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of Ontario



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Lundi
20 novembre 2023

Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott
Clerk: Trevor Day

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
Greffier : Trevor Day

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 20 November 2023

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 20 novembre 2023

The House recessed from 1216 to 1300.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON HERITAGE, INFRASTRUCTURE AND CULTURAL POLICY

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Standing order 66(a) provides that “each standing committee shall present one report with respect to all of the estimates and supplementary estimates considered ... no later than the third Thursday in November of each calendar year.”

The House did not receive a report on Thursday, November 16, 2023, from the following committee: the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy, for the Office of the Lieutenant Governor. Pursuant to standing order 66(b), the 2023-24 estimates of this office are deemed to be passed by the respective committee and are deemed to be reported to and received by the House.

Report deemed received.

PETITIONS

LABOUR LEGISLATION

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am very pleased to read this petition into the Legislature, called, “Pass Anti-Scab Labour Legislation.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the use of replacement workers undermines workers’ collective power, unnecessarily prolongs labour disputes, and removes the essential power that the withdrawal of labour is supposed to give workers to help end a dispute, that is, the ability to apply economic pressure;

“Whereas the use of scab labour contributes to higher-conflict picket lines, jeopardizes workplace safety, destabilizes normalized labour relations between workers and their employers and removes the employer incentive to negotiate and settle fair contracts; and

“Whereas strong and fair anti-scab legislation will help lead to shorter labour disputes, safer workplaces, and less hostile picket lines;

“Whereas similar legislation has been introduced in British Columbia and Quebec with no increases to the number of strike or lockout days;

“Whereas Ontario had anti-scab legislation under an NDP government, that was unfortunately ripped away from workers by the Harris Conservatives;

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

“To prohibit employers from using replacement labour for the duration of any legal strike or lockout, except for very limited use to undertake essential maintenance work to protect the safety and integrity of the workplace;

“To prohibit employers from using both external and internal replacement workers;

“To include significant financial penalties for employers who defy the anti-scab legislation; and

“To support Ontario’s workers and pass anti-scab labour legislation, like the Ontario NDP Bill 90, the Anti-Scab Labour Act, 2023.”

And Speaker, seeing as how I’m one of the MPPs who has their name on that bill, I support this petition, will sign it and will send it to the table with page Alina.

FRENCH-LANGUAGE POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. Guy Bourguin: I have a petition entitled, “Support the University of Sudbury.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Franco-Ontarians have fought and organized for a century to see a French-only higher education institution developed for, by and with Franco-Ontarians in the north through the University of Sudbury; and

“Whereas 65.9% of Franco-Ontarians believe the province should fund the University of Sudbury towards its French-language-only programming for higher education; and

“Whereas Franco-Ontarians are still fighting to see their charter right protected and have the same higher education given in the French-minority language; and

“Whereas studies have shown that at full capacity, the University of Sudbury will generate \$89.3 million for the region; and

“Whereas there are 8,500 Franco-Ontarians in the region aged between 10 and 19 who could enroll in higher education in French close to their home in the next 10 years;

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

“To provide the needed funding as requested by University of Sudbury of \$10 million a year to ensure the future of University of Sudbury, a higher education institution made for, by and with Franco-Ontarians, starting now.”

I fully support the petition. I will sign and give it to Brooke to bring to the Clerks' table.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I have a petition entitled "Health Care: Not for Sale."

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

"Whereas privatization always ends with patients getting a bill;

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

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

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

"—10 employer-paid sick days;

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

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

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

I fully support this petition, will add my name to address the health care crisis in Ontario and give it to Chloe to take to the table.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

Ms. Peggy Sattler: With November recognized as sexual assault awareness month, I am pleased to table a petition entitled "Pass the Safe Night Out Act."

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we are experiencing a sexual violence epidemic, with Statistics Canada reporting in 2021 that sexual assault was at its highest level in 25 years and community support organizations reporting more crisis calls than ever;

"Whereas 65% of women report experiencing unwanted sexual advances while socializing in a bar or restaurant, and incidents of sexual assaults involving drugs and alcohol most often occur immediately after leaving a licensed establishment or event; and

"Whereas there is no legal requirement for the people who hold liquor licences and permits, sell and serve liquor, or provide security at licensed establishments and events

to be trained in recognizing and safely intervening in sexual harassment and violence;

"Whereas servers in licensed establishments also face high risk of sexual violence and harassment from co-workers and patrons;"

We, "the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately pass the Ontario NDP's Safe Night Out Act to make Ontario's bars and nightclubs safer for patrons and staff by requiring training in sexual violence and harassment prevention, by strengthening protections for servers from workplace sexual violence, and by requiring every establishment to develop and post a policy on how sexual violence and harassment will be handled, including accessing local resources and supports."

I couldn't support this petition more strongly. I affix my signature and will send it to the table with page Emma.

SCHOOL SAFETY

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It's my honour to present the following petitions, part of the hundreds of petitions I've received from the great, hard-working, dedicated educators from ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local. Particularly, these folks are from Delaware, London, St. Thomas, Aylmer and Strathroy.

1310

The petition reads, "Keep Classrooms Safe for Students and Staff."

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas students and education workers deserve stronger, safer schools in which to learn and work;

"Whereas the pressure placed on our education system has contributed to an increase in reports of violence in our schools;

"Whereas crowded classrooms, a lack of support for staff, and underfunding of mental health supports are all contributing to this crisis;

"Whereas the government of Ontario has the responsibility and tools to address this crisis, but has refused to act;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

"Take immediate action to address violence in our schools;

"Invest in more mental health resources;

"End violence against education workers and improve workplace violence reporting."

I completely support this petition, will affix my signature and will deliver it with page Angela to the Clerks.

HEALTH CARE

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: This petition is entitled "Health Care: Not for Sale."

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

“Whereas privatization always ends with patients getting a bill;

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

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

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

“—10 employer-paid sick days;

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

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

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

I fully support this petition. I’m going to affix my name to it and send it to the table with Henry.

NURSES

Ms. Catherine Fife: This petition is entitled, “For Fair and Equitable Compensation for Nurses.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the government has a responsibility to ensure safe and healthy workplaces and workloads for nurses by enhancing nurse staffing and supports across all sectors of the health system;

“Whereas the RN-to-population ratio in Ontario is the lowest in Canada and Ontario would need 24,000 RNs to catch up with the rest of the country;

“Whereas there are over 10,000 registered nurse vacancies in Ontario;

“Whereas nurses are experiencing very high levels of burnout;

“Whereas registered nurses have experienced real wage losses of about 10% over the last decade;

“Whereas the government of Ontario needs to retain and recruit nurses across all sectors of the system to provide quality care for Ontarians;

“Whereas the Ontario government needs to retain and recruit RNs to meet their legislative commitment of four hours of daily direct care for long-term-care (LTC) residents;

“Whereas wage inequities across the health system make it particularly difficult to retain and recruit RNs to community care sectors, such as long-term care and home care;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to implement evidence-based recommendations to retain and recruit nurses, including fair and equitable compensation that is competitive with other jurisdictions in Canada and the United States.”

We fully support this petition. I will affix my signature and give it to page Peter.

OPPOSITION DAY

CLIMATE CHANGE

CHANGEMENT CLIMATIQUE

Ms. Marit Stiles: I move the following motion:

Whereas Ontarians are experiencing a cost-of-living crisis driven by low wages and corporate greed; and

Whereas costs associated with the climate crisis are also increasing, including grocery and insurance prices, infrastructure damage, and natural disaster response; and

Whereas the Ontario government has made the climate crisis worse and more expensive by eliminating funding to make homes more energy-efficient, cancelling clean energy projects, and removing protections from farmlands;

Therefore, the Legislative Assembly calls on the Ontario government, in partnership with the federal government, to subsidize the cost of heat pumps and other energy-saving retrofits for all Ontarians, in order to cut greenhouse gas emissions and reduce energy bills.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Ms. Stiles has moved opposition day number 5.

I look to the Leader of the Opposition to lead off the debate.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I’m very pleased to have tabled this motion on behalf of Ontario’s official opposition NDP because, right across this province, everywhere I go, people are struggling with just how expensive everything is after five years of this Conservative government. Rent, mortgages, groceries, everyday essentials—life is more expensive in Ontario than it has ever been before. And people are very frustrated that they have a Conservative government that, instead of helping them, is rigging the system to help a select few of their insider friends get even richer—a scheme for which they are now, by the way, Speaker, I would remind you, under criminal investigation by the RCMP. People are frustrated because they have a Conservative government that isn’t doing a thing to make life easier or more affordable. And as the weather gets colder, some are worried about whether or not they’ll have to choose between keeping the heat on or putting groceries on the table, because it’s no secret that home and utility bills are through the roof right now.

The members opposite are rather cynical. They want to pretend that you have to make a choice between lower bills and saving the planet, and it’s just not so; it’s a false choice. We in the official opposition NDP know that, and I think most Ontarians know that too. People know that smart and effective climate policies can actually help ease the burden on families, while helping in the collective fight against climate change. And that’s precisely what today’s motion does. It takes immediate action that helps make life more affordable and greens our planet—because it doesn’t have to be one or the other.

Speaker, today’s motion would provide free heat pumps and additional financial support for energy retrofitting.

These measures would help lower energy bills and make home heating more affordable, particularly for lower- and middle-income homes.

Let's start with this heat pump proposal. For those unaware: Despite their name, heat pumps can both heat and cool a space. I'm going to quote housing reporter Rachel Kurzius here because I think she does a good job of explaining what they do:

"They work by transferring heat rather than creating it. In cold weather, they pump heat from outside your home to the inside to warm your interior. An outdoor unit extracts warm air, then sends it travelling through a refrigerant line connected to an indoor unit. The air gets compressed along the way, which heats it up even more before it gets pushed into the home.

"In warm weather, the system does the reverse: sucking up warm air from inside and pumping it outdoors (which is also how a typical air conditioner works)."

And because they use electricity, they are significantly more energy-efficient than heating sources that rely on fossil fuel sources such as oil or natural gas or propane.

I'll tell you, Speaker, as I travel across this province, I find increasingly that many homeowners would like to make that switch to heat pumps because they provide substantial savings on your energy bills and they reduce carbon emissions. But the fact is that many homeowners simply can't afford them right now. The upfront cost of a heat pump can be pretty expensive—anywhere between \$8,000 and \$20,000 to install. And while some households in Ontario are eligible for partial heat pump subsidies through federal government programs—and fewer still through a patchwork of provincial municipal programs—the upfront cost is still way out of reach for so many households, even though, again, it would save a lot of money in the long run. So today's motion calls on the government to do something really important and substantial. It calls on the provincial government to finally step up and cover the difference, the cost over and above the federal financial subsidy, to make heat pumps completely free for eligible households who wish to retrofit their homes to bring down their energy bills and shrink their carbon footprint. This is a tangible thing. It shows once again that smart policy actually addresses affordability and climate change and it's possible to do both.

1320

I'm proud to say as well that today's motion is also calling on the provincial government to provide zero-interest on-bill financing, to make it as easy as possible for everyone to make other energy-efficient retrofits in their homes. These can include high-efficiency electrical water heaters, deep energy retrofits or energy efficiency assessments by authorized professionals. Again, the initial cost of those important retrofits can be out of reach for so many households, but they would pay for themselves, certainly, over time.

But why not make it easier for Ontarians to make the switch by providing grants to help them pay for these upfront costs and manage the remaining amount with easy on-bill financing? Homeowners would be able to pay back

this zero-interest financing over time on their hydro bills. By giving homeowners a bit of help with that initial investment of the retrofit and spreading out the upfront retrofit costs, it would provide homeowners with immediate relief. It would deliver energy savings right away and they would see their energy bills go down even with loan repayments.

I mean, why not? This is a kind of solution that delivers, not like these meaningless motions and letters that the government wants to write to other jurisdictions. This is something this provincial government could actually do right now, today.

Speaker, I look up at the gallery and I see all of these students visiting us today. It always brings us a lot of joy to see all these students—they're not supposed to wave back, but they're going to—because we are talking about things that are really about them and their future, their families.

Interjection: There are more over there.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Oh, and there are more over there. Hello. It's wonderful to see them here and to see them hearing us talk about positive solutions: ways to lower the cost and the pressure on their families, and also address making our planet greener, saving our planet, which I know young people all across this province care so deeply about.

This motion is a smart solution to help make life more affordable and make our planet greener. It would provide quick relief to many of those who are struggling to make ends meet right now by lowering those energy bills, especially for those in the north, where winters are harsher and longer and the cost to heat one's home is particularly high. It would also help create jobs by further boosting the demand for heat pumps and other energy-efficient retrofits, demand which, I might add, will help reduce the per-unit cost of that important technology. That's how it works.

Importantly, it will help lower our carbon emissions, because we are already seeing the negative impacts of the climate crisis on our economy. It has helped drive up inflation. Climate disasters such as droughts, floods and wildfires have driven up the costs of food.

Speaker, I would really like to see this motion pass today. I want to tell you that in my own riding, for many years now, but especially lately, I have noticed seniors who are really struggling and making the almost-impossible choice of whether or not to keep the heat on in the winter, instead of having to go buy groceries. It is an impossible choice, and it's not one that anybody should have to make.

We cannot afford not to act. Our planet can't afford it. Ontarians can't afford it. I encourage all of the members of this House to support today's motion, to make sure Ontarians are able to lower their energy bills, keeping money in their pockets and shrinking their carbon footprint.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

M. Stéphane Sarrazin: Merci pour l'opportunité de discuter d'un sujet qui devrait être vraiment une priorité pour les Ontariens, qui est celui du coût de la vie.

Le parti d'opposition, le NPD, a introduit une motion dans ce Parlement qui, selon eux, va rendre la vie plus abordable pour les Ontariens en réduisant leurs factures

d'énergie. Mais, beaucoup de mes collègues et moi-même, nous ne sommes pas convaincus en regardant les détails de cette motion. Ils font référence à la crise de l'abordabilité, le coût de la vie, qui est aussi influencé par un nombre de facteurs—et plusieurs autres facteurs. Pour en nommer un en particulier : celui des prix des aliments dans les supermarchés.

Mais, madame la Présidente, la Banque du Canada à récemment confirmé ce que le premier ministre Ford et notre gouvernement ont dit depuis des années : la taxe sur le carbone a été un facteur essentiel pour l'inflation et elle a contribué à augmenter le prix de plus ou moins tout. Prenez, par exemple, la nourriture, comme je viens d'en parler : la taxe a eu un impact sur l'essence pour chauffer les serres, sécher les grains, transporter les produits des champs jusqu'aux tablettes des magasins. Je le sais, madame la Présidente. J'ai beaucoup d'agriculteurs qui m'ont envoyé des messages me disant que quelque chose doit être fait à propos de la taxe de carbone, si ça continue, si le prix pour faire les opérations d'agriculture va juste continuer à grimper. Pour les agriculteurs, ça signifie des grosses pertes de profit mais aussi une augmentation pour les produits dans les magasins pour les aliments pour tous les Ontariens.

Si le parti de l'opposition, le NPD, était sérieux à propos d'aider les Ontariens, d'alléger les coûts, je pense qu'il aurait été de notre côté depuis le début, quand nous étions en train de demander l'élimination de cette taxe. Au lieu de ça, ils étaient des supporteurs ardents, madame la Présidente; ils ont vraiment supporté la taxe de carbone. En fait, par le passé, un membre des rangs de l'opposition se faisait fièrement appeler le « roi de la taxe de carbone » après avoir fait une campagne pour plus que doubler le prix de la taxe de carbone sur l'essence, jusqu'à 35 cents du litre, ce qui aurait coûté environ 4 100 \$ additionnels à une famille en coûts annuels—une famille, disons, qui a deux voitures. Donc, on parle de 4 100 \$ additionnels dus à cette taxe de carbone.

Ce n'était que récemment—dernièrement, on a beaucoup parlé de la taxe de carbone. On a parlé de l'impact. Il semble que c'est quelque chose que les Ontariens—c'est devenu impossible à ignorer maintenant, madame la Présidente. Les NPD ont commencé à changer leur attitude et reconnaître à quel point ils étaient, eux autres, déconnectés de la réalité à supporter cette taxe. Évidemment, leurs partenaires, les libéraux, qui les appuyaient—les deux ont réalisé que ça devenait de plus en plus lourd pour les Ontariens. Mais notre gouvernement, nous l'avons réalisé longtemps passé, madame la Présidente, évidemment. Nous l'avons réalisé; nous savions que cette taxe de carbone ferait en sorte que les Ontariens auraient de la difficulté.

Si l'opposition officielle avait eu la présence d'esprit d'opposer la taxe de carbone depuis le début, comme notre gouvernement, peut-être que les Ontariens auraient plus d'argent dans leurs poches. Ça fait maintenant quelques années que les gens payent cette taxe, et je pense que ça a eu un effet très négatif sur les Ontariens, à les appauvrir. De plus, quand le NPD était occupé en train de supporter

cette taxe, ils ne supportaient pas les initiatives de notre gouvernement—les véritables initiatives pour améliorer le coût de la vie des Ontariens.

1330

Pour aider à garder les coûts abordables pour les familles et entreprises, notre gouvernement a passé un projet de loi ce printemps dernier pour couper la taxe de l'essence de 5,7 cents sur le litre. Et juste récemment, nous venons d'annoncer que nous allons prolonger la durée de cette réduction de taxe, ce que, justement, les membres de l'opposition n'ont pas supporté. Donc, c'est très triste de voir ça, que le parti de l'opposition n'a pas supporté les coupures de taxe pour les Ontariens. Je pense que ce n'est pas très compliqué à comprendre que tous les Ontariens sont en faveur de cette coupure de taxe.

Nous avons coupé les coûts pour des millions d'Ontariens qui sont propriétaires de véhicules en remboursant leurs factures sur le renouvellement de la vignette des plaques d'immatriculation depuis mars 2020, évidemment, en éliminant le prix du renouvellement d'une plaque d'immatriculation et des vignettes, et en retirant de façon permanente les postes de péage routiers sur les autoroutes 412 et 418.

Je suis fier de notre gouvernement pour avoir pris ces initiatives-là pour faire en sorte d'aider les Ontariens à combattre les hausses du coût de la vie. Encore une fois, l'élimination de ces péages routiers, c'est quelque chose que le parti de l'opposition n'a pas supporté. Encore une fois, ils ont dit non quand ça vient à aider les Ontariens et à sauver des coûts aux Ontariens.

Lorsque nous avons fourni des réductions d'impôts pour les travailleurs, familles et personnes âgées, à travers notre « low-income individuals and families tax credit », à travers le « Seniors' Home Safety Tax Credit », « l'Ontario Jobs Training Tax Credit » et « l'Ontario Child Care Tax Credit », le parti de l'opposition n'a pas voté en faveur, aussi, de ces initiatives. Encore une fois, ils ont voté contre ces initiatives. Donc, ce que je peux comprendre, c'est que le parti de l'opposition n'a aucune intention de rendre la vie plus abordable aux gens de l'Ontario, n'est-ce pas? Exactement.

Donc, madame la Présidente, la motion du parti de l'opposition, du NPD, dit que ce gouvernement a annulé le financement vis-à-vis de l'efficacité énergétique, alors qu'en fait notre gouvernement a augmenté le financement pour les projets d'efficacité énergétique par 342 millions de dollars, ce qui met notre dépense totale au-delà d'un milliard de dollars.

Une voix.

M. Stéphane Sarrazin: C'est très possible. Mais, une chose qu'on peut dire, c'est que nous avons fait en sorte d'éduquer les Ontariens, aussi, à l'utilisation électrique. Récemment, nous sommes allés de l'avant avec des projets pour encore aider les Ontariens à sauver.

On sait que le travail achevé par notre gouvernement—on est réellement en train de garder les prix bas pour les Ontariens, en plus d'améliorer notre système d'énergie propre de l'Ontario, qui est déjà « world-class ». Comme vous savez, l'Ontario n'a jamais été dans une aussi bonne position dans le domaine de l'énergie, en matière

d'énergie. Je pense qu'on continue à faire en sorte que les gens aient une énergie propre, puis que c'est non seulement abordable, mais aussi fiable.

Donc, à propos de ces « heat pumps », la motion de l'opposition officielle démontre encore une fois qu'ils ne sont pas un parti sérieux avec des idées crédibles, indépendantes et aptes à diriger une province. La chef de l'opposition a déclaré aux médias que si notre gouvernement était en partenariat avec le gouvernement fédéral, nous pourrions fournir une « heat pump » gratuite pour toutes les maisons ontariennes, tout en dépensant moins d'un milliard de dollars.

Madame la Présidente, ce nombre présenté est absurde et l'opposition devrait en être conscient. Faisons les calculs rapides, en utilisant les chiffres d'une initiative créée par notre gouvernement nommée la « Clean Home Heating Initiative », la CHHI, qui, comme tellement de nos programmes engagés à garder les coûts pour nos Ontariens abordables quand ça vient à l'électricité, n'a pas—encore une fois, c'est quelque chose qui n'a pas été supporté par le parti de l'opposition.

La « Clean Home Heating Initiative » offre une subvention de 4 500 \$ afin que les destinataires puissent installer un système de chauffage hybride et économiser 280 \$ sur leur facture d'énergie annuelle. Il est important de savoir que la subvention de 4 500 \$ ne couvre pas les coûts complets d'une installation d'une « heat pump ». Cette subvention travaille à rendre le coût des nouvelles « heat pumps » aérothermiques compétitif avec celui des nouvelles fournaies au gaz naturel pour inciter les gens à changer et à essayer d'éliminer la source de gaz naturel en tant que chauffage. Comme ça, changer au chauffage hybride n'a pas besoin d'être une option plus chère quand une famille cherche à remplacer sa fournaise.

Madame la Présidente, nous savons aussi qu'à peu près 3,6 millions de maisons en Ontario utilisent le gaz naturel comme source de chauffage, ce qui signifie que passer au chauffage hybride va leur permettre d'économiser 280 \$ par an tout en réduisant les émissions de chauffage des maisons par un tiers.

Alors, calculons. Si nous essayons de fournir 4 500 \$, ce qui ne couvre pas le prix entier d'une « heat pump », à 3,6 millions de maisons, ce qui ne compte pas du tout toutes les maisons de l'Ontario, ça coûterait environ 16 milliards de dollars, madame la Présidente. On doit garder en tête que la chef de l'opposition a juré que le prix ne dépasserait pas un milliard de dollar pour donner une « heat pump » à chaque maison en Ontario.

Donc, la position de notre gouvernement est de ne pas supporter la motion de l'opposition, car ils ont démontré encore et encore qu'il n'y a aucune substance dans leurs propositions et motions. Au lieu de ça, le gouvernement va continuer à étendre nos programmes comme la « Clean Home Heating Initiative », que nous avons élargie jusqu'à plusieurs nouvelles communautés, ce printemps dernier. « l'Energy Affordability Program »—et éligible à qui chauffent leurs maisons actuellement avec de l'électricité.

Nous savons, de plus, que les « heat pumps », c'est pas la solution à travers la province. Sûrement que les

membres du Parlement qui représentent les Ontariens de la région du Nord vont vous dire qu'une « heat pump » n'est pas nécessairement la solution, parce qu'il y a quand même une limite à l'opération quand ça vient à la température ambiante. Pour cette raison, nous croyons que ce n'est pas la meilleure solution.

Si les NPD étaient véritablement concernés avec avoir des coûts abordables pour les familles ontariennes, ils voteraient en faveur et supporteraient l'expansion de nos programmes, à place d'opposer toutes les choses que nous présentons pour essayer de rendre la vie plus abordable aux Ontariens.

Je suis fier de faire partie d'un gouvernement qui priorise des mesures dédiées à l'amélioration de la vie des Ontariens, les gens que nous représentons, au lieu de jouer à la politique comme le fait le parti de l'opposition, le NPD. Encore une fois, avec cette motion, je vais voter contre la motion et j'encourage fortement tous mes collègues à faire de même. Merci. Ceci conclut le débat.

1340

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, as you're well aware, people in this province face some very real challenges—challenges when it comes to making ends meet and challenges of a world getting hotter and more extreme. This year they've faced rising rents, rising interest rates and rising grocery prices. They've also had to deal with choking air pollution as Canada's forests are consumed by wildfires, and for many people, they're facing the threat of losing home insurance as extreme weather exposes homes to flooding risks.

Earlier this year, the Weather Network reported that flooding and other natural calamities exacerbated by climate change are making Canadian homes uninsurable. Four million Canadians in areas impacted by severe flooding and up to 10% of all homes in Canada currently or will soon be facing the problem of uninsurability. We're not talking about the far future. We're talking about the here and the now.

At the same time, greed-driven, corporate-driven higher prices are squeezing people at the affordability end. According to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, over 40% of the recent rise in prices can be attributed to corporate profits, and the industry that leads the pack in hoovering up these excess profits is the very industry that's causing climate chaos: the oil and gas companies.

At the climate end, dangerous air quality from climate-driven wildfires is affecting the health of Canadians across the country. A government of Canada study this past summer reported smoke migrating from the fires is impacting air quality across North America, with historical records for poor air quality being broken in cities across Canada and the United States. As of June 14 of this past summer, special air quality statements were in effect for parts of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario and Quebec, including several major cities—and that's not even talking about First Nations communities forced to evacuate to avoid a disaster.

The affordability crisis and the climate crisis are both making life harder for people here in this province in Ontario. The resolution brought forward today is a way of addressing both these crises at the same time. By investing in the people of this province, by providing the financing for them to leave behind high-priced fuels like propane and heating oil, by providing them with the help to get away from the pricing roller coaster that natural gas has become, we can dramatically cut their carbon pollution and put money in their pockets. They need both. They deserve both. They can have both.

Let's talk briefly about the savings available. A 2022 federal government study compared heating systems costs to heat pumps. The federal study found that by installing a cold-climate air-source heat pump, Canadian households switching from an electric furnace would save an average of \$700 to \$1,900 a year in utility bills, and those with furnaces that run on heating oil would save \$1,000 to \$3,500 a year. I was talking to friend of mine last night who lives in PEI. She told me that she got partial conversion of her household to heat pumps—she couldn't afford to do the whole thing—but it cut her annual energy bill by about \$4,000 a year, a huge impact even with partial heating and cooling in her house.

The Canadian Climate Institute did a study focused on households with gas furnaces and air conditioners in five cities: Edmonton, Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax. Unlike the federal study, it included costs and savings over the lifetime of the equipment—assumed to be 18 years. A heat pump cut costs on average 13% in those cities studied.

Provinces with free heat pump programs—PEI, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador—are already working with the federal government to deliver the free heat pump program to low-income households, something we could do right here in this province. We could do it starting this winter if this government was willing to act. We in Ontario need to sit down with the federal government and negotiate a broader program to cover all fuels and vastly expand the savings and climate protection potential of this program. Ontario can and should be part of such a partnership.

Many people question whether a heat pump will work in colder climates like ours. I note that the studies showing savings included Montreal and Edmonton, not noted for their tropical weather conditions. In fact, people should also know that heat pumps are being widely utilized in Scandinavia. Europe's coldest countries have the highest heat pump penetration: 60% of Norway's buildings, Sweden at 43%, Finland at 41%—we're talking close to the Arctic Circle. This is technologically, economically and environmentally doable.

Let's face it: The cost of the climate crisis is going to have an impact on food, insurance—on every aspect of our lives. We need to take it on.

This is a government that does not have a credible climate plan. It's as simple as that. The Auditor General took apart the one that they put forward in 2018. And they have yet to come forward with a credible plan to actually show how they would get to the inadequate target that they

set. The inadequate target that they set for 2030 will not protect us from the kinds of climate damage that we fear is on its way; it will not allow us to meet the target set by the United Nations.

Speaker, investing in the homes of Ontarians will give them a big boost in the fight for affordability, it will deliver a real gain in the fight against climate change, and as our leader said, it will put a lot of people to work. Let's do it now.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutila Karpoche): Please be seated.

Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure to join the debate today on our motion on heat pumps. This motion actually is fairly cutting-edge.

I don't know if folks saw late last week that the Biden administration is using a wartime authority to bolster energy-efficient manufacturing. It's ironic that the Premier and the President of the United States share a birthday. I hope that the Premier would look to his elder on this front, because what we require, actually, to address climate change and to build some resiliency on the energy file is some true leadership.

The Biden administration said that it is using a wartime authority to bolster manufacturing of energy-efficient heating and cooling technology. It said it was utilizing the Defense Production Act to mobilize the production of heat pumps, technology used to heat or cool someone's home that is more efficient than traditional heating and air conditioning systems. And they're using the Defense Production Act to give the President the authority to invest and mobilize certain industries to advance national security. That is where the United States is. They recognize that we are at a tipping point here and it doesn't have to be an either/or or a "what about." We can actually have a strong, energy-efficient grid, we can create good local jobs, and we can reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. It doesn't have to follow the narrative of the Conservative government of Ontario, which is—which, ironically, to see the member stand in his place and say, "It's not just one thing"—this is a government that seized this House last week with the carbon tax debate. The one thing that they can focus on is the carbon tax.

We are proposing a viable solution here which will strengthen local economies, and which would demonstrate leadership on the environmental file, which this government has literally no credibility on. The research and the evidence is here. The province of Ontario actually funds research on heat pumps, but they don't apply that knowledge—you want to talk about throwing good money after bad in that instance.

I just want to say, there's still hope. We can keep trying. This is what the people of Ontario expect from their official opposition. They expect us to come to this place to work hard, to work together and to propose solutions. This is one solution. I feel like I should be in that movie—help us help you. We are coming to the floor of the Legislature with a solution. I still hold out hope—besides some of the

bickering—that this government one day sees the light. If Snoop Dogg could stop smoking cannabis, which he announced last week, anything is possible—and we wish him well.

On this side of the House, we know that it is possible to address both the affordability and the environmental concerns, which is why we want to help people lower the cost of heating their homes by subsidizing the heat pumps for Ontarians. This will require some co-operation with the federal government. That is what the people of this province and country expect: They expect the federal government and the provincial government not to work at odds with each other and not to complain.

1350

When the federal government, through their home ownership and home accelerator funds, are flowing that money to municipalities to actually put money on the table in true partnership, I would say, to fund affordable housing, it's not the Premier's job to complain that he's being left out of the photo op. I just want to say, that is not what we need. What we need is a true sitting down and having respectful conversations about how we can all be part of the solution. Certainly, their letter may get some traction; I don't know. They wrote a letter about the carbon tax. I don't know how much traction it's going to get, but at the end of the day, it's not going to have a direct impact as our motion would on people in their homes, wherever they live.

Northern Ontarians have got my attention on this particular issue. I'm going to quote from CBC Sudbury. It reads as follows: "These Northern Ontario Homeowners Are Turning to Heat Pumps for Energy Savings.

"Alasdair MacLeod says his heat pump saves him \$100 a month in energy costs." That's a significant savings, I would say, for, actually, all of us. He put in this heat pump last year. He has now had one whole year of at least \$100 in savings each month. With the fact that they received the \$5,000 subsidy from the federal government, he says it would be good to actually have some support at the provincial level as well.

But he says—and this is a quote: "So basically we're breaking even. Like the energy savings completely covers the cost.

"It's basically just an air conditioner, except it can run both directions. It's way cheaper than oil." Well, isn't that the truth.

The heat pump costs, as our leader had mentioned, anywhere between \$8,000 and \$20,000. This is obviously cost-prohibitive for so many people across this country.

But he says, "I think it's a great idea" to offer a subsidy, because it's still quite an "initial outlay of money."

This is the key piece. Not everybody is in a position to even contemplate installing a heat pump and to go through the extensive paperwork and the administrative burden of going through that federal process. So if the government were so inclined to support this progressive option and solution, we would recommend highly: Don't make it so filled with red tape. Let's keep the administrative burdens to a minimum. Let's make it streamlined, let's make it easy and let's get more people to weigh in and really apply for a heat pump in the province of Ontario.

Because we know from research, before they cancelled some of these really progressive programs, like, for instance, REEP, the Residential Energy Efficiency Program, whereby you would get a tax credit to install energy-efficient windows or do water-saving measures or energy-efficient furnaces. What did this do? This actually supported the local economy. It supported local skilled trades in your communities across this province. Because there was a tax credit, it actually prevented people from using the underground economy, so there was a consumer protection piece, because you were using certified skilled technicians. Also, because it was above board and not underground, there was taxable revenue that was coming into the province of Ontario. The consumer protection piece was certainly there as well. And, as a bonus, people were reducing their greenhouse gas emissions and their carbon footprint. Really, it was a win-win-win all the way around.

We are proposing also that heat pumps would have that same impact. I think that this government certainly should be, if they are not actively, looking for a change-the-channel kind of moment. Obviously, credibility and trust are at an all-time low. We have our first-ever criminal RCMP investigation into a provincial government and several Auditor General comments and reports and Integrity Commissioner reports and—you name it. It's just really the beginning.

This motion that we have brought to the floor of the Legislature is truly something that the province of Ontario—if you value skilled trades, if you value local economies, if you have some sense of the urgency that is needed to address climate change in this country and in this province, it should certainly be on the books. The heat pump argument is so strong that several universities and institutes have come forward. They've said, "Why is the province of Ontario not having this kind of a conversation? Why are you not engaging with the sector?"

The other big thing that we know will happen, as you get more people buying into this idea and into this proposal to reduce energy costs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, is that the price of heat pumps will actually drop.

You have so much opportunity. The potential here is so profound for the people that we're elected to serve. Because the research dollars have flowed into some of these institutions, you can apply that research, instead of other jurisdictions getting the benefits for those research dollars. You can create good, local jobs. You can actually help people with the cost of their energy bills. Affordability is the number one issue that is playing out in all of our ridings.

I urge the government to please, please give this some serious consideration. Don't just discount it because you're distracted with some of the other things that are going on in your government. Really think about the people that would benefit from this in northern Ontario, in eastern Ontario, right here in Toronto. My colleague from Toronto—Danforth referenced the research which profoundly proves that heat pumps work across the entire province.

With that, Madam Speaker, I will conclude my comments and I would urge the government, come to this debate with some honesty and with some integrity, please.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Please be seated. Further debate?

Mr. Joel Harden: It's a pleasure to rise today for a real climate conversation. This is refreshing, Speaker, because as we are dealing with a country where more and more of our neighbours are having a hard time putting food on the table, paying the rent, dealing with the basic necessities for their kids, we're also seized with the fact we are running out of time to look at the climate crisis and take action accordingly.

What's standing in the way? I think the big thing that is standing in the way is the hot air generated in this building around the wrong reasons. So let me suggest to the government that one thing we could do is bring in a heat pump to this very building, recycle all the hot air I hear from the members opposite, use the resource we have, their constant exhortations that Justin Trudeau is out to ruin the country and the economy—take all of that energy and use it for something good.

Speaker, I'm joking, but my hero, Jack Layton, was one of the people behind the solutions that took the cooling of Lake Ontario into most of the major office buildings in this great city's downtown. That's because Jack Layton was a solutionary, like so many people at home. They aren't waiting, necessarily, for government to come up with the answer; they grasp the reins that they have and they take action. Jack was working at the municipal level at the time.

When I think about what we could do, it's the modern example of "a chicken in every pot": a heat pump in every apartment building and a heat pump in every home. We have the resources in this province to accomplish this. If the province of Prince Edward Island can say to residents of that place, "If you make \$75,000 a year or less as a household and if your home is worth under \$300,000, the province will buy you a heat pump"—if PEI, a Conservative government, can accomplish that, what is happening here in Ontario?

