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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

HE-11

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

HE-11

**Standing Committee
on Heritage, Infrastructure
and Cultural Policy**

More Homes Built Faster Act,
2022

1st Session
43rd Parliament

Thursday 17 November 2022

**Comité permanent du
patrimoine, de l'infrastructure
et de la culture**

Loi de 2022 visant à accélérer
la construction de plus
de logements

1^{re} session
43^e législature

Jeudi 17 novembre 2022

Chair: Laurie Scott
Clerk: Isaiah Thorning

Présidente : Laurie Scott
Greffier : Isaiah Thorning

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON HERITAGE,
INFRASTRUCTURE
AND CULTURAL POLICY**

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DU PATRIMOINE,
DE L'INFRASTRUCTURE
ET DE LA CULTURE**

Thursday 17 November 2022

Jeudi 17 novembre 2022

The committee met at 0900 in committee room 1.

MORE HOMES BUILT FASTER ACT, 2022

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

Consideration of the following bill:

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

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Good morning, everyone. It's nice to see everyone again. The Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy will now come to order. We are here to resume public hearings on Bill 23, An Act to amend various statutes, to revoke various regulations and to enact the Supporting Growth and Housing in York and Durham Regions Act, 2022. We are joined by staff from legislative research, Hansard, and broadcast and recording.

Please wait until I recognize you before starting to speak, and as always, all comments should go through the Chair. Are there any questions before we get started? Okay.

Today's presenters have been scheduled in groups of three for each one-hour time slot, with each presenter allotted seven minutes for an opening statement, followed by 39 minutes of questioning for all three witnesses divided into two rounds of seven and a half minutes for the government members, two rounds of seven and a half minutes for the official opposition members and two rounds of four and a half minutes for the independent member of the committee. Are there any questions? Okay.

**RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION COUNCIL
OF ONTARIO**

**WATSON AND ASSOCIATES
ECONOMISTS LTD.**

**TORONTO REGIONAL REAL ESTATE
BOARD**

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I will now call on the Residential Construction Council of Ontario, Watson and Associates Economists Ltd. and Toronto Regional Real Estate

Board. Some are on the screen. Is there anybody here with us? Please come to the table.

I will remind all the presenters that at the beginning of your presentation, to please state your name for Hansard recording purposes. If it is okay, we can start with the Residential Construction Council of Ontario. If they are ready, please begin.

Mr. Richard Lyall: Thank you. Am I still muted? No, okay. My name is Richard Lyall. I am the president and CEO of the Residential Construction Council of Ontario, known as RESCON. I want to thank you for the opportunity to comment on Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act.

RESCON represents builders of all forms of high-rise, mid-rise and low-rise housing in the province. Along with many others within the residential housing sector, we are grateful to the government for their strong and continuing commitment to addressing the housing supply and affordability crisis. Their efforts are the most significant undertaken by any provincial government in over a generation.

The challenges facing us are many, and they have developed over many years. We won't solve all of this overnight, nor will we get it done with one piece of legislation or one particular act. There's no silver bullet here. However, combined with other policy initiatives and working together—industry, government and stakeholders—I know we can meet this challenge. It is critical that we all work together.

We are in a serious housing crisis, and at its core, it's not buildings or zoning regulations or density issues. At its core, we're talking about people and their quality of life. We owe it to our young people and to newcomers to the province and to all residents of Ontario to get this right. What is at stake is nothing short of our future prosperity and true equity for all residents of Ontario. Frankly, we've got a lot going on now, of course, from inflationary pressures to demographic challenges, NIMBYism. These challenges are manifold, but so are the solutions if we are prepared to embrace them. In this context, I'm pleased to share some comments on Bill 23, to list a number of policy and legislative initiatives to move us forward and effect enduring solutions.

I begin by pointing out that we have seen positive steps in moving towards efforts to boost the supply of housing. We have also seen work to remove cumbersome red tape, and we welcome the work of the Housing Affordability Task Force and the 55 recommendations therein. Also, the

passage of the more housing, more choice act; More Homes for Everyone Act; and the Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act are also welcome steps.

With the introduction of the More Homes Built Faster Act, we are being given a once-in-a-generation opportunity to advance planning regulations and change processes that can potentially be game-changers in addressing housing supply and affordability. This is particularly the case in the greater Golden Horseshoe, GTA, which is the economic engine of growth for Canada and Ontario.

It is very encouraging to see the More Homes Built Faster Act move on long-term needed reforms to the problematic provincial policy statement as well as the Places to Grow plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe. These planning instruments were introduced by previous provincial governments with the goal of implementing better land use planning across Ontario. But, to use the old phrase, the path to hell is paved with good intentions.

While their combined stated aims were to create stronger communities that are economically sustainable, affordable and environmentally sound, the end result was not in fact a realization of these goals. In reality, they became cumbersome planning documents interpreted by municipal planners in a way that stymied residential housing construction rather than supporting it. These two planning policy instruments derive their authority from two different legislative platforms, which was part of the problem, and the proposal we now have, as part of this bill, to reconcile the two streams of planning policy within one provincial planning policy instrument is much needed and, in fact, visionary.

The clearly stated aim of this new strategy is to identify policies that support housing development within the existing two planning instruments and then reconcile them into one document. This not only makes sense, but it's essential. Most solutions are simple, and this is a good example. Additionally, by streamlining policies and processes and eliminating burdensome duplication, along with new planning tools, we have an opportunity in this respect to drive enormous change, including addressing the need for a reasonable mix of housing.

In the past decade, the cost associated with constructing new residential housing in Ontario has grown at rates that exceed even what would normally be considered exponential growth. But just as impactful in terms of economic pressures, and perhaps more so than any other factor right now, are ever-increasing taxes, fees and levies for residential housing construction, assessed and collected by municipalities.

No other sector within our market economy has had to absorb increases like residential construction. In fact, I cannot conceive of any other sector of the economy that could survive it. And, in reality, we are seeing that neither can the residential construction sector now, based on market trends.

Over the last decade, the increases in these fees have grown to the extent that in Canada's largest municipality, for example, the purchase of a new detached home with those taxes, fees and levies—the number is about \$280,000

which is far beyond any other jurisdiction in North America. RESCON welcomes the provincial government's actions through the More Homes Built Faster Act to frankly return some sanity to these development-related charges.

In terms of parkland dedication fees, the proposed amendments for higher density development projects are an important change to both the fee structure and the actual rates assigned.

Concerning development charges, we all know that these significantly impact the viability of future projects. And we all get it: Municipalities need to be able fund infrastructure costs associated with growth. But to assign almost all the financial burden on new homeowners and renters is not only impractical, it's not equitable. These are the most vulnerable people in the housing market, and we need to find better ways to pay for needed infrastructure renewal associated with development.

Fortunately, Bill 23 makes progress in this area. There are some municipalities with large development charge reserve funds. In one case, that amount significantly exceeds \$2 billion. This practice is unwise, and it is not transparent. In requiring municipalities to assign and spend 60% of what they collect each year in development charges, the bill is a welcome change we need to see, if we are going to activate housing construction.

Again, we get it. Municipalities need to pay for this work, and we support every effort to get the federal government fully to the table on this, because they're not part of this yet. They accrue enormous revenues from the GTA and Ontario generally, and, if they're serious about helping to build more housing, they need to do more. But, again, Bill 23 is welcome relief in this area. We're also glad to see the bill will exempt inclusionary zoning units—

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): You have 15 seconds left.

Mr. Richard Lyall: I'll leave it that. My final remarks contain a couple of comments on inclusionary zoning, but I'm happy to take questions. Thank you for your time.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you so much for your presentation.

We'll now move on to Watson and Associates Economists Ltd. and—yes? Okay, in the room. Please state your name and begin your presentation.

Mr. Gary Scandlan: Thank you. Gary Scandlan. I'm managing partner with Watson and Associates.

I've provided two different documents, when you have an opportunity. We've provided a full submission, and these are my highlights that I'll speak to right now. Once again, at the onset, thank you for allowing us to speak.

We are involved with municipalities. We're probably 99% municipal-oriented, and we do work in the area of development charges, doing the land economics for planning, parkland dedication, community benefit charges, and we work for conservation authorities. This is our 40th year that we've continued to participate not only in Ontario with a couple hundred municipalities, but we also work in places such as Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary and right across Canada.

We've undertaken over half of the development charge studies, so we're well aware of the implications and what's

included within there. We also provide a number of the long-term planning and needs assessments in order to facilitate the growth through the planning process. We undertake growth management, asset management, etc. I'll leave that in our background document.

0910

There are three areas that I wanted to discuss with the committee, to just highlight from our submission. The first one, which I think is the most critical, is with respect to the municipalities' abilities to provide land in the future. Water and waste water servicing, storm and, to some extent, roads must be in place before you take out a building permit. A subdivision cannot be approved until there's the capacity within the treatment facilities, the pipes that service that area are in place—the pumping stations, the water supply towers etc. Along that whole chain, if there are any backups, if there are any chinks in the armour, that's where development stops. And that is one of my key areas that I'd like to highlight for a minute.

Right now, municipalities have to build that infrastructure before development happens. Municipalities invest and they build it in hopes that the development will come, so it's a sizable amount of expenditures. When we look at it, of the development charge that we create, a significant amount goes to water and waste water. Currently, 26% of the municipalities that have DCs have negative balances in either the water and the waste water areas. So when we talk about reserves, they're significantly challenged, and if you take a look at the proportion of the total amount, they're sitting at around 13% or 14% of the balances that are sitting there. So water and waste water is a considerable challenge. On top of that, municipalities have hundreds of billions of dollars in infrastructure debt that they're looking to fund.

I take the example of Peel a few years back. They issued \$2 billion of debt in order to get the water to the northern part of the municipality and to receive the sewage and bring it back down. That debt is being serviced at over \$100 million a year for 30 years. That's the growth component being funded from development charges.

My key area is, with Bill 23, the phase-in. So when we do the development charge, we're going to start off at 80%, then 85%, then 90%. That will remove 10% of the funding. So for water and waste water, which we must build upfront and we're already paying for the charges, we lose that funding. When we take a look at the additional exemptions focused on attainable housing, non-profit etc., we're adding another 10% to 15% of the lost revenue in order to fund those expenditures.

The act also removes any of the planning studies. The master plans that we need in order to figure out what the capacity of the system is all through the servicing areas—that's being removed, and any environmental assessment. So the public can request a class C and basically initiate these environmental assessments against any of the major projects.

Lastly, we're not sure what land we might lose. That's yet to be defined, but we could lose the money for easements, treatment facilities etc.

There are a number of areas in this bill that I am concerned with as an economist, because if we're trying to create 1.5 million new housing over 10 years, if the money isn't there to create the land supply, we're going to find a stumbling block and we're not going to be able to achieve it. So one of my key messages is to consider some senior level of grant funding in order to target those specific areas or some other revenue sources. But as I say, water, waste water, storm and, to some extent, roads are essential to allowing that land supply to occur.

If I move into the area of municipal housing—I put some statistics in my presentation. There are 11 municipalities that are currently providing municipal housing; of that, they are collecting, in today's dollars, about \$2.2 billion, which will go towards 47,000 units. This isn't funding 100% of those units. The municipalities are also contributing money towards the creation of those units. But 47,000 units is about 3% of the provincial 1.5 million housing target. So removing that removes about 3% of the potential supply the municipalities are trying to assist in creating.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Fifty seconds left.

Mr. Gary Scandlan: The last part is just affordable housing versus housing affordability.

Affordable housing: Obviously, there are areas on the fringe that need support, and our friends here that will be presenting with me today are acknowledging that. But not necessarily all of the different types of development need to be, to some extent, subsidized. Single-family homes or whatever at certain levels do not necessarily need the servicing. Any loss of revenue goes on to the existing taxpayer, so it becomes a subsidy not only on the individuals but as well as the businesses, so those subsidies then raise the amount of taxes.

We take a look at housing affordability. My mom is 90 years old. She's not going to be able to get a job at Tim Hortons in order to—

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you. I'm sorry to interrupt, especially the mom story. I'm sorry.

We'll now move on to the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board. If you could state your name and begin your presentation, please.

Mr. Mauro Ritacca: Good morning. My name is Mauro Ritacca. I'm the senior manager of government relations for the Toronto real estate board. Thank you for this opportunity to present the views of greater Toronto area realtors.

As you may know, the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board, or TRREB for short, represents the interests of our over 70,000 realtor members from across the greater Toronto area. Every day, our members help homeowners, homebuyers, renters and businesses to conduct billions of dollars' worth of transactions. They help homeowners to realize the full potential of their properties on the market. They help homebuyers to realize the dream of home ownership and they help businesses to remain competitive and create jobs.

Our members are an integral part of their communities and the economy. We all want to see the greater Toronto area, Ontario and Canada be as prosperous, livable and

sustainable as possible, which brings me to why TRREB is presenting to you today. Housing affordability is one of the most significant challenges facing our region and province, and we strongly believe that the only way to address this issue is to ensure that the supply of homes for sale and rent adequately matches demand. For numerous reasons, some of which are easier to control than others, that has not been the case in recent years. As a result, we have seen housing affordability become more and more of a concern for more and more people.

Realtors have their ears to the ground. They talk to homebuyers, sellers and renters every day, and they know that housing affordability is top of mind. Many people feel like they just don't have any or the right housing options, and they know that municipal councils can change that with policies that would bring more housing supply to the market.

A recent poll conducted by Ipsos on behalf of TRREB demonstrates this. The new poll found strong public support for TRREB's views on these issues. Specifically, the poll found that 71% of Toronto and 905 residents combined believe that municipalities should focus their efforts on increasing the supply of homes for sale and rent, rather than trying to reduce demand, and 54% of Toronto and 905 residents combined oppose increases to development charges. With that in mind, we are very encouraged by the provincial government's introduction of Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act, and we strongly support its intent to help bring more ownership and rental housing onto the market.

Bill 23 helps to address numerous issues that TRREB has been calling for action on. One of the most important changes proposed by Bill 23 is the significant steps it takes towards ending exclusionary zoning and encouraging gentle density and missing-middle housing by legalizing three units on residential lots. This is a major step forward, and we applaud the government's courage in this regard. Bill 23 also addresses other areas that TRREB has been vocal on, including more streamlined approvals, coordinating new development of transit, better managing delays and obstacles created by NIMBY forces, and reducing costs with exemptions from development charges and other fees.

As mentioned, TRREB believes that Bill 23 is a major step forward in addressing the housing challenges faced by our region and province. We applaud the provincial government for taking this issue head-on and we look forward to continuing to work with all MPPs on this and other issues.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you so much for your presentation. We will now go to the question and answer period. The official opposition has seven and a half minutes. I'll ask MPP Harden to begin.

Mr. Joel Harden: Good morning, Chair. Good morning, committee members. Good morning, panellists. Thank you for the opportunity to listen to your expertise this morning.

As I've been considering this bill with folks here at this committee, it's quite apparent to me that we're not necessarily having a very clear sense of the impact Bill 23 will

have on affordable rental housing and what affordability actually means in this context. That's something that strikes me.

0920

The city of Ottawa has told MPPs from our community that absent the development charges we currently bring in, Mr. Scandlan, this is a loss of \$26 million in revenue. The affordable housing budget right now is \$14 million in our city.

I want to recount a story from a resident who reached out to me. Her name is Alison Trowbridge. She lives in a community that's actually south of Ottawa Centre, the community I serve, in the Barrhaven area. Alison is an ODSP, Ontario Disability Support Program, recipient. Her home is in a community called Manor Village, which is currently in the middle of a massive change in that the proposal is to demovict this community and move her out. She is worried about the ability to have affordable housing for her and her son as a single mom. She wrote me about Manor Village, where she currently lives, and Mr. Scandlan, I'd like your reaction:

"I've lived here for almost seven years with my seven-year-old son. This is our home. It's our safe place. It's where he can battle with mental health in a safe location. He's a runner, and having this property to defend against that—you know, I have a whole community that will stop him in his tracks and helps me get to him. They keep him safe. This is a neighbourhood that he knows. I know that if he does get away and he's having a meltdown, he's still safe. He knows the streets. He knows where to go and where not to go. If that reliance of this neighbourhood that I can call on at the drop of a hat won't be there anymore, I'm in serious trouble.

"The building that we have is set up for his mental health. We've battled that for the last seven years. If I lose this home, we end up on the street. We become another statistic. We can't afford to live anywhere else. We can't afford the new rate. This is the rate that I can afford and get by and put food on his table, as a single mom. Knowing that we could lose our home is terrifying. I already have enough battles to deal with lately—schooling, his mental health—and now I have to worry about losing our home and food on the table and his school and his community and his safe place. It's heartbreaking."

I guess my question for you is, what is this legislation doing to ensure affordable housing for moms like Alison?

Mr. Gary Scandlan: Through the Chair, that's where my closing remarks were focused in on: the difference between affordable housing and housing affordability. There's not a lot of choices if we continue to provide the services, which this individual, I'm sure, is taking into account—parks, recreation, safe police, fire, etc. If we take away the funding for all of these different services, that has to be funded somewhere. It's either through property taxes, your water and waste water rates or we have to turn to senior levels of government.

The problem then becomes: Is it all on the municipalities' financial shoulders to address this or are there opportunities for all three levels of government to participate? If

we received grants against these services, that would obviously reduce the development charge in the exact same way, but the funding would then be shared between, let's say, three levels of government, rather than one level of government.

Mr. Joel Harden: Mr. Scandlan, what I've also been made aware of from the city of Ottawa is that there are currently 23 applications before the city right now for demovictions of the kind that Ms. Trowbridge is currently experiencing in Manor Village.

I'm wondering if you see anything in Bill 23 that will assure that there will have—something that the city of Toronto, I know, and the city of Ottawa has embraced—the notion of rental replacement rates, to make sure that tenants like Alison can go back to comparable housing. When you think about housing affordability or affordable housing, that distinction you talked about in your presentation, is there something in this bill to ensure that families like this can go back to the same kind of housing that they have come to understand and rely upon?

Mr. Gary Scandlan: No, I don't see it. It could be generated through other initiatives, but I don't see it specifically in Bill 23.

Mr. Joel Harden: Okay. Thank you. I want to move on to Mr. Ritacca. Thank you for being here this morning. You mentioned in your presentation on behalf of Toronto realtors that you were excited about Bill 23's opportunity before our real estate market to encourage more affordable rental housing. I know in this bill the very definition of affordability is being changed—we've heard that from other experts who have appeared at this committee—from the notion of being 30% of one's disposable income to 80% of the market rate. That's quite different, I'm sure you can agree, sir, as an expert, given the way the market has gone up in recent years.

Does that give you cause for concern as we think about how the market can generate affordable housing, if we're moving the goalposts and families like Ms. Trowbridge's are potentially at a loss, of homelessness, if we get rid of the existing affordable housing stock we have without any rental replacement regime for them to go back to?

Mr. Mauro Ritacca: Well, I mean, TRREB has concerns about housing affordability in the GTA and the province. We've been calling for raising the issue for a number of years now, which is why we're here today. And I would reiterate what we have been saying for a couple of years now: that the only long-term way to really solve this problem is to get more ownership and rental housing onto the market. We believe this bill takes some significant steps towards that, specifically with regard to rental housing. Even the step to allow three units on a residential lot is—speaking from a Toronto perspective, that often has meant things like—

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Sixty seconds.

Mr. Mauro Ritacca: That has often meant things like laneway suites, which has been a successful experiment in Toronto, which can create rental housing opportunities, additional rental housing—

Mr. Joel Harden: I understand, sir, but I only have 60 seconds. Thank you for that.

I want to move to Mr. Lyall. Mr. Lyall, you're an expert in the development industry. We certainly rely upon the development industry to try to spur work. But, again, for families like Ms. Trowbridge's, what is in Bill 23 to make sure that a family like this can stay in a home of comparable value? What is in this bill? I know you're enthusiastically supporting this bill, but I'm asking on behalf of low-income residents, particularly tenants. What's in this bill for them?

Mr. Richard Lyall: Well, the short answer to that is: There's nothing in this bill for that particular issue, but I don't think that was the intention of the bill. Also, I would add that we've got—there's no silver bullet on all of the issues. This is one part of the step of fixing a very complicated problem, so I—

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you very much. I'm sorry, we're out of time.

We'll go to the independents, so four and a half minutes. MPP Blais.

Mr. Stephen Blais: I have a question for Mr. Ritacca. Mr. Ritacca, you mentioned your membership, and they help sell homes, obviously. When a member of your organization lists a home for sale, do they limit that listing to the physical description of the home or do they describe the community in which it is located, park amenities, recreation centres, transit and the walkability score factor, such as that?

Mr. Mauro Ritacca: I assume you're talking about on the actual listing, on the—

Mr. Stephen Blais: When you're selling a house, yes.

Mr. Mauro Ritacca: Well, obviously I can't speak for how realtors market a property, but it's—

Mr. Stephen Blais: Okay, come on, you're an expert. You know that it's not just the physical description of the house, that the community amenities are included in the listing as a sales factor in the home.

Mr. Mauro Ritacca: Yes. So realtors can market the property—

Mr. Stephen Blais: That's all I needed to know. Thank you very much.

I have a question for Mr. Scandlan. Development charges are set based on a long-range projection of infrastructure needs over the course of the bylaw—five or 10 years, whatever that might be. If you reduce development charges on one segment of housing, that doesn't change the need for infrastructure. Is that correct?

Mr. Gary Scandlan: That's correct. What it just does is remove the funding for that infrastructure.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Sure. Based on growth, if you need a billion dollars' worth of infrastructure, you need a billion dollars of infrastructure. It's roads. It's sewers. It's recreation centres. It's parks. It's transit. That infrastructure need, all things being equal, remains the same.

Mr. Gary Scandlan: Correct.

Mr. Stephen Blais: And if growth goes faster, you actually might need more of that.

Mr. Gary Scandlan: Or sooner, yes.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Sure, or sooner. So if you take development charges off a segment of housing, that needs to be made up with either taxes, senior government funding—

or could the development charge on the other aspects of housing not affected by the reduction actually be forced to go up, as well?

Mr. Gary Scandlan: There's a restriction in the Development Charges Act that provides that we can't take something that we're not collecting from this segment and put that burden on another segment. So there are specific restrictions in the Development Charges Act.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Sure. So that would require, then, either municipal taxes to go up, or for the money to fall off a tree, or for the province or the federal government to somehow subsidize that infrastructure.

Mr. Gary Scandlan: Another revenue source, yes.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Another revenue source, okay.

In Ottawa, as the member for Ottawa Centre pointed out, I think there was a memo that was issued to council saying that just the affordable housing DC reduction—not the attainable housing, which has not yet been defined, but I suspect will probably be all suburban forms of housing. Just that will punch a \$20-million or \$30-million hole in the city's infrastructure budget. That represents something like a 3% tax increase in the city of Ottawa, which is about \$300, maybe \$350 a year.

Over time, what's the long-term financial impact of that kind of decision? Taxes will have to go up exponentially over time, right? It's not just \$350 this year; that grows over time as inflation takes place and needs go up. Is that—

Mr. Gary Scandlan: Inflation, and then if there's additional servicing as the population grows, there will be the additional loss.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Sure. And municipalities are constrained at the moment in Ontario with how much debt they can take. Is that correct?

Mr. Gary Scandlan: That's correct. There are limits.

Mr. Stephen Blais: And that limit is 25% of own-source—

Mr. Gary Scandlan: Revenue.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Revenue, yes. Are there municipalities that, for things like water and other critical pieces of infrastructure, are actually exceeding the provincial limit of 25% of own-source revenues?

Mr. Gary Scandlan: I have been before the OMB and the OLT in order to support a municipality to exceed their debt capacity specifically for water and waste water servicing.

Mr. Stephen Blais: York region is actually over the provincially mandated debt servicing limit already. They're already spending more on debt every year in York region to service water and waste water than the provincial government thinks is smart or advisable to do.

Mr. Gary Scandlan: That's correct.

Mr. Stephen Blais: And presumably, if their development charges go down, they'll have to take out even more debt than the province thinks is advisable to service that ever-increasing growth in York region.

Mr. Gary Scandlan: That's correct.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you very much. We'll now move to the government.

Interjection.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I'm sorry. I'm going to have to bring up a legislative situation that we have going on, so let me just get my glasses on and have a read here.

Interjection.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Okay. The Clerk has brought to my attention that, under standing order 74(b), a housing bill is being considered in the House right now, so: "No bill shall be considered in any standing or select committee while any matter, including a procedural motion, relating to the same policy field is being considered in the House." So we're going to recess immediately, until 1 p.m.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Can we challenge that?

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I don't believe there's any debate that's going to be able to do that. It's a standing order. I'm sorry. Okay? All right.

Thank you. We're recessed till 1 p.m.

The committee recessed from 0934 to 1302.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Good afternoon, everyone. The Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy will now come to order. We are here to resume public hearings on Bill 23, An Act to amend various statutes, to revoke various regulations and to enact the Supporting Growth and Housing in York and Durham Regions Act, 2022. Are there any questions?

CITY OF TORONTO

C.D. HOWE INSTITUTE

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The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I will now call on our first set of presenters: the city of Toronto, C.D. Howe Institute, and Canadians for Properly Built Homes. You'll have seven minutes for your presentation. Please state your name at the beginning of the presentation, for recording purposes.

I will ask the city of Toronto to please begin.

Mr. Gregg Lintern: Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Gregg Lintern, and I am Toronto's chief planner. I want to thank the committee, of course, for having us today, on behalf of the city, and for the opportunity to comment on Bill 23. I'm joined by some associates online, who are subject matter experts in many of the areas that the law covers.

Toronto is one of the fastest-growing municipalities in North America, attracting tens of thousands of newcomers from around the world every year. The need for coordinated actions related to housing supply and related to affordability and infrastructure in Ontario is a shared objective with the province.

While the city supports the province's goal to get 1.5 million homes built over the next 10 years, we're very concerned about several aspects of the proposed legislation that negatively impact growth funding tools and curtail

land use planning tools needed to build complete and sustainable communities. The bill would have the unintended consequence of impeding the city's ability to deliver growth-related infrastructure and selected essential services, and facilitate access to our full range of housing options for Torontonians.

The quality of life for future generations of Torontonians hinges on the city being able to build complete and sustainable communities, with access for residents and workers to local parks, community centres, libraries, child care—all those essential aspects of complete communities and hard infrastructure, in tandem with faster development of more homes. It also requires other levels of government to ensure that other infrastructure, such as schools and hospitals, keeps pace.

I'd like to highlight five key areas with the legislation, and there is further detail in our written submissions.

First, the city is concerned that the discount and in some cases the elimination of developer fees, some retroactively, would impede the city's ability to build the infrastructure necessary to support growth and the intensification envisioned under the bill. Toronto's 2031 share, which is 285,000 units, is a 115% increase, or 150,000 additional units over our current projections. However, based on current analysis, the city would lose about \$230 million in DCs and parkland annually, a more than 20% reduction, and our DC rates would be reduced to levels lower than our previous 2018 DC bylaw. This comes at a time when Toronto has real challenges, with a \$815-million budget shortfall as a result of the pandemic, with residents struggling with inflation and borrowing costs. The revenue loss would dramatically impact Toronto's finances and would be unaffordable for existing taxpayers to fully fund. As a result, the city would have no choice but to postpone or not proceed with many capital projects. In the absence of the province offsetting lost funding, these revenue losses limit our ability to advance the necessary infrastructure in tandem with new supply.

We, therefore, recommend that there be no discounts or reductions to municipal growth funding tools. Discounts to growth funding tools are not the appropriate mechanism to ensure delivery of housing supply. Instead, it would be more effective for provincial incentives to be provided directly to developers or homeowners through targeted grants, rebates or other incentive programs. Phase-ins should remain a municipal decision and should not apply retroactively to adopted bylaws. Toronto's bylaw already has a two-year phase-in. Housing is a critical DC service that services the most vulnerable. It should remain eligible. Growth studies and land costs are critical and directly related to delivery of growth-related infrastructure and should remain eligible, and the DC freeze interest rate should, at a minimum, reflect capital cost inflation.

Second, the bill would diminish housing affordability and rental housing replacement protection. This includes placing a 5% cap on inclusionary zoning and a reduction on the affordability period from 99 to 25 years. The proposed definition of what constitutes "affordable"—tying it to average market rates rather than income—would result

in higher rents and prices for those needing an affordable place to live. The removal of rental replacement would eliminate our current policies that prevent the net loss of thousands of existing units through demolitions and conversions—we get a lot of development in Toronto. Furthermore, there's absolutely no guarantee that discounts and exemptions from development fees will be passed on as savings to consumers, given that housing prices are market-driven rather than determined by developers.

We therefore recommend that you be mindful of the unequal impact of the bill on equity-deserving communities and maintain protection for existing rental housing stock, and adopt a higher cap for inclusionary zoning and an affordability period of 99 years.

Third, the bill would erode sustainability and resilient development practices. It would remove the city's ability to secure sustainable design elements from the site plan approval process, which we currently do through the Toronto Green Standard. These include such matters as energy efficiency, street trees, mitigating urban heat islands, deterrence of bird collisions, just to name a few. It would be unfortunate for this bill to inadvertently limit the city's ability to address climate change, biodiversity loss and our TransformTO net-zero strategy targets.

