



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Second Session

Alberta Hansard

Wednesday afternoon, November 9, 2016

Day 47

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 29th Legislature

Second Session

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Kazim, Anam, Calgary-Glenmore (ND)	Turner, Dr. A. Robert, Edmonton-Whitemud (ND)
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Littlewood, Jessica, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (ND)	Woollard, Denise, Edmonton-Mill Creek (ND)
Loewen, Todd, Grande Prairie-Smoky (W)	Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (W)

Party standings:

New Democrat: 54 Wildrose: 22 Progressive Conservative: 9 Alberta Liberal: 1 Alberta Party: 1

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, November 9, 2016

[The Speaker in the chair]

The Speaker: Good afternoon. Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Mr. Carson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is my honour to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly 54 students and staff from Annunciation elementary school. Students are accompanied today by Mrs. Maureen Ostrowerka, Mr. Chris T. Osayande, Rachel Hayward, and Mr. Chris Koper. It is fantastic to see them here this afternoon to observe question period. I would ask them all to please rise and accept the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane.

Mr. Westhead: Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my absolute pleasure to welcome students and teachers from Cochrane high school to the Legislature today. I apologize for not being able to join them for their photo earlier this afternoon. I understand that they were participating in a mock parliament, and I'm sure they learned quite a bit. I'd also like to commend the students from this particular high school for having a very robust renewable energy program, that I myself have had the pleasure to tour, and I thank the students for their leadership on the environment. I ask the Assembly to give them their greatest warm welcome.

The Speaker: Good afternoon. Welcome.

Are there any other school groups for introduction today?
Seeing none, the Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm introducing a group that is here today from the Canadian Diabetes Association. I believe they're in your gallery. If they could rise while I introduce them. November is Diabetes Awareness Month, and it's a time to spread awareness about the disease, share information about risk factors, and work together to support people living with diabetes as well as their families. You may also see people wearing the blue circle pin that is the universal symbol of diabetes to show their support during this month of awareness. I ask that Emily Johnson, Michelle MacPhee, Janet Riganti, and Tammy Norris along with the other volunteers and staff members from the Canadian Diabetes Association please accept the warm welcome of our Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome. If Speakers are allowed to make observations on occasion, I must tell you that I have a daughter who had juvenile diabetes, so I particularly identify with the issue.

The hon. Minister of Environment and Parks.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you key members of the Lung Association of Alberta and the Northwest Territories who are with us in the House today: Leigh Allard, president and CEO; Nina Snyder, chief operating officer; Monte Weber, chief financial officer; Dr. Mohit Bhutani, physician advocate; and Tim and Susan Penstone, patient advocates. These members are joining us during

lung awareness month and are providing a free clinic and lung health information in the lower rotunda today. Members of the Lung Association share our commitment to public health, and we thank them for their tireless work, especially as they raise awareness around the importance of phasing out coal-fired emissions. I ask that the members of this House extend our traditional warm welcome.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Camrose.

Mr. Hinkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you to all Members of this Legislative Assembly 17 members from 4-H Alberta. I will be speaking about the launch of the 100th anniversary of 4-H Alberta later this afternoon. If they would all please rise as I read their names. We have with us today Kathleen Linder, Helen Andrews, Virginia Harvey, Monica Harvey, Dave MacTaggart, Kate Harink, Ty Harink, MacKenzie Denschikoff, Kyley Denschikoff, Holly Johanson, Tantyn Monea, Adam Burnett, Judy Van Hecke, Dorothy Carlson, Shari Hanson, Dave Gower, Louise Erskine, and Mary MacArthur. Please join me in welcoming them as they receive the traditional warm welcome of the Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Advanced Education.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly some individuals visiting from my constituency of Edmonton-Gold Bar today: Veronique Wilson and her two children, Evan and Matt Wilson. They're also accompanied by their grandmother Monique Lecuyer. Matthew is a grade 6 student at Gabrielle-Roy, and Evan attends l'école Michaëlle-Jean, a francophone junior high school that opened its doors in Edmonton-Gold Bar this fall. I'm very proud of the francophone community that's in my constituency, and I'm happy to see that the options for francophone education are expanding. I ask them to please rise, as they have, and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Are there any other guests today, hon. members? Edmonton-Decore.

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured today to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly an incredible group of individuals from the Victims of Homicide Support Society of Edmonton, which I will be speaking about later. Joining us today are Jane Orydzuk, president; Kelly Rolston, vice-president; Susan Adair-Wolf, treasurer; Dianne Ilesic, secretary; Gayle Hanscom, director, and Mike Ilesic, board member. I would now ask that they please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome. Are there any other guests? The hon. Member for St. Albert.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly the Member of Parliament for St. Albert-Edmonton, Michael Cooper. I'd like to thank him for his public service and would ask him to rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Members' Statements

United States Presidential Election

Mr. Stier: Mr. Speaker, today I want to congratulate President-elect Donald J. Trump and the American people in a free, open, and fair election. No matter what your political stripe, the outcomes of democratic elections and the democratic process must always be respected.

This election marks a new day for diplomacy between Canada and the United States. Our two countries have the largest trade relationship in the entire world. Alberta alone exports over \$100 billion worth of goods and services to our southern neighbours each and every year. According to news organizations this election has the potential to be a win for Alberta if – and that's a big if – our leaders show the political will to capitalize, but I'm hopeful that after years of anti-Alberta hostility from within Canada's own borders this election may bring good news for working families in our province.

President-elect Trump has called Canada a strong ally. He has committed to building the Keystone XL pipeline. So far Wildrose is the only party in this Legislature that has expressed support for pipelines in every direction. That includes Keystone. I hope the Premier . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. members, we don't interrupt when a member is – the practice of this House is that there are no interruptions.

Please proceed.

Mr. Stier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope the Premier finally shows support for this project, too.

This is not about left versus right. This is about the people of our province, who are suffering because anti-Alberta politicians across this country want to see us fail. A Wildrose government would work with the new U.S. administration to enhance and defend the energy, agriculture, forestry, mining, and manufacturing industries. This election has presented a perfect opportunity to build pipelines and increase exports in some of our most vital economic sectors, all at a time when we need it the most. The question is: will we capitalize?

Premier, on behalf of the people of Alberta let me say: it's time to start speaking up and finding ways . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for St. Albert.

1:40

Inclusive Employment

Ms Renaud: Thank you. When you hear the label "most vulnerable," do you see a picture of a strong person, skilled, employable, independent, and valued? Likely not. We need to stop labelling Albertans with disabilities as our most vulnerable. We can call them our most unemployed, our most underrepresented but not our most vulnerable. They are people first, and they're not defined by their ability or disability. Whether they rely on a wheelchair, service dogs, need for staff, none of that defines them. They deserve our respect, and we need to commit to doing that, to giving it to them. Once we remove the label, we see the person: the premise of a 30-year-old movement called People First. Once we see the person, we can find solutions with them, not for them.

Did you know that October was nationally and internationally recognized as Disability Employment Awareness Month? Fourteen per cent of Canadians over 15 years of age have a disability; 411,000 working-age Canadians, who can work, who want to work, are not working. Unemployment and poverty are the daily reality of Albertans with disabilities. Unemployment rates for people with

disabilities are as high as 75 per cent for women; males are at 60 per cent.

People with disabilities make up a large pool of untapped labour with demonstrated value. Employers have invested time and energy and resources to be inclusive employers that value employees with disabilities. We know customers value inclusive employers and will go out of their way to support those businesses, and we know that employees feel pride at being part of an inclusive business or organization.

I would like us all to commit to recognizing Disability Employment Awareness Month next year. I would also like everyone to consider becoming an inclusive employer themselves. I think two out of 87 constituencies isn't a very good stat. We can do better than this.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Lougheed.

Remembrance Day

Mr. Rodney: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise today on behalf of our Progressive Conservative caucus to pay tribute to the women and men who have made the ultimate sacrifice in defence of Canadian values and to those who currently serve our country with such honour, both at home and abroad.

Time and again Canadians have bravely answered the call when freedom is threatened, when human rights are abused, and when darkness threatens to overtake us. Throughout history Canadians in uniform have served as a beacon of hope for marginalized peoples all over the world and as a tremendous source of pride for all of us here at home.

Mr. Speaker, not everyone is willing to put their life on the line in service of others. It takes a special kind of person to run into the line of fire just as others are running away. Those special people understand that there is value and nobility in standing up for what's right even if it costs them their life. From the world wars to Korea to Bosnia to Afghanistan and beyond, Canadian soldiers have proudly and willingly risked it all to save others from tyranny and terror. In doing so, they affirm our country's commitment to protecting the values of peace, tolerance, and freedom wherever and whenever they're threatened.

Mr. Speaker, when we recognize and honour our Canadian armed forces, implicit in the tribute is a huge debt of gratitude for the sacrifices of their families, so with my humble appreciation I'll share just a few apt lines from Laurence Binyon's Ode of Remembrance.

Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning

We will remember them.

Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

4-H Centennial in Alberta

Mr. Hinkley: Mr. Speaker, today we celebrate the launch of a year-long celebration of 100 years of 4-H in Alberta. For the next year across the province Albertans will celebrate this amazing youth program. What began in Olds as a way to modernize agriculture has grown to 335 clubs, 5,620 members, and 2,221 leaders across the province.

Today we have 4-H members in our gallery who throughout the year will celebrate 100 years of 4-H with art contests and a Western Regional Leaders' Forum in Edmonton this March. On the August long weekend hundreds of 4-H members, their families, and leaders will celebrate Centennial Fever in Olds, where it all began.

In 1917 W.J. Elliott, the president of Olds College, was disappointed with the poor quality of livestock in the area. Elliott

believed youth would be the early adopters and lead the way to improved genetic selection of livestock and crops.

Over the past century this fine youth program has promoted leadership skills, governance, farm safety, critical thinking, and public speaking. As an educator I knew which students were 4-H members because of their exceptional public speaking skills.

In my riding of Wetaskiwin-Camrose there are five active clubs: Coal Lake light horse, Camrose beef, Wetaskiwin horse, Rosebriar beef, and the Armena beef club. Through 4-H projects members learn how to raise a calf, teach it to lead, and show it in a sale. Horse members develop their riding skills, and members of small-engine projects can strip down and rebuild a small engine. Across the province thousands of children have benefited from 4-H, and hundreds of businesses have benefited from this training.

Let us celebrate everything that has happened in 4-H in the past 100 years. We all look forward to the next glorious 100 years of 4-H in Alberta. Congratulations.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore.

National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. September 25, 2016, marked the annual National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims, giving us all the opportunity to remember those lost to homicide and to honour their memories. This day of remembrance serves to focus on the impact of murder on families and communities as well support for survivors.

Facing the death of a loved one is never an easy task, especially when murder is involved. Pain, anger, and grief are compounded by the crushing realization that a precious life was intentionally taken. But there is a beacon of hope out there for people who have experienced the loss of a loved one to homicide, a group that knows all too well the journey that someone is about to embark upon. The Victims of Homicide Support Society of Edmonton, founded in 1995 by Noel and Joyce Farion following the murder of their son, is a self-help group designed to offer emotional support and information about surviving the loss of a loved one to this horrific crime. The group provides ongoing emotional support to help people deal with the pain of their loss and rebuild their lives. Meetings are held on the last Wednesday of every month at the Central Lions seniors centre located at 11113 – 113th Street.

When you have lost a loved one to murder, reach out to the Victims of Homicide Support Society and remember this: you are not judged, you are not misunderstood, and you are not alone.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

Electricity System

Mr. MacIntyre: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A strong, competitive, and affordable electricity system is the cornerstone of economic development and growth. Low electricity prices and a stable system attract investments, encourage innovation, and lead to the creation of thousands and thousands of new jobs. For a heavily trade-exposed economy like Alberta, the ability to have a stable electricity market directly influences our province's ability to compete with other provincial and international jurisdictions. If we are more competitive, it means more money coming into Alberta. That means more jobs, more growth, more prosperity for an Alberta that right now is desperate for hope and opportunity.

That's why it's so critical that any changes we make are for the benefit of Albertans and are based in economic reality. Instead, this

government has time and time again engaged in policies that have shaken our electricity sector and put future investment in Alberta at risk. They started by raising the carbon tax on heavy emitters, with zero consultation. When power companies said that they could no longer afford the tax increases, they sued. Now we are debating legislation from the government that shuts down coal generation amid fantastic promises of no pain to Albertans. Mr. Speaker, we've heard these promises before.

Ontario right now is experiencing one of the worst migrations of jobs and money in its history. Skyrocketing energy costs are so bad that businesses can no longer compete. Ontario is experiencing job leakage and carbon leakage, which we talked about before, all because of government meddling in the province's electricity market. It's why a growing number of major western economies are rejecting initiatives like carbon taxes as they instead seek to build on technological investments that help reduce global emissions. Instead of shutting down coal generation entirely, Alberta should be celebrating its achievements in clean-coal technology and sharing them with the whole world.

Thank you.

1:50

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

Trade with the United States

Mr. Jean: I'd first like to take the time to briefly acknowledge and congratulate the American people for choosing their new President.

These election results will have a major impact on Alberta's economy. In 2014 Alberta had \$120 billion in exports. Ninety per cent of those exports were consumed by the United States. Important free trade deals for Alberta like NAFTA or the trans-Pacific partnership need to be defended now more than ever before. Will the Premier commit to working with other export-dependent economies like Saskatchewan to defend free trade in Washington?

The Speaker: The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. We, too, join in congratulating the President-elect on last night's results.

We look forward to the opportunity to continue to work to better create opportunities for Albertans, whether it be through exports or through increasing opportunities for our economies to be stimulated in other ways. Soon the United States will have their new President, and we'll continue to move forward with other provinces across Canada, including the New West Partnership as well as working with other Premiers and the Prime Minister of Canada to increase opportunities of benefit for Albertans.

Mr. Jean: Whether it's energy, agriculture, forestry, manufacturing, all of Alberta's industries are reliant on trade and our ability to move our resources and products to market. We cannot waste money simply travelling to talk about carbon taxes. It's time to do what we can to stay competitive and to protect Alberta's economy. With no softwood lumber deal in place and free trade agreements at risk, does the Premier have any plans whatsoever to meet with Republican leaders in the House and the Senate to promote and defend Alberta's export-dependent industries and Alberta families?

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We have a long history of having good trade relationships with folks south of the

border that we share, and we continue to work on that. We have offices set up in a number of provinces, and our Premier has spent time visiting investors and other elected officials in New York as well as Washington. I expect that we will continue to forge forward on building strong relationships for the benefit of Albertans.

Mr. Jean: One of the good-news items for Alberta from last night's election is a commitment from the President-elect to support the Keystone XL pipeline. For Alberta it will mean badly needed access, finally, to tidewater. It will help Alberta receive a fair price for our products and get Albertans back to work, which is so important. However, this Premier is on the record opposing the Keystone XL pipeline and refusing to lobby on its behalf. Will the Premier reverse her position on the Keystone pipeline and make seeking its approval her very top priority?

Ms Hoffman: I'm really proud to have a Premier and to be part of a government that works to make sure that every day we are fighting for Albertans and Albertans' best interests, Mr. Speaker. A big part of that is making sure that we continue to diversify our markets. That's why we're not going to give up on Kinder Morgan and we're not going to give up on other pipelines that are in the works. We certainly are going to find ways to benefit Albertans when it comes to improved market access, and we'll be proud to work towards that. We certainly will not stand in the way of progress. We want to continue to get our products to as many markets as possible.

The Speaker: Second main question.

Energy Policies

Mr. Jean: Calgary right now is facing the highest vacancy rates in its downtown core since 1985. With an unemployment rate in the double digits and an expected 30 per cent vacancy rate before the very end of this year, 2016, Calgarians are looking for hope. Instead, they are faced with the crush of a \$3 billion carbon tax from this government, frivolous PPA legal proceedings, and no plan whatsoever from this government to improve investor confidence. To the Premier: what will it take for the NDP to cancel their risky policies, that are only making things much worse for Alberta's families?

The Speaker: The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Albertans deserve a government that will continue to fight for them and their best interests every day, and that's what they have in the government of the day. We are standing up for the investments that are going to continue to create jobs throughout Alberta. We have a jobs plan that is working. We have seen investments that have created 8,000 jobs in 2016. We're looking at 12,000 in '17 and 10,000 in 2018. Things are starting to prove that we're having success. We're not going to back down on climate leadership, either, though. Albertans deserve a government that will diversify its economy and be responsible members of a global community, and we're proud to do that.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Jean: Alberta in 2016: job losses, higher vacancy rates, shaky investor confidence, and now concerns for our export industry. With no carbon tax in sight for the United States for at least the next four years, Alberta simply can't afford to make our export industries and our energy sector even less competitive with new tax hikes and damaging regulations from this government. A carbon tax now makes less sense than ever before. How can this Premier

possibly defend this new tax on Alberta's industries and families when our number one trading partner and competitor will simply not have one anywhere?

The Speaker: The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In case the members opposite aren't aware, climate change is real.

Albertans expect us to act in the best interests of their families and for our shared economy, and that's what we're doing. That's why we have a made-in-Alberta solution, Mr. Speaker, that's going to lead to greater economic diversification, something the members opposite don't care about, and making sure that we have clean air, water, and a protected land for future generations.

Mr. Jean: Disingenuous fearmongering, Mr. Speaker.

Last night voters in one of the more liberal states in the union, Washington, also cast ballots to determine whether or not they would implement a state-wide carbon tax. What a novel idea, a carbon tax referendum to the people. The result was overwhelming, with 60 per cent saying no to a carbon tax in Washington. When our single biggest trading partner and competitor flatly rejects a carbon tax, joining countries like France and Australia, why won't the Premier hit the brakes on her carbon tax plan or at least put it to the people of Alberta? Listen to the people in a provincial referendum. [interjections]

Ms Hoffman: Mr. Speaker, we did have an opportunity a year and a half ago to have an election, and the people of Alberta voted for a government that said clearly that we were going to take action on climate change, and we are doing that. This is a smart thing to do for Alberta. It's smart for our economy and for our families. [interjections] We're moving forward with helping two-thirds of families recover some of the costs that will be impacted to their individual households, and we're very proud of that. But we're not going to pretend that climate change isn't real, because climate change is real.

The Speaker: Easy, folks.

Third main question.

Electricity System

Mr. Jean: Instead of protecting jobs in our electricity grid here in Alberta, the Premier is leaving the door wide open to pay for a billion-dollar transmission line to import more B.C.-generated electricity to Alberta. At the same time the NDP government is determined to shut down our coal industry ahead of schedule, a decision that will put thousands and thousands of Albertans out of work, leave several historic Alberta communities at risk, and cost Albertans potentially billions and billions of dollars in payouts. Why won't the Premier be clear on whether or not her government plans to pay for a \$1 billion transmission line to import electricity from British Columbia?

The Speaker: The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much for the question, Mr. Speaker. In question 1 the member opposite was talking about having good, collaborative relationships with neighbours in the east, west, and south of Alberta, and that's exactly what we're doing. We're moving forward with a made-in-Alberta solution because – guess what? – other provinces are taking leadership on that as well, including a former colleague of the member opposite, the Premier of Manitoba, who said: we certainly will develop a made-in-

Manitoba plan focused on the unique nature of our economy. That's what we're doing in Alberta. I don't know why the member opposite wants to just let all of this sit on Ottawa's shoulders. We deserve to have an Alberta solution for something that we are all committed to addressing, and that's climate change.

