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(Hansard)**

Monday 23 April 2007

Lundi 23 avril 2007

Speaker
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Monday 23 April 2007

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 23 avril 2007

The House met at 1845.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Christopher Bentley (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities): I move that, pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 184, An Act to protect species at risk and to make related changes to other Acts, when Bill 184 is next called as a government order the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the standing committee on general government; and

That the standing committee on general government shall be authorized to meet, in addition to its regularly scheduled meeting times, on May 2, 2007, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon and May 7, 2007, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon for the purpose of conducting public hearings on the bill; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the clerk of the committee shall be 12 p.m. on May 8, 2007. No later than 5 p.m. on May 9, 2007, those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill, and any amendments thereto. The committee shall be authorized to meet beyond the normal hour of adjournment until completion of clause-by-clause consideration. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 127(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House not later than May 10, 2007. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the standing committee on general government, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called on that same day; and

That on the day the order for third reading for the bill is called, the time available for debate up to 5:50 p.m. or 9:20 p.m. as the case may be, shall be apportioned equally among the recognized parties; and

That when the time allotted for debate has expired, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and put every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That there shall be no deferral of any vote allowed pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to 10 minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): Mr. Bentley has moved government motion 334. Mr. Bentley.

1850

Hon. Mr. Bentley: When the Ontario government launched an extensive review of the Endangered Species Act in May 2006, it was acting on a commitment to update and strengthen the legislation that protects the province's native species at risk and their habitats. Of course, we're having this discussion just following Earth Day and Earth Day weekend, when people in every one of our communities are concerned about sustainability of our environment, concerned about global warming, concerned about greening our communities, whether they be large or small, wherever they happen to be, and concerned about ensuring that the species we have grown up with and depend on will remain in the future. That is the background against which this debate is being held. The Endangered Species Act, 2007, is based on the findings of that review.

This legislation would replace the outdated Endangered Species Act and significantly expand protection for the province's species at risk. Although we don't often hear about species at risk in the headlines of the news, everyone in every single one of the communities in this province knows there are species which have been natural to those communities which are at risk, whether from encroaching development, whether from climate change, whether from the effects of human or industrial habitation.

If passed by this House, the proposed Endangered Species Act, 2007, would be among the strongest species-at-risk legislation in North America. It would set a benchmark for protection and recovery of species at risk and launch a new era of natural heritage protection in our province.

During the consultation process, extensive time was taken to ensure that we heard from all those who might be interested—from the public, from aboriginal groups, from a wide range of stakeholder groups and organizations. Of course, they included developers, environmentalists, people in large and small communities and the resource industry sectors.

Ontario's more than 30,000 species and their habitats are important to the biological, social and economic vitality of the province, and of these, more than 175 have been specifically identified as being at risk, which means that they may well disappear from the province if their rate of decline continues. Of course, when we talk about 175 species, other species depend on those species for their own survival. So if they disappear, we may well be starting a much more significant threat than even that significant threat to the species of this province.

By working to reverse the rate of species decline in our province, we will ensure that future generations of Ontarians benefit from a healthier and diverse natural environment. Because the habitat for many species at risk is found on private land, voluntary stewardship is essential to achieving any kind of success in reversing this rate of species decline. The proposed legislation includes an Ontario species-at-risk stewardship program which would provide much-needed support and incentives for stewardship activities by landowners, resource users and conservation organizations. Of course, the best course of action is to prevent species from declining in the first place through responsible land use practices.

It may be surprising to members of this House, but known to the one or two who have been around for many years, that this is the first time since the Endangered Species Act was passed in 1971 that our legislation has undergone a thorough review. Imagine that: the first time that it has undergone a thorough review. One can imagine the changes in virtually every community in this province since then, and to think that those communities are encroaching on the natural environment—it is almost beyond belief that it has not undergone a thorough review since that time. It is without doubt out of date, limited in its ability to adequately provide protection and recovery of species at risk or recovery of their habitat.

This legislation includes a much stronger commitment to species recovery, more support for groups and individuals who voluntarily participate in stewardship activities to protect both essential habitat and green space, and stronger enforcement provisions. The proposed legislation includes a science-based process for identifying and listing species at risk. It also requires the automatic protection of species on the list and their habitats. Protection of the species without the habitat is really no protection at all. Meaningful habitat protection is a priority.

The proposed legislation balances strong protection measures with flexibility to encourage greater and more effective stewardship and recovery efforts. Every one of Ontario's 30,000 species makes a unique contribution to our province's rich natural heritage, and every action we

take to protect species at risk will contribute to a healthier and more abundant natural environment for future generations of Ontarians. I urge every member of this House to quickly, appropriately ensure the passage of this legislation so we do not miss another moment in protecting the species at risk, the species that may be at risk and the future natural environment of this province.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): I very much appreciate the opportunity to discuss Bill 184, although I am very disappointed with the closure motion—absolutely. I think there should be a lot more consultation.

The previous minister spoke about consultation. I find surprising the large number of groups faxing me to say that it wasn't consultation; it was an information session that they went to. Even the First Nations community, when I was in the north two weeks ago, specifically stated—and laughed at it when I spoke to the deputy chief about the consultation process—that the consultation process was a mere information session. They had no consultation there.

It's good to see that the Minister of Natural Resources is in the House today, because I know we are discussing the closure aspect and MNR-related issues and I hope he notices that the new regs are out. Mind you, the fishing—it opens this weekend—regs that you're so much looking forward to are not out. I wonder why. The feds came through with the DFO changes for a number of species, but apparently there is some concern that they didn't approve all the stuff to allow the regs to be published in time.

I don't think the minister grasps the impact of not having those regs out there in a number of ways. Not only that; in the regs that were released, the hunting regulations that have just recently come out—our office received our copies today—and that we get requests for on a regular basis, he's created a new problem. The problem is that he has allowed three advertisers, and only three advertisers, inside there who are retailers of outdoor products. The difficulty is that there are hundreds, if not thousands, of outdoors outlets that provide regulations on a free basis to everyone. Now that you have three American companies, I might add, that are advertising in there, these stores are saying, "Why would I promote a competitor?" And guess what? The regulations that were released won't be distributed in those locations. If you want to get them, if you want to find out, find them someplace else. The ministry went through this problem in the past and it was addressed. There are a considerable number of things.

For example, the fishing regulations not coming out: NOTO, the Northern Ontario Tourist Outfitters, heads down south in about February and does all of their trade shows. When they go down there, they promote Ontario. They take all of the regs with them. And when they ain't got no regs, they ain't got no customers and no promotion of Ontario happening, because it's just not there. They can't get that message out. I know for a fact that when this question came up with the previous govern-

ment, all it took was changing the printing time at the printer. That's all that was required to get it done, and it got done.

It's so difficult. Some people are dependent on booking their holidays for those things and they don't have all the detailed information. I know other individuals who in the past had waited and booked the wrong dates because the regs hadn't come out to inform them. There are a lot of issues coming forward.

And we're talking about Bill 184. I could go on quite long, and I certainly hope we get interjections, because I love the opportunity to talk about some of these things. When you look at the debate from the past and you look at the PAs' comments, one of the areas that cause concern is a species at risk in Ontario. The difficulty with this is that animals don't know boundaries.

I should mention first that I am one of the biggest supporters of, and as a matter of fact I happen to know, the individual who regulated more species in the past than any other Minister of Natural Resources, because all it took was the political will. But one thing that's happening here is that it comes to the cabinet table, there is opposition and they can't answer the questions, so it goes to the back burner. I remember the minister speaking about the butternut tree. He spoke quite extensively about the impact of the butternut tree—the diseased butternut tree that you spoke of, Minister.

Implement the plan. Put the implementation plan in place, and that will allow for the cutting of that diseased species for the reintroduction to take place. If there are things out there that you have, implement those implementation plans that already allow you to do those things.

No. At the cabinet table it's extremely difficult to get these things through because of the impact. What is the area required for the five-lined skink to live? For those who don't know, the five-lined skink is the only lizard that actually lives in the province of Ontario. It's around—the Hastings area is probably one of the best areas to talk about. How much space does it require? So you implement a habitat program for that. Who is to determine?

1900

We've gone on and we've spoken about species at risk in Ontario. If you look at the lists, you talk about the bald eagle in southern Ontario as being—I think it was listed as “special concern” or “extirpated,” which means they're in existence but they're not in southern Ontario. Remember we spoke about the fact that species and animals don't know boundaries like we do? The concern here is that we're going to set artificial boundaries, and now we have a northern bald eagle and a southern bald eagle, and it's not happening.

It's the same thing with other things. I hope the minister talks about what's the intention with, for example, the Slate Island caribou, which effectively is a woodland caribou that migrated across to the Slate Islands in Lake Superior and, because of the food forage they eat, they've turned a somewhat different colour, a kind of slate grey. The belief is that it could be a subspecies, much like the

Algonquin wolf—there is no official Algonquin wolf, but we've declared that a special area. So this new committee will determine what and how to do these things.