Therefore, we recommend that you continue to allow municipalities to address sustainable design through site plan approval.

Fourth, the bill would decrease the amount and quality of parkland the city can secure. It would compromise the city's ability to provide sufficient and high-quality parkland where it is needed the most, for new residents and equity-deserving communities. New caps for parkland dedication rates place a downward pressure on park provision, with an impact of about \$15 million annually.

Therefore, the city recommends the province provide financial incentives directly through a grant, rebate or other programs rather than implement the proposed parkland dedication caps; reverse the requirement for the city to accept encumbered and stratified parks or privately owned, publicly accessible spaces; and continue to grant municipalities the power to determine the suitability of parkland to be dedicated rather than handing that determination over to proponents.

Fifth, and finally, Bill 23 proposes a number of changes to the OHA, the Ontario Heritage Act, that threatens the city's ability to identify and protect cultural heritage resources. Limitations proposed to the heritage register would require all existing and newly listed properties to be designated within two years or be removed from the register for five years. This would leave thousands of heritage properties across the city vulnerable to demolition. Therefore, the city recommends that you remove the proposed time limitations on listed heritage-registered properties.

In closing, while we support the intent to address housing supply, we urge you to pause implementation of a number of the changes proposed to assess short- and long-term financial and quality-of-life impacts, and to allow for further

consultation on alternative proposals and options that can be successfully implemented. Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you very much.

We'll now move to our next presenter, the C.D. Howe Institute. Please state your name and begin your presentation.

Mr. Benjamin Dachis: I'm Benjamin Dachis, associate vice-president of public affairs at the C.D. Howe Institute. I was part of the government's team at the Premier's office, designing the housing supply action plan 1.0, but I also want to be clear that it's critical that the C.D. Howe Institute, and my role there—we are very much a non-partisan organization.

I want to give this committee some food for thought on questions posed to the government on matters relevant for either this round of legislation or for future rounds. The government has committed to annual housing red tape reduction legislation, and that's an important commitment to have as a lens for how to view this committee's role.

But first, I want to use my remarks to commend the government's efforts so far to meet its ambitious growth targets of building 1.5 million homes—"ambitious" may be an understatement. That pace of building would be a substantial increase in the current rate of building, about double the annual pre-pandemic rate. Ontario's lack of construction workers and delays in what does get built add hundreds of thousands of dollars onto the cost of homes through impact on overall supply.

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The government created an extra task force to propose ideas to increase housing construction, and it recommended a series of reforms last February. The government reaction was initially fairly tepid, which is of little surprise given municipal concerns. But two elections have since passed, and the time for Ontario to act is now. Bold changes are needed for any chance of meeting this 1.5-million new homes target. This task force report really is the key touchstone document of what needs to happen, so what I'd advise we do is compare the government's action so far to this report.

One persistent issue is the right of community groups to appeal a project to the Ontario Land Tribunal, or OLT, even after it has gone through all the hoops of government approval. These groups can start an appeal at the minimal cost of \$400, with no consequence for filing a vexatious claim meant only to prolong the process. Such claims have wider consequences by slowing other cases before the tribunal, which can slow building province-wide. The government followed the task force recommendation and eliminated most sources of vexatious third-party appeals. This is major progress, but it's worth understanding the exact scope of how far we should rein in third-party appeals.

The task force also called for preventing the abuse of heritage preservation designation processes. I'm not an expert in this, unlike Gregg here, but major progress was made in Bill 23.

The most urgent—and obviously, most politically contentious—reforms are in zoning and land use planning. At a minimum, the province should be adopting aggressive density targets around transit stations, and it should allow

developers automatic approval if a development meets densification targets around transit stations. The problem is it's stated this is going to be the case, but we haven't seen exact legislative or regulatory details, and that's something that this committee should be calling for.

Bill 23 also made major progress on making the land use planning and approval system more generally permissive by exempting projects of 10 units or less that conform to official plans. For larger projects, they'll also be focusing on site plan approvals on health and safety issues. This is good progress in terms of speeding up the pace of development. But additional legislative or policy action may be needed to not allow for municipalities to counteract as-of-right density between other actions via site plan control, through scope creep. Some financial reform such as allowing damages, something that was considered as part of the task force report—the OLT, for such rejections, is something that this committee may want to consider as well.

The legislation amends problematic rules on inclusionary zoning. Such policies shift the overall cost of housing away from taxpayers and onto new homebuyers. Having homebuyers be the main source of supporting new social housing isn't the right approach. If this is a social issue that we want to address, we should be using the widest possible pool, and that's taxpayers, to support our efforts in this, because inclusionary zoning is not the way to primarily solve housing issues.

Cutting development charges on buildings subject to inclusionary zoning is a start, but this gets me to my last core point on development charges, which is that cities are amassing large reserves largely from development charges. A provincial review of reserves is a good start. Bill 23 requires that 60% of annual development charge funds be spent. More than zoning, this is going to have major ramifications for municipal reserves and calculating development charges in the future. Such a move is likely to slow the growth of increasing DCs that Toronto, in particular, put in place. But a freeze or any kind of change on reserves is only going to help in the short term. This is going to create long-term problems if the system isn't fixed in the future, not necessarily in this bill but at some point soon. Cities in the province need to come together for a deeper rethink of how cities finance their infrastructure. Collecting development charges upfront for water and waste water in particular, which is the largest individual source of DCs outside of the city of Toronto, no longer makes sense. Users should be paying the cost capital as they use the services, not fully upfront, as DCs primarily do now.

I'll leave my opening remarks at that, but there's much, much more in the government's housing supply action plan, part 3, that's outside of the scope of legislation here today that I'd also be happy to discuss in questions.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you very much. We will now move on to the Canadians for Properly Built Homes presentation. Please go ahead.

Ms. Karen Somerville: Good afternoon. What's the largest purchase you've ever made? For most of us, it's a home.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Sorry, state your name for Hansard.

Ms. Karen Somerville: Oh, pardon me. Karen Somerville with Canadians for Properly Built Homes.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you.

Ms. Karen Somerville: Okay. I'll start again. What's the largest purchase you've ever made? For most of us, it's a home.

My name is Karen Somerville and I appreciate your attention to one of the most critical issues that the volunteers who run the non-profit Canadians for Properly Built Homes are working to address.

Imagine finally being able to save up the money to purchase a new home. You check to see if the builder you are considering purchasing from is licensed by the Home Construction Regulatory Authority. Good, it's a licensed builder. Next, you check the Ontario builder directory and you find that the builder's record is perfect. Ultimately, you proceed, purchasing from that builder.

But what if somehow, after you purchased, you end up in a disastrous situation that leaves you financially ruined, or with your kids physically sick, or a family member suffering from a mental breakdown? All of these serious issues can be yours due to Ontario building code violations and inadequate consumer protection. We hear from Ontarians in these situations regularly. Sometimes they experience all three outcomes: financial ruin, physical sickness and mental sickness. Tragically, some homeowners have confessed that they're considering suicide after buying one of these newly built homes. Obviously, this should not be happening in Ontario, but it is. As legislators, you have the power to fix this.

I'm going to focus on schedule 5 of Bill 23 on the New Home Construction Licensing Act, 2017. I will highlight six key problems that have emerged related to HCRA from a consumer perspective and I will offer six recommendations. I will close by making a very brief comment about building homes faster.

Despite it being almost two years since it opened its doors, HCRA continues to be plagued with problems.

(1) The Ontario builder directory continues to be highly misleading for many builders. This has been an issue for decades now. On July 8, 2020, speaking to the Ontario Legislature, MPP Bailey promised that the Ontario government would be holding HCRA to a higher standard and ensure that the Ontario builder directory would be fixed. But it has not been fixed. In fact, many argue that it is now worse than before MPP Bailey made his comments. HCRA recently conducted yet another consultation related to this directory. In our opinion, this was a waste of resources and another unnecessary time delay.

(2) HCRA says it does not have the authority to end the practice of builders secretly selling newly built homes with used and damaged furnaces. CPBH has a legal opinion that says that this practice violates the Consumer Protection Act.

(3) In its 2022 annual report, HCRA said that it had received 808 complaints about builders and the majority of these complaints were against licensed builders, but

only about 10% of all complaints that HCRA received resulted in an HCRA investigation, and \$7.8 million in surplus revenue accumulated for HCRA that same year. With this huge backlog of complaints and almost \$8-million surplus, why did HCRA not ramp up resources much more quickly to address the complaints, for example, using contractors?

One homeowner who waited for more than a year after they filed a complaint against their builder was recently advised by HCRA that their complaint was closed, as the licensee is no longer registered with HCRA, and HCRA no longer has the authority to hold the former licensee accountable for their conduct or behaviour. Currently, HCRA has no set timeline for the completion or action of complaints.

Here's another twist related to complaints and discipline: It's in section 61(5). It says, "No proceeding under this section shall be commenced more than two years after the facts upon which the proceeding is based first came to the knowledge of the director." So if the licensee is no longer registered with HCRA, or if for some reason HCRA does not act on the complaint for two years after receiving it, the complaint against the builder is dropped. How is this fair to the consumer? This is supposed to be consumer protection legislation.

(4) Complaints about the HCRA itself are handled within HCRA. As one example, a complaint was made about something that involves the HCRA CEO, and HCRA staff investigated this complaint. Clearly, that was inappropriate. To no one's surprise, that complaint was dismissed.

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(5) There are still no consumer advocates on the HCRA board. Currently, the board is made up of three builders, three former public servants, two lawyers, and one former politician/executive.

(6) HCRA board meeting minutes are not public.

So here are our recommendations:

(1) Regarding the Ontario Builder Directory, make either Tarion or HCRA accountable for this directory. Currently, it is a shared responsibility, and accountability has worsened. Make the changes to the directory that Justice Cunningham identified in 2016 or that the Auditor General of Ontario identified in 2019.

(2) Provide HCRA with the authority and responsibility to prevent builders from secretly selling used and damaged furnaces in newly built homes.

(3) Require HCRA to address complaints about builders within a specific time frame.

(4) Establish an ombudsperson role related to HCRA, reporting outside of HCRA. Designate at least two HCRA board members for people with a solid track record in consumer advocacy.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Final 60 seconds.

Ms. Karen Somerville: A final word about building homes faster: We understand the need to build faster, and we understand that the Ontario building code is outside of the scope of Bill 23, but the Ontario government must also focus on housing quality and homes at least meeting the minimal Ontario building code. Far too many newly built homes do not meet the building code now. Many fear that

it's going to get worse with this faster building approach. As legislators, please find a way for the Ontario government to ensure that newly built homes at least meet the building code during construction. Safety must be job one for the government of Ontario when it comes to newly built homes.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): We'll now move to the question and answer period. And the official opposition, if they would start: MPP Bell.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you to the presenters for coming in today.

My first questions are to Gregg Lintern and the staff from the city of Toronto. I'm deeply concerned about Bill 23's impact on housing affordability and our homelessness crisis. We are seeing a sharp rise in homelessness in the city of Toronto. We're seeing encampments return. We are seeing shelters full. We're also seeing some very concerning trends in our private market housing sector, where there has been a 26% drop in affordable private market rentals where the rent is less than \$1,000. And during this same period, we are seeing an 80% or so increase in luxury rentals that sell for \$3,000 a month—that's the average rent. It's extremely concerning.

Mr. Lintern, could you explain how you think this bill will affect housing affordability and homelessness in Toronto?

Mr. Gregg Lintern: Thank you for the question.

I think, generally speaking, the concerns that we have are that the issues you raised aren't specifically targeted. You're identifying that we have a broad spectrum of need in a big city like Toronto.

For example, the bill's proposals around replacement housing are a concern because we produced, through the replacement housing policy, 4,000 units of replacement housing since we've had that authority for more than 15 years. So when we get apartment developments, infill apartment developments, we're able to replace, and that's generally more affordable housing, and that is generally vulnerable people who live in apartments. So our concern would be, we've got to maintain that supply, that inherent supply, sustained supply, and add to it—on apartment sites, of course.

Another concern would be that the city's inclusionary zoning policies that were adopted last year are watered down by the bill. They reduce the cap to 5%—the amount—and they foreshorten the affordability to 25 years from 99 years, among other concerns.

These are two targeted aspects of the bill that would, I think, connect right into housing need and the spectrum of need. This is need around PSWs. It's around the folks working in grocery stores—dare I say, education workers—and others who need good, sustainable, reliable, affordable housing in the city. The tool kit is not deep and not rich, so these are just two aspects of the bill that I would be concerned about.

Ms. Jessica Bell: My second question is related to the government's decision to cut the \$1,000 or so fee that goes to affordable housing measures that the city is running. Can you explain a little bit more? What is that housing fee used for by the city of Toronto?

Mr. Gregg Lintern: Would you be referring to the service in the DC?

Ms. Jessica Bell: Yes.

Mr. Gregg Lintern: Okay. The city previously and currently is allowed to allocate funds from development charges to a housing service. That, currently in our budget, is attached to what I think have been very successful programs. The Open Door program, which subsidizes literally per door, to the tune of tens of thousands of dollars, the provision of targeted affordable housing, is currently targeted to provide the capital costs of land for the Housing Now program, which so far has approved, I think, 4,000 units, with many more thousands of units in the pipeline. This is the city actually taking its land and leveraging private market interest in good development sites across the city. That's a real, tangible, right-up-front impact to the tune of, I believe, \$130 million a year, which is quite a significant hit when you need to know how you're going to plan and roll out these sites. Everyone can agree that development is not easy, so lining these sites up and getting the zoning in place, which we've done; knowing that we have the security of the funding, so that we can come to the development industry and partner with the industry to achieve affordable housing—at a fairly rich rate; some of these sites are 20% to 30% affordable, which is pretty healthy.

Ms. Jessica Bell: They are two very good examples of where development fees are used to build new, deeply affordable housing with the Open Door program, so thank you for raising that.

We hear this argument being presented by the government that cities like the city of Toronto are sitting on a mountain of unused, unallocated reserve funds and are hoarding this money instead of spending it on infrastructure. Hearing your presentation today, that seems completely untrue. Can you clarify? Is the city of Toronto sitting on a hoard of unused money in reserve that hasn't been allocated to infrastructure?

Mr. Gregg Lintern: No. And I will defer that to our controller, who is online.

Andrew, do you want to help me with that answer?

Mr. Andrew Flynn: Certainly, Gregg.

To the member: The development charges received by the city are 100% allocated to specific projects; 70% of those projects will be undertaken within the next five years. So the presumption that the city is sitting on pots of money and not allocating it is patently and demonstrably not true. The money that is received from development charges is completely committed.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): You have 60 seconds remaining.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you for sharing that concern. That has always been my understanding of the city of Toronto's finances—that they're already earmarked to necessary infrastructure that new residents and current residents need to make our city great.

I'm going to leave the rest of my time for Canadians for Properly Built Homes and for MPP Harden, who's going to address them in the next section.

Mr. Joel Harden: Karen, we will pick this up in the next round, but is there anything you wanted to comment on based upon what you've heard so far?

Ms. Karen Somerville: No, thank you.

Mr. Joel Harden: All right. Then we're happy to pass to our colleagues in the Liberal caucus.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): MPP McMahon, you have four and a half minutes.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you to everyone for coming in, and sorry about the back-and-forth today—whether you were on or speaking or not. I'm thrilled you're here. You've taken the time, you've done a lot of work, and we appreciate it. We want to hear from you as we consider this.

Toronto, the economic engine of Ontario, has more cranes in the ground—what do they say?—than the top four or five US cities combined, so we know a thing or two about development. We really appreciate our chief planner, Gregg Lintern, and the other 10 experts here to give us some sage advice. It's a little alarming that you mentioned that some capital projects will be cancelled if Bill 23 advances, and I'm just wondering if you can elaborate on any of those projects specifically.

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Mr. Gregg Lintern: Through MPP Scott—I'm used to saying, "Through the Speaker;" sorry—the threat is that we need to plan capital. As Andrew pointed out, you go through a planning process; you tender. The city has a number of large capital programs that are relying on projected revenues from DCs, and they include:

- improvements to capacity related to growth for the TTC at Yonge and Bloor;
 - access and the purchase of new cars;
 - areas that are undergoing change, like St. Clair, where the province is working with the city to put in a new GO station;
 - we have a transportation master plan that needs new roads;
 - in Liberty Village, new streets related to a new Ontario Line station, in part there;
 - waste water treatment, new sewers and trunk sewers;
- and
- many parks and recreation facilities.

I can't answer your question specifically because we need to understand the full impact of what we're dealing with and we need to likely rework our capital plan, which is a 10-year plan. It's a horizon plan that gets reset every year. If we're going to project a precipitous drop in revenue, then it's going to be probably a little bit of the Hunger Games to try to figure out how we're going to re-sort priorities.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Right. And some of these projects are connected to us with the Ontario Line, so it doesn't help us, as well, if you're struggling, if the city of Toronto is.

Parkland dedication—we know how important parks are. We've always known that, but especially in a pandemic when it was mental, physical and spiritual health improvement for our residents all over. The parkland dedication is a big concern for me in this bill. What's the

forgone revenue as a result of the changes which would occur in this bill, and what's the impact on the parks system?

Mr. Gregg Lintern: The impact, I'll speak to, and then my friends from finance can answer the revenue question. But the impact is less parks and in undetermined location. Right now the city has the ability, in working very co-operatively with the development industry, to locate parks on sites in a way that's suitable and that's operationally appropriate for the life cycle of that park. This bill takes that ability of a city or municipality in Ontario away. That is concerning to the people who design and develop parks, knowing that they have to go in and maintain those parks for the life cycle of that park. I'll boot it to finance to answer the revenue question.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: It's only 45 seconds because I have a short time, unfortunately.

Mr. Gregg Lintern: Finance, revenue loss?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Can we hold the time while we get the mike?

Mr. Gregg Lintern: Andrew?

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Can someone put their hand up on the screen to answer that question?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: And hold the time?

Mr. Gregg Lintern: Andrew, can you answer the revenue loss question on parks?

Mr. Andrew Flynn: The revenue loss is approximately \$30 million.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thirty-million dollars for parks, green space and quality of life for Torontonians and beyond—tourists. Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you. We'll now go to the government side. MPP Smith, you can begin the round.

Ms. Laura Smith: I want to thank everybody on this very significant collaborative effort, everybody being here today.

This question is actually to Mr. Dachis—am I pronouncing that correctly?

Mr. Benjamin Dachis: Yes.

Ms. Laura Smith: We are definitely in a housing supply shortage. We need houses. Bill 23 takes bold action to advance our plans to address this housing crisis by building 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years. We've said this before and we'll continue to say this again. We've streamlined approvals and increased housing supply, including the full implementation of the Housing Affordability Task Force.

Can you speak to your previous research on the connection between housing supply and affordability?

Mr. Benjamin Dachis: Sure. The way that economists around the world have thought through the effect of supply constraints is a very simple kind of thought process, which is when there's a large gap between what it costs a developer to physically build a home, the construction, the labour costs, the materials, all these things—there's a certain cost for those things. When there's a large gap between that cost of constructing a home and what someone is paying for a single-family home or a condo—when there's a huge gap there, there are only a few causes and those are fundamentally about barriers to supply, barriers to being

able to build. That can be any number of things. It can be things like the amount of time it takes to get through the approvals process. It can be charges on homebuyers—nominally on development charges, but those things get passed through in the cost to end-users and buyers, which is an important thing to remember. It can be things like the lack of infrastructure to be able to get to communities in which the homes are available. It can be the lack of available land in which we are building homes.

When we have all these barriers, they all add up to a significant gap between what it costs that builder to build and what people are paying. We've seen here in Ontario—Toronto, for example—a substantial gap in the hundreds of thousands of dollars over time. This is from old data that needs updating, and it's almost certainly larger now in terms of what these costs are. What happens is that when you have these barriers to supply, when you have a lack of homes being built, the end cost is on people who are buying new homes and then the overall housing market, as well.

Ms. Laura Smith: And you also touched on the significance of delays.

Mr. Benjamin Dachis: Yes. All these things come together. Delays and charges added onto the construction, the lack of available land: All these things together contribute to our lack of supply.

Ms. Laura Smith: If we don't act, where do you see us?

Mr. Benjamin Dachis: Look at Vancouver, as an example. Look around the world. New York City has some of the largest barriers to new construction in Manhattan. This is where the metrics of us having the largest numbers of cranes, for example—it sounds great, but it's misleading. We need to go more than that. In terms of the amount of immigration that we're bringing in, immigrants to Canada greatly improve our productive capacity and the vibrancy of Canada. We need places to house them. We need to have way more cranes around transit stations. We need to have missing middle. We need to have growth in suburban areas. We need to have all available options. The consequences to the Canadian economy are quite substantial.

If you look at some of the evidence from around the world, the lack of construction touches on potentially one of the largest causes of some of the deepest economic problems that we face—inequality, for example. If you look at the trends on inequality in terms of wealth, what's fundamentally driving a lot of that is actually the amassing of housing wealth. And there's intergenerational inequities there. So there's so much to unpack in terms of the consequences of a lack of building.

Ms. Laura Smith: Thank you. Time?

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Three minutes.

Ms. Laura Smith: I'm going to share this time with MPP Vijay Thanigasalam.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): MPP Thanigasalam.

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Thank you to all the panelists for your presentations today. I will start off with Mr. Lintern. Thank you for that presentation and thanks to all the members who are virtually here, as well.

Again, when it comes to the bill, with all the changes, if passed, this bill would provide lower building costs, it will provide relief to Ontarians, and of course, it will lay a solid foundation to addressing Ontario's housing crisis. This housing crisis did not happen overnight. It has been happening for quite a very long time. So we need to have a short-term and long-term strategy, and we need support from all three levels of government. Of course, we are working with the federal government to ensure municipalities continue to receive the support and the critical infrastructure that they need to accommodate growth, such as new roads, waterworks and transit, including through the new \$4-billion Housing Accelerator Fund. So, our government is working with the federal government to make sure that the support is there for municipal governments.

My question is, to start off with Mr. Lintern: When it comes to our bold action item that we have at hand, 1.5 million houses in the next decade, do you agree with this goal? Do you think this goal is achievable?

Mr. Gregg Lintern: I believe it's very important to have an aspirational goal. I've spoken to many people about this aspirational goal. I do not believe that there is the capacity in the system to actually get 1.5 million homes built, however.

1340

We can probably approve—we approve a lot of housing, many municipalities, including the city of Toronto. At our last council meeting, we approved I think it was 25,000 housing units. But that isn't necessarily homes that are getting built, as we know. We have to work on our approval process, at the tail end of the approval process. Thanks to the government, we're working on co-operation across the province on tuning up approval processes, and that's great. But there are so many other levers to pull. Where's the industrial strategy? Where's getting the workforce out of our schools? The carpenters—I was talking to the carpenters about them having to bring folks in who know mass timber from Quebec, because we don't have that capacity here to actually get the homes built.

We have about 15,000 completions a year in Toronto. We approve—maybe it's double than that sometimes. People can't live in a paper approval; we need to build the entire community out to actually achieve the goal that we all want, which is good sustainable housing for the future.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you very much. We will now go to the official opposition, to MPP Harden, please.

Mr. Joel Harden: Thank you very much. Karen, it's nice to see you here—nice to see everybody here. But, Karen, I want to dig into a topic of considerable expertise for you, and that is the problems with developer-driven politics.

In our city in Ottawa, an organization named Horizon Ottawa has conducted research, and they found the following—and this is the context for the bill, Chair, through you. In the 2018-19 municipal by-election and 2018 general election, there were 250 individuals connected to developers in the city of Ottawa that contributed over \$500,000 to

municipal candidates. The single biggest contributor to municipal electoral candidates of that number was the Taggart Group, with 29 people connected to that company in executive positions contributing over \$71,900 to municipal candidates.

I name the Taggart Group and I bring this up, Karen, because a community you've advocated very strongly for is Cardinal Creek in the east end of our city, which is a development that was built by the Taggart Group. You talked about the conditions of many of those homes, and thanks to you I had an opportunity to meet many of those homeowners who are suffering considerably.

I'm wondering if you could tell this committee what's not in Bill 23 to prevent against future improperly built homes. And do you share the concern expressed by Horizon Ottawa that there appears to be a very strong link between developer interests in the city of Ottawa and our local governance structure municipally, which is the subject of this legislation?

Ms. Karen Somerville: Thank you for that, MPP Harden.

I can tell you that we as volunteers continue to spend tremendous time trying to support the homeowners in Cardinal Creek Village. We have for more than five years now, and it continues to be very, very concerning that, despite a significant meeting that we convened at the request of those homeowners that you attended—and we thank you for being there, and MPP Rakocovic as well. We had over 100 people in the room that night. Many of those homeowners tell us that despite raising those issues in 2019 at that meeting, these issues continue today. They have not been resolved in more than three years from that meeting.

Meanwhile, more homeowners from Cardinal Creek Village continue to contact us for help. One of the biggest problems we hear about in Cardinal Creek Village is mould. This is a very serious health concern for many, as I'm sure people know.

So it continues to be a problem, yes, in terms of developer influence. We are concerned about that as well overall, in terms of the financial contributions that many developers make—not just Taggart, but many developers. Yes, we are deeply concerned about that. You raise a really important development issue with one community here in Ottawa, but there are many across Ontario.

I hope I answered your question.

Mr. Joel Harden: You did. In fact, we can bridge from that to talk about the Tewin development proposed by the same development company, Taggart, which involved an expansion of Ottawa's urban boundary that was approved by this government.

In fact, the government approved an even larger expansion of Ottawa's urban boundary just recently that the city did not ask for, involving 440 hectares of land. The city staff of the city of Ottawa advised against building Tewin because of structural issues. Much of this land, as I understand it from city staff back home, is marshland—absolutely inappropriate for commercial construction.

I'm also noting, Karen, that the 2,995 hectares designated for construction in Bill 23 in the greenbelt, covering 10 different municipalities, perhaps coincidentally, perhaps not, seems to have a relationship between developers that are very prominent in the province of Ontario and folks who are donors to the PC Party.

I'm going to note, in particular, Mr. Michael Rice, who, in September of this year, for \$80 million, purchased two parcels of land, 700 acres, the value for which now, if Bill 23 passes, is exponentially greater than what Mr. Rice bought them for. Does this raise any flags for you, Karen, when you talk about the governance structure at HCRA, which is making the decisions there, and the lack of justice for homeowners who buy improperly built homes? The evidence we're trying to keep up to, because it's coming fast: It would seem that developers in the province of Ontario are able to get access to land before legislation is passed that dramatically lines their pockets and doesn't necessarily help homeowners. Do you have any thoughts on that?

Ms. Karen Somerville: Obviously, we're concerned. We're following this from a big-picture perspective. Yes, we're deeply concerned about all of this.

The system is broken, clearly, from the whole development process right through to when homeowners get their long-awaited home. There are so many aspects to the system that are broken, and yes, we are deeply concerned about the entire situation.

Mr. Joel Harden: How much time do I have left, Chair?

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): You've got two minutes.

Mr. Joel Harden: Thanks.

Just so I understand from your perspective correctly, Karen, you have advocated in the past for changes at Tarion. And with the new HCRA, through what MPP Bailey and Justice Cunningham said in his report, you're advocating for an entirely different governance structure. Could you describe that structure, in the time you have left, to this committee?

Ms. Karen Somerville: In a nutshell, we are deeply concerned about the administrative authority structure. We're being approached by various organizations about this who share those concerns. We don't think it's appropriate to have these significant responsibilities off-loaded onto private, not-for-profit corporations. There needs to be accountability, in our opinion. There needs to be accountability within the government of Ontario, not off-loading into private administrative authorities. So yes, from a governance perspective, we have deep concerns.

Mr. Joel Harden: So a better, more efficacious model would be one in which residents of Ontario with existing expertise could be there to advise people who have concerns and claims about improperly built homes, so they could be adjudicated fairly and properly at arm's length from existing folks in the development industry. Am I understanding you correctly?

Ms. Karen Somerville: Correct.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Sixty seconds.

Mr. Joel Harden: What I'll end on, Chair—and I will throw this to our friend from the C.D. Howe Institute to

comment upon. Sir, from a financial perspective, do you have any concerns with some of the things I've read into the record this afternoon, that Mr. Rice, who's a donor to our friends in government here, has purchased a piece of land for \$80 million, barely weeks ago, the value for which has now dramatically increased? Do you consider this to be coincidental timing? Does this raise any governance issues for you? I know you participated, as you mentioned, in the Premier's office developing the more homes and better act plan, or an earlier version of it. Does this raise red flags for you?

Mr. Benjamin Dachis: I have no idea about any of these transactions.

Mr. Joel Harden: I would encourage you to look it up because, for the people who are emailing and calling our office, it's a major concern. Certainly, in any normal free market, one shouldn't have expedited access—

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you. MPP McMahon, please.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Again, I only have four and a half minutes, so we're going to be succinct. That includes your answers.

A lot of work was put into the Toronto Green Standard, I know. And I know our current Premier voted for it back in the day. It's something we're very proud of. Other municipalities in Ontario—some of them have standards—are trying to replicate that.

How important, in a climate emergency, is the Toronto Green Standard? How important is it any time, but especially in a climate emergency? To the chief planner, Gregg Lintern.