Well, I'm going to make a guess in my remaining couple of minutes here about what is happening in Ontario. The people of Ontario are beholden to an invisible lobby that they don't see in this place, and it's the fossil fuel industry. If Enbridge had representatives elected and were sitting in this place, Enbridge would be saying, "I'm sorry, Joel, we can't do that because we need to make sure that natural gas"—which has a toxicity of 70 times of the effect of carbon dioxide—"continues to grow in influence. We have to make sure that our profits and our bottom line and our ability to gouge consumers"—which Enbridge does year after year after year, jacking up the rates—"is more important than making sure that we have a heat pump in every apartment building and a heat pump in every home." Well, I will say, Speaker, for the record, that is an atrocious argument. It needs to be brought out into the public. A government that cared, not only about affordability but about the future for our children, would make sure that we had a plan that was good for the planet and also good for the pocketbook.

1400

As we're looking for money to figure out how we make this shift, I will follow on some comments from my col-

leagues earlier and say there are 50 billionaires in this country. Most of them live in Ontario. And what we just found out from a report from Oxfam is they have a collective wealth of \$249 billion. That's as many as 15 million Canadians. Their wealth massively increased in the pandemic. A Conservative government in England has instituted a windfall tax—a windfall tax on oil companies to raise revenues. A study has been done at the federal level saying a similar windfall tax federally could generate over \$5 billion.

My question to you, Speaker, for this debate, as we seek to find the money to put a heat pump in every apartment building and a heat pump in every home: What are the billionaires that are ripping people off at the pumps, ripping people off at the grocery stores, ripping people off with rent—what are we asking them to do? Because it's time for a government in the province of Ontario that will tell those folks they have to pay their fair share and they have to do it now.

I'll end with this: The city of Vancouver has instituted a bylaw saying all new apartment buildings in that city will not be hooked up immediately to natural gas. Fortis, the natural gas lobby group in that province, has spoken out against it—not surprising. But who governs the province of British Columbia? A New Democratic government. They have stood by the city of Vancouver. And who governs the province of Ontario, ultimately? It's the people who live here, not Enbridge.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Please be seated.

Further debate?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It's my pleasure to rise today to speak on our opposition day motion number 5, which is around heat pump subsidies and basically making life more affordable for people in this province, while also giving a damn about the environment that we are leaving to future generations.

First, I want to start with the member from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, who talked at length about the NDP not being about affordability and went on to say that we supported tolls on the 412 and 418 highways. I just want to say for the record that that is complete and utter fiction. In fact, my colleague from Oshawa tabled a bill—in 2018, I believe, it was the first time that she tabled that bill to get rid of the tolls on 412 and 418, and the Conservatives never supported it. They didn't push it through until four or five years later; they brought forward a bill of their own. So if it wasn't for the hard work of my colleague from Oshawa and the people in her community in tabling that bill, the Conservatives would still be charging a toll on those two highways.

Those people that use it are being charged tolls on the 407. Do you know why they're being charged tolls on the 407? Because a Conservative government privatized that highway; they sold it off for nothing, really, and gave it to a private corporation. So I find it interesting that the member on the other side of the House then stands up and talks about highways and how great they are with the highways.

Speaker, we just had a vote on my colleague from Ottawa's bill about vulnerable road users. When we're talking about affordability, do you know what's really affordable? Walking or cycling. Do you know what's really good for the environment? Walking or cycling. Yet the Conservatives this morning, just a few short hours ago, voted against protecting people that cycle in the province of Ontario. That doesn't sound like they support affordability. It certainly doesn't sound like they support the environment. We just have to look at what happened with the greenbelt. That is a glaring condemnation of what this government thinks of the environment.

Speaker, Ontarians are relying more and more on food banks in this province—that's Conservative government policies. The Daily Bread Food Bank actually just came out with a report and then came out against the government for not doing enough. So, while their members will show up to the Daily Bread Food Bank here in Toronto for photo ops and say, "Everybody should support the food bank. The need is so great. Everybody needs to step up and do more," what they aren't doing is actually making life more affordable in the province, so people don't have to rely on food banks.

Housing costs have gone up. Rent has gone up. Hydro has gone up. Heat has gone up. Food has gone up. This government has done nothing to actually go after the people responsible for price gouging in the grocery stores. The Premier is so tight with Galen Weston that he will not go after these corporations that are price gouging. They talk a lot about a carbon tax, but they don't talk about these big corporations that are actually price gouging and making millions. I think Loblaw, which is Galen Weston's company, I believe I read had a record quarter—record profits while more and more people are going to the food bank. We had Metro grocery store workers who were on strike who couldn't afford to buy groceries in the very store they worked in, and yet the Premier says this province is a thousand times better than it was before they formed government five years ago.

Speaker, it was reported earlier this month that, just in Windsor alone, food bank visits were already up 8% to last year. June Muir, who is the president of the Windsor-Essex food bank, said she expects that number to continue growing ahead of their typically busiest time over the holidays, and to say that she's concerned is an understatement. She's very, very worried. The Daily Bread Food Bank, who I mentioned, here in Toronto, just recently released their Who's Hungry 2023 report. One in 10 people in Toronto are relying on food banks, which is twice as many as last year. Some of those folks are people that have one job, two jobs. They can't afford to heat and to eat. We have seniors who can't afford medication and to eat.

And this is one solution to address two things: the affordability crisis and also the climate crisis that we're facing. In my region, we had two once-in-100-year floods. We just saw recently these out-of-control wildfires that were taking place. The government's reaction was to cut the firefighters—totally makes sense, right? But this is a real solution to address two very important issues that are

impacting people across the entire province. And as I mentioned earlier, this government was focused on giving their friends greenbelt land to make billions of dollars, while more and more people are experiencing homelessness or precarious housing, while more and more people are struggling because we don't have rent control, because this government cut it, while more and more people are going to food banks, more seniors are going without medication and other things. So we have a solution that we've put forward. We put forward Homes Ontario, our affordable housing plan. What did the government do? They said, "Nope. Nope."

It's interesting—I spoke to a forum with realtors and developers in Windsor. There were a couple of Conservative members that participated in that, and it was just days after they voted down our affordable housing plan. What was interesting to me is one of the Conservative members then said that what he thinks is a solution is for government to get involved in helping to build modular housing and to provide financing at a lower rate—which is exactly what our plan was, which is exactly what built this province. During World War II, we saw wartime homes. Those were modular homes and those were financed by government. It's exactly what we had proposed to do again and the government—Conservatives—voted against it but then, two days later, were saying it's a great plan as if it was their plan, all of a sudden, and they were thinking about doing it. That is the absurdity of this Conservative government.

So, Speaker, again I'll say—you know, oftentimes the Conservatives will say that all we do is oppose, we don't propose. We are proposing a solution. We are proposing a solution to lower the cost of heating and cooling for people in this province, to ensure that people who normally would not have access to heat pumps get the subsidies to be able to do that. It is more affordable, but it is also better for the environment.

1410

We had proposed a solution for affordable housing, and the government decided they wanted to throw away billions to developer friends—until they got caught, and now there's an RCMP criminal investigation.

Oftentimes the government side will stand up and say, "We will take no lessons from the members opposite." Well, Speaker, I would suggest they do. I would suggest that they do, because what we propose is what the people of this province are asking for and it's what the people of this province need.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Further debate?

MPP Lise Vaugeois: For the benefit of the people in my riding, I'd like to read out the motion:

"Whereas Ontarians are experiencing a cost-of-living crisis driven by low wages and corporate greed; and

"Whereas costs associated with the climate crisis are also increasing, including grocery and insurance prices, infrastructure damage, and natural disaster response; and

"Whereas the" Conservative "government has made the climate crisis worse and more expensive by eliminating

funding to make homes more energy-efficient, cancelling clean energy projects, and removing protections from farmlands;

“Therefore, the Legislative Assembly calls on the Ontario government, in partnership with the federal government, to subsidize the cost of heat pumps and other energy-saving retrofits for all Ontarians, in order to cut greenhouse gas emissions and reduce energy bills.”

It's all there in this proposal: fighting climate change, reducing costs for people—and everybody is struggling with the cost of living. These are smart and effective policies that could really help to ease the burden on families, while also helping in the collective fight against climate change. We know how many fires there were in northern Ontario this year, how many communities had to be evacuated and, by the way, how many firefighting jobs were cut by this government and the fact that woodland firefighters are still not eligible for presumptive cancer coverage—unbelievable.

But I'd like to talk about heat pumps. Actually, I heard this morning—I was very surprised to hear this—from the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, who actually said heat pumps won't work in Kenora, because they won't work when temperatures are below minus 20 degrees. Let's see. They're using them in Minneapolis at minus 40 degrees Fahrenheit, which is the same as minus 40 in Celsius. They are using them in Sweden. They're using them in Norway. In fact, they are using them in northern Alaska.

Interjections.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: Yes, it's surprising.

What I realize is that Conservatives aren't generally interested in science or evidence, but there's plenty of evidence that there are heat pumps that can work in very cold environments, so why aren't we exploring that?

Interjection.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: Oh, yes, and Sudbury. One of our members referenced that earlier. Thank you for that, because it's being used in Sudbury.

Frankly, there are so many cold places in our country and in the province of Ontario, it's inspiring to see where it is actually possible to have heat pumps.

I notice that the Conservatives did some heat pump pilot projects in Whitby, Ajax and Pickering. Of course, those are Conservative ridings. But I would think it would be very, very interesting: What about a pilot project in a place on the north shore of Lake Superior, where we have communities—

Interjection: Great idea.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: It's a great idea. We have communities such as Schreiber, where they have not ever been able to have access to natural gas. At one time we thought natural gas was going to be the cheapest way to go. Now we know that we need to move away from that, but Schreiber, of course, for many years has been trying to figure out how to get natural gas. So what about giving them the opportunity to try out heat pumps?

Interjection.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: Like a pilot project.

And then, in addition to bringing those heat pumps to Schreiber—it's got a fairly small footprint, so it's really the ideal size for a pilot project—bring up the people who have the know-how to install heat pumps.

That's another problem we have in northwestern Ontario—it was identified a year ago. We actually don't have people with the skills, at this moment, to install heat pumps across the region. So bring up enough people to provide some training, mentor people from the region, and once you get that started, move the program into the college so that people can be qualified and we can get a move on getting what people are asking for. The only reason that we don't have more heat pumps in the region is because it's expensive and people don't yet feel comfortable laying out that kind of money.

What we are proposing is working together with the federal government and giving a combination of grants and either forgivable loans or loans with no interest so that people can actually take the plunge, as it were, and invest in heat pumps. We know already from so many sources—I don't really think I need to make the case that heat pumps are a solution. They've been out there for a while, and they're known to be a very positive solution.

Those are the main points that I wanted to make.

Something else came up this morning that I really want to use a couple of minutes to address. I heard this morning that the Ministry of Health wants the Northwestern Health Unit, which is based in Sioux Lookout, to look at merging with the Thunder Bay District Health Unit. There's quite a lot of pressure on them from the government to do this. It's supposed to be a speculative study, but the reality is, you are looking at merging two health units. When climate change is having so much of an effect on people's health, you are trying to have two health units cover the geography of 400,000 square kilometres. What on earth is this about? We are trying to improve access to health care in the north, not reduce it—but that is exactly what they are pushing towards.

I will stop there. I think the arguments have been made. The north needs supports. Our party is offering those supports. And I would love to see this take place in northwestern Ontario.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Please be seated.

Further debate?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always a pleasure to rise in the House—and today, to talk about an NDP opposition motion to actually impact people's lives directly, right now, when they need it most.

People are having an incredibly hard time paying their bills. Costs have gone through the roof. Interest is going up. They're wondering how to pay for things. They're wondering how to pay for their heat. They also know, like the kids who are filing in right now, that we need to do things to make our planet more green and make sure that they have a good life moving forward, as well. That's a balancing act. So what we've proposed—and this isn't a be-all and end-all. Helping people install a heat pump is

not going to change the world, but it is going to lower their energy bills, and it does make a much lower carbon footprint.

The member from Kiiwetinoong raised a really good point with me: There are a lot of people who have no clue what we're talking about when we're talking about heat pumps. So I'm going to try to give a little—I'm not going to talk about the technology of the heat pump; that's far beyond me. Think about a refrigerator in the house. A refrigerator keeps your food cold, but if you go to the back of the refrigerator, there's heat coming off it. That's basically a heat pump. It's taking heat out of the fridge to make it cold. The same thing with an air conditioner: If you have an air conditioner in the summertime, it's making your house cold, but you'll feel heat coming off that air conditioner.

1420

Basically, what a heat pump does—it's an air conditioner in the summertime but it can take heat from outside air and, through the compression process, will concentrate it and use that heat in your house. This isn't something that is new technology; it's technology that we haven't really paid attention to. Other countries have. The Scandinavian countries have paid attention big time.

And, contrary to some people's statements, they do work in northern Ontario. They do. The issue for cold climates is, the colder the outside temperature, the less efficient the pump is. So when it's really cold—if it's minus 40—the pump might not be completely efficient for use, but it will still work. It will be efficient for use above—minus 20, 25, I believe?

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: Okay, minus 23, member from Niagara Falls, minus 23. Even where I live, we hit nights once in a while of minus 40. But it doesn't stay minus 40 for a week; it stays minus 40 for a night or two, and in the daytime raises up. When the sun hits, it raises back up to a balmy minus 20. It will work again.

It's not super complex technology—it's not—but it is expensive. But it will save money in the long run. The cost right now is between \$8,000 and \$20,000. For a lot of people that's a big chunk. It's a big, big chunk. They're going to have to borrow. That's why, where the government has the responsibility to lower greenhouse emissions—our carbon footprint collectively—it could actually help not only do that but help people pay their bills. Isn't that what government is for?

The Conservative government of the day, their solution is to write a letter to the federal government and complain about the federal government's carbon tax. Maybe you could take those letters and throw them in your fireplace; it will give you a bit of heat. But that's basically all they want to talk about. We actually want to give solutions to Ontarians that they can use.

The life expectancy of a heat pump, I believe I just heard: 18 years. The federal government has already said they want to help. There are provinces that already do this. You help people purchase a heat pump and it will save them money and help the planet for that initial purchase for 18 years.

But for some reason, for the one speaker the government has put up, that is not a good idea. According to them, that is not a good idea. He also said you can't solve this issue with just one thing, one heat pump in every house. That part I agree with. There are more things that we need to do, but so far, on the carbon issue, the only thing they've talked about is the federal carbon tax. That's the only thing. And the only thing that the provincial government can do on the federal carbon tax is write a letter to the federal government.

Furthermore, there is only one reason that the province of Ontario has the federal carbon tax. We had cap-and-trade in Ontario. The Ford government was elected and they scrapped the cap-and-trade program and because of that we fell into the federal carbon tax regime. You know what? Quebec, our neighbour, they don't pay a carbon tax. They have their own scheme. Ontario pays the carbon tax because they decided that Ontarians should pay the carbon tax so they had the right to complain.

And then they came up with a great idea: stickers on gas pumps. Now, I've got a suggestion for a sticker. I've got a serious suggestion for a sticker, okay? Implement this program and every heat pump that goes into every house in Ontario, you can put whatever government of Ontario program paid for part of this heat pump. That's a valid use of a sticker. That's a valid use of a sticker, and I would approve of that use of a sticker. Brought to you by the province of Ontario: Here's how to save money and save the planet. That makes sense. I would hope that the government looks more seriously at this issue so we actually can do our part, planet-wise and people-wise.

There's more to it than just complaining about the carbon tax. There is. Put some horsepower behind it—and actually, you're talking about big subsidies for electric cars; you're talking about the green steel industry. Prove that they're actually going to lower our carbon footprint and institute Ontario's own program to get us off the carbon tax. It's possible, if the will is there, but you haven't demonstrated the will. You haven't, and we're all paying the price for it. Everyone is paying the price because the carbon tax is one vehicle—not a vehicle that Ontarians need. We could have a better vehicle, but you're refusing.

Is this, putting in heat pumps, going to solve all the problems? No, but it's going to make a difference in people's lives. Other jurisdictions are doing it and you're not. You're choosing not to. You're choosing to cost the people of Ontario more money. You're choosing whether they heat or eat—your choice.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Please be seated. Further debate? Further debate?

I turn to the leader of the official opposition.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I want to thank, first of all, the members of the NDP official opposition who spoke to this important motion: the member from Toronto—Danforth, the member from Waterloo, the member from Ottawa Centre, the member from Windsor West, the member from Thunder Bay—Superior North and, of course, my colleague

the member from Timiskaming—Cochrane—people who represent all regions of this province, essentially, who are all speaking in favour of this important motion.

It's disappointing that we didn't hear more from the government side or some of the other folks in this place speak on this motion, because it's a very tangible idea, a solution that we've put forward that I think many Ontarians would appreciate and would be shocked that this isn't already happening.

It's a pretty straightforward motion. If it passes, it would lower energy bills for so many people in this province, for Ontarians who are already really struggling to pay for their groceries, to pay for the rising rents. And by the way, I do want to point out—and I appreciate my colleagues also mentioning this—that there are so many things we could also be doing to actually address the affordability crisis, and real rent control, bringing back real rent control, which this government did away with—boy, would that not make a massive difference to the lives of so many Ontarians right now.

This is just one little solution, but it's a tangible one and it goes so much further than what this government puts forward, which are meaningless motions, sending letters off to the federal government over and over again. Really, take some responsibility within your own jurisdiction to do something substantial to impact the lives of so many people. Food banks in this province—first-time visitors have gone up by 64% since pre-pandemic times. One in 10 people that live in Toronto are going to a food bank right now. I think that in Ottawa they just came out with a report too. It's what?

Interjection: One in seven.

Ms. Marit Stiles: One in seven, in Ottawa—let's note that a lot of these are people who have full-time jobs. There's something wrong in the province of Ontario when you can have a full-time job and still have to go to a food bank.

So I want to ask the government, members opposite, to work with us and try to bring about some change for the people of Ontario. This motion is a smart solution. It's just one little piece of the puzzle, but it would make life more affordable and make our planet greener.

As I've said previously, it doesn't have to be one or the other. We're showing you that you can do both. Smart policy brings about affordability and also addresses climate change. Smart policy does those things. Smart policy is actually working within your jurisdiction as a government who has a majority to do things that could actually make people's lives better, not just writing letters to another level of government every five minutes.

Take this initiative, run with it, and vote with us. Let's make a difference in people's lives. It's just one little thing, but it will make a big difference in many people's lives. It will also drive the economy and, frankly, drive down the cost of some of this technology so that more and more people can afford it.

I want to thank my colleagues for their comments and I hope that the government will do the right thing and support this motion.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): MPP Stiles has moved opposition day number 5. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1432 to 1442.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Members, please be seated.

MPP Stiles has moved opposition day number 5. All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

| | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Armstrong, Teresa J. | Gates, Wayne | Schreiner, Mike |
| Begum, Doly | Gélinas, France | Shaw, Sandy |
| Bell, Jessica | Gretzky, Lisa | Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) |
| Blais, Stephen | Harden, Joel | Stiles, Marit |
| Bourgouin, Guy | Hazell, Andrea | Tabuns, Peter |
| Bowman, Stephanie | Kernaghan, Terence | Vanthof, John |
| Brady, Bobbi Ann | Mamakwa, Sol | Vaugeois, Lise |
| Collard, Lucille | Mantha, Michael | West, Jamie |
| Fife, Catherine | Pasma, Chandra | Wong-Tam, Kristyn |
| Fraser, John | Rakocevic, Tom | |
| French, Jennifer K. | Sattler, Peggy | |

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 31; the nays are 67.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): I declare the motion lost.

Motion negated.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): I will allow the members to leave the chamber before we proceed.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PLANNING STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE L'AMÉNAGEMENT DU TERRITOIRE

Mr. Calandra moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 150, An Act to enact the Official Plan Adjustments Act, 2023 and to amend the Planning Act with respect to remedies / Projet de loi 150, Loi édictant la Loi de 2023 sur les modifications apportées aux plans officiels et modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire en ce qui concerne les recours.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am sharing my time with the parliamentary assistant, and with the associate minister as well.

Again, thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It is always an honour to rise in the Legislature, specifically to talk about building more homes for the people of the province of Ontario and the bill that we are bringing before the House today, which I believe will go a long way to helping us not only reset with our municipal partners, but also help us get more shovels in the ground faster.

As you know, Madam Speaker, I announced some time ago—I guess about a month ago—that we would be reviewing official plans in Barrie, Belleville, Guelph, Hamilton, Ottawa, Peterborough and Wellington county, as well as Halton, Niagara, Peel, Waterloo and York. These areas, of course, are of incredible importance in order for us to meet our targets of building 1.5 million homes across the province of Ontario, so it is an exciting day for us, because we're able to, as I said, begin the process of working more closely with our municipal partners in these areas as we begin to focus on that 1.5-million goal by 2031.

I think it is obviously clear to all members in the House how important it is for government to continue to work with our partners at the municipal level. In fact, we have been doing that since day one, as you know, with our previous housing supply action plans since 2018. We've brought in a new bill each and every year that allows us to focus on building homes for the people of the province of Ontario, working more closely with our municipal partners, especially in those areas where housing growth is required and where we can get shovels in the ground even faster.

We have been working very closely—my ministry and my parliamentary assistant, as well as the Associate Minister of Housing—meeting with our colleagues at the different levels and saying, “How can we get moving even quicker?” So we looked at the official plans—both that of November 4, 2023, and those approved on April 11, 2023. We recognize that within those plans and the changes that

were made by the provincial government—that it might not have necessarily been in the scope or in the ability of the community partners to be able to provide the housing in those areas at a rate at which we would have wanted them to be, and the decisions with respect to those modifications, which were really based, as you know, Madam Speaker, on helping us build as many homes as we possibly could in as quick a time frame as we could.

1450

Just to step back a little bit, the reason why we are so focused on this is, we have known, really, since 2018 that with a renewed optimism, when the government was elected back in 2018, shedding the yoke of what was 15 years of horrific mismanagement—

Interjection.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Yoke, yoke.

I suppose the member for Waterloo is right. She's probably right; there was probably a lot of guilt from the previous Liberal government on their mismanagement of the economy. So I share that sentiment with her. I can't imagine the guilt that they felt after 15 years of mismanaging the economy—how the previous Liberal government brought us into a housing crisis, and they doubled down in so many instances.

We knew by 2018 that a new government would unleash the economy again and that people from across the country and around the world would want to come back to Ontario, as has always been the case. Ontario is the engine of the Canadian economy. It is really a beacon for people all over the world.

I've talked a lot about how my own family came to Ontario to build a better life and on the basis of ensuring that not only could mean—as I've said, my parents came here, as I've said, in the late 1950s, early 1960s. My dad came here in the late 1950s, and my mom in the early 1960s—and how they all lived in one home. It was in the member for Scarborough Southwest's riding. I've talked about this before—my dad, his three brothers and a sister all living in a home in Dentonia Park, which I believe is in the member for Scarborough Southwest's riding, or close enough. The dream was to get out of that home, and one by one they did that—first, the older brother, and then the next. Then, they moved into another home on Lombardy Crescent. So whoever lives at 6 Lombardy Crescent—that would have been my first home, as well. I'm sure they're excited by that. The fact is that that was the dream for people when they came here; it was about home ownership. And for far too many people, that dream does not exist—not that it doesn't exist, but far too many people are thinking that they won't be able to participate in that dream.

That is why, when I assumed responsibility for the ministry, along with the parliamentary assistant and the associate minister, we looked at all of the successes that were brought in by some of the previous housing supply action plans. And there were a lot of successes there.

When we came in, housing starts were low. Purpose-built rentals were literally non-existent in the province of Ontario. Nobody wanted to get into it; none were being built. And we were starting to fall behind.

Some of the changes that have been made through the previous bills, which eliminated red tape—I know the Minister of Red Tape Reduction has done a spectacular job in helping us reduce red tape. What the previous housing supply action plans had been focused on has been about not only removing red tape, removing obstacles, but working with our municipal partners to focus on infrastructure and what it takes to get shovels in the ground, and the results have been really quite spectacular. Frankly, we're at our highest level of purpose-built rentals in over 15 years, and housing starts over the last couple of years also have reached their highest levels in this. Even this year, we are seeing a very, very strong level of housing starts across the province of Ontario, despite the headwinds with respect to increased interest rates and the speed at which interest rates have increased across the province of Ontario. We're seeing really strong numbers. I'm actually quite happy by that.

Ultimately, what we've decided to do is take a look at those plans in those areas that we've talked about and then double down on our ability to work with our municipal partners and say, "What do you have to do in order to ensure that we maximize getting shovels in the ground?" Let's not focus on those things that we disagree on. Let's focus on the things that we agree on with respect to their official plans. I'm quite happy that this bill has been very, very well received across these different areas.

Now, part of the bill, Madam Speaker, as you will know, does allow the municipal partners in those areas to identify some of the changes that we made to highlight whether they are able to expedite or build homes faster on those lands that we had identified that should have been available for housing. Our partners have until December 7, if I'm not mistaken, in order to highlight for us what of those parcels of lands that we would have otherwise made changes to in the original approvals back in November 2022 and April 2023—and they will do that by December 7. In the new year, any changes to those plans will be reflected in a new bill, an additional bill which we will bring to this House early in the new year.

It is all about getting shovels in the ground, building things faster, working with our partners at the municipal level, and we're going a little step further, Madam Speaker. As you know, one of the things that I've been doing when I was the Minister of Long-Term Care is I provided a significant number of requests to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to provide me with what are called ministerial zoning orders so that we could expedite shovels in the ground for long-term care. I know different ministers—the Minister of Education, the Minister of Infrastructure—have done the same thing to help us expedite, obviously, the building of schools and important infrastructure along the Ontario Line and GO Transit routes across the province. But one of the provisions that we put in this bill, which I think was a bit of an oversight and which should have probably been in there before, is immunity provisions for both us, the provincial government, and our municipal partners. And the reason we've done that, with respect to ministerial

zoning orders, is, as we have said, we want to ensure that when a ministerial zoning order is given, it is given not only for the purpose that it has been requested and approved, but also that we are seeing the results. And when we're not seeing the results as are expected, both our government and any future government should have the ability to amend that ministerial zoning order and not fear prosecution, should they do that. I think it was a bit of an oversight that it wasn't in there before, so this bill will allow that to happen.

It also builds a bit on some of the changes that we announced also a little bit earlier—and there's a bill before the House, the Greenbelt Statute Law Amendment Act. As I said, again, that one was really focused in complementary fashion to help build more homes in areas close to existing infrastructure, but, as we've said, as much as the desire was there to build more homes, people did not agree with that decision and that is why we are in the process of repealing that, while at the same time expanding protections to the greenbelt across Ontario.

Another important feature of what we're doing, and I know the Minister of Infrastructure in the most recent fall economic statement that was passed—I should say, Madam Speaker, I'm quite proud of the fact that the fall economic statement was unanimously supported by all members in the House, with 100% support. Nobody voted against that fall economic statement, which I think is pretty important when you think about it. I know in my time, it's happened twice before. I think it was the winter of 2020, a budget bill was passed unanimously, and then again, just recently, like I said, last Thursday, a second budget bill passed unanimously. And why is that important? It's important because as colleagues will know, on both sides of the House, a budget bill is a confidence motion and members have the opportunity to express their confidence in what the government is doing, their confidence in the finances, their confidence in the approach of the government and the legislation before the House.

1500

Look, the reality is, Madam Speaker, as you will know, when you have a commanding majority of 81, 82 seats, true, there are no consequences of voting against the government on a confidence motion. That's what made it even more, I would suggest, gratifying that 100% of the members who voted in the Legislature on that voted a sign of confidence in the government. Nobody voted against the government.

So I want to thank my colleagues in the NDP for expressing that level of confidence and support in the government. As I said, it's not been done before. And I appreciate that my colleagues in the independent caucus also expressed their confidence. I could be wrong—I'm just going to double-check—but I'm pretty certain that it was a 100% vote of support. I don't want to get it wrong, just in case the NDP voted against—no, I'm right. It was a 100% level of support for that motion.

Interjection: Vote of confidence.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Vote of confidence—you're right. So we've not had that before, but it's very gratifying,

given all that has been happening across the province, the aggressive work that we're doing, to have the full support of colleagues on both sides of the House for only the second time in the history of the province where a government has received that level of support.

But back to building homes, Madam Speaker: Something that we keep hearing constantly about is the need to increase infrastructure spending in order to allow those communities where we're asking the most, frankly—and those communities that we're asking the most of are 50 different communities. We're asking them to do more than others. They have expressed the need for increased infrastructure spending. As you know, in the unanimously supported fall economic statement, there was a fund to begin that process of investing. It is also one of the reasons why we're getting very, very frustrated with the federal government at the same time.

So the federal government—not to stray too far—is continuously making announcements: a thousand homes here, a couple of hundred homes there, 3,000 homes here. Last week, they announced 2,400 homes—perhaps even close to Madam Speaker's riding—at a cost of, I think, \$1.1 billion. To put that into context: \$1.1 billion would build in excess of 35,000 homes across York region, because what they're waiting for is infrastructure to help them unleash the housing activity: water and sewer. So it is one of the reasons why we are being so aggressive with our federal partners.

We also have, of course, the Building Faster Fund, which is to incentivize and also reward—I would say that—those who are able to get shovels in the ground quicker. Now, the reason for that is that not all municipalities are going to be able to meet the aggressive targets that we have set. That is clear.

I look at a community like mine, Stouffville. They will be able to meet that target, but they will need additional resources in order to meet that target. They're going to be asked to go above and beyond the usual pace of approvals. The Building Faster Fund will give them the extra resources that they need in order to meet those targets. While others, they might not be able to meet that target because they need infrastructure. While they won't have access to the Building Faster Fund—this fund is specifically for those who are being asked to go above and beyond, because they have the ability to meet those targets.

So, ultimately, it is another pillar in working with our friends at the municipal level. It is about ensuring that we have plans that maximize our ability to build 1.5 million homes. It is about making sure that the official plans that are approved are those that maximize existing water and sewer infrastructure, but also in areas where we have identified that additional infrastructure investments will help unleash thousands of additional homes.

It is reframing how we do the ministerial zoning orders to ensure that, if they do not meet the goals as set out by the province of Ontario, and if they are modified or changed, our municipal partners and the provincial government, now and in the future, have immunity from those who might not necessarily agree. But we've also been very

clear: If we give you a ministerial zoning order, we expect it to have the impact for which it was applied. I think this change will allow that to happen.

We, of course, are going to committee on the bill. It is listed right now on the Environmental Registry for comments so that the public can make comments on what we've seen.

Ultimately, though, Madam Speaker, as you will recognize, the original official plans, as this bill contemplates legislating, went through extensive consultation in their communities. It's mandated consultation. It went through very, very extensive consultations. This is just another layer of ensuring the public have confidence in the bills before them.

But ultimately it is about ensuring that people have confidence that all three levels are working closely to really focus on what is important to them, and that is building homes, giving them the same opportunities that many of us have had, giving people the excitement that they might one day have the ability to get out of their parents' basement and into a home of their own, and doing it in a fashion that makes sense; making sure that we are building all types of housing, whether it's rental housing, whether it's affordable housing, attainable housing or market-based housing; providing the full spectrum in communities where the infrastructure is available and in communities that are willing partners.

The last thing I will say on this before I hand it over to the parliamentary assistant—who, by the way, if I can say, has done an extraordinary amount of work. He's been criss-crossing the province talking about regional government reform. Again, it's reform that he's leading and helping us work with. Instead of the top-down that we used to get from the Liberals all the time—that top-down, beat-me-down style of government of the previous Liberals—it's about bringing people together for the number one job of building homes, ensuring that people have the dream of home ownership, whether it's your own home, whether it's your first rental apartment, whether you're a student and you have access to a dorm. It's the full continuum of housing. This is just another step on that really, really important pathway.

Thank you for your attention. With that, I will hand it over to the parliamentary assistant.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): I recognize the member from Perth–Wellington.

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you to the minister for his remarks. I don't know if the minister doesn't like me that much or not, but he sends me a lot across the province of Ontario with committee work. I know I appreciate that opportunity to go with my colleagues that serve on the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy to go out and meet with the people in Ontario, across this beautiful province.

I'm honoured today to rise to share some of the government's time as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and to speak to the Planning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023. As the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has outlined,

the proposed Planning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023, would, if passed, reverse provincial changes made in November 2022 and in April 2023 to the official plans and the official plan amendments in 12 municipalities. These are the cities of Barrie, Belleville, Guelph, Hamilton, Ottawa and Peterborough, Wellington county and the regional municipalities of Halton, Niagara, Peel, Waterloo and York.

The reversal includes changes to urban boundaries made by the province while maintaining protections for the greenbelt. The reversal of these official plan decisions made by the province would be retroactive to the original date that those decisions were made, either November 4, 2022, or April 2023.

As the minister mentioned, construction that has already begun or has received a building permit would be able to continue.

Applications already in progress seeking planning permissions—for example, zoning bylaw amendments or plans of subdivisions—would continue to be processed. They would be required to conform with the municipality's official plan brought into effect under the Planning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023.

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We recognize that in some cases more than a year has passed since these plans were first approved. That's why impacted municipalities have been given until December 7, 2023, to submit information about the circumstances or projects that are already under way. Also, impacted municipalities are being asked to bring forward any changes that they would like to see in their official plans based on the modifications the province previously had made. We anticipate that municipalities will want to use this window to recommend updates that address current priorities in their communities and align with the ministry's changes originally made to the official plans.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing will then evaluate the items brought forward by municipalities in a consistent and principled manner. For example, the ministry may consider matters such as whether the change is consistent with provincial policies—for example, increasing density and housing opportunities around transit—or whether the change might resolve a conflict with provincial legislation or regulations, or, possibly, whether the change is needed to address public health and safety concerns, or perhaps modifications may be needed to address a provincial priority project—for example, a long-term-care home or transit-oriented community. If the proposed change meets the criteria for inclusion in the official plan, the province will then explore, in consultation with the municipality, the most effective way to implement it.

In essence, the proposed Planning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023, recognizes that communities are dynamic and each has unique and evolving needs, which is why our proposed approach offers impacted municipalities an opportunity to fine-tune their official plans.

As discussed by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the changes made by the province to urban

boundaries would be reversed. Beyond that, for each official plan, there are a handful of provincial modifications that would be maintained under the legislation. These instances include changes the province made to protect the greenbelt, protecting public health and safety, and to align with existing provincial legislation and regulations.

Speaker, I think it's important to emphasize what is being preserved in the proposed Planning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023, so allow me to take a deeper dive into the importance of official plans and exactly what modifications made through the ministry's decisions would be retained through the proposed legislation.

As we look closer, we can understand the common-sense reasoning supporting these changes. As one looks even closer, a new appreciation emerges for the complexities and nuances of official plan processes. An appropriate analogy would be a fine-tuned machine: Every part of the machine has to function to perform. If one component is out of step, out of alignment, then the entire machine underperforms, and there's an interdependence and harmony between the different component parts. So it is with official plans. Big-picture planning is matched by the great attention to detail. Divergent land uses must be carefully managed to successfully co-exist. Long-term infrastructure goals must be front-and-centre as short-term development pressures are considered. It's a process of fine-tuning and calibration, where an oversight in one area can have unintended consequences in another.

More detail on the provincial changes to be maintained under the proposed legislation can be found on the Environmental Registry, where the Planning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023, has been posted for 30 days for public input—which also, I believe, closes on December 16 of this year.

Here, Speaker, I would like to walk us through some of these key modifications organized by theme, and I believe it will be a helpful exercise in understanding the rationale behind them.

For those who are still with me, I will also be sharing my time with the Associate Minister of Housing, the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London.