The concern there is that there is overlying legislation. There is lists of bodies, the COSEWIC organizations that have the ability to determine, “Yes, woodland caribou is a threatened species, however, not in Ontario,” because we may have anywhere from 8,000 to 10,000—it depends on which biologist you speak to in the ministry; there are several pockets throughout the province—and in other parts of the country there may not be. For example, the barren-ground caribou: The report on the Hudson-James Bay lowland—I actually had to dig for this one; it was quite extensive. There's a very in-depth report in there, and I would recommend the minister get a copy of it. They determined that the Hudson-James Bay caribou is actually a cross between barren-ground and woodland caribou. What does that mean? Does that mean that it's a new subspecies? Well, quite possibility a new agency who may have that as a priority concern—I seem to remember getting caribou dolls, stuffed animals, at one time last year about this thing—may determine that is, much like the bald eagle, and it's listed in the books: northern Ontario and southern Ontario. And it may have implications there that will cost the ministry huge amounts of money.

One of the organizations that was very concerned approached me and said their estimates when they reviewed this—and they spent an extensive amount of time at it—was about \$200 million to implement this. Currently, they've got \$18 million over a four-year period to implement this entire process. There is a process in place now.

I have to tell you, I am a big supporter. As a matter of fact, last summer I happened to be driving by a marsh area and I looked over at the side of the road and I could see what I thought was a Blandings turtle. For those who don't know, a Blandings turtle is very similar to a map turtle—a southern map turtle, I might add; it's somewhat difficult to tell the difference. So I pulled over and stopped. Actually, it had been hit by a car. I did some short-term rehabilitation of the animal. What's the name of that show? The Red Green show. Duct tape works wonders on damaged turtles. But that turtle wandered away. It was actually a map turtle; it wasn't a Blandings.

The point being, what's going to take place for the municipalities? If a municipality is going to move forward in the future, are they going to have to do a species-at-risk analysis in order to determine whether there's anything of concern in that area before moving forward with a major project? And what is the length of time? Because, as we know, birds migrate on an annual basis. As mentioned here—the bald eagle is a perfect one, or the great grey owl.

There are other agencies and NGOs, non-government organizations, who are extremely concerned and feel they haven't had the opportunity to come forward and discuss this. I would have hoped that we would go on the road to hear from the various parts of the province, whether it is

Kenora, Thunder Bay, Timmins, down in the eastern part, the western part and central Ontario, in order to get a perspective from those communities on the impact of this.

The trapping community is very concerned with this, particularly with three animals that are there: the grey fox, the American badger and the wolverine. According to them, they don't know of a badger trapped in the province of Ontario ever having been sold at the fur auctions. Here comes the difficulty—and I hope the minister addresses this issue: What takes place is, these fur sales come in from all over North America, where there are no problems with endangered aspects of these species.

So an American badger, which, if you look in Manitoba or some of the western provinces, is effectively somewhat like a groundhog—there are large numbers of them, and they're kind of in the same volume out there. They would come into the province of Ontario to be sold at fur auctions, and they're sold around the world. I think the next one is coming up in Mississauga, where it's expected that about \$100 million worth of fur will be sold. I think at the last one, 36 countries from around the world came in and purchased these goods. Not only that, but they shipped them in.

The way the legislation is currently written, as expressed to me by those associations, it will eliminate the sale of those particular goods at their fur auctions because of the way it's listed inside the legislation. The concern is that the wolverine—yes, there have been some coincidental catches of wolverine in the northern part of Ontario. However, to their knowledge, a grey fox or a badger has never come through on those sales.

What's going to happen with those industries? The one sale house alone does about \$250 million. They're talking about relocating to other parts. Quite frankly, there is a large number of issues I could go on and talk about for the entire 51 minutes, but I know my colleagues have a great deal of information that they'd like to mention.

One of the things I'd like to talk about is the peregrine falcon, for example. When the minister spoke in the House about this, he spoke about peregrines coming back in. But I don't think—and he should have mentioned that actually it was the domesticated peregrines that are responsible for the reintroduction. The falcon clubs in Ontario came forward, and quite frankly, if the minister had known—it was a former Liberal minister. Lyn McLeod was the minister at the time, and I was on the committee that worked on that, so I know a little bit about what took place. I dealt with the minister on some of that stuff. Those agencies were responsible. In the event that a species is at risk, what happens to domesticated ones that come in, that are currently domesticated, or are brought in from other jurisdictions for reintroduction purposes?

Another one the minister mentioned was the wild turkey, which was extirpated in the 1900s for a number of reasons—over-harvesting, no seasons at that particular time, as well as change in the farming communities and the harvesting in the province of Ontario. But there was

no mention of the fact that the community that reintroduced and live-trapped all those turkeys and brought them back into Ontario was, as a matter of fact, the outdoors and the hunting community.

There are a lot of issues that can be brought forward. Quite frankly, I'm disappointed at the motion as read for closure today because it limits organizations' ability to come and present here at Queen's Park. Two days is a very limited time. I've had a number of faxes from the Ontario Water Power Association about their strong concerns and what the impact is going to be. I believe that the only species that really needs to be regulated—

Hon. Mr. Bentley: Here we go. This is funny.

Mr. Ouellette: —is the human species, because that's the one that's impacting everything. As the minister said, this is really funny. He thinks it's really funny, that it's a big joke. He has to understand that species at risk is a strong concern for a lot of people, and they take a lot of action and do a lot of things. As a matter of fact, the previous minister implemented a program and offered help to organizations to reintroduce the northern bobwhite quail.

Interjections.

Mr. Ouellette: They don't like that. But that's actually what happened. You have to have the intestinal fortitude to come forward at the cabinet table and move forward on it. The stuff is there that needs to be done. This smoke-and-mirrors stuff ain't going to make a big difference. People are going to feel warm and fuzzy out there, but at the end of the day it's not going to happen.

Hon. Mr. Bentley: It doesn't make any difference.

Mr. Ouellette: The minister says it doesn't make any difference. Yes, it does make a difference. What has to happen is that you have to have the political will to come forward at the cabinet table to make the changes necessary.

I appreciate the opportunity. I know my colleagues have some other things to say about it as well.

1910

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): It's my pleasure to have a chance once again to talk a little bit about Bill 184, An Act to protect species at risk and to make related changes to other Acts.

I'm going to talk a little bit about it, although I have had a chance to talk about the bill previously, just about a week ago. Interestingly enough, that doesn't usually happen. Once you've debated a bill, usually that's your turn for that particular reading that we're in, and of course this being second reading, I've already contributed. But the reason I'm given the opportunity once again to make some remarks about this bill is of course the motion that we're debating tonight is not the actual bill itself; it's a motion to invoke closure on the bill. In other words, the government wants to shut down debate on this bill, and that's what we're debating tonight, the fact that the government is not prepared to allow members from all sides—its own side and the two opposition parties—to bring forward issues and concerns or, in some cases, congratulations on the issues that are outlined in the bill.

It's interesting, because the last time we were here debating this bill happened to be a night when a particular reception was taking place in our dining room downstairs. I believe it was in the dining room. Perhaps it was in room 228; I'm not actually sure. It was in room 228, now that I think. It was by an organization that was trying to bring awareness to the members about these very issues, about endangered species. It was quite a fun evening, and many of the speakers who got up to speak that evening, including myself, spent some time talking about the species that we became honorary guardians of that evening. It was quite a fun night. I'll just recall that I was given the honour of protecting the orange spotted sunfish. My friend from Beaches–East York, who is currently sitting in the Speaker's chair, I can recall that his species was called the least bittern.

As you went through all the members in this place, it was very interesting to see how, in some cases—not all, but in some cases—the species we were made honorary guardians of sometimes tended to resemble ourselves in some way. Orange spotted: of course, as a New Democrat, orange is a colour that I like very much. In fact, the member from Beaches–East York, least bittern: Everybody knows what an affable person the member from Beaches–East York is. He certainly is not “bittern” at all.

Nonetheless, it is kind of frustrating for people in opposition particularly when the government invokes closure on a bill. There is no doubt that this government has waited until the 11th hour to bring in a number of very important bills. I will be in committee later on this week on one of those bills; they finally decided to move on the independence of the child advocate office. In fact, I can see the minister responsible for democratic renewal sitting across the way. When she was Minister of Children and Youth Services, she was the first one on the government side to make the promise that the child advocate would be independent in the province of Ontario. It's finally now, again, in the 11th hour of this government's mandate, that it has decided to bring forward the child advocate bill.

Having said that—same thing here, right? We are at the very last minute of this government's mandate. The reason they are actually bringing closure motions left, right and centre is because they realize they had better do something to ingratiate themselves with the voters of this province because there is certainly a huge pile of disappointment that emanates from every corner of every community from one end of this province to the other. People are simply extremely disappointed. It's major lunch-bag letdown in a huge way with this government and its lack of effectiveness in its term thus far.

So here they are in a mad scramble at the last minute trying to get through some things that they think will make people like them again. I don't know if that's a good strategy. What I can tell you, though, is that it's a very obvious strategy, one that is very apparent as we continue to have to debate closure motions. The problem becomes, as you rush these things out the door and try to make it look like you're actually implementing some of

the things you had promised to implement, it becomes very, very clear that it doesn't matter what the details look like, as long as you can spin it out there, the fact that you're getting something done—“Nobody is really going to pay too much attention to the details, so we're not really concerned.”