1350

Mr. Gregg Lintern: Through MPP Scott, the importance is really related to achieving the city's climate goals. We know that transportation and buildings are big CO₂ emitters, and that's where we have to focus our efforts. In building new communities across Ontario, focusing on the impact on air, on water, on energy, on biodiversity and on waste are five focus areas that, if we do it right, we can build—and the industry has demonstrated this over and over again—sustainable development.

We've had the green standard in the city since 2009—versions of it, as we ramp up over time, to increase the performance—and it's vitally important, through all the devices that many, many builders use, that the city regulates through the green standard to work toward a more sustainable development and achieve our climate goals.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: And you're saying industry has been supportive of this? We're hearing all these things seemingly slow development down. Is that your experience? Tell us about industry being supportive.

Mr. Gregg Lintern: It's applied through the site plan approval process, and again, we have graduated ourselves and the industry through successive changes in the performance standards over years. Give people time to adjust, give people time to learn and change practices, to build the industry capacity. The science around it all is changing; it's always changing. It's really important, I think, that we work collaboratively with the industry to see that the developments that people are going to live in maybe five,

10 or 15 years from now—they're going to be occupying these buildings for decades—are actually built to the kind of environment that this community is going to have in 2040.

We all know where the temperatures are going. We all know the weather is getting more extreme. Let's think about the kind of community we're going to have in 2040 and build the buildings that we're building today to actually respond to that future environment.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Okay. Thank you very much. And do you feel that conservation authorities have done a good job over the years in protecting Ontarians and protecting our lands? Can you speak to that?

Mr. Gregg Lintern: Very generally, we work through a permitting system with the TRCA and the city of Toronto. We have well-understood natural heritage areas and boundaries below regulated lines.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Sixty seconds.

Mr. Gregg Lintern: Of course, we have the history of Hurricane Hazel in the city, where many people lost their lives, so it has become ingrained in the way that we do development and, again, a very well-understood practice around maintaining development on table land and keeping it away from flood-prone areas.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Great.

And to Benjamin and Karen, probably like 10 seconds each: one piece of advice as we consider Bill 23?

Mr. Benjamin Dachis: One piece of advice? There's more to come. More work needs to be done. This is the first round.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Okay. And Karen?

Ms. Karen Somerville: As I said in my presentation, we understand the need for more homes, obviously, but please remember the people who will ultimately live in those homes. They need to have safe homes that at least meet the Ontario building code. This is critical.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you very much. Thank you all.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): We'll now move to the government side. MPP McGregor.

Mr. Graham McGregor: Thank you all for being here. I do acknowledge that we have a lot of the senior official team for the city of Toronto, and I just want to say that certainly on this side of the Legislature, we appreciate the work that senior public service does. You could be doing a lot of things; you are choosing to serve the public. We acknowledge you as strong allies in our fight to do a whole host of issues, but particularly to tackle this housing crisis. We know that the province can't do it alone. We need your leadership and your diligence on that, as well.

We have a large number of immigrants coming into our province. We have a labour shortage of almost 400,000 people. We saw the federal government put in targets that are going to hit 500,000 per year; the lion's share of that will be coming to Ontario. Certainly I was always raised that if we have somebody coming to our home, we always want to make sure that people feel welcome. I would say that's why we've been working to not only build homes for people to live in, but also to invest in transit for people

to get around, and to build hospitals and health care facilities so that they have somewhere to go to when they get sick.

On the housing issue, we know that experts have told us 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years is a requirement to get our supply and demand back in order. A question, I guess for Ben Dachis: If we, as legislators, were to continue to say no—no to investing in transit, no to investing in health care, no to building homes—would there be a dramatic impact? What kind of impact would that have on Ontario if we buried our heads in the sand and said no to building any more new homes?

Mr. Benjamin Dachis: It would very fundamentally affect the economic dynamism of our province. What Toronto's economy is built on—and London's, Ottawa's—is the power of the people, the knowledge of people sharing ideas. That is what fundamentally drives urban growth and economic growth: being in the same location.

If we can't have people all together, we're all going to be worse off for it. We're all better off today, being here in person, as much as we can, learning from each other; we benefit from that. If we can build more housing in places like the downtown core, along subway corridors, along GO train corridors where people can come together, we're all going to be better off.

Mr. Graham McGregor: Thank you. I'll yield the rest of my time to Mr. Kevin Holland. How much time do we have, Chair?

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): We have four minutes and 50 seconds.

Mr. Graham McGregor: Perfect.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): MPP Holland.

Mr. Kevin Holland: Thank you, everybody, for being here. I appreciate you taking the time. It's an important piece of legislation that we're considering here, and the input you're providing will help us move forward.

My question is for you, Mr. Lintern, with regard to your presentation. This was spurred on by my colleague's comments with regard to the development charges and how much is in reserve. I just want to clarify that we don't believe that the money is being misspent in some way. We do know that there is a large amount of money, collectively across the province, that is in reserves right now, and we fully appreciate that some of that is allocated. Our point is simply that we need to get it out sooner and we need to get it out quicker in order to tackle the crisis that we're facing in housing.

You had stated that you will lose \$234 million a year in development charges. I have a few questions; I'll just go through them and you can answer them.

How much do you collect per year in development charges? I'm asking these questions just for perspective, for my point. How much do you spend per year on development, out of those development charges? I guess that will tell us how much winds up being put into reserves for future development at some point. You're saying right now it's a minimum of five years out. Your planning process is five years out, I believe you had said earlier, where you're spending this money.

By my calculations—you had stated that 15,000 per year is what you're building—over 10 years that's going to be 135,000 homes short, for the target of 285,000 for the city of Toronto. What can Toronto do to increase those numbers of housing being developed? Perhaps using some more of the development funds that are in the reserves or getting it out the door quicker, that type of thing, is what I'm thinking. What initiative do you suggest to help reach those numbers? Along the lines, how long does your approval process take, on average, and what are the bottlenecks the municipality is facing that are delaying or preventing you from achieving your goal of 285,000 in 10 years?

Mr. Gregg Lintern: Thank you. I will—that's quite a series.

Mr. Kevin Holland: I know. I apologize; we don't have much time.

Mr. Gregg Lintern: No, no. I'll try to maybe rapid-fire some of those for you, and I'll yield to our finance folks for your finance questions.

Just on the initiatives, I think that's a really important question. Being able to provide more as-of-right development options—everybody understands that; you can go and pull a permit, right? We've done that, for example, through changes to the Planning Act that underpin these things for municipalities. Secondary suites, laneway suites, garden suites, reduced and eliminated parking requirements: All of these things are now in our bylaw, as-of-right—go get them. And we should keep going with that. We are suggesting and have had deep conversations with communities and our council about additional as-of-right development changes that we can make.

I think from that will flow and address some of the housing need. Not everyone will end up living in a tower. Not everyone may want to live in a grade-related unit. A city needs housing at different scales and to meet different needs. Being able to expand our housing options has been a big part of what we've been talking about over the last couple of years, and we've actually taken the steps to do that. But that, to me, along with, of course, density around transit—I mean, you're not going to get an argument; it all makes sense. I worry, though, about the infrastructure needed for that, because everybody thinks it's easy to plan a building, how tall, all the rest of it—

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Sixty seconds remaining.

Mr. Gregg Lintern:—but the stuff below the ground, the pipes, funding the infrastructure, is so essential. Again, you can't live in a paper approval, is what I said earlier.

1400

I'll punt it to Andrew on the DC revenues coming in and what we spend.

Mr. Andrew Flynn: Through you, Chair, the city collects approximately \$750 million a year on development charges. The amount we spend every year varies. By way of comparison, the total cost in our 10-year capital plan is \$22.5 billion. That would equate to a need for about \$2 billion worth of spending.

Mr. Kevin Holland: Okay, so you collect \$759 million per year, and—

Mr. Andrew Flynn: It's \$750 million per year, and we spend about \$2 billion on DC-eligible costs. So in that context, DCs do not pay for the total gross costs required.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you very much. I'm sorry, we're out of time.

I'll thank the presenters for coming forward this afternoon and ask for the 2 o'clock presenters to please either come on video or proceed to the front of the room. I'll just give a minute for a change-out.

TORONTO REGION BOARD OF TRADE
THE ATMOSPHERIC FUND
THE ROSE CORP.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): This afternoon, we're going to have the Toronto Region Board of Trade, the Atmospheric Fund and the Rose Corp. Once you get settled, I'll just remind you all to introduce yourselves before you begin speaking, for Hansard, and remind you that you have the seven minutes to make a presentation.

So I think if we're all somewhat settled, we'll start with the Toronto Region Board of Trade, please.

Mr. Craig Ruttan: Thank you very much for the invitation to present to committee today. Good afternoon. My name is Craig Ruttan. I am the senior director of policy at the Toronto Region Board of Trade.

On behalf of our 11,500 members, the board believes that a strong economy depends on having enough good-quality homes that workers of all income levels can afford. To that end, we support increasing our housing supply, along with improving the variety and affordability of housing options in Toronto, across the region and all over the province.

In my comments today, I'd like to focus on highlighting the aspects of this legislation that we believe will have the most positive impact on getting more homes built faster as well as note a few recommended amendments that we believe would further strengthen the bill.

Bill 23 is one of the most substantial reforms to land use planning that Ontario has seen in decades, and many of these reforms are badly needed. The existing system and set of rules in this province has led to skyrocketing home prices and workers and families being priced out of the communities they love. Approvals and reviews are taking longer, government fees have gone up sharply and anyone with \$400 can tie up new homes in an overwhelmed appeal system. There is no doubt that serious change is required if we want to reach our collective goal of 1.5 million new homes being built over the next decade.

There are four areas of positive action where I'd like to focus my comments. First, this bill takes significant steps to ending exclusionary zoning and encouraging gentle density, directly responding to recommendations that both the board of trade and the Housing Affordability Task Force have made. Legalizing three units on residential lots across the province removes one of the major barriers to

adding multigenerational and affordable rental homes to existing neighbourhoods. Eliminating site plan approval for buildings with 10 units or less will reduce costs and speed up timelines for these gentle density projects. We would like to see future housing supply bills continue on this milestone action by providing more permissive building envelope sizes and increasing the number of buildable units per lot.

Secondly, the board supports requiring municipalities to update zoning in major transit station areas to match their official plans within a year. We believe this measure will help with ensuring that more homes are built more easily in well-connected locations.

Third, we are particularly supportive of restricting the ability of NIMBYs to prevent much-needed housing. This bill will largely eliminate third-party appeals, increase the threshold for designation of heritage properties, eliminate public meetings for subdivision approvals and increase powers for the Ontario Land Tribunal to dismiss appeals for undue delay and order costs of the losing party. Taken together, this package of measures will resolve many avenues that have been used to frustrate and filibuster new homes from being built. It helps to rebalance the power dynamics between existing residents and those who aspire to one day live in that neighbourhood and will have a tangible impact in reducing the cost and risk of developing new homes.

Fourth, the board approves of measures in this bill to reduce the costs of building new housing. Reducing development charges for purpose-built rental projects and eliminating them entirely for non-profit and inclusionary zoning units will help ensure more of these types of homes can be built. Similar measures to reduce or eliminate community benefits charges and parkland fees will also have a measurable impact in reducing the cost of new units. Development charges are a necessary source of revenue for cities to ensure that they remain a vibrant, enjoyable and functional place to live. However, these fees also impact the cost of building new homes. At the board, we are encouraged by the province's proposal to offset the lost DC revenue to municipalities, such as through the Housing Accelerator Fund.

In addition to highlighting these positive elements, there are also three recommendations we would like to put forward in order to improve the legislation. The first relates to development charge discounts being provided for affordable and attainable housing. This is a worthwhile goal, and the board wholeheartedly supports encouraging the building of more workforce housing, homes that a low- or middle-income worker could afford. However, as currently written, Bill 23 sets the bar too low to ensure that this forgone revenue both provides a long-term benefit and avoids unintended consequences.

The legislation proposes a 25-year period of affordability. We believe that setting a minimum of 40 years would be more appropriate in helping to ensure the availability of these units over a longer time horizon.

The current threshold of entirely exempting DCs for affordable housing—that is, 80% of average market rent

or purchase price—also introduces the potential of dangerous unintended consequences. Much of this depends on how and for which geography these average prices are calculated. For instance, if the city of Toronto were treated as one market, nearly all developments in Scarborough could be exempt from DCs. We recommend phasing in the implementation of this exemption by starting with a threshold of 50% of average market rent or through introducing a tiered set of DC discounts based on the affordability level.

Second, we support allowing municipalities to retain green development standards under the site plan approval process. These policies, which exist in Toronto, Brampton, Ottawa and many other cities, help to minimize the lifetime cost of new housing by requiring more efficient design and materials. This provides a benefit to both the provincial and municipal governments by reducing the amount of future infrastructure investment needed to service these homes, like electricity and waste water. Green development standards help support job creation and can enable the growth of Ontario's climate economy.

Finally, we recommend that manufacturers retain third-party appeal rights for developments in their immediate vicinity. While the board strongly supports removing third-party appeals in general, introducing residential uses right next to major industrial sites can sometimes make it harder for these companies that provide good jobs to operate. Appeals are not even necessarily used to block new homes. For example, they have been used to ensure that appropriate warning clauses were included on title so that new homebuyers were made aware of their proximity to an industrial site. This can be addressed in a targeted way by including class 1, 2 and 3 industrial facilities in the definition of "specified person." This would provide manufacturers with the same appeal rights which the current bill grants to utilities, telecom, gas, oil, mining, propane and railway providers that participate in the planning process.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Twenty-five seconds left.

Mr. Craig Ruttan: Perfect timing.

As I said before, these recommendations are intended to strengthen a piece of legislation that takes much-needed action to address our province's housing crisis. Thank you for your time, and I look forward to your questions.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you so much. The Atmospheric Fund, if you would please begin, and state your name.

Mr. Bryan Purcell: Hello. Thank you for having me here today. My name is Bryan Purcell. I'm the vice-president of policy and programs at the Atmospheric Fund. We are a public agency created by the city of Toronto and the province of Ontario to address climate change solutions across the greater Toronto and Hamilton area, working in partnership with governments, businesses and the community.

First, I'd like to say that we acknowledge the need to accelerate new housing and applaud many of the positive measures in Bill 23, many of which the Toronto Region Board of Trade just spoke to, including measures to support intensification around transit stations. Concentrating development near transit and existing infrastructure improves

affordability while reducing congestion and transportation emissions. We think the bill could go even further in this regard, and we support some of the Environmental Defence's recommendations for minimizing costly and climate-damaging urban sprawl.

But while we support the bill overall, we have one major concern with the bill. As drafted, it would remove municipal authorities for green development standards around the province. We believe, based on our conversations to date, that this is an unintended impact of the bill. I'm here to ask you for a single amendment—surgical, simple, straightforward—that would correct this oversight and preserve these long-standing green development standards.

1410

Our green development standards are municipal design standards that address climate change, efficiency and affordability in new buildings. They consolidate various municipal bylaws and design guidelines into a single cohesive document that clearly lays out design expectations for sustainable, efficient design.

We helped the city of Toronto create the Toronto Green Standard over a decade ago, in partnership with the development, architectural and engineering communities. Since then, we've helped Toronto update and streamline its green development standard, and we've worked with large cities across the greater Toronto area to introduce their own green standards, harmonized with Toronto's energy and carbon targets. They all use the same energy and carbon targets and metrics, with each city moving at its own pace—one, two or three years behind Toronto in some cases—based on the local industry capability to build and to design to these green standards.

In terms of the carbon emissions, the Toronto Green Standard has been by far the most effective climate policy that the city of Toronto has adopted. It has also saved homeowners and building operators many millions of dollars on their utility bills through promoting energy efficiency and smart design. Going forward, green standards are critical to cities achieving their climate targets, and they also support the province in achieving its targets. They're also critical to protecting residents from ever-increasing energy prices and carbon prices. Green standards promote housing affordability, because smart green design pays for itself. It also saves money for cities on their infrastructure, which is ultimately paid for through development charges, so all of that supports affordability.

It's also important to note that it costs about five times more to renovate buildings down the line to achieve these sustainability outcomes than it does to design them that way from the beginning, when you have the chance to do it right. Developers who build to green standards, or the purchasers of the homes, can be eligible for financial incentives such as CMHC's green mortgage insurance rebate and Toronto's development charge refund program for those who build to the higher tiers of the Toronto Green Standard.

Green standards have been adopted by large cities in Ontario because they are a practical way to manage growth.

Toronto, Whitby, Ajax, Pickering, Brampton, Markham, Vaughan, Aurora and Ottawa have all updated or adopted green standards in recent years, all based on the same framework we developed with the city of Toronto, in partnership with the development industry. Industry leaders like Tridel, Minto and EllisDon have all been key to developing the standards around the table with us and to building to the voluntary higher tiers, showing the industry what can be done in the future.

Green development standards ensure there is consistency and address real concerns around efficiency and affordability. Again, I'm asking for a single amendment to preserve them. Our amendment is straightforward, as you can see it in the package we've emailed and put in front of you today. It preserves the intent of the bill in that section and still streamlines planning approvals by removing red tape around character, scale and aesthetic design issues with buildings, which we agree are not necessary as part of the site plan approvals. Our amendment would cut that red tape, as the government has intended, while saving the green standards.

Our amendment has been endorsed by over 500 individuals and 90 companies and, as you've just heard, is also supported by the Toronto Region Board of Trade, which represents thousands of members across the region.

To conclude, I'd like to tell you a story about how we came to have green standards in Toronto, and subsequently around the region. It might surprise a lot of people to learn that the Toronto Green Standard is part of Mayor Rob Ford's legacy, may he rest in peace. I spent two years developing the standard, working with city staff and an advisory group of architects, engineers and developers around the city. When the standard was finished and the reports were written and signed off on by city planning and city legal, senior city staff decided to withhold it from council, thinking there was no chance Mayor Ford would support it, but they didn't bother to ask him.

I was devastated, because I had worked so hard on it. I had recently celebrated the birth of my first child, and I had been thinking the green standard had just taken on a whole new meaning for me, as I thought about the kind of world she would be inheriting. As I held her in my arms after that day, I was inspired to take action. I called up every city councillor I knew, until I found one willing to walk it back onto the agenda, and then I briefed every councillor I could and asked the people who had helped develop the standard, the experts and stakeholders, to write or speak to council and communicate their support.

I sat in the council chambers and watched with bated breath as the standard was debated, and ultimately it was approved—unanimously, to my surprise. After the meeting, I thanked deputy mayor Doug Ford for his support—he was a councillor at the time, of course—and he told me exactly why he had voted for it. He said it's for the people, the people who will live in those buildings. This standard will save them millions of dollars on their utility bills. And indeed, it has.

Today, my daughter isn't a baby anymore. Like millions of kids around the world, she suffers from climate anxiety.

The first time she came to me in tears, distraught about the state of the climate, I told her the story of how she'd inspired the green standard that almost died before it was born, even before taking her first steps. And I told her how it had grown and developed, as she had, and been replicated across the province.

Today, green standards are on life support because of what I think was a mistake in the drafting of the bill—

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thirty seconds.

Mr. Bryan Purcell: And I implore you not to pull the plug on this great legacy of green development standards that started in Toronto under Mayor Rob Ford and expanded around the region. Please don't pass this bill without taking the time to fix this mistake. It can be simply adjusted through the amendment we have suggested, a very minor amendment to correct this oversight. By all means, cut the red tape to accelerate housing, but save the green standards. Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I'll now invite the Rose Corp. to begin. Just a reminder to state your name.

Mr. Sam Reisman: Chair Scott, members of the committee, my name is Sam Reisman. I am CEO of the Rose Corp. Thank you very much for the opportunity to share some of my experience, which I hope will inform the pending legislation.

I have some small but specific recommendations, which I hope the standing committee will adopt as you consider changes to Bill 23. My comments are generally directed towards purpose-built residential development in and/or near major urban centres, particularly those considered affordable. The Rose Corp., together with my team as CEO, completed the first purpose-built rental building in the market of any size—225 units—in generations. That was in 2017.

The Rose Corp. is currently completing development of approximately 600 units next door, 400 of which are purpose-built apartments. When the development is complete next year, we will have added 625 purpose-built rental apartments, 150 of which will meet local and federal affordability criteria.

In Kitchener, we have 520 purpose-built apartment buildings either recently completed, under current construction or in the permissions process. The homes in Kitchener do not have an affordable designation but are, by their nature, modestly priced.

In the very next hour after this meeting, I'm meeting with the city of Toronto, hopeful of getting into the ground with a 25-storey 260 purpose-built rental apartment development next year. The plan is to have 58 units meet the Toronto guidelines for an affordable dwelling. I use the word "hope," because, as you already know, the environment for rental development, which has always been challenging, is now in crisis. I use the words "next year," because I believe by pulling together we can make rental happen. The city staff, I note, are working very hard and productively with us to figure it out.

CMHC has declared itself a major player in the creation of new housing, committing \$7 billion over 10 years, and, as it's been reported, has already committed \$13 billion,

primarily for construction of 13,000 apartments across Canada. The Rose Corp. was one of the successful applicants. Without CMHC support, most of the units we've built would have been condos, and condominiums are a poor substitute for purpose-built apartments.

CMHC can't do it alone. They need multi-level government co-operation and support to succeed. This is especially true now, when interest has quintupled over the last three years, and construction costs have exceeded inflation by an alarming rate.

So here are two quick, no-cost fixes. The federal government, through CMHC, is making an impactful contribution to affordable housing. Given this current circumstance, the province should establish a liaison office to coordinate with the various government initiatives and stimulate others. The mandate would be to implement a coordinated, flexible suite of incentives to address the unique nature of the community's needs. I can't over-emphasize the value of you doing so.

CMHC relies heavily on local governments to define its own standard of affordability. When the local community fails to do so, as is often the case, the criteria defaults to the province's provincial policy statement. It was written in a different generation, and it needs to be more simply defined. When local governments do make the efforts to create cohesive, affordable policy, it's crafted with their own language and definitions. Often the regional government's definition is in conflict with the member municipalities'. This state of affairs makes aligning policy and incentives unnecessarily complex.

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I suggest we can fix it and fix it now. Amend the provincial policy statement such that affordable rent is 30% of median income in a relevant census area. When local governments develop their own policy, insist that they use this language. This simple change to the provincial policy statement would have a real and immediate impact on capital flows and align your bill with its purpose, which is to build more houses sooner. I can go through some examples, but I'm going to wait for that during any questions you may have.

My single most important recommendation is simply to align policy definitions so we can use all the same language when discussing affordable housing.

The most fundamental and immediate change that should have the quickest impact on affordable housing is the bill's provision to permit auxiliary dwelling units as of right in existing and new residential settings. The cost of an ADU will vary, but the cost of providing, say, a two-bedroom basement apartment will be closer to \$100,000; and a new condominium in a comparable location close by, close to about \$1 million. It's worth repeating: \$100,000 versus \$1 million. If the province wants to make an investment, make it here. Provide easy access to funds for individuals who convert their homes. You could optionally give it away to those building high-quality ADUs and spend less than subsidizing some of the massive construction projects otherwise required.

In all of the changes Bill 23 offers, I don't see any provincial funding to assist the desperately required affordable

housing which they wish to create. I'm concerned that constraining municipal resources as you've asked them to will prove too much of a challenge.

I conclude by noting that new apartment development should be stimulated at any reasonable cost. It's an essential service. It's a very low-risk proposition for governments to finance. The private sector can efficiently develop and deliver apartments, but only government can currently bear the low initial returns in this current environment. Our observation is that all purpose-built rental is good for the community and remains one of the least expensive forms of conventional housing.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you very much for your presentations. We will now move to the question and answer section. Official opposition: MPP Bell.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you very much for your time. Thank you for coming in, all three of you.

My first question is to Bryan from the Toronto Atmospheric Fund. We will be introducing an amendment to change the site plan rules to ensure that green building standards can remain. We very much hope that, in clause-by-clause, the Ontario government members will support it. I would love to know if you have a position on how we can go further provincially to expand and improve the green building standards across Ontario, if you could elaborate on that.

Mr. Bryan Purcell: Sure, thank you. Through the Chair, I will say that there are a lot of things that the province could be doing to improve green building standards. First of all, of course, amending this bill to save the municipal standards would be a key step. It lets the municipalities and the larger urban growth centres that have the more sophisticated development market and practitioners lead the way.

Of course, the provincial building code has a key role to play and sets a minimum standard across the province for certain things. That tool could be used more ambitiously. Certainly, I know the ministry is working on a building code update that I think will be published next year. We're hopeful that that will improve the energy efficiency standards for new construction province-wide, although, from the consultation materials to date, we're not sure it's there yet. But we hope that that can be strengthened before it's finalized.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you. I'll make sure to look out for those updates to the building code. We've been waiting for the Ontario government to release that for some time, so it's good to know it's coming next year and that you're involved in that process.

My next question is to Mr. Ruttan from the board of trade. One thing I've noticed about the board of trade is that they're very much in support of increasing infrastructure and improving infrastructure in the city of Toronto to make it livable, especially when it comes to transit. That is why I am a little concerned about some of the statements that you've made today around reducing development charges, when we all know that development charges partially subsidize the necessary infrastructure that we need, including transit, and it's the municipality that pays for the operating costs. So it's just a partial subsidy.

If it's not developers that are paying for it, then who is going to pay for it? What are your recommendations?

Mr. Craig Ruttan: I think that's a fair question. It's a good discussion, because I think, as I noted in my remarks, that development charges are an important part of the fiscal plan for municipalities to be able to meet their needs and to expand that infrastructure. But, of course, they're not the only tool that's there. There are also property taxes and other fees that municipalities can lever.

For example, in terms of the transit expansion in the city of Toronto, we know that there's multi-billion dollars being put in by the provincial government to build that transit, as well as by the federal government. In terms of some of that capital expansion, we see a really important role and a really valuable contribution that multiple governments coming to the table can make together.

Ultimately, the calculation of development charges is something that is more art than science. I managed to read the background report when the city revised its development charges in the spring, and there are a lot of decisions and assumptions in there that could go, I think, a number of ways. I don't think it is a precise scientific direction. When we look at that idea of how the city pays for its infrastructure and where that goes, that does need to be a broader conversation in terms of what is the appropriate amount of that to put on the base of new homes that are being developed, and the fees that are charged just to the new people living in the community versus the existing residents and existing businesses that reside in that city or municipality as well.

Ms. Jessica Bell: We've heard a few times in the last day that the cost of a home is a little bit affected by development fees, but it really is set by the market. We had Gregg Lintern come in earlier and mention that the city would be on track to losing \$230 million in development charges, which could only be addressed by dramatically increasing property taxes or dramatically cutting services, which is very concerning.

I want to get to this issue of parkland. In my riding of University-Rosedale, 80% of people live in buildings that are five storeys or more, which means that over 80,000 people in my riding do not have a backyard. They rely on parks as their lifeline for their children to play in, for that breath of fresh air, for that green space.

If we are looking at reducing the amount of parks that are set aside for new developments, how do we make downtown Toronto livable? What is the board of trade's position on that? What happens there?

Mr. Craig Ruttan: Listen, I'm a big fan of parks and so is the board of trade. I think what's most important is to ensure that those parks are actually built and maintained. Funding that is sitting in a reserve fund that isn't being spent for a number of years isn't, unfortunately, achieving that objective. Again, it is a matter of balancing where those exact numbers fall. But overall, the big picture, I would say, is that it's important that we get these parks actually built and that they continue to be maintained well, and that the funding that flows from that and from the developments gets put toward its intended purpose.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you for that. I also want to be very clear: We have had AMO express their concerns with Bill 23; we also had the city of Toronto come in earlier, as well as Cam Guthrie from the big city mayors alliance, and they were unequivocal in their statement that municipalities are not sitting on a mountain of reserve fund cash that is unallocated. The reserve funds that are available for municipalities have already been allocated to infrastructure that is needed for growth that's already been approved. It's to build the transit—

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): One minute left.

Ms. Jessica Bell: —that the board of trade is in support of. It's to build those daycares, those services, the electricity, the sewage, all the things that we need to grow our city. So I'm a little bit concerned to hear that that is an argument that the board of trade is also supporting, given that municipalities are saying something very different.

Mr. Craig Ruttan: I think the perspective I would leave you with, at the end of this cycle, is that, for us, one of the big challenges in what we've heard from some of our members are the projects that do not go forward because of the calculation of different costs, whether it's construction or labour costs. But as well, fees are a part of that equation. The combination of those, over the past year, increasingly, with the rising interest rates as well, has really put the brakes on a number of projects that we really need to see in order to see that housing supply grow. I think that's one of the reasons why we're in support of many of the measures in this bill.

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The Acting Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much. Time is up.

Now we'll move on to the Liberals for questions. You have four and a half minutes. MPP McMahan.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahan: Thank you for your presentations—scintillating, especially the beautiful story from the TAF father. I know how hard you worked for the Toronto Green Standard and for many things sustainably related in Toronto. I appreciate your efforts.

First of all, you were starting to list the municipalities across Ontario that have green standards. I'm wondering if you can just list those again for me. Especially for some members here, if it's their area I think they'd be interested.