The first area of provincial changes to be retained relate to the greenbelt. There may be instances where a municipality included elements in its official plan that run contrary to policies and mapping supporting the greenbelt. For example, a municipality's adopted urban plan may encroach into the greenbelt.

And as you know, Speaker, our government has brought forward legislation to enhance greenbelt protections. We carefully worked through the official plans to identify and then address inconsistencies with the greenbelt, and changes have been made to meet municipally adopted plans for Hamilton, the regions of Niagara, Peel and York, and the county of Wellington to align with greenbelt policies.

In a similar way that official plans must align with the policies protecting the greenbelt, they must also align with policies protecting other areas. A good example is the Niagara Escarpment Plan area. The Niagara Escarpment,

just like the Oak Ridges moraine and the protected countryside, forms an important part of the greenbelt area. Modifications are proposed to be maintained in the Niagara region plan to help protect the escarpment from incompatible uses. The province has maintained language to Niagara region's municipally adopted official plan to prohibit a new waste disposal site in the Niagara Escarpment Plan area.

Speaker, the next area of modifications we'll explore relates to Indigenous interests. Indigenous communities have important interests that need to be considered through land use planning. Accordingly, we are maintaining modifications that help to strengthen municipalities' approach to working with Indigenous communities and ensuring obligations are met.

An example of this type of modification includes ensuring that where a marked or unmarked cemetery or burial place is found, Indigenous communities with known interests in the area are notified. Another situation could be where archaeological resources are documented and found to be Indigenous in origin. In this case, the official plan sets out that a copy of the archaeological assessment report be provided to Indigenous communities and organizations with an interest in the matter.

Another provision that would be maintained to an official plan would ensure that when identifying, protecting and managing cultural heritage resources and archaeological resources, the municipality engages with Indigenous communities with Aboriginal and treaty rights, or traditional territory in the area.

A further example of an Indigenous interest that would need to be addressed in official plans is ensuring that the municipality engage with Indigenous communities with Aboriginal and treaty rights or traditional territory in the area throughout the planning process. Changes have been made to the municipally adopted plans for Hamilton, Belleville and the county of Wellington to align with Indigenous interests.

Now, Speaker, let us take a closer look at modifications related to sensitive land uses. A sensitive land use in Ontario is defined as a building, park or recreation area or outdoor space that, in the course of normal use, would be adversely impacted by pollution from a nearby facility. An obvious example is that one wouldn't want to locate a major industrial facility next to a long-term-care facility.

It's worth keeping in mind these considerations work both ways. Of course, in my example, the disadvantages for the residents of the long-term-care facility are obvious. But also, the industrial facility—perhaps a cornerstone of the community's employment and economic prosperity—would likely find its operations hampered by such an ill-advised location, and this could be true even if the industrial facility met or exceeded the province's rigorous environmental standards. Poor choices around location would place each activity in a losing position.

Official plans play an important role in establishing a framework where incompatible land uses are kept apart. To this end, the legislation would add language to an official plan to clarify that the municipality would follow

provincial guidelines, with the goal of keeping opposing land uses such as major industrial, office or retail facilities separate from sensitive land uses, such as residential or recreational areas. Also, if this proves impossible in certain situations, then the official plan would include language to ensure measures are taken to minimize and mitigate any potential adverse effects from odour, noise and other contaminants. In some cases, that legislation would add language to official plans to prevent industrial facilities being gradually squeezed out of a site by the encroachment of other sensitive uses. This careful allocation of land uses helps maintain the long-term use of existing or planned industrial or commercial facilities, which in turn supports a community's economic stability.

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We can see, Speaker, that modifications related to sensitive land uses perform an important function related to both protecting public health and safety and promoting vibrant local economies. Changes have been made to the municipally adopted plans in the cities of Hamilton and Peterborough and the regions of York and Niagara to align with sensitive land uses.

Speaker, building on the health and safety priorities we just discussed under the sensitive land uses, we will now turn our attention to the modifications concerning another very important issue: safe drinking water. Official plans include provisions for wellhead protection areas in alignment with the Clean Water Act. Many municipalities rely on wells to supply drinking water to their communities. Pollutants can sometimes seep into the ground and contaminate the water in the well, clearly something we want to avoid.

A wellhead protection area is an area around a well where landowners and the municipality are required to manage activities that could become potential sources of contamination to the well. Wellhead protection areas are identified in official plans, and official plans need to reflect the good planning that is undertaken through water protection plans under the Clean Water Act. For example, source protection plans related to Lake Ontario, Lake Simcoe or the Trent River might cover an area that includes wellhead or water intake protection areas. In some other situations, the province has maintained language in relation to wellhead protection in areas in an official plan.

Speaker, in layperson's terms, these detailed and technical provisions ensure that a plant manufacturing powerful industrial chemicals isn't located within the area that feeds a well for our drinking water. It's very important, and I think all members of this place would agree.

Changes have been made to the municipally adopted plans for the cities of Barrie, Belleville and Peterborough and the regions of Peel and York to align with provisions for safe drinking water.

Speaker, next we'll look at modifications related to municipal plans that aren't reflective of the province's capital infrastructure plans. Logically, as the province invests billions of dollars in new and upgraded transit infrastructure—\$185 billion, to be exact—we want to

ensure that the planning of our towns and cities is reflective of our long-range infrastructure plans.

We want as many people as possible to commute to their jobs using public transit. This reduces congestion, helps the environment and supports livable, walkable communities. It's also a social equalizer where access to employment and educational opportunities is much less dependent on access to a car.

The province has made some adjustments to municipally adopted official plans in relation to transit infrastructure plans. These apply to the municipalities of Peel region, Halton region and York region.

Speaker, next I'd like to discuss the provisions related to planned corridors. Large infrastructure projects—for example, new subways, highways or major electricity transmission lines—require years of planning. This planning process includes important environmental assessments. Once potential future corridors are identified, they need to be considered in official plans. Common sense dictates that it would be unwise to permit new development on a tract of land being considered for a new highway, for example.

The province has made some plan modifications related to a transportation project and an electricity project, which are currently at various stages in the planning process. These are the Highway 413 corridor and the northwest GTA transmission corridor. The province's modifications related to planned corridors affect the municipally adopted plans for the regions of Halton and Peel as well.

I'd like to echo the comments made by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing regarding immunity provisions. The proposed legislation would introduce immunity provisions to help mitigate legal risks for municipalities and the province resulting from this legislation. This legislation would also amend the Planning Act to introduce immunity provisions related to the making, amending, or revoking of ministerial zoning orders. This provision would help mitigate risk should revocations be necessary as the ministry reviews use-it-or-lose-it policies.

Ontario's strength is in its diversity, and that diversity is reflected in Ontario's dynamic communities. The 12 municipalities contemplated in the proposed Planning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023, are a microcosm of the quality of life, abundant opportunity and sense of community that draws people to Ontario. The official plans play a vital tool to help guide the long-term growth of these communities. These plans help ensure that we build housing where we need it and that businesses have a place to grow.

I appreciate everyone joining me on this journey through official plans. I know it's not the sexiest thing you could be talking about on a Monday afternoon, but it really does demonstrate the importance of these plans and ensure we continue to build Ontario, whether it's Highway 413, as I've mentioned in my remarks—which the members of the opposition continue not to support and the mayor of Mississauga continues not to support, but that's her decision in that. These decisions are vital for the prosperity and future of Ontario, and it's through these official plans,

the building blocks, the pathway forward for our communities—and our government will continue to work, as the minister mentioned in his remarks, with those communities moving forward to ensure that we build those communities, ensure we get more homes built, ensure that we attract those economic engines of Ontario to our communities, ensuring we continue to build on our success of attracting 700,000 new jobs to Ontario since our government formed government in 2018. We'll continue to do that to ensure Ontario remains a great place to live, work and play.

With that, Speaker, I pass it to the Associate Minister of Housing.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): The Associate Minister of Housing.

Hon. Rob Flack: Thank you to the parliamentary assistant from Perth–Wellington. Good job.

Speaker, it's an honour to be here to speak about the Planning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023. We know how important official plans are to our communities and to this province, especially when it comes to planning for the future local priorities and services, including housing. I'd like to speak today about how reversing official plan decisions for these 12 municipalities across the province will work. Combined with other actions the government is taking through our housing supply action plans, the Building Faster Fund and a revised definition of affordable housing will help support local planning priorities and support municipalities in their efforts to help us reach our goal of building at least 1.5 million homes by 2031.

The minister has outlined the changes that will be made as a result of the proposed Planning Statute Law Amendment Act, but I would like to underline how important these proposed changes will be to our local communities. The legislation, if passed, will have a positive impact on the cities of Barrie, Guelph, Belleville, Hamilton, Ottawa, Peterborough and Wellington county, along with the regional municipalities of Halton, Niagara, Peel, Waterloo and York.

The reversal in the decisions on the official plans for these municipalities would help ensure that future planning and development align with community needs. Official plans set out where new housing can be built; where offices and shops will be located; where industry can develop and thrive; where infrastructure like roads, water mains and sewers will be needed; and finally, they determine the locations for parks and schools.

Official plans help implement the provincial policy statement. This statement contains direction and processes that municipalities must follow for land use planning interests such as community development and community growth. Land use planning helps set the goals for the community while keeping social, economic and environmental factors in mind. Planning helps to balance the interests of property owners with the interests of the community as a whole. And municipalities work to reflect the interests of their communities in their official plans.

That is why we believe it is important that, through the proposed legislation, we reverse the official plan decisions

for the 12 municipalities I just listed, so they can more accurately reflect the local community's priorities and the will of local municipalities.

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As the minister noted earlier, there would be some limited modifications that would be maintained in the legislation that would continue to apply. They would be maintained even after winding back the majority of the provincial changes to the official plans and official plan amendments, as made in November 2022 and April 2023. The reversal of the official plan decisions made by the province would be retroactive to the original date that they were made—either on November 4, 2022, or April 11, 2023. However, construction that has already received a building permit would continue to be able to proceed, and applications already in progress seeking planning permission—for example, zoning bylaw amendments or plans of subdivision—would continue to be processed and would be required to conform to the municipality's official plan as approved under the Planning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023.

Mr. Speaker, as I have mentioned, the province is on the right path to building more houses for seniors, for students, for first-time homebuyers and those needing housing stability. As such, Speaker, we need to take additional steps to support the efforts of our municipal partners. As part of our proposed legislation to wind back changes to the official plans, we have asked the impacted municipalities to submit information about which modifications they would like to see made to those plans, based on the modifications originally contemplated by the province. This includes information on projects that are already under way. It is our shared goal to build 1.5 million homes by 2031. However, we all know there is some heavy lifting ahead to achieve this lofty goal.

You've heard me say it before, Speaker, and I stand by it: Well done is better than well said. And that is why we will work with our municipal partners to ensure official plans, going forward, match our shared priorities. Speaker, it will take all of us—federal, provincial and municipal governments, along with the not-for-profit and private sectors and financial institutions—to get the job done. As the minister mentioned, reversing the official plan decisions that were made would better reflect local priorities and support the needs of local communities while maintaining our goal of at least 1.5 million homes—the hundreds and hundreds of thousands of homes Ontarians need and deserve.

Speaker, the proposed Planning Statute Law Amendment Act is an important step to improving our collaboration and partnership with the municipalities as we work towards a shared goal of more housing supply, but it represents only one of the many ways in which we are working with our partners to deliver more housing of all types. Since the beginning of our mandate, we have put forward many impactful measures to help increase the supply of housing. I'd like to speak to a number of those initiatives right now.

We've introduced four housing supply action plans to address the different challenges people across the province

are facing when it comes to finding a home that meets their needs and their budgets. We've taken bold action to speed up the construction of housing, because more and more people are unable to afford a home.

I'll give you some examples, Speaker: The More Homes Built Faster Act, which received royal assent in late 2022, introduced the groundwork for more growth in the housing sector. The groundwork includes reducing the red tape that delays construction and pushes home prices even higher, promoting building up near transit and reforming zoning to create more gentle-density housing, protecting homebuyers and using surplus provincial lands to build more attainable homes. Our More Homes Built Faster housing supply action plan also works to streamline municipal planning responsibilities, and it removes duplications in the planning process.

Next, in 2023, we introduced our latest and fourth housing supply action plan, called Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants. This plan works to make life easier for renters and protects affordable housing while encouraging the revitalization of older and deteriorating buildings. That plan also introduced new changes to reduce the cost of building a new house and it streamlined the rules around land use planning to help encourage new housing construction.

Speaker, it's actions like these that will help communities as they grow and continue to grow, accommodating more and more people in this province—actions that will help communities grow with the right mix of ownership and rental housing, help them grow with single-family homes, townhomes and mid-rise apartments, and grow with the population, as I said, as it increases right across Ontario.

We know that, as Ontario's population has grown, housing construction has not kept pace. We need to keep up with population growth and projections as we are heading toward 20 million people in this province. That's because those population and employment forecasts help each municipality plan for what their communities need in the coming decades ahead.

Speaker, as we have all said, we have a housing crisis right across this province. That is why it is important that we support these municipal plans for future growth, because if we do not, prices for housing will continue to rise and make home ownership, along with finding an affordable place to rent, even more and more out of reach.

More than 500,000 people moved to the province in 2022 alone. Some might argue it was even more. Recent projections show that as many as four million additional people will move to Ontario by 2031, hitting that 20 million mark, as I spoke about earlier. That is why we are determined to work with our partners to build at least 1.5 million homes by 2031. I am proud to say we are making substantial progress. We are well on our way to meeting our goals, with already 11% of our target achieved.

Other housing types that have been enabled and encouraged by provincial policies, including basement and laneway suites and long-term-care homes, could also be counted toward our shared housing goals.

To check our progress, we rely on housing data provided by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. We saw close to 100,000 homes built in 2021 and again in 2022. This figure represents the most housing starts we have seen in over 30 years—three decades, Speaker; over 30 years.

Rental housing construction improved as well, and together, we set a new record of nearly 15,000 starts last year. In 2023, rental housing continues to be on the right track, with over 14,000 rental starts so far and a 43.5% increase in the number of starts from the same period last year—impressive indeed. This is the highest level of rental starts on record for this time of year ever. That is why we are continuing to take action to prepare for the accelerated housing supply growth.

As you can see, our government's housing supply action plans and other significant measures are having a positive effect on housing supply. Our actions are transforming Ontario in a very bold way, and we are continuing to take steps to support the efforts of our municipal partners in tackling the housing supply crisis.

To further help our municipal partners deliver on our shared goal, we recently announced the Building Faster Fund. This program will provide important financial support for qualifying municipalities by providing them with up to \$1.2 billion over three years. The fund can be accessed by 50 municipalities that have been assigned a housing target, and it will help pay for the infrastructure that supports housing development like water, waste water, roads and hydro, as well as the related costs that support community growth. This new program also reserves a portion of the funding for small, rural and northern communities that have not yet been assigned a housing target.

For the 50 municipalities with housing targets, each municipality's portion of the \$400 million annually will be determined based on their share of the greater provincial housing supply goal as well as their performance compared to their annual assigned targets. For example, if a municipality's target represents 10% of the province-wide target, that municipality will be eligible for 10% of the funding through the BFF, the Building Faster Fund.

Performance will be evaluated by comparing the municipality's number of housing starts and additional residential units created in a given calendar year against the annual target. Municipalities that are achieving 80% or more of their annual target will be able to access a portion of their allocation. Those that exceed their target will be eligible to receive additional funding. Municipalities that are not achieving 80% of their annual target will receive no funding. Funding will begin to flow in 2024-25, and we are counting on all 50 municipalities with targets to do their part and get the job done.

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We want to ensure that local communities are able to make decisions that affect them directly—so long as those decisions align with our shared goals and priorities of building more homes faster. We need to start building homes today, and we need to get shovels in the ground and

faster. We're focused on creating conditions for growth, creating the environment for success is important. Provinces don't build houses; people do.

We also need to make the housing we build affordable. The affordable housing definition: That's why Bill 134 would, along with other measures, support getting more affordable residential units built throughout the province. The proposed changes recently introduced in the act would bolster our efforts to lower the cost of building, purchasing and renting affordable homes across the province. Specifically, the changes we are proposing would affect the collection of municipal development-related charges as they pertain to affordable housing. The charges I'm talking about are the community benefits charges, development charges and parkland levies.

We've also proposed a revised definition of "affordable residential units" because to make home ownership and the rental housing more affordable, we need to include income as a measure of affordability. In addition to local incomes, the revised definition of "affordable" would also take local market factors into account.

The new definitions we are proposing are as follows. For ownership, we are proposing that a unit would be considered affordable when the purchase price is at or below the least expensive of the following two criteria: a price resulting in housing costs that are no more than 30% of a household's annual income for moderate-income households, taking local incomes into account, or at least 10% below the average purchase price of a unit in the local municipality.

For rental housing, we are proposing that a unit would be considered affordable when the rent is at or below the least expensive of the following two criteria: 30% of a household's annual income for moderate-income households, taking local renter incomes into account, or average market rent of a unit in the local municipality.

For both ownership and rental, moderate household income would refer to those in the 60th percentile of the income distribution in a local municipality. Both residential rental and ownership units that meet the province's new definition would be eligible for discounts and exemptions from municipal development-related fees.

By strategically exempting and discounting municipal development-related charges on affordable residential units, we are counting on the community home building sector to step up and help build significantly more affordable housing. Discounts and exemptions on these fees could help to ensure more Ontarians in all parts of the province can find a truly affordable home.

There are still far too many people struggling to find housing that meets the needs of their families—and the cost of living is continuing to rise. As we say, day in and day out, everything is affected by the carbon tax and the high, high cost of inflation. The proposed changes to the way "affordable" is defined under the Affordable Homes and Good Jobs Act also considers important feedback we received through two technical advisory tables. We've also welcomed further feedback on the proposed amendments through our postings on the Environmental Registry

of Ontario and the Regulatory Registry. This is just one way we've been working to reduce the costs of building much-needed affordable residential units.

As I've said, all levels of government must work together to address the housing crisis. That's why Ontario is working closely with the federal government to increase the supply of purpose-built rentals. It's why, to spur construction of more rental units, Ontario is removing the full 8% of the provincial portion of the harmonized sales tax on qualifying new purpose-built rental housing. It was a fun announcement to be at with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, along with the Minister of Finance, when it was announced a little less than a month ago. It was a cold morning, but it was a warm morning, because it warmed everyone's heart to see that we're making life more affordable in this province. This builds on the federal government's announcement in September to remove its portion of the tax in response to our long-standing call—and I repeat, we made the call—to encourage construction on more rental units and, as I said earlier, we're seeing those results in spades.

Removing both the federal and provincial portions of the HST is a measure that will make it easier and cheaper, more affordable, to build this important housing type throughout Ontario. It helps make it more affordable for the people that have come to Ontario looking for a new start and a good place to live and take care of their family, and it will help meet our shared goal of building at least 1.5 million homes. It's a lofty target—we know, folks—but at the same time, if we don't set good targets and try to achieve them, we won't get there. So 1.5 million is key. It's tough, but we'll get there. We will prevail.

Speaker, as you can see, the proposed Planning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023, is just one of the many ways our government is engaging and collaborating with municipalities to support local communities as they grow over the coming years. Our government is getting it done by following through on our commitments. We are committed to increasing housing supply throughout this province, be it for first-time homebuyers, seniors, newcomers to this great province and this great country, or for those needing housing stability and ultimately supportive housing.

But we are also committed to reasonable and responsible growth that supports local interests and provincial priorities. Through the actions that we've already taken and the actions we will continue to take, we will keep building homes and listening to the needs of municipalities and their local communities. Our call to action is to get shovels in the ground across this province. And, Speaker, to the many people I talked to in my endeavours in this province—be it seniors or first-time homebuyers or people that have lost the hope and dream of home ownership—we are fighting for them. Our call is a call to action, to get shovels in the ground and roofs over peoples' heads right across Ontario. We need all hands on deck, and I am confident, under the leadership of Premier Ford and this government, we will get the job done.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Bill 150, the Planning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023, is essentially legislation to backpedal on the government's misuse of its powers to expand municipal boundaries, which the government forced on them. So my question is—to whichever member wants to answer the question—why did it take the Auditor General's report, an Integrity Commissioner's report and an RCMP criminal investigation for this government to reverse a decision that was so strongly opposed by everyone in Ontario, except the government's speculator friends?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Well, I don't know if that's the case, actually, Madam Speaker. We will see on December 7 which of the changes that were made by the provincial government will be supported by our municipal partners. I've heard from many of our partners, some who have said unilaterally that they will maintain all of the provincially suggested changes, and others who have said, indeed, that they won't be accepting all of them, and some that said that they won't accept any of them.

Ultimately, the decision was made to focus on building homes quickly, as quickly as possible. But in some instances, the decisions that weren't supported by infrastructure in the area and, certainly, just weren't supported by either the elected officials in the area or residents in the area—that is why we will work more closely with those that want to make the changes. We'll work more closely with them to ensure that we meet those goals within the existing urban boundaries.

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

Mr. Stephen Blais: A few moments ago, the associate minister said that “I believe the government is on track at 11% of the total goal of 1.5 million homes for home construction.” This is, of course, a 10-year goal, and we are approaching the end of year 3. To be on track with achieving your 10-year goal, you should be at 33%. So I'm wondering how the associate minister can positively classify the progress on achieving the goal, having only reached one third of the one-third target they should be at, at this point.

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Hon. Rob Flack: We're not a third of the way there yet and 11% I think is a notable achievement, but I would also acknowledge, as I did in my remarks, that we've got a long way to go. We are trying to create an accelerated speed to get this done, and obviously we've got some headwinds in front of us right now, being high inflation thanks to your party's support of the carbon tax, federally. I would also say, respectfully, that interest rates have curtailed the construction of homes in this province—rental units, supportive housing units. Why? Because, again, inflation is at an all-time high and the government opposite's federal cousin spent unbelievably during the pandemic and caused inflationary pressures. We are going to get there. We are going to try and create momentum between now and the next two years. With headwind in front of us, we'll get it done.

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

Mr. Lorne Coe: My question is to the minister's parliamentary assistant. Both the minister and the parliamentary assistant spent some time talking about the empowering of municipalities, which is a good thing—as a former councillor—and also to strengthen local decision-making, which is also, I think, very strategic in terms of meeting our goals.

Can the parliamentary assistant expand on how the legislation, if passed, will do what I just described? Strengthen global decision-making and empower municipalities to build more homes through an open and transparent process. And I thank you both for that.

Mr. Matthew Rae: I want to thank the member from Whitby and also recognize that he has now served in elected office for over 20 years.

Interjections.

Mr. Matthew Rae: No, he does not look that old at all, Speaker. I won't tell him that I was 10 when he started his elected career.

I appreciate the question from the member from Whitby and this process—as the minister mentioned and I mentioned in my remarks, December 7 is when the municipalities and the minister reached out. When the minister came into his new role, he reached out immediately to the municipalities about the housing task force recommendations and asked, how are we going to get homes built and which recommendations do you want to see us work forward immediately on that? And I know we're working through those recommendations right now.

Also, December 7 is when we're asking for the feedback, but also the ERO posting is up December 16 and anyone in the public can make a submission through that, and I encourage anyone watching this afternoon to do so.

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

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: We're dealing with Bill 150 but not long ago we were dealing with Bill 136, a similar bill that was protecting Ontario from the government for the greenbelt. Now we're dealing with Bill 150, reversing harmful urban boundary expansions that the government forced on municipalities.

So, my question would be: Does the government now accept the conclusion of its housing affordability task force that a shortage of land is not the cause of the housing crisis?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I think the member is actually wrong. What the problem is, is a shortage of service land in a lot of instances, Madam Speaker. That is one of the challenges that we are facing right now and that is why it is a two-pronged approach, to not only approve lands where infrastructure is available but also to ensure that there is funding set aside to build infrastructure. It is one of the reasons why—the member will know; I said it in my speech. One of the reasons why we are so frustrated and so bewildered with the federal government response that will pay \$1.1 billion to build 2,400, 2,100, 2,200 homes in the city of Toronto—when that same amount of money would unleash thousands of homes in York region and with an extra couple hundred million would probably unleash thousands of homes in Simcoe county.

So the difference is, what land is available, what land is serviced and where we should be putting those very valuable resources of the people of Ontario and Canada. We believe it should be put into thousands of homes; they obviously believe it should go into hundreds.

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

Mr. Stephen Blais: Despite the government's efforts to accelerate home construction, many home builders are still complaining about the pace or lack thereof at the municipal level. I'm wondering if the minister or one of his associates can inform the House what they think an appropriate timeline is from the approval of this bill and, say, a subdivision application to getting shovels in the ground for that next subdivision.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I would say as soon as possible, really, but we have to get the bill passed first. But a bill is not an obstacle toward building and planning new homes. The Liberal member of Parliament's question highlights the challenges that we were all facing in building homes in the province of Ontario whilst they were in charge: obstacle after obstacle after obstacle.

I don't think many of my municipal partners or friends are sitting there waiting for this bill to be passed before they approve plans, before they work with home builders to get shovels in the ground. Just the opposite: They're reaching out to all three of us and saying, "What else can we do to get shovels in the ground?" Because they also want to be there and have homes built in their community. They also want kids to get out of the basement and into a brand new home. I don't think they're waiting on a bill to be passed to get that job done.

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

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I want to thank all three of the members and also the former Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for the work of getting 1.5 million homes built in our province. In the next couple of years, we're going to have an extra four million people. If you lived in Etobicoke, you'd think they're all coming to Etobicoke. You see high-rises growing and growing and growing. On every street—the Queensway, the Kingsway, Lakeshore—there are buildings. If you look at Humber Bay Shores, there are condos galore, an extra 30,000 people.

Not everybody wants to live in Toronto; I do. Not everybody wants to live in a condo, so we have to open up land in other places for people to live, raise their families and have the choice. Do they want to live in a townhouse? Do they want to live in a condo? Do they want to live in a multiplex? We have to offer all those types of housing.

I appreciate the work that is being done. We need to continue moving this train forward and getting these shovels in the ground. But can one of the members please explain how government plans to balance our need for more homes while looking after our natural resources, our farmland and our public health infrastructure?

Hon. Rob Flack: It's no question—I'm standing beside the Minister of Agriculture. We feed more people

today than we ever have, and we produce more food and export more food than we grow. The bottom line is, I'm convinced we're going to feed the people. We're going to create economic growth so we can keep people employed. The jobs are coming. The opportunities are there.

The third leg of the stool that's causing this consternation, as the member pointed out, is housing. As such, we have a good plan in place. I'm convinced, even with some headwinds in our way, we're going to get the job done. How are we going to do it? We have a housing forum starting next week where we'll bring all stakeholders together to talk about the opportunities and a bias for action, the sense of urgency to get shovels in the ground and build homes and raise roofs over the people, all those who need—

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

Mr. John Vanthof: Point of order, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Point of order: I recognize the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane.

Mr. John Vanthof: Given that the official opposition was given no notice of which bill was going to be called, we respectfully ask for unanimous consent to stand down the lead of the official opposition.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): The member from Timiskaming–Cochrane is seeking unanimous consent to stand down the lead. Agreed? No.

Further debate?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: As always, it's an honour and a privilege, as it is for all of us in this House, to be able to rise and speak on behalf of the great residents of Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas. I would also like to commend Hamilton for putting on a fantastic Grey Cup party, a whole week of Grey Cup. *Félicitations aux Alouettes*. They did a great game. It was an incredible game. In fact, I just learned that 12 out of the 14 last Grey Cups were decided in the last three minutes of the game, and that was no different from the game yesterday, where the Alouettes took and retained the lead in—

Miss Monique Taylor: Under a minute.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: It was under a minute, so it was pretty fantastic.

In Hamilton, we had a fantastic street party. Green Day played. We also had a fantastic Santa Claus parade. I was honoured to walk side by side with MPP Monique Taylor to see tens of thousands of people line the streets for the Santa Claus parade. But because there were visitors from all over Canada for the Grey Cup, there were probably as many CFL jerseys in all the different colours as there were Santa hats and, for the Ti-Cats, the black and gold. They were pretty excited to see one of the Ti-Cat linebackers riding with Mrs. Claus in the Santa Claus parade. So all in all, it was an absolutely fantastic week in Hamilton.

1600

We were disappointed not to see the Ti-Cats in the game, but we know in BC, next year, the Cats are going to be there—Oskee wee wee all the way. So thank you so much, Hamilton volunteers and the Grey Cup committee

for a fantastic, fantastic weekend. Thanks to everyone. It just proves that CFL—Canadian football—is the best football in the world. The Bills are pretty good too, but CFL football beats all, I have to say.

We're not here to talk about the CFL, although I could talk about the Bills and the CFL for quite some time. We're here to talk about—

Interjection: An hour.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: An hour? I could do an hour. Can I do an hour on Josh Allen? I could, but instead I'm here to talk about Bill 150, An Act to enact the Official Plan Adjustments Act, 2023 and to amend the Planning Act with respect to remedies.

This act is comprised of two schedules: One is the Official Plan Adjustments Act, which is the schedule that will roll back the forced urban boundary changes and amendments made by this government, and the second schedule—in fact, almost more words are dedicated to the second schedule, which is yet again a schedule that the government puts in to indemnify people from wrongdoing in these decisions of the government, just like we saw with the greenbelt scandal. Their greenbelt amendment bill that rolled back their atrocious decision to grab the greenbelt on behalf of special-interest developers of the government—that bill, also, was filled with indemnities as well, because you put forward bills that require indemnities when you have put forward bad legislation, and we've seen a heck of a lot of bad legislation and bad decisions coming from this government.

So, what is all the fuss about? And I have to say, this is a long and sordid tale, but before I get in to how we got here, what I'd like to talk about is how these bills—reversing these undemocratic decisions that the government has made when it comes to the greenbelt, when it comes to protected lands, when it comes to our precious and dwindling agricultural land—all of these rollbacks of these decisions are a victory for the people of the province of Ontario, because everyone saw this for what this was: a greenbelt grab. People did not buy this government's cover story, and—news flash—they're still not buying this government's cover story that this is about housing, because none of that adds up.

So this is a victory for those of us who all worked to push back against this government's terrible decisions. It's a significant victory for every citizen who recognized this for what it was, who decided to speak up and be engaged. All the environmentalists, environmentalist groups—and when I say environmentalists, I'm talking about the grandmothers for saving the planet, people that never expected they would stand up with a sign to protect it. Those were the people that were engaged because they were so, so incensed by this government's decisions. There were housing advocates that said we are wasting precious time with these shenanigans of the government when it comes to building much-needed and affordable housing. And to the farmers and the farmers' organizations who stood up to the Conservatives and this land grab—because they knew what was at risk and what was going to be lost for the future. So, we came together—people

came together—we pushed back, we stood together and we won. This is an example of the power of the people.

We had Ontario's First Nations—they demanded Doug Ford return the land to the greenbelt. First Nations chiefs from across the province wrote a letter to the Premier saying that the Chiefs of Ontario, who represents First Nations leaders across the province, voted unanimously that last Wednesday, in an emergency meeting, to oppose the land removals: "The Ontario Government's decision to remove greenbelt lands did not respect obligations to First Nations, the treaties or its own policy-making process." That comes from Ontario Regional Chief Glen Hare. "The decisions made in a completely flawed process cannot in any way be allowed to stand."

Farmers and agriculture groups said—and this is from the National Farmers Union-Ontario—"Farmland is for those who grow food, not speculative investors. Return the" 74,000 "acres unjustly and irresponsibly stolen from the greenbelt." This land grab includes the forced urban boundary expansion which had also put precious prime agricultural land across southern Ontario at risk.

Environmental groups like Environmental Defence talked about these actions and the forced urban boundary expansion and the greenbelt giveaway as a "breach of MPPs' promise not to touch the greenbelt" and to act in the public's best interests. The actions of this government were "a vast transfer of public wealth to a few select real estate investors," and not only did it remove strong protections for the greenbelt, it also, as we saw, removed productions for the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve. This massive transfer of land value effectively, which should have been held, in the case of the greenbelt, in trust for the public, was put into the hands of a few well-connected real estate investors.

Thanks to the Auditor General, we have an estimated value of \$8.4 billion—was it \$8.4 billion or \$8.3 billion?—of profit that was given at the expense of protecting lands that are important to the people of the province of Ontario. This had significant impact on the environment, on our agricultural lands, but certainly a significant impact on the public finances.

I think all of us will remember the Ontario Greenbelt Promise signs—they were sprouting everywhere—that said, "Premier, Keep Your Promise." There were greenbelt rallies all across southwestern Ontario. I was at rallies where I saw people dressed up as carrots and dressed up as fish that were endangered in some of the wetland areas that were going to be impacted. There were just kids and nanas and nonnas like me.

There was the Stop Sprawl HamOnt group. I do have to give a shout-out to Stop Sprawl HamOnt, because stop sprawl Hamilton was the birthplace of the stop sprawl movement. They were the first group to understand that this boundary grab, this greenbelt grab was something that needed to be stopped, that we needed to stand up and speak out and make sure that we spoke up for this generation. I want to give them such huge credit for the incredible organizing and mobilizing. They were just tireless in organizing across the province, and that was an idea that

spread all across the province. It was pretty fantastic to see.

So, these people came together to show that change is possible, that we can say no. We said no to selling off our natural heritage. We said no to this government's cronyism and backroom deals. And certainly, the people of Ontario said no, and they're continuing to say no, to a government that puts their billionaire friends ahead of everyday Ontarians. It happened then; it's still happening now and we're not taking our eyes off the ball.

Really, should it have taken a series of scandals from this government for the Premier and now the Minister of Housing to undo the damage that they've done? And believe me, it's not going to be simple to undo the lasting damage of these decisions that are now being reversed. I mean, really, should it have taken Mr. Ford and his ministers getting caught making backroom deals and having preferential treatment with speculators? The whole scandal has pulled back the curtain on how this government likes to do business. They're all too comfortable rubbing elbows in backrooms, making those deals at the same time while they're yukking it up on the golf course or they're meeting in the Premier's corner office or they're at stag and does or weddings or on the massage table in Las Vegas. Well, that is where decisions are being made in the province of Ontario.

We see people who are struggling with an affordability crisis and a housing crisis, and it really, as our former leader used to say, rots my socks to hear this government stand up and talk about housing, that 1.5 million homes are going to be built—as the member from Orléans just said, you're not even close to meeting that target. This is falling on deaf ears. People are not buying this cover story about building housing, because we've gone through all of this trauma, all this effort and not one single unit of housing has been built—certainly not affordable housing. So, really, people need your help. They're asking for your help, and you are putting deaf ears and turning your back on people that need your help now. It is really just adding insult to injury when you continue to stand up and say, "Oh, this was just about process; we got the process wrong," or "We are so committed to building houses as quickly as possible." Really? It does not ring true. It does not ring true.

1610

John often talks about a section on his land—I don't know what he calls it, but that's what it feels like, that pit. That is just not the case when it comes to this government's commitment to building housing. Really, how much time have you wasted? How much time have you wasted? You have been in government for five years—five and a bit?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Quarter—let's go with a quarter.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Five and a quarter, okay; I'll take that. That's a good interest rate right now too, by the way.

In all that time, it just came as a shock to you that people needed housing, that people were struggling. I don't know. What did you think those tents under bridges were? Or people living in cardboard boxes or sleeping on cardboard

boxes on Bay Street? That didn't just happen. That has been happening for quite a long time and getting steadily worse. So I don't know when this government woke up to the idea that people needed housing. If you did wake up to that and if it was a genuine effort on your part, you sure fumbled the ball—if I can use a CFL analogy. Pigskin Pete would be really disappointed with how this government conducted themselves when it came to really building affordable housing in this province.