Mr. Jean: This government's experiments in our electricity grid will have a major impact for Albertans across this province. This government's policies will mean higher power bills and even higher taxes. For families and our businesses in Alberta this means less money to spend on their priorities. The fact is that the NDP is busy suing for Alberta-owned power companies but leaving the door wide open to pay for a transmission line to directly benefit B.C.-owned power companies. Does the Premier plan to help pay for a billion-dollar transmission line from B.C.? Yes or no?

2:00

Ms Hoffman: This government is committed to making sure that we are taking responsible action as we move forward on addressing climate change and that we're creating a fair playing field for businesses right here, that are proud to be contributing to Alberta's local economy. Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue forging ahead on acknowledging the science that is behind climate change and on working with local opportunities to increase investment in renewable energy and have clean air.

For the folks who are in the gallery, who are here about lung health, I hope that they know that the member opposite is advocating for increased pollution. We're advocating for increased safety of health and wellness for Albertans, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I believe it's your second supplemental.

Mr. Jean: Yes, Mr. Speaker. We're advocating for Albertans, and Albertans are right to be skeptical about the NDP's risky interventions in our electricity grid. They've seen other provinces go down this path only lead to skyrocketing power prices for consumers, for Albertans while jobs and investments flee their provinces. This is not what we want to see.

There is no shortage of steps that this Premier could take to end this mess. It starts by stopping her legal battles with Alberta-owned power companies, cancelling tax increases, and ending this ideological war against Alberta's coal industry. It's simple. Why won't the Premier accept just one of these ideas so that we can keep power bills low in Alberta for Albertans?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We are really proud to be investing \$34.8 billion over the next five years to build infrastructure in this province, which is going to help Albertans. It's going to be creating jobs throughout the province, and it's going to continue to help support the Alberta families that rely on those construction jobs as well as the jobs that are created in the long term that continue to support them.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to keep working with business in a fair and respectful way. That's one of the reasons why, when we announced our climate leadership plan almost a year ago, we had a number of business folks standing on stage with us, supporting us, because it's a fair and reasonable way to move forward.

The Speaker: The hon. leader of the third party.

AISH Administration

Mr. McIver: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General's report points out that vulnerable Albertans on AISH are not readily able

to access the supports they need when they need them. We know that the government sometimes, under fire, will blame the previous government. But today I'd like to solve a problem. To the Premier. The AISH backlog is getting worse, and as legislators this should concern all of us deeply. I know your government accepted the recommendations in the report, but what is your government doing today to address this serious issue?

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much to the member for the important question. We share the concerns that were highlighted by the office of the Auditor General and, like the member opposite, are committed to making sure that we are addressing those as we move forward. We've invested an additional \$28.3 million in AISH to ensure that the increased number of Albertans who need the support can access it, Mr. Speaker. This is something that is a complex matter, but investing that \$28.3 million is going to help make some of the issues that we're encountering far less cumbersome for the individuals who are trying to support those families and the citizens who rely on AISH and make sure that they can have a good quality of life.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. McIver: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, we know that AISH clients are some of the most vulnerable in our community, and we know that the measure of a society is how we look after our most vulnerable. I think we can do better. To the Premier. One of the Auditor General's recommendations was to improve reporting on efficiency and improve how we measure and monitor the process. Are you satisfied with your government's work on this front to ensure that no Albertans on AISH are slipping through the cracks?

The Speaker: The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. I just want to reiterate something that my colleague from St. Albert raised earlier, and that's the importance of having a language that's inclusive and reaching out a hand towards people who are the most underemployed and, certainly, have a lot of potential to bring about, benefiting Albertans. That's one of the reasons why we're establishing a working group to build on the Auditor General's recommendations. It will be reporting back before the end of the year, and it's definitely going to be solution focused. We'll welcome contributions from all members of this House to help us find solutions because this is a matter of great importance to us.

The Speaker: Thank you, Deputy Premier.
Second supplemental.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I sent a file to the Human Services minister. An Albertan in need received cancer treatment as a child, and that treatment left this Albertan permanently unable to earn a living. Therefore, he was approved for AISH. He subsequently married a woman with an income level that took away the AISH benefits. The marriage is gone now, the medical condition hasn't changed, and the Albertan needs those AISH benefits back. Premier, will you work with your Human Services minister and see if you can get this Albertan the AISH support that he so rightly needs and has been approved for before?

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much for the important question. We will be happy to have the office of the Minister of Human Services follow up with the individual that has been identified and do our best to come up with a solution that works for everyone. Mr.

Speaker, that's why we're really proud of the increase of \$28.3 million to the AISH line item, and we're also proud that we didn't move forward with proposed cuts of \$2 billion to operations in Alberta. We know that it's important to have stability and long-term investment. We're happy to work in collaboration to help address the matter that was just raised with us.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Lung Disease

Dr. Turner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. November is lung health month across Canada. Fifteen per cent of Albertans are suffering from significant lung disease, with that number predicted to increase. As a physician I've seen the impact of lung disease first-hand, and I'm aware of the constraints on the quality of life of persons with lung disease. To the Minister of Health: what is the government doing to help support Albertans living with lung disease?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for his ongoing work, whether it was in his other profession, during his candidacy, or as a caucus member, in continuing to move forward concerns that have been raised by folks, including the physician community and the Lung Association, who is here today, with regard to respiratory disease, which never stops being of utmost concern and importance to us. Albertans living with lung disease know that every breath matters, and that's why our government is partnering with the Lung Association to help challenge Canadians around acknowledging every breath and the challenges that might bring. We are making real reduction by keeping tobacco out of the hands of children.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
First supplemental.

Dr. Turner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that lung disease burdens so many Albertans and given that the national Lung Association has said that prevention is key, to the same minister: what preventative strategies is the government using to reduce the number of Albertans that do develop lung disease?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the member for the question and to our front-line health care workers who deliver preventative care and treatment to Albertans throughout our province.

This includes information around smoking cessation and strategies for Albertans who do want to quit; research that is being done at the respiratory health strategic clinical network, which we're very proud of, that is funded by the government of Alberta through Alberta Innovates; and we've also banned the sale of menthol and flavoured smoking products, that we know were enticing youth and ending up in those hands. We're taking concrete action to protect youth and all Albertans.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Dr. Turner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the Lung Association of Alberta and Northwest Territories recognizes that emissions from burning coal are impacting Albertans with lung

disease, can the Minister of Health inform the House what's being done to remedy that?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member is right that coal power, according to research – a report that was put out by the Lung Association, the Asthma Society of Canada, the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, and the Pembina Institute asserts that 92 premature deaths in Alberta every year are from the associated emissions from coal, and the costs associated with health care could be as much as \$460 million per year. It went on to say that an accelerated coal phase-out would more than double the health cost benefits associated with the federal government's coal phase-out and that we'll be able to prevent an estimated 600 premature deaths, 500 ER visits, and 80,000 . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
The hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

2:10 Cardiac Care in Central Alberta

Mr. Orr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While the NDP claim to be champions of our health care system, outcomes are getting worse for patients and their families. If you have a heart attack in central Alberta, your chances of dying are increased 100 per cent compared to Edmonton or Calgary. Two years ago a feasibility study outlined the need for cardiac services in Red Deer to prevent increased heart attack mortality rates caused by travel delays to distant facilities. How many deaths will it take for this government to take action and save the lives of central Albertans?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and for the question. I've had the opportunity to visit Red Deer and many of those communities that are impacted in central Alberta who rely on important services in the regional hospital as well as in Edmonton and Calgary. AHS is working on improving cardiac services for the central zone, and that work includes considerations of this very important project for cardiac catheterization within Red Deer. We want to make sure that there is a province-wide plan and that every Albertan gets the right care in the right place at the right time with the right information. We're continuing to move forward on this project as well as others that are important to Albertans.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
First supplemental.

Mr. Orr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While I realize that it is being considered, the provision for advanced cardiac care in Red Deer is needed now, not later.

Given that there are \$10 million of private donations that have been received for the needed cardiac services in Red Deer and given that it will save 3 and a half million dollars a year in reduced hospital stays and given that these procedures are already being done and paid for hours away, creating higher mortality risk, will the government save upwards of 30 lives a year and provide central Albertans with the cardiac catheterization lab that they need?
[interjections]

The Speaker: Members on both sides, would you terminate the discussion with each other immediately.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you for the question. Albertans depend on getting services as close to home as possible, but they want to make

sure that it's the right service for their condition. We are certainly working to move forward on increasing stability in the health care system through the budget, as opposed to cutting over a billion dollars from last year's operations. We've committed to increases, but smaller increases, every year because we do want to ensure stability and we want to ensure that we continue to have a world-class system. So there needs to be evidence taken into consideration as we make these decisions, but like the member opposite, I certainly want to make sure that we move forward in having the best care for Albertans across our province.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Second supplemental.

Mr. Orr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the minister – and I will credit her – had said last week that she will work with AHS to improve cardiac services in the central zone and given that Red Deer hospital has the highest acute-care volume in the province outside of Calgary and Edmonton and given that AHS's strategic clinical network has affirmed that Red Deer has the cardiac volume to justify a catheterization lab, will the minister commit today to take action to save money, to save lives by approving that cardiac cath lab in Red Deer and set a date for its completion?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Earlier in the week we had a member from the third party ask me for a sod-turning. Today we have a member from the Official Opposition asking me to make a campaign-style announcement. I'm not going to do that. I'm going to make sure that we're working with the community, that we have a strong, stable public health care system. We're not going to be firing nurses and teachers and then allowing people from private sectors to build something that won't have staff. We're going to invest in front-line care, and that includes having evidenced-based decisions around where we put our infrastructure, and I'm proud to be the minister leading that work.

Energy Policies (continued)

Mr. Fraser: Albertans and the Progressive Conservative caucus understand that we need to take action on climate change. Albertans reject the notion, though, that we need to pit action on climate change against jobs. Albertans know that we can have both. Private industry, investors, and municipalities impacted by the accelerated coal phase-out also know this. They want to create jobs and take action on climate change by enhancing clean-coal technology. To environment. The perception is that you've been absent in actually engaging with these communities and investors who want to continue research into clean technology. Do you understand that with your approach to accelerating the coal phase-out and killing coal, you're also killing advancements in research?

The Speaker: The Environment and Parks minister.

Ms Phillips: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for the question. Of course, this province is committed to a just transition for communities, and to that end, we have established an expert panel that is touring those communities, who will be reporting back to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. In addition, we are looking at, at a minimum, \$10.5 billion of new investments in renewables being phased in in addition to the new investments that will come from the other 70 per cent of the electricity mix, which is, of course, natural gas.

Mr. Fraser: Given that strides made in the innovation and research for clean-coal technology would create jobs, diversify our economy, and make Alberta a leader in green energy technology and given that all those opportunities will likely come to an end when you end coal, to the Premier. Your aggressive attack on Alberta companies with the PPA lawsuits spoke volumes. It seems you're using the same approach when it comes to the accelerated coal phase-out. Premier, will you show gracious leadership and speak with investors and researchers to continue to develop green innovation and revisit the accelerated coal phase-out?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Phillips: Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, this province is committed to a thoughtful reinvestment of the existing price on carbon on large final emitters, and as that system evolves into a system of performance standards, we're going to do that based on the lowest cost per tonne and proven technologies. We're not alone in that.

You know, there are a number of Republican governors that were re-elected last night: Iowa, Oklahoma, Kansas. In Iowa the Republican governor said: every wind turbine that you see as you travel Iowa means income to farmers whose lands it is on, revenue to local governments in the county that it's located on, and jobs for families.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Fraser: With respect, Minister, Albertans need a firm baseload for energy so that they can be confident with their business and their families. Given that this government is losing this PPA court case in the court of public opinion, Premier, will you assure Albertans that you won't play political games by dropping this court case then retroactively implementing PPA legislation, like you have with other legislation, that would further damage the confidence of investors and Albertans in this government?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Phillips: Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. As concerns the evolution of our electricity system and as we decarbonize it, we have committed to a just transition, of course, for the electricity generation companies. We have said that we will make a commitment to the workers, we will make a commitment to the communities, and we will make a commitment to ensuring that consumers do not see massive spikes in their bills in addition to not unnecessarily stranding capital. That's a made-in-Alberta plan. The opposition would have us have a plan imposed by Ottawa, and that's not our approach.

The Speaker: The Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky.

Little Smoky and A La Peche Caribou Range Plan

Mr. Loewen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's no secret that this government has a horrible track record in consulting with Albertans and stakeholders prior to enacting legislation. In the case of the draft plan for the Little Smoky and A La Peche caribou herds strong concern has been raised by local people, municipal governments, the public, outdoor groups, hunters, and trappers as well as the forest industry and its related businesses. To the minister: other than perhaps ForestEthics and the Natural Resources Defense Council, have any groups given any positive reviews to your draft plan?

The Speaker: The Minister of Environment and Parks.

Ms Phillips: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Species at Risk Act federally mandates that Alberta manage 65 per cent of its critical caribou habitat. We have to file that plan by October 2017. The previous government had 20 years to fix this problem but did nothing. So we inherited a situation where the problem was admired for quite some time but action was not taken. That is why we appointed the mediator that we did, to take seriously the impact on our forestry industry in particular, to work in collaboration with the energy industry. We have a draft plan with which I have spoken to many different communities and many different stakeholders, including the local First Nations. We will move forward on a thoughtful response to that plan over the coming months.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Loewen: Given that Mackenzie county could lose almost 60 per cent of its property tax revenue if the proposed 1.8 million hectare protected caribou zone is set aside and given the broad restrictions this Alberta draft plan for caribou places upon oil and gas and forest industries, hindering their ability to operate properly, to the minister: will you stop hiding behind federal threats and stand up for Albertans here in the House today and state there will be no job losses due to your ideological and unsubstantiated Alberta caribou action plan?

Ms Phillips: Once again, Mr. Speaker, we have a situation where the Official Opposition, despite all of the foot stomping and arm crossing, is simply opening us up to action by Ottawa. That is not the approach that we will take. That is not strength; that is weakness. Now, what we have done is that we have taken seriously the concerns of, in particular, the forestry industry in some of these areas in the Duvernay and Montney formations, in particular, those Little Smoky, A La Peche herds. We did not accept the ministerial task force recommendations to the previous government because that would have cost jobs. Instead, we went back to the drawing board, and now we have a thoughtful plan to move forward.

2:20

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
Second supplemental.

Mr. Loewen: Yes. I think we're seeing weakness here.

Given that our softwood trade agreement has expired and the dispute is far from being resolved and given that the moratorium on the forest industry cutting in the Little Smoky and A La Peche caribou zone makes it nearly impossible for lumber companies to access the needed timber supply, endangering hundreds of jobs, to the minister. The Wildrose would prefer a balanced approach between industry and environment. In that vein, will you table the timber supply analysis used in the Alberta draft report that it based its recommended timber supply levels on, if it exists?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, the mediator's report is public and contains a number of very thoughtful analyses and scenarios on this matter, and I commend it to the hon. member for his reading.

Now, Mr. Speaker, sitting on our hands and doing nothing is not an option, as the Official Opposition would have us do on a number of environmental files. It would force the federal government to impose a plan that would stop industrial development until 65 per cent of caribou habitat was reclaimed. That would mean serious job losses, and that is not a path that this government will take.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Airdrie.

Carbon Levy

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The NDP's carbon plan contains taxation powers and targets that are so misguided that the government cannot even bring itself to use the word "tax." One can only assume they are avoiding it because they know how punishing this will be on the families of Alberta. Heating our homes, fuelling our cars, buying groceries, and pretty much everything else is going to be more expensive as of January 1. Will this government start using honest language and admit that this poorly advised policy is actually just a tax?

Ms Phillips: Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, the federal government has signalled its intent to bring in a floor price, or tax, if you will, on carbon. [interjections] Honestly, it's the law. They've committed to bringing in floor pricing on carbon. Of course, we have a made-in-Alberta plan already. What the Official Opposition would have us do is open ourselves up to a situation where we are having a plan imposed on us by Ottawa rather than a plan that is tailored to Alberta's economy. That is not the approach of this government. That is not in the best interests of the people of Alberta.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Airdrie. I think we're on first supplemental.

Mrs. Pitt: Wow. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the Wildrose has repeatedly pressed the government to conduct a full economic impact assessment so the people of Alberta really know what the full cost of this tax is and given that the government has created a rebate for lower and middle-income Albertans to partially offset the cost associated with this tax, how did this government even determine the amount of the rebate without a full economic impact assessment?

Ms Phillips: Well, Mr. Speaker, we released our most up-to-date conclusions earlier this week. If we do not act, we would be opening the door to Ottawa. Our renewables plan will ensure \$10 billion in private investment and 7,200 new jobs in the province. Two-thirds of Albertans will receive a rebate to ensure that the carbon price does not place an unfair burden on their household budgets. The rebate is based on income, not emissions, so families can come out ahead. If families access new energy efficiency programs, which we'll also be providing, Albertans will have help lowering their emissions. They will have more money in their pockets at the end of the day.

Mrs. Pitt: Mr. Speaker, given that last Saturday people from across this province, including my own community of Airdrie, gathered in town centres and public spaces to demand a referendum on the carbon tax and given that in a recent interview the director of communications in the office of the Premier stated that – and I quote – we live in a country where everyone is entitled to their opinion and entitled to voice their opinion, unquote, will this government honour the people's opinions, uphold the Premier's office's commitment to democracy, and hold a referendum on the carbon tax?

Ms Phillips: Well, of course, Mr. Speaker, Ottawa has signalled that they will be bringing in a price on carbon beginning very soon, and that plan on behalf of Ottawa would not contain a carbon pricing scheme that works for Alberta's economy. Had Alberta not studied this matter, consulted widely with both the public and every major industrial group in this province, we would not have that in place if it had not been for this government. So we will not wait to have a plan imposed on us. It's a made-in-Alberta solution today,

or it's a made-in-Ottawa solution tomorrow. The opposition has made their choice. We've made ours.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Some young students just left the Assembly. I wonder why they left.

Coal-fired Electric Power Plant Retirement

Mr. Gotfried: Mr. Speaker, a recent study completed by 15 industry participants outlined the true cost to Albertans for the NDP's ideologically motivated coal phase-out. Accelerating the phase-out comes with a price tag of \$4 billion to \$8 billion, almost as high as our ballooning deficit, and Albertans want answers. We know this government has trouble understanding the unintended consequences of their misguided policies. We saw it in Bill 6, we're seeing it with PPA lawsuits, and now with the accelerated coal phase-out. To the Minister of Energy: did the government complete a comprehensive economic impact study before pulling the pin on yet another irresponsible NDP . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Ms Phillips: Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, there is a cost to doing nothing on coal-fired emissions. That cost shows up in our emergency rooms, and it shows up in lost productivity, and it shows up in the health of the very young and the very old. That is why we have taken the action that we have, again, with a made-in-Alberta plan that will ensure a just transition and no unnecessary stranding of assets. We are doing it because the science behind the health effects of coal-fired emissions is as settled as the science of climate change, and both are real.

Mr. Gotfried: Economic evidence-based study indeed.

Mr. Speaker, given that in order to keep up with the demand for electricity, renewable resources need to be phased in as quickly as coal is phased out and given that the NDP government will rely heavily on private-sector investors to meet renewable targets, the same companies the Premier publicly vilifies daily, and given that you've invested in turning public perception against taxpayer-owned companies despite their commitments to a stable power grid and the communities they serve and now you're asking them for partnerships in billions in investments, again to the minister: simply put, do you regret torching those very bridges of trust and investor confidence in front of and behind you?

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. minister.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. On this topic of the investment appetite in the renewables space I will quote Calgary Economic Development president Mary Moran, who said:

As investment in renewable energy in Canada is growing rapidly, Alberta has been largely on the sidelines in this key part of the future energy supply, so we are pleased to see policy that provides the long-term certainty and stability that encourages global and local companies to invest.