Mr. Bryan Purcell: Through the Chair: We're aware of green development standards in the city of Toronto, the town of Whitby, Ajax, Pickering, Brampton, Vaughan, Markham, Newmarket, Halton Hills and Caledon. Some of those may be still just going to councils in the new year, a couple of them, but those are the ones where it's in place or very close to being put in place. As well, the city of Ottawa recently adopted a green development standard.

As I mentioned, we've worked really closely with cities around the region, even reaching out to Ottawa, to encourage as much harmonization and consistency as we can. As I said before, cities are moving at different paces based on their local context, but using the targets and metrics we developed with the city of Toronto and the development industry there.

The key thing we did in Toronto to support that was, when we did version 3 in 2018, we laid out not just the current standard but we published version 4, version 5 and version 6 and the schedule for those coming into effect in the city. So there was 12 years of notice of where the standards were going, changes that were planned over time. That's allowed other cities to look at that framework and move at their own pace.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: That's great. I know MPP McGregor is so proud of Brampton and speaks about his riding all the time, so he will be thrilled to have another bragging right there for their green standard. Thank you.

Just for the average Joel, because some of this is inside baseball: For people out there on the street, if you can just elaborate on what exactly the Toronto Green Standard entails, that would be great—like a 101.

Mr. Bryan Purcell: Sure. Through the Chair, the Toronto Green Standard is a set of design standards that is about 20 pages long, mostly charts and tables that are very straightforward. It sets out design goals and standards for new developments of different sizes and types. It includes energy use, carbon intensity targets, as well as other sustainability goals that can be set out as a standard—all really clear, with specifications for exactly what is meant.

From our perspective, the key parts are those energy and carbon intensity targets that protect people from rising energy and carbon prices and reduce emissions, as well as electric vehicle-charging readiness. We don't require the buildings to have chargers because the people moving in might not have an electric vehicle, but we require them to be designed to accommodate future electric vehicle chargers, because we know 100% of new vehicles sold will be electric by 2035. That's around the corner—

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): There's one minute left.

Mr. Bryan Purcell: —and it costs 10 times more to install a charger if the building wasn't designed to facilitate that.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I'm in the last minute. We heard from the chief planner today that industry is on board with the green standards. I know that we have great innovative industry in Canada and beyond, and globally builders are building sustainably because it's a win-win, cost-effectively. Can you comment on that in 30 seconds?

Mr. Bryan Purcell: Yes. There are a lot of leading developers, many of the big ones, who have voluntarily met the higher tiers, building ahead of the standards. Tridel and Minto are prominent examples who have done that many times, and many other developers as well. There's been great support from them. The number one concern we've heard is that they've said in the past that the incentives for those voluntary tiers haven't been high enough. Toronto provides that incentive through a partial development charge refund—

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much. Time is up.

We'll move to the government side. MPP Thanigasalam.

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Thank you to all the presenters. Craig, Bryan and Sam, we appreciate your feedback and your time. I will share my time with MPP Smith.

I'll start off with Craig. Craig, we have a bold plan to build 1.5 million houses in the next decade, and our plan includes building more houses close to transit to unlock the innovative way to provide more attainable houses for the public, because the housing crisis is a problem which has been there for more than a decade, for more than 15 years. So we want to have short-term and long-term planning, especially innovative ideas.

I know you touched on the updated zoning near transit for municipalities. Could you please elaborate on why and how the transit-oriented communities are important to provide attainable housing? And how is that important for Ontario's economic competitiveness?

Mr. Craig Ruttan: Absolutely. Thank you for the question. We see a lot of those things as interrelated. There's a lot of advantages to locating more houses, more homes, close to transit. One is that that is where we would ideally like to see people living and working and being able to use transit, as opposed to living somewhere where they would need to drive for all of their daily tasks. That also helps reduce their daily cost of living and helps make life more affordable for people who are able to live in those communities. It also helps ensure the province gets the most bang for its buck in terms of the transit infrastructure, by having some of that baked-in ridership and ensuring that there are people who are living there who are eager to use those transit stations to get from point A to point B.

We're glad to see a number of different measures to encourage more of that density near transit stations: both the government's hands-on developments that it's working on to build those transit-oriented communities around specific stations, as well as these measures to increase density around all major transit station areas. I think it's a really interesting approach that the province is taking through this measure by asking municipalities, or requiring municipalities, to, in essence, put their money where their mouth is in terms of having updated their official plans already to allow for this increased density around the transit stations. This goes a step further by then requiring them to update their zoning, as well, which means that projects and developers who want to build housing to those densities in these well-located locations, which we all agree is a great place for more of that density, are able to do so more quickly. We see that as a step that's really going to help cut costs and accelerate the ability for people to move into these homes.

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Absolutely. Thank you. I'll pass it on to MPP Smith.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): MPP Smith.

Ms. Laura Smith: Thank you, Madam Chair, and through you: Once again, I want to thank all of the participants today, because we do realize that time is valuable and we value your opinions.

This is possibly a two-parter for both Mr. Reisman and Mr. Ruttan. We talked about density; my friend talked about

addressing the intensification. We went into, possibly, the missing middle. Bill 23 addresses this issue by dealing with the allowing of basement apartments in main residences and garden homes, so one home can actually become three. And we also talked about—I know you talked about transit, specifically, and either one can go—either one who wants to jump in first: Can you comment on the community needs and the environment to build more homes, to create a broader mix of rental housing and homes with respect to the missing middle?

Mr. Sam Reisman: Sorry, it's Sam—

Ms. Laura Smith: To Sam first, yes.

Mr. Sam Reisman: All the developments we're doing right now address the missing middle. We have the affordable component, but we've literally built—have identified 1,100 to 1,200 units of affordable rentals, both that are designated affordable and those that are not. And it's my view that any rental coming on stream addresses that missing middle that's so critical.

I also think that the ADUs can have a profound impact, and I think it would behoove the government to accelerate that by just providing, for a short time, financing so some of these people sitting on those homes can get them going. Incent them to, because it's instant. As I pointed out, a million-dollar home in an apartment development is a \$100,000 home in somebody else's house. And the quality of the housing is better because it's ground-related.

Ms. Laura Smith: Thank you. And sorry, I'm just going to pass this over to Mr. Ruttan so he can comment on it.

Mr. Craig Ruttan: Yes, the missing middle, I think, is a really critical part of the solution to addressing our housing needs and providing more of that, as Sam was saying, ground-oriented housing that people want to live in.

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I can speak from my personal experience. My partner and I were fortunate enough last year to co-purchase a duplex with another couple. We're actually in the process of building a laneway house as well, because we're lucky to be in a place where that's permitted in the city of Toronto.

I think that type of denser living that allows for community and allows for a mixture of different types of housing units, of family makeups, of multigenerational living, is really the direction we need to go in, in terms of accommodating this 1.5-million new homes. Not all of them can live in that immediate vicinity of transit stations and not all of them can live in new subdivisions. We just don't have the infrastructure to support that, whether that's transit or energy or waste water. So making more efficient use of our existing neighbourhoods and existing communities through gentle density, whether it is some of these triplexes—ideally, we're moving in a direction of permitting fourplexes or even walk-up apartment buildings in many of these neighbourhoods. I think it's a process, and part of that involves getting existing residents and existing homeowners, many of whom were lucky enough to have purchased their homes decades ago, comfortable with the idea of the change and that this is, in fact, a positive change that we'll be seeing in neighbourhoods across the province.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): This is one minute left.

Ms. Laura Smith: It's interesting. You actually touched base on something that we've never heard—well, I've actually heard it a few times—just pushing the limit even further and bringing fourplexes to the equation. Could you push further on that?

Mr. Craig Ruttan: Absolutely. That was one of the recommendations that we made in our report, Meeting in the Middle, last December: to enable fourplexes across the province. I will say that Bill 23 is quite a strong step towards that in terms of allowing for three units. It's also the number that the Housing Affordability Task Force recommended, and it's hopefully the direction that the city of Toronto is going in with its Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods program.

Allowing for fourplexes, again, doesn't mean that every single family home will become a fourplex or that every redevelopment becomes that, but by creating that option and that opportunity, it makes better use of the existing land and spaces and infrastructure in these communities.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): We'll return to the official opposition. MPP Harden.

Mr. Joel Harden: Thank you to presenters for this afternoon. I'd like to begin with Mr. Purcell. I have to say off the top, you got that applause because I believe in the power of story-based politics; that was quite a powerful story you rendered there.

There are folks in Ottawa, as you mentioned, who are inspired by the built environmental standard that you worked hard to achieve here in Toronto. One of the things they told me, though, before I got my bags ready and headed down the 401 to come here, is that we have to also be mindful of some of the things not covered in this bill which will contribute to the performance of an environmental standard if, in fact, we're able to persuade the government to keep it.

One of them is energy costs. It would seem that the progress you've been able to make is incredible in preserving the value of those energy costs once they're in the unit of housing. But my question for you, sir, is: What about the situation in which Ontario, as it has currently announced, is cancelling its energy agreement with Quebec in April 2023—Quebec being an immense source of emissions-free hydroelectricity at a cost of five cents a kilowatt hour—and, as I understand from Minister Smith, is prepared to promote gas-fired electricity, which would entail a massive increase in our emissions and be, depending upon the expert you believe, at least two to three times more expensive? Would you say that Bill 23 could be better if it had some direction for the government in thinking about where it's procuring its future energy costs?

Mr. Bryan Purcell: Through the Chair, thank you for your comments, MPP. I will say, yes, we are concerned about the system in Ontario. I'm not sure that this bill is the avenue to fix that, but it's a key concern and one we've been speaking with the government on, and we're preparing a report for later this month on options for Ontario.

Electricity generation emissions have doubled since 2017 and are on track to triple, again, by 2040—according to government projections, not our projections. So we're very concerned about that because it undoes a lot of progress we achieved through coal phase-out in Ontario and it undermines the impact of our other climate measures like electric vehicles and heat pumps. They're still positive, but the more electricity gets dirtier, the less impact that they have, while still being impactful, so yes, absolutely. We think that natural gas is the most expensive of the major options. We're not sure why the agreement is not being renewed or kept with Quebec hydro.

There are many other options as well for expanding our electricity supply. First of all, energy efficiency as the lowest-cost option, and we can do a lot more there. As well, renewables and storage have been dropping quickly. There's huge potential there, both centralized and decentralized. The federal government just reduced the price of renewable energy by 30% through the clean investment tax credit, which could be benefiting Ontario, and that's not available for natural gas plants. So I think it's a mistake to move towards additional natural gas plants. I'll leave it there for today.

Mr. Joel Harden: I appreciate that, as a subject matter expert—my government friends. I'm not just a New Democrat giving you that advice, or a Liberal. We should be thinking about the source of the electricity coming into the grid and how that's going to help us be effective, sustainable and prosperous going forward. I take your point.

Mr. Reisman, I was very interested in your comments and very impressed with the work you've been doing, sir, with respect to making sure that we actually have deeply affordable homes. I've said in the past, and I apologize to the folks in the room who've heard me say it a few times—you will be hearing it for the first time—Bill 23, as I understand it from city of Ottawa officials, would mean a \$26-million shortfall because of the loss of funds for development charges. One of the things those development charges have been used for, as we've heard from our friends in the city of Toronto, has been deeply affordable housing. The metric they use is the one you use: the notion of 30% of income, not 80% of market rent, which, from our standpoint in Ottawa, certainly wouldn't be affordable for many residents here at home. For context, the city of Ottawa, if this bill passes as it's currently drafted, would lose \$26 million from the loss of revenue from development charges. Our affordable housing budget that we've used in the city is \$14 million, largely drawn from those development charges.

So what advice would you offer this government? It would seem our friends in the for-profit development sector—there are cranes all over this city, all over mine too. They're not building deeply affordable housing. Most of the deeply affordable housing that's built comes from non-profit builders, expansions of community housing projects, modest expansions of co-op. Do you have advice for the government today about why we need to take your definition of affordable housing seriously?

Mr. Sam Reisman: I'm glad I'm not in your business. The development charge discounts in Bill 23, as I understand it, will be applied to affordable housing, and the other recommendation I did point out is that the Ontario government, while they're making certain improvements that I think will address the issue, have not added more money to the pie. I did make that observation. Both are true: that the money is going to reduce development charges and also they're not providing enough funds to do it.

I'd also point out that I'm very sympathetic to helping very low-income families. I think it's an absolute responsibility of the government to do it. But that should not negate the importance of people who are living in the middle—to their housing.

I was just saying that very low-income people deserve houses but so do the middle—they also need to have housing provided.

Mr. Joel Harden: I appreciate your answer, sir.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): MPP Bell.

Ms. Jessica Bell: I wanted to ask Mr. Ruttan from the board of trade just a little bit more around the definition of affordability that the board of trade is advocating for. I also agree that having a reduction in development charges can make sense, especially if the definition of affordable housing is truly affordable. What I have noticed with Bill 23 is they've moved away from a definition of affordability that's based on income, and they've moved towards a definition that's really based on what the market is doing.

When we're looking at affordability, they've got a definition for "rent" and also a definition for "own." When we're looking at the definition for "own," it's 80% of average market rent. So that would mean a one-bedroom condo would be exempt from development charges even if it cost \$440,000, which a household income of \$130,000 would need to afford—

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): There are 30 seconds left.

Ms. Jessica Bell: So that is not affordable. Can you clarify what the board of trade's position is on affordability in terms of household income and what that would actually mean?

Mr. Craig Ruttan: Yes. Knowing time is short: I think the definitions matter in specific circumstances and how they're being applied. So I think on a general sense-level idea of where affordable is, yes, we take the general consensus: 30% of income makes sense as affordability. In terms of implementing specific policies related to fees, I think it has to be—

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you. The time is up.

To the Liberals and MPP McMahon.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Over to Sam: Thank you for your presentation. It's great to hear about your group and all you're doing. I'm just wondering if you've looked at vacant properties at all, vacant homes.

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Mr. Sam Reisman: No, vacant homes are not something that our company would have great expertise with. We're aware of them, but it's not an area of our expertise.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Okay. Because you know Toronto is looking at all kinds of things, even the millions of empty bedrooms in the city of Toronto—many of them are seniors who are over-housed and partnering them up with students looking for affordable housing.

Mr. Sam Reisman: Well, that we have looked at a bit, and we're interested in a marketplace that might see more of a flex-living, or some people might refer to it as "co-living," environment. That is providing very modern facilities that would have people live with others on a professional basis, i.e., there would be professional landlords overseeing it and taking a two- or three-bedroom and renting it out by the room. We have looked at that at a larger level, and I think there's something to be said for it. You can rent out bedrooms for closer to \$1,100, rather than the asking price of a two-bedroom unit in Toronto, which is \$3,000, so it would make quite a difference.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Right, and because we're looking at building up instead of out, especially when we deal with our sustainability goals.

And then, over to Craig. Thank you. With the Toronto board of trade, I'm just wondering what you're thinking of in your experience with building up the green economy and green jobs, and how important the Toronto Green Standard is to that so that builders and industry have clarity and predictability.

Mr. Craig Ruttan: Absolutely. I think you hit on some of the key words there. Clarity and predictability are really important for businesses, for that stable operating environment, so they can plan for moving forward. The global clean-tech market this year is projected to be \$3.3 trillion, so we really see clean tech and the climate economy, as we call it, as a really vital cornerstone of where we need to be focusing our efforts. In the Toronto region, we have a lot of world-leading innovators and operators here.

If I can share one anecdote about how the green development standard has helped a Toronto-based company succeed, it's named Geosource Energy. They're a member of the board. They are a geothermal driller who works particularly on large-scale sites. For those familiar, just around the corner, they were the ones who drilled the University of Toronto's geothermal field underneath King's College Circle. They have developed innovative approaches in how they use their technology, including being able to do multiple boreholes from one specific site.

They have specifically credited the Toronto Green Standard with being one of the main drivers that has forced that innovation, by getting them to work with developers to figure out how to make that happen on very small sites. They're actually, at this moment, overseas with the board and our World Trade Centre team in Barcelona for the Smart City Expo, looking to license their approach and technologies around the world, so it's a really great success story tied to this development standard.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Amazing. So we really need to keep that Toronto Green Standard, and green standards in general. Fabulous.

Just a quick rapid-fire for everyone: One piece of advice as we consider Bill 23? You have probably 30 seconds each. Sam?

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Forty-five seconds left.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Oh, no. You have 10 seconds.

Mr. Sam Reisman: My one recommendation was to make sure that you define affordability in a consistent way, so we can speak about it at multiple levels of government.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: All right—define affordability.

Craig?

Mr. Craig Ruttan: Keep going, and be willing to make some of these minor changes, and then further steps as needed.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: All right.

Bryan?

Mr. Bryan Purcell: Balancing and recognizing that sustainability and affordability go hand in hand, so cut the red tape but save the green standards.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you very much.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you. We'll go to the final round of the government side. MPP Holland.

Mr. Kevin Holland: I want to thank the three of you for coming out today and presenting to the committee. It's very important for us to get your feedback, and we appreciate the time you've taken and the interest you've shown in this topic.

My question is for you, Craig, with regard to—I want to first of all thank you for your feedback regarding Bill 23. The proposals in Bill 23, if passed, would help cities, towns and rural communities grow with a mix of ownership and rental types that meet the needs of all Ontarians. Our housing supply action plans have been built on extensive consultation with municipalities, the industry and the public. We're also recommending using recommendations from the Housing Affordability Task Force that we undertook.

We have plans; the government has committed to releasing a housing supply action plan every year, over the next four years, beginning with Bill 23. What next steps would you suggest our government take to further address the housing supply crisis, moving forward?

Mr. Craig Ruttan: I think that the housing task force report, as you mentioned, lays out a really great road map. We support many of those recommendations and are pleased to see a lot of action in this bill on a lot of those recommendations that were included.

In terms of additional next steps, once this first iteration can happen with ending exclusionary zoning and allowing those three units across the province, my hope is that the reaction in communities across the province does not come to pass: that people realize that, in fact, not only are these not negative and dangerous; that, in fact, they are a very positive aspect in enhancing the vibrancy of their communities, meaning that they have an opportunity to downsize as they get older, that there are places for their children to live and that their grandchildren can live nearby. I think that will lay a strong foundation to go further in terms of making it even easier to do more of these developments as of right. That's one of the things I'd particularly like to see the government continue to build on: to increase those

permissions on individual lots, to soften some of those requirements around the building envelope size to ensure that we're not limited by the built form that was there before. In a multi-unit, each unit will be smaller but the whole house might be a little bigger, and that's not going to be the end of the world.

I think, around the transit-oriented evolution and work on major streets, there's a lot of really strong promise around allowing for more mid-rise development as of right, throughout cities across the province.

Mr. Kevin Holland: As you know, the plan has allowance for all types of developments to meet what we need. We can't just focus on one area of development in the province or in urban centres to meet the demand that we have out there.

Keeping in mind what you just said for moving forward, in your view what are the most important proposals in Bill 23 that will help us accomplish not just the goal, but work toward what you have just said, into the future?

Mr. Craig Ruttan: Absolutely, I think one of the key underlying benefits in the bill is around the measures that are reducing who is able to appeal measures, because we've really seen that tie up a lot of development. Like I said, all it takes is 10 people with 40 bucks or one person with \$400, and it can then end up getting jammed in an appeals backlog for months or even years. That drives up the cost of that housing and means some projects don't happen.

By really limiting the number of those who can do it— as I mentioned in our remarks, we do think industrial facilities have a very valid argument to have the ability to appeal—what that really is doing is helping to streamline these decisions and ensure that the projects can move forward more speedily and get built. That's ultimately what we're hoping for in that objective. It's going to take a lot of change for us to be able to ramp up our development speed and be able to hit that 1.5 million homes, and I think that's going to be a key enabler of allowing that to happen on the timeline.

Mr. Kevin Holland: Perfect. Thank you. How much time do I have left?

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): You have three and a half minutes.

Mr. Kevin Holland: I'll go back to you with just a couple of questions with regard to green energy and green homes, that type of thing. I heard that come up in a couple of comments and questions, and I just wanted to clarify. There were comments made with regard to funding for affordable housing and supportive housing not being identified in the bill. Those are typically not identified in these types of bills; those are identified in the government's plan in budgeting time, how to address those.

What we're simply trying to do is make it more affordable for builders to consider taking on the building of more affordable homes and supportive housing, as well as the energy efficiency of homes. You are correct; that is, in fact, dealt with in the building code. We are currently reviewing our building code, looking to bring it more in line with the national building code so it's a standard that's across Canada.

Just in that respect, on the funding aspect, you had indicated what we need for funding for supportive and affordable housing. Do you have any idea what you think we need and how we can achieve that?

Mr. Bryan Purcell: Through the Chair, I'm not certain that I made comments about funding for affordable housing in my presentation. We certainly support that.

Mr. Kevin Holland: I think it was in a question, not necessarily—

Mr. Bryan Purcell: Perhaps in a question, yes. I'm not an expert on affordable housing. I do think that it would be great to see provincial funding there, to the extent that it could be harmonized with other funding programs. CMHC has some excellent programs to support affordable housing, but they haven't been enough to build the volume we need, so some sort of match or top-up to that would be extremely helpful. Then you don't have to create a whole new program; you could just top up an existing program. Those are measures that I think would be quite helpful.

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Also tax incentives are something we could look at. If you look at the boom in rental housing development we had in the postwar era in Ontario, it was really driven by federal and provincial tax incentives for rental housing. We could look at that again. I think it was quite successful. It creates a predictable, business-friendly way to fund or support the cost of affordable housing, and particularly purpose-built rental, because that, as many people have noted, is a big gap. But that's not my area of expertise, so I wouldn't give you a figure.

Mr. Kevin Holland: No, I appreciate that. Like I said, I think it came up in a question. It just piqued my interest to see if you had any suggestions, because that's a pretty big ask. There's a big demand.

That's all I have.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you very much to all the presenters in this round. We will ask that you change out, and the next 3 o'clock presenters, which I will name off in a minute, can come forward, or on the screen, whichever is happening. So thank you again for appearing.

CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH
ASSOCIATION, ONTARIO DIVISION
FEDERATION OF RENTAL-HOUSING
PROVIDERS OF ONTARIO

CANADIAN CENTRE
FOR HOUSING RIGHTS

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I'll just announce that this round we have the Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario division, the Federation of Rental-housing Providers of Ontario and the Canadian Centre for Housing Rights.

Just a friendly reminder: It's seven minutes per presentation, and if you would state your name at the beginning of the presentation for recording purposes, that would be very helpful.

If I could ask the Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario division, if you are ready, if you would begin. Thank you so much.

Ms. Camille Quenneville: Thank you, Madam Chair. Good afternoon. My name is Camille Quenneville. I'm CEO of the Canadian Mental Health Association of Ontario. We're here on behalf of our 27 CMHA branches across the province, providing front-line programs and supports for individuals and their families living with mental health or substance use issues.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act. Much has been made about this bill and the government's commitment to build 1.5 million more homes over the next decade. As you're likely aware, we're facing a very significant supportive housing shortage across the province. From our perspective, the government has missed an opportunity to change the lives of the most marginalized in our society. More specifically, this bill lacks the mechanisms to develop supportive housing, which is key to recovery for thousands of Ontarians, many of them homeless.

I'll elaborate on this missed opportunity in a moment, but first I'd like to provide information about supportive housing. Beginning in the 1970s, deinstitutionalization began to make the availability of community and mental health services challenging. The intent was to change from institutional care to living in community with treatments available, but the investments and planning to create a robust community system with supportive housing as a foundation were never enough. With historic underfunding in our sector for decades since, we see the outcomes. Just look at the encampments and homelessness in plain sight in communities and downtowns big and small. This has become a municipal issue and one that we are collaboratively working to address with our partners at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

Supportive housing should be a safe, stable, affordable place to live, where an individual living with a mental illness can receive community supports to help them not only survive but thrive. Support comes in many forms: case management, assertive community treatment, life skills, vocational supports—all the work of our CMHA branches.

There's ample evidence that supportive housing is the most significant key to recovery for people who are living with severe mental illness. The Mental Health Commission of Canada's groundbreaking At Home/Chez Soi report, along with multiple other reports over the decades, make the case.

Today, the average wait time to secure supportive housing across Ontario is 300 days, but inequity across the province leads to wildly different wait times depending on where you live. While you may wait less than 200 days in northwestern Ontario, it's 570 days in Mississauga. In Waterloo-Wellington, it's 741 days. In Toronto, there are a staggering 23,000 people waiting for supportive housing. Half of those people are homeless, and the wait time for a supportive housing unit in Toronto is up to seven years. These wait times and wait-lists don't fall at the feet of one government.

The discussion at this committee is timely given regional consultations that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing hosted this week. Several of my CMHA colleagues and I are thankful for the opportunity to provide input to the Associate Minister of Housing and the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. We've been asked at these round tables to propose innovative ways to solve the problem. I'll tell this committee the same thing I said at a regional round table on Wednesday: The problem isn't innovation; it's a lack of supportive housing stock and associated funding to provide wraparound community services.

I mentioned earlier that CMHA Ontario views the bill as a health issue. Allow me to connect a few more dots. We're in the midst of a hospital crisis. We need to get people out of hospital beds and into community. Approximately 10% of all ALC, or alternate level of care, beds are occupied by people with a mental health issue. These individuals account for about 24% of total length of stay in these ALC beds, which is a disproportionate amount of time. Building more supportive housing will allow hospitals to transition clients from ALC into community where they belong and where they would be better served. This would help hospitals as they struggle with current capacity issues. Most importantly, this would help individuals living with a mental illness get the care they need to live in the community.

Now, to the opportunity I also mentioned previously: This government is focused on creating more homes for all Ontarians. If it's willing to make drastic changes to get more people housed, then we suggest the province can also help the most vulnerable at the same time. Why not dedicate a certain percentage of all new units built in this province over the next decade to supportive housing? This would help get us closer to what the community mental health and addictions sector has been advocating for, for years. That's 3,000 new units annually for 10 years.

If you do choose to be the agent of change, CMHAs across Ontario stand ready to help. Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you very much. We'll now move on to the Federation of Rental-housing Providers of Ontario. Please state your name.

Mr. Tony Irwin: Thank you, Madam Chair. Good afternoon. My name is Tony Irwin. I'm president and CEO of the Federation of Rental-housing Providers of Ontario. I'm joined today by my colleague Asquith Allen, FRPO's director of policy and regulatory affairs, who is participating by Zoom.

FRPO has been the leading voice of the province's rental housing industry for over 30 years. We're the largest association in the province representing those who own, manage, build, finance, supply and service residential rental units. Our 2,200 members own and manage over 350,000 rental homes across the province.

Today, I'm pleased to have the opportunity to provide FRPO's comments on Bill 23.

I'll start by providing a brief overview of the current state of Ontario's rental market. We experienced some softening of demand during the COVID-19 crisis, but the rental market has quickly bounced back to pre-pandemic

levels. The most recent data from Urbanation reported a 1.2% vacancy rate in the GTA for the third quarter of 2022. This represents a significant decrease in vacancies from the peak of 6.4% during the first quarter of 2021. To put that in context, a 3% vacancy rate is generally seen as a healthy rental market.

The 10-year supply gap is also on the rise. FRPO recently commissioned a study that concluded over 300,000 new rental units alone are required to address the supply gap over the next 10 years. These would be in addition to units currently in the supply forecast.

The supply gap exists in a context where there have been very few new rentals built in decades. Over 80% of Ontario's existing rental stock was built before 1980; however, some progress has been made over the past few years. Due to measures of this government, purpose-built rental construction starts have doubled over the past five years, reaching over 13,500 units in 2021, the most since 1991. The inventory of proposed purpose-built rental projects in the GTHA also grew by 56,000 units, or 122%, after measures were put in place to incent new rental development. But we still need an additional 30,000 rental units a year, each year, to meet the anticipated shortage over the next decade. That's precisely why policy-makers must take strong action to address our urgent housing crisis.

Now, moving on to Bill 23: FRPO supports the proposed More Homes Built Faster Act. We congratulate the Premier and Minister Clark for taking bold action and demonstrating strong leadership on the housing crisis.

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Many measures in Bill 23 will help our members build more rental housing, and build it faster, across the province. I'll walk through a few examples for the committee's benefit. The typical pro forma for rental projects being considered in many urban centres is under water. These projects are simply not feasible. That's why we have a massive shortage of rental housing in this province. This is especially the case for projects that seek to include affordable units or are subject to inclusionary zoning requirements. Government fees and charges is a key factor that negatively impacts feasibility. They represent approximately 18% of the total cost of a typical development in the city of Toronto. Anything we can do to reduce these costs will naturally help improve project economics and turn some marginal projects from no-go to go.

Bill 23 proposes to exempt affordable housing units from development charges, community benefits charges and other fees. These measures will directly help our member's ability to build and operate projects with affordable housing components. Other proposals, such as discounting development charges for rentals and providing higher discounts for larger units, are also very helpful.

Our members want to build rental projects that meet the demands of all households, ones with one-, two- and three-bedroom units, to accommodate families of all sizes. Incenting units with more bedrooms through deeper DC discounts is a creative way to achieve this objective and a policy our members wholeheartedly support.

Bill 23 goes on to include measures to phase in DCs over time, cap interest rates paid on deferred DCs and reduce the impact of other charges, such as community benefits charges, by adjusting the land base it's calculated from. These are some of the helpful measures in Bill 23 that will directly improve project economics and result in more rental housing being built in Ontario.