And now, where are we at? We've got all this time we're spending on legislation to try to unravel and undo this debacle and this scandal. We have the OPP asking questions, the OPP considering this matter. We have an RCMP investigation—it's unheard of. I think someone said that it is the first RCMP criminal investigation of a provincial government ever. I was also appalled to hear the Premier at one point debating whether this scandal was worse than the Liberals gas plant scandal, like it mattered. How bad is bad? Is it worse? Is it better? But really, quite clearly, this is the worst scandal in the history of the province of Ontario. If you look at the time that's wasted, what was at risk, people's lack of housing and supports that people needed, and \$8.3 billion, \$8.4 billion or \$8.5 billion—this is a big, big deal.

An RCMP investigation is something I would not be happy to be part of. Honestly, just to be concerned that my phone was going to ring or I would get an email or a knock on the door because of something I may or may not have done intentionally or unintentionally, something that I was a part of. It goes against what we just expect our government to be, which is honest and trustworthy and actually—what is the word I want to say—effective. Was this bungling? Or was it intentional? Those are the two questions, either this government was insanely incompetent when it comes to this or it was a corrupted process, a failed process. Either way, either one of those are not any of the two choices that I would like to be having to justify to the constituents.

Then we have the whole story that reads really just like a crime novel. We've got deleted emails. We've got information getting passed at expensive dinners. We've got Mr. X. We've got—what am I forgetting? It's just endless. It just reads exactly like a whodunit if you ask me. So I think it's really important to know that, again, we're here, on this side of the House, because we want to make sure that our work improves the lives of the people of Ontario. That's what we're trying to do. It is extremely frustrating and extremely disappointing to see us rolling backwards, to see how much time we've spent in this House, talking about scandals and report after report, when, in fact, we should be working towards building housing for the people of the province of Ontario.

So how did we get to this bill? How did we get to Bill 150? What road led us to this? If you will remember, back in 2018, the Premier was caught on video saying he was going to remove a big chunk of the greenbelt. Then, because that was revealed, he promised that he wouldn't touch it. Then he campaigned on a promise not to touch the greenbelt. He called the greenbelt a scam, a field of

weeds. He said that the greenbelt was just a bunch of bureaucrats in a room with crayons. Really, that should have been a signal to all of us that he was moving behind the scenes against the greenbelt and for further forced urban boundary expansions to make way for developers to profit in the province—not necessarily with any commitments or guarantees that this would return the housing that we so desperately need.

Then we had these two scathing reports. As we will know, the Auditor General's report came out, in fact, after our leader wrote to the Auditor General asking for her to investigate the greenbelt. It came out. She was clear that the government gave preferential treatment to developers in this process and that where there was criteria that looked at the impact of these decisions on the environment, because that couldn't be met, they just removed that criteria from the process. That Auditor General's report laid the stage for the Integrity Commissioner's report. The Integrity Commissioner report is an incredible document. It's remarkable. It's over 150 or 160 pages and, in it, it goes in-depth as to how we got to the sad state of affairs where the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing at the time was found to have violated the Integrity Commissioner's act. He violated section 2, conflict of interest, and section 3, use of insider information. Can I just repeat that? Conflict of interest, violated; and use of insider information—and that's what we're saying. Preferential treatment means that you use insider information, that people are given an advance notice, people are given an insider track or edge to profit in the province. It doesn't necessarily mean that what those decisions make will be in the public good, and that's a serious, serious charge, and it's a serious, serious outcome.

I'll go back to that, because Hamilton seems to figure greatly in this report.

Also, given where we are with Bill 150, I think that the Integrity Commissioner's last comment in his report—it was specific about the Greenbelt Act, but I think it's something that bears on this bill and the forced urban boundary changes, the MZOs, the unilateral amendments that were made to the urban boundary plans across the province. I think this statement from the Integrity Commissioner has relevance. He said, "The Greenbelt Act provides that there shall be another 10-year review in 2025 to determine whether it should be revised. I sincerely hope that the experience of the exercise to remove lands from the greenbelt as set out in this report will be used to inform that review and any subsequent process affecting these lands."

What I would like to say to this: This experience that the government went through, that the opposition went through and that the province of Ontario went through with the Auditor General's report and the Integrity Commissioner's report and the OPP looking into this and now an RCMP investigation—we need to make sure that we are learning lessons from this. It is my hope that the government plans to operate with more transparency, with more accountability.

Sadly, I have to say I don't see that transpiring, and there's no greater evidence of that not transpiring than that

the greenbelt amendment act is going to committee and, you'd think—I asked the minister this morning in the House during question period, why is the minister only allowing one hour for comment at committee on the greenbelt amendment act after all of the province of Ontario was seized with this? Why is there only one hour of being allotted to discuss this bill? And guess what? The minister himself is going to use up that entire hour, so that means that nobody in the province of Ontario will be allowed to come to committee to tell the government what their experience was, what they think of the bill that is actually trying to put the toothpaste back in the tube. They don't want to hear it.

1620

It's so deeply, deeply disappointing to say that. Really, have they learned a lesson? Not really. The Premier, as has been said many times, kept saying he was sorry, but it seems more and more true that, as people have been saying, he's just sorry that he got caught and—what is it that can't change their spots? The leopard can't change their spots, or the cheetah can't change their stripes? That mixed metaphor is what I think we're seeing in this province.

Let's look at this bill very specifically. Let me just say a little bit more about housing. This government's actions when it came to the greenbelt; the forced urban boundary expansion; the MZOs that were not solicited by municipalities, that were solicited by third parties in the province; the very site-specific urban plan amendments, all of those really tell the tale of how the government tries to use unilateral, undemocratic, behind-the-scenes actions on their part when it comes to mucking with municipalities' urban plans.

Their cover story was about housing. As I said earlier, people really just aren't buying it, and there's no greater evidence than the fact that the government's own affordability task force—your own hand-picked task force—said in February 2022, “A shortage of land isn't the cause of the problem. Land is available, both inside the existing built-up areas and on undeveloped land outside greenbelts. We need to make better use of land.” So that information was out there.

Again, the Ontario Greenbelt Alliance said that “The province's removal of 7,400 acres from the greenbelt”—and the urban boundary expansion—“was met with overwhelming public opposition. Data did not support the government's ... assertions that the land was necessary for solving the housing crisis.” The Auditor General said so. Regional planners said so. The municipality of the city of Hamilton said so. Again, the housing task force said that wasn't necessary. So we need to get serious. This needs to be a serious approach to addressing the housing crisis.

We have been proposing changes that would help people—real rent controls in the province. Let's not only build housing; let's make it so that people don't lose the housing that they have. We see renovations and demovictions. We've put bills forward to stop renovations and demovictions. We had a 94-year-old woman here; I forget her name but she was here, and she was being demovicted.

She came to the House and literally said she didn't want to live anymore, because she was losing her housing at 94 years of age.

That's something the government could do now, not the 1.5 million homes in however many years. Right now, before you, you could make changes to make sure that 95-year-old women are not losing the housing they have, never mind looking at building new houses—which I agree we need, but you just can't turn your back on people who are struggling to keep and afford the housing that they currently already have.

I want to say that just like the bill that tried to restore the greenbelt lands, Bill 150 is an attempt to reverse harmful boundary expansions that the government forced on municipalities. It needs to be clear: The city of Hamilton chose to freeze their urban boundaries. That was their decision. In Hamilton, I'll have you know, we are exceeding our housing targets currently, within the existing boundaries. There was no need to force an urban boundary expansion on Hamilton. This province, this minister, decided that they knew better, chose not to listen to Hamilton city council or Hamilton city planners, and forced an urban boundary on Hamilton.

I will shortly go into explaining how these decisions, Bill 23, the greenbelt, the forced urban boundary expansion, the “MZOs R Us,” the mucking around in site-specific amendments to urban official plans—this has caused undue chaos in municipal planning departments all across the province. You've created an environment where people don't know what's coming next. Planners don't know what's coming. Municipalities, who are losing revenue, who are struggling right now with deficits and who have to raise their property taxes because of your decisions—this is all on you. And developers now see this environment just as a giant risk. They don't know.

We see developers that invested millions and billions in land that they thought was going to be de-risked, and now the government said, “Whoops; sorry, we made a mistake. Good luck next time.” So, developers and builders are also going, “I don't know. This is not the climate where I want to put my capital at risk.” Your decisions have created chaos in the land use planning departments for developers and realtors. You have set us back years in our effort to build the housing that we need. It's really hard to see you stand up and crow about your 1.5 million homes that you're going to build when you haven't built a single one—not a single one. And, in fact, we may be behind by years and years because of the damage that is still unfolding.

I want to say that we, as the official opposition, did write to the Auditor General and to the Commissioner of the Environment about this government's meddling when it comes to land use in the province and municipalities. In the letter, we're quoted as saying, “Unfortunately, there is evidence”—just like there was with the greenbelt—“of similar preferential treatment with respect to other site-specific land use planning decisions....”

“In many cases the ministerial changes to OPs, including mandated urban boundary expansions, evidently

conflicted with provincial policy”—and this is what conflicted with your own provincial policy—“and the recommendations of professional staff planners in municipalities such as Hamilton, Ottawa, Waterloo, York, Peel, Niagara, Peterborough, Halton and Wellington.

“There is also evidence that certain landowners have benefited from preferential treatment with respect to the issuance of minister’s zoning orders, which can increase the value of a property by an order of magnitude, without requiring the construction of a single new home. Some landowners have recently been caught attempting to sell land, mostly unchanged, for many times what they paid for the land, after receiving an MZO.”

So we asked the AG to do a value-for-money audit into these decisions around the MZOs and the urban boundary expansions, and we got a response back from the Acting Auditor General, who said that “in response to your letter dated September 28 ... in which you requested my office conduct an audit....

“As part of our normal audit selection process, we identified the province’s process for selecting and approving minister’s zoning orders as an audit....” So they are already conducting an audit and that they “take inquiries from members of provincial Parliament ... seriously” and that, in the meantime, they are going to be looking at other actions “by resolution of the standing committee ... or by a minister of the crown. If the Standing Committee on Public Accounts passed a formal motion for my office to perform an audit, I would comply with that request.”

Now we have, again, an Auditor General audit pending that will, again, hopefully shine some light on how these decisions transpired behind closed doors to muck with, to meddle with, to impose, to bigfoot—however you want to call it—the municipalities’ ability to plan their own communities. You have made it really difficult for municipalities to choose how to grow their own communities. And it is not municipalities that are making the choice; it’s people that live in these municipalities. Your decisions have made it very difficult for there to be democratic input and have surely hit them in the pocketbook because of the expenses that municipalities are going to have to incur because of the decisions that you have made.

As I said, we’re here because of an Auditor General’s report, an Integrity Commissioner’s report, an RCMP investigation and, as I said, extraordinary advocacy on the part of the public to get the government to begin reversing its preferential treatment of favoured speculators. And even after these extraordinary reversals, the bill before us still does not reverse all of the planning policies that enriched speculators, harming the public interest, as I have described, and it certainly doesn’t help this government’s failing efforts to deliver the housing that Ontarians need.

1630

Really, why did it take an Auditor General’s report and Integrity Commissioner’s report to get us to where we are today? That’s a really, really important question, and I would say it is not just the members of the public, it’s not just the official opposition that is really concerned with what this government has done when it comes to meddling

in their local communities. The Association of Municipalities of Ontario is also very concerned.

The Association of Municipalities were very clear that Bill 23, which was the More Homes Built Faster Act—like, really? Okay, I don’t know; how is that going for them so far? But the More Homes Built Faster Act took away many of the mechanisms that municipalities relied on—the development charges—to support the services that they would need, the infrastructure that they would have been forced to build on forced urban boundaries, things that we all rely on, like roads, like sewer services, like parks, daycare centres, libraries—did I say schools already? All of these things—gas, sewer, hydro—were going to be imposed on municipalities and also on the taxpayers’ pocketbook.

So municipalities were either forced to cut services or raise property taxes and that was Bill 23. That was way back in, I guess, December of—when was that? The minister is in the House. But AMO was already sounding the alarm that these decisions were going to make it very difficult for municipalities.

Then, when it came to this new bill, the current minister, MPP Calandra, received a letter from AMO around Bill 150, saying, “As you are aware, the province announced plans to reverse its official plan amendments made in the following select municipalities: Barrie, Belleville, Guelph, Hamilton, Ottawa and Peterborough, the regions of Halton, Niagara, Peel, Waterloo and York, and Wellington county.” And then they go on to say, “AMO welcomes the decision to reverse these minister-issued decisions on official plans and to engage with the impacted municipalities on the proposed reversal, recognizing that projects and investments may already be in the works. In previous submissions to the Legislature, AMO has highlighted that pervasive or indiscriminate provincial intervention and development risks undermining broader local planning efforts with implications for financing, timing and complete communities. AMO has urged the government to use ministerial planning authorities, such as MZOs, only in collaboration with municipalities and in situations of extraordinary urgency.” And we know that has not been the case.

This paragraph speaks to what I was saying earlier. Chaos reigns because of this government’s decision. Planning departments don’t know what’s coming next. In fact, with Bill 23, the legislation has been proclaimed but they haven’t enacted many of the provisions, so the municipalities are saying, “Do we operate under this Bill 23 even though they haven’t followed through with it?” It’s a grey area for them. And I would also like to add—and follow me if you will; it’s a bit nerdy here—this government, in November or December 2022, forced urban boundaries to expand. From that time until when this bill gets enacted, any hearings that happen at the Ontario Land Tribunal, any developers that went to get relief at the OLT, those decisions were made on the basis of a bill that was now found to be a process that is under investigation by the RCMP.

It’s my assertion that all of those decisions based on that information at the Ontario Land Tribunal should all be

thrown out. And it's not just my assertion that those should all be thrown out. I know there's going to be—judicial reviews are going to be asked about those decisions because they were based on, essentially, what is deemed to be an illegal process. Again, chaos reigns at the OLT, at municipal planning offices, in development and building and planning. People don't know what's coming down. There are two sets of rules that seem to be applying. People are in absolute confusion. Meantime, are we building houses in the province of Ontario? Absolutely not. We're stuck here, looking at your bills to try to undo your bad legislation in the first place.

AMO goes on to say—they have quite a lot to say, but they go on to say AMO wants you to work with them. They represent a lot of municipalities. I forget how many, but it's in the 400s. Does anybody know how many municipalities? Does 412 sound about right? There's a lot of municipalities that are—

Mr. Wayne Gates: It's 444.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: It's 444 municipalities that are represented by AMO—

Mr. Wayne Gates: See, I'm one of the guys listening. Take a look; no one over there is listening.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Yes, it doesn't matter. I know.

That's a lot of people that the Association of Municipalities of Ontario represents. They're asking you to work with them. Didn't we hear earlier someone say, "Let us help you help them," and that is the case here. They're saying: "AMO ... calls on the province to continue working with municipalities on a clear and collaborative path forward to ensure the cost of the proposed reversal is borne by the province and not by municipalities."

Is that going to be the case? Is the province going to assume the costs that are borne by all of these municipalities? These municipalities have not been made whole by the changes you made in Bill 23. We see increased tax rates all across the board. The 444 municipalities are seeing property taxes go up. Bill 23 is the reason there.

Now, they're saying, "Really, you're not going to dump the costs of your bad decisions and your promises that you made in the backroom deal that fell flat to your special-interest developers—you're not going to make taxpayers of the province of Ontario bear this cost, are you?" Are you going to make municipalities pay it, or is the province going to assume that cost? That's a huge question, and we'll be keeping our eye on that. Who's going to pay for this—what is the word I want to use? In French, they say "bordel." Who's going to pay for this mess?

I would also say that the idea of working "on a clear and collaborative path forward"—they go on to say:

"We commend the government for making efforts to ensure that these changes are made in consultation with municipalities and that considerations are being made to ensure that no unintended consequences arise from the proposed reversal. By way of your recent letter to the impacted communities, AMO believes the province recognizes the importance of ensuring that municipalities"—again—"do not incur costs arising as a result of ministry-

issued decisions but is concerned about how and when financial support will be provided to municipalities.

"AMO has heard that municipalities have already incurred significant costs as a result of the ministry-issued decisions on official plans and that more costs are likely as a result of the proposed reversal. AMO strongly urges that the province collaborate with municipalities to establish a clear framework that ensures the province is directly responsible for all costs arising as a result of reversing these provincial decisions. AMO would be happy to review and provide comments on any proposed framework."

There you have it, really, in a nutshell: AMO, which represents 444 municipalities that have been mucked with by this province, by your bad decision-making; by your insider decision-making, by giving special, preferential treatment to special friends of the Premier—there's a cost to be borne. That's the question that the Progressive Conservative MPPs across the way need to consider. Are you going to allow your constituents to be stuck with the bill? Are they going to have to pay the costs of your mistake and your meddling? That is a huge question, and that is a huge consideration.

I would suggest, if anyone from a PC-held riding is listening right now, you might want to reach out to your MPPs and say, "Please, we are struggling in an affordability crisis. We can't afford groceries. We can hardly pay our utility bills. We are struggling to pay our mortgage, struggling to pay rent. If we're lucky enough to have a house over our head, please don't impose further service cuts at the municipality level"—services that they rely on. "Don't impose cuts, and don't cause my taxpayer bill to increase." That's the question this government is going to ask—it's great that you've got this bill to undo your ill-planned, bad legislation, but who is going to be stuck with the cost of that? I'm not hearing any answers.

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I'd be surprised if the government will step up to help individual taxpayers, because it's not something that we've seen them do. They seem very free and easy with taxpayers' money when it comes to taking things to court, giving insider deals to their friends. I'm looking forward to the day that this government actually looks after taxpayers and doesn't just pay lip service to them. That would be a good day in the province of Ontario, I would like to say.

This forced urban boundary expansion—again, it's important to know how we got here. And how do we know what happened? We have the Auditor General's report and the Integrity Commissioner's report that show that preferential treatment and, as it was said, the use of insider information had actually taken place in this government. So we know that because of the two independent officers of the Legislature—but we also know a lot of information from leaked documents that we have received, that have been made public in the media.

The government's own Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing documents that were made public show that they knew clearly that the decisions they were about to

make when it came to forcing municipalities to expand into farmland, to expand beyond their urban boundaries—they knew that these were bad decisions, but they went ahead and did it anyway. Their own documents show that. And if you give me a second, Madam Speaker—let me see if I can just quote from that: “The internal documents from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing show that the minister had full knowledge about the contentious nature of the ministerial amendments and the expansions that were being made to communities across the province.”

In the case of Hamilton, we lost more acreage of farmland through the urban boundary expansion than we lost when it came to the greenbelt grab. We lost about 5,400 acres to the greenbelt grab; well over 7,400 acres were lost to the urban boundary expansion. So this was no small thing that the government chose to land-bank, as it will—and not just through the greenbelt grab, but also through this urban boundary expansion. An application for judicial review came from Environmental Defence, and it provided additional evidence to go along with the evidence that we have from the Auditor General and the Integrity Commissioner. It showed, again, a pattern of arbitrary, non-transparent and unreasonable decision-making with respect to municipal official plans.

These decisions were made against the will of Hamiltonians. Really, as I’ve said, we’ve given away Hamilton’s precious agricultural land. It turns out, through the urban boundary expansion, these lands were given to the very same speculators who were given access to the greenbelt carve-out. So we—

Mr. Wayne Gates: Robbed.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Yes. What else can you say? I’m trying not to say it.

Really, the system was clearly rigged, and it was an intentional secondary attempt to make sure that people got their hands on land or that they were enriched by land. We’ve actually been calling it the greenbelt scandal 2.0 or act two of the greenbelt scandal. It really is what we’re talking about here when it comes to the urban boundary expansion.

Let me go back to the Integrity Commissioner’s report. How do we know before that that in the city of Hamilton, for example, the developers were given an inside look at the changes that were going to be made to the urban boundary expansion? Well, it says right here in the Integrity Commissioner’s report, section 444—actually, isn’t that funny? That’s the same number as the number of municipalities in the province. It’s the section that says very clearly that in Hamilton, there was a planner who was working for a developer and who said that he was asked to a meeting at 777 Bay Street in Toronto with Ms. Jensen and Mr. Amato—who, if you recall the characters in this saga, worked in the minister’s office or worked for the minister—to review the merits of the submissions and the details of the asks that this developer had when it came to urban plan amendments. Upon reviewing his records, Mr. Johnston advised that this meeting took place on October 31, 2022, Halloween. He said that in addition to himself

and the two minister’s staff, Peter Van Loan also attended. He understood that Mr. Van Loan had also made submissions on behalf of his clients. At the meeting, he said, “We were presented with the changes the minister was considering making to the Hamilton official plan and asked to verify our comfort level with them.”

So let’s be really clear what happened here. This developer and his planner, working on behalf of a developer, were asked if they were comfortable with the changes that were going to be made to Hamilton’s urban boundary—the urban boundary expansion, the changes that were going to be made to Hamilton’s official plan. This developer was asked at a private meeting with high-level staff of this government—but here’s the thing: This was before the municipality of Hamilton even knew about this. The municipality of Hamilton wasn’t even consulted on this. This is clear evidence in the Integrity Commissioner’s report that there was a meeting with the developers and the developers’ representatives before they met with city planners. It’s unheard of, and it’s evidence of how clearly and how confidently this government felt that they could act without being accountable to anyone, that they could stand with a giant map of the province of Ontario and say, “We want some of that, and we would like some of that, and we’ll take a little bit here.” It’s shocking, if you realize what power was exercised on behalf of the people of the province of Ontario, of people living in communities and towns all across the province—decisions that were made that impacted your community, impacted your ability to have housing for your kids, impacted your ability to pay taxes, to go to the library, to see development happen. Those didn’t happen in your community; they happened on Bay Street in Toronto, at a private meeting. That is unacceptable.

That’s why people are furious, and that’s why people don’t trust a thing this government continues to say about how they’re working to build housing. It was always a cover story, it was always a charade, and maybe it isn’t now, but I don’t see any serious effort on the part of this government—they turned down all of our proposals. They do not seem to sense the urgency of the need for housing in the province, but they certainly, I can see, sense the urgency to try to do damage control—

Mr. Wayne Gates: To cover up.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: —to cover up the damage that they have inflicted on the province and the people of the province of Ontario.

Let me end, with the time I have left, with a little bit when it comes, again, to the changes in Hamilton. Generally the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing of a province doesn’t make site-specific changes; the minister doesn’t take his pen to make a change for a very specific site, but in Hamilton, this is what happened. It was like, “Oh, let’s make changes to that particular site and then this one over here”—and surprisingly enough, the sites where those changes were made happened to be connected to the developers who were at that private meeting. Generally, when you muck with the urban boundary plan or the secondary plan, you do it for a street

or a neighbourhood. You don't look and say, "Hey, that site on Wilson Street where they had been seeking an amendment to move a heritage building and build the eight-storey unit that doesn't currently conform—let's just give them what they want." That's what it looks like happened in Hamilton, and people are on to you. That's the level of meddling that has happened in this province—that the minister signed, very specifically, a site-specific amendment. How did that even come to the level of the attention of the minister? It's hard to fathom.

1650

That's why for many reasons other than that that we are now faced with in the province of Ontario—our government being under investigation by the RCMP. This government seems to not understand the magnitude of the seriousness of an RCMP investigation into the Ontario government. It's something that I would not in any way want to be associated with my legacy as an MPP, as an elected official, as a legislator; I wouldn't want to be anywhere near it. I am sure that many of the MPPs weren't in on it, were not made aware, but it's quite clear that they're all prepared to carry water for the Premier; they're all prepared to stand up and say this was okay. They're not contrite—they don't seem to have any humility or don't seem to be humble in any way that they are part of a government that's being investigated by the RCMP. And that they continue to stand up and say, "Oh, we did this for housing"—it's just unbelievable.

In case we're not up to where we're at—

Interjection.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Exactly.

"RCMP Investigating Ontario Government's Plan to Open Greenbelt Land for Development."

"Following a referral from the Ontario Provincial Police, the RCMP O division's sensitive and international investigations (SII) unit has now launched an investigation into allegations associated to the decision from the province of Ontario to open parts of the greenbelt for development."

They went on to say, "While we recognize that this investigation is of significant interest to Canadians"—also note "Canadians," not just Ontario; this is a scandal that has reverberated all across the country—"the RCMP has a duty to protect the integrity of the investigations that it carries out."

Then it goes on to say, "The RCMP's sensitive and international investigations unit specializes in 'sensitive, high-risk matters that cause significant threats to Canada's political, economic and social integrity of its institutions across Canada and internationally.'" This is some serious stuff we're talking about right here. "The squad performs political investigations that examine elected officials on allegations of fraud, financial crimes, corruption and breach of trust"—again, pretty serious. The criminal probe, as we know, came after the province removed land from the greenbelt.

We saw the story change back and forth from the Premier—he really was not able to keep his story straight when it came to what they were doing and why they were

doing it, and we have been pushing, on the side of the opposition, for answers for the people of Ontario. The unfortunate thing is that we have seen that this has pushed the government off the agenda of building the houses that we really need, and we're not anywhere close to that.

You're still probably seized in your caucus rooms, behind closed doors, with this RCMP investigation—and we are so clear that trying to undo the damage that has been caused is what we're doing here today; it's what we're looking at today. This has nothing, again, to do with housing, despite the protests from the minister that this is all about housing. We know it's about reversing the damage. The evidence is here, and I'm sure the RCMP will do this—I'm certainly not going to do it.

When you go back to the Auditor General, when it came to the greenbelt, she found that more than 90% of the land removed from the greenbelt was within five of the sites passed on to prominent developers at a BILD dinner. And we know that the same developers that I referenced in the Integrity Commissioner's report that were representing people in Hamilton were at the stag and doe. They bought tickets to the Premier's stag and doe. This is the same developer that, as quoted in the Integrity Commissioner's report—Amato saying, "The Premier" has "to stop calling this guy." If I were privy to any of this, I would be really concerned, because the evidence is even in public that this happened. The smoking gun is in public; they don't even have to dig for it.

It's so true that we see a government that's really just in damage control and spiralling and not getting to do the work of the people of the province of Ontario, and I have to say, it is really shameful that we are not here advocating for the environment, for example, for climate change, for coming up with real solutions for people who are struggling to afford their energy bills, real solutions for people that are struggling to buy groceries. Instead, here we are, mired in a scandal, seized with the public's business, talking about undoing the damage.

I just have to say, I did hear the minister just earlier today say that there was 100% confidence in the decisions of this House. I have to say that there is not 100% confidence in the decisions of this government anywhere in the province of Ontario. People don't trust you. You've broken that confidence, and you have broken that trust. I don't see an honest coming to the public to really be clear about what you have done, and I still don't see, even with this bill, an honest reckoning.

There's no greater evidence that this government is not prepared in any way to be held accountable because, as we know and as we've said earlier, the greenbelt bill is coming to committee and, as I said, the public is not going to be allowed to speak to it. Only the minister himself is going to be allowed to use the one hour dedicated to speak to the bill. That does not speak to a government that is contrite in any way, that is sorry in any way. It is not what people expect from this government. People of the province of Ontario aren't stupid, but they're forgiving, I would have to say. If the government was straightforward with them, gave them a chance to air their grievances, to

say how they feel, you might earn that trust back. But continuing to behave in the way that you always have behaved is not going to get you anywhere with the people of the province of Ontario.

I just would like to end by saying we hear the people of Ontario are hurting in so many ways. We have record food bank use by seniors, by kids. Breakfast programs in schools across Ontario and across my community are struggling to keep up with the need to feed kids that come to school hungry every single day. It really is shameful that that's where we are in this province. We have people in my municipality—in all of your municipalities—living in tents, living under bridges, sleeping on cardboard. We have all kinds of problems in this province, immediate problems of people being able to live and survive. We have winter coming. You have no plan to keep people housed. And here we are, spending all of this time, effort, money and energy trying to reverse your dreadful mistakes. I hope that the government has learned from the error of their ways—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. That's time.

We're going to move to questions. I recognize the member for Essex.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: The context of this debate is in the context of the goal of the government to build 1.5 million homes in the province of Ontario over the next 10 years. From my point of view, in my riding, I think one of the difficulties that we face is the reticence of municipal councillors who are sometimes met with fierce opposition of people in their own towns who don't want anything above a two-level home built anywhere. So they face opposition when a home builder wants to come in and build, let's say, an 80-unit building that holds 80 homes, and maybe it's three or four or maybe even more storeys high. What does the member think is the best solution to that kind of opposition?

1700

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I would start by saying the worst solution to that kind of problem is the one that you've put before us. The worst solution is to impose, from Queen's Park, undemocratic decision-making on duly elected municipal councils. I understand that if building housing in municipalities was black and white, we'd be in a different position in Ontario. But you have taken us so far back in building housing because of your actions. So, what I think is that you are a government that, instead of meddling, should take housing seriously and propose serious, serious solutions.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question.

Mr. Wayne Gates: First of all, I want to congratulate my colleague who did an hour lead with actually no notice from the government. Something as important as this—you should have notice. She should be able to prepare. Unfortunately, our critic is on his way. He's caught in traffic. He couldn't be here. So I just want to say to our colleague, you did a great job with no notice. But if they want to run this place properly, it's not being run properly when that has to happen.

I just want to go quickly, because I don't have a lot of time left. There was no mention of the agricultural lands in the latest economic statement. As we're losing 319 acres of farmland every single day in the province of Ontario—

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: But how are we raising production, Wayne? Come on; talk about increased production.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Can I just ask my question? It's accurate. We're losing farmland.

Maybe you can help the minister on how much farmland you've lost in your own riding of Hamilton.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: First of all, I want to thank you for that and acknowledge that, in fact, that is true that we were given zero notice that this was the bill that we would be debating for an hour. Really, the government House leader is welcome to disrespect the opposition in any way that he sees fit, and we're seeing a lot of that, but this is a disservice and a disrespect to the people of the province of Ontario when their official opposition is not able to engage in debate in an informed and important way because this government is playing games. It's not what they expect of a government, to behave this way, but we will continue to stand up and we will continue to speak out. It was easy, in fact, for me to do my hour lead because I know that the people of my city are really, really outraged with this government.

When it comes to agriculture, this forced urban boundary expansion, the vice-president, who is a constituent, Drew Spoelstra, who lives in my riding—the vice president of the OFA lives in my riding—is drastically opposed to the loss of prime, class A farmland because of this forced land grab for urban boundary expansion.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. Stephen Blais: I'd like to thank the member from Hamilton for the hour, unannounced and without any planning. Very well done, off the top of your head, I have to admit.

Being from Hamilton, which is one of the cities that had the urban expansion thrust upon them and now is going to go back, I'm wondering if you can discuss what steps the city of Hamilton is doing to achieve its home-building construction targets.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you to the member from Orléans for the question. I would say you might not be so complimentary if you saw all the papers across my desk and under my desk. I did definitely scramble.

But what I want to say to you, and I'm proud of this fact, is that the city of Hamilton is exceeding, in fact—not just meeting. The city of Hamilton is exceeding our housing targets within our existing boundaries, so this forced urban boundary expansion was not necessary to build the housing that we need. We were clear about that. Our city planners were clear about that. Our municipality was clear about that.

And the residents of the city of Hamilton who voted—I forget, but overwhelmingly, I think 10,000 people voted and sent into the municipal council to say we don't want to expand into farmland. We don't want this. It's against

what we think is good for the people of the city of Hamilton, and we can build our city and we can build the housing that we need within our existing city. That's just what we're doing, except now we have to deal with the mess left behind by this government's flip-flop on these decisions.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: We heard the member from Essex ask a question about building multi-residential units and councillors facing some objection to that. I'm just wondering, member for Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas, in Essex, Harrow, Kingsville, LaSalle and many towns within that member's riding, we saw extreme flooding just a few months ago. Some of that was on prime agricultural land. Many people had a great deal of damage to their homes because of this flooding.

So I'm wondering if the member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas can talk about how, when governments make decisions, when the provincial government overrides the knowledge of the local decision-makers—the local elected officials, the people who actually live in those towns, that own that land and those farms. When the provincial government overrides that decision-making and that planning and those environmental concerns, aside from what we have seen in the member from Essex's riding not too long ago, what have we seen across the province when the Ford government decides that they're going to completely override the municipal decision-makers and do whatever it is they want to do and hand gifts over to developers rather than looking at environment aspects?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: It's disastrous. When the government thinks that they know all, when they make decisions from a corner office at Queen's Park with the sole intention to enrich and give special preferential treatment to developers without consideration of the unintended impacts, it's disastrous. We saw a government that dismantled or kneecapped conservation authorities who have, I don't know, maybe 75 years of knowledge when it comes to integrated watershed planning. We heard today about the homes across Ontario that aren't able to get insurance because of the increased levels of flooding. So for the arrogance of this government to say that they know best when we quite clearly see that they don't, because now they have to reverse their disastrous decisions, it makes absolutely no sense that this government would disrespect democratic municipally elected experts to shoe in their own experts who in fact really are just doing the bidding of the Premier's office.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you to the member opposite for her hour speech. And I do commend her on giving an hour speech; I know it's not easy to do so, and I appreciate her remarks.

My question, Speaker: She mentioned in her remarks around the consultation obviously. We actually had an opportunity to hear from the AMO president last week at committee. I'm paraphrasing, Speaker, but the AMO

president, Colin Best, thanked this government for their consultations and their robust consultations under the Affordable Homes and Good Jobs Act, for example—the most recent legislation—and, I know, under these consultations around the changes for these planning applications and these official plans. There are two opportunities for municipalities to submit feedback, as we mentioned in my remarks and the minister's remarks earlier.

My question to the member opposite is, will she support this bill? Yes or no?

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): For a quick reply, the member.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: You're paraphrasing AMO, but I am not. I am reading what they're saying. They are clearly saying that they are concerned about how and when financial support will be provided to municipalities, and they are clearly saying that this bill that provides all kinds of indemnities to developers and such—they are saying indemnification is important to ensure that municipalities do not have to defend planning decisions that have been made in good faith, but that becomes inconsistent with official plans as a result of provincial decisions. And they're saying that, because of your provincial decisions, they want to make sure they're not going to be held on the hook and neither will their taxpayers. So AMO—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. We have no more time.

We're going to move to further debate.

M. Anthony Leardi: C'est un plaisir d'adresser notre Assemblée ce soir au sujet de ce projet de loi. Le débat ce soir se déroule dans le contexte que nous voulons faire construire 1,5 million d'habitations dans la province de l'Ontario pendant les prochaines 10 années. C'est bien évident que nous avons des défis, et je vais parler un peu au sujet des défis que nous avons rencontrés.

1710

Premièrement, il y a le défi de main-d'oeuvre, ou plus exactement le manque de main-d'oeuvre. Nous avons besoin de personnes qui ont des savoirs dans le domaine de la construction. Nous avons besoin de main-d'oeuvre.

Deuxièmement, comme nous en avons déjà discuté dans l'Assemblée ici, nous avons le défi de la taxe, spécifiquement la taxe sur le carbone.

Troisièmement, nous avons un autre défi, et à mon avis—je vais employer le mot « surréglementation ». Le défi de surréglementation : à mon avis, je dirais que nous avons trop de réglementation dans le domaine de la construction des maisons. C'est important de faire quelque chose en ce domaine.

Donc, je vais parler—pendant mon discours de ce projet de loi, je vais parler au sujet des plans officiels, parce que ce projet de loi s'agit majoritairement de plans officiels.