But when it comes to important issues, particularly of an environmental nature, and certainly this bill is one of them and another one is one we were debating last week on water-taking, these are extremely important pieces of legislation. To simply shut down debate and ram them through the process is dangerous, at the very least. It could lead to some major problems down the road if we don't give the bills the scrutiny they need and if we don't take an honest approach to reviewing the pros and cons as we go through the process. So, by invoking closure, we end up in a situation where that debate, that critique, that criticism is not given its full opportunity, and that's certainly shameful, to say the least.

When I last spoke about the bill particularly—it's interesting, because that was last week and of course over the weekend we had Earth Day celebrations in most communities across the province. Certainly in my community, I attended a number of Earth Day events. One of them was an annual Earth Day event which occurs down at Princess Point. It starts off as a bit of a walk, a five-kilometre walk, from Bayfront Park to Princess Point, and then follows up with an afternoon of planting trees in the Royal Botanical Gardens. In fact that is the organization that provides the trees and puts together the coordination and the effort of making sure there are enough trees for all the people so they can do the planting.

Interestingly enough, on Earth Day this year—it must have been 20 degrees or 21 degrees—it was very, very warm and there were thousands of people out to plant trees. Last year when we were doing the same planting, it was not very warm at all. In fact, it was fairly cold, drizzling and raining—a terrible day. And the year before that, it was actually drizzling, raining and snowing. Those three Earth Days, year over year, indicate quite clearly that there are some issues in terms of how our climate is changing in Ontario and in fact in Canada.

It was very instructive to be there at Earth Day just the other day, and I was able to talk to some of the people who I mentioned in my previous remarks. I mentioned a number of people who are active on environmental issues in my community, because governments can do all they can in terms of legislation—like this bill and others that this government and previous governments have put forward—but when it comes down to doing the real work of ensuring that environmental issues get the kind of attention they deserve in our communities, it's absolutely the grassroots activists and the people who are active at the community level who make that happen.

I know the minister responsible for democratic renewal is aware of this as well. She's from my community and she has been at meetings, as I have, on the remedial action plan and the need to get some really serious work done around Hamilton harbour. On Saturday, at the Earth

Day festivities, I had an opportunity to actually talk to people who are active in the remedial action plan and in the Bay Area Restoration Council and who are partners in other organizations that also assist with the implementation of RAP.

The one person I forgot to mention in last week's debate on this bill was a gentleman named Larry Pomerantz. Larry is the person who actually pulls together our Earth Day celebrations in Hamilton every year. I first met Larry years ago when I was on city council and he was coming to talk to me about whether the city would partner with him on an Earth Day celebration. I couldn't understand what he was getting at because, if I'm not mistaken, he wanted to have that very first Earth Day celebration inside Copps Coliseum. I just didn't get it. I couldn't understand why you'd be celebrating Earth Day inside one of the largest physical facilities that exist in my community. It's kind of the antithesis of an Earth Day location, from my perspective. But nonetheless, Larry's done some great work over the years in our community and has had ever-successful Earth Days. The only thing that makes Earth Day a little bit less successful is when the weather is not conducive to families.

On Saturday, there were many, many families. Yes, there were adults, but there were so many kids. I have to say it's very encouraging to see so many children out on Earth Day participating in the planting of trees and trying to bring back the habitat at Princess Point. That's why Earth Day takes place at Princess Point. It's an area that has, over hundreds of years, deteriorated as a natural area. The habitat that used to support so many fish, plant, animal and bird species has all but been destroyed over the years. So a big part of what Earth Day is in Hamilton is to try to regenerate that habitat as it was before it was ruined by human hands over the years.

If you ever want a lesson on how the degradation of an ecosystem leads to the loss of species, you simply need to go on to the computer and look up anything from Princess Point or the remedial action plan or the Bay Area Restoration Council. Any of those organizations will take you to links to this particular habitat regeneration effort that's happening in my own community.

1920

In fact, another part of it is a fishway, where they're trying to keep the carp from spawning through the Desjardins Canal and into the waters of the Princess Point area, because carp are an invasive species, and invasive species of fish, through the eating of the weeds and vegetation inside the water, are preventing the native species from proliferating in that area. So there's an entire system set up to prevent those carp from coming over, and it's an amazing process. Again, if people are in the Hamilton area in the springtime, I encourage you to go down and look at the fishway and be amazed by the wonderful work they're doing to try to make sure that the fish habitat is restored so that the native species that used to live there are able to once again become abundant in those waters.

The other thing that I raised last week—and it's interesting, because of the people who had raised that issue—was the environmentally sensitive area in Stoney Creek, a part of my city, where there is a threat of development occurring simply because of a lack of appropriate notice being given to a particular landowner, which happens to be the separate school board in the city of Hamilton. Interestingly enough, under the previous council that was in place before this last election, the school board somehow was not in receipt of a notice of zoning of lands and, unfortunately, as a result, successfully appealed the existence of this environmentally sensitive area. What that means is that there is a particular area called the turtle ponds that is being threatened. That habitat is an area that the blue spotted salamander happens to inhabit, and the people from that area, from those communities surrounding that area, have been very active in trying to convince the school board and the city of Hamilton not to allow development on that environmentally sensitive area.

I've got to tell you, it's kind of frustrating to sit at this level and watch various pieces of legislation come forward that purport to do all these things, whether it's greenbelt or water protection or endangered species. On the ground, we still seem to be losing a heck of a lot of important areas in our communities. Again, the turtle ponds is one that was brought to light last week in our local newspaper. The activists around the turtle pond issue were at Earth Day as well, trying to get support for their cause, and I had the opportunity to speak to a number of the people involved in that effort. All I can say is pretty much what I said when I first began my speech, which is that it's really these people on the ground who are making the effort to make a difference in terms of bringing some of these initiatives the government has put in place into the light of day and actually have them occur, have them breathe life, if you will, in communities across the province. My community certainly has been blessed with so many activists.

In fact, just on the weekend, on Earth Day, I met the new executive director—relatively new—of the Bay Area Restoration Council, a gentleman named Jim Hudson. Jim and I have made a commitment to sit down and have a talk, because I was very active and well-versed with the previous executive director. I haven't had a chance to sit down and talk to Jim lately, but I certainly will be doing that in the future, because he plays a key role in harnessing the volunteerism of a number of people in our community who work on the remedial action plan and other initiatives in Hamilton.

The issues before us in Bill 184 are sound ones in terms of the desire to protect various kinds of species. If you look on the Environment Canada website to find out exactly what it means when we talk about species at risk, the Environment Canada website indicates a number of categories of risk:

- extinct, which is a species that no longer exists;
- extirpated, which is a species no longer existing in the wild in Canada but occurring elsewhere;

—endangered, which is a species facing imminent extirpation or extinction;

—threatened, which is a species likely to become endangered if limiting factors are not reversed;

—species of special concern, which are particularly sensitive to human activities or natural events but not yet an endangered or threatened species;

—species that are data deficient; in other words, there isn't enough information about them; and

—species that are not at risk.

The interesting thing, as you go through the lists of endangered species, is the sheer numbers of them. I've got to tell you that many of the endangered species in Canada, in fact, are endangered in Ontario. In Canada, more than 500 wild animal and plant species are considered at risk, according to the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada, and nearly 40% of the Canadian species at risk are right here in Ontario, so it goes without saying that the import of this kind of legislation is absolutely unquestionable.

The issue has been raised by my own leader and others in my caucus of concern particularly around the consultation process, or lack thereof, and I know my colleague from the north will be talking about that a little bit later on. The member for Nickel Belt is very well aware of some of the concerns that some of the northern communities have, particularly around consultation. Again, I don't think it's the case that people are absolutely resistant to this legislation, which hasn't been updated since 1971, being updated; I don't think that's the issue. I think the issue is that there needs to be considerable and thoughtful consultation with stakeholders, and that means stakeholders across the board. I know that First Nations particularly have some concerns about the lack of consultation, consultation that's absolutely legally required for the government to undertake. So there are some serious issues there.

Coming from the community that I come from, I think it's high time we started to look at more effective control over the loss of our species of various types in the province of Ontario. That means everything from fish and birds and plants and—oh, here's a list: vascular plants, mosses, liverworts, hornworts, lichens, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals, fishes, molluscs, crustaceans, insects—the various kinds of species under which a number of different animals and plants can be categorized.

There is no doubt that there needs to be an improvement of the legislation, but there is also no doubt that in order to get it right after so many years of there being no changes, it's really incumbent upon the government to do a proper and appropriate consultation and not to rush the bill through simply because they're trying to throw a bunch of stuff against the wall to see if it's going to stick, in terms of getting their opinion polls up. That's simply an unfair way to treat such an important matter in terms of the future of the province and in terms of the legacy that we leave behind to our children and our grandchildren. I know that members have spoken about that as well in some of the previous debates on this very bill,

that they see this as really a stewardship issue that is the responsibility of all of us, and I don't think there's a single member in this House who would disagree that that's definitely the case.