This is a plan that plays to the best parts of Alberta's competitive electricity market while ensuring that we are staging the phase-in of renewables and also natural gas in order to replace the aging coal . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, minister.

Second supplemental.

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's not what I heard yesterday from the CED economic outlook people and the stakeholders that I met there.

Given that the unemployment rate continues to rise across the province, hitting double digits in Calgary, which was a big issue yesterday, and given that a new punitive carbon tax will hit Alberta families January 1, when they can least afford it, and given that we simply need to look to Ontario to see how ideological policies hurt families on fixed incomes the most, with increased power bills, and given you know accelerated coal phase-out will hurt these very families and Albertans, knowing that you do not have their backs, when will you stop pursuing the NDP world view and finally start being a Premier for all Albertans?

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll happily direct the member to look at the Alberta jobs plan, which I released on Monday, which talks about the fact that this year Alberta is poised to have record investment – record investment – in capital investment, in manufacturing, in non oil and gas, in oil and gas; \$28 billion will be invested this year. As well, at this very same meeting that the member attended, they also talked about how there are many economists that are saying that Alberta is turning the corner and that for our economy there are positive projections for next year's outlook. We've had three months of growth.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

2:30

Climate Leadership Plan and Indigenous Communities

Mr. Rosendahl: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Success of the climate leadership plan requires collaboration and engagement from Albertans. In West Yellowhead the Hinton Friendship Centre has told me that for too long past Alberta governments have not worked co-operatively or recognized the leadership role that aboriginal communities can have in building Alberta's green future. To the Minister of Indigenous Relations: what is this government doing to involve indigenous people in the climate leadership plan?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Indigenous Relations.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. It's very important that the First Nations and Métis people of this country have a very crucial role in our economy and help to build the workforce and benefit from the climate leadership program. Right now they're already helping to shape this plan as members of the Energy Efficiency Advisory Panel, the oil sands advisory group, and the Energy Efficiency Alberta program. Last month, as well, we introduced two pilot programs that are specifically directed toward the indigenous communities under our indigenous climate leadership plan. Right now 2 out of every 3 people in Alberta, including First Nations people, will be eligible for . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

First supplemental.

Mr. Rosendahl: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that indigenous communities are often directly impacted by the impacts of climate change, to the same minister: could you tell us more about these pilot programs?

The Speaker: Mr. Minister.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. I'm very excited to announce, having announced these programs earlier this year, that these programs are open until the end of March. The first is the Alberta indigenous solar program, which will help the friendship centres and other indigenous organizations and the government to put solar panels on the roofs of buildings. The Alberta indigenous community energy program will help First Nations and Métis settlements conduct community energy audits. These programs will invest \$2.5 million into reducing power bills and making buildings more efficient. They're also smart ways of building expertise, creating opportunity . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
Second supplemental.

Mr. Rosendahl: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for the response. After these pilot programs end, what will the climate leadership plan look like for the indigenous communities?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. We have already started working with the First Nations communities and the Métis community to help build these pilot programs. We want to encourage success, like is happening right now on Montana First Nation, which has put solar panels on their band offices, their water treatment plant, and 15 of their homes. Through doing this, they've been able to cut their energy bills in half and have developed important partnerships and big plans for the future. Through their band-owned renewable energy company they've trained 40 people and generated \$120,000 for their most recent installations. The climate leadership plan, like Montana First Nation's solar . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Bovine Tuberculosis

Mr. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, a rancher in my constituency has hundreds of cattle, with a portion that is quarantined due to a case of TB being discovered in southern Alberta. The two herds have never come into contact. He has been unsuccessful in selling his unaffected cattle at auction given the unease that they may also be unhealthy. To the minister: what is the government doing to help this rancher and others like him in this situation?

The Speaker: The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have been and continue to be in close contact with beef producers about this. It absolutely is causing them distress. The beef industry is an important industry in this province, and the product that they export is important to the producers and to the whole province. We are working with the CFIA and moving forward with this organization, and now we are continuing to actually extend and work with Saskatchewan on this issue. This is an important issue to our province, and we will do everything we can to support the CFIA and the producers to move forward to ensure that they can sell this amazing product . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, this rancher is incurring mounting costs for the care of his cattle that have been quarantined since the

beginning of this case. Given that Albertans like this rancher don't have unlimited resources and need to pay the bills to maintain their families, income, and what they're doing and given that this government is passing new legislation at a breakneck speed, to the minister: why is this government, then, taking so long to make a decision on these quarantined animals?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, it is the CFIA who is leading this investigation, and we have offered all of our support in this matter. It is an important priority.

In terms of financial options AFSC posted a list of programs available to affected cattle producers, from advanced programs to flexibility on AFSC loans. Agriculture and Forestry has begun the longer term analysis of whether future AgriRecovery assistance may be available to producers affected by bovine TB. We encourage impacted producers to engage with AFSC or Agriculture and Forestry so we can continue to find supports that work for them. We will listen to beef producers and affected . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, given that we heavily rely on the United States to purchase our exports and given that a case of bovine tuberculosis has caused uncertainty in our valuable beef industry, to the minister: what is this government doing to ensure that our trading partners know that we are competent to handle situations like these when they arise?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I mean, obviously, we're monitoring the situation closely in support of our farming families in this province, and we are urging the federal government to do the same. Again, there is very little risk to human health. We don't anticipate market disruptions as a result of this. It is something that periodically happens in markets. However, we are pressing the CFIA to move forward on this, to consider it an important priority. We'll continue to work with Saskatchewan to do the same, and we will continue to support the hard-working farm families of this province with every bit of support that we can give.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

The hon. Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster.

Municipal Minimum Property Tax

Dr. Starke: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bill 21, the euphemistically entitled Modernized Municipal Government Act, purports to make improvements to the MGA, the large piece of legislation that has governed how municipalities operate for the past 20 years. However, one section was left completely untouched, the section that permits the levying of minimum tax. To the minister: given the egregious and penal nature and unfair nature of the section and the penalizing effects it has on the owners of property of lower value, do you support amendments to end this practice?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very proud of the work that we did amending the Municipal Government Act. I've certainly heard a lot of support from the other side of this House in terms of that. In regard to the minimum tax, certainly, there are costs that municipalities incur as a result of providing support to residents in the community. That is what property tax is about. Certainly, they

need to be able to recoup the costs of providing a very basic level of services to those properties, and we will continue to support municipalities to be able to do so.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Dr. Starke: Well, Mr. Speaker, given that the application of minimum tax in some communities results in property tax payable actually exceeding the property's assessed value and given that this practice seriously impedes the capacity for rural communities to be places where those on lower or fixed income can find attainable housing and given that this seriously damages the viability of small rural communities, to the minister: why won't you at least consider changes that would end the practice of levying minimum tax?

Mr. Mason: Point of order.

The Speaker: Point of order?
The hon. minister.

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, as I stated, we absolutely have support for the rural municipalities to be sustainable, to be viable. They need to be able to have the funds to provide support to the residents in their communities, and setting a base, low, minimum tax rate for property owners is a reasonable thing, and I continue to support them in the autonomy they have to be able to meet the needs of their residents and utilize all the tools that they have to be enabled to do so.

Dr. Starke: Well, Mr. Speaker, given that this government and indeed NDP philosophy in general prides itself on the world view of redistributing wealth from the rich to the poor and given that the application of the minimum tax does exactly the opposite, why won't the minister take steps to restore fairness to the application of property taxation in small communities across our province and end this practice?

2:40

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, the minimum tax provisions is an enabling piece of legislation. It doesn't force municipalities to do so. We continue to extend that tool to municipalities to utilize, and I encourage Albertans who feel that their municipality is utilizing that tool in a different way to work with their municipality to find a fair solution. We respect our municipal leaders, we respect our municipal leadership, and we will continue to support them to do the amazing work that they do to keep their communities healthy, sustainable, and viable into the long-term future.

Opioid Use Prevention

Ms McKittrick: Mr. Speaker, the continued threat of fentanyl and other potentially deadly opiates is a concern for people in all regions of our province, including my own constituency of Sherwood Park. We've lost Albertans in our cities, in rural areas, and in our indigenous communities. Given that, can the Associate Minister of Health tell this House what the government is doing in response?

The Speaker: The hon. Associate Minister of Health.

Ms Payne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. I've had the chance to sit with Albertans who have lost loved ones to addiction. Their stories are heartbreaking. We have lost Albertans with loving families, growing careers, and lives full

of possibility ahead of them. Two weeks ago I was at the Royal Alexandra hospital to announce several new initiatives to respond to this public health crisis. These include the expansion of opioid replacement treatment, co-operation with physicians in changing prescription practices, and beginning serious conversations in our communities about supervised consumption services. In all of our initiatives we are putting harm reduction first, and I am very proud of that.

The Speaker: Thank you, associate minister.
First supplemental.

Ms McKittrick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Public health officials and law enforcement officers have been supporting harm reduction as the most meaningful and cost-effective intervention that we can make to save lives. Given that harm reduction covers a wide range of activities, to the same minister: how is this government using this approach and to what extent?

The Speaker: The hon. associate minister.

Ms Payne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. Harm reduction is based on the belief that every person has dignity and worth and that Albertans living with addiction are no less deserving of health care than any other person living with a serious chronic disease. Harm reduction is driven by hard evidence from other jurisdictions that has proven that by offering support rather than stigma we can make a real difference for families. I was honoured to be joined at the Alex by Petra Schulz, who lost her son Danny to addiction. She told us her definition of harm reduction. It's keeping them alive so they can make a better decision on another day.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Ms McKittrick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for the response. Can the minister tell this House how supervised consumption services are distinct from safe injection sites?

The Speaker: The hon. associate minister.

Ms Payne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. We know that the use of illicit drugs will always be a high-risk activity, and while supervision can reduce that risk, we can never make it entirely safe. We also know that people use substances in a variety of ways, not just through injection. We'll be able to connect with and support those Albertans as well. Lastly, the model we are exploring in Edmonton will embed these services in existing community agencies so that people will be able to have access to a full range of social and health services at several locations. We're proud to support this work and make meaningful interventions to save the lives of Albertans.

The Speaker: We'll proceed in about 10 seconds.

Presenting Petitions

The Speaker: Hon. members, please be seated.
The Member for Calgary-Klein.

Mr. Coolahan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All Albertans deserve to go to work in an environment free from harassment and bullying. Bullying at work can have a long-lasting psychological impact, to the point that the harassed individual can demonstrate symptoms similar to those of PTSD. What's more, psychological harassment

and bullying at work impacts a company's bottom line from absences and nonengagement.

As such, I am pleased to present this petition, sponsored by Wendy Gaucher-Bigcharles and Linda Crockett of Alberta Bullying, that has more than 1,300 signatures. It reads:

We, the undersigned residents of Alberta, petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to: introduce legislation to address the issue of psychological violence in the workplace; protect employees from being exposed to hazardous work environments due to workplace psychological violence; and, request the federal government to introduce similar legislation in the House of Commons to address this issue for federally regulated employees.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Introduction of Bills

The Speaker: The hon. President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance.

Bill 31

Agencies, Boards and Commissions Review Statutes Amendment Act, 2016

Mr. Ceci: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to request leave to introduce this Bill 31, the Agencies, Boards and Commissions Review Statutes Amendment Act, 2016.

The legislation is necessary to enact some of the results of the first phase of the government's review of public agencies, boards, and commissions, also referred to as the ABCs review. The government established this review to ensure Alberta's agencies are, in fact, relevant, effective, efficient, and well governed. As part of Budget 2016 we announced the amalgamation and dissolution of 26 agencies, boards, and commissions. The proposed bill will allow the dissolution of three entities that were established by statute, and they are the Government House Foundation, the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta, and the Wild Rose Foundation. [interjections] Not the Wildrose Party, though that wouldn't be bad either.

The work of these agencies continues within government or through other means. The proposed bill also includes provisions to enhance the administration and governance provisions in other legislation affecting agencies, boards, and commissions identified through our ABC review. Finally, these additional provisions will help ensure effective governance and support other policy decisions that have been made to date.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 31 read a first time]

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Strathcona-Sherwood Park.

Bill 207

Veterinary Profession (Clear and Timely Price Disclosure) Amendment Act, 2016

Cortes-Vargas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce a bill being the Veterinary Profession (Clear and Timely Price Disclosure) Amendment Act, 2016.

It's my pleasure to rise today and introduce Bill 207. This bill intends to regulate the profession's governing body, the Veterinary Medical Association, to provide clear and timely disclosure for services that are within the scope of veterinary medicine. Specifically, this bill requires the members of the veterinary profession to disclose to their clients a narrow set of predictable fees that a client is likely to incur for services unless they are needed services in an emergency.

I look forward to discussing this important topic with my fellow colleagues in this House.

Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 207 read a first time]

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Klein.

2:50

Bill 208

Occupational Health and Safety (Protection from Workplace Harassment) Amendment Act, 2016

Mr. Coolahan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise and introduce Bill 208, the Occupational Health and Safety (Protection from Workplace Harassment) Amendment Act, 2016.

Every employee has the right to work in an environment free from psychological harassment and bullying. This bill would amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act to include a specific definition of psychological violence and add prohibitions for psychological violence in the workplace. I look forward to future discussions about this bill with my colleagues in the House.

Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 208 read a first time]

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Klein.

Mr. Coolahan: I was just going to request a reversion to introductions if possible.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Introduction of Guests

(continued)

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Coolahan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly some individuals who are dedicated to ending harassment in the workplace. I'm not sure if they're all here, but if you could stand when I call your name: Wendy Gaucher-Bigcharles, a constituent who was a catalyst to my private member's bill, who came to my office and cosponsored the petition as well; Linda Crockett, the founder and executive director of Alberta Bullying, also a cosponsor of the petition; Jared Matsunaga-Turnbull from the Alberta Workers' Health Centre; Pat Ferris, a researcher in the field of workplace bullying; Dr. Jonathan Eustace and Dr. Michelle Drefs, representatives of the Psychologists' Association of Alberta. Thank you. Please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Tabling Returns and Reports

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-East.

Ms Luff: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I'm rising today to table five copies of a report from the Asthma Society of Canada, the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, the Lung Association, and the Pembina Institute entitled Breathing in the Benefits: How an Accelerated Coal Phase-out Can Reduce Health Impacts and Costs for Albertans.

The Speaker: Hon. members, pursuant to section 21(1) of the Child and Youth Advocate Act I rise today to table five copies of the 2015-16 annual report of the Child and Youth Advocate.

I also would like to table five copies of the page biographies for the Second Session of the 29th Legislature, fall 2016, so that all of you know these wonderful young people who serve us every day.

Hon. members, I think we may have a point of order. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona on the point of order.

Cortes-Vargas: We're going to withdraw the point of order.

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 29

Vital Statistics and Life Events Modernization Act

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Service Alberta and Minister of Status of Women.

Ms McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise and move Bill 29, the Vital Statistics and Life Events Modernization Act.

I'm proud to have tabled this bill yesterday because this legislation touches personal moments in every Albertan's life. Every Albertan uses vital statistics services at some point in their life, whether they are planning a wedding, becoming a new parent, dealing with the death of a loved one, or are travelling and need a birth certificate to apply for a passport. That's why it's important that we update this legislation to reflect the modern reality of today's Alberta. There are over 60 amendments proposed in this transformative legislation, changes that respond to Albertans' expectations for efficient public services and an inclusive, compassionate approach to life's major events.

Bill 29 clarifies that parents can choose any last name for their child. This helps families avoid costly and complex processes when changing a child's name. It also empowers parents to use cultural naming conventions such as placing the family name before a given name, as is done among Cambodian, Japanese, Korean, and Hungarian communities, to name a few.

Our government respects the dignity of represented adults. We will amend the Marriage Act to remove the requirement for a doctor's letter to marry the person of their choice. At the same time, we are giving guardians more time to intervene, if they feel compelled, by extending the notification period from the current 14 days to 30 days before a marriage licence is issued. Several groups, including Right to Love and the Calgary Sexual Health Centre, have advocated for this very change, Mr. Speaker. We have also received letters from doctors who say that the decision to marry is a personal one that should not require the consent of a doctor, and we agree.

Alberta is a compassionate province, and this act reflects those values, particularly during times of grief. We are reducing the burden on grieving parents of a stillborn child by not requiring parents to name a stillborn child in order to register the stillbirth, but they still certainly have the choice to do so, Mr. Speaker. We are providing them with the ability to later add or amend the name if that is part of their healing process.

One mother wrote us a few months ago letting us know that after a long and traumatic labour she was forced to quickly come up with a name to register the stillbirth. She and her partner provided a nickname that they had referred to their unborn baby as during the pregnancy. In her words, she said that the fact that her child never had a real name had been weighing very heavily on her, and she

pleaded for help to be able to give her late child a name that she says he deserves. As a new mother myself I cannot fathom the pain of losing a child and how difficult it must be to grapple with these decisions in time of deep loss and mourning. We are giving parents the time they need to grieve and heal instead of being bound by restrictive and uncompassionate rules and timelines.

With Bill 29 we are also protecting the privacy of Albertans, Mr. Speaker. We are restricting who can search for vital records such as registrations of birth, marriage, or death. This change is of particular importance to protect the security of vulnerable persons fleeing domestic violence or harassment. We are also removing the need for legal changes of name to be published in the *Alberta Gazette*, and we are removing the need to provide a reason for requesting a legal change of name.

Albertans are telling us they want improved access to vital statistics services. The Vital Statistics and Life Events Modernization Act will enable a future online birth registration system that will make it easier for parents to register births from anywhere, any time, on any device of their choice. Not only will it save taxpayers nearly \$460,000 over four years; it will also reduce errors from the current paper form system. The act also paves the way for other e-services like online marriage registrations for marriage officiants. We are also introducing a new commemorative certificate, Mr. Speaker, a decorative document to commemorate special occasions such as a 50th wedding anniversary or a 100th birthday or even to complete a family tree display.

We are now adding midwives to the list of professionals who can register a birth and acknowledging the essential role that they play in the health and well-being of expectant mothers and the safe delivery of babies.

With this act Alberta is leading the country in being an inclusive and welcoming province. We are preparing to include a third marker on vital records for those who do not identify as male or female, and I'd like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the MLA for Strathcona-Sherwood Park for her instrumental contribution to this change. This makes Alberta the first jurisdiction in Canada to make this change in its Vital Statistics Act. This change will take effect after regulatory development and when the federal government makes a similar change so that legal documents such as provincial birth certificates are aligned with federal documents like passports.

3:00

We are also removing the outdated requirement for proof of sex-reassignment surgery in order to change one's sex on vital records, and we are expanding the list of professionals who may confirm an applicant's affidavit for change of sex to include registered social workers, nurse practitioners, and registered nurses.

These proposed changes to modernize the Vital Statistics Act are essential to making government work for Alberta's families and are critical in building an inclusive province that respects the rights of all Albertans. I'm proud our government is proposing these amendments and look forward to the debate.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Chestermere-Rocky View.

Mrs. Aheer: Good afternoon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my absolute pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill 29, the Vital Statistics and Life Events Modernization Act, at second reading. After taking some time to review the proposed changes, I am so happy to say that there is much in this bill that I support. The province is undergoing change just as society as a whole is

undergoing change, and in order to meet these changing needs, Alberta's legislation that regulates how these changes are recorded needs to be updated and modernized from time to time.