En commençant, je vais poser la question, c'est quoi un plan officiel? Parce qu'il y a plein de députés ici dans notre Assemblée qui n'ont pas eu l'occasion de servir comme conseiller au niveau municipal. Donc, je vais décrire un plan officiel. C'est un plan adopté par le niveau de gouvernement municipal. Le plan officiel décrit la façon

dont les terres devraient être exploitées dans une municipalité. Le plan peut être adopté par une municipalité au niveau d'une ville ou au niveau d'une région. Les plans s'agissent souvent de l'emplacement des nouvelles habitations—ça peut être n'importe quel type d'habitation—l'emplacement des nouvelles industries, l'emplacement des immeubles de bureaux et des magasins. Un plan officiel parle souvent au sujet des besoins futurs en matière de routes, de distribution d'eau, de services d'égout, et des parcs et des écoles. Un plan officiel parle souvent au sujet des initiatives qui sont importantes pour la municipalité.

Les plans officiels sont utiles pour quelques raisons : premièrement, c'est utile pour informer le public au sujet des initiatives de la municipalité et sur les politiques générales de la municipalité. Les plans officiels sont très importants pour ceux qui construisent des maisons et pour des gens qui sont intéressés à faire des investissements à une municipalité. Un plan officiel garantit, ou vise à garantir, une croissance coordonnée dans la municipalité. Un plan oriente l'élaboration des règlements municipaux de zonage et fixe des normes. C'est important de constater que des plans officiels favorisent les questions d'intérêt provincial, et je veux parler un peu plus de ça.

Il y a tout un processus qui est suivi par une municipalité avant d'adopter un plan officiel. Il y a une consultation et une réunion—au moins une réunion publique. Avant de considérer l'adoption d'un plan officiel, la municipalité doit donner au public au moins 20 jours d'avis, et la municipalité doit avoir au moins une réunion publique. Et la municipalité doit donner au public l'occasion d'examiner tous les documents dans le plan officiel.

La réunion publique, c'est une réunion extraordinaire du conseil, strictement pour considérer le plan officiel. Si une personne veut faire des présentations, les présentations peuvent être faites personnellement ou par écrit ou par un autre moyen. Toute personne ou tout organisme public peut, au cours de la réunion publique, fournir des observations. C'est souvent nécessaire de consulter avec les communautés autochtones, et, comme j'ai déjà dit, la municipalité est obligée de se conformer à la Déclaration de principes provinciale. Une municipalité est obligée aussi de mettre régulièrement à jour le plan officiel—au moins, à chaque 10 années.

Je vais passer maintenant à certains aspects importants. Dans le projet de loi devant nous, les municipalités auront jusqu'au 7 décembre pour présenter des renseignements qu'elles souhaiteraient voir apportés à leur plan. Ça veut dire que toutes les municipalités touchées par le projet de loi auront non seulement une première fois, mais elles auront l'occasion, jusqu'au 7 décembre, pour présenter n'importe quoi au ministère. Elles peuvent même hausser l'offre de logements et elles peuvent appuyer des projets prioritaires comme un foyer de soins de longue durée, par exemple.

Après la date limite du 7 décembre, la province examinerait tout changement proposé et déterminerait, en consultation avec les municipalités, la façon la plus efficace de mettre en oeuvre les nouveaux plans. Nous

allons donner la priorité aux mesures de protection de l'environnement et de la santé publique, comme toujours, et maintenir un petit nombre de modifications provinciales aux termes de la loi. Nous allons protéger la ceinture de verdure, et j'espère que nous allons renforcer les relations avec les autochtones.

J'aimerais offrir quelques mots au sujet de l'eau potable. Ça touche spécifiquement les municipalités régionales de Peel et de York et les villes de Barrie et Belleville et Peterborough. La province applique des règles qui interdisent certaines activités qui sont proches des sources d'eau potable. Ce sont des réglementations importantes, évidemment, parce que c'est une source de consommation d'eau pour des humains.

J'aimerais indiquer qu'il y a une chose que ce projet de loi ne va pas faire : ce n'est pas un moyen de faire ralentir le développement de la nouvelle autoroute 413. Nous allons continuer de développer l'autoroute 413.

1720

I spoke a little bit about the importance of official plans and how they apply to various municipalities, and I also spoke a little bit about the process in adopting an official plan. Having participated in this process myself, I would like to speak a little bit about my personal experience in the official plan process. And this can be affected and this can touch on many municipalities, especially small ones in the province of Ontario.

People can be very interested in what's in an official plan, but truth be told, 99% of the population of any particular municipality won't be interested in and won't participate in what occurs in an official plan or the process related therein. That's because they're comfortable with where they are, and nothing in the official plan will particularly affect them directly and probably not even indirectly. However, that doesn't mean that these things aren't important. In fact, they're very important, because as I said earlier, these plans touch on the proper and coordinated development of municipalities and the land under their control.

Official plans don't exist in a vacuum, they are not strictly municipal plans. The municipal plans that are developed by various municipalities are, by law, required to conform to something called the provincial policy statement, and that is a statement that has developed over time, and it can be changed from time to time as well.

Now, the most frequent people who are commenting on official plans are planners—they are land use planners and people seeking to make changes to various pieces of terrain within the municipality and that means that they're usually home builders. And that's why home builders are very interested in official plans and so are people who are trying to make changes that would advance the interests of the municipality and that means the municipal council, most often.

One of the challenges in an official plan is to consider what your own taxpayers in your own municipality want and what they don't want, but that has to be viewed through the lens of provincial policy, more specifically, the provincial policy statement. The provincial policy

statement sets out general principles, but it doesn't specifically say, "One must do or must not do," except in very limited circumstances. And so, official plans are subject to interpretation, as is the provincial policy statement subject to interpretation. It's this interpretive zone, I'll call it, that sometimes leads to a great deal of discussion and that can lead to extended timelines.

I suppose the best official plans are the ones which are adopted and last a long time and are able to last a long time, because there isn't a great deal of swift change within the municipality, but when there is swift change—and change can happen swiftly like in the span of six months—it's often difficult for an official plan to keep up with what I'll call facts on the ground. So, for example, we are here facing the difficult challenge of building 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years, and one would suppose that with a challenge like that, we would need to move very quickly, and moving quickly is not in the nature of official plans. An official plan only needs to be updated every 10 years, which, in the environment of building—or facing the challenge of building—1.5 million homes is not something that we say is moving quickly.

After all, if you need to build 1.5 million and you need to accommodate those homes, then obviously you need to take a look at the official plans and make the changes that are necessary in order to accommodate the homes. But if an official plan doesn't need to be amended but for every 10 years, then you can see the disconnect in that situation. And so, we face these challenges by implementing measures that we hope will encourage the construction of 1.5 million homes, and then we have to make sure that the provincial policy statement will support those decisions.

But I don't think anybody should think that this is not a worthy thing to do. I think that, rather than thinking it's not worthy, we should think exactly the opposite. This is an extremely worthy goal, and, in fact, there are millions of people counting on us to achieve this goal. And there are consequences of not achieving it. So, faced with the decision of making things move, we've got to make things move and we've got to make the changes that are necessary in order to accommodate the construction of homes and to accommodate the construction of those homes quickly.

Now, one of the good things about this particular piece of legislation before us today is it is going to give municipalities a very good opportunity to once again sit down with the provincial government and discuss the provincial policy statement. There's going to be a lot of opportunity for corroboration, co-operation, collaboration between the municipal governments that are touched by this particular legislation, or proposed legislation, before us, and those municipalities, I am sure, will be requesting things of the ministry and of the Minister of Municipal Affairs, and then those requests will have to be viewed through the lens of the provincial policy statement, and then either those requests will be granted as being in compliance with, or being compatible with, the provincial policy statement, or the requests will have to be turned down on the basis of not being compatible with the provincial policy statement.

This is not an easy task that can be accomplished in a black-and-white form. Many, many times, things fall in the grey area, and many, many times, qualified professionals will take a certain view of things. Some qualified professionals will take a view of a certain proposal and say that it does fall within the purview of the provincial policy statement and comply with the provincial policy statement, and others will say it does not, and somehow these things have to be resolved. That will take course over the next few days and weeks until December 7, and then decisions have to be made.

But I want to particularly make it absolutely clear that nothing is going to dissuade this government from pursuing its goal of 1.5 million homes being built in the province of Ontario over the course of the next 10 years. People need homes, and they are relying on us, and at the end of this discussion, we're going to vote on this proposed legislation and we're going to make things happen in the province of Ontario, because people need the homes that are going to be built. We're going to get it done, notwithstanding everything that gets thrown in our way, time and time again, by the people who have repeatedly attempted to block every positive development that has occurred in the province of Ontario over the last five years.

I thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Point of order, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The member for Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas has a point of order.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I'd like to welcome to the Ontario Legislature Harry Gray and Steven Gray. They come from Fort Severn, Ontario. Fort Severn is the most northerly community in Ontario. It's located all the way up by Hudson's Bay. Welcome to the Legislature.

1730

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We can now move to the period of questions.

M. Stephen Blais: Merci à mon collègue pour son discours aujourd'hui, et merci aussi pour le commencement en français. C'est bien apprécié par la communauté francophone.

Est-ce que le député peut nous éduquer? Il a dit que son gouvernement à trop de régulations dans le domaine de la construction de nouvelles maisons. Donc, peut-être il peut nous expliquer une des régulations qu'il propose que son gouvernement change pour accélérer la construction de nouvelles maisons.

M. Anthony Leardi: Donc, nous avons eu des suggestions que nous fassions des changements à la réglementation qui gouverne la construction des maisons, particulièrement en ce qui concerne le code qui s'applique aux maisons qui sont construites dans les municipalités. Ça veut dire les réglementations qui fixent les règles qui s'appliquent à toutes sortes de maisons, non seulement des maisons pour des familles, mais aussi les singuliers, et aussi pour de grands bâtiments de 60, 70, 80 unités. Ce

sont des réglementations qui sont implémentées par la province, mais qui sont renforcées par les municipalités. Ça, c'est un exemple.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I just want to be clear: The only reason the government has brought this bill forward—or the greenbelt bill—is because of an Auditor General report, an Integrity Commissioner report and now a criminal RCMP investigation into the actions of this government. This isn't because the government has gone, "Wow, this was a bad idea. We really shouldn't have done this because it wasn't good for the environment, or it's not actually getting homes built." It's because of an RCMP investigation.

But, Madam Speaker, the members opposite are saying that they saw that it was a flawed process, that they now hear from the people of the province who were telling them all along it was not a good idea, and now they're saying, "We've seen the light. Hallelujah."

So I'm wondering, if the government agrees that it was a mistake to give preferential treatment to its speculator friends with the greenbelt grab and the forced urban boundary expansions, does it also agree that it is a mistake to give preferential treatment to many of the same, favoured speculators with arbitrary MZOs, which are now also under investigation by the Auditor General?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Listen, we all know that the NDP have come out very, very forcefully against MZOs. They despise MZOs. They hate MZOs. They've made that position very, very, very clear.

But let me tell you what an MZO did for that member's riding: An MZO was used to make sure that we could build the NextStar battery plant in the Essex region, and an MZO was used to make sure that we get five new transmission lines to bring power into the region, all of which benefits that member's riding. And now, here she is, talking against the very measures that made it all possible. That is an excellent illustration of how the NDP members of this House fail to recognize that MZOs bring battery plants and they bring transmission lines, all of which the NDP members oppose because they hate MZOs.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I thank the member beside me from Essex for his speech today. If I can add, an MZO—and I suggest to the opposition, through the Speaker, to talk to one of your own members, because we put in an MZO to save the food terminal so it's where it is, so we can continue to get food to the table. If you don't like MZOs, I suggest you speak to your own members about that one, because they were actually in favour of an MZO to keep those employment lands going in the riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

But, on a positive side, I want to ask the member: You know, we want to build 1.5 million homes. We have to get shovels in the ground and, once again, not everybody wants to live in Toronto, although it is a great place to live, and Etobicoke probably the best place in the world to live,

but there are other places around this beautiful province that people want to live in. They want to have houses. They want to have townhouses. They want to have condos. I was out to dinner with three young fellows the other night—they all live with their parents—and I said, "Well, where would you like to live?" One said, "I want a ranch." The next said, "I would love to have a townhouse," and the third said, "I'd like to have a condo." Do you know—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I'm sorry, but we're very limited in time for questions. I would like the member to answer the question.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: The member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore has touched on a very important point. She likes to encapsulate it by saying, "Not everybody wants to live in Toronto," and that's absolutely correct. So we need to have every type of housing available in the province of Ontario—not just multi-level residential housing; we need every type of housing.

We've heard NDP member after NDP member say over and over and over again that they're opposed to just about everything that this government proposes. However, I want to point out to the entire House, as is stated by the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, that not everybody should be forced to live where the NDP wants you to live, in a house or a unit where the NDP wants you to live. You should have the choice to decide where you want to live, in what type of house you want to live in.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I just want to let the member from Essex know that I will not support any bill that is under criminal investigation by the RCMP. I also want to let the Essex member know that my colleague from Windsor West has fought hard and long for auto workers in Windsor, even when your government said nothing when they got rid of a thousand workers on the third shift and when your Premier said that ship had sailed in Oshawa. So I just want you to at least understand that.

And I'll ask you a question on this; this is probably a better one: Will this government admit that a shortage of land was never the problem when it comes to building the 1.5 million homes, as your task force told you 18 months ago?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Well, as a matter of fact, when I just gave a 20-minute discourse on the official plans, official plans can actually forcibly limit the amount of land available for construction or expand the amount of land available for construction.

Not every piece of land in Ontario is buildable, and just because there's land doesn't mean you can put anything on it, in particular if that land is not located close to the existing services that are presently available in any given municipality. So, in fact, it doesn't matter how many square feet or square kilometres the municipality is. What matters is what is the available amount of serviced or serviceable land. That's what matters.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question.

Mr. Stephen Blais: I'm going to try again in English, just to ensure that I was clear, and maybe the member

could be more clear. In his, I think he just called it, 20-minute dissertation on official plans, he informed the Legislature he thinks that there's too much regulation slowing down home construction. Given that this government had three or four or five "building homes faster" acts and given that this government controls the regulations that might be used by municipalities to slow things down, I'm wondering if he can educate us on at least one change he would like to see to those regulations here in Ontario to build homes faster.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I'll tell you what my favourite one has been so far. My favourite one so far has been the creation of additional units in existing residential spaces where the footprint of the existing building is not altered. I like to refer to them as in-law suites or mother-in-law or father-in-law suites. I think that's my favourite one that got changed. I think that we could probably proceed down that road and find some other things that are as useful as that.

For example, I can think very clearly of homes in my hometown of Amherstburg that, effectively, as we speak right now, are quite adaptable to being up-and-down duplexes because, as many people do, they might have a kitchen on the main floor and a kitchen in the downstairs. So, it's quite adaptable and easy to adapt that particular home, particularly if there's also a washroom on the main floor and a washroom in the downstairs to—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. That's time.

Further debate?

1740

Mr. Wayne Gates: It's always a pleasure to rise and talk to any bill on behalf of the residents of Niagara Falls. This bill is really exciting, because this bill should be called "the bill to protect the Conservatives from the Conservatives." I think that's what the name of the bill should be, because that's what this is about.

But I want to be clear here: We can't discuss this bill without addressing the elephant in the room. Why are we here right now? Why are we reversing decisions from this government that they defended for months, even years? We're here right now because of the hard work of many people in this province: the work of the Auditor General; the work of Integrity Commissioner; the work of our media institutions; the work of the official opposition; and, mainly, the advocacy of the people of Ontario. People stood up to this government and said they will not tolerate corruption. They will not tolerate land planning based on helping well-connected friends.

It's important to recognize that victory, but never forget that this only happened because this government got caught. And somebody said, "Well, what do you mean they got caught?" So I'll help you, because I know sometimes you guys don't remember. But I remember before the last election, when a number of your Conservatives came into my riding, hoping to defeat us. Well, your Premier got caught on tape with a bunch of developers, saying he would develop the greenbelt, but, unfortunately—I don't think the Premier knew at the time that

somebody was taping what he said. Then the tape was released to the public, and then it was on social media—Twitter, Facebook, Instagram.

And what did the Premier do? He went, before the election—including in my riding, by the way. He came to my riding and said he wouldn't touch the greenbelt. And guess what? Right after the election, what was one of the first things he did? He attacked the greenbelt, and in my riding, that means a lot. We have a lot of greenbelt land in Niagara. I think I've talked I don't know how many times about our grapes and our tender fruit and how important the wine industry is down there.

But this is what happened. They got caught red-handed and now they face an RCMP criminal—and that's the key word, here, Madam Speaker, "criminal"—investigation. I feel very confident that this will mark the eventual downfall of this government. And when somebody says to me, "Isn't that kind of harsh? Do you think that's kind of big?" I'm going to give you an example, because our Speaker, Madam Speaker, is a Liberal. And I remember, because I was here, under the Wynne government, when they decided to privatize hydro.

I can remember the day I went to Premier Wynne—who, by the way, I got along really well with. I thought she was a very fine lady. I think she was a good Premier, except the one mistake. And what was that mistake? She privatized Hydro One. And what happened? To my colleagues that are here—I think some of the Liberals are down at the end there—what happened? You went from a majority government down to a minivan—and I won't say anything bad about the minivans, because they're made in Windsor. We know the workers in Windsor, Unifor workers, do a great job on the minivans.

But that's the effect that can happen when you make bad decisions, and that was a bad decision by the Liberals. And the decision that was made over the last 18 months, where you guys defended the greenbelt, trying to say, "Well, we want to build 1.5 million homes." We're not arguing with that. There's nobody on our side, including the Liberals and the independents, who have said, "No, we don't need to do that." We all agreed.

What we didn't agree with—very clearly, from what I could see—is we didn't want it to be built on the greenbelt. Yet, your government—including your past minister who now isn't the minister, some of the staff and one of your other ministers is now on this side as an independent—we told them all. So I want to be clear to the Conservatives that are listening—and I appreciate it, because there's more listening than they probably have all day, because they enjoy my speeches. I think that's why they're listening. I really believe that.

I want to be clear: I have three daughters. I have five grandkids. If you think I want them to live in the basement of my house, you're absolutely wrong. What I wanted to do is make sure they got a good education. I want to make sure that they have the opportunity to buy their own home, raise their own family. Obviously, like we all do—I don't think anybody on that side is any different than I am—you want to support your kids the best way you can, whether

that's financially or whether that's helping them get to school, picking them up every weekend when they're in university in London or Windsor or wherever they are. I believe that.

But what I said very clearly, and my colleagues here and my colleagues here and my colleagues here—we were clear: Don't touch the greenbelt. And in my riding, that means a lot.

As I get through some of my speech here, I'll give you some examples of when we're talking about councils. Those that don't know, long before I was an MPP, I sat at council in Niagara Falls, and long before that, I was president of my local union for 12 years. So I've kind of paid attention to the political—although I think the unions are probably more political than I face today here in the House, being honest.

So the ultimate goal was never about building more homes or ensuring people had affordable places to live. At what point in our history has the Conservative government ever cared about helping people get housed? This is a party of insiders. This is a party of land speculators. This is a party of wealthy developers—and I just put my notes down; I said talk about my kids and my grandkids.

Madam Speaker, we must discuss why this happened in the first place—and that's important. Why did the government think that these urban boundary expansions were needed? What advice prompted them to arbitrarily go out, pick random pieces of land and force boundary expansion to those plots onto municipalities in the province?

I'll add there before I get into the next line, and remember—because my colleague on her hour lead, and I thought she did a great job with very little notice, mentioned about AMO and the 444 municipalities they represent. Somebody explain to me on that side—because you'll get a chance to stand up and ask me whatever you like at the end of my 20 minutes. Not once was AMO consulted. Why would AMO not be consulted? But they weren't.

I'm going to take a look at the falls, because I know you guys all came to the falls not that long ago, right? It was good. That was when you kind of said you were sorry for the decision that you made on the greenbelt. Take a look at Niagara. We have pieces of land in both Niagara Falls and Fort Erie that were included in this urban boundary expansion that are now being pulled out. What was interesting about that, Madam Speaker—because I know you're interested in this as well: The mayor of Fort Erie and the council never asked or agreed to include the land to be included in the urban boundary. It wasn't asked; didn't know why. And how do I know that? There's a big article in the Review this week, on Saturday, the local paper, where Mayor Redekop—really good guy, works very hard, has got a great council—said, “We didn't want it. We weren't consulted.”

Why were those pieces of land included in the first place? We know that Fort Erie has lots of developable land. Land has or can be serviced by the municipality—which is important, right? If it's already serviced land, that's where you want to build your homes.

The land in Niagara Falls that was included, apparently, never had proper planning, analysis done by the municipality. This decision was entirely by the province.

Madam Speaker, it's hard to imagine that the province would randomly select this parcel of land in Niagara Falls. Who told the province to include this piece of land? That's a question for you guys. And if the former minister—he was here earlier, but I know he's not here now—maybe he could answer that. What connection did that person have to the current government when they recommended including that piece of land? That's been a big issue. That's why this bill was brought forward.

And because I talked about Mayor Redekop, I think it's fair and reasonable to say that Mayor Jim Diodati said publicly this weekend in the Niagara Falls Review that this parcel land “came as a surprise because it wasn't part of the request from the municipality's perspective.” So think about that. Somebody had to go to either the former minister or the minister's staff and say, “We want this parcel of land, to include it,” and it ended up being an MZO but never going through the municipality. So when I hear members that say they were on city councils—I would think the process would include the local council. And even to expand the urban boundaries, for those that don't know, it would normally go to the council, and they would say yes, have a vote on it, and then go to the region. And then the region—in our case, Niagara region—would then have the debate and then they would either support it or not support it, and then the last place it goes to get the overall support is the province of Ontario.

1750

So who, if it wasn't the mayor that went and it wasn't the Chair of the Niagara region, Jim Bradley—who used to sit right over here for 40 years, one of the longest-serving MPPs in our history. It didn't go to him. Who had the authority to go the minister or his staff to talk about this land? Those questions have to be answered. They have to be answered. And I'm going to have more on that—not in this speech, but I have more on that coming shortly, trust me.

So while we are happy to see these lands move back into the urban boundaries, we know there are still a lot of unanswered questions—and that's what I was explaining. I really am hoping, because I have a lot of faith in the RCMP and I think that they'll do an incredible criminal investigation on how this can happen in the province of Ontario—because we do have processes in place. As I stated, many municipalities were surprised by the inclusion of some of these lands. I only know about Niagara—I don't know about Toronto, I don't know about up north, I don't know about Windsor—because the Niagara people are talking to me. The mayors are talking to me. The local media is talking to me. I'm sure this has happened all over the province of Ontario. It's why there is an RCMP investigation, I would think.

For many towns and cities across Ontario, they know they have enough land to develop on. I want to make sure that everybody understands that. Even the government's own housing affordability task force came out and said that there's enough land in the province to build 1.5

million homes—and everybody in the NDP agrees that we should build 1.5 million homes. What was interesting, there was even another report that came out and said that we actually have enough land to build two million homes, of all types of homes.

So you really have to wonder, what motivated the province to rip up the greenbelt and to push this urban boundary expansion? I can tell you, it was a huge mistake from the government, and I believe the fallout from this scandal has just begun. I think there's more layers. You peel that orange, then you peel the next orange—I think there's a lot more and I think the RCMP will probably find that out.

Because it was never about housing. And my colleagues that are over there and some in the middle—well there's one in the middle. The tall guy in the middle there—

Mr. Will Bouma: Tall, good-looking guy.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm not going to say it. I'm staying out of that argument, okay, buddy? That's for other people to say. I do know you're tall because I'm short, so I can pick that up pretty easy.

We need housing, affordable housing in this province desperately, so we're all agreeing with that. The lack of accessibility and affordable housing has become a pressing issue affecting individuals and families right across the province, including in my riding and—if I get enough time; I probably might not get to all my speech—including in Fort Erie, including in Niagara Falls, including in Niagara-on-the-Lake. My entire riding is struggling to find affordable housing.

In Fort Erie, I believe—off the top of my head, I don't have it in my notes—there's a 13-year wait-list for a one-bedroom apartment—a 13-year wait-list. And I would think right across the province of Ontario, we all have that. We all have that problem with affordability.

It's time to address the crisis head-on and work towards solutions that prioritize the basic right to a safe and stable home. The Ontario NDP recognizes the severity of the housing crisis and has put forward a comprehensive plan to tackle the issue. We have outlined a series of proposals aimed at making housing more affordable and accessible to everyone. The plan is grounded in a belief that everyone, regardless of your income or your background, deserves a place to call home. One of the key proposals for the plan involves the creation of a housing affordability fund. This is interesting; you should listen to this. The fund is designed to provide financial relief to Ontarians struggling with housing costs by offering direct financial assistance to those in need. We want to make sure that the immediate burden faced by many families and individuals—allowing them to secure stable housing without sacrificing other essential needs.

The plan also addresses the issue of skyrocketing rent prices. The NDP proposed the implementation of rent control, which would include a rent freeze for two years, protecting tenants from sudden and unaffordable increases. Additionally, the plan seeks to close loopholes that currently allow landlords to exploit tenants through

unbelievable rent hikes, creating fairer and more stable rental markets.

Recognizing the significance of home ownership as a pathway to stability, the Ontario NDP proposes to establish a rent-to-own program. Again, we have to get the Conservatives to listen and to take a look at it. Furthermore, the NDP plans to emphasize the need for increased investment in affordable housing and development.

By committing to the construction of new affordable units, the NDP seeks to address the supply/demand imbalance that has contributed to rising housing costs. This approach not only creates more housing options for Ontarians, but also stimulates job growth in the construction sector, supporting our local economy. It is a commitment to the principle that housing is a right and not a privilege. As we move forward, we should stand up united and make sure that that happens. For hard-working folks to find a place they can call home, it's not right and it's not fair if they don't have an affordable place to live. We need policies that put people before profit, making sure everyone has a chance at a decent and affordable place to live.

I've been hearing about folks—I mentioned this a bit; I didn't have it and I didn't realize—waiting for Niagara Region Housing. Think about this, to my colleagues from Hamilton who probably are seeing the same type of stuff happening in Hamilton: Waiting lists for 20 years in Niagara Falls. It's not just a wait; that's a lifetime. It's time for action, more funding, more support and commitment to cutting down these wait times. Everyone—your kids, your grandkids—deserves a safe and stable home. We're not going to rest until we make that a reality.

Hydro bills: I don't have a lot of time left, so I'll kind of skip through some of this. Affordability, to me, quite frankly, in my riding, and I believe like every riding across the province—and I do know that the 1% are doing extremely well, the 1% who are going to build homes on the greenbelt. That's the 1%. But people in my riding? Here are their issues: Their hydro bills are going up. Grocery prices: Put your hands up if your grocery bills are unaffordable and unattainable. You can't buy what you can to feed your kids. Gas in your cars: How many are having problems putting gas in your cars?

The issue about that is, take a look at why it's happening. Why are rents going through the roof? It's because this government took rent controls off new builds. I think that happened in 2018 or 2019. Why are food prices going through the roof? And this government hasn't said anything, by the way. You know, they talk a good game about some of their issues. The reason why food prices are going through the roof is because—and I use the Weston family, because they're the easiest; because they're making so much money, they don't know what to do with it. They are gouging everybody. They had to go to Ottawa to plead their case. They said they're going to run sales and all that stuff. Guess what happened? They had record profits again—record profits again, at the expense of seniors who can't feed themselves.

As a matter of fact, I talk to a lot of seniors in my riding, being the long-term care critic, I go to a lot of senior

homes, and I talk to them and I talk to their families. Do you know what seniors are doing in my riding? They're eating breakfast and dinner, if they're lucky; or they're having lunch and not having breakfast, not having dinner, because they can't afford to buy the food.

Yet, the Weston family is making millions of dollars right now. They've been making millions of dollars since the pandemic, since COVID hit. Yet, regular folks—our seniors and, quite frankly, those who are in university—are facing the same thing.

1800

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We're going to move to questions.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I thank the member for his comments this evening. He had said something right at the very beginning of his speech that caught my ear, and it was about Kathleen Wynne and her premiership. Everybody in this House, I just want you to remember—I'm not old enough to remember Premiers like Premier Rae and Premier Harris, but I do remember Premier Wynne. I would have said that there were a lot of mistakes that she made, but the member had said that he could only remember one mistake that she had really made.

My question to the member is this: Is it really just one mistake that she made, or does he believe she made more than one mistake?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm not going to agree with you that you're not old enough to remember Bob Rae, but I will tell you my point with that is that hydro was the number one issue that caused the Wynne government to lose. This RCMP investigation on the greenbelt is going to be the reason why you guys are going to go to a van the minute that somebody is charged over on that side. That was my point with Wynne; I was using her as an example. I'm using the greenbelt as an example and the RCMP investigation, that hopefully a criminal investigation—that whatever happened here, the truth will come out. Because I always believe that the truth will always set you free.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Thank you to my colleague from Niagara Falls. I always enjoy listening to him speak and talk when he does his speeches.

My question is: We've seen this government bring a couple of these bills already, just to protect the people of Ontario from their own government. This is a similar bill. If it wasn't for the Auditor General report, the Integrity Commissioner report and the RCMP criminal investigation, do you think we would be dealing with this bill right now?

Mr. Wayne Gates: First of all, I'd like to thank you for the compliment. I opened my speech by saying I think the PCs actually like to listen to my speeches too, maybe for different reasons.

The answer is no, absolutely no. The only reason why this bill is here is because this government got caught on the greenbelt scandal, and they got caught by a number of different organizations that you talked about. Because of what transpired, they now are facing an RCMP criminal investigation.

I said very early in my speech, the key word is “criminal” investigation. It's one thing to be under investigation by the OPP or by a local police force, but when they throw in “criminal investigation,” that really sends a clear message that something happened here that shouldn't have happened, and something was corrupt. That's why we've seen two ministers aren't ministers now. We've seen a couple of staff people leave this government.

To your answer, we would not see this if it wasn't for those other three organizations—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you.

Next question.

Mr. Stephen Blais: I would never want to call into question the remarks of another member of the House, but I am quite certain that I am younger than the member from Essex, and I certainly remember Bob Rae and Rae days, and I certainly remember Mike Harris closing hospitals like the Grace Hospital in Ottawa and threatening to close the CHEO cardiac unit et, bien sûr, l'effort pour fermer l'Hôpital Montfort à Ottawa.

So I'm wondering if my friend from Niagara can talk to us a little bit more about some of the challenges that exist with the way in which this government has gone about land use planning decisions and overriding municipalities and then changing their mind again and going back and forth?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I will answer your question around Bob Rae because he's the one who brought in scab legislation, and it was the Conservatives that got rid of it. And I do remember that it was Mike Harris that closed 26 hospitals and laid off 6,000 nurses. And I even remember, because—I'm not going to give my age out for sure, but I do remember that we had protests that went around the province of Ontario under the Harris government, including in my community of St. Catharines, in Windsor and Sudbury.

To answer your question a little bit—I already spoke about it in my comments. I have the mayor of Fort Erie, Mr. Redekop, and I have the mayor of Niagara Falls, Jim Diodati: Neither one of them asked to use MZOs for expanding the urban boundaries. Not once were they asked to do that. Think about that.

They didn't go to the mayor. They didn't go to the council. They didn't go to regional council. Yet, because of, I believe, some of the corruptness that was happening, they decided to use MZOs to expand some of the boundaries—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. We'll have to go to the next question.

Do we have another question for the member?

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: My question to the member: As we're discussing these options, I've heard a lot of positive things about this in my particular community; and I wanted to know what the positive things are that they're hearing because, certainly, it can't be all negative.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Maybe she can stand up again. I didn't hear the first three lines that you said, because I didn't have my thing—do you want to repeat it, please? Can we do that?

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I can go to the next question. If the member wants to stand up—

Mr. Wayne Gates: I apologize; I didn't have my earphone in. I'm showing my age. I'm sorry.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I'll recognize the minister again.

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: I'll speak a little loudly for my great colleague.

Obviously, I go into different parts of the province. I have a lot of folks in Simcoe county that have family in Niagara, and they've heard a lot of positive things about what this government is trying to do.

So I just wanted to turn a new leaf and ask you: What are the positive things you've heard about the bill as opposed to all the negativity?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'll be honest; I have not heard one positive comment on the bill itself. On the bill itself—I want to be completely honest—nobody has come up and said, "I've got some real positive things on Bill G150." I think if you ask 99% of the people in Niagara, they would say, "What's G150?" Very few people would even know what the bill is.

So to answer your question, no, I haven't heard anything on this particular bill that's positive yet, but I'll keep my ears open.

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

Miss Monique Taylor: It's always fantastic to listen to the member from Niagara Falls, and his portion on Bill 150 today is definitely no different. We have seen so many times this government put forward legislation that has had to be reversed. This is one more of those times.

We've just gone through the greenbelt grab reversal under Bill 136. Now, we're seeing the urban boundary reversal under Bill 150. Would the member like to comment on his thoughts on what happens when we see a government not take into consideration what the people of this province want where there's been a lot of protest back at them and rush legislation that is not good for the people of the province and now—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Back to the member from Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I do appreciate the question. The greenbelt grab, I've already said, was one of the biggest mistakes. But, from Niagara, it really hit home to us and it's why we had—to the member's point—lots of protest. We had lots of environmental groups protest on the streets, saying, "Why are you going to develop on the greenbelt, when we know"—meaning the environmentalists knew when they did their protest—"that we already had enough land in the province of Ontario to build 1.5 million?" Think about it. I'm not saying billion; 1.5 million. We also know that that was what their task force told us. Then, there is another report that had come out, because they said, "Well, that was an old report." There is a current report that had come out and said not only do we have enough land to build 1.5 million, we have enough to build 2.0—two million homes can be built in the province of Ontario—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Response. 1810

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you. My feeling is, who from the Conservative government, other than their developer friends—

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

Mr. Stephen Blais: It's a pleasure to be with you all this evening to debate Bill 150, the Planning Statute Law Amendment Act. Madam Speaker, that's a big pill to swallow. The Planning Statute Law Amendment Act: It's a very innocuous title. It makes things sound very formal and governmental. It makes things sound very bureaucratic, in fact. But what does it really mean? Or perhaps, what should it be called instead of the Planning Statute Law Amendment Act?

I was thinking about it, and it should really be called "undoing our mistakes act," because the government has admitted more than once now that, in the realm of land use planning in particular, they are making mistake after mistake after mistake. This is the second version of the "undoing our mistakes act," in fact. They have another "undoing our mistakes act" that undoes the greenbelt situation that's under criminal investigation by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. This is the "undoing our mistakes act 2," to roll back the decision to force upon municipalities urban boundary expansions.

We read in one of those reports—I think it was from the Auditor General, but it might have been from the Integrity Commissioner's investigation—about how in the greenbelt situation, the Premier was so eager to call and speak to developers about the changes he was going to make that his staff had to tell him to stop calling: "Stop calling these guys. Don't get on the phone with these guys."

Maybe the act should actually be called "protecting Ontarians from the Premier's instincts act," because the Premier's instincts are to get involved, to meddle, to try to force himself upon municipalities and their decisions. He has a history of that, as we know, over the last five years, of trying to be the mayor of Ontario's cities as opposed to being the Premier of the province of Ontario.

But my favourite name for the act—and I might go to committee and propose this as an amendment, because I like this one so much—is the "getting it undone act," because this bill gets it undone. It undoes the changes to the urban boundaries that were forced upon cities. So I actually think I'm going to go to committee and propose that as an amendment to the short title of the bill.

But why are we here tonight, Madam Speaker? Colleagues in the NDP have talked about it a little bit. The government says it's because they're listening to the people, but I think it's really that they're listening to the Integrity Commissioner and listening to the Auditor General. More importantly, they're listening to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, who have launched a criminal investigation into the government and what the Mounties perceive as the possibility of corruption.