Not only does there need to be open and transparent and diligent consultation on this bill, but in fact the government needs to recognize that the way the bill is currently written, as many members have raised as well, there are significant—I don't know if you want to call them loopholes, but there are certainly significant opportunities for things to slip through in terms of not actually being done to properly protect species that are endangered.

The reality, again, is that even though they say that they have consulted extensively, it has only really been about 10 months, and it has not been within the process of this very place, where we have committee hearings and public hearings, where we can see stakeholders coming from all areas of the province to have their input. So that kind of consultation in terms of the committee process has not taken place.

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Also, it's really clear that the bill itself provides opportunities for the minister to delay the designation of species as being endangered. The process is one that does require some milestones to be put in place, but the bottom line is, at the end of the day, there are significant loopholes that could cause problems if we really do intend to protect endangered species from further erosion.

There has been some positive response and some positive feedback in terms of the arm's-length scientific panel that's being put in place by the government to review and determine where there is a need to become involved in species protection. But notwithstanding the fact that the government has claimed that a 10-month informal consultation process is enough, the reality is that the bill before us doesn't even allow for royal assent until 2008. What does that mean? How can it be that you're in such a hurry to get this bill through and you're beating your breast, saying, "This is so important to us"? You waited till the last minute to bring it forward. You're saying that it's something you really want to do, yet, in the bill itself, it doesn't receive royal assent until 2008. It makes a person wonder if really the game here isn't to get you through yet another election so you can hold this bill over the head of environmentalists and say, "You'd better support us, because if you don't support us and we don't form the government, then it's not going to receive royal assent in 2008." I certainly hope that's not the game the government is playing, because that's a pretty nasty game. It's pretty inappropriate on issues of such great import to the province of Ontario and to our current generations and generations in the future, to actually hold something over their heads as a bit of a threat by putting in a proclamation date for the bill that's a year after the election takes place.

I have not seen another bill of that type with that kind of a long due date in terms of royal assent. It brings me

some concern. It makes me think that the government really is being a little bit too cute by half in terms of the procedures they're putting in place; on the one hand, complaining that it's taking so long and they've got to invoke closure, saying they've consulted like crazy when in fact the reality shows they haven't. Then if you look at the fine print at the beginning of the bill, oh, guess what? "We're not even going to get this made into law until well after the next election, so you environmentalists had better behave." It's kind of like some of the funding issues we've been raising in question period around the kinds of things the government might be holding over the heads of various groups in terms of making sure that they can get the votes when it comes to election day on October 10 in the province of Ontario.

It's something that really makes people shake their heads with disdain, when they see their governments behaving in that way. It's certainly not dignified; it's certainly not democratic; and it's certainly not reflective of the kind of governments that people are yearning for in the province of Ontario and in our country. I just advise the government that these cute little manipulations, if you want to call them that, don't go without notice and don't do much to raise the esteem of the government in the eyes of the people—certainly not people like me; certainly not people like my colleagues. I would warn them that others as well in the community sometimes actually watch these debates unfolding in the Legislature and they do hear the kinds of criticisms we bring. It's not all something that the government can simply think that people are not paying attention to, that it's the fine print nobody really notices, and, "If we go out there and talk about endangered species, then everybody's going to be on board and we're going to be popular again." You know what? I say "good luck" to the government. I don't think it's a strategy that's working. It's interesting to watch how many bills they're bringing forward at the 11th hour as opposed to doing what was supposed to be done, which was bring some of this legislation a lot earlier so it could have had the appropriate time, scrutiny and effort made in terms of the debate and in terms of the critical analysis.

Really, I think that everybody in this place does support this kind of legislation. But we shake our heads with concern and with curiosity as to why the government would not have brought it earlier. If it was so darn important, why wait until the 11th hour, until the dying days of their mandate, to bring this kind of legislation in?

I know that my colleague from Nickel Belt wants to talk about this legislation as well, so I'm going to sit and have myself a glass of water as my voice starts to get a little bit dry. Thank you very much for the opportunity.

Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs): Immediately, I'd like to provide the member from Hamilton East with the answer to her concern about the delay in the bill getting royal assent. We have 70 species that are backlogged right now that need to get their recovery plans in place. We've committed to do that work before we

implement this new bill. Our commitment is to get the 70 outstanding species into the recovery stage and get that work done. We've put the resources into the ministry to get that done. We need that breathing space before we tackle the new regime that comes with this act. So that's why we're doing that.

I'm pleased to be able to stand here tonight and speak again about our Endangered Species Act. We introduced this bill on March 20. We put second reading forward on March 28. If passed, it would make Ontario a North American leader in species-at-risk protection and recovery. Essentially, all parties have agreed that, if passed, this legislation would represent a milestone in the protection and recovery of Ontario's species at risk and establish a benchmark for North America. It is also generally agreed that by expanding protection for our province's species and their habitats, the new act would help ensure that future generations of Ontarians enjoy the benefits of a healthy, abundant and biologically diverse natural environment.

If passed by the Legislature, the proposed Endangered Species Act, 2007, would broaden the scope of Ontario's existing Endangered Species Act, strengthen protection and recovery measures, and provide more flexibility for implementation. It would provide greater accountability to the public and demonstrate clear results. It would also encourage greater stewardship involvement from landowners, resource users and conservation organizations. The McGuinty government has proposed to back up this approach with funding of \$18 million over four years to promote stewardship activities protecting essential habitat and green space. This is separate from funds to support the implementation of the act.

There has been much discussion in the House about consultation. We are grateful for the significant input we have already received from stakeholders and aboriginal communities. We are continuing to work closely with groups and individuals to discuss common ground and approaches to implement the proposed legislation that will address the needs of a range of stakeholders, interest groups and landowners.

We began the consultation process in May 2006, when we launched a review of the existing Endangered Species Act. Over the past year, we have consulted widely with key resource users, landowners and conservation organizations. We have met with organizations representing agricultural interests more than a dozen times since last June. We have met with representatives from mining and aggregates more than 10 times. Ten meetings were held with aboriginal communities across the province last fall, and another three this month. We have also met with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. The public was consulted through face-to-face meetings, newspaper ads, a discussion paper, an online questionnaire, and through three Environmental Bill of Rights registry postings. Our EBR postings have generated thousands of responses from interested stakeholders and individuals. In our most recent EBR posting, which just closed last Thursday, we received over 280 individual comments, 1,200 faxes and

800 e-mails. Included in this response were individual submissions from our key stakeholders. We are carefully evaluating and considering each response as we move forward.

These meetings are still happening. Just last week we held round-table discussions in Windsor, Kingston and Thunder Bay. All comments received at meetings, from the EBR postings and written submissions were considered in the drafting of this legislation. The proposed bill incorporates lessons learned from other jurisdictions, including the experience that the federal government has had implementing the Species at Risk Act. Bill 184 includes provisions to facilitate harmonization between the Ontario and federal governments to meet the needs of species-at-risk protection and recovery. Consultation will continue, and it is an important component of our program and policy development. Bill 184 may be referred to committee, and if that is the will of the Legislature, there will be additional opportunities for input through the public hearings process. I am also committed to establishing an advisory committee, enabled by Bill 184, that would include a cross-section of stakeholders and provide invaluable advice on all facets of implementation.

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In preparing the proposed legislation, MNR conducted a separate aboriginal consultation. We believe that the proposed legislation is unique in Canada for its inclusion of specific provisions to accommodate aboriginal interests. The ministry's aboriginal consultation included:

- an individual letter and copy of the discussion paper mailed to approximately 150 aboriginal communities across Ontario in May of last year;

- meetings held with key individuals within aboriginal communities who have involvement or experience in species at risk to gain information related to the intersection of aboriginal interests with proposed species-at-risk legislation and its subsequent implementation;

- a series of workshops held in October and November 2006 across the province, strategically located to maximize opportunities for attendance by aboriginal organizations and communities, and subsequent follow-up discussions were arranged based on information received through the above consultation approaches.

Three additional meetings have taken place over the past week to continue our ongoing discussion with aboriginal peoples.

MNR will continue to provide feedback to aboriginal interests on the proposed legislation and will involve them in its implementation. The "purposes" section highlights aboriginal traditional knowledge as one of the key components in assessing species at risk by the species assessment body, which is the committee on the status of species at risk in Ontario, commonly known as COS-SARO. Individuals with aboriginal traditional knowledge will be eligible for appointment to COSSARO. COS-SARO species classification is based on best available scientific information, including aboriginal traditional knowledge. A non-derogation clause is included regard-

ing existing aboriginal and treaty rights. The proposed legislation makes it clear that it does not abrogate or derogate the protection provided for the existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada as recognized and affirmed in section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

We also welcome input on ways in which aboriginal interests can continue to be addressed. The government is committed to meeting its constitutional obligations in respect to aboriginal peoples. It is important to note that the meetings held with aboriginal communities to discuss Bill 184 and ways to involve and address aboriginal interests are being well received. Aboriginal consultation will continue as we proceed to develop implementation approaches and stewardship programs.