Bill 29 proposes to modernize and clarify the language of the Vital Statistics Act and the Marriage Act. This includes formal recognition in the act itself that removes the requirement to show proof of gender reassignment surgery when requesting a change to a birth certificate.

The Vital Statistics Act provides the framework by which the government and its agencies collect, manage, and store information about Albertans. For example, it is important for the government to know when a baby has been born in Alberta, the location where the baby was born, and the name of the baby. This information allows the government to provide this new baby and their family with the legal documentation such as a birth certificate, that is needed in order for the baby and their family to access the critical services that they need. A birth certificate is considered a foundational legal document that can be used to verify identity in order to obtain other very important legal documents such as a social insurance number, driver's licence, passport, provincial health care number, et cetera.

As I mentioned, our society is changing, and with the advancement of technology, that change seems to be happening faster and faster. Albertans are much more interconnected and dependent on technology than ever before, and their government must keep up with them. That's why I'm so pleased to see the amendments included in Bill 29 that will allow for parents to fill out and submit birth registrations online. This will result in a much more efficient process, that should result in parents obtaining their child's birth certificate in a more timely manner.

Giving birth is already an incredibly stressful and beautiful experience for parents, but sometimes the last thing that you're worrying about at that moment is whether your handwriting is sufficiently legible on a form or if you have misplaced important paperwork. I can attest to that, having had very, very long and very, very difficult labours and it being the very, very last thing on my mind, especially when that little munchkin was put into my arms. I'm very grateful for the opportunity that we'll be able to do this and to even potentially have a caretaker, husband, wife, whoever happens to be in the room with you able to help you out with that information.

To keep up with the baby theme, another change that I'm extremely happy to see is that the government is clarifying that parents may choose the last name they want for their child. That allows parents to change their child's last name without the need for a costly and complex process. That not only protects and respects the fundamental rights of the parents to make these important decisions, but it also removes the needless institutional barriers that might discourage parents from changing their child's name when and if they feel that's appropriate.

Canada is a richly diverse country. Just last week we celebrated the passage of the Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day Act, honouring the many contributions of Ukrainian Canadians. According to the 2011 census Alberta is home to over 220,000 First Nations, 156,000 South Asians, and over 40,000 Latin Americans amongst many, many, many others. While we are all Albertan and we bring all of our individual cultural experiences with us, one of the most important aspects, I feel, that's really reflected in this, one of any culture, is its language. More specifically, it's the individual naming practices in different cultures. For example, naming conventions in Asian cultures, including Japanese, list the family name first, followed by the given name. Actually this bill, Bill 29, clarifies that Albertans will be able to use their cultural naming convention when naming their children, and that's wonderful. I

think that just really, really speaks to the diversity and inclusiveness in how this bill is moving forward.

Again, in my personal family my father's middle name became his first name when he came here because his first name is very long and difficult to pronounce, and his middle name is actually a very common name. If there is a lot of those common names in a room, it's a little difficult to figure out who they're talking to, however. Then when my father-in-law came to Canada, they mispronounced his name when he entered the country and actually wrote it down wrong. It's actually wrong on his certificate from when he immigrated here. I think that this will give a tremendous amount of dignity to the folks that we have that are wanting to follow that cultural practice. Hopefully, we will be able to get that a little bit more correct for future generations and other people's names.

If I may, I'd like to move on to another topic that is very important to me personally, and that is amending the proposal to repeal the requirement for a physician to certify that a represented adult has the capacity to marry. I don't know how a physician who sees a child or a represented adult a few times a year would ever feel comfortable, let alone qualify, to have the intimate knowledge to make such an important judgment call, including the authority to overrule an individual's parents' or guardians' rights. Obviously, the decision is best left to the individual and their family and the guardian to decide, and I welcome this change. Again, I can speak from a personal experience in my family. I want nothing more than for my 18-year-old to have the privilege of being married and having a family one day, and I would be absolutely just blown away if somebody was able to take that right away from him, let alone my ability to encourage him to have this life that he so desperately desires. This is a very welcome change.

One of the things in the amendment that is interesting is that there has been an increase to the time that the parent or guardian has to intervene if they feel that the represented adults should not marry, from 14 to 30 days. This is extremely important. There is definitely much emotion and very many different circumstances. These are thumbprint issues from person to person, Mr. Speaker, and it's very important that families and guardians have some time to have discussions and potentially a period in which to get together with all of the family parts involved to make sure that this is the right decision and that that person, that represented adult, also feels like they're being represented and that their personal emotions, decisions, and feelings are not being pushed aside in this decision.

3:10

In closing, I would truly like to reiterate my support for the changes proposed in this bill. Unfortunately, I was not able to touch on all of them. There are so many. But I believe that this bill truly improves and modernizes how government and agencies collect, manage, and store information about Albertans while also providing an extremely compassionate and inclusive approach to major life events. For this reason, I will be supporting Bill 29 at second reading, and I encourage all of my honourable colleagues in the Chamber to support it as well.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. members, are there any other members who would like to speak to second reading of Bill 29, Vital Statistics and Life Events Modernization Act? Calgary-Hawkwood.

Connolly: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to speak on the Vital Statistics and Life Events Modernization Act. I cannot tell you how excited I am about this act. This will affect every person born in our province, whether they are planning a wedding, becoming a new parent, dealing with the death of a loved

one, or making gender-affirming changes to their birth certificate. While I won't name all the fantastic things this bill will do, I would like to highlight just a few important changes.

The legislation will help to bring the Vital Statistics Act into the 21st century and assist to end institutionalized discrimination of persons with developmental disabilities and the LGBTQ-plus community. I don't know if anyone in this Chamber has ever attempted to change their name or has a friend who has tried, but I can promise you that it is incredibly difficult. This act will not only make it easier for parents to change the names of their children, for any number of reasons, but it will also strike out the need for legal name changes to be published in the *Alberta Gazette*.

Albertans change their names for a wide variety of reasons. Many do not feel safe having their old name published along with their new name in the *Gazette*. It can be incredibly dangerous for people who are fleeing an abusive relationship or people who change their names to reflect their gender identity, and several other reasons, to have their names published. A lot of times people want their name changed to affirm their gender identity, and when their names are published in the *Alberta Gazette*, they are often fired from their job or can be evicted when their employer finds out that they don't go by the name that they originally said that they were.

Removing the need to provide a reason for requesting a legal name change will also assist Albertans who wish to change their name legally to do so without fear of stigma. One of the many reasons people are afraid to change their name legally and are hesitant to do so is because they don't want to have to explain their reason for doing it. The decision to change one's name is not something people do lightly, and it can already be an incredibly emotional and difficult time in someone's life. Putting up barriers for people who wish to change their name legally is not going to solve anything, and I'm happy to see our government taking action on this.

This bill will also continue our government's record on leading the country in creating a more inclusive and welcoming province. Our government is preparing to include, once this bill is passed, an X gender marker on vital records for those who identify as neither male or female. This will make Alberta the first jurisdiction in Canada to do this change in its Vital Statistics Act. Many Albertans do not identify as male or female, thus it can be incredibly difficult and triggering when forms, websites, et cetera, only offer two genders.

It's also infuriating when people tell me that those who do not identify as male or female should just identify with their sex assigned at birth or according to their genitals. Mr. Speaker, personally, I don't believe the government nor anyone has the right to ask people about their genitals, nor should people be required to divulge information as to what their genitals look like; however, this is often what happens to gender-nonbinary Albertans. Currently in Alberta if a gender-nonbinary person doesn't identify with the sex they were assigned with at birth, they have to prove to the province that they have had gender-reaffirming surgery, and while many gender-nonbinary people choose to have gender-affirming surgery, many do not. That's just a personal choice that one may make.

Gender-reaffirming surgery is also incredibly difficult to have in Canada. Currently there is only one clinic in Canada where you can have this surgery, and in order to be able to get this surgery, you have to have signed documents from, I believe, two doctors in Alberta, one psychiatrist as well as another doctor. There are only one or two doctors in the entire province that will sign these forms for a patient.

Albertans have the right to identify with their true gender, and I'm glad to see our government being a leader in the world on these issues. I know of many Albertans who will be incredibly happy to see our government moving forward on these issues, making sure that one does not have to have gender-reaffirming surgery to show that they are not the gender they are assigned at birth and that they

know who they are and that the records show that they know who they are.

I would highly encourage all members of the Legislature to support this bill. Thank you.

The Speaker: Are there any other members who would like to speak to Bill 29? The hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow.

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I will be brief. I won't cover a lot of the ground that previous members have covered, but I did want to rise to speak in favour of Bill 29, to thank the hon. minister for bringing it forward and allowing Alberta to lead the nation, particularly as it relates to allowing Albertans to live their lives as they are, not the way the government says that they should be. I think that's a very important point, and I do hope that the rest of the provinces in Canada will follow Alberta's lead on this.

There are other aspects of this bill that I think are quite positive. The Member for Chestermere-Rocky View I think did a very good job of outlining some of those as well, as did the minister. Anything we can do to reduce stress on parents at difficult times and to allow people more choice over naming – one of the things, I think, that I find fascinating about this job is that I learn things that I didn't know were laws. That, in fact, there's a registrar in this province that could have dictated and that to this day can dictate what someone chooses to name their child seems, frankly, foreign to me and doesn't seem right. I'm pleased to see that that will change with the passage of this legislation.

I certainly will be supporting it and enthusiastically encourage all of my legislative colleagues to do the same. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Are there any questions or comments under 29(2)(a) for the Member for Calgary-Elbow?

Are there any other members who'd like to speak to Bill 29, the Vital Statistics and Life Events Modernization Act? The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Dr. Swann: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to stand and talk about this piece of progressive legislation. It's going to benefit all of us, I think, and streamline processes, communications, accuracy, timely changes. We're just learning this week that the federal government is starting to move on the whole issue of gender markers in their legislation as well, so it seems like we're somewhat in sync federally and provincially on at least the gender identity changes that they're looking at – also, the rules around people who want to change their birth certificates but haven't yet undergone gender-reassignment surgery.

Online birth registration through computer, tablet, and smart phone; online registration for birth confirmation from doctors and midwives; and pursuing online marriage registration for officiants like MLAs: that just speeds and facilitates things wonderfully. We are an online society now, and we're, I think, appropriately catching up with some of our technology. Baby names, name changes, marriage certificates: we don't see any problem with this. It's pretty noncontroversial, and the proposed changes are very consistent with our policies.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

3:20

The Speaker: Are there any questions for the Member for Calgary-Mountain View under 29(2)(a)?

Are there any other members who would like to speak to the bill? Is there a motion to close debate?

I'm going to go to the vote.

[Motion carried; Bill 29 read a second time]

Bill 25
Oil Sands Emissions Limit Act

Mr. Loewen moved that the motion for second reading of Bill 25, Oil Sands Emissions Limit Act, be amended by deleting all of the words after “that” and substituting the following:

Bill 25, Oil Sands Emissions Limit Act, be not now read a second time because the Assembly is of the view that it is necessary to have the recommendations from the oil sands advisory group tabled in the Assembly before the bill can proceed.

[Debate adjourned on the amendment November 9: Mrs. Aheer speaking]

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Chestermere-Rocky View.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’m going to just back up a little bit to where I was before. I think it’s important enough to reiterate. We are speaking in regard to making sure that – we want to see this bill put on hold until the OSAG reports. We’ve gone over a lot of reasons why this is important, but I just need to reiterate that there is a massive level of responsibility here that this House has to Albertans to make sure that the panels that the government is bringing together, that the folks that they put on these panels, that the information that comes forward from these panels, that everything that is required for Albertans to understand what the government is doing is there before we move to ramming through legislation that has not yet had the ability of the panel to speak to it.

Everyday Albertans right now are talking about all of these issues. I realize that when we’re under here, it might feel like everybody knows what we’re talking about, but they don’t. As I said before, when I’m in my constituency and people are asking me about – and like I said before, there are some very, very interesting people on this panel that are bringing forward a lot of controversy amongst the folks that I speak to. I firmly believe – and I think I can speak on behalf of at least my constituents – that they’re going to want to know what this panel brings forward before legislation is passed here because any regulation that happens after the fact is under the ministry and has absolutely no ability to be talked and spoken about robustly in this Legislature.

The importance of bringing the panel forward was obviously important enough for the government to strike one but not important enough for them to bring forward the panel discussions prior to ramming through this legislation. I take personal responsibility for being able to convey at least to some degree where the government is headed with this. As I said before, the concern then comes up: has the panel already reached its decision and we’re just not bringing that? Maybe the government isn’t happy with the direction that the panel is going.

I would have to say that I would have assumed that the government – the reason why you’ve stretched it out to February was to give them, in good conscience, the ability to deliberate on this massive piece of legislation that is going to alter, constrain, and change the future of how we produce in this province. This cap on production changes the whole look of prosperity, not only for Alberta but for Canada, and I would think that the government would want that information back.

Evidently, the government picked experts that they think are at least somewhat, it seems to me, by looking at these names, I mean, like, similarly thinking, minded people. You know, we have people from CNRL on there. We have Ms Tzaporah Berman that is on there, from Stand and from Greenpeace, and we have many, many other folks on there that if given the opportunity to have to choose a panel, may not have been my first choice, but I’m not the government. The government has that privilege of being able to

choose that panel. But with that privilege, they also have the responsibility to make sure that the information that comes from that panel is made accessible not only to us but to Albertans.

This is not what you campaigned on. This government campaigned on transparency, and to be able to withhold panel discussions and information and advice that comes from that panel prior to putting through this legislation is not what they campaigned on, Mr. Speaker. That level of transparency and accountability is absolutely imperative, especially in situations like this, when we’re looking at – these are job creators. This is about how our province is going to move forward. This is about stability. This is about investment, about everything that we have come to talk about on a daily basis in here, and it just doesn’t seem to be getting through.

There is a cost to creating this panel, too. This isn’t a small number of people. This is a large panel with, obviously, a great deal of expertise in their areas. Am I to understand correctly that the government is going to suggest that we ram through legislation even though the taxpayers are on the hook for paying for this panel, yet the panel is not going to respond back to the Legislature, let alone to Albertans, but that’s supposed to be okay because, as the member across the way said earlier today, delaying it is not helpful and it doesn’t matter what the panel says? Wow. I find that extremely concerning, especially because it was the government that decided to put forward a panel. I don’t know if somebody can explain that to me, how that works, but it just doesn’t seem to make sense to me that you would strike a panel of advisers, of experts, yet ram through legislation before the experts are able to speak about it and then expect Albertans are just going to be okay with that. I highly, highly doubt it, at least for the folks that I talk to in my constituency.

With the absolute privilege that I have of being in the industry and talking to these people all day – nobody knows what’s going on. I would wager a guess that that brings a tremendous amount of instability. As a person, you know, if I was involved in this and I’m looking for an investor – an investor is going to look at a full package. They’re going to look at the tax regime. They’re going to look at what the government is doing, what their priorities are, and how it works within their ability to invest and be able to report to their stakeholders. It really doesn’t look very positive on that side of things. If I was a business person and this was my situation and I had money to invest, I would be very wary. I’d be very concerned.

If you go back to the manifesto aspects as well, because they do have Ms Berman on this panel – this is not new information. Specifically it says in the manifesto, Mr. Speaker: no new infrastructure projects aimed at increasing extraction of nonrenewables, including pipelines. That is explicitly said within the manifesto, and we have people like that on this panel.

Again, the issue I raise is: do they already know what the panel is going to say and that it really is irrelevant and that’s why we’re going to ram it through, because it doesn’t matter? They already know that the panel is aligned with the ideology of this government, so we’re just going to push through the legislation because the panel is already aligned with that. Albertans don’t get to have a say.

On top of that, we couldn’t even get this government to go to committee with us on this, to actually bring in other experts to potentially round out this discussion. That’s really all we were asking for. If the government is correct in their arbitrary amount of 100 megatonnes, well, then the experts would most certainly back that up.

Believe me, if that is what the experts and all of the other companies that are involved in this – and there are a lot more than just the big four that the government keeps talking about. If those folks and those people were able to come in and discuss this with the government, Mr. Speaker, a more well-rounded discussion

could have happened so that all of us would have the information we need to go forward and not just grasp at straws here, trying to figure out: “Well, what is 100 megatonnes? Where did that come from? Where is the 30 per cent coming from?” These arbitrary numbers leave us very uncomfortable. Again, if I could reiterate, the instability that that brings to the sector just drives investment right into the waiting and open arms of other jurisdictions.

3:30

The government has been bragging about this panel, about the industry folks that are in there, about the environmental folks that are in there, about the aboriginal folks that are in there, that are going to help bring to this panel some clarity and bring clarity to the government, yet again I will say that we are going to ram through this legislation without any clarity. What is the point? The member across the way said it best: “What does it matter? Ram it through. We don’t need the panel’s advice.” I’m sorry. I find this very, very hard to take, and I find it very difficult to be able to go back to my constituency and say: “Oh well. It doesn’t matter. The panel’s advice going to the government doesn’t matter because they’re just going to ram it through anyway.” I mean, this cap is about a cap on prosperity. It’s a cap on production. We’ve said it, and I will say it a hundred times more: we should be producing here.

I was going to say, too, that when we’re on this side, the amendments to the bill are an absolute priority for all Albertans to, again, be able to have a robust discussion in here. It doesn’t matter if we agree or not, but that is the ability of the opposition parties and, actually, of the government, to be able to bring amendments that can make these bills better.

I’m curious about how it is that we’re supposed to help create reasonable amendments, thoughtful amendments, accountable amendments when we don’t know what the panel is going to say. How is one supposed to do that? It’s not common sense, Mr. Speaker. We are trying to create amendments to make this bill better, but we are grasping in the dark trying to figure out how this is all going to work. There are a lot of puzzle pieces coming together here, and I’m going to tell you that from my perspective, it’s very concerning.

The Speaker: Under 29(2)(a), are there any questions for the Member for Chestermere-Rocky View?

Seeing or hearing none, are there other members who would like to speak to the amendment to Bill 25, Oil Sands Emissions Limit Act? Mr. Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s a pleasure to rise and speak to Bill 25, the Oil Sands Emissions Limit Act, on the amendment this afternoon, the reasoned amendment, as you know. There is a lot that can be said about this particular piece of legislation, and it is certainly going to – this legislation shouldn’t be passed. As you know, I would never want to presuppose a decision of the Assembly and be found in contempt, as some have been. Should it pass, there will be significant and wide-sweeping changes to the face of our province and our province’s ability to continue to be a world leader in resource extraction. Let me be clear. Our province has been a world leader, and it will continue to be a world leader.

The thing that this bill does and one of the reasons why we’ve proposed this reasoned amendment to delay the legislation is that sometimes when you place a cap or a limit on the opportunity for success, you can actually have the opposite effect. We have been a world leader in technological advancements and responsible resource extraction. The government will argue that once you have a cap, everyone will get better to try to get under the cap. We’ve

seen significant advancements with respect to removing resources in an environmentally responsible way because, one, it’s the right thing to do; two, the competition in the marketplace; and, three, there is always a desire to become better at what you’re doing.

When you place a cap, it’s quite possible that many players who would have otherwise wanted to engage in the process will actually say: “You know what? We’re going to go to another jurisdiction, and we aren’t going to be spending our resources on becoming better because the opportunity for growth isn’t there.” When the opportunity for growth is limited, people’s desire to spend real dollars on becoming better at what they do is often reduced because the upside or the benefit of doing that is no longer present.

While the government, you know, likes to say that this is going to actually encourage people to be better, what it’s going to do is allow the biggest players, the ones who already have significant investment in the marketplace, to continue as they are and only expand. Under the guise of reducing emissions, we’re going to see emissions increase to 100 megatonnes and limit the amount of industry players in the marketplace, and it’s very likely going to prove to be less responsible than more responsible. I think that’s a shame.