There are also measures in the bill that we are excited to work with government to further refine at the implementation level. For example, FRPO has long advocated for financial incentives that promote mid-market rental projects. The challenge here is that project feasibility, especially in urban areas with their high cost of land, drive new developments toward the higher end of the rental market. Affordability requirements for those projects may result in units that cater to low-income individuals, but that creates a gap. What about those middle-income individuals who may not be eligible for affordable housing as it's defined, but market housing in some urban areas is simply beyond their reach?

Bill 23 proposes to create a new classification of housing called attainable housing. What is defined as attainable will be set in future regulations. For those deemed attainable, the bill proposes to exempt DCs, CBCs and parkland requirements to incent the development of those housing units. We fully support this policy as our members want to build rental units for everyone across the income spectrum.

Another area we support and look forward to working with government on implementation details is the Ontario Land Tribunal. In an environment of increasing costs of materials and labour, combined with rising interest rates, delays in project approval can kill otherwise viable projects. Bill 23 proposes to provide the Attorney General with powers to create regulations around service standards for scheduling hearing and decisions at the OLT. Improved service standards, combined with adequate resourcing so the tribunal has the capacity to meet those standards, will help build more housing in Ontario.

FRPO is pleased to support Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act. Our housing crisis requires bold leadership and strong, transformative action. Minor tweaks won't get the job done. With this bill, government has sent a clear signal that it intends to follow through on its commitment to build 1.5 million new homes over the next 10 years. Failure is not an option. Current residents and future generations are counting on us. We look forward to being a partner to government and members of this committee as it continues to work on our housing crisis.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to your questions.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you very much for your presentation. I'll now ask the Canadian Centre for Housing Rights to please start.

Ms. Bahar Shadpour: My name is Bahar Shadpour. I'm the director of policy and communications at the Canadian Centre for Housing Rights. My colleague here on the screen is Emma Bell-Scollan, who is a senior policy adviser.

I am here on behalf of the Canadian Centre for Housing Rights. We are a non-profit organization working to

advance the right to housing across Ontario and Canada. Over the last few months, we have closely followed the many legislative proposals introduced by the province to tackle our ongoing affordable housing crisis. We also welcomed the opportunity to offer our recommendations during past consultations.

Our recommendations are rights-based, which means prioritizing the needs of households who are most impacted by the affordability crisis, and promoting collaboration and meaningful engagement to formulate lasting solutions. It also means that affordable, adequate and accessible homes should be available to everyone, irrespective of their income or whether they own their home or rent it.

We appreciate that the province is exploring solutions that may address the housing challenges in our province. We definitely need more housing, but we need the right supply of housing. This includes affordable housing options. At the same time, we need to preserve our existing supply of affordable housing or else the proposed strategy to increase supply alone will not solve our housing challenges.

There are elements in the proposed bill that we support. For example, the exemptions on development charges for non-profits could help them overcome long-standing barriers to constructing deeply affordable housing. We encourage the province to think more expansively about helping this sector develop affordable housing at scale, but we worry that this bill may actually reduce the number of affordable housing options. Worse yet, many people may be displaced from their communities and lose their housing.

Today, I would like to talk about demolition and conversion controls. As it currently stands, municipalities have the power to prohibit or regulate the ways in which a building might be demolished or converted. The current proposal to allow the province to potentially scrap local policies related to demolition and conversion is problematic for many reasons. This change takes away a rare tool that is available to local governments to preserve their existing stock of affordable housing for low- to moderate-income households.

The city of Toronto has used the tool most extensively in Ontario since it adopted its replacement policy over 15 years ago. Approximately 4,000 rental units have been preserved. In practice, this policy has deterred many demolition requests. In instances where redevelopment proceeds, affected renters are also guaranteed the right to return to their homes. Meanwhile, housing construction has continued at a rapid rate. The policy has not been a disincentive to build housing.

The risk of removing or weakening this tool is even more concerning because of other legislative changes that will increase the pressure to redevelop. Notably, the provision to promote more density along transit corridors will attract more development activity in areas that happen to already have a concentration of older buildings. While on the one hand we recognize that more intensification is needed, we also need to ensure that it does not happen at the expense of existing renters. A replacement policy would direct developers either to look for available areas to develop

housing in these corridors that don't require demolition or it will guarantee that much-needed rental options remain available in the event of redevelopment. Put simply, preserving our rental housing, much of which is affordable to lower-income residents of our cities, ensures that the process of intensification is fair and reasonable. It will take time for us to build more housing options. Eliminating rental protections will impact housing security for people today.

It's important to note that many other municipalities across Ontario are experiencing population growth and the number of renter households is increasing. Because renters tend to live on lower incomes than homeowners, they often face the pressure of affordability more acutely. The recent census data confirms this. The point is that municipalities will have to strike a balancing act between creating more housing options that meet the diverse needs of the growing population while also ensuring people who are already living in these cities are not displaced or evicted into homelessness. Demolition and conversion controls help them navigate through these tricky issues. Even though most municipalities have not utilized this tool, this does not mean that the power should be taken away from them to preserve their existing affordable housing stock.

To summarize, we have a limited stock of affordable housing, and it is crucial to preserve it so that lower-income renters can continue living in these homes. It means that many seniors living in these homes can age in the communities that they're a part of and access the services that they need. It means that parents aren't commuting for long hours so that they can put food on the table. It means that their kids can stay close to their friends. It means that single young people can pay down their student debts without constantly worrying about the cost of housing escalating.

It is the obligation of our government to protect people from displacement. The proposed policies in Bill 23 should not push people out of their homes. I urge you to remove the provision that empowers the province to potentially eliminate local controls over demolition and conversion. I encourage the province to explore ways to maintain the existing stock of affordable housing. This could range from supporting energy retrofits to helping the communities in these buildings with more economic and educational opportunities. Local governments are already innovating on this front, but they could certainly do with more provincial help. I should also highlight that such investments are significantly less expensive than having to pay for the emergency relief that people who are displaced may need.

While there are a number of other provisions in the bill that we have expressed concerns about through a supporting submission, this particular provision will have immediate negative impacts on renters. Everybody has a right to live in affordable, secure and accessible homes.

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The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you very much for your presentation. We'll now move to the official opposition. MPP Bell.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you to the presenters for coming in and for the presenters online. I have questions for all three of you.

I'm going to start with Ms. Quenneville, the CEO of the Canadian Mental Health Association. Thank you for outlining the crisis that we have with providing supportive housing to people who are in need, including people who are homeless. Could you clarify a bit: What specific demands would you have on the provincial government to meet supportive housing targets? What numbers? Do you think they should be exempt from development charges? If you could just clarify that for me.

Ms. Camille Quenneville: I'd be happy to. Over the course of the last number of years, the mental health and addictions sector has come together and had conversations, even before this government was elected, around how we can go forward and have the right policies in place. What a group of sector colleagues have come up with is that 3,000 units each year, over the course of 10 years, would go a very long way in getting us back on track in terms of the amount of supportive housing that should be available.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Just to clarify a little bit: 3,000 units a year. Do you have complementary asks around what the supportive piece would be? Would that be Ministry of Health funding? Just to clarify that. Is there a number there that you're asking for?

Ms. Camille Quenneville: It would be Ministry of Health funding. I do have it; it's just going to take me one second to find it. But as you likely know, we do have a variety of ways that we serve people within supportive housing. So there are rent supplements that are available—bear with me one second. You know what? I will get you that number.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Yes, you can follow up with me after. I'm quite curious about that.

Ms. Camille Quenneville: Thank you.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you for your work.

My second question is to Bahar Shadpour from the Canadian Centre for Housing Rights. Like you, I am very concerned about the impact of schedule 1 and schedule 4 in Bill 23, which would eliminate the rental replacement bylaw in Toronto and Mississauga and stop it from being implemented in other municipalities, like Ottawa and Hamilton. It is the key bylaw that protects these affordable, private market rentals that are often \$1,200 or less, and stops them from being demolished and being converted into luxury rental for \$3,000 or more, or condos, which we know will rent or be put for sale at prices that not even a middle-income Ontarian can afford.

What impact do you think eliminating the rental replacement bylaw will have on housing affordability and homelessness, from the work you've done?

Ms. Bahar Shadpour: Thank you. As I mentioned in my deputation and presentation, these are really precious existing supplies of housing. A lot of low- to moderate-income families across the province are living in rental housing that, I think Mr. Irwin mentioned earlier, were built a long time ago. So the rents in those places are much

lower. I, myself, live in one of those places. If we remove the current condition and continue with the provision in Bill 23 to not have rental replacement bylaws in municipalities, this would really put at risk a lot of the housing that people are living in. If they are demolished, we're getting rid of the supply altogether, and if they are redeveloped, they tend to be redeveloped into condominiums, which have much higher rents than the purpose-built rentals. So people would be either economically evicted or they would be displaced from their communities.

A lot of people are already being displaced due to rising rents and they are living on the fringes of our cities. They're commuting longer hours. They're not close to their places of employment. They're not close to the services and amenities that they need. It would actually put more pressure, also, on current infrastructure and the services that we already have, and the worst-case scenario is that people are evicted into homelessness. I think we can all agree that that is absolutely not the outcome of this bill and, therefore, it really needs to be removed.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you. My final question is to Tony Irwin, the president and CEO of the Federation of Rental-housing Providers of Ontario. Did your association lobby for, and are you in support of, schedule 1 and schedule 4?

Mr. Tony Irwin: Well, what I would say is we are in support of it, yes. The fact is, as I said in my remarks, we all know that the stock is aging. It's getting older, and it's getting more expensive to be able to maintain that stock.

What we'd like to see is an environment—just to speak to rental construction not being disincentivized. Rental construction has been disincentivized in Ontario for decades. That's why we have seen a condo boom. We need more housing of all types, and it needs to be new, and it needs to be affordable. There are ways that that can be done moving forward that will make the economics of rental projects work.

Some of these aging buildings eventually will get to the point where there's no option but to demolish. I think what we would all prefer to see, in time, are new buildings being built that are affordable, that people living in older units now that are more affordable today can move into that are new. That can be done. I believe it can be done.

Many of the measures in this bill will make the economics of building rental feasible. We have members who want to build rental, and they want to build it for all incomes and types. But because the economics of building rental are so challenging, that's why we're not seeing it. So being able to do that, being able to build buildings that will appeal to different income types, that are new, not 60 years old and becoming increasingly difficult to maintain—we think that's the way forward, and that's what we want to see and what we are supportive of.

Ms. Jessica Bell: It is honestly hard to hear that, Mr. Irwin, because there are serious negative consequences to people's pocketbooks, to renters, to the health and vitality of cities—

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): You have 50 seconds.

Ms. Jessica Bell: —when moves are being made to replace affordable private market rental with luxury condos, because they almost exclusively will be turned into luxury condos, or private market rental that is exempt from rent control. That will have a significant impact on the affordability of our city. I urge your association to reconsider your support for schedule 1 and schedule 4.

Mr. Tony Irwin: I'd just like to go on the record that I'm not suggesting we want to see the disappearance of affordable units with luxury condos. I've never said that, and I don't ever want that to be on the record.

Ms. Jessica Bell: But that's the consequence of schedule 1 and schedule 4.

Mr. Tony Irwin: I think, unfortunately, the consequence long-term will be these old buildings are no longer going to be inhabitable. And where will we be then? So we need to have a strategy to address that too. I think that's obviously also a real concern. These buildings are going to get older and older, and I don't think that's sustainable long-term either. There has to be a way forward to be able to address the fact that these aging buildings are going to keep getting older and older, and harder and more expensive to maintain.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you very much for that. MPP McMahon, please.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you, everyone, for coming in. I'm glad you could come in today, because we had a little blip this morning, but I'm happy you're here to share your stories and give us your sage advice.

I have a few questions for you. We'll start off with Tony and keep you on the friendly hot seat.

Mr. Tony Irwin: That's okay.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I like what you said about looking for higher incentives and discounts for industry building more units with more bedrooms, so we can accommodate all types of families. That is great.

Has your organization looked at vacant homes at all, or vacant properties and empty bedrooms?

Mr. Tony Irwin: It's not something that we've really—it's kind of outside of our purview as rental housing providers. We don't really look at that too much. Our members build purpose-built rental housing, which of course is high-rise, is mid-rise, is low-rise. That other area you speak about would be more, I would assume, our friends at BILD and OHBA.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Okay. With the new builds, I'm sure some of your builders are very keen on, as the rest of the world is, building sustainably, especially in a climate emergency—

Mr. Tony Irwin: Absolutely.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: —and in addition to the great benefits from that, comfort and doing the right thing and helping address our net-zero goals, there's economic benefit. So what are your thoughts on the Toronto Green Standard, which is at major jeopardy in this bill?

Mr. Tony Irwin: I'm going to actually defer to my colleague Asquith Allen. I think he's probably more able to address that topic than I am. Asquith?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you.

Mr. Asquith Allen: Can you hear me?

Mr. Tony Irwin: Yes.

Mr. Asquith Allen: Perfect. Thank you, MPP McMahon, for the question.

The provisions in Bill 23 that make changes to cities' abilities to set requirements around exterior design are fairly welcomed by the association, partially because some of these requirements serve to disincentivize the construction of rental housing, requiring certain setbacks from the curb, angular planes, these other issues that would reduce the number of total units that you could build on a site.

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We understand that, yes, there may be impacts to the Toronto Green Standard, but it appears to us that the intent of these provisions in the changes are more to address those pieces—

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Sorry. Toronto will not be able to achieve its net-zero goals if this bill goes through. We just heard that from the chief planner. I'm not sure if you're aware of that. That's how drastic it is. Were you aware of that?

Mr. Asquith Allen: I was listening to some of the previous testimony—not all of it, I'm afraid. But I will reiterate: angular planes and some of the setbacks are issues that some of our members face in actually making performers work to build the housing.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Right. I'm not really sure that's part of the green standard.

I only have a minute left. We're over to Bahar. You mentioned energy retrofits. How important is it to you to build sustainably?

Ms. Bahar Shadpour: And the question?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Well, you were mentioning that energy retrofits are really important.

Ms. Bahar Shadpour: Yes, I mentioned that there could be other ways for the government to work with housing providers to maintain their homes, and that could be through retrofits. That could be done in tandem with capital repairs that may be needed.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you very much. I'll get to CMHA in the next round, thanks, because I'm short on time.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Over to the government side: MPP McGregor.

Mr. Graham McGregor: I want to thank everybody for taking the time here today. I really appreciate it. I can certainly understand, even though some of the feedback—we may have different ways that we want to go about it, but I think we all acknowledge that housing is in a crisis right now and we've got to find ways to pursue it.

My first question is for Ms. Quenneville—I'll just take the chance, now that CMHA is here, to say on the Hansard: Mental health is health. Certainly as legislators we have a responsibility to do something about the mental health crisis that we have. We have to deal with our personal crises, so I have therapy tomorrow that I'll be in. I think everybody should take advantage of it. I also acknowledge that I've got benefits that a lot of Ontarians don't have. That's why I'm so proud to be part of a party that's engaging in the

largest mental health investment of any provincial government in history, really to spread equitable access to mental health service. I'm sure my colleagues on the other side appreciate doing that work as well.

That being said, we know that increased anxiety, for a whole lot of reasons right now, has been rampant, especially with COVID. I hear a lot of anxiety from young families, new Canadians and seniors that are unable to find the right type of housing that they need. We put forward, with the Housing Affordability Task Force, a desire to build 1.5 million new homes over the next 10 years. Does CMHA have a position on that? Are we striking the right balance? Is more housing supply a good thing for the province, or are we misaligned in our priorities?

Ms. Camille Quenneville: First of all, thank you for the question. With your indulgence, I'm going to actually put some numbers on the record for MPP Bell: It's \$242 million for the 3,000 units and it's \$45 million annually for the supports. Thank you for your patience with me.

Your question is a very good one. First of all, I want to commend you on saying in this public forum that you have therapy tomorrow. I want to thank you for that. We're always very grateful when people who have a public profile speak publicly about seeking help for their mental health. It really breaks down barriers and stigma, and you should be commended for that. Thank you so much.

With respect to your question, I would say that I'm not, obviously, in the housing business. I don't pretend to be an expert. The people that I represent support, really, the most vulnerable people that we have in society. I don't think any of us likes to be in our downtown core in our communities. I speak to mayors all the time; I'm seeing the mayor of Windsor tomorrow. I was in Peterborough the other day, and it is consistent across Ontario, the level of concern with municipal leaders about managing the homelessness issue in their downtown core, but also the opioid overdose situation we find ourselves in in this province, where we've had more deaths than imaginable—more than 5,000.

I would just simply say that if we're going to focus on housing, I think we really need to include the kind of housing that will do two things: first of all, support those individuals, but also really try to right-size the people that should be seeking care in hospital. As we know, there are folks in hospitals that should be in long-term-care facilities, but there are also folks in hospitals that would be living better in community, and those are people with severe and persistent mental illness. So those are the kinds of folks I'd like to see housed.

Mr. Graham McGregor: I appreciate that. Time check?

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Three and a half minutes.

Mr. Graham McGregor: I will turn it over to MPP Smith.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): MPP Smith.

Ms. Laura Smith: Through you, Chair, I also want to thank all of you for being here and providing this insightful information. The most vulnerable people are a priority for our government, and we want to see success in these areas.

Mr. Irwin, sorry, you mentioned something about the new classification of attainable housing and the reduction of fees and inclusionary requirements. Bill 23, if passed, would help cities and towns and all people—rural communities, mixed ownership, rental-housing types—to meet the needs of the Ontario people, from single-family homes to townhouses, to mid-rise apartments. We talked about that, and we talked about the percentage discounts. In your view, how would the proposed development charge discounts on rental housing, with up to a 25% discount for larger homes or units—three bedrooms or whatever—incent the supply of rental housing?

Mr. Tony Irwin: Thank you very much for your question, MPP Smith. When we look at the pro formas to build rental housing or the issues that stand in the way of getting rental housing built, fees and charges are a huge barrier. It's a huge part of the pro forma. The delays, the time it takes to get projects approved—that's also a big one. I remember sitting here once; one of your colleagues a few years ago asked me about a development in his constituency that had taken 10 years. I was fairly new on the job, and I thought, "That can't be normal." But, of course, I left here and realized it's pretty normal for it to take that long. It can take that long.

But as to your question on fees and charges, that is a big component to get to making rental projects economically viable to build. So that's why. We need more housing of all types. Different housing types have different economic realities. Condominiums are different. That's why they have been built in such great amounts over the last two or three decades. They can be built and sold; the prices can reflect costs in those units. Rental, of course, can't. It's a long-term housing option. Our members build them. They tend to build them and hold them and manage them for years and years.

So being able to address government fees and charges, which are necessary—we absolutely agree and endorse that growth must pay for growth, but it has to be reasonable. It also has to reflect the different challenges that exist in different housing types. Rental is absolutely critical. As a society, we need to acknowledge rental is an important part of our housing going forward and just look at the fees and charges. We're definitely very supportive of doing that to be able to get more rental housing built, more affordable housing built, but just more rental housing built, period, because it's needed. There's a reason why we haven't had much of it built over the last three decades.

Ms. Laura Smith: That's the delays. I mean, let's just be honest. You touched on that. If you could actually discuss that a bit more so we can understand. You talked about a project that took 10 years—

Mr. Tony Irwin: That was one example. There are so many examples that I hear about—

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thirty seconds.

Mr. Tony Irwin: One that I know a little bit more specifically about: One of our members was looking to build an apartment building. This was in the Hamilton area. They went through all the approval processes with the city of Hamilton, got all the approvals, and then a resident paid,

I think, \$250 to appeal all of that. It then took about three years further to finally have that appeal dismissed. It's not about not having checks and balances, but in that situation, that one resident paid the fee, appealed the decision. The project then has to be on hold for three or four years. Finally, it's dismissed and—

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you very much. Sorry, that's the end of the time.

1540

Over to the official opposition: MPP Harden.

Mr. Joel Harden: Good afternoon, everybody. Mr. Irwin, do you believe that owners of rental housing units have an obligation under Ontario law and regulations to properly maintain the buildings that they own?

Mr. Tony Irwin: Absolutely.

Mr. Joel Harden: Okay. With that in mind, sir, what do you say to situations, with which I'm familiar in Ottawa, where, in a community I've talked about today and yesterday known as Heron Gate, we had 400 evictions. Residents of that community had told folks for months that the landlord, Timbercreek—a highly profitable organization—had simply not maintained the housing for six or seven years. I visited some of the units and can confirm that some of the appliances were refabricated with duct tape. Would you say that meets the standard of an obligation under Ontario law?

Mr. Tony Irwin: I wouldn't think so. Without knowing all the specifics, sir, I wouldn't think so.

Mr. Joel Harden: Okay. What do you think could happen to this bill to make sure that the character of your industry, which is an important industry, isn't impugned by people who engage in a practice that is discussed as renovictions, or demovictions. Certainly no progressive owners of apartment buildings in Ottawa, and there are many, that I've talked to would want to be held accountable for repeated offences of not maintaining the standards of their buildings, only to ensure that folks could be pushed out of those buildings so they could be turned into a form of housing which is much more profitable to the building owner. Most of the people, as you've said already, that I've spoken to in Ottawa Centre who own large buildings have a relationship with the residents there. It's in their interest to make sure the buildings are maintained and services are maintained. How could Bill 23 be amended to make sure that we deal with this issue of demovictions and renovictions?

Mr. Tony Irwin: That's quite a question. Demovictions and renovictions are obviously a very sensitive subject, as you all know. As I was saying earlier to your colleague MPP Bell, we understand that there is no greater subject, there is no greater thing for people, I don't think, than where they're housed. Housing is such an important issue, where people are housed and how they are housed.

Without getting into all the specifics of Heron Gate—I know it's been a long-standing situation and I don't know all the specifics of what happened there—the first thing I would say in response to your question is that I think it's important to understand, or to define, what that term even really means. I think different people view that term dif-

ferently. Is it that no one should be forced to vacate accommodation if it's not by their own choosing? What does that mean relative to units that do need renovation, that do need vacant possession to renovate those units? We have rules for what governs that. As you know, notice must be given and compensation must be provided and the ability to come back to the building after the renovation is done at the old rent. All that is in place as it is today. Those rules have to be followed.

Mr. Joel Harden: Hold up for a moment, Mr. Irwin. I think you're asking a question. Let's define it. I want to throw to Ms. Shadpour for a moment, because I know your organization has expertise in this emerging trend of renovictions and demovictions.

It would seem to me that to answer Mr. Irwin's question, it would be important to say: Has the building owner consistently engaged in practices whereby key amenities of the units have been left to deteriorate? If that's happened and complaints have been made and no remediation has taken place—as has happened in Heron Gate; a 400-person eviction—and nothing has been done and a highly profitable company is now even more profitable, how could Bill 23 be changed to ensure that kind of thing doesn't happen anymore?

Ms. Bahar Shadpour: Thank you for the question. Just in terms of defining renovictions specifically, it is when a tenant is pushed out of their home for a renovation to take place. Some of these renovations may be extensive enough that a vacant unit is required. However, what we're seeing—not just in Toronto or in Ottawa but across the country in hot housing markets, where rent prices have increased—is some landlords use renovations as a way to push out existing long-term tenants in order to raise the rent. The reason for that is because we have vacancy decontrol in these areas.

So Bill 23 could be strengthened by removing the provision that limits municipal governments' ability to have rental replacement policies. As well, we have not seen any protections for tenants from renovictions and demovictions in this bill at all, so strengthening those protections would be really important.

Mr. Joel Harden: Chair, how much time do we have left?

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): You have two minutes and 15 seconds.

Mr. Joel Harden: Okay. So moving to Ms. Quenneville—nice to see you this afternoon. Could you comment, given the folks your organization works with, on the mental health implications of renovictions and demovictions? In our experience, in Ottawa Centre, we have the highest proportion of rooming houses, for example, in the city. We aren't opposed to rooming houses in downtown—those are homes; those are neighbours, and they matter as much as anybody else—but there is a very strong correlation between decrepit, terribly maintained units and some neighbours who are living in those buildings.

How could Bill 23, in your view, from a mental health perspective, be changed to make sure folks struggling with mental health have housing that contributes to their wellness, as opposed to the deterioration of their mental health?

Ms. Camille Quenneville: Thank you for the question. There is a great deal of research and evidence that suggests that—first of all, let's start with that having a home is critical for mental health. The Mental Health Commission of Canada has done a variety of work—At Home/Chez Soi—around ensuring that there is an understanding that having a roof over your head is the first step towards mental wellness. So—

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Final 60 seconds.

Ms. Camille Quenneville: Thank you. So while I can't comment on the particulars of situations in which people are living in less-than-ideal conditions as it relates to this, what I can say is that if we're looking at housing across the spectrum, it is our hope that we're including individuals who are precariously housed, and certainly those who are without housing.

I hope that helps. I hope that answers it.

Mr. Joel Harden: Yes, thank you very much. And I also thank your organization for the work that you do in our city—we are very appreciative of it—to help neighbours who are in mental health distress and their housing.

Ms. Camille Quenneville: That's very kind. My colleague Tim Simboli, who runs our branch in Ottawa, is someone I would reach out to and ask the question that you asked me, so I will do that.

Mr. Joel Harden: Thanks very much. That's it, Chair.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): MPP McMahon, for four and a half minutes, please.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you very much. I did not get to ask Camille a question the first time around, so I would like to just elaborate on my colleague MPP Bell's question on the number of units. You were mentioning that 3,000 units a year is definitely what you would need, and I just would like you to elaborate on that. What types of units? Because with this housing, 1.5 million new homes, it seems like a lot of talk about single-family, detached homes, and I'm just curious what your community and vulnerable populations are looking at.

Ms. Camille Quenneville: Well, it's interesting, because there has been an evolution on that front. What used to be a belief that people should be integrated into community in a single dwelling and living independently with support has moved to the thinking that that creates a very lonely person, and that in order to truly support someone's mental health, having them in a community environment—in fact, I used to be the chair of the board of an organization called St. Jude Community Homes, which is in this city—

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Oh, yes.

Ms. Camille Quenneville: —is really an ideal manner in which to support people as they age in place with severe and persistent mental illness. So the notion of a community amongst those individuals, living with supports, living in appropriate supportive housing, is, in our view, the ideal environment.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Great. Thank you. I actually have St. Jude's homes in my riding, and the tenants are very involved in the community, especially with their tree-planting and beautification on the street, watering trees and getting involved in the community. It's great.

Ms. Camille Quenneville: I was on that board before I took this job.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Awesome. Great.

Now I'm just going to do rapid-fire, with basically under a minute each: just one piece of advice to us as we consider Bill 23. We'll start with Tony.

Mr. Tony Irwin: I would think, really, it's just to support the development of more purpose-built rental housing where it makes sense, providing for as-of-right zoning and density where it makes sense, whether that's on MTSAs, but making sure that we can actually prioritize and get rental housing built where it makes sense.

1550

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Okay, thank you very much. Camille?

Ms. Camille Quenneville: I think as you move to develop regulations, I would look at the definition of attainable housing, which isn't clear in the legislation, and look at attainable housing to ideally include supportive housing to assist the kind of people that I've described for the committee.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: All right. And final word to Bahar.

Ms. Bahar Shadpour: Increase supply of housing, but the right type of housing, thinking about affordable housing, non-profit housing and co-operative housing. Retain affordability, and also define affordability in a way that is tied to people's incomes so they can actually pay their rent and so that their housing is not based on fluctuating market conditions that are—right now, market prices are way above income that people can afford for housing.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Final 60 seconds.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you very much.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I'll go over to the government side. MPP Sabawy.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I will start with Mr. Tony first. Some of the presenters earlier today presented a number which was kind of astonishing to me. They said that for affordable housing, about 90-plus per cent of those houses are built in partnership with a non-profit or a charitable or a community-based, I would say, not-for-profit organization who helped push the envelope to get that done with the city—which, in the majority of cases, the city could waive some of the DCs or all of the DCs to help the community and get the affordable housing going on.

When we look into this statistic, that gives us an idea that we need to encourage more of that, because that's 90% of what's happened already anyway. So don't you see that waiving the DCs for those small organizations could encourage those not-for-profit organizations with very limited resources to get a project going and add more affordable housing to the cities?

Mr. Tony Irwin: Absolutely. I agree with you. And there are a lot of communities that don't charge DCs because they want to encourage housing to come or they are flexible on what they do charge because they really want to be able to encourage different housing types in their communities. It's absolutely a great approach, and we certainly support that.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Ms. Bahar, if you can comment on this as well.

Ms. Bahar Shadpour: Absolutely. The DC exemption is going to help non-profits, co-operatives to provide the housing, the deeply affordable housing that so many low-to moderate-income people need. But we also need governments to invest in that type of housing because, as you mentioned, the operational costs—it's not just to build the housing, but they need to keep it running and that is really expensive.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Sure. I get your point about that. But again, talking in general—now we leave that piece. We'll talk about housing in general, the housing crisis we have currently. We know that even rental apartments—we didn't see any rental corporations coming to build rental buildings recently because it's very difficult to maintain the base and maintain profit margins with the maintenance and the control over the rent and stuff. They feel that it's not worth investing in, basically. Don't you see that adding more flexibility, using the bill to encourage companies to invest into, generally—I'm talking about general—rental market and get more rental units available?