But why we're really here is that the Premier doesn't believe that cities are a responsible order of government.

He doesn't think that cities are mature and have the resources, the capabilities, the background to make decisions for themselves. The Premier doesn't believe that municipal elections matter. All of our municipalities held elections. In fact, every municipality in Ontario holds elections on the exact same day every four years, and they elect councillors and mayors and aldermen and reeves to the cities and towns and regional councils to make decisions about land use planning issues, to make decisions about how we're going to do elections in our municipalities, to make decisions about all sorts of things. And repeatedly, over the last five years, the Premier has decided he wants to intervene, not just with small changes here and there but really big, fundamental changes to the decisions that these elected councils have made.

He kicked off the government run with the changes in Toronto, as we all know, changes that were rejected eventually by the courts, changes that this government used the "notwithstanding" clause to overrule. The same clause that has been used in Quebec for language laws, the same clause that has been used as it relates to abortion rights in Alberta, I think, was used to override court decisions about city councillors in the city of Toronto. This really goes back to the Premier's instincts to want to intervene in decisions made by municipalities because, over and over and over again, the Premier and members of his government have tried to dabble. They've meddled, they've interfered with how our cities and our towns operate.

Now, we've heard repeatedly from the government over the years—including tonight during debate from the minister, his associate and his deputy associate—that they have a goal of building 1.5 million homes over 10 years. The 10 years, of course, started three years ago, so they really need to build 1.5 million homes in the next seven years. We heard earlier today that they're about 11% of the way there. Well, we're 33% of the way through the 10 years, right? So if you're going to achieve your goal, you should be close to the timeline of getting there, but they're at 11% of their goal after 33% of the time.

Many of them have described this as making progress, as being bold, I think, was one of the words that was used, as being ambitious and that they're getting it done. Well, Madam Speaker, I don't think anyone considers being 70% behind schedule as being anywhere close to getting it done. In fact, if infrastructure projects were 70% behind schedule, the people would be up in arms. The government knows this because the Crosstown is still far beyond schedule. It's far more than 70% behind schedule, and the government hears about it pretty constantly.

I think we can all agree that it's not good enough to simply build homes. We need to build homes; people need a place to live. We have new people being born in Ontario, new people moving to Ontario and new Canadians immigrating from abroad and choosing Ontario, and so certainly we need to build homes, but we must also build complete communities. We need to build schools, we need to build parks and we need to build community centres. We need to build those things that turn a group of homes on a

street or in a subdivision into a complete community. In fairness, Madam Speaker, not only does the government have a lot to do to achieve its goal of building 1.5 million new homes, it has a lot of work to do with helping municipalities build complete communities.

I'll give you one example. The Minister of Education was here earlier. I'm in the process of writing him a letter, so I'm hoping he's here to hear this story—honestly, I really am—because his ministry has approved funding to build a school in Orléans, and that funding was approved in 2020, shortly after I got elected. I congratulated the minister and thanked him for making that investment in our community, but the school board has been caught in what can only be described as a "foggy swamp" that is the planning department at the city of Ottawa in trying to get this school approved. So they've had millions of dollars approved to build this new elementary school and, three years later, they're nowhere near getting approved. In fact, they applied for zoning and a site plan on April 6 this year, and they have still not had their required public meeting to get approval from the city. Now, this is to build a school in one of these neighbourhoods and, as a result of the delays that continue to exist within municipalities, the school board is going to have to ask the government for another \$6.2 million because of a three-year delay in approvals at the municipal level for a school in—the member for Carleton might disagree with me—one of the, if not the, fastest-growing parts of the city Ottawa. The school is desperately needed, and it can't get it through the planning process. In fact, the public meeting is, I believe, later in December. So there is a lot of work for this government to do to build homes faster.

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Earlier tonight I asked one of the members from the government who believes there's too much regulation slowing home construction down, what changes they could make, other than undoing basically the last year or year and a half of their own work, to help home builders, to help municipalities accelerate the pace of construction in our growing communities. And the only suggestion we could get was to increase the number of units within the existing footprint of a building. It's not a bad idea. It's not horrible.

The member said the residents of Essex would love to see that kind of proposal come forward, so I'm going to go door-knocking in Essex and ask everyone if they want their neighbours to put in a duplex. I'm going to leave the member for Essex's phone number and email address in their mailbox just to see what kind of response they get because I'm sure that in Essex, like in many communities, there are parts of those communities where that might make sense.

But sure as the sky is blue, Madam Speaker, if I were to tell my neighbours that I was putting a duplex in my home, they would go ballistic, and I think rightfully so. And so, I'm not sure that allowing people to establish duplexes within their own existing home is really the regulation that the government should be going at to accelerate home construction. And even if that change was made, it would not help a single builder get an official plan

amendment. It would not help a single builder get a subdivision approved. It would not help a single entity, institution or builder get a site plan control or a building permit.

Why are we here tonight, though, Madam Speaker? That's because the government did things without consultation, overriding the things that municipalities had already done. In the city of Ottawa, which is one of the cities captured by this bill, city council had passed an official plan. After months, if not years, of study and consultation and analysis, city council approved adding 1,200 hectares of new land to the boundary—so not like Hamilton, where they're freezing everything; they added 1,200 hectares to new development land. Working with home builders, working with stakeholders and working with OMAFRA, the city had done a complete review of all the land in Ottawa. The member of Essex quite rightly pointed out that not all land is buildable, and so, working with home builders, the city had done this review.

Ottawa is big. For those of you that don't know, Ottawa is enormous. You can fit Montreal, Toronto, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver inside the city of Ottawa, and you still have 100 square kilometres left. Reviewing all of the land in Ottawa takes a long time and is very expensive. They did that review in Ottawa with the home builders at the table, Madam Speaker, and despite passing an official plan that added 1,200 hectares, the government said, "That's not enough. We're going to add 600 more." And do you know what, Madam Speaker? I'll agree with the minister. Some of that land, in the fullness of time, is almost certainly going to be developed. It's going to become neighbourhoods. Whether you do it this year or whether you do it 10 years from now, that's going to happen. My problem is that they override the democratic elected officials in Ottawa, but whatever.

The big problem is that part of that review of all that land was to determine what was high-quality farmland, because the city of Ottawa has a policy to protect high-quality farmland. And one of those parcels that the process determined was high-quality farmland was on Watters Road in Orléans—that there's an active farm on that parcel, Madam Speaker, that city council endorsed and that it was an active farm and it was protected agricultural land—and the minister undid it, anyway. He undid it anyway after holding the OPA for a year and after the Conservative Party of Ontario and riding associations received, at last count, over \$30,000 in donations from the new owners of this land.

And so, that is exactly why we're here tonight: to undo that kind of process that smells of undue influence, that smells of giving favours to your friends. It smells of something, and only because of that are we here tonight, to undo the government's constant mistakes with land use planning.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): It's now time for questions.

Mr. Will Bouma: I appreciate the speech from the member. I thought I was almost going to take his time away from him there for just a second; although I am up next.

I was curious: Earlier in his speech, he talked about the delays in the city of Ottawa for a school that he's hoping to have built in his community. And then he was talking about how we took away the rights of the democratically elected officials in Ottawa. To me, that sounds like they're blocking things, but we need to unblock things. So what we're trying to do is kind of a carrot-and-stick approach with municipal officials to keep things moving.

I'm wondering what the Liberal plan is. For your school, what would you do to force that issue through the city of Ottawa against the democratically elected folks in the city of Ottawa in order to push that school forward, and how would you tackle that problem differently than what we're doing?

Mr. Stephen Blais: It has nothing to do with democracy, that particular situation. The bureaucrats at the city of Ottawa are using maximum administrative delay. It's the MAD principle—maximum administrative delay. When you apply for a subdivision or you apply for a site plan or you apply for zoning, you go in and you see the planner and you say, "I want to get this done," and the planner gives you 10 or 15 studies you need to do. So you go off and you get all that done, and then you come back and then the planner gives you another 10 or 15 studies you need to do. And you go off and get that done, and then you come back a third time and here's 10 or 15 more studies. And that whole time, Madam Speaker, your legislative timelines have never begun because your application has never been deemed complete. So they run you out of time and they run you out of money.

Now, a school board—I don't want to say they have lots of money, but they have the resources to get through that. Small builders have a lot harder time, and that's one of the reasons it's taking so long to get housing built in Ontario.

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

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Thank you to my colleague from Orléans for his comments on this bill. I certainly agree the expansion of the Ottawa urban boundary and, particularly, the Watters Road development in his riding did not pass the smell test at all.

But the member also referred to the government's incredibly poor record on building the housing that we need in Ontario to ensure that everybody has a place they can afford to call home, so I'm wondering if the member for Orléans agrees with the NDP's proposal that would get government back into the business of supporting not-for-profit and community housing in Ontario by creating a public agency that would actually fund community organizations like Ottawa Community Housing to build the hundreds of thousands of units of affordable housing that we need in Ontario.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Thank you very much, and I appreciate the question. I support creating the Ontario home building agency, which is something Ontario Liberals proposed in the last election. This agency would use a combination of government lands and seed money that the government would provide the agency to work with home builders to accelerate the construction of not-for-profit housing, market to need-based housing, co-operative

housing across the province. So I am glad—in fact, I am thrilled, Madam Speaker—that the NDP is adopting yet again one of our proposals from the Ontario Liberal Party.

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

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Excellent debate by my colleague from Orléans and, certainly, I'm very familiar with this government's work to undo the work of democratically elected cities. In my riding of Don Valley West, they overturned the Yonge Eglinton secondary plan and we're asking for that to be investigated.

But coming back to your remarks, I'm wondering whether the member thinks that it's coincidence that there have been \$30,000 of donations from Conservative Party members in advance of this decision to rule this land eligible for development.

Mr. Stephen Blais: I'm reminded of a quote by Emma Bull: "Coincidence is the word we use when we can't see the levers and the pulleys." I think that's really what we're talking about, Madam Speaker, and what we've been talking about for the better part of a year. There seem to be a lot of levers and pulleys on the back side of this government. What we don't know yet, or what we're only starting to see, is exactly who's pulling them—kind of like the Wizard of Oz.

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

Mr. Will Bouma: Back to the member from Orléans: He seems to forget that the bureaucrats actually work for the government of Ottawa. So when those delays happen inside of the bureaucracy, inside of the municipality, the actual responsibility lies with the elected officials who actually write their paycheques. They work for them. I guess that's why I'm confused, because everything that we've done to try to eliminate any of the bureaucracy inside of municipal planning has been met with pushback from the elected officials saying that we're taking away their rights. But again, I'll leave that aside.

What I'm wondering is, what would the member do to ease that bureaucratic burden for that school that he'd like to see built in Ottawa?

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Mr. Stephen Blais: First of all, I would like to see the provincial government give the school board the \$6.3 million it needs now to build the school that they already funded the first time, the \$6.3 million that is needed because of the three years of delay between approval of the funding and potentially breaking ground on the site.

But what I would do? I would use my powers of government to change the Planning Act to not let bureaucrats tell applicants they can come back four times for new studies. Give them a list of studies. If they do the studies, your application is complete. That's done. It would be a simple regulatory change that would speed things up—free of charge; over to you.

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

Mr. Will Bouma: That's a really good point, because we've actually done some of those things. In fact, a municipality will lose some of the fees if they don't get

out of the way of development. You're correct; they just find different ways of delaying deeming an application complete.

I'm curious: When we've made steps in progress toward that as a government, every single time the independent Liberals have voted against those changes. If this is as important to you as you say it is, to try to decrease some of that bureaucracy at the municipal level to get things built faster, why didn't you support any of that legislation when you had the opportunity here in this House? That also begs the last question: Will you be supporting this piece of legislation?

Mr. Stephen Blais: I will always support the Premier when he changes his mind and undoes the clear mistakes that he's making to derail the province of Ontario. I will happily support the Premier in his efforts to undo everything that he spent the last year doing.

In terms of the previous housing bills, I actually think that I voted for one of them. I stand to be corrected. The member knows that I am not afraid to vote with the government when I agree with the government—I did so earlier today—and I'm pretty sure I did. I'll stand to be corrected; maybe I didn't.

If you brought a bill tomorrow that limited the number of times you could go to a planner and get a list of studies and have those studies be done before you could get the application deemed complete so that the statutory time-lines could actually start, then I would happily vote for that. Just don't Christmas-ornament it with all sorts of other stuff that is unsupportable. Bring a clean bill doing that and I'll vote for it tomorrow.

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

Mr. Will Bouma: One more time. We're running down. One last question: I think the undisputed front-runner in the Liberal leadership race is Bonnie Crombie. I remember back in May, when we introduced legislation to break up Peel, it was kind of a joke among some of us that the mayor of Mississauga was getting three municipalities but her municipality was only able to get two housing starts in the month of May. If that's the record of the front-runner of the Liberal Party, what do you have to say to the front-runner for the leadership about how you have to do things differently? I'd appreciate your response on that.

Mr. Stephen Blais: I am excited by the highly competitive multi-candidate race that we are having for leader. Unlike other parties who want to crown a king or a queen in a completely undemocratic and closed fashion, we are having an open and competitive process to choose a new leader of the Liberal Party of Ontario. The voting in ridings happens this coming weekend across the province: one member, one vote; every riding treated equally across the province. We're going to announce the winner on December 2 right here in Toronto. We look forward to seeing that member in the Legislature very soon shortly after.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): We have time for one quick question. No takers?

I recognize the member for Brantford—Brant.

Mr. Will Bouma: I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak, along with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Associate Minister of Housing and the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

The Planning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023, would, if passed, reverse provincial changes made in November 2022 and April 2023 to official plans and official plan amendments in 12 municipalities. They are the cities of Barrie, Belleville, Guelph, Hamilton, Ottawa and Peterborough, Wellington county and the regional municipalities of Halton, Niagara, Peel, Waterloo and York. The reversal of the provincial plan encompasses changes to urban boundaries while maintaining protections for the greenbelt that our government has outlined via Bill 136, the Greenbelt Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023. As the associate minister stated, the reversal of the official plan decisions made by the province would be retroactive to the original date that they were made, either November 4, 2022, or April 11, 2023.

Speaker, reversing the official plan decisions for the 12 aforementioned municipalities is an important piece of our government's pledge to build 1.5 million new homes in the province by 2031. Today's proposed legislation will help our government support local planning priorities and assist municipalities in building more homes. Our government made a promise to Ontarians, and we have not wavered in our commitment to build more homes in municipalities across the province.

Ontario's housing affordability crisis is taking a heavy toll on Ontarians. It is becoming increasingly difficult for Ontarians to live happy and healthy lives due to decades of inaction, as well as the current federal government's National Housing Strategy, which is underfunding the province of Ontario by \$480 million. Speaker, it is not only our duty to fix this crisis, but it is our duty to fix this crisis while bolstering and maintaining public trust.

Our government has been in contact with municipalities across the province and, as the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing said last Thursday, our government has heard from many mayors and heads of council who agree that we need to be more ambitious in how we tackle the housing crisis. Municipalities across this province also wish to build more housing to accommodate our growing province. Through close partnerships with municipalities, our government has eagerly received feedback from our mayors and heads of council about changes to the original official plans and amendments. As our municipal partners prepare this feedback, and in the spirit of being more ambitious, I, along with our government, urge our municipal partners to prioritize increasing density, especially near transit, in order to connect Ontario even more.

Speaker, when I spoke to the Greenbelt Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023, I said it would be a disservice to our children if they are forced to move out of this beautiful province simply because they cannot afford a home. That sentiment continues to be relevant, and the Planning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023, aims to refocus and redouble our government's efforts to foster the growth of

future Ontarians by allowing them to remain in Ontario. The only way to achieve our goal, Speaker, is to build 1.5 million homes by 2031, and I am proud to represent the government that stands firmly behind this promise.

Additionally, an obvious consideration that our government is addressing with the Planning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023, is the various construction projects that have already received a building permit; projects of this nature would be able to continue. As the Associate Minister of Housing stated, applications already in progress seeking planning permissions, such as zoning bylaw amendments and plans of subdivision, would continue to be processed and would be required to conform to the municipality's official plan as approved under the Planning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023.

In keeping our government's commitment to work seamlessly with our municipal partners, this legislation will allow for changes to be made to original plans based on feedback directly from those municipalities. Our government recognizes that, in some cases, more than a year has passed since the plans were first approved. As such, the affected municipalities have been given until December 7, 2023, to submit information about circumstances or projects that are already under way and on any changes that the municipality would like to see made to the official plan based on the original modifications. This will ensure that our municipal partners are given sufficient agency and input into how this reversal will be carried out. Proposed changes might include, for example, modifications that boost housing supply or support priority projects such as a long-term-care home or a transit-oriented community, which would increase transit ridership and reduce traffic congestion, all while creating affordable housing supply, including affordable housing and the jobs affected in municipalities.

Following the December 7 deadline, the province will review any proposed changes and explore, in consultation with municipalities, the most effective way to implement, through further legislative solutions or other tools, any changes to the official plans that municipalities would like to keep. This provision will guarantee that the reversal process is conducted in a responsible and transparent manner that maintains and reinforces public trust as well as the relationship our government has with municipalities.

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Additionally, it guarantees that no unilateral actions will be taken by our government during the reversal process and that the priorities of local communities are more accurately reflected and given greater priority. With this proposed legislation, along with other legislation currently being proposed by our government, including Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act and Bill 134, the Affordable Homes and Good Jobs Act, we can create a province where home ownership is a realistic and achievable goal for all Ontarians in every municipality.

Our government has comprehensively evaluated the official plans of the province. We believe that in order to preserve the health of the environment and of the public, a

restricted set of provincial adjustments must remain in place and are currently slated for retention under the Planning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023. These particular changes are emblematic of the province's strategic efforts to maintain and underpin the safeguards for the greenbelt that our government has outlined in the Greenbelt Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023. Our government has always been receptive to feedback and is eager and willing to adapt when necessary. In fact, a full breakdown of the changes being maintained in the official plans was posted by our government on the Environmental Registry of Ontario.

The Planning Statute Amendment Act has been made accessible on the registry for a stipulated period of 30 days, providing a valuable window for public input and engagement in the legislative process. Our government is confident that this participatory approach exemplifies the province's commitment to transparency, comprehensiveness and the democratic shaping of policies that significantly impact the well-being and sustainability of our great province. As such, we're using the reversal of the changes the province made to municipal boundaries to reinforce measures taken by our government to improve public health and safety that harmonize with the countless pieces of pre-existing provincial legislation and regulations.

It is important to understand that what our government aims to maintain under this proposed legislation is a unique facet of our paramount goal to build 1.5 million homes. Simply fulfilling our promise to the people of this province is not good enough in the eyes of our government. Our government will fulfill this promise in addition to preserving the greenbelt and enhancing its protection.

We acknowledge that the greenbelt is a vital environmental and agricultural zone. That is why we will ensure that greenbelt lands are protected and secured in the most robust fashion they have ever been. Additionally, the key provincial changes being maintained in official plans are indicative of our government's commitment to prioritizing the well-being of our citizens.

Through the implementation of measures that address emerging challenges and promote a secure living environment, these changes encompass diverse initiatives, ranging from health care infrastructure considerations to emergency preparedness strategies, all geared towards fostering a resilient and secure Ontario. Moreover, the proposed legislation seeks to streamline and synchronize with the broader framework of existing provincial legislation and regulations. This initiative further underscores our government's commitment to coherence and consistency within the legal and regulatory landscape all in service of making Ontario affordable, as it continues to grow.

Now that I have made our government's goals with the proposed legislation clear, I will provide a concise overview of the key provincial changes that will be maintained under the Planning Statute Amendment Act, 2023, in official plans. As I briefly stated earlier, our government remains committed to protecting the greenbelt as well as the agricultural utility afforded by the Duffins Rouge

Agricultural Preserve easements and covenants. The Planning Statute Amendment Act, 2023, retains provincial changes in official plans to address instances where elements of a municipally adopted official plan would have been in conflict with greenbelt policies. Specifically, for the cities of Hamilton, Belleville, the regions of York, Niagara, Peel and the county of Wellington, provincial changes are slated to be retained and official plans to address instances where elements of the officially adopted official plan would have been in conflict with greenbelt policies.

For example, in cases where an urban boundary may encroach onto the greenbelt or an official plan might permit the extraction of sand or gravel or allow for a waste disposal site in a particular area when in fact it is part of the greenbelt, the provincial plan will be retained. These aforementioned activities are prohibited under the greenbelt plan, which the province has committed to preserve. Maintaining those provincial changes will ensure those activities will continue to be prohibited and the greenbelt will continue to be protected. In such cases, our government will work with municipalities to develop and enact plans to build homes and other infrastructure in ways that leave the greenbelt untouched. These cases are perfect opportunities for our government to put ambitious strategies into action and to prioritize making urban areas more dense, especially around transit centres.

Our government remains steadfast in providing the tools required by municipalities to build more homes in our ever-growing province, and with this legislation, if passed, we will be able to do so, all while respecting Ontario's historic green space.

Speaker, these retained changes will ensure that greenbelt lands are protected and secured in the most robust fashion than they have ever been, all while allowing the Ontarians who will eventually occupy the one and a half million homes this government will build to bask in the natural beauty of Ontario, its fertile soil and its diverse and wonderful ecosystems.

In addition to our government's commitment to protecting the greenbelt, we are also committed to strengthen and maintain a relationship with a plethora of Indigenous communities across our province.

Another key provincial change that would be preserved in official plans encompasses the obligation to notify Indigenous communities with a recognized interest in a given area upon the discovery of a marked or unmarked cemetery or burial place. Additionally, these provincial changes are being maintained to guarantee that planning approval authorities effectively coordinate and engage with Indigenous communities who possess aboriginal and treaty rights concerning cultural heritage and archaeological resources. These key provincial changes that are being kept affect the cities of Hamilton and Belleville and the county of Wellington.

Collaborating with Indigenous leaders and communities is imperative for fostering collaborative, respectful and fair development. Our government will be in direct contact and in constant engagement with Indigenous

communities and municipalities situated in and around potentially affected areas. This will ensure that as municipal areas expand and develop, they do not encroach on sites that carry profound significance. This approach not only safeguards cultural heritage but it also fosters a relationship between our government, Indigenous communities and municipalities built on mutual understanding and respect, which serves to promote a more transparent and conscientious planning and development process.

Finally, this will ensure that the process of identifying, protecting and managing cultural heritage resources and archeological resources is led by the appropriate Indigenous communities. In instances where burial sites are located, Indigenous communities will be consulted on all matters throughout the planning process.

An example of that is in my community at the historic residential school, the Woodland Cultural Centre. There were hundreds of acres there at one time, and not necessarily with the changes that we're doing here, but it's so good to see as part of the reconciliation process that land is being set aside. Even on land that has been brownfield before and has been repaired now, we're taking the time and letting Indigenous community leaders do that search for those sites in an appropriate manner, in a way that works, before any development occurs. That's the kind of changes that I'm talking about.

An important aspect of our government's plan to build a more affordable Ontario is ensuring that the province remains a desirable place to live. Many of the provincial changes that are slated to be retained involve the sharing of built-up areas and compatible land uses. These retained changes specifically affect the cities of Hamilton and Peterborough and the regions of York and Niagara.

As our government continues to build homes in this province, on our way to meet our goal of one and a half million by 2031, official plans across Ontario must work in harmony. Provincial policies set out rules for how sensitive land uses, such as those used for homes or long-term-care facilities and other uses, such as industrial lands or sewage treatment facilities, should be planned for when in proximity to one another.

It is imperative that as municipalities develop and continue to urbanize and densify, public health and safety remain a top priority. Several provincial changes that would be retained in official plans in this category ensure these uses are appropriately separated to avoid any negative impacts from odour, noise or other contaminants. By retaining these provincial changes, our government can ensure that Ontarians can live happy and healthy lives, regardless of which municipality they live in.

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Speaker, it remains our goal to work with all of our partners to help municipalities build new homes as soon and as efficiently as possible. Municipal governments across Ontario want to build homes for their people, and these retained provincial changes will ensure that they are able to do so in the safest way possible.

On the topic of safety: Our government is acutely aware of the importance of fresh water and its accessibility for

Ontarians. That is why, for the regions of Peel and York and the cities of Barrie, Belleville and Peterborough, to protect drinking water, the province has rules in place that prohibit certain land uses and activities surrounding drinking water sources. By retaining these provincial changes, our government can ensure these rules are reflected in municipal official plans. All municipal official plans will exist in accordance with the 2006 Clean Water Act, which protects all existing and future sources of drinking water across the province. In a similar vein to the provincial changes we are retaining with regard to sensitive land uses, these retained changes will ensure that drinking water sources are not compromised in future development.

Our province has some of the best water in the world. Ontario boasts exceptional drinking water due to stringent regulations and advanced treatment processes. Our province prioritizes water quality, and the province has invested in cutting-edge infrastructure and environmentally conscious practices that ensure a safe and abundant water supply. The consistently high drinking water quality is a testament to our government's commitment to sustainability and public health, with 99.9% of over 519,000 drinking water tests from municipal residential drinking water systems meeting Ontario's strict drinking water quality standards in 2021-22.

Speaker, I'm getting thirsty just talking about the fresh drinking water that we are so lucky to have in the province.

It's imperative, as our province continues to develop and our government continues to build homes, that the quality of our water remains pure and untainted for all future and current Ontarians.

The Planning Statute Law Amendment Act also retains provincial changes to official plans that are aimed at preparing for Highway 413. These changes affect the Halton and Peel regions. Major infrastructure projects such as Highway 413 require years of planning, which includes important environmental assessments. Once potential future corridors are identified, they need to be considered in official plans, as it would be counterproductive, for example, to permit new housing or industrial development on large swaths of land being considered for a new highway. As such, the province made certain changes to both the Peel region and Halton region official plans for the protection of the Highway 413 corridor. These changes must be upheld in order for the Highway 413 project to be completed as seamlessly and efficiently as possible.

Speaker, I would also like to make clear that the proposed legislation would introduce immunity provisions to help mitigate legal risk for municipalities and the province resulting from this legislation. The legislation would also amend the Planning Act to introduce immunity provisions related to the making, amending or revoking of minister's zoning orders. While no specific changes to MZOs are currently being made, this provision would help mitigate risk should revocations be necessary as the ministry reviews a use-it-or-lose-it policy.

Speaker, it's clear that the key provincial changes being retained by this proposed legislation have been selected to

ensure that our mission to build 1.5 million homes by 2031 is completed as sustainably, efficiently and seamlessly as possible. We are eager to work with our municipal partners to implement ambitious development solutions that will meet Ontario's evolving needs. Our government remains open to further feedback on the proposed amendments, as evidenced by our postings on the Environmental Registry of Ontario and the Regulatory Registry.

The Planning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023, is another step in allowing us to continue to build a more affordable and sustainable Ontario.

I'm proud to represent a government that continues to listen to feedback from the people of Ontario, but most importantly, that is willing to take feedback into sincere consideration and implement suggestions when appropriate and necessary.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: There was no mention of the agricultural lands in the latest economic statement.

As we are losing 319 acres of farmland every single day in the province, what is your government going to do to support farmers and protect agricultural lands?

Mr. Will Bouma: Awesome. I love this question, Speaker, because I've been trying to figure out the mystery of the 319 acres for quite some time. I had a good conversation with the Green member about it last week. I need the member to explain to me exactly what that 319 acres means. Because at a reasonable estimate—a low estimate—of 12 houses per acre on 319 acres per day, over 365 days in a year, that would be 1.4 million new homes, colleagues. So, I don't know what this member is talking about, because he's implying this is all going into development, and I don't understand the question. I need him to clarify further and I hope he will stand up and say in this House exactly what he means by that.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: Ask the OFA. Ask the OFA. Easy. *Interjections.*

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Come to order.

I recognize the member for Mississauga Centre.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: Our province is experiencing historic growth. We are 15 million and the projections are that, by year 2031, we will grow by another four million Ontarians. And the sad reality is that many Ontarians my age are being priced out of the housing market. You know, they're living in their parents' basement and no matter how much they save, even between two salaries, they are unable to save money for that down payment. So that Canadian dream of home ownership that attracted so many people to move to our beautiful country is getting out of reach for even our Canadian-born youth.

Can the member explain how this bill is going to further empower local governments to team up with the province to tackle this housing crisis that we are experiencing?

Mr. Will Bouma: Great question. I thank the member from Mississauga Centre for it.

Speaker, we know that our municipal partners play a pivotal role in helping us meet our ambitious, shared goal of building at least 1.5 million homes by 2031, and we need all of our municipalities to do their share. We are committed to providing every tool at our disposal to empower other municipalities who are shovel-ready and committed to growth. They have the best understanding of their unique situations. Their needs and concerns are what make sense for their communities. Within each municipality resides a base of community knowledge and detailed expertise—a valuable asset in our planning process—and that is exactly what this proposed legislation aims to take into consideration.

By empowering our municipal partners to address the needs of their communities, we are making it easier for those municipalities to address their needs and get shovels in the ground faster on new homes, employment areas and infrastructure. At the same time, the proposed legislation also takes measures to align legislation and regulations—to protect provincial priorities, such as maintaining the greenbelt protections, supporting Highway 413, and restricting land use to protect clean drinking water.

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

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I would like to bring the member back to the preferential treatment that was given to developers that was identified both in the Auditor General's and the Integrity Commissioner's reports. Specifically, I want to look at the MZOs that have been issued to friends of this government. The Liberals, in 15 years, issued 18 MZOs. Miraculously, 18 MZOs were given to guests at Doug Ford's family wedding—the same number at one family function that were given out in 15 years of Liberals—and nine of those 18 were given to Flato, which is owned by Shakir Rehmatullah of the Las Vegas massage fame.

So my question to you is, while you spoke about what is in the bill and not in the bill, you seem to have completely avoided—what we're here to do is undo these preferential treatments that were given to friends of the government through MZOs, through forced urban boundary expansions, and through the greenbelt grab. Why are you avoiding this subject?

Mr. Will Bouma: No, I love that question, and I appreciate the member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas for asking it. I think what the opposition doesn't understand is that the Premier of Ontario has 15 million friends—every single citizen in the province of Ontario. I think she should probably ask her colleague from Niagara Falls because, as I recall, we did an MZO to build a long-term-care home in that community. I believe—even though he voted against it—that the member from Niagara Falls went to the ground-breaking of that facility. And so, it seems to me that they would never say that in here, but the opposition is actually in favour of a lot of these MZOs. So, you know what, you can also include yourselves among the friends of Premier Doug Ford.

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

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I'm very happy to stand to speak about this bill, to ask questions about this bill. My colleague spoke about how this plan for building 1.5 million homes will help the new generation and new Canadians to achieve the goal of buying a new house or having the opportunity to have their own house.

Can the member explain what other initiatives our government is taking to support municipalities getting shovels in the ground and building more homes that Ontario deserves? And also, how can we work in conjunction with them to bring the homes faster?

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Mr. Will Bouma: Again, I think that's an absolutely great question. The reality is that we need all boots on the ground in order to make this happen. We have to work with all of our partners, because I know that the young people in my riding—and I know the same in your riding—are worried about being ever able to own a home.

To go back to what the member from Orléans said earlier, the fact is—and he doesn't blame the elected members of his municipal council for this, but he is blaming the bureaucracies inside those municipalities, which make it impossible to get anything done. His community is waiting for a school because of that bureaucracy and municipalities not deeming applications complete, so that they can't get that done. It makes all of that different.

That's why we have to work so hard with municipalities, because I don't think there's a single elected municipal councillor out there who doesn't want to see young families in their community be able to find an affordable home.

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

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I note that a chunk of this bill—probably more words are dedicated to issuing indemnities, which would only need to be issued when bad legislation has been passed by this government and needs to be rolled back. And really, I want to specifically talk about the chaos that you've created with these changes in municipal planning departments all across the province. AMO themselves have written this government, actually written to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, asking, "Please work with us. And very specifically, please, because of your decision-making, do not stick us with the bill, the cost that unrolling this mess will result in."

So can you confirm and can you assure the members, your constituents in Brantford–Brant, that they're not going to see increased property taxes because of the mess you're unrolling here with this bill?

Mr. Will Bouma: I'm so glad that the member brings that up, because that's exactly what we're doing with our indemnity protections, because we realize that some people, with the uncertainty that this has done, will probably be considering legal action. And so being able to provide that protection and that indemnity to people in the field is very critical, and it's so good to see that the member agrees with me that this is necessary.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Final question.

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you to the member for his remarks this evening. I know the member is very proud to

represent Brantford–Brant in this place. For those who may not be aware, Brantford is actually leading—or was recently leading—the housing starts in Ontario. I was wondering if the member could explain to this House a little bit more about what is working in his community in their initiatives to get more homes built?

Mr. Will Bouma: I think that's such a great point, and I look forward to the parliamentary assistant's ministry generously rewarding the city of Brantford for their hard work on this file.

The reality is, Speaker, that this didn't happen overnight. We got a new mayor in the fall of 2018, and he got right to work on making Brantford building friendly. That is now bearing fruit. That's a great challenge that we have in municipalities, that these changes don't just happen overnight and instantaneously. It takes time. It takes forethought. And even though the mayor of Brantford has now been given strong-mayor powers, he doesn't actually foresee having to use them, because he has a progressive council that's ready to work with him and make new homes for anyone that wants to call Brantford–Brant home.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): It's now time for further debate.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It is my pleasure to rise to speak to Bill 150, the Planning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023.

The reality is, we wouldn't need this bill if the government hadn't participated in what is at least perceived by the RCMP to have been a corrupt process, giving away greenbelt land and changing urban boundaries willy-nilly and giving away land to their rich developer and speculator friends.

I've been in here for hours now and listening to debate, and the Conservative side of the House would have us all believe that this legislation is needed to protect land and such transactions from happening from other governments. But again, I will say, this legislation wouldn't be necessary if it wasn't for this Conservative government. If it wasn't for an Auditor General's report and a damning Integrity Commissioner's report and now a criminal RCMP investigation into this government, this government would not have brought this forward. So while they're acting like this is being done in good faith and this is about building homes, none of this was ever, ever about building homes. This was about doing some favours for some very well-connected and wealthy speculator friends who were showing up at the Premier's daughter's wedding and stag and doe, their fundraisers. And I think it's interesting, because the speaker before me, the member for Brantford–Brant, was talking about legal protections in this bill. The government is covering their own—sorry; it's late and I'm tired, so I have to watch what I was going to say—butt from being sued.

Where have we seen this before? This is a repeat performance, where the government brings in legislation to protect themselves from being sued. Do any of my colleagues remember? Does anybody on the government side remember when they did this?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Long-term care.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: After 6,000 people died of negligence, during the pandemic, in long-term care.

While you guys supposedly had an iron ring around long-term care, 6,000 people died, and your response to that was to bring in legislation to protect yourselves and those for-profit long-term-care operators. Some 78% of those 6,000 deaths were in those for-profit homes, and you guys brought in legislation to protect yourselves and those for-profit companies from being sued. And here we are again.

So the government hands land over to wealthy speculators and donors to the Conservative Party, they get caught and they get in trouble, and so they put it in legislation to protect themselves from being sued by those very speculators and municipalities that have had forced urban boundary changes that this government brought in without even speaking to the municipalities.

It's really hard for anybody on this side of the House or in the province in general to believe that this kind of legislation is sincere, when we're seeing a continued cycle of this government doing something, getting caught, and only when they get caught do they bring in legislation to try to make it look like they weren't really doing anything wrong at all; they were trying to protect the people of this province from some other government. The greenbelt legislation they brought forward was literally the Conservative government protecting the greenbelt from the Conservative government. That's literally what they did, and it's the same thing they're doing now. So it's really unbelievable to most people—they're not credible to most people—that this government is now saying this is about housing.