There has been some discussion in the House about the funding commitments in the provincial budget for the Ministry of Natural Resources this year versus previous years. I am very glad my official opposition critic is here tonight, as he always is, and very eager to learn more. I'm pleased to provide him with this information. There have been claims that MNR's budget has been reduced by an unseemly sum of \$36 million. I have to assure the member here tonight and the people of Ontario that that is certainly not the case. The \$36-million reduction referred to is part of a one-time allocation for extra money received by MNR last year to deal with a higher-than-normal forest firefighting season. I think the member understands that. In fact, the ministry's 2007 budget will increase by more than 6%, to \$726 million, from the 2006 Ontario budget expense of \$682 million. Part of this additional funding for MNR will go directly towards implementing the programs outlined in Bill 184.

Our approach to better protection and recovery of species at risk in Ontario includes not only the legislation but the development of strong programs and stewardship opportunities. We know that broader legislation on its own is not enough to achieve our goals, and we also know that the public and stakeholders unanimously support proactive stewardship and incentive approaches. Because many species that need protection are found on private land, voluntary stewardship activities are essential to achieving any kind of success in reversing the rate of species in decline that is now happening in Ontario.

Bill 184 is proposing a "stewardship first" approach, a key recommendation of many of the land users, to help landowners do the right thing. This program will provide on-the-ground support to landowners, aboriginal groups and stakeholders to provide the tools and incentives they need to help do the right things for species at risk. The program will be guided by a number of principles, including building on existing stewardship agents and funds, voluntary participation, province-wide availability, and accountability and transparency.

Examples of activities that could be supported through this program include: support to farmers and landowners for the creation and maintenance of species-at-risk habitat on their properties; support for the forestry, urban development and other industries through funding of

research projects that identify ways of integrating protection and recovery into their business; outreach and education projects that provide information on species at risk to the public and provide opportunities for youth employment; the purchase of key species-at-risk habitat from willing sellers.

We also recognize that flexibility is needed regarding certain activities, particularly when the outcome is beneficial to the species or where significant socio-economic interests for the province are involved. Bill 184 contains provisions for stewardship agreements that are not provided for in the current act. These agreements could support the agricultural sector in their stewardship efforts and ensure that they do not face future restrictions as a result.

Many species at risk in southern Ontario are found in areas that are already natural or naturalized. It is very rare for active agricultural croplands to be considered species-at-risk habitat. Where species at risk are found on working agricultural lands, we will work with the agricultural community to develop long-term stewardship and best management practices that, where possible, facilitate continued agricultural activities and protection for species at risk.

Activities that might benefit the agricultural community that could be supported through the stewardship program include: topping up environmental cost-share programs available to farmers for the creation and maintenance of species-at-risk habitat; funding research projects to identify ways of integrating species-at-risk protection and recovery into agricultural practices; the development and implementation of recovery plans for species at risk which enable a wide variety of stakeholders, including farmers, to get engaged in recovery planning; and the securing of high-priority species-at-risk habitat, including opportunities for purchase, lease and easement of properties in co-operation with land-owners and existing partnerships.

We are also very aware of the significant interest in the role of forest management activities related to species at risk, as well as their protection and recovery. This government has made a significant investment to ensure the vitality of the forest industry and northern communities in this province. We have and continue to demonstrate our commitment to the forest industry. The forest industry is already addressing many species at risk through the forest management planning process. Approaches for addressing other species at risk are currently being developed through landscape guides. The forest management planning process provides a good vehicle for dealing with species at risk. The proposed legislation complements forest management planning activities and provides opportunities to integrate species and habitat protection more effectively.

Our objective is to address species at risk through existing processes to the maximum extent possible. We are continuing discussions with the forest industry to develop effective means of implementation. Agreements and permits will provide flexibility that does not current-

ly exist under the present act, which will allow industry to strengthen its position with consumers and investors alike. In addition, the forestry and forest products sectors will be provided with a range of stewardship incentives to ensure continued engagement in the species-at-risk protection and recovery actions.

As I said earlier, I don't believe there is any disagreement in the House that the people of Ontario deserve the benefits that come from conserving our province's unique natural heritage and rich biodiversity. I believe we have succeeded in developing progressive, precedent-setting legislation that would offer optimum protection for Ontario's species at risk while at the same time support the overall social and economic well-being of our citizens.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): I am very pleased tonight to be able to debate time allocation of Bill 184, An Act to protect species at risk and to make related changes to other Acts. I think what is disappointing is that, generally speaking—a lot of members of this assembly certainly support species at risk and the protection of any of our species—is the whole fact that in this era of democratic renewal, when we thought we were maybe doing some reform to this House, we would be time-allocating everything.

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At a home show on Sunday, I talked to a group of people from the citizens' assembly up in Simcoe North. I mentioned to them that in spite of the fact that they're talking about democratic renewal, we've actually time-allocated the democratic reform bill. And here we are again tonight. I've just learned that we're now time-allocating the water-taking bill.

So you wonder, what's the rush here? Why are we in such a panic to time-allocate everything? The House can sit until the end of June; we can certainly do committee hearings. There are a bunch of words that I think we need to get involved with here, and I think we could start using some "gate" phrases. For example, Caplanguate, slush-gate, Collegate, broken-promises-gate, autism-gate, Bill 140-gate—it goes on and on and on.

You guys want out of the House; that's the only problem. That's why we're not travelling this bill to Thunder Bay or to Sudbury. The minister just mentioned all of the wonderful consultations he had done, but you know what? No committee of this Legislature has done it. He talked about meeting with the aboriginals and meeting with the timber industry etc. Give me a break. That's what everybody is saying: Why can we not travel this bill? What's the rush? What are you trying to hide? What are we trying to hide in this House that we cannot take this bill on committee hearings? You waste more money in any given hour on props than it would take to go to Thunder Bay or Sudbury and actually listen to the folks in those communities. People want to hear that. They want the opportunity to say that a legislative committee went to those communities. It's not going to happen. We've time-allocated it. We're down to a couple of mornings in this House now. That's what has happened.

The reality is, they want out of the House. They're going to try to get out of here by the May 24 weekend.

Interjections.

Mr. Dunlop: Absolutely, that's what you want. You know it.

Interjection.

Mr. Dunlop: Then travel the bill. If you don't want out of this House early, then travel this bill. Why are we time-allocating this bill? What is the rush? You've been the whole term in getting it to the House, the same as with the water-taking bill. I can tell you right now, on the water-taking bill, there are a number of people, including the Georgian Bay Association, who want an opportunity. They've called me. They want an opportunity to debate that bill in committee hearings. They're told that it's not going to happen; they're not going to get an opportunity. So you know what? We heard Mr. Colle today, and he didn't answer one question; the Minister of Citizenship didn't answer one question to do with slushgate. He talked around it. I can tell you that when we're talking about an era of democratic renewal and the cabinet of Ontario is going to put a question on the ballot talking about democratic renewal, it's a sad day when we're time-allocating every bill leading up to that decision.

The minister talks about all the new money in MNR. Maybe there is a lot of additional funding that's gone in; I don't know. But I can tell you one thing. Have you ever gone to the Midhurst office of MNR? It's a beautiful building down beside the county council chambers, next door to the education centre. You walk in this dingy hole in this beautiful building, you pick up this old phone and try to find somebody in the building who can come out of secret hiding. They'll tell you, if you get the right number, that they'll come down and meet you. There used to actually be somebody at the door to talk to you. They'd say, "I'll call your office," or "I'll get you this information." People are complaining to me about this all the time. I hear it over and over again. Talk about the fine service of MNR, and you know what? There's no money.

Let's talk for a second about all this money that's floating around in MNR and what it's going to do for species at risk. Let's talk about Lake Simcoe, and the fact that the whitefish are now basically destroyed; they have to restock the whitefish. Now we're finding that the herring are leaving Lake Simcoe. Do you know what it's going to cost to rehabilitate that lake? I don't know if anybody realizes: \$163 million. If they put in about \$100,000 a year, by the year 3000 we might have one fish or something restored to the lake. It'll never happen. And you know what? Aquatic mammals or fish are included in the species at risk. So I can't imagine how it will ever happen. At \$18 million over four years, it's not going to happen.

We all want to save the species, but let's be upfront about this. Let's not hide behind some secret proposal or secret program. We need to put real money into these programs, we need to put real money into the Ministry of Natural Resources, and we need to do a proper job in

making sure that the species are in fact protected, not hide behind something.

The former Minister of Natural Resources, the member for Oshawa, who spoke very eloquently on this bill, obviously knows a lot about all the different species across the province. He mentioned to me that the Ministry of Natural Resources conservation officers don't have enough money for gas for their vehicles. Last year, we know they shut them off for the summer.

Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound): They sold cookies.

Mr. Dunlop: They had bake sales, and they sold little flags and things like that. They'd go to the fall fairs, and they'd sell balloons or something like that to find gas for the conservation officers' equipment. It's pretty pathetic. Although we're trying to protect the species, we don't have money for the conservation officers to go out and actually protect them.

Interjection.