Ms. Bahar Shadpour: Thank you for the question.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I'm not talking about affordable; I'm talking about rentals generally. In Mississauga, you can have a wait of a year to find one rental apartment place.

Ms. Bahar Shadpour: I'm a renter, so I'm quite intimately familiar with how difficult it is to find affordable housing. I think taking a rights-based approach is really important here, because we need to adopt policies that are going to really turn the lives of those who are most impacted by the affordable housing crisis around, and those are lower-income people. We have seen rentals being built since 2017. They're luxury rentals. Their rents are way out of reach for people. There need to be conditions. If the government is going to support purpose-built rental developments through, let's say, some financing tools, there need to be conditions also in place that what is going to be built is affordable housing.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: That's if the government is basically adding some financial help in there.

Ms. Bahar Shadpour: The conditions need to be in place that it's affordable housing, and affordability needs to be defined in a way that is actually in reach for people who are in lower-income households.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Yes, but you don't see that happening now? As far as I know—of course, I could not be the expert on the subject—if the government is putting any money towards building affordable houses, there are conditions in the agreement which make sure that they have control over the pricing and the number of units and everything. That's not part of that bill; I'm just saying, in general, the control of the number of units and the price and everything—if the government is doing that agreement, it's already there. Any government financial involvement—money—has conditions come to it. That's taken care of.

This bill is not touching that. The bill is trying to encourage building generally, to encourage adding more capacity, because we have almost 450,000 new immigrants coming every year to Canada. We need housing.

We have our own kids growing and they need housing. There is a need for housing. We are in a big crisis in housing generally—I'm talking affordable or not affordable, condos—all kinds and all aspects. Don't you see in this bill any item that could help in increasing the numbers of units available in the market?

Ms. Bahar Shadpour: If I understand your question correctly, it is that as long as we add supply, the price of housing will drop. First of all, we do have an exemption on rent control for any residential units built after November 15, 2018, so people could be economically evicted by their rents being risen beyond what they can pay within a year.

I think it's a complex issue, and we really need to think about the supply question in conjunction with the preservation of the existing housing, in terms of strengthening rent protections for tenants, and in regulating the market so that we can direct developers to build the right type of housing that we need.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Sixty seconds left.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Mr. Tony?

Mr. Tony Irwin: I would just say to that that, certainly, from our point of view, we believe that building more supply is absolutely fundamental to us really getting out of this crisis in a meaningful way. That's all housing types. For my members, it is true that over the last few decades, a lot of the rental housing that's been built in Toronto has been higher rent. That's not because that's all they wanted to build; that's because that's all that's been viable. Those are the projects that have been viable, given the economic conditions. That's why rentals have been built at a much greater pace than apartments.

Provisions in this bill that both address government fees and charges but also address the time it takes and the duplication and the redundancies that end up getting to seven years for you to be able to get shovels in the ground: All those things, of course, will get more housing built. Speed up the time it takes to get projects approved, look at the government fees and charges that can maybe be reduced in some ways for rental apartments, and they will get built.

Our members build all over the province. They build different kinds of units for different kinds of incomes, different kinds of family needs. They're going to do a lot more of that—

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you so much. That's all the time we have for this round of presenters. Thank you very much for coming today, virtually and in person. As you depart, we'll ask the next round of presenters to come up. Thank you again. Safe travels.

WEST END HOME BUILDERS'
ASSOCIATION

NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION
AUTHORITY

REENA

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): The West End Home Builders' Association, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority and Reena—everyone can join whichever way

we are joining today. As they're getting settled there, I'll just remind everyone that seven minutes, up to seven minutes, is your timeline for presentations, and if you could please state your name near the beginning of your presentation for Hansard purposes, that will be great.

1600

If you're ready, Mike, West End Home Builders' Association, would you mind beginning? When you're ready, we'll start the clock. We can do it from this end; turn your mike on when you're ready. You're good? Okay. Please start.

Mr. Mike Collins-Williams: Good afternoon. My name is Mike Collins-Williams, and I am the CEO of the West End Home Builders' Association. I am pleased to be here today to speak in support of the measures contained in Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022.

With 300 member companies, WEHBA is the voice of the home-building industry in Hamilton and Burlington. The building and renovation industry provides more than 550,000 jobs across Ontario, paying over \$37 billion in annual wages. I'd add that what makes us unique is we are in each and every community across this great province, building new housing supply, providing well-paying jobs in the skilled trades and professional services and generating billions of dollars in tax revenue for all levels of government. WEHBA is proudly affiliated with the Ontario Home Builders' Association.

For several years now, WEHBA has been sharing our concern that we're in a housing supply crisis. Too many people are struggling to find an attainable home that meets their family's needs. It's a complex problem that requires a range of solutions. The big picture is that Ontario is growing. Our economic region of the greater Golden Horseshoe has about 10 million people, and we're expected to be close to 15 million by 2051. Now, those are big numbers, so let's consider just how big: That is equivalent to the entire population of greater Montreal moving here over the next three decades. This is a tremendous opportunity, but to make the best of it, we need to build a lot more housing of all types and tenures. We need more studio apartments, more three-bedroom condos, more stacked townhomes, more detached homes, more secondary suites, more student residences, more rentals and, yes, much more below-market affordable housing. You name it; we need more of it.

So just how much more do we need? We know, thanks to the Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force, along with third-party verification from Ottawa's Smart Prosperity Institute, that we need at least 1.5 million more homes. This will help restore supply in the market.

We also have bipartisan recognition of this. During the spring provincial election campaign, all four parties—the NDP, the Ontario Liberal Party, the Greens and the PCs—campaign on the need for 1.5 million homes. I recognize that you all probably have different ideas on how to get there, but there's at least fundamental agreement that we need more housing of all types. At the federal level, the major parties have also agreed that we need more supply.

The crown corporation CMHC suggests we need more housing: 1.85 million more homes in Ontario over the next

decade. To put the challenge of building 1.5 million homes into perspective, consider this: 2021 was the best year for housing starts in Ontario in a generation. Last year, the industry delivered slightly more than 100,000 units, including 12,000 purpose-built rental units, yet we're still nowhere close to hitting our objectives.

In my hometown of Hamilton, the Bill 23 target is 47,000 units over the next decade. That's just under 5,000 a year. Over the last few years, we've been delivering 2,000. We need to more than double production in Hamilton for us to remain a welcoming city for newcomers and to avoid continued displacement. This is an absolutely monumental challenge that requires a total paradigm shift.

To frame why we are in a housing supply and affordability crisis now, I'd offer three root causes that have been highlighted repeatedly by third-party research:

(1) It takes too long to obtain approvals to build new homes, with too many agencies involved.

(2) Government-imposed charges add between 20% and 25% to the cost of a new home in the form of taxes, charges and fees from all levels of government, with bigger cities typically being at the higher end of that range for development charges, which is part of the reason we're seeing an exodus of young people from the GTA to smaller communities.

(3) Across southern Ontario, land supply is severely constrained for both urban expansion and urban intensification, which is, again, why we're seeing some rather strange internal migration patterns within southern Ontario.

WEHBA and its members support Bill 23 because it makes it faster, easier and less costly to build new homes. First, Bill 23 addresses rising costs for buyers. As I said, currently, 20% to 25% of the cost, on average, of new homes is government taxes, fees and charges. This can add more than \$200,000 to the cost of a typical single-family home in Hamilton.

Municipal fees and charges have been escalating significantly. I'll give you an example: In Burlington, council just approved a 500% increase in parkland charges this summer, meaning that any young person struggling to purchase a small condo would be stuck paying \$33,400 in a medium-density building and \$23,600 in a high-rise tower in parkland fees alone. I'll repeat that: Parkland dedication fees in Burlington for a small starter condo right by the GO station, exactly where we should be adding density, jumped from a bit over \$5,000 to \$23,600, all in one shot, a few months ago, and the city has not even completed a full study to justify the increase. These are fees that are ultimately baked into the cost of new housing and are placed on the backs of new homebuyers. Bill 23 adds predictability for new homebuyers by defining what should and shouldn't be paid for by development charges and limits future increases through freezing and limiting numerous charges.

Second, Bill 23 makes it easier to add supply and density with new as-of-right zoning provisions. Currently, there are areas of Burlington and Hamilton where existing neighbourhoods are experiencing declining population density. This is occurring as the population ages and young people

and families—the 22 to 42 age demographic and their children—are moving out in search of housing they can afford. People are voting with their feet; they're leaving. They want more space at prices they can afford. Research from the Smart Prosperity Institute shows that over the last five years, Hamilton on net lost 15,000 people to St. Catharines, Niagara and Brantford for cheaper family housing.

The housing market is a bit like a cruel game of musical chairs, where more and more people, in particular young families looking for room to grow, are leaving more expensive cities and scattering across the province.

The More Homes Built Faster Act enables and promotes greater density within urban boundaries, with new as-of-right provisions across existing neighbourhoods and around major transit station areas. These measures create the opportunity to build gentle density across existing neighbourhoods and greatly increase density around transit infrastructure, precisely where it should be.

Lastly, and most importantly, Bill 23 will enable the building of more housing by introducing a cultural change that is desperately needed. When viewed in conjunction with Bill 109, it signals to municipalities that they must approve new housing in a timely manner, as required by provincial legislation. It rejects the status quo of NIMBY-ism that hinders the addition of new homes and, finally, it focuses on more homes for people in all communities in Ontario.

In conclusion, we have found ourselves, quite frankly, in a bit of a mess when it comes to the housing crisis. We literally have the governments of Alberta and Nova Scotia advertising and encouraging our best and brightest minds to pick up and leave Ontario. Now is not the time for small plans. It's time for bold action. As people leave the region in search of housing they can afford, the problem that started in downtown Toronto has cascaded in a rippling effect of displacement to communities like Hamilton and spread to other parts of Ontario. Who would have thought places like Shelburne and Tillsonburg would be some of the fastest-growing communities in Canada? This is a policy-driven crisis, and the solution to address it is clear—

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): We're going to have to interrupt. Sorry. I didn't give you much warning in the end. We were thinking you were going to get there.

Mr. Mike Collins-Williams: I had one last sentence.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I know. I've been trying really hard.

We'll move to the next presentation: Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, please. If you would state your name at the beginning.

Ms. Chandra Sharma: Dear Chair Scott and honourable members of the standing committee, thanks for the opportunity to make a delegation today. My name is Chandra Sharma. I'm the CAO of Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority. Joining me online are two of my colleagues, both professional planners with extensive municipal and conservation authority experience: NPCA's director of development and planning, Ms. Leilani Lee-Yates, and the senior manager of environmental planning and policy, David Deluce.

I'm a professional planner with 24 years of public service. During this time, I've had an opportunity to work with all kinds of elected officials from all different parties. I've also worked with some of the leading industry and business partners located in Toronto, Mississauga and Brampton, along the GTA rivers and wetlands. There's one thing in common: All had a strong sustainability mandate; all wanted to attract the best talent and skilled immigrants; all financially contributed to enhancing the wetlands and river courses, daylighting water courses in industrial headwater areas in the GTA so that employees can benefit from these natural assets.

Last week, I attended the Niagara Economic Summit to listen to our local industrial and business partners and our academic institutions, Brock University and Niagara College. We all have a common interest in providing the best quality of life and affordable housing to keep the best talent in Niagara.

Conservation authorities have always been part of the solution to deliver on provincial priorities. For instance, when the Walkerton incident happened, conservation authorities were given a major responsibility to urgently mobilize the science on a watershed basis and act as provincial source protection authorities. Because we had years of data and technical expertise, we carried out that mandate effectively to support municipalities under the Clean Water Act. There is history and trust in the ability of conservation authorities. We can do this again with less disruption.

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A written submission was provided to you with detailed comments. I have many copies of well-evaluated data on wetlands right here with me that I'm happy to provide to the committee members. It was also uploaded for circulation to this committee.

I'm going to be highlighting some of the major issues with Bill 23, and also highlighting some additional proposals on ERO that directly impact Bill 23:

Number one, proposed exemptions to transfer CA regulatory responsibility: Transfer of CA regulatory responsibility will be precedent-setting and a risk to public health and safety, especially associated with uncertainty related to extreme weather events. Conservation authorities consider upstream, downstream and cumulative impacts on a watershed basis, rather than on a municipal boundary. There is greater chance of inconsistent and potentially risky decision-making in numerous parties involved in those decisions on hazards.

We recommend that CAs' core mandate responsibility for delivery of natural hazard management through planned review be maintained. A better solution would be to set up a task force to accelerate and incentivize attainable housing, mandating all regulatory agencies to work together. Progress on this should be reviewed on an annual basis, to make needed adjustments as required.

Our second proposal is related to changes prohibiting conservation authorities from having MOUs and agreements with municipalities. The inability of a conservation authority to enter into an MOU with municipalities may result in longer delays, as many municipalities may not

have the technical readiness—I say “technical readiness”—that is required for this initiative. It may also result in increased costs to municipalities. We recommend that municipalities should retain the option to enter into MOUs with CAs for planned review services, with clearly defined items, timelines and performance measures as allowed under section 21 of the CA act already.

My third issue is removal of pollution and conservation of land as a test from the regulations. These tests are fundamental to the protection of regulated areas, and they are an important first line of defence in pollution prevention during development. The removal of pollution tests also has implications on our role as implementation agencies for federal/provincial agreements on Great Lakes water quality and Canada/Ontario agreements, so important to this region. We recommend to reinstate these terms under the regulations.

Finally, my final suggestion is about ERO postings related to the proposed changes to the Ontario Wetland Evaluation System. The wetland evaluation system is a science-based system to assess the functions and values of wetlands in Ontario. Conservation authorities rely on this proven scientific methodology as an aid in implementing regulations under the Conservation Authorities Act. We recommend that instead of eliminating the wetland complexing and scoring criteria, work with conservation experts such as CAs to amend the criteria for complexing and scoring using a scientific approach. We also recommend that conservation authorities be identified as the decision-maker, to ensure a consistent standard for wetland evaluation and mapping to be maintained.

In closing, we support the province’s goal of increasing the housing supply and see ourselves as valuable partners in achieving this goal. However, the proposed changes affecting the conservation authorities and our core mandate may not have the desired effect. The diminished role of conservation authorities could also lead to more development being located in natural hazards—

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Fifty seconds.

Ms. Chandra Sharma:—higher costs in property damage, increased burden on municipal partners and absolute erosion of an ecosystem approach applied through the established integrated watershed management system in Ontario.

Let’s grow and prosper together with nature, while mitigating the safety risks from extreme weather and climate change. Thank you for the opportunity.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you very much for your presentation. You got it in under the wire.

I will now move to Gary from Reena.

Mr. Gary Gladstone: Good afternoon. My name is Gary Gladstone, and I’m the lead, stakeholder relations, at Reena, as well as the convenor of the Intentional Community Consortium. Reena, celebrating our 50th anniversary next year, promotes dignity, individuality, independence, personal growth and community inclusion for people with diverse abilities within a framework of Jewish culture and values. Open to all, Reena provides supportive housing, programming and employment services to 1,000 individuals with

developmental disabilities, including autism and those with mental health challenges. Reena is the fourth-largest developmental services provider in Ontario, currently operating 32 group homes, supporting an additional 140 individuals in supported independent living units, 252 community participants in our daily programming, with over 700 full- and part-time employees, with an overall budget of over \$57 million.

The Intentional Community Consortium represents 26 agencies that are advocating for and building not-for-profit, deeply affordable housing for the most vulnerable in society: those with developmental disabilities. On behalf of those we support and more so for those waiting for support, individuals with varied abilities and specifically those with developmental disabilities and severe mental health challenges, I am pleased to be present to support Bill 23, An Act to amend various statutes, to revoke various regulations and to enact the Supporting Growth and Housing in York and Durham Regions Act, with some suggestions to improve the bill to support the most vulnerable: those with developmental disabilities.

We welcome provincial efforts to grapple with the affordable housing crisis, and this bill offers some exciting areas of progress for supportive and affordable housing. The waiver of development charges, parkland and other fees for non-profits who provide affordable housing will assist those entities to have greater flexibility in developing mixed-use housing and speed up the process. The waiver of education fees should also be investigated. The as-of-right permissions for secondary suites will enable innovative models for families who provide care and want to support independence.

Let me share a story about Gladys and Anthony. Gladys is a middle-aged woman and Anthony is her adult son. Both have developmental disabilities and both have been on a housing waiting list in York region for years. Both Gladys and Anthony live separately in the shelter system, receiving community supports. Due to their complex needs and lack of understanding of suitable accommodations by landlords and other tenants, their housing options fell through or fell apart until they found a home at Reena’s Lou Fruitman Reena Residence.

The existence of Lou Fruitman Reena Residence would not have been possible without the waiver of development charges and parkland fees, loans from the CMHC co-investment fund and the support of the province of Ontario. Under this act, projects like this would be able to move ahead with greater confidence in their financial model. The bill should enable only those charitable non-profits dedicated to deeply affordable models to access these benefits, promoting for-profit and charitable partnerships with a minimum 80% below-market benefit, promoting a plan where all levels of government work together to assist the most vulnerable rather than being separated and experiencing homelessness.

I am proud to report that Gladys and Anthony have been living at Lou Fruitman together with the right supports to thrive for the past number of months, while, unfortunately, thousands of others are waiting. More must be done with

all levels of government so that there can be more success stories.

Housing is a key social determinant of health and well-being. Housing is a fundamental right for all persons, including those with developmental disabilities. One size does not fit all. There is a wide range of needs, which demands a wide range of options. About 100,000 Ontario adults have a developmental disability. Eighteen per cent to 30% of those in homeless shelters have a developmental disability. Fifty per cent of those with developmental disabilities live with significant medical issues, and 90% of those with developmental disabilities live below the poverty line and require deeply affordable rent for adequate housing with supports, now \$520 in Ontario. Women with a developmental disability are 65% more likely to experience abuse than a typical female.

Honoured members of the committee, there are currently over 25,000 individuals with developmental disabilities in Ontario waiting for supportive housing, with an average of a 40-year waiting list, which is 10 times longer than the average person seeking affordable housing, although things are getting a bit better thanks to the targeted carve-out of the National Housing Strategy for the targeted vulnerable community.

Previous provincial governments did not provide targeted sustainable funding for developmental services housing. The National Housing Strategy bilateral agreement between Ontario and Canada commits a \$4.2-billion investment in affordable housing over 10 years in three distinct phases. The initial three-year phase launched in 2019-20 and will continue to the end of 2022. As Ontario evaluates progress to date and prepares for phase 2, there is an immediate and growing need to ensure that ongoing investment expands the supply of affordable, available supportive housing for those Ontarians.

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Investing in developmental services housing will directly contribute to the province's goal of ending hallway medicine by housing a number of ALC hospital patients and those incorrectly placed in long-term-care homes, for a far better quality of life at a much cheaper cost. We strongly recommend that the Ontario government amend Bill 23 by prioritizing investments in housing for individuals living with developmental disabilities by aligning provincial resources, committing 10% of National Housing Strategy funding to this critical need and the implementation of the forthcoming phases of the agreement, and by expanding the waiver of fees and charges for charitable housing providers, creating deeply affordable housing.

This level of investment, which is proportional to the percentage of individuals living with developmental disabilities on Ontario's affordable housing wait-list, will build more than 2,400 new units of housing—

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Twenty seconds.

Mr. Gary Gladstone:—help maintain the 12,691 units currently available and repair more than 2,500. The bottom line: a 10% allocation to those with developmental disabilities in phase 2 and 3 of the National Housing Strategy will make a difference. Thank you for the opportunity to speak

in support of Bill 23. For further information, check out reena.org.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you very much for the presentation.

Are you guys all ready? Okay. I'll go to MPP Bell from the official opposition to begin the questions.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you to all the presenters, online and in person, for coming in today. I really appreciate it. I've got questions for all three of you.

My first question is to Mr. Collins from the West End Home Builders' Association. I'm very interested in the West End Home Builders' Association's take on the missing-middle component in Bill 23. When I look at it, I certainly see it's taking a big step towards as-of-right zoning and allowing more homes, that gentle density that we're looking for, but I also think that we could go further. I am wanting to know what the West End Home Builders' Association's take is on the missing-middle piece in this bill.

Mr. Mike Collins-Williams: I agree with you: The missing middle is a huge opportunity for housing in communities across Ontario. It provides gentle density within existing neighbourhoods, the opportunity to have more transit-supportive neighbourhoods and—for some of those lower-density neighbourhoods, when we're thinking about retrofitting the suburbs—providing an enhanced customer base so that coffee shop on the corner or that local neighbourhood bar can survive.

Bill 23 is a great first step. I do think there needs to be more done in the future, but it does open the door to eliminate exclusionary zoning. We've seen this done in other jurisdictions, in particular the United States and Edmonton. Other jurisdictions are moving towards this to provide more housing options. A great thing about it is, rather than the larger companies, it allows individual homeowners and small-scale contractors to get involved in increasing housing supply, which is desperately needed.

What the bill does is allow up to three units—again, a great first step. Can we do more in the future? I hope so. I hope that this will lower the temperature with some municipal politicians who are opposed to it and lower the temperature with some ratepayer organizations that are opposed to it. There's a lot of NIMBYism out there, and my hope is that as some of these additional units start coming on-stream, people will realize it doesn't fundamentally alter the character of their neighbourhoods. It actually enhances the character of their neighbourhoods by allowing more people the opportunities.

In the future, I'm hopeful that we can go beyond the three-units first step, and also eliminate the parking requirements. My fear is that that's where municipalities will step in, that each of those three units does require a parking space. As you are retrofitting or providing more units on a smaller lot, you may be able to get that first or second car in there; it may be difficult to get the third one in there. We have seen in the past that municipalities, when they've been putting in provincial policies to implement secondary suites, have used parking requirements

basically to torpedo the ability for those secondary suites to go in.

Ms. Jessica Bell: My second question—I encourage you to be brief, because I have questions for all three presenters. We had a presenter come in yesterday, Carolyn Whitzman, and she talked about the need for municipalities to have targets and the province to have targets that aren't just based on the number of 1.5 million but drill down into subtargets: square footage, so there are targets based on square footage so we can get more family-sized homes; as well as targets based on income, so lower-income, moderate-income people who are really priced out of the housing market see these 1.5-million-home targets and they can see themselves in some of these homes that are being built.

What do you think of the idea of having subtargets for municipalities or the province?

Mr. Mike Collins-Williams: In my attempt to be brief, I understand that Bill 23 does have some overarching targets. My hometown of Hamilton has a target of 47,000 units over the next decade. I guess we're not far enough along in the process to know whether it's just a 47,000-unit target or whether there will be subtargets in terms of what municipalities have to achieve. I think, again, the target is a great first step, but if we're going to be able to measure progress, more data is good. I'm all about more data, more information.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you for that answer.

My next question is to Chandra Sharma from the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority—I apologize if I said your name incorrectly. What areas does your conservation authority want to protect in the Niagara region and why?

Ms. Chandra Sharma: Thank you for the question. As you've heard from me, I think our most pressing issue right now is the wetlands that are being proposed and linked to Bill 23. I don't know if you've had an opportunity to see some of these wetlands. Wetlands do constitute a major part of the Niagara region natural heritage. You can see it from here. I have two different maps here that will give you a picture of the kind of impacts we are talking about. I think that's very important. We do want to work with the province on improving the complexing and scoring criteria, and conservation authorities can be a partner.

The other area we want to protect is conservation authorities' regulatory roles. Like I said, it's precedent-setting and it may not achieve the intended purpose, because there's lots that goes into making decisions on natural hazards. You have to understand, conservation authorities employ a very skilled workforce—water resources engineers, hydrogeologists, technical people, planning ecologists—and these all come together with planners in making those decisions. We have layers and layers of data. We look at upstream/downstream concepts. We run models in order to make decisions. We look at groundwater. I don't think our municipalities are ready, with all this information, to interpret it and hire so many people to do it. I don't even know if our industry is ready to do that. So if you are going to download or upload the hazard management role, it's going to cause more delays.

I think we can be partners to the solution. We have done it in the past. I think that should be maintained. That was our second recommendation. The third recommendation was in regard to the—

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): You've got 55 seconds. *Interjection.*

Ms. Chandra Sharma: The MOU is with the municipalities, yes.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): You can keep going if you want. Forty seconds.

Ms. Chandra Sharma: Okay. The third question was in regard to our ability to support local municipalities with natural heritage and stormwater use, for the same reasons that I just listed here.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you for coming in and sharing your expertise today.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I'll now turn to MPP McMahon for her four and a half minutes, please.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you to everyone for coming in, introducing yourselves to us and sharing your stories and experiences and knowledge. I really appreciate you taking the time.

I'm going to continue on the line of questioning to Chandra and the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, because this bill is very concerning for conservation authorities. I'm sure you've not been getting much sleep.

First of all, going back on something you just said about the highly skilled workforce within the conservation authorities, if you could just list some of those roles again for me.

Ms. Chandra Sharma: Thank you for that question, MPP McMahon. If you look at a typical conservation authority, we have two roles, as everybody understands. We have roles within the provincial policy statement, as a commenting agency to municipalities, and we have a role under section 28 of the Conservation Authorities Act on issuing planning permits. For us to be able to deliver on those roles effectively—and those hazard areas within a conservation authority constitute wetlands, flood plains, shorelines; shorelines like Lake Erie, if you're looking at Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority. The people we employ need to be highly skilled in understanding—

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: And, sorry, their roles—because I only have four and a half minutes.

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Ms. Chandra Sharma: Okay, the roles. We have water resources engineers. We have hydrogeologists and geologists. We have planning ecologists. We have planners. We have shoreline experts. We have GIS experts, who update the data and analyze the data. We have integrated water resource specialists. These are the kinds of positions we have.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: So then do you think, if we hand this rollover to the 444 municipalities in Ontario—for them to pick up that workload, would they have, in your experience, capacity or experience or resources or expertise to perform those duties?

Ms. Chandra Sharma: I just want to remind everyone that this capacity within 36 authorities who are serving the

444 municipalities has been developed over 70 years, and there is a network of 36 conservation authorities that rely on the data and peer support and reviews all together. So we are a valuable resource in the province to help in natural hazard management. It's based on years of flood plain mapping. Each conservation authority has updated their flood plain maps and shoreline maps and watershed plans. I'm not saying municipalities cannot develop that, but it will take years.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Okay. Thanks. And, in a minute—that's all I have left. We do a lot of inside baseball stuff here. Just to the average Joe, if you can explain, elaborate on what a wetland complex is and why it's so important, in one minute.

Ms. Chandra Sharma: A wetland complex is a unit of wetlands that are functionally linked with each other. Together, these wetlands perform important functions, managing the hydrology of the natural area, habitat functions and supporting particular wildlife. I think that's the most simple way of explaining it.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Fabulous. How worried are the conservation authorities with this current climate emergency we're in?

Ms. Chandra Sharma: Well, as you know, conservation authorities have inherently been in the business of adaptive management. That's the work we do, and the reason why Ontario hasn't seen the type of climate impacts Calgary and Alberta have seen is because of conservation authorities, because when we had extreme storms here, we were prepared.

We are worried. We are undertaking a variety of technical updates to understand the impacts on local watersheds so we can provide that valuable input and technical advice to our municipal partners.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you very much—right on time.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you so much. I'll move over to the government side. MPP Pang.

Mr. Billy Pang: Thank you, Madam Chair. Through you, my first question is for the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority. Our government understands the importance of the role conservation authorities play in communities and how you are serving our communities. We will continue to work with you in order to finalize regulatory changes.

Having said that, many of our constituency offices across the province regularly receive emails, letters and phone calls from home builders and private individuals noting delays in receiving CA approvals. We've heard similar concerns in various public consultations over the last four years. Now, the province has committed to build 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years. It's not that we want to build to that goal, but there's a need. There's a housing crisis here. So to achieve that goal, we have heard that municipalities and CAs need to accelerate approvals and address fees to facilitate development. Bill 23 and the housing supply action plan include several proposals to address this concern.

So my question is: I would like to know if conservation authorities have any plans to streamline and speed up the

approvals to catch up to 1.5 million homes in 10 years and also lower the development costs to deal with the housing crisis.

Ms. Chandra Sharma: Thank you, MPP Pang. You'll be really pleased to hear that we are ahead of the curve on this. We are already working on this, and there have been several improvements made by many conservation authorities.

I want to tell everyone that we have client services standards that were put in place. If you go to the Conservation Ontario website, you'll see the data and statistics collected every year. Just last year, in 2021, 91% of our permits were issued in high-growth conservation authorities within provincial timelines, the timelines that were dictated. So we are collecting that data; we are continuously improving.

In 2022, we also came up with a protocol to expedite and streamline our planned review functions with municipalities, and we're working on that protocol. So we are on it. We are proactive. We know this is coming and we're getting ready, working with our municipal partners.

Now, I should also say that we're not perfect. Some files are very, very complex, and sometimes complete applications are not delivered. That causes a lot of delay, because you want to get it right and there's a lot of back and forth on this. Having said that, we are totally committed to improving the process and putting all resources in place to expedite the process and work with the province.