I think further proof that this is not about housing—I just sat on a panel with WECAR, which is the Windsor-Essex realtor organization. Two members of the Conservative caucus were on that panel with me and my federal riding mate. There was polling that was done that David Coletto presented, and it talked about housing in Windsor-Essex and the crisis that we are facing. This government hasn't done anything to address that. Nothing has changed.

Speaker, I want to talk about truly affordable housing. I think it was November 2 or November 3 of this year, just a few weeks ago, that a report came out—Windsor's housing and homelessness master plan—and that report says that non-profit housing in my area faces a \$22-million repair shortfall—\$22 million. This is social housing. This is rent-geared-to-income. This is co-op housing. This is truly affordable social housing, yet this government is underfunding them. Some 31 local non-profits needed more than \$26 million last year, just to deal with maintenance and repair of social housing units. What they got was \$4 million in 2022-23 through the Ontario Renovates social housing repair program—\$4 million from the provincial government.

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There are 236 units total; 5% of those are vacant. They are vacant because the operators of this non-profit, rent-geared-to-income social housing need about \$500,000 a year, half a million dollars a year, just to cover repairs and

maintenance. What they got was \$130,000 last year. I'm not that great at math, so I did the calculation on my phone; I'm going to be upfront about that. You have \$130,000 divided by 236 units. It means they got \$550 a unit to do maintenance and repairs.

Do you think anybody in this province can get maintenance and repairs done to their home for \$550? The answer is no. But the units need a new roof; that's thousands upon thousands of dollars. A furnace goes? Thousands of dollars. You're talking a significant amount of money if the heat goes and they have to call someone in to look at the furnace. And then say there's a plumbing issue, and you now have to have someone come in to look at the plumbing; or say the roof leaks and they need a roof repair. That \$550 doesn't go very far.

And so what's happening is the repair backlog is getting bigger and bigger, and more and more units are being taken off the market, meaning more people who are in need of social housing and rent-geared-to-income or co-op housing are being denied access to housing, because they can't repair these units to be able to rent them out to people.

Fabio Costante, who is a Windsor city councillor in ward 2, the west end of the city, and who sits on Windsor's social services committee, had pointed out—I want to point out that the west end of Windsor is one of the lower-income neighbourhoods. That's the area he represents. But he sits on this committee, and what he had said, and rightfully so, was that where the problems started to happen when it came to affordable housing, especially social housing—does anyone want to guess who was in government when they downloaded social services to the municipalities? It was a Conservative government. It was the Mike Harris Conservatives.

And I believe that was at the same time—oh, and then they started to cut funding, as this government is doing. It's also noted by these 31 non-profit agencies that are running these units. It was pointed out that this government themselves continues to cut. Can-Am Indigenous housing has noted that for the last five years funding for social housing has decreased more and more and more. That's a cut. This government is cutting social housing.

But some of my friends here might remember Mike Harris, when he started to download social services to municipalities, and then they cut social assistance. What did Mike Harris say then? Do any of my friends remember? What he said, for people who were living in poverty on social assistance, is—what the minister at the time said was that they should just buy dented cans of tuna and eat bologna sandwiches. Right? That's what he said.

This government has the same attitude. Maybe they won't come out and say it like that, but it's the same attitude. They're talking about it being access to housing, or people in general having access to housing, but they're not ensuring that some of the most vulnerable people in our communities—and I'm talking about people with disabilities on ODSP—have enough income to actually be able to afford to rent, let alone buy a home.

They're cutting funding for social housing and they're letting all this housing fall into disrepair, so we have empty

units, not just in my city but in cities all across the province. I would suspect that all the Conservative members have social housing in their riding that has fallen into disrepair and is unusable because their own government is not funding it. Again, I'll say this was never about housing—never about housing.

I want to take an opportunity too to talk about the number of people that are now accessing food banks under this government. I believe the number was an 8% increase in the last few months at the UHC Hub of Opportunities in Windsor, an 8% increase in food bank usage. In Toronto, they say one in 10 people are accessing food banks. Many of those people are children and seniors. We're seeing an increase in seniors.

But even more interesting than that, but also disturbing about that, is that many of the people who are now accessing food banks have never accessed food banks before. These are people with full-time jobs or multiple jobs, because under this government things have gotten so expensive that many people are having to work two or, in some cases, three jobs, and they still have to go to the food bank.

Interjection.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Yes, as my colleague just pointed out, Metro workers at the Metro grocery store were on strike because they couldn't afford to purchase the groceries in the store that they actually worked in. Meanwhile, you have Loblaws, Galen Weston and Loblaw company, who are making record profits—record profits—and obviously price gouging the people in this province. This government won't do anything about that. They'll show up at the food banks for photo ops and say, "Aren't we lovely? Look at the great work these folks are doing. Everybody should donate." Actually bring in policies and legislation that will make it so people don't have to go to the food banks.

When they talk about how fiscally responsible they are, if you look at their track record, they're really not fiscally responsible. They've made a lot of lawyers rich in all the court battles. I've lost count of how many times they've been in court fighting something. They don't want to release mandate letters so they're in court spending taxpayers' money on that.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: And losing.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Yes, that's an important piece too: It's not just in court; they're actually losing and then they appeal it.

When the government talks about housing and trying to now make it sound like this bill is all about making sure housing is being built, it was never about that. This is covering their own hides, is what this is, and hoping that people will look the other way from the corruption and the scandals that they're currently going through.

One of the protections here is about the ministerial zoning orders too, so I'm going to put that out there again, that the government made provisions so that they can't be sued for the previous decisions that they made. That's really what this legislation is about: just to protect themselves from being sued.

Something else that I want to talk about, because it is about housing—I believe it was the member from Essex who talked about power lines and building the next EV battery plant in Windsor. What he failed to mention is that this government didn't seem to put any language into that investment to ensure that the jobs that are being created are being filled by people in Windsor and Essex county or in the province in general. So what's happening is, now they're posting jobs that are going to go to temporary foreign workers—or in some cases permanent workers—from overseas.

Invest WindsorEssex and others are saying we're going to have to build thousands of units of housing for the workers that are coming from overseas. We have a housing crisis in Windsor-Essex—it's across the province, actually.

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Ms. Christine Hogarth: It's everywhere.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It is everywhere; you're right. I wouldn't be pointing that out, because it's your decisions that are creating the housing crisis. But thank you for that.

The point is, we have a housing crisis, and instead of ensuring that people in Windsor-Essex have good-paying union jobs and affordable housing, this government had two kicks at the can—

Interjections.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Speaker, it's interesting. They get really fidgety when you talk about their failures. They should, but you wouldn't have to get all upset about it if you would just stop failing. Actually make good decisions that benefit the people of the province, rather than getting us to the point where you get caught by the Auditor General, the Integrity Commissioner, and now you're under criminal investigation by the RCMP and feel like you need to bring forward legislation to protect your own hides. It's easy. Just don't do things that get you into legal trouble.

My point is—

Interjection.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: The point is—

Interjection.

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

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My point is, we have people in this province that are struggling because of this Conservative government's decisions, because they're putting their donors, their wealthy friends and land speculators ahead of the people in this province that are struggling to find homes and that are going to food banks en masse. That's what this government is doing. They're not ensuring that people in my community and communities across the province have access to good-paying jobs, in their own communities, where they want to work and they want to live. They're more focused on giving gifts to their friends that are invited to the Premier's daughter's wedding or stag and does. That's where this government's focus is.

So it begs the question: If the government now is backtracking after getting caught and they're saying that it was a mistake to give preferential treatment to these

speculators—that it was a mistake to change urban boundaries without talking to municipalities. If they're saying it was a mistake to give out MZOs, are they now saying that the MZOs that still stand—the ones that they gave to the very same speculators who benefited from the greenbelt scandal. Are they now saying that they're going to reverse those MZOs? Is that what they're saying?

They're going to try and spin it on that side—they already did earlier—that we're totally against development or we're against MZOs.

We're against corruption. We're against the preferential treatment that wealthy speculators were given, which does absolutely nothing to build housing. Many of them were just flipping that land to make more money. That's it. They weren't building homes; it was never about homes.

So I'm asking the government that. Are you going to look at the MZOs that you gave to those speculators, or is it going to take another Auditor General's report to come forward, which the Auditor General is again investigating? Is it going to take another Integrity Commissioner report? Is it going to take another criminal investigation by the RCMP to make this government do the right thing? Because that's what we've seen from this government, historically. They get caught. They say sorry. They bring in legislation to make it seem like they didn't do anything at all, didn't do anything wrong at all, and to protect themselves. So I'm asking: Are you going to do the right thing now before the Auditor General's report comes out or—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): It's now time for questions.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I was really pleased to hear the submissions by the member from Windsor West, who says that this government has created so many jobs in the region that it can't even fill all the jobs that the government has created, and it's bringing in so many people to the region that the demand for housing has skyrocketed. That's how many jobs we have created. All of that is true.

But I was particularly interested in the member's comments when she was talking about MZOs. I was wondering if the member would state definitively, with absolute clarity, that despite the opposition of her caucus to MZOs, this member absolutely supports the MZO used to build the NextStar plant and absolutely supports the MZO used to bring transmission lines to the area. Will she do that with absolute clarity?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: What I said about the NextStar battery plant is that this government didn't put language in the deal to ensure that those jobs were actually going to the Unifor members and the ironworkers and the millwrights and the boilermakers and the carpenters and the other workers in Windsor-Essex. When the member from Essex is talking about bringing people from the region—they're bringing people from South Korea to do the jobs that people within Windsor-Essex county, people in Ontario, people in Canada are qualified to do. That was the point. So as much as the member from Essex would like to try to spin this on me—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): The government side will come to order.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My point was, we have skilled workers in Windsor-Essex, some of whom are having to go to food banks because of this government's policy, and we need to ensure that they're getting the jobs at NextStar before they go anywhere else and are offered to anyone else.

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

Ms. Sandy Shaw: This government loves what they think are the gotcha questions. But do you know what I'd be more worried about, as the government? I'd be worried about the gotcha questions that you're going to be hearing from the RCMP and possibly the OPP. So I'd focus on that.

How is it possible—because this may be something that the RCMP may be interested in—that this government gave 18 MZOs to developers who were at Doug Ford's wedding? Speaker, 18 MZOs—more than the Liberals did in 15 years. In what world is that possible? And miraculously, nine of those 18 MZOs were given to Flato, as I've said before, owned by Shakir Rehmatullah, who also was very fond of not only MZOs but massages with MPPs and ministers.

My question to you is, wouldn't this government be more concerned with looking at how they've issued these MZOs and how they're going to roll this back and how they're going to address the chaos they've created in planning offices all across the province?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I would say to my colleague from Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas that they are concerned about it. That's why they brought in this legislation. Once the Auditor General came forward with a scathing report; once the Integrity Commissioner came forward and pointed out that one of the ministers was getting couples massages with one of the developers—the speculators who benefited from this MZO; once the RCMP decided to launch a criminal investigation, that's when this government brought this legislation forward. They're not concerned about their actions and what they did and how it didn't actually help at all to create housing in this province. They didn't care that their own hand-picked housing task force said that there's plenty of land to build on and we don't need to build on the greenbelt. They're not concerned about that. What they're concerned about is the fact that they got caught and covering their own back ends, through this legislation, to ensure that they cannot get sued for the decisions that they have made.

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

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Unlike the member from Windsor West, I will state without any hesitation and with absolute clarity that I 100% fully support the use of an MZO to build the NextStar battery plant and to bring five transmission lines to the region of Essex county. I have no hesitation in endorsing those decisions.

I will give the member from Windsor West a second opportunity at that question. Now that she has seen the

absolute certainty that I can demonstrate in this assembly with regard to that decision, I ask her again: With absolute clarity, can she state that she absolutely supports the MZO that was used to build the NextStar battery plant and to bring five transmission lines to our region?

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Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I will ask the member for Essex, do you support the fact that they are looking to hire thousands of workers from outside Windsor-Essex, from outside of Ontario, from outside of Canada to do the work of people within our community who are not only qualified to do it, but are well educated, well trained and have tons of experience in doing that work?

I ask the member from Essex if he thinks that is acceptable because that is what I was talking about in my speech, and he seems to want to veer off from that, and I understand that. But many of those workers, those boilermakers, those ironworkers, those millwrights, those Unifor workers—they live in your riding. So I'm asking you, do you think that they deserve to have the jobs in that plant?

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Through the Speaker.

Question?

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Thank you to my colleague from Windsor West for those remarks and for that excellent summary of how distracted this government has been by corruption and scandal, rather than actually focusing on addressing what Ontarians desperately need, which is action on affordability and action that will actually deliver homes that people can afford.

My question to the member for Windsor West is, if this government wasn't so distracted by scandal, what could they actually be doing that would ensure homes were being built that people in Ontario could afford?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: We had a proposal, the NDP had a proposal—which is interesting. That real estate forum that I referenced earlier that I spoke at that two Conservative members were on—they actually, after voting against our plan to build housing like they did after World War II—wartime housing, where there were modular homes, prefab homes and funding that came from the government in order to make those affordable houses for when people were returning from the war, or for those that stayed behind and worked in various industries—the Conservatives voted against that. But then fast-forward a few days to this real estate forum and they proposed the exact same thing—the exact same thing. So they could be doing that.

They could bring in true rent control and end renovations and demovictions. They could build or fund—at least fund—the social housing stock that we have so that they can meet the maintenance and repair needs, so that we're not finding empty social housing units all over this province.

Those are just a few things that this Conservative government could be doing to actually build affordable housing for the people in the province.

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

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: I had the opportunity to be in Windsor this past Friday. I saw the member there. I had the opportunity to visit one of our francophone schools, l'École élémentaire L'Envolée, and have dinner with our Polish Canadian community there. Windsor is made up of immigrants, people coming from all over the world to settle and work—yes, for work, as well, in the city of Windsor.

The member talks a lot about supportive housing and supporting our vulnerable, but what she failed to mention is how much her city and her county got recently, back in April 2023, in our homelessness prevention strategy. So I will inform the member that your city and your county got \$16.7 million for supportive housing and homelessness prevention, which represents a 34% increase year over year. In addition to that, \$11.5 million was invested into Indigenous supportive housing.

My question is simple: Why did the member vote no to that increase?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: That's not an entirely accurate representation, but what I will repeat is that there is a backlog, a \$22-million repair shortfall for social housing in the community. They got \$4 million last year. If you take \$130,000 and divide it by 236, that's \$550 a unit for social housing.

We have an increased number of people living on the streets, having to visit shelters. Shelter use has exploded in my community and around—just walk outside the doors here, and you can't help but see it.

In Brampton last week, someone died sleeping outside what used to be a shelter—because they couldn't keep it open because they didn't have funding.

The government can pat themselves on the back, saying they've made all kinds of investments, but the reality on the ground is that food bank use has exploded. People living rough, not having houses, dying on—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): It's time for further debate.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: When our government was elected in 2018, we made a promise to the people of Ontario that we wanted to build this province to be the best place to live, work, worship and raise a family. Being for the people meant many things, but it meant listening to the people who got us elected. The tabling of Bill 150 represents exactly that: listening to the people. We understand that there's a housing crisis occurring across this great province.

If passed, Bill 150 demonstrates our commitment to work with our municipalities on our shared, ambitious plan of building at least 1.5 million homes in a way that maintains and reinforces public trust. We know that trust is the backbone and foundation of any relationship, and the proposed legislation will ensure that our goal of building 1.5 million homes will be achieved through a transparent and trusted process.

Now is the time to refocus and redouble our efforts on building more homes faster. There is a dire need for housing all across our great province. Just last year, Ontario welcomed 184,725 new, permanent residents,

which is almost half of the record-breaking 437,120 new, permanent residents Canada took in last year. Overall, last year, our province grew by more than 500,000 new residents—that's more newcomers than Texas and Florida, the fastest-growing states in the United States of America.

Failing to act would only worsen the housing supply and affordability crisis, particularly for young families like mine and newcomers to this province, like many of my friends and neighbours in my riding of Mississauga Centre. People are seeing the dream of home ownership slip further and further away. As we welcome more people, we need to build more homes of all types across the housing continuum to accommodate our growing and diverse province.

This affordability crisis is no more apparent than in my riding and childhood neighbourhood of Mississauga Centre. As many of you know, I immigrated to this country in 2000, I settled in Toronto, and in 2002, I moved to my wonderful home riding of Mississauga Centre.

To show how apparent the housing supply and affordability crisis is, let me share a statistic that is very personal to me: According to the real estate board, at the time of my family's immigration, the average cost of a home in Mississauga was \$241,000; the average house price in the same area this year, in 2023, is—can you guess, Madam Speaker?—more than \$1 million, representing a 400% increase. Can you imagine? An important thing to note: The household income in Mississauga in 2000 was \$80,442. Today, average household income in Mississauga is \$96,385. This represents an only 17% increase. So something doesn't add up in this equation.

The situation in my riding of Mississauga Centre exemplifies a challenge we are seeing across the province, and the time to act is now.

That is why the proposed Planning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023, would, if passed, reverse provincial changes made in November 2022 and April 2023 to official plans and official plan amendments in 12 municipalities. The cities of Barrie, Belleville, Guelph, Hamilton, Ottawa, Peterborough and Wellington county and the regional municipalities of Halton, Niagara, Peel, Waterloo and York would be impacted.

Our government will do whatever it takes to achieve this ambitious goal of 1.5 million homes in the next decade, and this proposed legislation shows our commitment to working with our municipal partners and the trust that we have in them to make these decisions for their residents.

The reversal of these official plan decisions made by the province would be retroactive to the original date that those decisions were made. However, we are being cautious; we do not want to undo any progress towards our housing goal. And as the minister mentioned, construction that has already received a building permit would be able to continue. Applications already in progress, seeking planning permissions, for example, zoning bylaw amendments or plans of subdivision would continue to be processed. Impacted municipalities have been given until December 7 of this year to submit information about cir-

cumstances or projects that are already under way. Impacted municipalities are also being asked to bring forward any changes that they would like to see to their official plan, based on the modifications that the province has previously made. We anticipate that municipalities will want to use this window to recommend updates that address current priorities in their communities, which is of utmost importance to our government. We have made a commitment to working with all levels of government to ensure this jurisdiction is the best place to live, work, worship, and raise a family.

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Another great example of this commitment to working together is the Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act, 2022, which showed the trust and belief our government has in municipal governance. Mayors across the province of Ontario understand that our government has their back, and will continue to ensure they have the autonomy and trust of legislators at Queen's Park. Our government will do whatever it takes to serve the people of Ontario and provide them with the services they need to live a fruitful life.

The changes made by the province to urban boundaries would be reversed. However, for each official plan, there are a handful of provincial modifications that would be maintained under the proposed legislation. One of these provincial modifications to be maintained is the changes the province made to protect the greenbelt. There may be instances where a municipality included elements in its official plan that run contrary to policies and mapping supporting the greenbelt. An example of this is, a municipality's adopted urban boundary may have encroached into the greenbelt. As we all should know, our government has brought forward legislation to enhance greenbelt protections. Established under the Greenbelt Act, 2005, the greenbelt is a broad band of protected land that currently includes over two million acres, which is about 800,000 hectares of property in the greater Golden Horseshoe.

Our government wants to enhance protections for the greenbelt and the Oak Ridges moraine areas by ensuring any future boundary changes can only be made through a public and transparent process that would require the approval of the Legislature. We are also engaging directly with our Indigenous communities and consulting the public, municipalities and stakeholders on this.

We carefully worked through the official plans to identify and then address inconsistencies within the greenbelt. Changes have been made to municipally adopted plans for Hamilton, the regions of Niagara, Peel and York, and the county of Wellington to align with greenbelt policies.

Madame la Présidente, notre gouvernement souhaite renforcer la protection de la ceinture de verdure et de la moraine d'Oak Ridges, en veillant à ce que toute modification future des limites ne puisse se faire qu'à l'issue d'un processus public et transparent qui nécessiterait l'approbation de la législature.

Nous nous engageons directement auprès des communautés autochtones et consultons le public, les

municipalités et les parties prenantes sur cette question. Nous avons soigneusement examiné les plans officiels afin d'identifier les incohérences avec la ceinture de verdure et d'y remédier. Des modifications ont été apportées aux plans adoptés par des municipalités de Hamilton, des régions de Niagara, de Peel et York, ainsi que du comté de Wellington, afin de les aligner sur les politiques de la ceinture de verdure.

La législation proposée témoigne de notre volonté de protéger la santé et la sécurité publiques, et de nous aligner sur la législation et la réglementation provinciales existantes.

I would also like to mention a vital part of the proposed legislation, and that is the official plans including provisions for wellhead protection areas, in alignment with the Clean Water Act. Some members of our government already spoke to this. As we know, many municipalities rely on wells to supply drinking water to their residents, and pollutants can sometimes seep into the ground and contaminate the water in a well. A wellhead protection area is an area around a well that requires landowners and the municipality to manage the activities that could become potential sources of contamination to the well. Changes have been made to the municipally adopted plans for the cities of Barrie, Belleville and Peterborough and the regions of Peel and York to align with provisions for safe drinking water.

Speaker, safe drinking water is a human right, and I think this legislation takes us one step closer to ensuring that we protect this sacred right for all of our residents.

I'm proud to support this piece of legislation, and I'm proud to be part of a government that continues to build for the people of Ontario so the dream of home ownership can no longer escape young families like mine and future newcomers who will be coming to Ontario to settle, because we need each and every one of them.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): We have time for questions.

M. Guy Bourgouin: J'ai écouté attentivement l'allocation de ma collègue du gouvernement et, avec toute l'allocation, comment la législation va protéger la ceinture de verdure, et toutes ces belles paroles.

Mais j'ai devant moi les notes explicatives du projet de loi, et je peux vous dire, premièrement, ce que ça dit dans votre projet de loi, c'est plutôt que, les actions que vous prenez, vous faites certain qu'il n'y aura pas de recours : « Notamment, il prévoit qu'aucune cause d'action ne prend naissance par suite de l'édiction de la loi. »

Ça va encore plus loin. Un autre paragraphe, c'est : « Par exemple, ces nouveaux paragraphes prévoient qu'aucune cause d'action ne prend naissance, directement ou indirectement, par suite d'une décision concernant l'exercice de tout pouvoir prévu à l'article 47. »

Votre projet de loi, je vous dis, madame, c'est seulement pour vous protéger des décisions de l'abus du pouvoir que vous avez pris. C'est probablement tout relié à l'investigation criminelle de la GRC contre votre gouvernement.

M^{me} Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: Merci pour cette question. Moi, je suis fière de faire partie d'un gouvernement qui veut bâtir l'Ontario. On doit bâtir 1,5 million de places de logement pendant les 10 prochaines années.

Récemment, le député et moi, on a assisté au 45^e anniversaire des Centres d'Accueil Héritage, un organisme francophone qui est ici, à juste quelques kilomètres de notre Assemblée. Cet organisme offre des logements abordables pour les aînés francophones de la province de l'Ontario. Ils ont célébré 45 ans de faire cela.

C'est important que nous continuions de soutenir des organismes comme les Centres d'Accueil Héritage et que l'on continue de bâtir plus de logements en Ontario pour que toutes les communautés, y compris les communautés autochtones et francophones, aient accès à des logements abordables.

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

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you to my colleague from Mississauga Centre for her remarks in this place this evening.

As a younger member of our caucus, obviously, she mentioned the challenges for first-time homebuyers getting into the market.

I was wondering if she could elaborate on some of the initiatives our government has taken to ensure the next generation can have a place to call their own.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: Thank you so much for that question.

As I mentioned, back in 2000, when my family first settled in Canada and we moved to Mississauga in 2002, my mom, who was a single mom, nonetheless was able to put a down payment on a townhouse, which at that time was around \$200,000. Today, that same townhouse is valued at over \$1 million. As her daughter who was educated here in this system, as an MPP, as a single woman, I would not be able to afford actually to put a down payment on that very same home.

It's very tragic that we are pricing an entire generation out of the market and that the dream of home ownership is becoming unattainable to them.

That's why, in this legislation, we are empowering municipalities to help meet our shared, ambitious goal of building at least 1.5 million homes by 2031.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'd just like to say to my colleague across, the municipalities do not build one home in the province of Ontario. There's a process, but the builders have to build. That's the problem we're having in Niagara Falls. We've said we can build a number of homes, but the builders aren't building. You've got to get the builders to build, so we need a process in place so builders will build. That's what they do best. I just thought I would say that.

I just want to say this, because I think this is a fair question: Why did it take an Auditor General's report, an Integrity Commissioner's report and an RCMP criminal investigation for this government to reverse decisions that were so strongly opposed by everyone in Ontario except the government's speculator friends?

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Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: I just want to say that 50 of our largest municipalities have signed on to our government's plan to build more housing across the province of Ontario. In fact, we had the chair of the strong mayors' caucus come and present to us and say that, yes, Ontario's municipalities—the 50 municipalities she represented as chair—are on board to meet the ambitious plan that the government has set forward.

I truly believe that a sign of strong leadership is when you recognize when you make a mistake, you take lessons and you move forward. That's exactly what we did. That's exactly what the Premier did: He took responsibility; he apologized. And now we are putting forward a process that is transparent and that will ensure that we meet our targets of building 1.5 million homes.

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

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you, Speaker.

Mr. Mike Harris: Great member.

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you to the member from Kitchener–Conestoga for his encouragement this evening.

Listening again to my colleague's remarks, the member from Niagara Falls mentioned that municipalities do not build homes; builders build homes. He is correct. Maybe we'll agree this evening with my member across the way.

I was wondering if the member from Mississauga Centre could elaborate on some of the tools that this government has given our municipal colleagues to help get shovels in the ground and get homes built with our builders.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: Yes, and our municipalities have ambitious targets. I know in my municipality of Mississauga, our target is 120,000 homes over the next 10 years. Unfortunately, what we have seen, perhaps due to the lack of leadership in the city of Mississauga currently, is that the municipality only approved less than 10,000 housing starts in the last year. If we do simple math, less than 10,000 times 10, that's not going to add up to our ambitious goal of 120,000 housing starts in the city of Mississauga.

Through putting this bill forward, we are empowering municipalities to make these changes, because we know that they're the best positioned and they understand the needs of our communities through the official plans that have tangible impact on the people who call a community home. That is why there are best positions to consult on these plans.

I wish that my municipality of Mississauga would get on board and build 120,000 homes over the next 10 years so that other people in Mississauga can enjoy the dream of home ownership.

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

Ms. Sandy Shaw: To the member, I have an example from your municipality of Mississauga of the kind of chaos that your government has created with your reckless meddling in municipal planning. As you would know, being from Mississauga, that an MZO that was issued by

this government to Lakeview Village partners doubled the size of the development that was approved. But then, what was shortly there to follow was the fact that Mississauga council was asking the minister to consider rescinding the Lakeshore Village MZO, which overrides the city's earlier approval. One councillor is quoted as saying that this was truly a complete community planning that was worked on for years by residents, city planning staff and the developer that, by the stroke of the minister's pen, was all upended.

So my question to you is, whose side are you on in this? Are you on the side of the council that says this is upending and overriding democratically made decisions? Or are you on side of the developer that got special preferential treatment at the stroke of the minister's pen to double development—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Back to the member from Mississauga Centre for a response.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: Yes, so the only thing that's causing chaos right now in the city of Mississauga is a mayor who forgot what her job is and is running around the province and not actually showing up to council and doing her job. As a result, we now have something that's called a rotating mayor in the city of Mississauga. So we have a councillor for one week and then another councillor for another week. As you can imagine, that causes chaos. At a time that is of historical importance, that the still-mayor of Mississauga advocated for, the separation of Mississauga from the region of Peel, which is a time that is of historical importance, our citizen is missing in action. So I would like to say to the people and residents of Mississauga, at the next opportunity they have, send a message to the mayor and remind her what her job is and why she got elected serve the people of Mississauga.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): It's now time for further debate.

Ms. Chandra Pasma: It's always an honour to rise on behalf of the residents of Ottawa West–Nepean. Off the top tonight, I want to take a moment to recognize two giants of the Ottawa community who have just passed away. One is Ian Shugart, a constituent in my riding of Ottawa West–Nepean who served his country in many different public roles: as a former adviser to the leader of the official opposition; an adviser to the Minister of Health and Welfare federally and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources; then as a long-time public servant, ending his career in the public service as the Clerk of the Privy Council and finally as a senator.

Despite the fact that we both moved in political circles and the fact that he was a long-time friend of my husband's family, Ian and I actually met and got to know one another as church volunteers, where we worked together on planning services. I always found him the kindest, loveliest, most thoughtful man. My condolences to Linda and to his whole family.

Nous avons aussi perdu Jean-Louis Schryburt, un géant de la communauté francophone d'Ottawa, la semaine dernière. Il était un éducateur et un champion pour le

système de l'éducation de langue française en Ontario, un défenseur des droits franco-ontariens et un promoteur de notre chère Maison de la francophonie d'Ottawa.

Il laisse un très grand vide pour la communauté franco-ontarienne et j'offre mes condoléances à sa femme Chantal ainsi qu'à toute la communauté franco-ontarienne.

Tonight, I'm rising to speak to Bill 150, the Planning Statute Law Amendment Act. Now, normally this government has such lovely Orwellian titles for its bills. We had Bill 98, the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, which wasn't actually about better schools or better student outcomes; it was a giveaway to private developers of school land and setting out priorities without funding that schools could actually deliver on. We had Bill 135, the Convenient Care at Home Act, which wasn't actually about convenient care at home but about further privatization of our home and community care sector, and we had Bill 28, the Keeping Students in Class Act, which actually forced students out of class.

My question is, why not give a creative title to this bill? It seems like a completely lost opportunity. There were so many good opportunities here. We just had Bill 136, which journalist Matt Gurney suggested could be called the "stop Doug Ford act," and we've had Working for Workers 1 through 4. So it seems to me like there's a lost franchise opportunity here. This could be the "stop Doug Ford act 2," or the "make sure no one can ever do what the Conservatives just did again act"—

Interjection: Again and again and again.

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Again and again and again—there's an endless series of possibilities here, so it's really kind of disappointing that the government did not bring its A game to titling this legislation.

But perhaps it's because the legislation joins a series of bills that the government has had to introduce to repeal things that they themselves have done. We had Bill 35, which repealed the Keeping Students in Class Act. The Keeping Students in Class Act was passed on a Thursday right before a constituency week began. The Monday that we all returned to the Legislature, Bill 35 had to be tabled—probably the fastest walk-back in the history of the province. We've had Bill 136, which was the rollback of the greenbelt grab, and now, today, we have Bill 150, which rolls back the unilateral expansion of urban boundaries by this government. This bill finally does the right thing in rolling back that unilateral expansion of urban boundaries, but it took an Auditor General report, an Integrity Commissioner report, an RCMP investigation and massive public outcry to come to this result.

One has to wonder how much of this government's legislative agenda has to be spent on undoing things that the government themselves did, kind of like how much time we have spent here this fall debating federal policy rather than provincial policy—because apparently the government would rather do that than actually use any of their own powers that they have to make life more affordable for people. So, we're spending our time debating federal policy that is under federal jurisdiction

and undoing the government's own legislative agenda. So, it's an incredibly productive time for the people of Ontario, at a time when people in Ontario are suffering from some pretty serious challenges that this government has powers to do something about and yet is failing to do. The cost-of-living crisis, the fact that people can't find affordable homes, the fact that so many people in our province are going hungry and being forced to turn to food banks even though many of them have full-time employment, the fact that our children are struggling in schools without the resources that they need, especially mental health care—and it goes on and on, Speaker.

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So, this bill repeals urban boundaries that were unilaterally imposed on 12 municipalities, including Ottawa. I just want to talk for a minute about the Ottawa official plan and how the Ottawa official plan was created, because it's not something that was slapped together by Ottawa city council on the back of a napkin and rushed off to Queen's Park, and then the minister is the one that took a long and serious look at it.

The city of Ottawa spent two years building the official plan, with intensive studies by city staff. There were nine discussion papers set out at the start. There was a very thorough look at what the quality of different plots of land was and what the cost would be of adding them to our urban boundary. There were multiple consultations with residents that were several months long, through different formats—public hearings, online surveys. This was a democratic, consultative process that relied on planning expertise regarding the suitability of land for inclusion, the availability of infrastructure and transit, the cost of servicing land and, of course, protecting farmland, which is incredibly important because we need to feed our growing population.

So, the outcome of all of this work was the Ottawa official plan, adopted by council in 2021 and submitted to the province in the fall of 2021. Then it sat on the minister's desk for a year. And then suddenly, in November 2022, Ottawa gets the news that the then-Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing had approved the official plan, but also included lands that Ottawa had never asked to have included—654 hectares of land Ottawa did not want included in their official plan. In fact, staff had looked at this land in the urban planning process and had scored it very poorly. This is land that was not close to existing services, not close to existing public transportation, and it was farmland.

I read one analysis that said the cost to Ottawa residents of including this land in our urban boundaries would have been close to \$1 billion to service, which would have meant property tax increases for the residents of Ottawa. And this land wasn't even necessary to build housing. The city of Ottawa was confident that we could meet our housing target within the boundaries that the city put forward in our official plan. So, there was no reason to include this land, and it was incredibly costly to the residents of Ottawa.

In fact, a study commissioned by the city of Ottawa found that intensification is far, far cheaper for the city to

develop. The city actually comes out ahead financially with infill, but for single-family homes in undeveloped fields that are far from current infrastructure, it's very expensive for taxpayers. Development fees and the property taxes of homeowners don't fully cover the costs of servicing those funds, and so that means tax increases for residents.

So, that begs the question: Why would the minister force Ottawa to include these lands?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: For who?

Ms. Chandra Pasma: And that is the million-dollar question, but the question is, a million dollars for who? Because it just so happens—just so happens—that one of the parcels of land was owned by a group of investors who had donated thousands of dollars to the Progressive Conservative Party. And furthermore, they bought this land between the time that the city said no to developing this land and the time the minister said yes.

So, there was no reasonable expectation that this land was going to be included within Ottawa's urban boundaries. These developers were buying land that was zoned for farmland and there was no reasonable expectation that that was going to change any time soon, and then lo and behold, the minister unilaterally includes it in Ottawa's urban boundary.

Now, this may sound familiar to you, Speaker, because this is exactly what happened in some of the cases of greenbelt land, where a very few lucky developers bought land that was part of the greenbelt and should have been worthless for development, and then a few months later—a few brown envelopes at a dinner party later—suddenly this land is included in land that the government is taking out of the greenbelt, and these developers were expecting to be \$8.3 billion richer. So we either have some of the world's luckiest developers in the province of Ontario, who should probably buy lottery tickets because they are so lucky, or there is something untoward going on in the minister's office. This just is the kind of deal that did not pass the smell test.

This fall, we saw Ottawa city council voting to send a letter to the new Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing asking him to review this decision, and that motion was adopted unanimously. And 11 city councillors sent a letter to the Auditor General and Integrity Commissioner, asking them to investigate. I'm just going to read that letter into the record:

“Dear Auditor General Stavropoulos and Integrity Commissioner Wake,

“Ottawans watched with interest as your offices concluded their recent respective investigations related to the provincially directed removal of lands from the greenbelt in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area (GTHA). The resultant findings have led us to question whether similar dynamics were at play in the provincially directed urban boundary expansion in Ottawa in November of 2022.