Mr. Dunlop: I hear the minister responsible for democratic renewal now heckling me. You know what? On a closure motion, I wouldn't talk too loud, Minister, because people have caught on to this democratic renewal process—nothing but a joke.

Interjection.

Mr. Dunlop: The Minister of Labour is over there heckling me again. I'd be more worried about Green Lane. The minister had better go down to Green Lane. Start knocking on doors now, because you're going to need every vote you can possibly get. Green Lane is going to destroy five seats down there, and you know it.

Interjection.

Mr. Dunlop: If he's not worried about Green Lane, why is he over there screaming at me?

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order, please. Order.

Mr. Dunlop: He's now claiming we closed 71 MNR offices. Name two of them. You couldn't name two if you tried hard. You couldn't name them. Fine, get on the BlackBerry; find some spin doctor. Maybe Warren Kinsella can help you find a name. Maybe it was some office in Manitoba or Prince Edward Island.

The fact of the matter is, we're time-allocating a bill that the citizens of the province of Ontario want an opportunity to debate. They want to debate it in Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury or North Bay. What is the problem? That's what this is all about. We just want an opportunity for committee hearings. No one is screaming loud about this. We just want that opportunity.

I brought this up last week. Environmental Defence had their lobby evening, and I thought it was a brilliant idea that they came up with the playing cards—and they had all kinds of members from all different political parties in the reception—and actually showed us a number of the plants and birds and fish and animals that would possibly be extinct in this province if we didn't do something about it. I know that Ontario Nature is behind them. They're supporting it as well, and most of the members of this House do.

The reality is that I just cannot understand what the rush is to time-allocate this bill, that we cannot take a committee of eight people to Sudbury or Thunder Bay or Sault Ste. Marie or maybe North Bay, wherever it may be in the north, to let the people have an opportunity to have a—there's a major impact on those people.

The minister, a few minutes ago, mentioned how wonderful it was with agriculture. I've got this huge press release saying that the Ontario Federation of Agriculture is not happy at all with it. I thought they met with them seven times. I guess it was seven times they said no, and now they're disappointed in it. So we're going to time-allocate it so no one has to go on the defence.

The reality is, as I said earlier, it's all about slushgate, Caplangate and Lottogate, all these different things. They want out of this House badly. It was pathetic to hear the answers today. It was one of the most pathetic days I've seen in this House, watching these individuals actually trying to answer a question, not being straightforward with the people of the province. It was disappointing, as a politician, to think that in this era of democratic renewal, we have to put up with this garbage. It was pathetic. I'm disappointed in the ministers that we've had to create things like slushgate—we have to run and hide to get out of this area.

Interjections.

Mr. Dunlop: I know there are lots of people heckling and they're not agreeing with what I'm saying, but I see it in MNR. I see the cuts to places like Midhurst, and I see that the conservation officers have no money for gasoline in their boats and vehicles. It's very, very disappointing.

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Maybe there will be all kinds of money flowing around. Who knows? But the reality is that as we speak right now, there's a shortage of money in the MNR. There's certainly not enough money in the MNR budget to protect the species at risk; that's a fact. If you think that \$4 million a year is going to compensate for all the costs associated with the implementation of this bill, it's not going to happen. It's very disappointing for members of this House who want to support this bill. I'm one person who wants to support this bill. I know that not everyone in my caucus may feel exactly the same way as I do, but the reality is, I really believe strongly in the fact that we need to protect as many species as we can, and at the same time, try to compensate the proper landowners for issues that they face and that type of thing. That's the only way I think we can move forward with it in this era.

I've had an opportunity to say a few words. I just want to sum up by saying that I wish they would reconsider it once again, but it looks like it's not going to happen because, as I said earlier, we just found out about the water-taking bill—it's been time-allocated. I don't know. I guess every bill is going to be time-allocated from here on in. We'll likely be out of here in two weeks the way it's going. I mean, I thought we were sitting here to mid-June or late June.

Interjection: They used to complain about time allocation.

Mr. Dunlop: Yes, they used to complain a lot about time allocation if anybody did it the odd time. But now we're doing every bill on time allocation, because the reality is—

Hon. Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal): Sixty-one per cent of your bills were time-allocated.

Mr. Dunlop: Well, 100% of your bills are being time-allocated. It's 100% of your bills, so you have to answer to these questions.

But, do you know what? You're giving us a lot of ammunition because with slushgate and Lottogate and all these scandals that we seem to be running into, it's starting to make Chuck Guité and the boys look not too bad.

I keep going back to old Chrétien with that golf ball, making fun of Gomery. And this is coming to be what we're seeing in this House, as they're trying to answer to the people of Ontario on some of the questions. We just want to know: Why have we increased spending in this province by \$23 billion in four years when we're not seeing results? We've got conservation officers without gas. We've got secret slush funds. Basically, in my opinion, what has happened in some of these ministries is almost scandalous.

I appreciate this opportunity to speak tonight. I know my other colleagues want to say a few words as well. But I wish the government would, one more time, reconsider the whole intent of time-allocating this bill. Make the people of Ontario proud. Let's put this bill to committee hearings properly in northern Ontario, where they deserve that opportunity. Let the farmers and the agricultural community have one more crack at this. Let's pass this bill with dignity and respect, and we can carry those types of results into a democratic renewal vote in the fall.

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I'd like to say that it's a pleasure to participate in the debate, but it's not, because we're dealing with a time allocation motion, which is designed to grab members by the throat and choke off their debate and choke off any opportunity that we might have to represent some views from our constituents or from folks who live in our part of the world; in my case specifically, some aboriginal communities, and I'll speak a little bit later to that.

If you look at the time allocation motion that the government is forcing down our throats this evening, you will very clearly see that this is all about ensuring that the committee process is going to be as truncated as possible and the government is going to do whatever it can to limit the number of people who can come and have their say on this particular bill. I can tell you that a lot of First Nations would want the opportunity to come and do that, and they're not going to get a chance to do that. Frankly, I think the bill should be travelling and the government should go to some of those First Nations communities.

Those who live above the 50th parallel are the ones who will be most affected by the passage of this bill, so it might be a good idea for the committee to actually hear from those folks. Of course, they're not going to have that opportunity, because you can bet your boots this committee is only sitting here in Toronto and it's sitting for a limited period of time and there's going to be a limited number of presenters who ever get to have any say.

Then you look at the opportunity to put amendments, and it's very clear that on the single day that amendments are going to be dealt with, by 5 o'clock, regardless of how many amendments are left to deal with, that's going to be it, that's going to be all. Five o'clock: Anything left over that should have been moved, should be dealt with, should be debated, is going to be deemed to have been moved, is going to be deemed to have been debated, and that's going to be the end of that process too. So in the time allocation motion it's also very clear that the government is not very interested in any amendments, because if they were, they wouldn't be here with a motion that's designed to cut off that process very rapidly at 5 o'clock on the afternoon of May 9.

Then if you look at the next section of the motion, which talks about what's going to happen on third reading, again you've got the government choking off that debate very quickly: one afternoon scheduled for the debate on third reading. At that particular time, the time available is going to be divided up between the members of all the parties. It might happen in an afternoon or it might happen in an evening sitting; regardless, in one of those sittings and only one, there's going to be a little bit of debate on third reading, and at the end of that, the vote will be called, and that will be the end of that process too.

So here we are with a motion that is designed in every way, shape and form to make sure that people can't come and have their say, that presentations can't be made in terms of dealing with some very different sides to this issue that are out there, to make very clear that there aren't going to be a whole lot of amendments put or debated or allowed, except for whatever government amendments might come through, because they're going to be deemed to have passed—and of course, with their majority, they are—and barely anything on third reading, because really the government doesn't want to hear what any of us have to say with respect to what our constituents are telling us about this particular bill.

It's a little hard to take from a government that talked about democratic renewal. It's a bit ironic that the very bill that talked about changes around democratic renewal was also time-allocated. Now we find out—and I didn't know till my colleague from the Conservative Party spoke just before me—that another time allocation motion has been filed for tomorrow for the water-taking bill. So here we go. I guess this is going to be the order of the day from here on in for however long we sit.

I resent that, because with this particular issue, the government had lots of time to bring forward a new bill. If it was such a priority for the government, where have

they been? We are in the fourth year of this Liberal mandate, with about five months to go before the election, and suddenly this is a big rush, rush, get this through: "If you don't support it, you don't care about endangered species, blah, blah, blah." You've got to say, "Look, folks, if it was a priority, where have you been?"

That takes me to the minister's comments about royal assent. I find it very curious that it's such a big rush and it's so important and we've got to do something about endangered species and "Get on board, because if you're not, you're against endangered species." And lo and behold, royal assent for the bill is not even going to take place until June 2008. So what kind of rush is that?

Now, here's the response the minister gives, here's the rationale. Listen to this. The minister says, "We can't do it before then because we have 70 species at risk where we haven't done species management plans or species recovery plans." Seventy: That should tell you how low a priority endangered species are with this government. If today, as we stand here and debate this, the government has no less than 70 species that have already been identified as at risk and you've done zero, zip, nada to put any money on the table to actually deal with the recovery plan for those 70, does this sound like a priority to you? It doesn't to me. That's a really lame rationale. Frankly, it gives an even blacker eye to the government to stand here today and admit that we have to hold off on royal assent for a year because we haven't done anything about the 70 species at risk that have already been identified and we've got to deal with them first before we can even look at new ones. What kind of priority is that? Zero. No priority. That's the reality.