Mr. Speaker, the government, through significant amounts of fanfare of their own and public resources being spent on speaking of panels and advisory groups, has cobbled together a group of folks that are going to be providing recommendations on the extraction of oil sands. In some strange way they’ve said: “We want to listen, except on this one massive issue, where we intend to limit the potential of our province by limiting the production amounts in the oil sands. We want to put together this panel because consultation is important.” This is paraphrasing, Mr. Speaker. “Consultation is important, except on things that we’ve already made up our mind on.”

I think you’ll recall, Mr. Speaker, a pretty significant and robust discussion inside this Chamber around other pieces of legislation, like Bill 6, where the government was saying the same sorts of things: “Oh, we want to consult. We want to listen, except here’s the piece of legislation that proves that we don’t really want to do that.” That’s exactly what’s before us in the form of Bill 25, this fanfare and posturing around consultation, yet legislating on a significant, significant portion of our economy, of our ability to be competitive in the world marketplace, because the government doesn’t seem to want to be confused by the facts. They’ve already made up their mind.

What this reasoned amendment does is that it allows the government the opportunity to pause, to take a step back, and to say: “You know what? Let’s just put this down the road a little and wait for this recommendation.”

3:40

Now, Mr. Speaker, much like the government already quite likely knows what’s going to be in the report, I have a sneaking suspicion that there are going to be many things in the report that others in this place don’t entirely agree with, but the key factor here is around this consultation piece. The government likes to say one thing and do another. Really, all the opposition is trying to do today is to be here to help the government, to give them the opportunity to say one thing and do one thing, and that one thing is that they said that they want to have the OSAG panel, that can provide input and feedback and direction. While it’s unclear if we will agree with the OSAG report, I think it’s reasonable that if you asked your friends to provide you with advice, you’d want to get the advice before you moved on to drastically changing the face of the province.

The opposition has taken the opportunity to propose this amendment that will give the opportunity for the government to do

just that. What we're talking about with respect to changing the face of the province is important, not just today but tomorrow as well, not just tomorrow but the future of our province. As you know, Mr. Speaker, we are a world player in this market. We have been blessed with resources that have provided so much for our province. I think of the future of our province at a time like this, and that future is very important.

That's why we need to make sure we get it right. That's why taking a pause of six months to get the appropriate information before we dive headlong into an ideological position that this government has presented, a position that's going to limit our industry's ability to compete in that world market that I just mentioned, a limit that's going to provide a significant leg up to all other energy producers that surround this province, a limit that is going to give a giant gift of thousands of jobs to Saskatchewan and thousands of jobs to North Dakota and thousand of jobs to Manitoba – I'll take that back; I don't know about Manitoba – and thousands of jobs to Montana, thousands of jobs even to, likely, the state of Washington, Mr. Speaker, who you'll know last night voted against a carbon tax. When we limit our potential, we limit the opportunity of our province. It is more than just a little unfortunate that we are going to give significant gifts to our competitors to make our position in the world weaker.

Mr. Speaker, as I'm sure you've heard over the last number of days in debate – and I know you know this – Alberta is, if not the best, one of the very best at producing energy in an environmentally responsible way. As my colleague from Chestermere-Rocky View said, it is much better for us to be producing energy in our environmentally responsible ways than it is to allow other jurisdictions with significantly less environmentally responsible policies to outproduce us and have a significantly negative impact on our industry and not even have the benefit of carbon reduction.

What we will see is the significant leakage of our industry to other jurisdictions with policies and legislation that do not provide the same sort of oversight. So we're going to wind up with the worst of both: jobs that have been lost, ripped out of Albertans' hands, and the overall impact of an increase in carbon emissions from our neighbours. We need to be doing much, much more to encourage the reduction as an overall unit, not as an individual in a much larger group, because while we all have a responsibility, we can't wind up with the worst of both scenarios, where jobs and industry go to another jurisdiction and emissions still increase.

This opportunity here that the government has before it is to take a pause. In this case, we've identified the fact that the committee has been struck. A significant amount of public dollars and resources have been placed in this committee's ability to deliver on important information. I don't hold a lot of hope on this particular issue, but it is, frankly, my hope that the panel will come back with a much more reasonable position than this piece of legislation, that will address some of these very important issues that we spoke about here today, these very important issues of jobs and industry fleeing our jurisdiction in the form of carbon leakage yet emissions actually increasing.

Who knows what the panel will come back with, but if the panel does in fact come back with recommendations that are contrary to this legislation, I don't understand why we would create such uncertainty inside our producers – large, medium, and small producers – over that duration. Mr. Speaker, you know that the wheels of government often don't turn as fast as many would like them, and . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member, I was so pleased that you didn't interject or make a comment when the gentle heckling took place

on the other side of the House. I consider that a sign of hope for the future.

Under 29(2)(a), the hon. Member for Calgary-Foothills.

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, I also felt the same way, but I thought the future of Alberta felt the pain of us saying that we should strand the asset of \$250 billion in the ground. I thought that was what the baby was crying about.

I'm just curious. The good people from the best of the 87 ridings, Calgary-Foothills, are telling me why it should be referred to the committee, and that's why I moved the first amendment. Now I'm curious to understand what the MLA from the second-best riding of Alberta is hearing from the people he represents, the good people of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills. What are they telling you?

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we all know, the great people of Calgary-Foothills holiday in the outstanding constituency of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills. So many people want to go there and be able to spend time in such an outstanding area.

3:50

You know what? It's a really good question, though, because when I reach out to members of the constituency of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills, the outstanding constituency of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills – you know, the good thing in some respects right now, Mr. Speaker, is that I don't need to do a lot of reaching out to folks. People are contacting me on a very regular basis and expressing their concerns. It's good that they're engaged in the process, but rarely are they engaging in the process because they're calling my office to say: "You know what? This NDP government: I have never been happier."

You know, I had a constituent call and ask: why, Mr. Speaker? They didn't say "Mr. Speaker." They said my name, but that would be wildly inappropriate to say here. They said: why does the no development party, like, the NDP, want to limit our potential? They call and say: "What can be done? How? Is there anything you can do to get this government to slow down?" They're concerned with the speed at which the NDP, the no development party, is trying to change the face of our province.

This reasoned amendment, the ability for the NDP to listen to Albertans – because one thing that they all do agree with is that they all want what's best for the province. They often don't believe that the no development party's plans are what's best for the province, but they have a real desire to see the province succeed.

Mr. Speaker, in Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills the effects of job losses are heartbreaking. You know, I look at the community of Crossfield. I don't know the exact number, but my guess is that inside the community there are probably only somewhere around 1,000 to 1,500 jobs. Just recently 120 of them were lost, and many of those 120 families who have been negatively impacted are fearful that the NDP will continue to make decisions that have a negative impact on our province's ability to remain competitive in a world marketplace. What that means for them is that it's so difficult to send their kids to hockey practice, to make sure that the mortgage is paid. In one – one – fell swoop 10 per cent of their people lost their jobs.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

On the amendment to Bill 25, the Member for Edmonton-McClung.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to speak to the amendment. Many people in the opposition have spoken, and we're

getting good debate on the amendment motion that's before the House today. Many members opposite have spoken about the future of Alberta being put at risk by the Oil Sands Emissions Limit Act because they suggest that we might be stranding the asset. However, as part of the climate change plan that we've introduced, this Oil Sands Emissions Limit Act is going to do basically the opposite because we're looking at a very long-term strategy here. We're not looking short term, and the opposition is focusing on short-term things.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

While we're very much aware of the economic situation in the province and the fact that the oil sands are an integral part of our economy and that they must be looked at as a long-term strategic asset which we want to develop, you must look at the Oil Sands Emissions Limit Act as a measure that will do just that. It's designed to prevent the stranding of assets while driving down the carbon output per barrel.

Now, some across the aisle have said that our legislation presupposes the outcomes of OSAG. Well, in fact, exactly the opposite is what's happening. This advisory group will determine its own outcomes by consensus, determining what advice to pass on to the government. The very diverse nature of the individuals on this panel will ensure that there's a robust debate amongst themselves, and they will independently come by consensus to the advice that they wish to pass on to government. We've established this committee with a view to having it designed so that robust debate takes place within it, and we expect very good, high-quality advice to result from that panel.

We're definitely not in a situation where we're looking to strand the asset and put Alberta jobs at risk. We're here to protect the long-term interests of this province and its most outstanding resource, the oil sands. This Oil Sands Emissions Limit Act is designed to make sure that that asset is there to be developed for the long-term future. Madam Speaker, we have to have a place to sell this asset. In order to ensure that there is a market, we have to make sure that the world knows that we're producing it at the lowest carbon output per barrel possible so that we end up being able to export this product globally by using pipelines that we hope will be built in the not too distant future.

So to suggest that we are not looking after Alberta's interests by proposing this act is totally incorrect. We're doing what is difficult for governments to do, and that is to look at the long term, Madam Speaker. The long term is something that governments historically have had difficulty with, but we're doing that hard work, and we're looking after Alberta's interests by having that long trajectory.

The climate leadership plan released on November 22, 2015, committed to establishing a legislated greenhouse gas emissions limit on the oil sands of 100 megatonnes in any year with provisions for cogeneration and new upgrading. Now Alberta is bringing forward a new Oil Sands Emissions Limit Act which establishes this 100-megatonne limit on oil sands greenhouse gas emissions in any year, consistent with the government's commitment in the climate leadership plan. Implementation of the limit will be considered by a multistakeholder oil sands advisory group over the next six months.

Now, an act that establishes the limit but leaves the detail regarding its application and implementation to regulation allows the oil sands advisory group to complete its work and provides the opportunity to engage with stakeholders and the public on regulatory details for the implementation of the limit. The composition of OSAG was designed especially to make sure that there were people from all spectrums of the debate regarding the oil

sands involved in the advice construction process so that the government was getting a full and complete view of arguments that would be presented through the oil sands advisory group deliberations and that they would be guided by the best possible robust debate and outcomes from that committee in order to make decisions and policy adjustments as time moves forward.

I think that by focusing solely on oil sands emissions, the new act highlights the government of Alberta's pledge of swift action on the climate leadership plan and sends a strong message to national and international stakeholders of Alberta's commitment to limiting oil sands emissions as Alberta works to increase market access. The new act needs implementation mechanisms – for example, compliance and enforcement tools – but details on what may be needed require further consideration and input from stakeholders and Albertans, and that will be done through the oil sands advisory group.

Bill 25 states that the Oil Sands Emissions Limit Act “shall be construed as forming part of the Climate Change and Emissions Management Act, and the Climate Change and Emissions Management Act shall be construed” in the same way. This means that the tools set out in CCEMA's comprehensive legislative framework such as compliance and enforcement tools and regulation-making authority may be used for implementing the limit set out in the Oil Sands Emissions Limit Act.

4:00

To suggest that the future of the province is at risk because we are limiting, through this Oil Sands Emissions Limit Act, the amount of carbon that may be produced in the exploitation of our oil sands is absolutely wrong. What we're doing, Madam Speaker, is protecting this asset for the long-term future of Albertans. To suggest otherwise is a misreading of the facts.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Any questions or comments under 29(2)(a)? Go ahead, hon. Member for Chestermere-Rocky View.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you. If I may, I'd like to make a few comments before I ask my question, just in regard to what the hon. member said. I just wanted to speak in regard to short-term aspects. Madam Speaker, 3.34 billion barrels of oil: think about that. Between 2025 and 2045 that is what we could be losing purely based on bad policy.

Let's talk about time here, if that's what this is about, the short term, not to mention the fact that the OSAG panel – all of the things that the hon. member said about compliance, emissions: this is coming into the House after the legislation has been passed. There is absolutely no way to put that together. I don't understand – and I would love for somebody to be able to explain this to me – how it is that we are supposed to ram through legislation without the advice that the member was talking about.

It's a bit of a contradictory term. He says in one term that we're not wanting to push through this legislation, yet we're only concerned about the short term. Actually, it's quite different than that. If we were only concerned about the short term, we wouldn't be thinking about investment, we wouldn't be thinking about the overall look, of what this looks like to anybody else who's literally laughing at us right now and scratching their heads. There are all sorts of jurisdictions all over the world that are just yahooin' right now because they're going to become highly competitive while we sit here and wait for the panel to come and advise us on legislation that's going to go through sometime in the next two weeks. I don't understand it.

I have a question for the member. You were saying that the panel is going to bring advice about compliance in the coming months, whenever that is. I was wondering if that member could answer this question: how is it that the government and the opposition and the House are supposed to understand what compliance is prior to the OSAG panel commenting on what's happening, as we pass legislation without knowing what the advisory panel is bringing forward?

The Deputy Speaker: Edmonton-McClung, do you wish to respond?

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Well, the fact of the matter is that the whole asset will be stranded without public support. As part of the climate leadership plan this piece of legislation is designed to gain that public support so that the asset can move forward, be produced and transported to offshore markets, ultimately through pipelines that we hope will be built with the public support we hope to gain by pieces of legislation like this, which limits carbon and which is in the public interest. By lowering the carbon footprint per barrel on the production of our oil sands, that's how we're going to gain that public support to get those pipelines to tidewater so that we can actually sell to the world at world prices this strategic asset of the province of Alberta over the long term.

This oil sands emissions cap will drive innovation. Putting a limit on oil sands emissions shows how Alberta can be an energy producer and a world leader on climate action. It will drive innovation and reduce emissions per barrel while still allowing for production growth and development.

Now we look forward to reviewing the implementation advice offered by our oil sands advisory group. The legislation limits oil sands greenhouse gas emissions to an annual maximum of 100 megatonnes, as I've said, with allowances for new upgrading and cogeneration. That figure was established by a diverse group of stakeholders and was recommended to government by environmental organizations and representatives of Alberta's oil sands industry. It sets a framework for additional implementation advice for the oil sands advisory group, which was announced in July 2016.

The cap is a cornerstone of Alberta's climate leadership plan, allowing the oil sands industry to grow sustainably while repairing the province's reputation. Limits on oil sands emissions will provide an incentive for companies to invest in greenhouse gas reduction as well as innovative technologies that will pave the way for Alberta's energy industry to lead in a low-carbon future. Alberta's climate plan and the oil sands emissions cap were lauded by U.S. President Barack Obama, and Minister Phillips will promote the plan at the United Nations climate conference later this month in Marrakesh.

The Deputy Speaker: A reminder, hon. member, not to use names in the House.

Do we have another speaker to the amendment? The hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow, followed by the hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

Mr. Clark: Well, thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to rise and speak on this amendment. You know, this is an issue that, interestingly, the Member for Calgary-Mountain View and I have been kind of chatting back and forth about a little bit. I think it's important for me, first off, to say that in principle I absolutely support the 100-megatonne cap on oil sands emissions, and I support it for a couple of reasons. One, I agree, in fact, that it will spur innovation so that the next tranche of

development that will happen will be lower carbon than the development that has happened to date. Now, that's happening anyway, so it means that the 100-megatonne limit will not likely be hit for at least 15 years and probably longer than that. That's a good thing. Those are made-in-Alberta technologies that the world wants and the world needs if we're going to address global climate change.

That speech made a tremendous amount of sense last week, that speech before the election in the U.S. that happened less than 24 hours ago. We knew where the world was going. At least we had a pretty good idea where the world was going on the Paris climate accord, and it represented a tremendous opportunity for Alberta.

Now, I think we ought to take action on climate change because it's inherently the right thing to do irrespective of what the rest of the world is doing, but we have to be very careful in this province, in this Assembly, to not disadvantage Alberta, to not put our province in a position where other jurisdictions, including, obviously, the one immediately to the south of us, are emitting more as a result of their lax policies – so the world has more carbon in it – yet we've disadvantaged ourselves. If we had produced in Alberta at a higher standard, with lower emissions – I think it's very likely that we will be producing energy in a way that actually contributes to an overall reduction in carbon emissions globally. A molecule of carbon is a molecule of carbon irrespective of where it's emitted. Now, I don't know what's going to happen. This election is less than 24 hours old. We're all still processing it, and Donald Trump doesn't officially become president until January.

The reason I support this amendment is that it allows OSAG to do its work before we in this Assembly are asked to pass legislation. We can pass that legislation with the benefit of the knowledge of the deep and detailed work that that panel has done because they will be able to take into account all of these factors and others in terms of what's feasible, what is a reasonable stretch target for a reduction of oil sands emissions and other emissions. Their focus, of course, is oil sands emissions.

4:10

It's important for this House and especially the hon. members on the government side to understand my support for the principle of addressing climate change because, as I've heard a couple of times in this House, including today in question period, climate change is real, climate change is human caused, and climate change is a defining issue for our generation. We must do something about that. I do think that it presents not just a moral obligation for us as Albertans and as citizens of the world to do something about climate change, but it is a tremendous business opportunity for this province if we get it right. We have tremendously innovative people. We have an entrepreneurial culture. We have remarkable technical people. We have great universities. We have smart finance people. This is what Alberta's contribution to the world can be: the technology to reduce carbon emissions.

Which isn't to say that we move away from hydrocarbon as a source of energy. In fact, what it may mean is that we enable and unlock the use of this tremendously convenient, this tremendously energy-dense source of energy for the world while still reducing carbon emissions. That's possible, and that can come from Alberta. Those are good things. That's more than just a good thing. It's the kind of thing that can allow our province renewed prosperity, that can allow our energy industry, our oil and gas industry the support it needs, not just globally but within our own country, to build made-in-Canada pipelines. The people whose land the pipelines will traverse will recognize that Alberta's product is, in fact, a clean product, that Alberta has made a tremendous contribution to the

fight against global climate change, and that they are proud to have that product cross their land because there's a benefit to them and a benefit to the world. That's possible. All those things are possible.

The reason I support this amendment is in no way intransigence on the climate change file, but it's really a reality check, an opportunity for the OSAG panel to do its work, to report back. Then this House can pass legislation in full knowledge of the implications of what a 100-megatonne cap is. Maybe 100 megatonnes is too high. Maybe we find that, hey, it should be 85. Maybe we find, you know, that that actually isn't feasible, that it should be higher. I don't know.

It's very difficult, and it's an unfortunate trend that this government has continued from previous governments, of simply passing enabling legislation that allows for regulations to be created after the fact and saying: trust us; it's going to do wonderful things. Unfortunately, it seems to happen a lot. It's been a trend, I presume, in other Legislatures as well, which is unfortunate. I don't have that data before me. As a single MLA I get a little busy at times and don't have a chance to do research on those sorts of things. You know, it's unfortunate that the Legislative Assembly is not allowed the privilege of full information when being asked to pass legislation. That's what this amendment would do.

With that, I would encourage this government to take an opportunity not to back down from a climate change strategy in any way, not to feel that your values are being compromised but, in fact, to really thoroughly examine the issue using a panel that you yourselves have set up, that you yourselves have appointed thoughtful, capable, and diverse members to. Allow them to do that work, and then allow this Chamber to do its job of evaluating the results of that work in an open, transparent, and public way, hopefully a nonpolitical way, that will then engender some real support for the outcome of that.

With that, Madam Speaker, I will return to my place. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments under 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, I'll recognize the hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

Mr. MacIntyre: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I rise in the House today to speak to Bill 25, the Oil Sands Emissions Limit Act, and specifically on the reasoned amendment. Once upon a time in this beautiful province of Alberta we were a land of opportunity. This province was a place that individuals, moms and dads, young people, corporations, entrepreneurs could come to and make an investment, build a future, build a business, hire people, make those businesses even bigger. This was a place where people came to live out their dreams. That's why I came here in the '70s.