Mr. Billy Pang: Having said that, can you explain more or expand more about what the plan is on catching up? Because yes, we are catching up, but I didn't hear any—

Ms. Chandra Sharma: Well, the plan is to adequately resource staffing within the conservation authorities. I would say most conservation authorities do not have the tax base, and they are understaffed when it comes to doing these types of things.

The other thing is working with our umbrella agency, Conservation Ontario, to make improvements to the process we already have, the client services streaming protocol process. We manage it every year. We review it every year. We know where the gaps are, and we are continuously working together, all 36 conservation authorities, in doing that.

Now, not only the high-growth CAs—this protocol was originally developed for high-growth CAs. Conservation Ontario has already extended this protocol to non-high-growth CAs, so every conservation authority should monitor this. So I can assure you we're on it. We're working on it. We are putting a lot of things in place.

Mr. Billy Pang: You mentioned how you saw the gaps, but what's the most concerning gap that you're aware of?

Ms. Chandra Sharma: Let me explain the situation with conservation authorities, and it relates to the fees. Currently, conservation authorities—first of all, Watson did a study. Watson consulting, as everybody knows, are a third-party provider that does planned review fee analysis for most municipalities. Conservation authorities deployed Watson, and they did a study.

Conservation authorities fees, typically, are 0.1% of the total cost of a new home, just so everybody is on the same

page on that. At this present time—I would say not right now; over the past six years—NPCA was only collecting 25% or 26% of the cost. We were 70% behind, and as a result we were not able to adequately put all the staffing in place to expedite these things. So these are the gaps. We know these gaps. We have studied these gaps. We're doing our best to find a way to help everyone.

Mr. Billy Pang: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I want to pass my time to—

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): There's two more minutes, so if there's anybody—MPP Sabawy.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I would like to clarify something. In the beginning, you were explaining part of the work the conservation authorities do, and you said you have multiple specialists in different directions. In your words, "It could take years." You said that.

Ms. Chandra Sharma: Yes.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: You said that it could take years. If one step of the process or the approval process could take years, how do you see that going to help in accelerating building housing?

Ms. Chandra Sharma: Thank you for your question. Let me clarify: I said it took 70 years to get to the level of expertise and data that conservation authorities currently own to do their job effectively. It takes time, right? I'm not saying it will take us many years to build that expertise—that expertise to do natural hazard management and provide technical support to municipalities is there with conservation authorities. Many of them have MOUs and they are currently undertaking that work effectively. So I hope that helps.

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The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): One minute remaining.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Thank you very much.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): MPP Thanigasalam.

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Thank you, Madam Chair. Within that one minute: First of all, thank you to all the presenters—we really appreciate your feedback—for your time.

My quick question—I will turn it to Mike. Mike, thank you for being here. This bill has a bold action plan of 1.5 million homes in the next decade and these changes are designed to lower the cost of building the houses. My question to you is, what additional changes are needed to enable builders to build more types of housing that Ontarians are calling for? For example, the ground-related housing, as well as the family-sized condominium units: What actions are needed to get it done faster and cost-effectively?

Mr. Mike Collins-Williams: In probably the few seconds I have: greater flexibility within zoning. There's a lot the province can do, but ultimately, the final approval comes at the municipal level. Zoning in many municipalities essentially shrink-wraps sites and there's not a lot of flexibility there, which results in long processes. If there's greater zoning, particularly—

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I'm going to have to cut you off, sorry. Long question, short time.

Over to the official opposition. MPP Harden.

Mr. Joel Harden: Thanks very much to all the presenters from this afternoon. I have to say, friends from Reena house, it's nice to have a disability perspective in this conversation. This is one of the first opportunities that we've had that. Certainly, what we see in our community in Ottawa and what I've heard from around the province is that there's a real lack of assisted living spaces, and you've done a lot in this city to make a difference in that. So I want to congratulate you for that.

Here's my question, however: First of all, just for clarification for the committee's work, can you describe your role in providing supportive housing for persons with disabilities? Are you simply a property manager or do you also build?

Mr. Gary Gladstone: No, we build. We are the property manager. We build; we offer support. We're funded by MCCSS. We have, as I said, 32 group homes. We have three intentional communities. Think of those as apartment buildings. Two have been built; one is in progress. We support individuals in their own residences, as well. We support independent living programs. We offer day programs, both virtual and in congregate care, etc.

Mr. Joel Harden: Okay. What I've heard from folks back home—and in a previous capacity, I was the provincial critic for persons with disabilities, so I did a little bit of a tour of the province. What I kept hearing from persons with disabilities is when they couldn't find supportive housing, they were often staying with family for long periods of time and parents are getting burnt-out because parents were becoming personal caregivers for adult children and that entailed a significant challenge.

I was also hearing that sometimes people were finding placements as they could within existing rental housing stock, which is not necessarily adequate in many cases for needs with persons with disabilities. So I'm wondering what you see in Bill 23 that's going to help us meet that urgent need for more supportive housing for persons with disabilities, and if it could be improved, how would you suggest to improve it?

Mr. Gary Gladstone: Thank you very much and, yes, as I indicated, there is a 40-year wait for appropriate affordable housing with supports in the province and it needs to stop. We need to build more. Waiving the development charges, having the secondary suites will make it easier, but in terms of what will make the real big difference, it's what I refer to as the 10% ask. As the provincial government is negotiating with Canada—the Ontario-Canada benefit of the co-investment fund of the National Housing Strategy—allocate 10% of all housing dollars down to the service managers to assist those with developmental disabilities. Be it in the form of rent supplement, be it in the form of capital subsidies—whatever, and however, the local service managers and developmental service agencies feel will assist best. We'll take care of that, allowing the province to use federal government funds in order to take care of its most vulnerable population.

Mr. Joel Harden: Okay. Now, take this as a friendly question, okay? I do not mean it to be—

Mr. Gary Gladstone: I've got friends all around the room.

Mr. Joel Harden: I can tell, I can tell. But I'm wondering if there isn't a tension between what you're congratulating here in Bill 23 around the developer charges and the taking down of them—I understand you're a builder and ways to get building done quicker are always well received, but in our city, one of the biggest entities that has taken advantage of developer charges to build supportive housing for persons with disabilities is a counterpart organization called the Centretown Citizens Ottawa Corp. They're actually our landlords; it's where our community office is back home.

They've accessed our affordable housing fund—it's a \$14-million fund—but what I'm hearing from city officials is that this bill is going to remove \$26 million from the city coffers. It exceeds what we currently spend and allocate toward affordable housing, where we partner with your counterparts in our city. The Reenas of Ottawa, for our community, are CCOC and other groups like Participation House—other groups like that.

We can agree to disagree on this, but is there not a tension between—we can always hope the federal government is going to come with that 10%, but I won't hold my breath. What we have in front of us, though, is this revenue from development charges. Is it a mistake to cut that revenue and put us in a bit of a hole with municipal finances when we've seen that money actually be put to good use?

Mr. Gary Gladstone: If I can clarify a bit for you: First of all, the 10% that I'm suggesting—the federal government will be providing 100 cents on the dollar to the province as part of—

Mr. Joel Harden: The tentative plan.

Mr. Gary Gladstone: —the Canada-Ontario agreement. All I'm asking for, on behalf of OASIS, the second organization, as well, is that 10% be allocated to those with developmental disabilities to help the issue.

I will tell you: Our most recent build, the Lou Fruitman Reena Residence, would not have been able to be built for deeply affordable housing—as I indicated, 90% of those with developmental disabilities live below the poverty line, are on ODSP, and now the rate has gone up to \$520. Had we not had development charges waived on the building of Lou Fruitman Reena Residence and in our other intentional community, the Reena Community Residence, we would not be able to provide deeply affordable housing, even though the community and our philanthropic arm have raised millions of dollars towards the project—

Mr. Joel Harden: You're very successful fundraisers. I agree.

Mr. Gary Gladstone: —so it is vitally important that those building not-for-profit, deeply affordable housing have the development charges waived, absolutely.

Mr. Joel Harden: Chair, how much time do I have left?

The Acting Chair (Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal): A minute and 30.

Mr. Joel Harden: Thank you.

I think you're making a powerful case to potentially waive development charges on a meritorious basis. Reena would seem to be perfectly suitable to make that case. But Bill 23 is proposing a much more across-the-board

approach with development charges, and a \$26-million hit to the city of Ottawa's finances is going to put us in a massive hole. So what about a compromise between supporting Bill 23's efforts to diminish development charges across the board to a more focused approach, supporting organizations like yours or CCOC or Participation House?

Mr. Gary Gladstone: I'll speak to that which I know best. I think it's imperative that those building affordable housing—charities and non-profits alike, who have been doing it for years—have development charges waived. And I would also like, as I indicated, to have a look at why education charges don't get waived as well.

Mr. Joel Harden: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you so much. MPP McMahon, please, for four and a half minutes.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you very much. This is great, listening to all your answers to these questions.

My first question is for Mike from the West End Home Builders' Association. Thanks for coming in. Your builders, I'm sure, are looking forward to what's upon us with climate change and whatnot, and probably building sustainably—for many reasons, but economically as well. I'm just wondering, because we were hearing this morning from the chief planner of Toronto and others how industry is on board with building homes sustainably, if you can speak to that: about your members, their mindset on that, and their thoughts and your thoughts on the Toronto Green Standard.

Mr. Mike Collins-Williams: Absolutely. Home construction in Ontario is highly innovative. It's always looking at new technologies, design materials and different design methodologies. We're not throwing up a bunch of sticks and bricks on a site. A home now is a complicated machine, with different evolutions of the building code.

Speaking to the association specifically: Our provincial association, the Ontario Home Builders' Association, actually owns the EnerQuality Corp., which delivers the Energy Star for New Homes program, does a lot of builder training and does the third-party verification in partnership with the Canadian Energy Efficiency Alliance.

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At a national level, the Canadian Home Builders' Association, a few years ago, started up a net-zero housing council that brings together the actual builders and developers, along with suppliers, manufacturers—everybody from the people making the windows to the insulation etc. The focus there is that a lot of the net zero that's been built in the past has been highly customized, specialized builders—and trying to really scale up so that that can be done on scale for production builders.

When it comes to the building code, we know that stability in the building code is critical and it needs to be consistent across the province. That's why we have an Ontario building code, not 444 different municipal building codes. The Ontario building code—any code is open to criticism—is the most advanced in Canada when it comes to energy efficiency requirements.

We're actually going through a process right now where the Ontario code is being harmonized with the national code. One of the biggest hiccups is that we're so far ahead

of every other province in terms of energy efficiency that the provincial government has slowed down that a little bit, because we don't want to fall behind. When you look across North America, we're probably, actually, in the top five in North America.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: So you see value in the Toronto Green Standard, then, in retaining it?

Mr. Mike Collins-Williams: I see value in having a standard across the province or a standard across the country rather than having 444 different sets of rules. I recognize that Toronto is more sophisticated than some other municipalities. My concern is primarily representing the Hamilton-Burlington area.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I just have to wrap it up because I only have two minutes. What's your concern, in 30 seconds?

Mr. Mike Collins-Williams: That there are a lot of smaller, less sophisticated municipalities bringing in different standards and they don't understand the building science.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Okay, so possible green standards across the province—great.

Let's just do a rapid-fire: one piece of advice for us as we consider Bill 23, in under a minute and a half or so. I want to start with Gary Gladstone, and I want to compliment you for coming in and the great work you're doing for our society and for everyone. Thanks. So something for us to consider, quickly—sage advice.

Mr. Gary Gladstone: The 10%—I'll just keep on repeating it: to allocate 10% of every housing dollar to those with developmental disabilities. That's the only way we're going to solve it. That's the only way the most vulnerable in society will have an appropriate place to live. It can be done without cost to the province, because it's coming from the feds. Let's just do it.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you. Chandra?

Ms. Chandra Sharma: I would say, let's not remove what's working well. Let's invest in what we have: conservation authorities as an asset. Let's not create technical roadblocks to defeat the whole purpose of what we're trying to do here. So investing in conservation authorities—

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you very much. We'll now go to the government side. MPP Sabawy, please go ahead.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: My question is for Gary, quickly. First of all, I would like to thank you for coming and presenting and for the great work you're doing. Your organization has been doing that work for a period of time. You've already helped 1,000 individuals who had this. Don't you see in Bill 23 that the removing of the DCs could promote more interest in your work and more fundraising and more initiative projects to come? That it's much easier to kick-start a project?

Mr. Gary Gladstone: There is no question that anyone who is building truly non-profit affordable housing should have all development charges waived. Reena has been very fortunate in our builds. We have gone through the

municipality. They have been waived, but through a lot of effort.

The Intentional Community Consortium, representing 26 agencies across the province—many of them are starting to build now—will find it much, much easier to build. And, again, deeply affordable, which is what is needed. As long as they're doing that, the charges should be waived, absolutely.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Thank you very much. I will give the rest of the time to Vijay.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): MPP Grewal?

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: First of all, welcome, all of you. Thank you for being here.

Chair, how are we doing on time?

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): We have six minutes.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Okay, so three minutes for me, and then I'll share three minutes with MPP Smith.

My first question is going to be for Ms. Sharma from the conservation authority. Ms. Sharma, I wanted you to talk to us about the core mandate of the conservation authority. I'm not talking about the expanded mandate but the actual core purpose, if you could briefly summarize that in about a couple of sentences or so.

Ms. Chandra Sharma: Thank you. I actually have how it's defined in the Conservation Authorities Act, section 20(1):

“The objects of an authority are to provide, in the area over which it has jurisdiction,

“(a) the mandatory programs and services required under section 21.1”—and those include hazard management, source protection and land management;

“(b) any municipal programs and services that may be provided under section 21.1.1”—so we could offer programs and services as—

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Ms. Sharma, to simplify, for the sake of time, I would say flood mitigation, protecting wetlands, protecting green areas—

Ms. Chandra Sharma: Managing land—

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: —managing land. So nature of all those sorts would fall into your principal core mandate that you have now. Does Bill 23, as it's put, still allow you to fulfill your current core mandate?

Ms. Chandra Sharma: I don't think so, because taking the regulatory authority from the conservation authority in addressing natural hazards as part of permitting will take that away.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Ms. Sharma, once again, because we're being quick on time, when it comes to protecting properties for flood mitigation, will Bill 23 impose implications on doing that?

Ms. Chandra Sharma: Yes.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: So you will not be able to properly identify properties for flood mitigation if Bill 23 is passed? Is that what you're saying?

Ms. Chandra Sharma: No. Our fear is that properties will be built in wetlands and flood plains.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: The conversation will still continue, but it has to deal with your core mandate.

The core mandate of the conservation authority is to make sure that properties are protected from those particular areas. That part is not being touched in any way. You still have the ability to do that. I understand that your fees are going to be frozen for a while. I understand that changes are coming your way, but you're still going to be able to fulfill your core mandate. Is that correct?

Ms. Chandra Sharma: Protecting property, yes, but we do it in many ways. Issuing permits under section 28 and approving permits under the Planning Act is one of them, and this bill impacts that.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Yes, it definitely does impact that, but it still allows you to fulfill your duties in your core mandate. Is that correct?

Ms. Chandra Sharma: Of course there are many things in the core mandate, but this impacts a major part of it.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: It does impact the broad scope, but if we narrow it down to the basics of it, it still allows you to carry out those duties, right? Correct?

Ms. Chandra Sharma: Well, conservation authorities exist for a variety of reasons. What's proposed in Bill 23 is about what is the regulatory responsibility of conservation authorities. It's being impacted from this, the whole—

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Thank you, Ms. Sharma.

With the remaining time, I would like to move it over to Mr. Collins-Williams. My question to you, sir, is simple: Do you believe that the changes that are being brought forward in Bill 23, especially the incentives that are being given to the building community—is that sufficient to spur development in various areas compared to how things operate today?

Mr. Mike Collins-Williams: I think it's a vast improvement in terms of how things operate today. I was encouraged prior to the election campaign that Minister Clark said that there would be a hosing supply action plan each and every year going forward. There are no silver bullets. This is a complicated situation that we've gotten into. But the plan before us today is a bold plan that is a significant step forward, and I look forward to the plan being implemented and further conversations with the provincial government and our partners at municipalities and conservation authorities on additional improvements that can be made over time.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Thank you so much. I'd like to pass over the remaining time to MPP Smith.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): MPP Smith, two minutes.

Ms. Laura Smith: I want to thank everyone for being here today, specifically Mr. Gladstone. I'm very fortunate to have members of my own community in the chamber here today. Mr. Gladstone is part of a wonderful organization that our government supported, and I'm a very proud, let's just say, supporter, because when we support our not-for-profits, they support us.

Going forward, you mentioned our action plan would help those in need by increasing Ontario's affordable housing supply—so in tax incentives. Also, not-for-profit housing developments would not have to pay development charges and parkland dedication levies. Affordable housing would

also continue to be supported through the creation of more affordable housing units. I've actually been very fortunate to go to one of these homes that are in a neighbourhood and Reena has multiple units within one dwelling.

1700

I wanted you, if there's time, to comment on gentle density with reference to Bill 23, regarding group homes and supported living apartments across the GTA and, of course, Thornhill, if the time remains.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): About 20 seconds; give it a shot.

Mr. Gary Gladstone: Absolutely. The first thing I will just reiterate is the 10%, which will allow us to continue to build. In terms of the gentle density, it is so important. Individuals are being supported by family members at home. Group homes of three, four, five, seven, 12 individuals in a home, cared for appropriately, supported and integrated fully into the community: The more that we can do of that, the better off we'll be.

In terms of the multi-unit buildings—100%, fit right into a community without problems. There are many places we have duplexes and triplexes. We can't in Thornhill—why not? This will help us.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Sorry, we're out of time. I thank the presenters for this round. I really appreciate you coming. It's getting late in the day, so thank you. Take a moment to go from the table and safe travels home.

THE SHIFT

TOWN OF THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

CONFEDERATION OF RESIDENT AND RATEPAYER ASSOCIATIONS IN TORONTO

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I would take this opportunity to invite the next round. I think we only have one in-person, the town of Blue Mountains, so when you get a chance and there's space, please join us at the table. I believe the Shift and the Confederation of Resident and Ratepayer Associations are going to be virtual with us on the screen. Sorry for a bit of noise in the background as we just do the adjustments.

I'm going to ask the Shift if they would start in a moment, and just remind the presenters that there are up to seven minutes for presentations. Just please state your name near the beginning of your presentation.

So I would ask the Shift if they would start. Go ahead.

Ms. Leilani Farha: I'm Leilani Farha, the global director of the Shift. Thanks to the committee for allowing me to present today. For almost 10 years, I've been reviewing government housing policy and legislation from around the world to determine if it complies with international human rights law, including for six years as the United Nations special rapporteur on the right to housing.

Governments often roll their eyes at the mention of the United Nations and human rights, but before you dismiss my comments, I will remind you that human rights were born in 1948 after World War II, when the international

community recognized that the world had kind of gone astray and needed a moral compass, that for countries to develop, to grow economically and in other ways in a way that would be peaceful and positive required a new set of laws.

At that time and thereafter, states, including Canada, agreed that the right of adequate housing was one of those laws—that same right that is now found in Canada's National Housing Strategy Act and that governs Canada's housing policy. The right to housing is defined as housing that is affordable based on household income, housing that provides security of tenure and housing that's habitable, in good repair.

So the question I put to myself, as you should have done when drafting Bill 23, is this: Does the bill uphold the government of Ontario's international and domestic human rights obligations with respect to the requirements of housing? The short answer is, unfortunately, it does not. It is clear that the bill was not written to produce human rights outcomes.

The central problem, from my point of view, is the legislation focuses on units and developers—developers of units—instead of on people and those who most need the units. Human rights require a focus on the latter. In this country, that would mean Indigenous, poor, homeless, racialized, migrant and refugee, disabled and LGBTQ2S populations, as well as women and particular groups of women. Had these people and their housing needs been centred, the legislation would have looked entirely different. As immediate and priority issues, it might have come up with bold and creative measures to work with other orders of government and the non-profit sector to house homeless people, and would have emphasized addressing those thousands and thousands in core housing need. It would have enhanced protection and capped the profitability of development.

Catering mostly to developers, the bill not only will fail to address the housing crisis affecting every single municipality in the province, it establishes measures that may exacerbate it. I am conscious that speakers before me have raised similar issues, albeit not necessarily in a human rights frame, but you can rely on their numbers and statistics to verify my points.

First, empowering the province to eliminate rental replacement bylaws will erode affordable housing in Ontario's cities. The destruction of affordable units without replacing them would be considered a retrogressive step under international human rights law and is strictly prohibited. The point of human rights protections is that governments should always be moving forward, striving for more. By taking away affordable units, that's an obvious step backward. You should remove this provision.

Limiting municipalities to not more than 5% inclusionary zoning is also inconsistent with human rights and retrogressive. Inclusionary zoning is a tool to assist in the provision of affordable housing. Why would you limit it so severely? I was just talking to a lawyer in Munich, Germany, who says that their city just raised inclusionary zoning percentages to 60%. Inclusionary zoning is the type

of legislation that can help ensure more affordable units are available, and is thus human rights-compliant. Some municipalities already have inclusionary zoning that is higher than 5%, which means this policy is also retrogressive and contrary to your international and national human rights obligations. You should raise the cap to a reasonable limit.

With respect to the provisions regarding development charges, I agree that DCs could be waived or used as an incentive for the building of non-profit housing, of deeply affordable housing. However, decreasing DCs for market accommodation deprives municipalities of resources that they desperately need for infrastructure and for affordable housing. I doubt very highly that any savings incurred by developers will be passed on to consumers. This requires review.

The affordability measures in Bill 23 are contrary to the definition of affordability under international human rights law. Tying it to what a market can command is not consistent with human rights. You've also capped affordability to 25 years, and affordability should be in perpetuity.

Lastly, you're limiting access of third-party appeals to the tribunal. This obviously undermines democratic principles, as well as the notion of access to justice, which is a cornerstone of the right to housing. This provision is also retrogressive, removing an available avenue. This provision—

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Sixty seconds.

Ms. Leilani Farha: Thank you—should be reconsidered. I think there are less far-reaching avenues to ensure the tribunal functions well.

In closing, Bill 23 seems to be based on some version of trickle-down economic theory. You've diagnosed the housing crisis as a lack of supply writ large, and you figure if developers are incentivized to build, build, build, that will flood the market with supply and prices will come down. I remind you that trickle-down theories have been debunked, even by the IMF, and that housing continues to defy Econ 101. And even if trickle-down were to work, how long will it take for the trickle to reach homeless people? How long do you expect people to live in their cars, in shelters or in tents in parks?

Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you very much for your presentation.

We will now move on to the town of Blue Mountains, please.

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Mr. Rob Sampson: I appreciate the invitation to be here. I'm Rob Sampson, a councillor in the town of the Blue Mountains and past chair of the Blue Mountains Attainable Housing Corp. With me in the gallery today is mayor-elect Andrea Matrosovs, who is attending and watching. The mayor sends his regrets; he was unable to attend so he's sent me in his stead.

There was a presentation we submitted. I'm not going to read it. I'm going to speak to it, if I can, since we have a short amount of time. I think there's some good intentions in this bill, some unintended consequences we would

like to draw your attention to and some missed opportunities where I think some further work is needed. The key points that I will speak to today: The first being, faster approvals may not produce the desired results. I say that because our experience is that builders tend to build, and prefer to build, the large expensive homes because that's, frankly, where the money is.

The definition of "attainable and affordable": It's excellent. I have been calling, and our town has been calling, for that definition for some time. However, if you take a look at our average resale price of about \$1.8 million, 80% of that might not meet people's definition of "attainability." We might need some refinement and some local ability to adjust that definition, even though the definition provincially can stay within the general context.

The elimination of DC charges and spending: I have been watching some of the presentations over the last couple of days. I'm going to have some comments further on that. The general concept here is there is a risk of swapping capital cost-related revenue sources, DC, to an operating revenue base, being the property tax base. The fundamental principle of corporate finances: finance long-term assets with long-term revenue sources, short-term assets with short-term revenue sources. The proposal here may be somewhat stretching that.

The next point is that short-term accommodation rentals may start to cannibalize some of the new long-term rentals that are generated as a result of this bill, and that will not actually help the problem. In our particular area, short-term rentals are a huge issue.

And the final point: Municipalities, in my view and in this town's view, have given, at best, a casual glance, if I can, to section 1.4.3 of the provincial policy statement. I'm going to read it: "Planning authorities shall provide for an appropriate range and mix of housing options and densities to meet projected market-based and affordable housing needs of current and future residents of the regional market area by:

"(a) establishing and implementing minimum targets for the provision of housing which is affordable to low and moderate income households and which aligns with applicable housing and homelessness plans." It goes on.

But we are actually directed—we are the planning authorities—to set targets. I will challenge municipalities that come before you and, in your research, to find many municipalities who have done that. And, frankly, the town of Blue Mountains is also guilty of that. We've recently started to set those targets. We have had some challenges in having those targets accepted by the land tribunal. But municipalities wear some of the blame here. You won't hear that, by the way, from AMO.

Scope of the problem: Just quickly, we are the second-fastest growing municipality in Canada, by the census, the small little town of Blue Mountains. In the last four years, we built 1,200 homes—none of them affordable and none of them purpose-built rentals. There's a chart there that will show you that the average building permit was for a 3,100-square-foot home and a building permit value—just the building alone—of \$616,000. We are happy to build

homes faster but adding more 3,100-square-foot homes is not going to solve the affordability crisis. The next chart will actually show you the price ranges of the houses over the last couple of years.

Development charges: I've heard a lot about development charges of late. Let me give you some context here. Each household in Ontario is currently supported by about \$81,000 in municipal infrastructure assets. That number comes from census Canada, which gives us the number of houses, and the FAO, which provides statistics on municipal assets—currently, \$484 billion in municipal infrastructure assets. So if you're going to build 1.5 million homes and each one is going to need \$81,000 in municipal infrastructure, that is a total requirement of about \$120 billion in new municipal infrastructure that needs to be spent to support the 1.5 million homes: roads, fire departments, fire trucks, hospitals sometimes, recreation centres, and it goes on. That's the context under which the DC discussion is.

In the town of the Blue Mountains, we have \$35 million in DCs in reserve right now, all allocated. In fact, if you take away the approved projects of \$48 million, we have a deficit in our total DC reserve account of \$6.8 million. Who's going to pay for that?

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Sixty seconds.

Mr. Rob Sampson: My argument and our town's position is that it should not be put on the property tax base. There need to be amendments to the DC Act to allow the DC shortfall to be spread back onto, frankly, the market-based homes. It's a much larger revenue base. In our town, it's over \$600 million. Our property tax base is \$18 million.

Madam Chair, I think I'm running out of time. I want to get to a final recommendation which we have.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Twenty seconds.

Mr. Rob Sampson: Twenty seconds? I want the committee to take a serious look at our proposal for an attainable housing credit program, which is a mix of inclusionary zoning and the transfer of development right concepts that is being used in the US now in many jurisdictions to do exactly this: It's to encourage the development of attainable units.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you very much for your presentation.

We'll now move on to the Confederation of Resident and Ratepayer Associations in Toronto. Please start your presentation.

Mr. William Roberts: Yes. My name is William Roberts. I'm going to be four minutes, and Veronica Wynne, who is also with me, will be three minutes. I'm not going to get through my whole paper, but briefly, CORRA came into existence back after the amalgamation of the village of Forest Hill, the village of Swansea and the city of Toronto into the new city of Toronto. In the late 1960s, planning was basically by developers and the development department, and representatives of the communities got short shrift. There were issues with highways coming in, ravines being developed and other matters, and caught between loss of heritage buildings.

Bill 23 effectively returns us back to the times of the 1960s, when there was a general revolt by ratepayers once

they understood they would be stripped of their rights. This will generate the same problem. But not only that, it's a very flawed bill. Going back to my days in law school, administrative 101: Committees of adjustment are considered to be judicial entities, and I cite the court case for that. As a judicial entity, they are required to follow the principles of natural justice and fairness.

The present way the city of Toronto committees of adjustment work—and I don't know how it is in other municipalities—is that they deal with 30 to 60 items in a single day. Unopposed items are dealt with in five to 10 minutes; opposed items in roughly 15 minutes to half an hour. We present our speech for five minutes, the opposition speaks for five minutes and then the presenter gets to rebut for five minutes. There is no right of cross-examination in the process, and when the committee renders a decision, it's boilerplate with no reasoning.

The judicial review act and the Statutory Powers Procedure Act are very clear, and I cite the statutes. There is a right to be represented. There is a right to present evidence, to have experts and to make submissions. There is a right to cross-examine the other side. Finally, the committee must render written decisions if requested, and those written decisions must follow the Rosedale Valley golf club requirement of properly dealing with each of the four tests.

Whether that occurs now—I'm going to tell you what's going to happen. Maybe for a year the developers will have fun, and then somebody, somewhere, will appeal to the courts, and the courts will require every committee of adjustment in the province of Ontario to follow the requirements. It used to be—and why they were exempted was the appeal to the OMB or the TLAB, now the OLT. So the court stepped back, saying, "You have a right to have a full hearing de novo, so we will not interfere at the committee of adjustment level."

1720

Right now it's fairly expeditious. Right now most people can't afford to appeal, and so the result is very few matters go to the TLAB or the OLT. Effectively what you're going to do now is make sure applications will take years, and God help you when you do that. It will actually stop development.