If endangered species had been a priority with this government, then this government would have been putting money on the table to deal with those 70 species that have already been identified and would have put that money on the table to make sure recovery plans were in place to deal with those species. I wonder how many more of them have been lost because the government hasn't done anything about dealing with the backlog of the 70 species that already have been identified.

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So that excuse about royal assent is pathetic. It gives the government an even blacker eye, It clearly shows that endangered species haven't been a priority with this government and are only becoming a priority for them for political purposes, because we are in the fourth term of this government, within five months of an election, and this government has got to go forward and try and show somebody that they have done something about endangered species before we hit the next election. But it hasn't been a priority. The mere fact that we have 70 species at risk today without recovery plans, that that has been the case under the Liberal government for the last four years, says it all in terms of how little a priority endangered species have been for this government.

This is all a public relations exercise, regrettably, on an issue that is very important, that I consider to be very important. It's a public relations exercise on the eve of an

election, because so very little has been done by this government to date to deal with the species that have already been identified as at risk.

I also heard the minister say, “Oh my goodness, we’re going to propose some new money so we can deal with these species recovery plans.” Holy jeez, who believes this? Who believes any more that the Ministry of Natural Resources is going to get some new money, additional money, to deal with these 70 recovery plans that they’ve already got to do and then the new ones they want to add some time after royal assent, some time after June 2008? The Ministry of Natural Resources staff in North Bay about two months ago held a bake sale just to raise money for gas for the conservation officers. The MNR staff themselves held a bake sale. Doesn’t that tell you a little bit about how sad the situation is at the Ministry of Natural Resources right now in terms of funding for conservation officers, the very people we trust out there to be looking after the protection of fish and wildlife? There was a public meeting less than a month ago in my own community of Sudbury hosted by a number of people who are avid fishers and hunters because they are so concerned that in Sudbury it’s the same thing: no gas for any vehicles for conservation officers to be out there in the bush protecting our fish and our wildlife.

I find it so hard to believe that magically, with the passage of this bill, MNR is going to get some new money to deal with recovery plans. I’m sorry, that has not been the track record for this ministry over the last four years. On the contrary, the funding crisis at MNR has gotten worse and worse and worse. I find it hard to believe that magically there’s going to be some money available to deal with this particular legislation. In fact, things are so bad that MNR staff in my own riding actually did their own petition about underfunding of the Ministry of Natural Resources and had me read into it the record, and of course I supported it. It was MNR staff in the Sudbury district that put together the petition. They of course signed it, friends and neighbours signed it, and they sent it to me to point out how bad the situation now is in terms of funding.

So if anyone believes for half a moment that something is just going to change that dramatically and that MNR is going to get some money to make this work, I don’t know what world they’re living in, because that has not been the track record or the legacy or the history of what has happened in this ministry under the McGuinty Liberals.

I heard the minister read into the record the consultation with aboriginal communities. I want to focus on this, because the reality is that the group of folks who will be most affected by whatever happens around this legislation are aboriginal people who live north of the 50th parallel. They are the ones who live closest to the land. They are the ones who, in terms of trying to maintain a traditional way of life, continue to hunt and fish and rely on and live off the land. They will be the ones who will be most impacted by this bill, and I hope that most people in this Legislature recognize that. So it

seems to me that over and above the government’s constitutional obligations to consult, there is an added responsibility to consult because these First Nations are the ones who will be most affected. The minister says, “There was all kinds of consultation. My goodness, we were talking to this community and that community and this aboriginal group and that aboriginal group, tribal councils and the whole nine yards”—except that I’ve got some correspondence here from a number of First Nations north of 50, and what they’re telling me is absolutely categorically different than what the minister tried to put on the table here tonight. So let me read some of them into the record.

This comes from the Wapekeka First Nation: “Mr. David Ramsay, the Minister of Natural Resources and minister responsible for aboriginal affairs, has been requested by our community leadership to meet our First Nation with respect to on-going disturbing matters stemming from the designation of the Waterway Provincial Park in our territory.” He continues to refuse to meet. “The chief and council cannot understand Mr. Ramsay’s procedures by not consulting with our First Nation with respect to any bills which can affect our traditional territory.

“Similarly, as [with] any bill the province wants to put in the form of legislation, there has never been any kind of community consultation process. Legally, our First Nation believes that we are not part of it to begin with and we will never be part of it until we have been properly consulted and until our First Nation can agree to support any proposed bill....

“Finally, I want to reiterate that the province has not contacted our First Nation about Bill 184, which I believe will produce significant impact on our lands, plants, trees, fish, birds and animals. In my opinion, any legislation applicable within the laws and justice system in Ontario will eventually penalize our right to use our traditional lands and resources.”

This is from Chief Norman Brown, Wapekeka First Nation, March 30, 2007.

Here is the next one, from the Chapleau Ojibwe First Nation. It reads as follows:

“Please be advised that the Chapleau Ojibwe First Nation (COFN) has not been consulted on this matter”—Bill 184—“due mainly to the fact that the consultation methodology fell far short of legal requirements. Two telephone discussions took place with Debbie Ramsey, manager of the Ontario Endangered Species Act legislative review with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources regarding the importance of this process and the concerns being expressed by COFN. A number of suggestions were made regarding how the methodology could be shifted on the fly as a means of meeting some of COFN’s more important concerns, but there was no response from the province....

“As you know, the province of Ontario recently developed an internal duty-to-consult strategy that fell far short of its legal obligations. More recently, the Ontario Ministry of Northern Development and Mines developed

a discussion paper in support of developing an aboriginal consultation approach for mineral sector activities. The Nishnawbe Aski Nation, of which COFN is a member, has developed its own duty-to-consult strategy that the province doesn't seem interested in following. It is COFN's position that the above products greatly simplify the task of developing a duty-to-consult framework that meets everyone's needs. Unfortunately, COFN's request to the Chapleau district manager of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources for a small amount of funding to sponsor a pilot project that would connect all of these pieces was turned down.

"Perpetuating the legal and political risk associated with the duty-to-consult issue continues to undermine economic stability in northern Ontario at a time when it is needed the most."

That's dated April 10, from the Chapleau Ojibwe First Nation—no consultation in any meaningful way at all between the government and this First Nation.

This one is from the Fort Severn First Nation, dated April 4, 2007. It says as follows: "This is to inform you that our First Nation has never been consulted during the formation of this bill, and to our knowledge, representatives from our tribal council ... are not aware of this legislation and have not been asked for input during its development." The tribal council at Fort Severn would probably include six or seven First Nations, not just Fort Severn.

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This is from the office of the grand chief, Stan Louttit, grand chief for Mushkegowuk Council out of Moose Factory. It says the following: "For your information, there has been no consultation on the subject matter." That's the grand chief for Mushkegowuk Council. I would think if the government was actually seriously interested in talking to the leadership of First Nations in northern Ontario, they would have talked to Grand Chief Stan Louttit. It's very clear—this letter is dated April 10—that there was no consultation. Maybe there has been now, but there certainly wasn't any in the 10 months when the minister says this legislation was developed, and there certainly wasn't any up to that point in time where the legislation was actually introduced.

Here's another one. This one is from the Whitewater Lake First Nation, which is in Thunder Bay. It says the following: "To date we have not heard about any consultations with Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) regarding Bill 184 and this issue never even came up during recent meetings we've had with them. If there were consultations going on, they"—the Ministry of Natural Resources—"had many opportunities to inform us and we also believe this bill could definitely impact First Nations in many areas. The only issue being discussed with MNR is about Ontario Parks and it is one that will be ongoing..." That was dated March 27, 2007, Chief Arlene Slipperjack of the Whitewater Lake First Nation.

Here's another one, dated April 2, 2007, from the chief and council of the Attawapiskat First Nation. It says

as follows: "The Ministry of Natural Resources did consult with our director of lands and resources on the proposed legislation several months ago, at one meeting. On our behalf, she invited MNR staff to come and talk to the community and elders about the rare species legislation but they"—MNR—"never accepted our" invitation. "This was quite a disappointment for us as we feel it is important to the MNR staff to understand the importance of woodland caribou to our people (woodland caribou being one of the species included in the proposed legislation)." That was dated April 2, 2007, signed by Chief Mike Carpenter, Attawapiskat First Nation.

Here's the final one I'm going to read into the record. This was dated April 3, 2007, from the Independent First Nations Alliance. It reads as follows:

"Independent First Nations Alliance has received no requests for consultation from Minister Ramsay on Bill 184, An Act to protect species at risk. Normally, something of this magnitude would be faxed to our office. Additionally, nothing has been mentioned during the northern table discussions that we have attended.

"We are disturbed by the claim of 'exhaustive consultation conducted with many groups including First Nations' in the minister's introduction of the bill to the Legislature. Nothing has come through our office requesting consultation on legislation for species at risk at the provincial level.