I was a British Columbian. I was a young fellow, graduated from school, and we had an NDP government. There was no work. There was no work for most of my fellow graduates, so we left the province of British Columbia and came out here, to Saskatchewan and different places, to find jobs. This was the land of opportunity right here in this province, and that's why a lot of us settled here in this province to make a life here. That was just on a small scale, just me.

But there are corporations that came here, too, large ones, investment groups who found a business-friendly environment. There were lots of resources here, and those resources could be developed: agricultural, forestry, and, of course, our subsurface resources as well. It was a place to come and do that, and many, many people came. Many, many corporations came.

But now we have a government in place that wants to cap development. They want to cap development under the guise of

capping emissions, and they want this House to pass a bill, Bill 25, before we've even had an opportunity to listen to a panel that this government struck specifically with a mandate to advise this House and this government on these very issues. As has already been stated, it provides or, rather, it's causing a credibility gap, a serious credibility gap, and it's another nail in the coffin of this current government because their credibility continues to suffer at their own hands.

Now we have this bill, and although it's seemingly a very straightforward bill, the implications of it are so extremely far reaching. It is really a very large bill because of the scope, because of the long-term impact it's going to have on development in this province. Part of it is based on what I believe is a false premise, that somehow, if this government puts a cap on emissions in this province, it's going to do something towards saving the planet when, in fact, what it's going to do is result in another massive carbon leakage.

As we have already detailed, not just the Official Opposition but other members in this House on this side have already demonstrated very clearly the impact that the carbon tax is going to have on carbon leakage. This bill accomplishes the same thing. Putting a cap on our development does not put a cap on the demand for oil in the world. The demand is going to continue to grow. Depending on which organization you go to to find out what that growth looks like, it is significant, and that demand is not going to be curbed because the province of Alberta has a cap on their development.

As a result, that oil is going to be consumed by somebody, and that oil is going to be provided by somebody, and as my esteemed colleagues have pointed out, those somebodies that are going to be producing that oil to meet that demand do not have our environmental record. Many of them do not have our human rights record. Some of them can't even educate their little girls. That's irresponsible. That's the net result of this kind of carbon leakage, where other jurisdictions in this world – I'll use the words “despot regimes” – are going to be producing oil without any regard for the environment, producing oil and getting money for it. Some of those jurisdictions are funding terror with that.

4:20

The more that we produce here in an environmentally responsible way, in the Alberta way, where we respect human rights, where we respect the laws of our land, where we respect our fellow man, the more we do here, the more we help this planet. But when we have something like this, putting a cap on our development, we're not helping the planet at all. We're making things worse. We're making things worse because that carbon leakage is a reality. It's going to happen.

Now, we had the hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung accusing the Official Opposition of only looking at things from the short term. That was the accusation. The hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung went on at length telling about how this bill is taking the long view, the long term, and so forth. Yet just the other day the hon. Member for Spruce Grove-St. Albert said: we can't wait for the report; we're in a hurry; we need action now. It was a rather short-term type of a statement that they can't even wait for their own panel's report before we get this legislation passed.

That's not the long view. That's not the long-term view. The long-term view would be to make use of the panel that you struck and listen to what they have to say. Get that report out in the public, and let the public even have a critique of what this panel has produced. You know, like the hon. member from the outstanding riding of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills pointed out, there might be some stuff from that panel that's actually pretty good, that we can agree with.

The point is that we're not going to know. This legislation, if we follow the government side's timeline, will already be signed, sealed, and delivered before that report comes out. That is contributing so much to this government's credibility gap again, just like Bill 6 did, just like this bill does, putting the cart before the horse again, just like Bill 27: get the legislation passed, and then see what the experts have to say. This isn't a hockey game, where you shoot the puck into the corner and then dig it out. This is impacting people's lives, livelihoods, whole, entire industries.

This government's credibility gap continues to grow. I just checked on the polls to see where the Premier's popularity rating is going. It's got the glide path of a brick, and it's because of things like this: poor governance, poor management. It's really unacceptable. It is completely irresponsible to ask any member of this Legislature to support legislation without feedback from OSAG. That's why this bill must not now be read a second time.

I want to talk a little bit about this social licence that we apparently need to have although Nigeria doesn't need one. Saudi Arabia doesn't seem to need one. Iraq and Iran don't seem to need one. Russia doesn't need one. But somehow the little province of Alberta has to have a social licence. Albertans received notice the other day from the federal government – the federal government – you know, the only level of government in our beautiful federation that actually has any say on interprovincial pipelines. Our nation's Liberal Transport minister commented to CBC that a “moratorium on crude oil tanker traffic off British Columbia's North Coast [would be in place] by the end of the year.” Well, what happened to our social licence? I think someone may have revoked our licence.

Albertans are paying billions of dollars. We have a \$6 billion carbon tax, half of which is being paid for by regular old Alberta moms and dads and half of which is being paid for largely by juniors out in the patch so they can subsidize their competitors, actually. The \$3 billion being paid by the taxpayers: well, much of that is going to go to the environment minister's slush fund for her green friends and their pet projects.

You know, a 60-year-old school in desperate need of better windows, better doors, better insulation, a high-efficiency heating system: what good is that old building without a solar panel on the roof? This government gets things kind of backwards all the time. We should be doing very deep retrofits on these old buildings first. Reduce energy consumption first. Begin by using less first. Then with the energy demand that's left over, you go to the roof and put some sort of energy production system on the roof like solar panels. But, no, putting a solar panel on the roof provides an excellent photo op. Meanwhile the heating system is 40 years old, 50 years old, the windows are about that old, the doors are that old, and the insulation and building standards of that day are nothing like what we have today in the codes for our highly insulated buildings.

We have a coal phase-out and billions of dollars in stranded assets compensation. I say billions because no one can be bothered to let Albertans know just exactly how much that's going to cost other than that it's not going to be on the cheap side. There will be no sale on that one.

We have a mass turn-back of power purchase agreements because of this government not doing their homework when they took office that at the end of the day is going to be costing us, oh, just a few hundred million dollars. There's also the risk of more stranded asset claims from this particular bill, Bill 25, once we work out which leaseholders aren't going to get to develop their share of the 3.34 billion barrels left in the ground.

And don't think I have forgotten about the 30 per cent by 2030 renewables target. We've heard that AltaLink is quite excited about that one, undoubtedly because of, one, the costly transmission

system upgrades required to get our system ready for reliability issues with renewables to that degree; two, the high transmission costs from moving our utility-scale power units away from central coal areas to the southern part of the province, where there is a chance that the renewables might just be able to earn back their embodied emissions – it might just be a snowball's chance, but it may be a chance – and three, the inertia buildup required so that B.C. workers can take Albertans' jobs and sell us power at a premium when the wind doesn't blow and the sun doesn't shine. With guaranteed rates of return on new bills like this, why wouldn't AltaLink be supporting this government?

This government used social licence, that phrase, as justification for hitting Albertans with the largest tax increase in the province's history, and thus far there is precious little to show for it except higher rates of taxation, caps on development, jobs lost. This is the cost of this social licence?

Well, Northern Gateway is dead. We are voting to cap oil sands. Why, again? So our oil sands players can get their pipeline? The pipeline for our oil sands players is Northern Gateway. Oops, that's kind of awkward.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments under 29(2)(a)? The hon. Member for Chestermere-Rocky View.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to the Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake. I just wanted to have you potentially speak to a few things. I just wanted to bring up a few things that you had mentioned and a couple of the red flags that had been brought up as a result of not being able to have the OSAG panel advise the government previous to the legislation going through. The government has repeatedly said that they're onside with pipelines, but I don't think that that is conducive to capping production. In fact, Ms Berman stated not so long ago that there was no need for pipeline capacity, and I'm assuming that's as a result of the cap on the production of our resources here. It's the only way that I can put those two together, maybe because it's already been decided.

4:30

I was wondering if the hon. member could potentially comment on: originally we had made a referral to committee, and since that referral has not been passed, potentially, would you be able to explain to this Chamber why it is that we would need to discuss this in committee and potentially at this point in time put this bill off for some time until that advisory panel comes forward with their advice?

Thank you.

Mr. Dach: Ask your question through the chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. member, just a reminder: not only through the Speaker, but also if you turn around, the microphone can't pick up your voice for *Hansard*.

Mrs. Aheer: I'm sorry. Thank you so much. So through you.

The Deputy Speaker: Go ahead, hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

Mr. MacIntyre: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you to my esteemed colleague. I think it's becoming really obvious, not only to members on this side of the House but even to Albertans in general, that repeatedly this government is rejecting any ideas about allowing Albertans to speak to legislation. We had put forward a referral to committee for the purpose of getting experts in, getting testimony in, getting Albertans able to come and talk about this, and

allowing all of the people who have leases, which are many, more than just the famous four that stood on the stage with the Premier, all of the juniors, to come and talk about stranded assets and what this Bill 25 is going to mean to them. The government didn't want to hear that.

Today here we are on a reasoned amendment, and we're putting forth the argument: "All right. You didn't want Albertans to speak to this in committee. How about waiting for OSAG, you very own panel, that you struck?" What we're hearing from the government side today is: "Well, yeah, we struck the panel, but, no, we don't want to hear from them either. Just pass the bill. Hold your nose and pass the bill." Well, no, that's not how it works. This is supposed to be a democracy, Madam Speaker, where it's government of the people, by the people, for the people, but the people aren't being allowed to be heard. The people who are directly impacted by this piece of legislation are not being permitted by this government to speak to this piece of legislation, not in committee, not even this OSAG panel.

It is very important for the credibility of this government to hit the pause button on this piece of legislation and allow the people of Alberta an opportunity to have their two bits. I don't hold a lot of hope that the government is going to, you know, listen. They aren't listening to Albertans, and now we find out that they're not even going to listen to their own panel. They just want this bill passed. That's really unfortunate, but it is what it is. This government continues to just push away any concept, any idea of listening to Albertans.

I believe the phrase is confirmation bias, where you surround yourself with people that nod their heads and agree with you and you don't want to consider that maybe there is another opinion out there, an expert opinion that just might be different than yours and be a good idea, too. It just appears to the people of Alberta that this government is of the mindset that if an idea does not come from the NDP world view, that idea is no good.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other hon. members wishing to speak to the amendment? The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have some pretty deep concerns when it comes to Bill 25, the Oil Sands Emissions Limit Act. I'd like to start off with exactly what the mandate is of the oil sands advisory group, or OSAG, because I think it's important to go back to it. This is on the Alberta government website. Let's start with the first paragraph here.

The province is establishing an Oil Sands Advisory Group (OSAG) composed of members from industry, environmental organizations, and Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities to advise government on the oil-sands aspects of its Climate Leadership Plan and ensure that its initiatives are effective and widely supported.

My first question is: why are we ignoring these people? This is a valid concern. I would hope that industry would play a part in the planning for exactly how this 100-megatonne cap is going to affect them.

Let's go to environmental organizations. I am unsure exactly how you came up with a round number of 100 megatonnes. That is a reasonable request. Where did that number come from? Did you pull it out of the air? Now, I have heard my colleagues say: "Why not 80? Why not 120?" Where did it come from? The fact is that we have not put the work into figuring out what it is that we need and why we need to put it there.

Now, the indigenous and nonindigenous: this government has been stating nonstop that it wants to consult with these groups, yet it's got the opportunity right now to do that, and it's choosing not to.

An Hon. Member: Shame.

Mr. Cyr: That is shameful, very shameful.

We need to be looking at exactly – these groups are saying: let's work in consultation. Again, like a broken record, we bring up Bill 6. It's a bill that continues to plague this government. It's a bill that I called the No Consultation Act because that's exactly what it was. This is the same way. We have got an act right now being put forward, and we had a group of individuals tasked to work out the actual specifics of how it would work. So we're going to create these limitations and then work out how it's going to work afterwards. It makes no sense, which is why a lot of these bills have had failure written all over them.

Let's talk about caps. One of my favourite caps was the debt cap. The debt cap was something that the government rushed into. We told them that they were going to meet that cap and they were going to have to extend the cap. It makes no sense. What you're doing is making no sense. Now, Wildrose has been very clear. We're not for caps, but at least a cap would prevent the government from going incredibly deep into debt. Now, when we start looking at this . . .

An Hon. Member: Speak to the amendment.

Mr. Cyr: This is speaking to the amendment because you're setting another cap without actually going to anybody to find out if it is an accurate cap.

This here is important to note: in the end, we got rid of it. The government backtracked and said: it doesn't matter with debt anymore. Here we're setting up another cap. We've got no advice from any of the groups that are being put into this. I would argue that some are of deep concern to myself and a lot of Albertans as they are anti-oil.

Now, let's continue down here. Let's start with the fact that you're ignoring stakeholders. Let's go with what the actual focus of this group is. "Specifically, the group's primary focus is to consider how to implement the 100 megatonne per year carbon emissions limit for the oil sands industry." Why bother? Why even bother creating these wonderful advisory groups when you have no plan to actually even consider what they have to say?

Now, let's go on the opposite chance that possibly you actually have a report from them already. Let's say that you've actually got something from them, a draft report, say, or something where the government knows the direction that this group is going in. What if this anti-oil group and some of the members come back and say, "30 megatonnes is that number that we need to cap"? Well, that's an embarrassment. So what do we do? We change the cap.

4:40

The other thing is: let's say, for instance, that this group comes back and says that how we calculate GHGs is incorrect. We need to go in there and figure out how to change it. Let's say that they come back with: Alberta is putting out 120 megatonnes of GHGs. Suddenly we're above the cap, again ignoring this group that they have set up for, again, advice to the government, again, which we won't know until we actually see what it is.

Let's talk about the deadline, February 2017. If you knew you were going to put this bill forward, why didn't make their mandate sooner? Why did you have to go with February 2017 when you knew you were going to ignore them? You could have easily had September, and if that wasn't enough time, then we should have put off this legislation. So you put out a group that you knew was going to fail – you knew it – yet you still did it anyway. This is why Bill 6 is relevant. You put out legislation that didn't actually consult, and then you found out later that it failed.

Now let's go to the next one: "develop durable, effective structures and processes to address local and regional environmental issues (i.e., air, land, water, biodiversity, [and] cumulative effects)." This sounds like spending the carbon tax.

We've got now two sets of legislation that they were to advise on that we have rammed through and rushed, with no idea how to implement. Again, it comes down to creating an environmental study, an impact study, if you will, on the effects. We need to study what we need to implement, how it's going to achieve those goals, and what it will cost Albertans, my taxpayers in my riding, my most vulnerable Albertans, my seniors, my residents on AISH, which we've heard awful things about in the last couple of days. We have no idea where this is going, but, hey, let's institute it anyway because caps are a good idea. Well, again I'll go back to the debt cap. That wasn't a good idea. You rolled over on that one. Do you think this one might not end up as well as the debt cap did?

Now, let's go with the last one: "provide advice to government on investing carbon price revenue in innovations to reduce future emissions intensity." Well, I would like to say that we are already seeing that across the world we've got provinces, we've got countries, we've got states that are all putting money into something without doing an actual study on how the money will actually reduce these emissions.

Now, a good example is this one here. I've got an article up here. It's Fail: Busted Wind Turbines Give College Whopping Negative 99.14% Return on Investment. Somebody dropped the ball. That cost the school. Now I hear that our schools are looking to get into wind turbines.

An Hon. Member: Oh, my God.

Mr. Cyr: I know.

This is insane, that we have an entire part of our government right now going in a direction that could end up costing that school system and its students – and that is a travesty – because somebody didn't do the impact study. Guess what? There's no wind at this school. Of course, it's not going to make money. It's a great idea, but in the end, they lost – what? – almost 100 per cent of their investment. That is because somebody wasn't watching. That is the responsibility of the government. You know, the problem here is that it takes years for this stuff to realize those losses. They don't happen overnight. In the end, we're burdening not ourselves but possibly our children with this lack of oversight by government.

Now, I will tell you that when we start looking at all of the things the NDP have brought forward, my riding is sitting on the second-largest resource in Alberta – the second-largest resource in Alberta – so this impacts me directly. This means that people in my riding, Bonnyville-Cold Lake, are consistently shown the doorway when it comes to these businesses because, in the end, these businesses are saying that it is too unstable in Alberta to be able to continue business here.

What we've got here are a bunch of laws that this government has brought forward that have created consistent unstable government decisions, which, in the end, cost me jobs in my riding. That means we have a dependence on social programs that we've never seen before, at unprecedented levels. We have food bank use that we can't even keep up with. We've got incredible need. We've got people in my office crying. They're saying: I can't make it, and my family can't make it.

An Hon. Member: Raise the minimum wage.

Mr. Cyr: Again the government's solution is to raise the minimum wage. Well, great. That's awesome. All of my riding can work at

minimum wage. That sounds like a great idea. That sounds exactly like an NDP decision.

Anyway, to go back to the jobs in my riding, we've got people right now that are going to Saskatchewan and B.C. to find work. It comes down to the fact that these oil companies have got to be able to see a stable government move forward.

This is where this social licence – this is what this act is supposed to be buying us. It's supposed to be buying us the ability to somehow get a pipeline by taxing Albertans heavily, and it will somehow give the rest of Canada the warm, fuzzy feeling that we deserve a pipeline. Now, I can't make that connection, but where I can make a connection is that we have actually got the ability to influence. We need to stop going to these NDP rallies that are fighting against our oil and go to the governments and say: this is essential for Alberta. Debt caps aren't going to help that argument. The fact is that, in the end, our transfer payments are going to become less and less, and these provinces no longer will be able to continue with the same level of standard of living that they are currently at.

Now, when we start looking at this province and this debt cap, we start asking ourselves: well, what is it going to do?

Mr. MacIntyre: Emissions cap.

Mr. Cyr: This emissions cap. Thank you.

This emissions cap will allow the existing land sold the ability to emit. Now, I've heard from one of my other colleagues who said that we have more land sales than the emissions cap will already account for. That seems pretty shocking. I see that we still have land sales happening in Alberta. Is that because we start seeing that companies are preparing for the cap? Eventually what's going to happen is that by having the lease, there's going to be a value attached to it, which means that it's going to have an emissions limit attached to it. That is where the problem comes in here. We're no longer trading in our natural resource; we're going to start trading in our leases. That means undeveloped leases. That means people out of work. That's people in my riding out of work, and it is shocking that we would go down this road.

Now, if the answer here is to reduce carbon emissions, this isn't going to do it. As we've heard from Calgary-Elbow, 15 years is his anticipated time that we're going to hit this cap. So what is it actually achieving?

4:50

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments under 29(2)(a)?

Hearing none, are there any other members wishing to speak to the amendment? The hon. Member for Calgary-Foothills.

Mr. Panda: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As someone who directly worked in the oil sands, I know a lot of experts who can give all of us legislators advice on whether or not we should support this 100-megatonne, arbitrary cap on oil sands emissions. Today I heard other colleagues of mine here talking about how a cap on emissions is, in turn, actually a cap on production and a cap on opportunity for success and a cap on development and so on. Actually, this bill puts the equivalent dollar amount of five to seven years of government capital and operations at risk by not developing the resource. One report said that it could be up to \$200 billion of wealth that will be stranded if we legislate this bill and leave the resource in the ground. That is the wealth that's going to stay in the ground. If it does not get developed, people don't get to buy cars or homes or trucks or raise families because there will be a lack of developing the resource.

I mentioned in my earlier remarks that the first people into this investment get to make money, so all those big companies like Suncor, Syncrude, Shell, CNRL, Imperial, who are already there and established, can make money, but the last ones, all these small and medium companies, won't have the opportunity because they won't have enough guaranteed space for carbon dioxide emissions under the cap because they won't be producing soon.