There are other problems with the legislation, which I touched on, but I'm going to stop now to allow Veronica Wynne to make her presentation. I may be short, but I'm not going to overrun.

Ms. Veronica Wynne: [*Inaudible*] the Confederation of Resident and Ratepayer Associations in Toronto, and I live in the Swansea area in Toronto.

Our main concern is rights denied and rights retrieved. We see a pattern with this government. First of all, families have been denied their right to sue private long-term-care facilities where their loved ones have suffered neglect or abuse. Education support staff had their right to strike removed, but quickly restored when CUPE came on the scene. And here we are advocating for our neighbourhoods and communities because our third-party rights of appeal have been removed at all levels.

Up to the arrival of Bill 23, there was some prohibition in there, but nothing like this that will put everything in the

saddle. If we are denying third-party right of appeal, we will find another way to exert the right legally. Of course, we fully support and would be really interested in pursuing Mr. Roberts's suggestion because, if this third-party right of appeal is not restored, our next stop is the administrative law courts.

The reason why: This right of appeal impacts everything because both the city and the province have full rein, and we just have to sit back and fume.

Municipal hurdles and compromises: The city of Toronto development department—and I call it the development department because they stopped doing any planning. Anyway, our planners and legal counsel have taken advantage of the prohibition of third-party right of appeal already in the Planning Act as follows. There were seven residents' associations who appealed the project called Garden Suites. We appealed it because we wanted to firm up the ambiguities in the way that the planning had been defined because we wanted to protect those rentals that one of the previous speakers talked about. Obviously, if those ambiguities weren't firmed up, these renters would be tossed to the curb.

The negative impact on the removal of the third-party right of appeal is not limited to Toronto. The town of Gananoque also went through a DPS. They made up a 233-page playbook, and within a year it was tossed out and they were left with no right of appeal and no—

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Twenty seconds left.

Ms. Veronica Wynne: Okay. The conclusion: I meant to put up—it's called the blueprint for market intensification, but I don't have time to do it. CORRA and our community support moderate intensification with the integrity of good planning, protections for our green space and proactive enhancement and review of our infrastructure systems. In other words, we want a complete city, which is supported by the integrity of good planning.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you so much. I appreciate that.

We're going to go to the official opposition. MPP Harden, if you could begin this round.

Mr. Joel Harden: Thank you to all the presenters who joined us this afternoon.

Leilani, I want to start with you, and I want to begin by thanking you for the advocacy not only you but a community of folks to whom you're connected have done around the commodification of housing. You've talked about the need for us to understand housing is a human right and to put it in a human rights context. What I don't think many people understand—and the film which you were a part of did some work to help people understand it, but could you describe for us at the committee the role of real estate investment trusts, the role of large entities buying up existing affordable rental housing stock and turning it into a very different purpose? What impact has that had in creating the problem that Bill 23 is supposed to be solving?

Ms. Leilani Farha: Thanks for your question, and also, thanks for wearing a mask—so important these days.

It's real estate investment trusts but also other corporations—it's pension funds as well—who have seen in housing a really far less risky place to invest than one might normally think. Housing is sometimes considered a risky place to

invest, but these days it's generally been considered a pretty lucrative place to invest. There's been a real uptick in that kind of investment, with the goal of making profits, often for shareholders—or “unit holders,” as they're called in the residential real estate world.

The way in which profits are made by these corporate landlords, you might call them, or institutional investors, is by squeezing profits out of every square foot or square metre of the property, and that's done basically through raising rents. It can be done in other ways. It can be done by capital improvements that aren't necessarily necessary, all with the idea of raising the valuation of the property—the valuation, not the value—how that property is valued by lenders so that they can then leverage more money to buy more properties and do the whole thing all over again.

The impact in Canada has—while we've seen a real uptick in corporate ownership, we don't have good data on this, because it's an opaque area. But we think it's around up to 30% of Canada's housing market—that's Canada—is now owned by corporate landlords. Because their business model is based on raising rents, profitability for shareholders, what's happened is we've seen an escalation in the cost of rental housing. This is very much in the multi-family-housing area, but you have to understand that as rents increase and housing is more expensive in the rental, that actually helps to buoy how expensive home ownership is, so we can't view these things independently. This is a housing system.

Mr. Joel Harden: Okay.

How much time do we have left, Chair?

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): You have four minutes.

Mr. Joel Harden: Okay.

One of the stories we were talking about today is a story you know well. It's the story of Heron Gate, where 400 folks were evicted, 400 evictions took place, in the south end of Ottawa. The situation you're describing happened. The owner—at the time, Timbercreek, a very profitable, multi-property-owning investment company—comes in and essentially sits on the property; it never fixes anything. I walked through some of these homes, and I know you have too, where basic fixtures were created with duct tape by the residents, who simply could not get anybody to answer their call to fix their units. “It was as if,” they were saying to me, “the units were being made to rot.” Is that another way in which the profit motive is being served here, in the sense of increasing the value, prepping it for gentrification?

Ms. Leilani Farha: Yes, absolutely. I could have mentioned that; I should have. Heron Gate is now owned by—it was Timbercreek; they've changed their name. I think it's Hazelview.

Yes, it's a model: allow the property to become decrepit. That's grounds for razing the property or demolishing it and then rebuilding and repositioning—they use this term, “repositioning”—the property so that it attracts higher-income tenants. That is absolutely 100% what happened in Heron Gate. That was the implication.

And one should not forget that Heron Gate housed some of the poorest people in the city of Ottawa and was

almost in a completely racialized community, and those people acted as a community. So not only did they end up being displaced—priced out of their homes, not able to return to that community—they lose their community itself. That was a community that was really thriving. There were home businesses working with each other etc. So the loss is much bigger than just the home that gets lost.

1730

Mr. Joel Harden: I totally hear you. So what could be done to Bill 23, if you were to reinvent it, to make sure this kind of predatory behaviour didn't happen? As I was saying earlier to a representative of rental property owners, I think entities like Hazelview do a disgrace to the entire sector if they're permitted to allow mass evictions, dereliction of properties, pushing low-income tenants out. What could the government do to improve Bill 23 to make sure that affordable rental housing was actually maintained in our communities?

Ms. Leilani Farha: There's the provision that allows for the province to oversee and allow for the demolition of buildings and homes without one-for-one replacement, without replacement at all, and that obviously would have to be scrapped from this bill. That's completely contrary to international human rights law and the right to housing in the National Housing Strategy Act. In fact, there are very strict rules around what can and should happen around a demolition.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Two minutes.

Ms. Leilani Farha: There has to be one-for-one replacement. People have to be able to return to a unit of similar size and similar cost to where they were originally living. All of those provisions could have been included in Bill 23, in fact, and there are developers—not many, but there are developers right in the city of Ottawa taking a totally different approach, and there are municipalities taking a different approach.

Mr. Joel Harden: I totally agree. Is that the end of the time, Chair?

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Twenty-six seconds.

Mr. Joel Harden: Well, I will just say to the other presenters: Don't worry; we will make sure there are questions posed to you in the next round. I just wanted to make sure that we had ample time to talk about this phenomenon that has been discussed already.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): MPP McMahon for four and a half minutes, please.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Great presentations, and thank you for coming in, the long haul from up north and north-ish—our Thunder Bay MPP will say that area is not north—and thank you to everyone online. I really appreciate it.

I'll start off with questions for the town of Blue Mountains. First of all, I'm thrilled you're here, because Collingwood is my hometown. I'm a small-town girl and love that area, but I came to the city. But I still get back up there.

You were talking about development charges, which we are hearing a lot of today. We had our chief planner here from Toronto, and we've heard it over the course of

the past week, with presentations, what is going to happen with, as you're mentioning—we had the chief planner list the capital projects that would be delayed because of the loss of revenue from the DCs. I just want to know if you can elaborate the impact on your community with the loss of these development charges should Bill 23 pass.

Mr. Rob Sampson: To the extent those capital projects that the DCs were funding need to be built, that revenue will need to be found. There are two sources: There's the property tax source, and then there are the market-housing DC charges. Our argument would be that an amendment to the DC act needs to be added to this bill to allow municipalities to tap into that source if needed.

Look, DC relief is one tool in the tool box that will help; it's not the only tool. At the housing corporation, we're building a purpose-built rental unit. The DC relief that the town and the county will provide to us as part of our agreement with them will actually lower the rental per door by \$40 while the market rent is \$1,600. So \$1,600 minus \$40 does not get you into affordable range. There need to be more tools. Let's not fool ourselves that DC relief is going to be this magic bullet. It's not. It's simply one little tool in the large tool box that is going to need to be used.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Okay, great. I have far less time than everyone else, because—we won't get into the reasons why.

Mr. Rob Sampson: No, I'm aware.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: So, just from an environmental front, sustainability—I know Collingwood town council declared a climate emergency. I'm not sure if the town of Blue Mountains has or not, but I'm sure you have lots of green groups out there. This bill would effectively kill any chance of having green standards across Ontario, and we're very proud of the Toronto Green Standard. Also, we're worried about losing the expertise of the conservation authorities, so I'm just wondering if you could speak to that in about a minute.

Mr. Rob Sampson: On the green standards side, the town has declared a climate emergency, as well.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Great.

Mr. Rob Sampson: In fact, that project I just spoke to—we organize with the local community design guidelines task force to help us with some of the design guidelines for this building that we want to build, and the local group was very actively involved in that. We're just in the middle of an RFP for the design builder of the facility.

I can't release to you a lot of stuff that's captured within the cone of silence of that RFP process, but I can say to you that the builders who are participating in this RFP have put green standards at the top of the list. It's our hope and expectation that the building that comes out of that will be actually quite a pioneering-style building, not only just for our area but I think for the province.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Fabulous. Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you very much. To the government side. MPP McGregor, please.

Mr. Graham McGregor: Hi. I just want to thank everybody for being here, including our former mayor. Thank

you for your service to the people of Blue Mountains and thank you, everyone, for being here.

I have a question for the Confederation of Resident and Ratepayer Associations in Toronto. One of the primary motivations for the government behind this bill is really around streamlining the process. We've seen from expert feedback that every month of delay on a new construction start could cost up to \$3,300 per month, which is, as you know, almost \$40,000 a year in new cost, just to build. That's to say nothing about the labour cost. That's to say nothing about the land cost, the materials. Just the delays alone can cost up to \$40,000 a year, or close to, and so we're proposing to streamline some of those processes.

I think there have been some objections made in your testimony, that you think some of the meetings that we'd be removing and some of the limits that we'd be putting on the ability for third-party appeal—you think that those are a necessity for the system to work and to function. Could you maybe just defend that argument a little bit for me? How do you see the use of these meetings? And some of the changes that we're making—how would this negatively impact your ability to advocate for your neighbourhood?

Mr. William Roberts: Okay, so the catch is that right now, the committee of adjustment is a kangaroo court. You go in, they make a decision, they're not accountable to anybody and the end result is they can approve things or not approve things on a whim. They don't have to have grounds for their decision.

Previously, the only way of checking the committee of adjustment was the right of appeal: that right of appeal to the OMB, now the OLT, to that ensures that it happens—

Mr. Graham McGregor: Sorry. So through the right of appeal—can you maybe give me a case where the federation of resident associations—what appeals have you done recently? What kind of things are we appealing here?

Mr. William Roberts: In terms of the committee of adjustment, which is what I was focusing on: COA does not get involved in local planning matters; ratepayers do.

I'll give you a couple of examples. There was one case where a person was building up in Hoggs Hollow, which is North York. They wanted a three-storey building where only two storeys were permitted. There's a whole series of other things. They were too high, too much density, too close to the thing. At the end of the day, the TLAB supported the community. The cases I've taken to the TLAB for ratepayer groups—I'd say about 75% of them we win, in one version or another, either with getting amendment settlements and/or the refusal of the application, because the committee—

Mr. Graham McGregor: Just with limited time, one of the things that we've done is to put a step forward and—time check, Chair?

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The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): You've got four minutes.

Mr. Graham McGregor: We've put a step forward on as-of-right zoning so that any lot that somebody has, as of right they will be able to turn into three different homes.

This is nanny suites; it's garden suites. Do you think that is a good change that will help us with the crisis?

Mr. William Roberts: Basically, you're only adding one more unit from what you have at the present moment. Presently, I believe, it's a main suite, secondary suite and either a lane suite or a garden suite. It's only two-odd; now, you're making it three. That may assist, but what I really think it's going to do, as we've seen in Parkdale for laneway houses, is that the laneway house is created and it rents for \$4,000 to \$5,000 a month. The primary house is suddenly split into two or three units that are then rented for \$1,000 each. If you go to Allandale in Barrie, the result was, the houses that were renting for \$1,900 a month—people were kicked out, garden suites were put in and both the garden suite and the private home were each rented for \$1,900 to \$2,000. Family housing was lost and replaced by something entirely different. And if you go to the—

Mr. Graham McGregor: Sorry. I just want to—so the argument is, the home as a whole would rent for, say, \$1,900. If we put multiple units in that home, you're saying they would just rent the same units for the same price as the original home?

Mr. William Roberts: Or they might for a much smaller unit—this is what happened in South Parkdale. Units that were family units, where somebody created the four units, each one was being rented for the amount that the total family unit was rented for. So what you're doing is encouraging investment companies to come in, take over the properties—because they cost about \$300,000 for a garden suite or a laneway suite. That's not going to be a nanny suite. It's only speculators and investment companies that will do it, and that's exactly what's happening in South Parkdale right now.

Mr. Graham McGregor: And I really thank your federation for coming. Unfortunately, I think this is part of exactly the problem that we have. Our position and the position of experts is that increased supply will hit with the demand. In Canada, we actually have the lowest amount of housing per person of any G7 country, and in Ontario, we have the lowest amount of housing per person of any province in Canada. Now, you're telling me that as of right would be the wrong way to go. You're also telling me that one of the appeals that you said was a good one was around a three-storey building in North York, in a neighbourhood where it should have been two-storey buildings, which—we have a housing crisis. And you're also telling me that 75% of the cases—when a neighbourhood association brings something like this, they actually win.

I think with the system as is, clearly, to me—and I'm a millennial. I'm a millennial Canadian, and right now, we have a housing market where new families, young families, new Canadians, seniors aren't able to find the housing that they need. And people like me—

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Fifty seconds.

Mr. Graham McGregor:—growing up in my riding, Brampton North, have been priced out of our neighbourhood. Many of the people I grew up with have to move somewhere else, because they've been priced out of the

neighbourhood because they haven't been able to have the density and the type of housing that they need.

Don't you see the problem with that mentality? Don't we need to get building? Shouldn't we build homes for everybody, not just the people that live there already in the neighbourhood?

Mr. William Roberts: Well, no, you're not listening to me. A private house of two storeys replaced by a three-storey house—a house that was worth \$2 million is now worth \$4 million. Affordability went south. Starter homes are being torn down and replaced by mega mansions that then are sold for three to four times the value. You are ruining affordability. You are ruining affordability for poor people in poor neighbourhoods, and you're driving people out of other neighbourhoods. Exactly what you want to do is exactly what you're going to do: make developers and speculators rich and making it for everybody else unaffordable.

Mr. Graham McGregor: Thank you for the testimony today.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you so much. It will now go to the official opposition, to MPP Bell, for the next round of questions and answers.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you to the presenters who are here online as well as the presenters—Rob Sampson—who came in in person.

My first question is to Leilani Farha. I am also concerned about Bill 23's impact on housing affordability and renters, especially renters who are lower-income, middle-income renters who live in private market apartments, which—most renters live in private market apartments. What impact do you think schedule 1 and schedule 4 are going to have on housing affordability? These are these two measures that ban municipalities from having rental-housing replacement laws or protections for renters that are living in a home that is going to be demolished or renovated or converted to condos. How is that going to affect housing affordability?

Ms. Leilani Farha: Thanks for the question. I actually think the previous speaker—I'm sorry I don't know his name, my fellow panellist—just answered that question and he answered it so brilliantly. If you allow, which Bill 23 does, affordable units to be demolished and destroyed and not replaced with affordable units, what you end up with are, maybe, some units, but they will not be affordable.

The market has shown it doesn't take care of affordability. It doesn't do that on its own. Developers do not do that on their own. Their drive is for profits; their drive is not to make things affordable to someone in receipt of social assistance. A single person on OW in this province gets something like \$760 a month, which means that they can afford an apartment in the \$300 range—something like that. Developers are not looking to house those folks.

So when they demolish affordable and are not required to replace with affordable, then those people living in affordable accommodation are going to be displaced. And who knows where they're going to end up? They will not end up in their community, because nothing is affordable.

They may end up in their car. They may end up homeless in a park in a city. That's the damage done by taking that retrogressive measure.

I can't understand a government that wouldn't want to protect the affordable assets it has. Why would a government not want to keep housing poor and low-income people? To me, that is an upside-down world. If I'm a government, I want to do everything I can to protect my most vulnerable and disadvantaged populations and keep them housed. Because if I don't, I'm going to burden the health care system, I'm going to burden the criminal justice system, and I'm going to burden other aspects of our social welfare system.

Ms. Jessica Bell: We had a presenter come in here yesterday and explain that Toronto is losing affordable housing units very quickly. Those are those units that rent for \$1,000 or less, and they are being replaced by luxury condos that are not protected by rent control and that rent for \$3,000 a month. I fear that getting rid of—schedule 1 and schedule 4 will just speed up that transition from affordable rental to absolutely unaffordable rental.

My next question is to Mr. Sampson. Thank you so much for coming in. I believe we've spoken before about some of the work that you're doing. I have two questions for you. Could you just repeat again those statistics about how much it would cost to pay for the infrastructure for 1.5 million homes? Because that's where development fees really come into play. And then the second question I have is: Could you explain the issues you're facing with short-term rentals in your area and what measures you think we can take to address that?

Mr. Ron Sampson: The infrastructure needs, if you will, of 1.5 million homes is an easy calculation, I think. It's what our current infrastructure assets are in Ontario per home—the accountability office says that we have \$484 billion of municipal assets in infrastructure throughout the province and just a little over nine million homes. So you do the division, you get 90,000 infrastructure dollars per home. Multiply that by 1.5 million, assuming that those new residents will need rec facilities, fire departments, sewer and water facilities, you get to the number that I supplied.

The short-term rental issue is serious in our area, because we're a resort community and a recreational community. A lot of our long-term housing stock goes into the short-term housing market, because, frankly, the owners can get a higher rate. If you can get 5,000 bucks a month in the short-term market, which is what you can get, why would you rent it out on a long-term basis for less?

1750

If new units are being proposed and things like granny suites and additional suites are being allowed as of right, that means, potentially, these units could drift into the short-term housing market. Our recommendation would be that the committee take a look at recommending to the Legislature an amendment that excludes short-term rental from any DC relief or any as-of-right additions for additional units. Because that market, again, actually cannibalizes the long-term rental market; in our town, it does

hugely. We're probably one of the only towns in the province that regulates the short-term housing market, and we do it very aggressively and very purposely because we simply cannot afford to have any more rental accommodation being cannibalized by that particular market.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thanks for that. I think Mary-Margaret McMahon and myself would love to see the city of Toronto take a better approach to enforcing our short-term rental role in the city of Toronto.

Mr. Rob Sampson: Well, it's not easy. It's not easy and it's somewhat complicated throughout LPAT approval. If you want to have an example of how it's done, talk to the mayor-elect behind me.

Ms. Jessica Bell: My second question is back to Leilani. What do you want to see in Bill 23? What should we be advocating for to address the housing affordability crisis that we have in Ontario?

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I have to give you a warning: There's only 20 seconds left.

Ms. Leilani Farha: Obviously, some provisions would have to be taken out, the ones that undermine affordable housing. Where there are decent provisions or provisions that could be worked with, they just have to be wrestled down to ensure that they are required to meet affordability measures as defined by CMHC and by international law, which is affordability based on household income, not what markets can command.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you very much. We'll now move on to MPP McMahon for four and a half minutes.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: All right—last questions of the day. Leilani, I'm going to give you the floor—nice to see you again. It was interesting and kind of alarming when you were mentioning aspects of this bill that you feel violate the international human rights codes. If you can elaborate on how many of the aspects do, in a short time. I only have four and a half minutes and I want to give half of that to others.

Ms. Leilani Farha: Sure. Well, I think I outlined five measures, all of which were inconsistent with the human rights approach, or retrogressive, which is considered a violation of human rights. You absolutely cannot go backward. That's the whole point of human rights. It's a forward-looking thing. We've got to keep protecting people.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Specifically, though.

Ms. Leilani Farha: The five that I mentioned—do you want me to reiterate them?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Yes, please. Thanks.

Ms. Leilani Farha: The rental replacement bylaw; the limit to 5% inclusionary zoning; waiving the DC charges in most instances; the affordability measures using 80% of AMR; and limiting access of third parties to tribunals.

I'll say one more thing about the DC charges. Under international human rights law, you have to avail yourself of all resources possible to encourage and put toward the implementation of affordable housing. By waiving the DC charges, you're reducing the amount of resources a city or municipality would have to put toward affordable housing.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Sure. And then, I'm sure you will be very worried about the climate emergency we're in.

Ms. Leilani Farha: Of course.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: So environmental protections, the removal of that with this bill, with the lack of oversight by the conservation authorities and our green standards—your thoughts on those, quickly, in under a minute.

Ms. Leilani Farha: Yes, obviously those are huge concerns. I also just want to say that the “build, build, build” model doesn't take into consideration that 37% of CO₂ emissions come from the built environment, housing in particular. So if you're going to build, build, build, you've got to figure out how you're going to manage your CO₂ emissions. It's almost impossible with Bill 23.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Okay. Thank you so much for being super succinct.

The final question is for town of the Blue Mountains and CORRA. We'll do CORRA first, in basically 30 seconds: a piece of advice to us while we review and consider Bill 23.

Mr. William Roberts: Okay, quickly: Restore third-party rights of appeal. Also make sure conservation authorities—municipalities, at a minimum, have the ability to consult them. This is their expertise. But actually, I don't think you should reduce them.

On development charges, at the end of the day, if municipalities do infrastructure studies, they could actually say to developers, “Sorry, you're not going to be building, because we”—

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Awesome. Sorry. We're really short. Thank you.

And the town of Blue Mountains: One final piece of advice for us?

Mr. Rob Sampson: I would say challenge municipalities to do what they're obligated to do under the provincial policy statement. They've not done that. As I said, I'm speaking of one municipality that is guilty of that, and we've done our best to try to solve that problem, but municipalities are obligated to set targets and implement them. Get them to do it.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Sounds simple enough. All right. Thank you so much. Thank you, everyone, for coming in.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you very much. Now over to the government for the final Q&A. MPP Grewal.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: First of all, welcome, Mayor. My first question is going to be for you, as well. I'd like to put into context, since you're representing the city of Blue Mountains and we've been particularly talking about challenges that the city of Blue Mountains has been facing particular to Bill 23—I'd like to get some context in terms of the type of population that really travels and lives in Blue Mountains. Would you say it's primarily used by tourism? Would you say that a lot of your industry is fuelled by the actual Blue Mountain, the ski hill, the lodging, the tourist activities that surround it?

Mr. Rob Sampson: I'm the councillor, not the mayor. Thank you for the promotion, though. I appreciate that. It will last three days, because the mayor-elect is behind me.

We see about 2.5 million visitors a year—

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Okay. I'm just going to be quick, because we're very short on time. I only have three minutes in total. So a lot of that population is, I would say, tourism, but there are a lot of local people who live there. You mentioned in your speech that the average housing price in that neighbourhood is about \$1.8 million, but my question is: When it comes to developing more high-density homes, do you think Bill 23 is going to be effective in building that in your neighbourhood?

Mr. Rob Sampson: Yes, but again—

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: So when we go back to the instance of detached homes and we go back to the housing supply shortage in Blue Mountains in particular, would you say the city has also played a role in attributing to the shortage of homes? Because when we look at Blue Mountains's building permit history, we see that permits have taken upwards of six months to a year to be issued in some circumstances. If you're familiar with the area of Delphi Lane, that townhouse project that was building affordable homes for people—those permitting processes took months, if not years, to come to fruition. So do you believe that the More Homes Built Faster Act will be effective in terms of speeding up those timelines?

Mr. Rob Sampson: It may well speed up the timelines, and we're certainly in favour of having quicker times—

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: So if we have more affordable homes, more homes in that sense being built in the town, do you feel like that will adequately fix your supply shortage?

Mr. Rob Sampson: Well, the challenge is—you mentioned Delphi. Those are not affordable.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: They're not affordable now, but they were affordable then, when they started being built. If the flow of permits continued, more and more people would have been able to purchase at that price, and more and more people—and also, at the same time, your development costs would have been less at that time, as well. So do you believe that due to delays in city permitting, that led to a supply shortage, which led to the increase in prices of those neighbourhoods?

Mr. Rob Sampson: I don't believe the delay is entirely driving the cost of—

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: So do you believe, when thousands of people are migrating to a particular area and the housing supply is not keeping up with the demand—multiple bidders come; the prices go up. More and more people are now fighting for that house. But if there was a high supply of that particular product, there would be less infighting and there would be more homes being purchased, more people and the price would be a little bit more stable.

Mr. Rob Sampson: Well, if you take a look at our statistics and take a look at the average size of the house being built, a 3,100-square-foot house is not going to be an affordable house—

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: So now, with the intensification that Bill 23 is going to bring, the goal is to bring in more affordable homes like that townhome project. When builders come and apply to the city itself, the city can also approve higher-density projects. We're working on tackling that with Bill 23.

But my question is: With the support of Bill 23, do you believe that homes will be built faster in your neighbourhood?

Mr. Rob Sampson: I think Bill 23 will help more homes get built. The challenge is, at what price range are they going to be built? Are they entry-level housing? That's my definition of affordable housing: entry-level housing. A first-time buyer—the answer is, we have not built those in the Blue Mountains for 10 years, and I don't think it's a function of—

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: But when builders bring those projects to you, why is the permitting process so delayed? Why is it so hard for them to bring those projects to fruition? When we talk about the building challenges, it takes decades to build homes in the Blue Mountains. And when it comes to comparing Blue Mountains's building history to other cities across the province, I would rank it as one of the slower cities compared to other major urban cities.

Mr. Rob Sampson: I would agree that our process—

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: So if we sped that up and we pushed for higher density products, would we not open more affordable homes in the market? Instead of multi-billion-dollar luxury cottages, we would see more townhomes, more laneway homes, more garden suites. Does that bill help produce those things?

Mr. Rob Sampson: Only if you challenge municipalities to do what they are required to do in the provincial policy statement, which is have those—

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: That's exactly what we're asking. We're asking municipalities to support the provincial guideline and then continue and push to build the production of those homes.

Mr. Rob Sampson: Ah, but you've got to challenge the municipalities to actually set the targets, monitor the targets and amend the policies internally to deliver on those targets.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: That's exactly what we are doing. I appreciate your time here today.

I'd like to share the remainder of my time with MPP Smith.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): MPP Smith.

Ms. Laura Smith: Madam Chair, thank you. Actually, I'm just going to continue on with that conversation, because it's all about setting targets. I appreciate your honesty in this area and I want to thank all of the people who have provided statements today, but I specifically

want to thank Rob Sampson for being honest about municipalities.

We're talking about increasing density in neighbourhoods, where elected councils are constantly impeding this. We talked about the 2022 Building Industry and Land Development Association report, and I think my colleague touched on this, as well. When you have a unit within a high-density development, each month a delay costs from \$2,600 to \$3,000, which just keeps adding up. So I appreciate your honesty in providing that information, because the more we recognize the fact that delays in these areas make significant changes in not just the ability to put homes out there, but putting homes out there in a cost-effective way, which is so key.

So just continuing on with that dialogue, because of the cost of delays and the site plan reviews for larger projects, where we propose to speed up the approval by focusing on a site plan review that will be faster and will be able to get shovels in the ground—can you further comment? I'm sorry if this is a repetitive question.

Mr. Rob Sampson: No, that's okay; it's important. Look, we are not arguing that the approval process doesn't need to be sped up. It does need to be sped up. Will that drive the affordability component that you're looking for? I don't see it doing that, because I don't see that cost component being the driver of the difference between an entry-level affordable house and a \$1.8-million house. There is a huge difference, right?

Ms. Laura Smith: But you agree that municipalities have to put—

Mr. Rob Sampson: Look, as I said, show me a municipality that set a target and has monitored it. Show me one, in the official plan. And we're guilty of that. Grey county has got one, but it's a plan that they refuse to adhere to. When we challenged developers, as we have done, to build attainable units in their developments, we lost our only appeal in the LPAT because it was ruled that the municipalities don't have the authority to do that. Effectively, I argue we do. It's actually in the—

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you. I'm sorry about that, but the time has come and it has been a very long day. I'd like to thank everyone and all the presenters and the questioners for today. This concludes our business for today.

Just two quick reminders, if I could, before I bring the gavel down: a reminder that the deadline for filing written submissions to Bill 23 is 7 p.m. on November 17, 2022, and a reminder that the deadline for filing amendments to Bill 23 is 1 p.m. on Friday, November 18, 2022.

The committee is now adjourned until 9 a.m. on Monday, November 21, 2022.

The committee adjourned at 1803.

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