“The 654-hectare urban expansion lands added to Ottawa's urban boundary by the province had been previously reviewed and evaluated by Ottawa city staff. Most of these lands scored poorly in respect to the criteria

that included proximity to transit, sewage and water infrastructure, and the protection of farmland. While increasing housing supply was the primary objective of the city-led urban boundary expansion in 2020, Ottawa planners demonstrated through their analysis that the 654 hectares added by the province to Ottawa's urban boundary were not needed to meet the target of homes to be built in Ottawa. They would also be extraordinarily costly to residents of Ottawa. This is mirrored in the Special Report on Changes to the Greenbelt in the GTHA which also concluded that ‘that there was sufficient land for the target of ... homes to be built without’ [the provincial removal of Greenbelt lands].

“Generally, there has been a lack of transparency and accountability for the rationale behind the provincially led expansion in Ottawa. Auditor General Stavropoulos, your predecessor found the process in the GTHA to be similarly wanting. She ‘found that how the land sites were selected [by the province] was not transparent, fair, objective, or fully informed.’ The Special Report on Changes to the Greenbelt also concluded that ‘fair, transparent and respectful consultation with the people of Ontario did not take place.’ This contrasts with a municipal process that presented three options for consultation in advance of the expansion in 2020 with opportunities for public input. Residents of Ottawa deserve a say on a decision that will cost them billions of dollars in taxes to support dispersed infrastructure in the years to come.

“Ottawans have yet to see an adequate explanation from the province as to why the work of local land-use planning officials was dismissed by this provincial decision. Integrity Commissioner Wake, your investigation into the conduct of the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs concluded that the ministry, under the minister's watch, alerted some developers ‘to a potential change in the government's position on the greenbelt with the result that their private interests were furthered improperly.’ This investigation was pursued after complaints were filed by opposition members at Queen's Park following media reports suggesting that some prominent developers who are Progressive Conservative donors were benefiting from the province's land site selections.

“Here in Ottawa, there has been similar reporting on a particular lot in the expansion lands added by the province: a farm on Watters Road that was not even contemplated for development by the city due to the province's own policies on protecting farmland. This reporting revealed that this farm had been purchased by a newly incorporated limited liability company ... after the municipality had approved a new urban boundary that did not include it, but before the province reversed that decision. All five directors of 1177 Watters Developments Ltd. are donors to the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario.

“We are requesting that your respective offices also investigate the decision-making that led to the provincial decision to unilaterally add land sites to Ottawa's urban boundary. This decision was made without consultation or explanation and was at odds with the recommendations of local land use planning officials. The people of Ottawa deserve transparency and accountability.”

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Again, that was signed by 11 city councillors, including all four city councillors in the riding of Ottawa West–Nepean. It was a request that was echoed by my colleague from Ottawa Centre, who also called on the Auditor General to investigate.

I understand that the Auditor General may be looking into this urban boundary issue, and I really hope that they are, because even if this is being reversed, we need to understand what happened here and how these decisions were made. There is a complete and utter lack of transparency and accountability. Decisions are being made by the minister unilaterally, overriding decisions that are made publicly and transparently after extensive public consultation, and we have no idea how the minister arrived at his decisions. We know that the RCMP investigation is going to finally get to the bottom of the greenbelt grab, but we also need to get to the bottom of how these boundary expansion decisions were made and why decisions were unilaterally being made that benefit people who have donated to the Progressive Conservative Party.

Meanwhile, while the government is busy making decisions that favour insiders and donors, they are distracted from doing the work that actually needs to be done to get people housing. We have such a housing crisis in the province that what we really need is everything everywhere all at once.

Private developers have a role in meeting our housing need, but they should actually be required to build, not land-bank and speculate, which drives up the cost of housing while not actually delivering housing. We know of many cases where developers are sitting on permits rather than actually building.

In my riding of Ottawa West–Nepean, I have a situation where a developer sold units five years ago and is still refusing to build them. Those homeowners have been here at Queen's Park begging the government to take action to actually make this developer make good on the sales and deliver these homes, yet the government has been absolutely refusing to take any action. The Home Construction Regulatory Authority, which they created and which seems entirely bound to developers, is also refusing to take action, even though they've acknowledged that rules were broken and not followed.

What we need are some changes that will actually compel developers that when you hold permits, you use it or you lose it; you can't hold Ontarians over a barrel for years with a promise of housing without ever delivering housing. But private developers alone aren't going to get the job done. We need other actors.

Yesterday, I was at an interfaith service in Ottawa organized by the Multifaith Housing Initiative, which is a great model in Ottawa that brings together representatives from many different faith communities—many different Christian denominations, local Muslim and Jewish leaders, Baha'i. The Multifaith Housing Initiative is building housing that is connected to faith communities. They have a proposal for a development at Julian of Norwich Anglican Church in my riding of Ottawa West–

Nepean. There are housing units that are being built, including at Christ Church Bells Corners, right next to Ottawa West–Nepean. What I heard from these not-for-profit housing providers yesterday was that they desperately need the government to come to the table and be a partner providing the funding. They can build the housing, they can administer the housing, they can provide the services—often, these are not-for-profit models that make sure the community services are built right into the housing development so people get the supports that they need—but they can't fund the number of housing units that we actually need in Ottawa.

Multifaith Housing is just one of many not-for-profit community housing providers we have. Of course, there's the giant Ottawa Community Housing, and then in my riding we also have Nepean Housing. All of these are organizations that would gladly expand the number of homes that we have, and they provide deeply affordable housing, which is what we need for many people. Yet the government is not coming to the table as a supportive partner.

In fact, we proposed a motion which would create a public agency, Homes Ontario, to finance, fund and build this kind of not-for-profit housing, and the government accused us of being communist even though this was a model that was run in Ontario for over 40 years, including by the hero of many of the Conservatives here tonight, Bill Davis, who I guess joins us in being a communist. It's time for the government to go back to the future and embrace the leadership and the example of their predecessor Bill Davis and have the province fund, build and invest in this kind of not-for-profit housing that will actually make sure that everybody in Ontario has a decent place to call home, because the government's agenda, which is so focused on themselves and on doing their own agenda, isn't getting the job done for the people of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Harris): Questions?

M. Guy Bourgouin: Merci à ma collègue pour sa présentation.

Je vais te poser la même question que j'ai posée à la personne qui était avant toi. C'est parce que je lisais la note explicative du projet de loi. On a un gouvernement qui dit—ils font des beaux discours, et ils disent comment ils étaient là pour les municipalités et qu'ils s'excusent, qu'ils ont fait une erreur et qu'ils reconnaissent leur erreur. Mais ils ne mentionnent pas exactement ce qui est dans le projet de loi. Dans le projet de loi, ça parle qu'aucune action ne va être prise contre le gouvernement—à plusieurs reprises.

Fait que, croyez-vous que l'intention ce n'est pas juste de dire qu'on a fait une erreur et tout ça, c'est plutôt de se protéger contre des actions qu'ils ont voulues, où ils se sont fait poigner bien comme il faut? Je pense que c'est en cause probablement avec—on le sait—l'investigation criminelle de la GRC. Croyez-vous que c'est tout relié à ça ou que c'est de la bonne volonté du gouvernement?

M^{me} Chandra Pasma: Merci beaucoup à mon collègue de Mushkegowuk–Baie James pour la question.

Oui, le gouvernement veut qu'on croie que c'est une erreur et qu'ils sont très—« sorry ».

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Say it in English.

M^{me} Chandra Pasma: —that they're very sorry. Mais si on fait une erreur trois fois, ce n'est plus une erreur.

Mr. Guy Bourgoin: « Désolés. »

M^{me} Chandra Pasma: Oui. Donc, ce n'est pas assez de dire qu'ils sont désolés. Il faut changer les actions, et ce qu'on voit—oui, on parle beaucoup ce soir du processus et de consultations, mais on ne voit pas un changement d'actions. Je dirais que c'est important que les résidents d'Ontario ne paient pas pour les actions du gouvernement encore une fois.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Harris): Further questions?

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: In the midst of a housing crisis, the only solution the NDP has brought forward is to form an Ontario public builder, which by their own estimates would cost taxpayers \$150 billion over 10 years to, at most, build 225,000 homes.

Well, if the members opposite did their homework, they would see that in British Columbia the NDP's 10-year housing plan has disastrously failed. After six years of government, they have only built 16,000 units of the 114,000 they promised in 2017—less than 15% of the targets they've committed to. Instead, over six years, under the NDP in British Columbia, 75% of young people have given up hope of owning their home.

Can the opposition please explain why instead of working with our government to deliver homes for Ontarians they deliver half-thought-out ideas that would only add to more financial pressure to Ontarians already struggling with the rising cost of living?

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Let me start by saying to the member opposite that one thing that we can say about the BC NDP government is that they're not under criminal investigation by the RCMP and they haven't just lost three ministers in the last few months to corruption. So I think there's a lot that this government could learn from the BC NDP.

Also, I know that the member opposite has not had the benefit of taking the Minister of Education's new math curriculum, but his math on the funding for the public housing agency is completely off. The member also clearly didn't listen to my remarks, because I mentioned other options to address the housing crisis in Ontario in addition to Homes Ontario, one of which the government could move on at any point, which is to make sure that developers either use the permits they are issued or that they lose them. There are homes that have been sold to people who are desperate to have their housing built and the developers are not building the housing, so do something.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Harris): Further questions?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you to the member for identifying the problems not only with the greenbelt grab but certainly the forced urban boundary expansion and the MZOs and the amendments to official plans that were never requested from municipalities and that were all directed by the ministry and by this government.

We know a lot about this because Environmental Defence, in an application for judicial review, received all kinds of documents from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing—their own documents—that showed that they knew that these were not good planning decisions, that they would not respect the environment and that they had absolutely no idea what the cost would be for municipalities but they went ahead and did them anyway.

When it comes to Ottawa, you've identified it—as you said, many of these amendments were not supported by staff planning recommendations, in many cases were actually opposed by staff and council, and disproportionately, the beneficiaries of these changes were donors to the PC Party, which is a pattern that we see all over the place.

How do you think people would possibly believe that these decisions were made about housing when they haven't built a single unit of housing, and all of the MZOs and all of the actions that they took benefit their insiders and their donors?

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Thanks to my colleague from Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas for that excellent question.

It's very clear that this process was not based on evidence whatsoever because all the evidence pointed to not including these lands in Ottawa's urban boundary. They were far from public transportation. They were far from existing sewage and waste water infrastructure. It would have cost billions of dollars to taxpayers to bring servicing out there. And some of it was prime agricultural farmland. If the decision was being made based on any kind of evidence, this was not the decision that would have been made at all.

I can tell the members here tonight that nobody in my riding of Ottawa West—Nepean believes that this government's decisions are being made on the basis of delivering housing to Ottawa. They are not succeeding in pulling the wool over people's eyes. People see clearly that this is about benefiting insiders, not about building housing for people who desperately need it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Harris): Further questions?

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you to my colleague from Ottawa West—Nepean for her remarks. Speaker, as you will know, the members opposite voted with us on our fall economic statement, which obviously the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing mentioned earlier today in question period. It was nice to see some non-partisan cooperation on a very important bill.

The member who gave remarks just now tweeted about the investments we're not making in the fall economic statement but voted for it in the House.

Interjection: You creeping?

Mr. Matthew Rae: I follow her on social media; it's not really creeping. Some of you follow me. It's what we're there for.

My question, then, to the member from Ottawa West—Nepean: Is she going to support this bill as well?

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Well, I guess I have to start by saying thank you to the member opposite for following me on social media. I can't say I return the favour.

But the member clearly didn't hear my remarks on the fall economic statement, because it was actually 20 minutes of suggestions to this government on things that they could be doing right now that would address the greatest challenges that people are facing, including the biggest challenge right now, which is the cost-of-living crisis. We just got the numbers from Ottawa Food Bank today which show that the number of people who are food insecure and using food banks in Ottawa has doubled under this government. It's now one in seven people.

There are so many things that the government could do about that, that they have within their power today, that they could do immediately that would make such a big difference, starting with doubling our rates of social assistance; increasing the minimum wage; cracking down on precarious forms of labour like permanent temporary jobs; real rent control, which would mean that more people would be able to afford housing and put food on the table. I encourage the government to actually use the powers they have to make life better for the people of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Harris): Further questions?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I would just share with the member that we in Hamilton have had the same experience. This is a government that meddled with our official plan, meddled with planning processes, and they are identifying that they are in complete chaos right now. They don't know what decisions will be held up, what decisions will be changed. The minister said they're going to look at MZOs. They might keep them; they might not. If a building permit has been issued, that's okay, but if it's in the middle of a decision, we'll see how that goes. That kind of uncertainty in Hamilton is what stops housing from being built.

Can you explain—in Ottawa—how this flip-flopping, these uncertain decisions are impacting municipalities' ability to build the housing that we need, build the housing that this government should get down to doing instead of just talking about?

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Thanks to the member for that question.

What we're seeing is that this government's actions and decisions are having a huge impact on municipalities. Not only the flip-flopping but also the passage of Bill 23, which is taking significant revenue away from cities, even though they have so many needs to meet right now; significant changes to the planning process. In fact, I've been attending a lot of community association AGMs and every city councillor has to start their remarks by talking about the fact that the province has not been a good partner, and it's been incredibly—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Harris): Thank you very much. Further debate?

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: I'm grateful to rise tonight to speak to Bill 150, An Act to enact the Official Plan Adjustments Act, 2023 and to amend the Planning Act with respect to remedies.

First of all, I'd like to say that I'm glad to be here, and I am glad to see that the government has recognized the error of its ways as it relates to meddling in municipal boundaries for the municipalities listed here in the act.

I'd also like to say that I had a good feeling about my colleagues' short name for the act, whether it's the "undoing our mistakes act" or the "getting it undone act." Both of those would be very good candidates for a short name for this bill.

When I read about the city of Hamilton a number of months ago saying that they had lots of room within their municipal boundaries to build the housing that they needed and when I read the government's own housing task force report that said they did not to touch the green belt, they did not need to expand into that land to meet their housing targets, I remember thinking, about Hamilton, wow, that's really great. They are doing what they need to do to build density. We know that density actually helps cities, we know that it makes housing more affordable actually because you take advantage of existing infrastructure. We know that it makes transit more successful because more people are living within the boundaries and can access and use that transit, so it has positive impacts on our climate.

So it was really encouraging. Yet to hear then that this government basically said, "No, I'm sorry. We're not going to accept your proposal. We are going to force you to go beyond your existing boundaries into the greenbelt and into other agricultural land"—and I thought, wow, there's only one reason for that and that's because they want to make their rich friends richer.

I think certainly to see that the government is reversing its errors is encouraging. I think people across this province are happy to see that. Certainly, people in my riding are very happy to have seen the green belt decision reversed, as well as this decision, because they know that it means we will have more farmland. We will perhaps even slow down the trend of 319 acres a day of farmland being paved over, which is the case under this government.

So it is a good thing, but I think we need to remember that this started not with wanting to fix the housing crisis; it started with wanting to make their friends richer. I think we all know now that it was the Auditor General's report, the Integrity Commissioner's report and now the investigation by the RCMP that really was the impetus for reversing their initial bill.

We know that just like with Ontario Place and the Ontario Science Centre—again, I get hundreds of emails and calls and contacts from my residents. The Science Centre is very close to my riding of Don Valley West, just in the neighbouring Don Valley East. Lots of school children in my riding walk to the Ontario Science Centre to take advantage of it. I've spoken before about how teachers basically say, "This is an extension of my classroom. I use it as part of my science class, part of my social studies class, to bring kids to see the temporary exhibits and permanent exhibits to help teach them about science and the opportunities that it creates."

I hope that the government will also reconsider the mistakes that it has made with regards to Ontario Place, again, where they are chopping down—800, I think, was one of the numbers that we've heard—800 mature trees where they are creating an underground parking lot that will very likely be riddled with water problems for years to come. Who will be paying for that? The taxpayers.

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So I hope that it's not just that there is an RCMP investigation, an Auditor General report, and an Integrity Commissioner report that has caused the government to reverse this decision and put forward Bill 150. I hope it really does mean that they understand that protecting our farmland—respecting the policies and official plans put in place by municipalities who are democratically elected. I hope it does mean that they've had a change of heart around respecting those things and that, again, they will listen to the people of Ontario.

I have not heard one person—certainly, in my riding—write to me and say, “Yes, I'm all for moving the science centre. I'm all for putting a spa at Ontario Place.” So if they were really listening to people on those files, they would also understand that those are also big, big mistakes.

We saw protest after protest about the greenbelt. I attended some of those; I know my colleagues as well did. My colleague from Beaches–East York organized one of those protests, and we heard there about how upset people were. Yet again, that was not enough in and of itself for this government to reverse course. An \$8.3-billion payday is what the Auditor General estimates that developers who were, again, working with, we know, former staff and chiefs of staff of the former Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, passing envelopes back and forth to tell them which land they would like. That's actually the way this government has been conducting planning.

Again, as my colleague from Orléans said earlier, we have city planners; we have cities; we have elected officials in those cities who approve official plans. Yet, we have a Premier and a government who are quite happy to interfere in those plans and to come up with their own ideas about how those cities should be run. Yet, Speaker, when we had the federal government announce recently—I think it's a \$4-billion accelerator fund for housing to get the housing built that this government so energetically and passionately talks about—what did the Premier say? The Premier said, “Stay in your own lane. We don't want your help.” That's really hard to believe. I hope they reverse their course on that as well, because certainly those announcements around this province—I think there have been announcements in London. I think there has been one recently in the GTA, in Ottawa, perhaps, as well. That they are getting housing built. So those will be homes that people—again newcomers and Canadians who are Ontarians who are looking to buy their first home—will be able to take advantage of. So I hope that this government decides to work with them to make that happen.

I was disappointed, I have to say, when I read this bill, that there was no reversal to the decision to overturn the Yonge Eglinton Secondary Plan, the OPA 405, as it's known. The city of Toronto, when that happened back in the first year of this government—the first year they were elected, in 2018—many, many people, including the city of Toronto, including city councillors and many residents spoke out about their dissatisfaction with this government's interference in how the city of Toronto does its planning. Like what I have heard elsewhere here tonight in this debate, that plan, the Midtown in Focus plan, was done with extensive consultation and input from stakeholders, from medical communities, from residents, from builders and from city planners.

It was a robust plan, Speaker, and yet, now, in my riding we have buildings and proposed sites for buildings that have big huge signs from our school boards that say that if you live in this complex or this building, your children will not go to school here. That is not a good way to build communities. That is actually hurting our communities, because we know that when kids and families are going to school with their friends, they are building connections, they are learning how you to treat those people with respect, to treat them like they want to be treated.

We know that that's good for our community. So, you know, overturning a plan that was done with consultation and that was done with projections around how many schools you would need, how many doctors you would need, how many hospitals you would need. An estimate I heard recently was it's about 135,000 people who will be living in that area. That's a city the size of Peterborough, and yet there is not one new hospital proposed for that area; there is not one new daycare centre proposed for that area. We know that those things will be in fact hurting our community, so again, I would ask the new minister to consider including that Yonge Eglinton Secondary Plan in there—their correction here in terms of what they have reversed.

Speaker, I know that we have a government that is prone to mistakes. There have been some big ones. Bill 124: We know the unconstitutional act to take away people's right to strike, for our education workers. We know that they have reversed course on some very major files, but that was only when they were caught. So I would ask the government to think about not waiting until they're caught. We know that the Auditor General is now going to be doing a value-for-money audit at Ontario Place, and I would ask this government to not wait until they get that report, to take action now, to do the right thing and make sure that Ontario Place can be certainly restored, made better—we always want to make things better; that's part of our job here in the Legislature—but to do it with an eye to protecting our environment, to protecting our lake, to protecting access, to protecting the species that use that space and the many, many residents who walk and cycle and rollerblade. If you go down there, you see them all the time. Regardless of what this government wants to say or try to make people believe that Ontario Place is not used, they just need to go down there on any day and they will

see how extensively people, especially in our growing downtown core in Toronto, are using that space.

So I would ask that, again, the government consider that proposal. We all want to make things better. I would ask that they consider including reversing the Yonge Eglinton Secondary Plan in their bill and make sure that Don Valley West and Toronto remain a great place to live where we have people who live in their community, can go to school in their community, work in their community, have daycares in their community and not just have condos being built for condos' sake.

I also would like them to think about the land that needs to be protected—again, not just in these municipalities but across our province. When you drive through southwestern Ontario—I was there a few weeks ago. Farmers there are very worried about their land as well. They're worried that as boundaries continue to be pushed out to build housing sprawl instead of tall, we are facing a very critical impact on farmers and the value of their farmland. How can we make sure that we are protecting that land? A bill like this could help to protect that farmland so that it is farmland not just for this generation but for future generations and can help feed us all.

Speaker, lastly, I just want to again remind the government that this bill is basically a reversal of a mistake because of their own mistake; it's not a reversal of a mistake by the Liberal government. The Liberal government created the greenbelt, and we hope that it will stay protected. We hope that these cities will get the support of the government in densifying and making sure that the cities are thriving and continuing to grow as our population grows in Ontario.

With that, I will close.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): It's now time for questions.

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you to the member from Don Valley West for her remarks this evening. She mentioned the \$4-billion Housing Accelerator Fund the federal government has made available to our partners. As the Minister of Municipal Affairs, I believe, mentioned earlier, around the announcement in Toronto last week with the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance announcing some money for housing, if the federal government would come to the table around waste water, you could unlock a lot of housing in the minister's area of the province and in York region in particular by having that money invested. With the Housing Accelerator Fund, actually, they don't tie it to any housing starts. The Building Faster Fund, as members will know, is tied to housing starts and ensuring that those shovels are in the ground.

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This bill, as well, is an extension of continuing to work with our municipal partners to ensure that we are planning for tomorrow and the growth that we're seeing in all of our communities.

I'm wondering if the member is going to support this bill. Yes or no?

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Speaker, as I said, this bill is the correction of a very egregious error that the government has made. I absolutely respect people who say that they made a mistake. I think I would respect the government even more if they had admitted their mistake before they got caught. Certainly, I'm happy that they are admitting their mistake and trying to correct their mistake. So, yes, I will be supporting this bill.

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

Miss Monique Taylor: It's always interesting to be able to sit in the Legislature and listen to different people's perspectives on different bills that come before the House.

My question to the Liberal member: Since they're in a leadership race and the leading candidate for their leadership has agreed with the Conservatives several times over and, really, has the same donor base that the Conservatives do when it comes to planning, housing and development, how does she feel about having a leader in place who agrees probably more times than not with the Conservative government?

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Thank you to the member from Hamilton Mountain for the question.

It has been a very exciting—I guess it's about a year, but especially in the last six months, as the debates have been under way. We have four amazing candidates who really want the job of being the leader of the Ontario Liberal Party. There are over 100,000 members. I think I read that we are now the largest party by membership in Ontario. That's very exciting. We have a very exciting event coming up on December 2. Anyone is welcome. You just have to buy a ticket to come and see how that kind of election is done.

I'm very proud of all four of the candidates running for leader, and I know that any one of them will make a great leader and we will be behind the one who wins, absolutely.

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

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you again to my colleague from Don Valley West for her comments.

Building off of my NDP colleague's question around one of the people who are running for Liberal leader, I was wondering if she supports the strong-mayor powers which the candidate she endorsed, by the way, had to use to get federal funding. Does she support strong-mayor powers?

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Thank you to the member for Perth-Wellington for the question. As he knows, I have lots of family in the area and spend a fair bit of time there. It's a great part of our province.

Speaker, there are lots of things that we could be talking about here tonight, about what makes our province better, and that includes things like not paving over the beautiful farmland that's in Perth-Wellington; that includes not paving over the greenbelt; that includes making sure that our cities and towns, as well, including places like Stratford, are beautiful and densely populated with people who are thriving and who have the services that they need.

I think we have to, again, look at what mayors need to do to make their cities run well. I know that we've got great mayors who are elected in our towns and cities, who are doing all that they need to do to make sure that their communities are thriving.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: I listened very intently to the speech.

The NDP official opposition has never been in favour of paving over the greenbelt, and the Conservative government has had a road to Damascus moment and decided to protect the greenbelt from themselves.

I would like to know if the Liberal Party is also going to commit to not going into the greenbelt, considering the main leadership candidate, the front-runner, is the only one now in the province who has not committed to not paving over the greenbelt.

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Thank you to the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane. I think the greenbelt is something we passionately defend as Liberals. We created it. We're very proud of that. I see that the government side is also now committed to protecting the greenbelt. They also have, as you say, been on the road to Damascus, so that's very thrilling for us. I know that all of our leadership candidates are absolutely committed to protecting the greenbelt. They've all been asked this question many times in debates and have committed, and I'm very proud to be amongst their company when we're talking about this. I'm excited for the race that's happening, the vote next week and the results on December 2.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further questions? I recognize the member for Perth–Wellington.

Mr. Matthew Rae: Sorry to my colleague from Essex, and to my colleague from Don Valley West, I will move away from questions around your potential future leader for a moment.

Speaker, as you know, and as the member knows as well, she mentioned Stratford where she has family in that area, and Stratford, Toronto and Mississauga have seen massive growth over the past few years. As everyone knows, we're now 50 million people strong and four million potentially in the next decade. There's this massive growth in our province—across Ontario, no matter the size of your community.

So, through this legislation our government plans to empower municipal partners and give them the tools they need to grow and plan for future growth. Does the member opposite agree that the municipalities are in the best position to understand the unique needs of their communities and that we need to empower them further to plan for growth in a way to address those needs?

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Back to the member for response.

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Thank you to the member for Perth–Wellington for the question. I guess I'm a little puzzled. I mean, certainly we've seen this government do the exact opposite. We've seen the government override plans and tell them that they need to have sprawl. So, when we think about enabling mayors to do what's right for their

city, I think mayors are telling this government what they need. They're telling them that they need support. They're telling them that removing development charges means they don't have the funds to build their infrastructure. They've got sewers that are overflowing. They've got water pressure problems. They've got roads that aren't being maintained. So, absolutely this government should be helping cities do what they need to do to enable their cities to thrive.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further questions? I recognize the member for Orléans.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and thank you for your presentation tonight. As you just discussed, the government has had a topsy-turvy relationship with municipalities, doing things, overriding their responsibilities. Now we have two bills undoing some of that work, which is creating a very confusing land use planning environment for many cities.

We have the city of Toronto, whose chief planner is retiring at the end of the year. We have the city of Ottawa that's been recruiting for a chief planner for almost a year. In fact, they couldn't fulfill the recruitment and the mayor of Ottawa is now using the strong-mayor powers he said he wouldn't use in order to keep that recruitment going.

I'm wondering if you think that the topsy-turvy lack of clarity land use planning environment this government has created is going to make it difficult for Ontario's two biggest cities to recruit highly qualified chief land use planners.

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Thank you to my colleague from Orléans for the question. Some time ago, when some of these government bills were being put in to amend and remove the cities' ability to plan their cities, one councillor in Toronto stood up and said, "You know, maybe we should fire the whole planning department because the Premier clearly thinks he can do the job."

I would say that, absolutely, this topsy-turvy nature of how the government is managing its relationship with cities is hurting cities' morale. It's hurting the morale in the planning departments. I've heard that directly from city councillors in Toronto, my city. I know that stability and predictability are really good, and if people feel they're using their skills—and city planners are passionate about what they do, they want to be able to use their skills, and if they think they can't use their skills, I would absolutely think we will have a challenge recruiting them. So I hope the government listens.

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

Mr. Calandra has second reading of Bill 150, An Act to enact the Official Plan Adjustments Act, 2023 and to amend the Planning Act with respect to remedies. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I will refer it to the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Mr. Calandra has ordered the bill to the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy.

Orders of the day?

Hon. Paul Calandra: No further business, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): There being no further business, this House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 2050.

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Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Julia Douglas, Meghan Stenson,
Christopher Tyrell, Wai Lam (William) Wong
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Tim McGough

| Member and Party / Député(e) et parti | Constituency / Circonscription | Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités |
|--|--|---|
| Anand, Deepak (PC) | Mississauga—Malton | |
| Andrew, Jill (NDP) | Toronto—St. Paul's | |
| Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP) | London—Fanshawe | |
| Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC) | Wellington—Halton Hills | Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative |
| Babikian, Aris (PC) | Scarborough—Agincourt | |
| Bailey, Robert (PC) | Sarnia—Lambton | |
| Barnes, Patrice (PC) | Ajax | Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative |
| Begum, Doly (NDP) | Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest | Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle |
| Bell, Jessica (NDP) | University—Rosedale | |
| Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC) | Pickering—Uxbridge | Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances |
| Blais, Stephen (LIB) | Orléans | |
| Bouma, Will (PC) | Brantford—Brant | |
| Bourgouin, Guy (NDP) | Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James | |
| Bowman, Stephanie (LIB) | Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest | |
| Brady, Bobbi Ann (IND) | Haldimand—Norfolk | |
| Bresee, Ric (PC) | Hastings—Lennox and Addington | |
| Burch, Jeff (NDP) | Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre | |
| Byers, Rick (PC) | Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound | |
| Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC) | Markham—Stouffville | Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement Minister of Legislative Affairs / Ministre des Affaires législatives |
| Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC) | Scarborough North / Scarborough- Nord | Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité |
| Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC) | Willowdale | Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée |
| Clark, Steve (PC) | Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds— Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes | |
| Coe, Lorne (PC) | Whitby | |
| Collard, Lucille (LIB) | Ottawa—Vanier | Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative |
| Crawford, Stephen (PC) | Oakville | |
| Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC) | Mississauga—Lakeshore | |
| Dixon, Jess (PC) | Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler | |
| Dowie, Andrew (PC) | Windsor—Tecumseh | |
| Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC) | Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte | Attorney General / Procureur général |
| Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC) | Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord | Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités |
| Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC) | Nipissing | Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce |
| Fife, Catherine (NDP) | Waterloo | |
| Flack, Hon. / L'hon. Rob (PC) | Elgin—Middlesex—London | Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associé du Logement |

| Member and Party / Député(e) et parti | Constituency / Circonscription | Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités |
|--|--|---|
| Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC) | Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord | Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario Premier / Premier ministre Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales |
| Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Michael D. (PC) | York South—Weston / York-Sud—Weston | Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiques et du Multiculturalisme |
| Fraser, John (LIB) | Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud | |
| French, Jennifer K. (NDP) | Oshawa | |
| Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC) | Newmarket—Aurora | |
| Gates, Wayne (NDP) | Niagara Falls | |
| Gélinas, France (NDP) | Nickel Belt | |
| Ghamari, Goldie (PC) | Carleton | |
| Gill, Hon. / L'hon. Parm (PC) | Milton | Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives |
| Glover, Chris (NDP) | Spadina—Fort York | |
| Gretzky, Lisa (NDP) | Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest | |
| Grewal, Hardeep Singh (PC) | Brampton East / Brampton-Est | |
| Hardeman, Ernie (PC) | Oxford | |
| Harden, Joel (NDP) | Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre | |
| Harris, Mike (PC) | Kitchener—Conestoga | |
| Hazell, Andrea (LIB) | Scarborough—Guildwood | |
| Hogarth, Christine (PC) | Etobicoke—Lakeshore | |
| Holland, Kevin (PC) | Thunder Bay—Atikokan | |
| Hsu, Ted (LIB) | Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles | |
| Jama, Sarah (IND) | Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre | |
| Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC) | Dufferin—Caledon | Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre |
| Jones, Trevor (PC) | Chatham-Kent—Leamington | Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement |
| Jordan, John (PC) | Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston | |
| Kanapathi, Logan (PC) | Markham—Thornhill | |
| Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP) | Parkdale—High Park | First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative |
| Ke, Vincent (IND) | Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord | |
| Kernaghan, Terence (NDP) | London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord | Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle |
| Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC) | York Centre / York-Centre | Solicitor General / Solliciteur général |
| Khanjin, Hon. / L'hon Andrea (PC) | Barrie—Innisfil | Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement |
| Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia (PC) | Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre | |
| Leardi, Anthony (PC) | Essex | |
| Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC) | King—Vaughan | Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation |
| Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC) | Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek | Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport |
| MacLeod, Lisa (PC) | Nepean | |
| Mamakwa, Sol (NDP) | Kiiwetinoong | Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle |
| Mantha, Michael (IND) | Algoma—Manitoulin | |
| Martin, Robin (PC) | Eglinton—Lawrence | |
| McCarthy, Hon. / L'hon. Todd J. (PC) | Durham | Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises |
| McCrimmon, Karen (LIB) | Kanata—Carleton | |
| McGregor, Graham (PC) | Brampton North / Brampton-Nord | |
| McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB) | Beaches—East York | |
| Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC) | York—Simcoe | President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones |
| Oosterhoff, Sam (PC) | Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest | |

| Member and Party / Député(e) et parti | Constituency / Circonscription | Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités |
|--|---|---|
| Pang, Billy (PC) | Markham—Unionville | |
| Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC) | Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill | Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires |
| Pasma, Chandra (NDP) | Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean | |
| Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC) | Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud | Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences |
| Pierre, Natalie (PC) | Burlington | |
| Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC) | Timmins | Minister of Mines / Ministre des Mines |
| Quinn, Nolan (PC) | Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry | |
| Rae, Matthew (PC) | Perth—Wellington | |
| Rakocevic, Tom (NDP) | Humber River—Black Creek | |
| Rasheed, Kaleed (IND) | Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville | |
| Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC) | Kenora—Rainy River | Minister of Northern Development / Ministre du Développement du Nord Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones |
| Riddell, Brian (PC) | Cambridge | |
| Romano, Ross (PC) | Sault Ste. Marie | |
| Sabawy, Sheref (PC) | Mississauga—Erin Mills | |
| Sandhu, Amarjot (PC) | Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest | |
| Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC) | Brampton South / Brampton-Sud | Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports |
| Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC) | Glengarry—Prescott—Russell | |
| Sattler, Peggy (NDP) | London West / London-Ouest | |
| Saunderson, Brian (PC) | Simcoe—Grey | |
| Schreiner, Mike (GRN) | Guelph | |
| Scott, Laurie (PC) | Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock | |
| Shamji, Adil (LIB) | Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est | |
| Shaw, Sandy (NDP) | Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas | |
| Skelly, Donna (PC) | Flamborough—Glanbrook | Deputy Speaker / Vice-Présidente Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative |
| Smith, Dave (PC) | Peterborough—Kawartha | |
| Smith, David (PC) | Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre | |
| Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC) | Parry Sound—Muskoka | Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts |
| Smith, Laura (PC) | Thornhill | |
| Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC) | Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte | Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie |
| Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP) | St. Catharines | |
| Stiles, Marit (NDP) | Davenport | Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique de l'Ontario |
| Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC) | Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre | Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure |
| Tabuns, Peter (NDP) | Toronto—Danforth | |
| Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC) | Mississauga—Streetsville | Associate Minister of Small Business / Ministre associée déléguée aux Petites Entreprises |
| Taylor, Monique (NDP) | Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain | |
| Thanigasalam, Hon. / L'hon Vijay (PC) | Scarborough—Rouge Park | Associate Minister of Transportation / Ministre associé des Transports |
| Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC) | Huron—Bruce | Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales |
| Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC) | Vaughan—Woodbridge | Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances |
| Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC) | Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington | |
| Vanthof, John (NDP) | Timiskaming—Cochrane | Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle |

| Member and Party / Député(e) et parti | Constituency / Circonscription | Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités |
|--|--|--|
| Vaugois, Lise (NDP) | Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord | |
| Wai, Daisy (PC) | Richmond Hill | |
| West, Jamie (NDP) | Sudbury | |
| Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC) | Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre | Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity / Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes |
| Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP) | Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre | |
| Yakabuski, John (PC) | Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke | |
| Vacant | Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre | |
| Vacant | Lambton—Kent—Middlesex | |