Another downside of this policy here, Madam Speaker, is that those small companies won't be able to raise capital because the lenders will think that these projects won't be viable. They won't give them loans, or even if they give them loans, their finance cost will be higher because it will be a high-risk business, so they'll charge them higher interest. This Bill 25 takes these little companies and turns them into a takeover target by the bigger companies, so big fish eating the small fish.

Do you see where I'm going, Madam Speaker? This is how the Ponzi scheme rolls out. The last one in loses money, so all these small companies will become the takeover targets of the big market players. Capitalism subtends to monopoly, but crony capitalism guarantees monopolies. Whoever thought the NDP and Suncor would stand together and support this policy for the same reasons?

What people forget is all the trade union labour that has been employed by big companies like CNRL, Shell, and all, that the juniors tend not to have, and it is the trades, Madam Speaker, as represented by the Alberta Federation of Labour, that stand to benefit from the crony capitalist Ponzi scheme of consolidating the oil sands operations that the NDP want to enable.

Connolly: Crony communists or crony capitalists?

Mr. Panda: You can choose whatever you want to be, but the people sent you here to represent them. I suspect that that's not what I'm hearing from my neighbouring riding of Calgary-Hawkwood. [interjections] Yeah.

These people who will not be able to develop because they would exceed the cap: I want to hear from them and find out what their compensation demands will be. Madam Speaker, if they can't develop the leases they bought, it will be their right to ask for compensation, and the taxpayers will be on the hook.

How does the NDP expect to create innovation and green jobs when new companies are not permitted to develop? People like Columba Yeung, for that matter – Madam Speaker, he's an entrepreneur who has started this company called Value Creation. He has appropriate upgrading technology he wanted to employ on this upgrader project that he wants to build which will have far less CO₂ emissions. Under the emissions cap his company, Value Creation, will not be allowed to develop its leases and thus make the money to build the low carbon dioxide upgrader.

The NDP fail to grasp that it takes wealth creation in order to enable taxation to fund the social programs they want to create. You want to build schools, you want to build hospitals, so you need to first create wealth, which will enable taxation. Social programs like in-house laundry for Alberta Health Services is an example which you want to continue, but capping oil sands development at 100 megatonnes won't help that cause, Madam Speaker. A program that could easily be contracted out at far better value for money like in-house laundry for Alberta Health Services: they don't want to do that. They want to go for expensive alternates. That's okay, but then we should allow oil sands development, which will bring us that revenue.

At the end of the day, Madam Speaker, we know that the NDP say: forget economics; we're doing what is right. But doing what is right in the NDP world view not only hurts people; it's also outright wrong. Australia realized that when they cancelled the carbon tax.

Prime Minister Tony Abbott took the right decision to get rid of it, based on the feedback he got from his populace. France, under President François Hollande of the Socialist Party no less – the Socialist Party – will be dropping the carbon tax.

Policy matters. You all know my thoughts because I can tell you that if this were in India, this would be a bad policy, Madam Speaker. India is not capping their development. India is racing very fast to catch up and have the middle-class lifestyle of the western world. They have their dreams. They have the largest young workforce, with hundreds of millions of youth.

Mr. Dach: Yeah. What was the air quality in Delhi last year?

Mr. Panda: I'm coming to that. Stay tuned.

They want to improve their lifestyle. We can't tell them not to have that standard of life, but the demographic shift and the markets for those people are enormous. They want our energy. Also, it's a good thing to trade with them because they're the largest democracy in the world. In the same way, China – I travelled a lot in China for business. Although it's not a democracy, they embraced market capitalism under the Communist Party, and they need our energy, too, Madam Speaker. They want our energy very much. Both India and China want energy security, and they want affordability, too, so we can partner with them and export our energy to them because Alberta can be a reliable supplier for them.

5:00

That's why I'm asking the NDP not to use their, you know, majority in this House and abuse it to have this bill imposed arbitrarily. We are asking you to refer this to the committee so we can have a fulsome discussion, and in the meantime the oil sands advisory group can also give their recommendation. Then we'll see whether the 100 megatonnes is good enough. Or is 150 a good number? We don't know now, but we can use those good experts that the NDP approached to do this job. We should let them finish their job and use the findings before we vote on this bill, Madam Speaker. That's why I moved the first amendment, and I compliment my colleague from Grande Prairie-Smoky for bringing this amendment. We are hoping that all the people there who are concerned will vote in support of this amendment and do the right thing for Albertans.

With that, I would like to adjourn the debate, Madam Speaker.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Bill 27 Renewable Electricity Act

[Adjourned debate November 8: Mr. Stier]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's a privilege today to rise to speak to Bill 27, the Renewable Electricity Act. I have concerns with this bill, many concerns, in fact, that I would classify as a litany of concerns, so please excuse my lack of brevity on this matter as I proceed with my second reading speech.

First of all, let me preface the speech by stating that I'm in favour of renewable energy infrastructure and policy when, of course, the policy and infrastructure are implemented and constructed appropriately, taking into account the current market structure. I view renewable energy as one of the tools that can be used to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and, in turn, address some of the concerns that we have as a society and as a province around global warming.

But let me be clear: renewable energy programs must be implemented in a way that is respectful of the current power generation structure and, of course, power purchasing arrangements. Without this respect and trust, this mutual respect and trust, which the government has already undermined, the contractual legitimacy between two parties is severed, thereby destroying the stability of a contract and rendering it moot. Not a great environment for moving forward, Madam Speaker.

Why would anyone agree to sign a contract for power generation if they knew one party has a record of backtracking on its commitments and renegeing on the certainty that allows for well-reasoned, collateral-backed investment and financing? Are these concepts alien to this government? No wonder. The dearth of business experience may be showing through. This is not what I would call bargaining in good faith, Madam Speaker, and it sets a poor precedent for future agreements, which could be directly impacted by this legislation. Hopefully the government figures out how business works one of these days and eventually can move forward, because their track record on this matter has been nothing but an assault on business and thereby an assault on job creation.

Secondly, renewable energy infrastructure and policy should be constructed and implemented in a way that respects jobs and prevailing economic conditions. That is the common-sense approach, Madam Speaker. I know my colleague the hon. Member for Calgary-West alluded to this fact earlier in debate, but let me reiterate. There appears to be a huge and unaddressed gap in the plan and in the act given the power generation needs of Albertans and the industry associated with this irresponsible coal phase-out.

Given that the government wants coal-powered generation eradicated as well as all the mortgage-paying jobs that go with it by 2030, never mind the provincial unemployment rate we currently have of 8.5 per cent and double digits in Calgary – and you don't even want to guess the stats that might be pushed forward in the likes of Hanna, Hinton, Forestburg, and others in the years ahead because of this legislation – and given that approximately 50 per cent, in fact a little bit more than 50 per cent, of our electricity currently comes from coal, what will be used to replace it by 2030? The government and their central planning committee would like you to believe renewables, but their central planning committee has already determined that 30 per cent of power generation will come from renewables by that time. Last time I checked, we need to fill a 20 per cent gap with respect to power generation, from that 50 or 55 per cent to the 30 per cent.

So where is that baseload going to come from? You don't seem to have much of a plan there. In my books a decrease in supply means higher electricity prices for Albertans, not to mention the spectre of grid instability and brownouts to turn us into a third-world country and worse. Not only are you spurring unemployment through our coal phase-out, but you're also spurring higher electricity prices, further moves toward an uncompetitive environment for business and investment and a signal to industry that we are not, in fact, a business-friendly nor investment-welcoming jurisdiction. A great combination, Madam Speaker. Talk about making a bad situation worse.

Madam Speaker, this legislation appears to be haphazardly cribbed together on the back of a napkin by a government that continues the piecemeal charade which is its climate leadership plan, a plan that is hurting Albertans from all corners of this province due to its poor forethought and execution. Did I mention the unintended consequences of creating Albertans' latest tourism attraction? I think I did that before. It's called the new millennium Alberta ghost town. New economy jobs, indeed.

Madam Speaker, let us turn our attention to section 7 of Bill 27. It is my understanding that the Alberta Electric System Operator,

which is referred to as AESO, will "hold a competitive process" for renewable generation. The ISO "shall advise the Minister of the results of the competitive process," including the total quantity of renewables offered as well as the corresponding costs that will be payable via contracts. Thereafter, the ISO must receive ministerial approval on the quantity, the cost, and the final form of the contract prior to selecting successful participants and entering into contracts with certainty. Now, I think this section is quite pertinent to what I was saying before regarding trust, respect, and contractual agreements. A novel idea, indeed.

This government is demonstrating poor faith and now has a poor track record with respect to honouring contracts as evident through the current lawsuits around PPAs. Given that contractual agreements play such a vital role in this legislation, how will banks and investors view contractual validity? The government has, whether intentionally or not, decreased the value and certainty of a legal contract in the eyes of Albertans and external investors, or in this case I think we call these PPAs. Has this fact been considered? I certainly hope so as the foundational structure of this legislation is dependent upon it. How do we get people to invest in renewables? Madam Speaker, if we don't encourage other people to invest in renewables, I worry that we're going to have to do it with government funds, and those funds are covered in red ink today.

Secondly, another glaring concern for me is how this section enables the minister to choose winners and losers with respect to renewable generation. This is a problem. I went to look at our provincial partners in Ontario and see their renewable electricity plan. As of September the government scrapped plans for \$3.8 billion in renewable electricity projects. Three point eight billion: that's a lot of zeros. One motive for this decision: high electricity costs. Interesting. Correct me if I'm wrong, but did I not state this as a risk earlier in my speech? Unintended consequences, Madam Speaker.

5:10

AESO was intended to be a not-for-profit organization that manages and operates the provincial power grid. They were intended to work with industry partners and government to make sure reliable power is available to consumers and industry as required but with a vision to the future of Alberta, Madam Speaker, a vision of opportunity and the hopeful return to vibrancy in this province in the future that we all hope for.

Given the above information one can surmise that AESO is intended to be an independent organization operating at arm's length from government, Madam Speaker, not tied to and attached to and influenced inextricably by. However, the legislation we're looking at reads counter to this, undermining the independence of AESO.

I know my colleagues have echoed this sentiment, Madam Speaker. The language in this bill corroborates this statement in more ways than one. It explicitly states that when the minister provides direction, the ISO must comply, as evident within section 14. Can someone please explain to me how this once independent organization doing the best for Albertans and industry and consumers is now not going to be a simple and direct tool of the minister?

An Hon. Member: NDP world view.

Mr. Gotfried: NDP world view, indeed, an interesting lens to look through.

It would be my hope that government respects the independence of this organization and develops an internal system of checks and balances to maintain its autonomous nature, again in the best

interests of Alberta: taxpayers, consumers, and industry. That is how we succeed, Madam Speaker, by working together with the different sectors of this economy.

Madam Speaker, in order for organizations such as AESO to function efficiently, they need to remain arm's length from government. I suspect that we would have heard that from some of our esteemed colleagues on the other side of the floor in years past, that requirement and need for independence from government. I cannot stress enough how important this is, and it is my fear that this government is disregarding this fact.

Madam Speaker, overall, this bill exposes Albertans to unknown costs to subsidize green electricity generation, which I personally believe can and will stand on its own in time in a competitive marketplace. That will be the innovation that we see, those will be the initiatives that we see from industry, and if we subsidize it too much, we will kill the opportunity to do it right and to do it well.

It also allows cabinet to make unaccountable political decisions at the expense – and I say again in solid, hard, red ink: at the expense – of Albertans through the minister's ability or inability to pick winners and losers in renewable energy and to subsidize them in an irresponsible manner, possibly, not in the best interests, both short and long term, of Albertans.

[The Speaker in the chair]

Additionally, it fails to account for and support auxiliary infrastructure required to make diverse renewable resources work in Alberta. This legislation, like the climate leadership plan, appears to be slapped together without any semblance of a strategy or framework to consider the current electrical market structure, grid stability, economic conditions, job protection, or, of course, lack thereof.

Mr. Speaker, I'm in favour of renewable electricity. I think we're going to see us reach those goals in time. I believe it has a place and a future in our province but not as this current cadre of antioil crusaders intends nor on the irresponsible and costly timelines they propose. Renewable electricity generation should tap into the innovation and ingenuity of our citizens and invoke the Alberta advantage, setting a positive environment for investment, not subsidies, something the NDP world view seeks to advantage. The Alberta advantage seems like an alien concept. Renewable generation should work hand in hand with current market structures, market realities, complementary clean-coal technologies, and other electrical generation, from cogen to geothermal to hydro and others.

Mr. Speaker, for these reasons as well as many others associated with this irresponsible, ideologically driven push into a world, an all too familiar world these days, of unintended consequences, in spite of what I choose to believe are the best of intentions, I cannot and will not support this bill today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. members, under 29(2)(a), is there a question for the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek?

Seeing or hearing none, you'd like to speak to Bill 27?

Mr. Carson: Yeah.

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Mr. Carson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an incredible honour to stand in the House today in support of and as cosponsor of Bill 27, the Renewable Electricity Act. A year and a half ago Alberta elected a majority New Democrat government. They voted that way not only because we promised to protect education and health care in this province but, most importantly, because more than any other

party during the election and to this day we had a vision to diversify our province's economy.

Mr. Speaker, the last two years have been incredibly hard on all of our communities and the province as a whole. Our overreliance on one commodity, with very little action in the past to capture new markets for our products, has put Alberta in a vulnerable position to the global oil markets. During the last election many Albertans recognized this inability for their government to be forward thinking and chose a new path. To this day we have made incredible progress in partnership with industry and other stakeholders to ensure we are at the front of a green energy transition. Over the last year and a half with the New Democrat government in Alberta we have seen an incredible shift in the dialogue around how industry and environment interact because we recognize that the time to take action is now.

Mr. Speaker, climate change is one of the biggest threats to the prosperity of our province. If we do not take action now, it will only be to the detriment of all of communities, not only because of the fact that other jurisdictions are ahead of our progress in terms of implementation of renewable generation programs but, more importantly, because of the cost that climate change has in our industries.

Bill 27 creates the framework in which our green transition can take place. Alberta's electricity system plays a key role in our government's climate leadership plan. After being elected, our government established the Climate Change Advisory Panel, following through with our campaign commitment to take action on climate change. Through these recommendations we have put forward a number of programs that will ensure the economic and environmental sustainability of our province, whether you live in an urban community or a rural community.

If passed, Bill 27 will make changes to the Alberta Electric System Operator, or AESO, to ensure that their mandate aligns with our goals of creating programs that support renewable energy and the diversification of our electricity system. This bill continues our commitment to a greener economy by establishing targets of 30 per cent renewable energy by 2030, signalling to industry that Alberta is ready to diversify its economy and its workforce through development of our renewable resources. It will also require the development of interim targets and mandatory periodic reviews of progress and will establish a legislative definition for renewables.

Bill 27 updates the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act to add wind and solar electricity to the list of activities the director of Environment of Parks can put to greater environmental scrutiny, such as an environmental impact assessment in some circumstances, ensuring that all things are considered when developing such projects. These changes will not, however, alter existing regulatory processes of the Alberta Utilities Commission in regulating wind- and solar-powered projects.

The bill also legislates that a fairness adviser will be put in place, chosen by ISO, to oversee competition and to provide public reporting on the procurement process to ensure fairness, and it sets out a process for ISO to award renewable electricity support agreements to successful applicants. Through consultation with stakeholders it was recommended that a security interest be introduced to protect investments in case of insolvency. This is not something that is new to legislation, and it is important that we have the means to ensure cost-effectiveness and stability within our electricity system.

It is also important to stakeholders and investors alike that we provide market assurance, leading to better financing rates for investors, which is why such renewable energy programs will be backed by revenues collected from carbon pricing directly coming from carbon revenues and not general revenue.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 27 will establish a framework for AESO to procure renewable energy projects and lay out a path of transparency throughout the process. This bill signals to renewable energy producers that Alberta is the best place in Canada to invest their money with our firm commitment to reach 30 per cent renewable energy generation within our province by 2030 and a clear path to lead us there.

In my constituency and across the province I have heard the calls for a transition to a greener economy because Albertans recognize the incredible opportunity we have to lead the country in both nonrenewable and renewable energy development. Bill 27 will enshrine our commitment to diversification and, in conjunction with renewable energy programs, will bring billions of dollars and thousands of quality jobs to our province.

Mr. Speaker, there has never been a better time to invest in renewable energy projects, and we'll move forward with this plan because that is what we were put in this Legislature to do. I am very proud to be the cosponsor of this bill, and it is pleasure to stand in support. I would also like to thank the minister for bringing this forward.

Thank you.

5:20

The Speaker: Hon. members, under 29(2)(a), are there any questions for the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark?

Seeing none, the Member for Chestermere-Rocky View. To the motion. Is that right?

Mrs. Aheer: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 27, the Renewable Electricity Act. I was sent a very interesting and pertinent document for today's debate. This is based on a study that was recently published by the journal *Energy Policy*, titled Energy Return on Energy Invested, EROEI, for Photovoltaic Solar Systems in Regions of Moderate Insolation. This article found the EROEI of temperate latitude solar PV, or photovoltaic, systems operating in the latitudes of Earth between the tropics and polar regions to be .83.

If correct, that means more energy is [being] used to make the [photovoltaic] panels than will ever be recovered from them during their 25 year lifetime.

So I'll use PV for photovoltaic if that's okay.

A PV panel will produce more CO₂ than if coal were simply used directly to make electricity. Worse than that, all the CO₂ from PV production is in the atmosphere [immediately, like, today], while burning coal to make electricity, the emissions would be spread over the 25 year period.

Wildrose has continuously brought to the attention of this NDP government the concerns about carbon leakage. Turning China or other jurisdictions where these products are produced into industrial wastelands so that we can put solar panels on our houses to push this particular idea is not beneficial in our shared goal of reducing pollution.

In summary of this very technical paper Euan Mearns writes on Energy Matters:

So what is an EROEI? It is . . .

And it's just simply stated, and I say this lightly because this is very big information.

. . . simply the ratio of energy gathered to the amount of energy used to gather the energy [or] (the energy invested).

So it's basically the energy gathered versus the energy invested.

Euan Mearns goes on to provide an example, noting that: using PV to illustrate the point, the energy gathered will [also] depend on latitude . . .

So that's where those solar panels are.

. . . the amount of sunshine, the orientation of the panels and also on the lifetime of the panels themselves. And how do you record or measure the energy invested? Do you simply measure the electricity used in the PV factory, or do you include the energy consumed by the workers . . .

Like the drivers, anybody who's involved and participating in creating these things.

. . . and the miners who mined the silicon and the coal that is used to make the electricity?

That's in these other countries where they are still using coal to produce electricity.

Feroni and Hopkirk go into all of these details and come up with an EROEI for [the] temperate latitude solar PV of 0.83. At this level, solar PV [or photovoltaic] is not an energy source but is an energy sink. That is for Switzerland and Germany.

So while the authors of this source paper focused on Germany and Switzerland, they believe that it would actually be considerably worse in northern jurisdictions.

Euan Mearns goes on to write about the EROEI, that is so important, noting that

it is a concept that is alien to most individuals, including many engineers, energy sector employees, academics and policy makers. The related concept of net energy is defined as . . . EROEI - 1 (where 1 is the energy invested).

The net energy is that surplus energy left over from when we gather energy from activities that are used to power society, so when we're building hospitals, schools, aircraft carriers, growing food, whatever it is using energy.

In the past the EROEI of our primary energy sources - oil, gas and coal - was so high, probably over 50, . . .

That's the number that that represents.

. . . that there was bucket loads of cheap energy left over to build all the infrastructure and to feed all the people that now inhabit The Earth.

But with the net energy equation for what we're talking about right now, based on that energy for the solar PV, we have a serious problem: .83 versus 50. So as a policy-maker I am pleased to be able to share this report with my colleagues today, and hopefully we can have a good discussion about what this actually means.

Euan Mearns goes on to ask the question that is surely on everyone's minds. He writes:

So how can it be possible that we are managing to deploy devices that evidently consume rather than produce energy? The simple answer is that our finance system, laws and subsidies are able to bend the laws of physics and thermodynamics for so long as we have enough high EROEI energy available to maintain the whole system and to subsidize . . . [the] renewables. Try mining and purifying silicon using an electronic mining machine powered by The Sun and the laws of physics will re-establish themselves quite quickly.

That's not going to happen.

In very simple terms, [the] solar PV deployed in northern Europe can be viewed as coal burned in China [for example] used to generate electricity over here. All of the CO₂ emissions, that underpin the motive for PV, are made in China. Only in the event of high energy gain in the PV device would solar PV reduce CO₂ emissions.

And I'll go into that a little bit more later.

I think the most worrisome part about this is that that very important piece of information has not been considered. Not only am I concerned about the solar technologies that I read in yesterday, but there's an award-winning Surrey company that described itself as a world leader in wind turbines, and they've gone out of business. An article published in the *Vancouver Sun* tells the story of a Canadian company: "A bankruptcy notice on the front door of Endurance Wind Power in the Campbell Heights industrial area . . .

confirms that the company's operations are now being overseen by [another company]." The article states that "Endurance chief executive Brad Bardua said the company suffered after government subsidies to small-scale wind turbines dried up."

Wildrose has consistently warned – consistently warned – the members of this Assembly about the risks of propping up renewables artificially. That's what this is about. The article explains that "Endurance assembled 50-kilowatt turbines at its Surrey plant," and in Britain they had 225-kilowatt turbines. "The company had about 120 employees globally, including some staff in Denmark and Italy, with about 30 in B.C." Endurance is just another example of a rent-seeking company that is not economical without market-disrupting subsidies from governments. And then they end up going bankrupt.

I fully, fully support renewables in the instances where the market demands them. I actually run my own home off of 40 solar panels, so I have personal knowledge about this and what it took to build them and the energy and the infrastructure that was required to put those things on the back of my house. But Albertans are becoming increasingly concerned about this 30 per cent by 2030 and tying our economy to it. We feel that without an assessment of those embodied emissions – that's including the energy you put into what you're actually getting back out – from the building, installing, disposing, shipping of these renewables, without it being made clear how these renewables will complete in a free market and respond to the laws of supply and demand, we are very concerned that we're destroying a market-demand-supported industry to actually replace it with an incentive-supported industry. It doesn't improve anything.

Given all this information and the questions that it raises, I feel very strongly that it is necessary for this House to send this bill to committee for further review, so I would like to introduce a referral amendment, please.

5:30

The Speaker: Hon. members, the Member for Chestermere-Rocky View has moved an amendment referred to as REF1.

Would you like to speak to it?

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to move that the motion for second reading of Bill 27, Renewable Electricity Act, be amended by deleting all of the words after "that" and substituting the following:

Bill 27, Renewable Electricity Act, be not now read a second time but that the subject matter of the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship in accordance with Standing Order 74.2.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Are there any questions of the hon. member under 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, then, I think we're dealing with the amendment. The Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

Mr. MacIntyre: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to have the opportunity to rise again and speak to Bill 27, the Renewable Electricity Act, this time on my hon. colleague from Chestermere-Rocky View's referral motion. There are a number of things that need to be said regarding referring to committee. We've brought it up a number of times.

Mr. Cooper: How many?

Mr. MacIntyre: A number, a large number. I would say at least once a day since May of 2015.

The value of sending legislation to standing committees – and I happen to be on this Resource Stewardship Committee. I'm very pleased to be on that committee. Resource stewardship is an extremely important component of Alberta society, and I feel very privileged to be part of the Resource Stewardship Committee. I only wish that that committee could actually do work on resource stewardship, good work on resource stewardship.

We have an opportunity with this referral today to engage with Albertans, with stakeholders, with experts, members of the Independent Power Producers Society of Alberta, small and large generators, some of the cogen people, some of my colleagues from the renewables industry regarding microgeneration and things like that. All of these people should be given the opportunity to speak to this very important piece of legislation. I believe it is incumbent upon this House to support this referral to committee and allow Albertans to come to this place to speak to it.

This policy as it currently stands poses somewhat of a risk to Albertans of becoming retractionary, a retractionary economic policy. A retractionary economic policy, for those that perhaps don't understand, is a policy that causes our economy to shrink a little bit, sometimes a lot. But to shrink a little bit is retractionary. It means that our GDP goes down or our growth in our GDP is not as robust as it might otherwise be because of a particular economic policy from the government. Instead of aiding in the economic rebound that we so desperately need right now, this act actually stands to penalize businesses, homeowners, fixed-income seniors, and everyone. This policy is actually putting our current electricity rates at risk of going up, and it's likely going to make things even worse right here in Alberta.

Renewable technologies – and there are so many of them out there – are an exciting field to be in. I felt very privileged to be part of the renewables world, the renewables industry. There was a lot of interest in the '90s, in the early 2000s regarding renewable technologies. One of the things we discovered when we were building program content is that there are some renewable technologies that are market ready, there are others that are not yet market ready, there are some renewable technologies that are still quite, I would say, ethereal. You know, on paper, mathematically, they ought to work. That's one thing. But just because something can be made to work on paper doesn't necessarily translate into a technology that you can actually put on the grid or put in a building or actually make it technically work with existing systems that we currently have.

Then, of course there's the economic viability of renewable technologies. It's one thing for a renewable technology to be technically feasible. It's entirely different when it comes to the economics. One of the things that we promoted in the program at NAIT that we developed was: somebody's got to pay the piper. You can be ever so excited and get all kinds of warm and fuzzy feelings about a particular renewable technology, but somebody's got to pay the piper. That technology had better be able to stand on its own two feet economically after you have determined that it is even technically feasible. So there was an order to things.

In the program today the students are still taught: you do a feasibility study, you do an economic study, and there are some very important checkpoints along the way to ensure that it doesn't fail because, at the end of the day, people are spending a great deal of money putting some of these technologies into play. If that technology is going to be an economic failure, we are talking about two things: somebody is going to lose a whole lot of money and, secondly, and I think equally important, it puts a real bad taste in the mouth of the investment community when they see projects that, to them, are some new technology and it fails and it costs their investors money. It's like: once bitten, twice shy.

I ran into this overseas. When we opened our offices in Tel Aviv, we had an opportunity to go to the kingdom of Jordan to do a feasibility study for a very large hotel. It was one of the largest hotels in the kingdom of Jordan, in Amman. They had an excellent engineering team in-house. The wonderful thing I've discovered about engineering is that it doesn't matter what language people speak. I've worked with Russian engineers, Arab, Jewish, just all over the world. When you get out the drawings and you've got engineers around the table, we all speak the same language. Even when we can't understand one another, we can understand the drawings. It was fun.

So there we were, and we were looking at this huge hotel. It was a couple of hundred rooms, many stories tall. They had an absolutely horrific electricity bill because in Amman the temperature can get upwards of 40 to 50 degrees Celsius, so you can imagine the cooling load that they have to deal with. So we were looking at different technologies that we could possibly employ in this building to bring down this astronomical electricity bill that they experienced, to try to save them some money. Lots of money. We're talking many hundreds of thousands of dollars every year that they were hoping to be able to save with different technologies.

5:40

One of the things that I ran into very quickly – in fact, I think it was somewhere through the first or second day that I was there – is that there were some senior engineers and accountants who were on the board of directors of the company that owned this large hotel, and they told me the following story: you know, we had some engineers here from France, and they tried this and this and this technology, and it cost us. I forget how much money, but it was a lot of money, and it bombed. It bombed terribly, and they went back to France. Now here I was, basically another salesman at the door, saying that I could save them hundreds of thousands of dollars in cooling costs. They were extremely hesitant to give us a green light, extremely hesitant because they had been so bitten by that first failed renewables project.

I ran into that in Egypt. I ran into it in Jordan. I ran into it in Israel. I ran into it in Malta. I ran into the same thing in the West Bank. It was like there were these engineers running around two or three years ahead of me wrecking renewables. It was terrible. It made it extremely difficult to break into that market because of the failure of these projects.

We have a similar problem looming here. There are jurisdictions – and you don't have to go very far. You just have to go in eastern Canada to the province of Ontario. Under their Green Energy Act they forged ahead with renewables, and look at where they're at today. The people of Ontario are very upset at the kind of energy costs that they are facing. Now, yes, they blamed their government, but honest to goodness, Mr. Speaker, some of the dirt hits perfectly acceptable, perfectly good, technically good renewable technologies. That bothers me greatly because I have seen it in so many places in the world.

There are places in the world, Malta being one of them, where it wouldn't have mattered how good the project was. Malta is a very small island. There's only a handful of investors on the whole island, and they were adamantly opposed to anything renewable because they had been taken to the cleaners once already: thank you very much; we are not going to do this again. It wouldn't have mattered if it was a gold-plated project; they were not going to invest in it. It was extremely disheartening.

In the province of Ontario those poor souls over there right now are suffering terribly beneath the weight of an out-of-control renewables policy. They have utility debt up to here. They are the most indebted subsovereign jurisdiction in the world, and a big

chunk of that is on account of poor government policy impacting what should have, could have been perfectly good technology. As someone involved in the technology side of things that concerns me deeply.

We have an opportunity, by taking this bill to committee, to get the technical experts. We've got bunches of them right here in this province. Get those technical people in the door of this place because of the 87 people in this room, how many can actually say that they understand the technical aspects and the economic aspects of renewable technologies? Not many. You know, no one is an expert in everything, but we have experts in this province. We have experts right across this country. Those people, who are my colleagues, love renewable technologies, and they go out of their way to educate everybody who will listen.

It is imperative that we pause, take the time, go to committee, get these experts in the door. Let's hear about it because I guarantee you – I know my colleagues – they are going to come up with a better mousetrap every single time, certainly better than what a bunch of politicians could possibly throw together. Let's just be real honest about that. Let's get the experts in the door.

I don't want to see renewables in my province fail. As I said earlier today, I've been waiting for a renewables act for a long time. Please don't make it fail. I've seen too many failures around the world, and I've seen what it does to those marketplaces. People are so jaded; they will not accept renewables no matter how gold-plated they were.

Another little story. There was a particular project that I was doing a feasibility study on, and I was meeting some hesitancy from the board of directors and the bean-counters for that company. Fair enough. I mean, fair enough; it's their money. On the team that I headed up there were four engineers that I was supervising. We had this thing nailed down technically. I was absolutely sure. We actually went through and designed this thing three times to make sure that our numbers were absolutely ironclad.

Then we converted it to the financial feasibility. We had the economics down, Mr. Speaker. We knew exactly how much energy we were going to save, how much money we were going to save them. We were absolutely confident. We got in the meeting with their board of directors and their senior engineers and accountants, and they're just coming at the team . . .

The Speaker: Under 29(2)(a), the hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I find that a thrilling story, especially when you start talking about accountants. I would love to continue to hear what their thoughts are, so please continue so that we can finish off your speech.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. MacIntyre: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member. When we got in this meeting, the only way the corporation was going to accept our proposal was if I was willing to put my name on the hook for the financial responsibility if it failed. This is multimillion dollars. I don't have multimillion dollars. However, we went back to the board of our company and put it to them, and said: "You know. This is it; this is where the rubber meets the road. Are we willing to do this?"

Of course, the board of directors are not engineers; they're not technical people. They're accountants. I'm sorry for calling you a bean-counter, but they're bean-counters. They're looking at us on the team and saying: "Man, if you guys drop the ball, they're going to find you floating in the Mediterranean somewhere. You'd better be right." Well, we did. It happened. We got the contract.

Everything was fine. But that's the hesitancy that we were meeting because of failed renewables projects. It was an extremely difficult hurdle to overcome, Mr. Speaker.

For the sake of the whole renewables industry in this province, let alone the people of Alberta, for the industry, please, put this to committee. Let's get the industry in the door, and let's have a really good discussion with them about every line of this act. Let's take our time and, for goodness sake, get it right. If we get it wrong, the cost is going to be enormous. It's going to set renewables back, potentially, a whole generation. Let's just take the time.

I would appreciate it if every member of this House would be in support of this referral to committee. Let's take our time. Let's hear from the experts, and let's do a really good job for the sake of Albertans and for the sake of renewables in this province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

5:50

The Speaker: Any other questions or comments under 29(2)(a) for the Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake?

Seeing no one, is there anyone else who would like to speak to amendment REF1? The Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Mr. Carson: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise to this amendment. I've never really seen an amendment like this before. It's brand new to me.

This legislation, as was mentioned earlier, was developed with the best practices within other jurisdictions. This legislation, I think, needs to be in place for us to continue moving forward with renewable energy programs, and with this bill itself, not the amendment, the proper checks and balances are in place for us to move forward with renewable energy development.

We on this side of the House were elected to this Legislature as a government to diversify our economy. There are millions, if not billions, of dollars of investment waiting for us to move forward with this bill and this legislation to start implementing these programs. I find it quite interesting that the Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake, being a teacher of renewable energies, is so adamantly against any renewable energy course that we're trying to take in this Legislature. To be fair, he has said that he would like to see other programs, but I guess he's happy to wait 20 or 40 years before that happens.

Renewable energy is dropping in cost and gaining in efficiency every single year. We've seen this. We've seen other jurisdictions taking advantage of these programs. We've seen communities within our own province taking these programs and running with them. I think that it's important that we encourage these communities that are moving forward on renewable energies and not discourage them, like the opposition seems to be very excited to do.

I would just also add that this bill has been made in consultation with the Alberta Electric System Operator, the Market Surveillance Administrator, the Alberta Utilities Commission, Alberta Environment and Parks, the Alberta climate change office, Alberta Treasury Board and Finance, just to name a few. [interjections] I think that the members don't seem to really believe that these organizations understand the challenges within the industry. It seems a little funny to me. Not organizations, I suppose, but government agencies.

Respectfully, I will not be supporting this amendment, and I do encourage my colleagues to do the same. Thank you.

The Speaker: Under 29(2)(a)?

Mr. Shepherd: Yes. Thank you to the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark for his thoughts on this amendment. I know that this member has worked in the electrical field and has some knowledge

and experience in that area and, of course, knows some individuals who are interested, actually, in participating in the renewable plan and putting in some investment in that regard, certainly some young electricians and others who are interested in working in that field. I was wondering if he'd be able to share some thoughts on sort of the potential that this investment could bring to the province.

Mr. Carson: Sure. Thank you very much for the question and the comment. I have indeed through my career in the electrical industry met several people on my path, not only people who are interested in working in the field but also in investing. I mean, an incredible amount of opportunity coming through my office and, I've heard from my colleagues, coming through their offices as well. Hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of dollars ready to be disbursed throughout our province, ready to invest in the future.

Of course, I've said it before. It is so important for us to continue developing our nonrenewable resources. Well, this works in conjunction with that. Many, many investors coming through my office. I mean, it's just incredible.

I was down at union hall IBEW 424. They're increasingly putting more people through the programs. I was here one week ago talking about their 125th anniversary. They're developing so many people that are ready to do electrical vehicle charging stations at people's homes and at the commercial and even industrial levels as well as photovoltaic systems.

I kind of see where the opposition is coming from in terms of: if I don't believe in climate change, man-made climate change specifically, well, then I don't really believe in renewable resource programs either. I understand that. I appreciate the time to respond to that.

Just a final comment. We've heard from the opposition several times on this bill and on other bills: "Well, China is not doing anything. Why should we?" I think that is an incredibly sad argument, and I think it's time for us to move forward.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Under 29(2)(a), the Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

Mr. MacIntyre: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A couple of things I'd like to ask the hon. member about the great, long lineup of investors beating a path to his door looking for handouts, like hogs to the trough. I'd be interested if the hon. member might illuminate us a bit on just who this long line of investors beating a path to his door are, if he could name some of these investment groups, and if he could perhaps illuminate for us just how much subsidy these companies are looking for.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Mr. Carson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To be honest, I don't have a list in front of me of the investors themselves. [interjections] I think that many of my colleagues have had people coming into their offices. I think that it's incredibly naïve to say that no one has come to our office. So many people . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Please proceed.

Mr. Carson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think that many investors have come to his office, too, and I think that it's unfortunate that he's not willing to work with them, really, to be honest.

I think that we do need to move forward on this bill, as I said. I don't think that this amendment is necessary. I think that it's time

to move forward, really just laying out a framework for this green-technology economy.

You know, I will leave it at that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Under 29(2)(a), any other questions for the hon. member?

Anyone who would like to speak to amendment REF1? The Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, that was priceless, listening to the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark speak. I don't even know where to start, actually. He suggested just in his last comments something about: "Well, China is not doing anything. Why should we?" Nobody was suggesting that. But how about the U.S., our largest competitor, our largest trading partner? They're not doing a carbon tax. They're not doing any of this stuff. How about Saskatchewan, right next door to us? How about Saskatchewan?

And he says: all sorts of support. He lists a whole group of people that support it, but I never heard one thing about Albertans. Not one thing about Albertans. Have you gone to Albertans with this and told them how much their power is going to increase because of this? How much is it going to cost? Now, he talks about all these investors running through his doorway to invest. With subsidies, of course, or a guaranteed return on investments: that's who's running through his door. Of course, anybody with their hand out to get something for nothing would love to be there. So all sorts of support, none from Albertans.

He talked about that they developed this with the best practices from other jurisdictions. Like Ontario? Is that one of these best practices that they've used? The lessons from Ontario? A complete failure in renewables. A complete failure.

He also suggested that everybody voted NDP, so they must love everything that this government is doing. We just need to point to the last election. One per cent support with the same candidate that they used in the provincial election a year and a half before. One per cent. Right in your jurisdiction, Mr. Speaker. That's the kind of support that they have from the people of Alberta. That's very clear.

He also said that the last years have been rough. Yes, the last year and a half has been very rough, since this government has been elected. They always blame the world price of oil, Mr. Speaker, but their policies drive investment away. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Loewen: They drive jobs away. This government in its term has lost over a hundred thousand jobs. They had a plan to create a hundred thousand jobs. Well, that's a 200,000 job deficit, Mr. Speaker – 200,000 jobs – from what they promised to what they've delivered. That's not acceptable. That's not what Albertans want to see.

You know what we haven't seen, Mr. Speaker, on any one of these policies that they've brought forward? Do you know what we haven't seen? We haven't seen an economic impact study on any of them. We haven't seen proper consultation with Albertans. Albertans haven't been told the truth on anything. All over the place this government does things behind closed doors and doesn't consult Albertans, doesn't give them the full information so that they can make an informed decision on whether they want to support it.

All we're asking with this amendment, Mr. Speaker, is to have this go to committee so that it can be looked at, so it can be reviewed, so we can ask Albertans what they want, so we can ask experts to come in. But this government doesn't want to see that. They don't want to see any input. They don't want to have Albertans judge this by what it is. They don't want to have their carbon tax reviewed. They hid reports on that. We only find out this information when we use FOIPs. That's not right.

This government needs to start listening to Albertans. They need to start paying attention to what Albertans want, and they need to give . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member, I hesitate to interrupt. However, in accordance with Standing Order 4(2) the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 6:01 p.m.]

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