"We would like to formally request that you ask the minister for a list of the 'many groups' he has consulted on the development of Bill 184."

That is signed by Gerry McKay, CEO of the Independent First Nations Alliance.

It would probably be interesting actually to put in an FOI and ask the Minister of Natural Resources for the list of the many aboriginal groups that he has consulted on the development of Bill 184, but I'll share with you this story: It's probably not going to get this group or us very far. I'll tell you why. On October 4, the Minister of Health, in introducing the long-term-care legislation, said to the media outside after he had introduced the bill that many groups who had talked to the government about long-term care said that no minimum standards of care were required in Ontario. On that very day, on hearing that outside, I put in a freedom-of-information request to the Ministry of Health asking for the list of those groups, those organizations, those individuals who actually told the Ministry of Health that no minimum standard of care was required for residents of long-term-care homes. Here we are today, April 23, and there's still no response from the Ministry of Health on the list of groups who allegedly told the government that no minimum standards of care were required. From October 4 to April 23, there has been zero in terms of a reply from the ministry regarding that very list that the minister talked about outside of the House.

Given that most recent experience, we could probably put in an FOI, but I'll bet we'll be stonewalled in the same way that I'm now being stonewalled with respect to this information from the Ministry of Health, not to

mention the three years of stonewalling that I have had to put up with from this government while just trying to get some information about the legal costs, taxpayers' money, that this government has squandered fighting the parents of autistic children in court—over three years now.

On the eve of when the government was supposed to release this information to me as a result of an order made by the privacy commissioner's office, did I get the information? No. On March 7, I got filed with a notice that the government is going to go to judicial review. I now have the pleasure of going to judicial review to defend my right to try to get this information, not only on behalf of those parents, but on behalf of all taxpayers, who should know why that is happening.

Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh): It's certainly a pleasure to be in the House this evening to take part in this time allocation motion on Bill 184, the Endangered Species Act. I would like to preface my comments this evening by reading from Ontario's biodiversity strategy of 2005.

"Ontarians are fortunate to live in a province that is home to an abundant variety of plants, animals, birds, fish and insects, as well as the forests, wetlands, lakes and rivers they inhabit. This broad network of biological species and systems—our biodiversity—enriches our lives and provides us with clean water and air, as well as sources of food, wood, medicines and energy.

"Conserving Ontario's biodiversity is key to achieving a healthy environment, strong communities and a thriving economy. It includes protecting the variety of ecosystems and plant and animal species in Ontario and using our natural resources sustainably for the benefit of Ontarians."

I read that because when you look at the situation today, with 176 animals and plants in Ontario determined to be at risk—10 extirpated, 76 endangered, 45 threatened and 45 of special concern—it is a necessity now—not later but now—to follow the 2005 report of Ontario's biodiversity strategy and to do what they recommended: "Review and update Ontario species-at-risk legislation to provide broader protection for species at risk and their habitats, and to include requirements for recovery planning, assessment, reporting and enforcement."

When I was given the opportunity to speak tonight, I thought back to what I did in the riding on Saturday. On Saturday, I was down at the Raisin Region Conservation Authority, taking part in Earth Day celebrations, where I met Norm Genier, the soil and water conservation specialist at that authority, and also Lisa Delandes, the fish and wildlife specialist, along with a team of Home Depot employees who came out to assist in handing out trees, educating the public on how to plant those trees, educating the public on soil, water, the air—all part of that tree. That's important. I also saw a whole selection of birdhouses. Certainly, Ms. Delandes was interested in people getting educated about how they could regenerate the eastern bluebird into our wildlife of eastern Ontario.

I remember, as a young lad on the farm back in the 1950s and early 1960s, where between our house and the barn on that farm we had a hydro pole, and on that hydro pole was a birdhouse. Every year, my father looked forward to seeing the eastern bluebird return. But you know, for whatever reason, the eastern blue bird disappeared on that property, and basically disappeared in eastern Ontario. Certainly it was with the formation, in 1988, of the Ontario Eastern Bluebird Society that we saw a regeneration of the eastern bluebird.

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I'll never forget the Sunday morning about five years ago that I looked out from my bedroom window and here was an eastern bluebird scouting out a birdhouse that I had on my property. My daughters thought I was crazy, and my wife thought I was very crazy that I was making quite a scene about the eastern bluebird. I did that, for I remember those years on the farm, many years ago, back in the 1950s, when it was always the rite of spring for the bluebird to come back. And to stand in the House this evening and to say that this is not a popularity contest—this has nothing to do with popularity as was alluded to in this House tonight; it has to do with doing the right thing at the right time in a planned way. And I think that's exactly what we're doing.

A comment was made this evening that also got me kind of charged. We have in this bill planned a stewardship program for species at risk in Ontario. The minister alluded to that, talked about it. And, you know, I spent a little bit of time this afternoon thinking back to Lake St. Francis in my riding, a lake that was just teeming, for years and years, with yellow perch. We know that the yellow perch is on the decline in Lake St. Francis, and it has been attributed to the tributaries that flow into Lake St. Francis. The Raisin Region Conservation Authority did a plan: Lake St. Francis Tributary Restoration Project. In that project it's unbelievable, with a little bit of money, what has happened along the shoreline and out in the river, out in this lake, which is part of the St. Lawrence River system.

I think about the committee that was organized to make sure that the funds were distributed in the proper way to those who would make the greatest benefit from those funds: the conservation authority and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the Ministry of Natural Resources, the St. Lawrence River Restoration Council, the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association and the resource stewardship council of the SD&G. They were all involved. What did it do? It got 10,000 livestock out of water courses. It got alternate water sources on 56 farms. It upgraded 59 manure storage facilities, giving help, giving financial assistance to those people who wanted to do that. It allowed for the education of conservation tillage on over 10,000 acres of land and the planting of 260 native species of trees and shrubs. This is the kind of thing that will happen with this species at risk in Ontario stewardship program. It will provide the much-needed support and incentives for stewardship

activities by the landowners, resource users and conservation organizations.

I just look at the opportunities that we have here. I look at the opportunities that we have in our native communities too. In our native communities, the aboriginal communities and organizations have for centuries had a great interest in the plants and animals species, but some of those species are at risk, and we have to, sooner rather than later—and it's now—do something about that.

I know that we have been hearing in the House this evening that this is a big rush. This isn't a big rush. It's the time to do this, and it's the time to do it right. I think that's why the minister commented tonight about the number of organizations that have had opportunities to consult, to provide information. Certainly the ministry's website has had many hits and many, many responses, some hundreds of responses, with 80% supporting the recommendations of the Endangered Species Act review panel. We have the Sierra Club of Canada, the eastern chapter. We have the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, ROMA—Rural Ontario Municipalities Association. They've all had input into this, and that's what it's about, that they have an input.

I think it's time to move on. I'm delighted to have had an opportunity to speak on this bill, and I look forward to further debate this evening.

Mrs. Christine Elliott (Whitby–Ajax): I appreciate the opportunity to address the issue of time allocation on Bill 184, the Endangered Species Act. I would say that this is certainly indicative of a pattern that's been emerging for some time—indeed, in my short time here in this Legislature.

The first time I witnessed it was on time allocation on Bill 107, which was the human rights reform legislation. It seems that every time things get a little bit too hot, every time it looks like things aren't going according to plan, it's time to pull the plug and cut off public debate. Certainly with the hearings on Bill 107, we saw that as we travelled last summer to Thunder Bay, Ottawa and London. We heard time after time from speakers that they wanted some fundamental changes to this legislation. When the hearings started again in the fall in Toronto, things were going no better. Even though the hearings were still being scheduled and still being advertised to the public, at that point the government decided to close the debate, pull the plug on debate and incurred over \$100,000 of taxpayers' money in cancelling the ads, too, I might add.

Next, we see time allocation on the budget bill—surely one of the most important bills to come before this Legislature, outlining the fiscal policy of this government. Again, time allocation on this bill which, to me, speaks volumes about this government's confidence in its own budget, that it would close the door to public scrutiny and debate. Next, we had time allocation on the bill that deals with electoral reform, democratic renewal and restoring the public's faith in the political process—ironic to say the very least.

Now we come to time allocation on Bill 184, the Endangered Species Act. There's another huge irony here, in that I was present in this Legislature about a week ago where the government members were waxing eloquent about their commitment to this process and how important it was to preserve endangered species and species at risk, in addition to their natural habitat. There were a lot of lofty statements made by government members about protecting our natural heritage for our children, our grandchildren and future generations coming along.

In view of all that, there was a certain expectation that comments would be taken into consideration, that requests for hearings and further debate would be allowed, but what did they do? Instead of allowing all that, what we have is a time allocation motion, again refusing to listen to many voices calling for further consultation, particularly in the north where the impact of this particular legislation is going to be felt very directly by our First Nations peoples who, although it's said that they were consulted, it would appear that they certainly don't feel that way, and their voices are important to be heard as part of this whole discussion.

But all this is for the sake of political expediency, all this because we have an election coming up in the next few short months, and because anything that's even remotely related to the environment, as this is of course, is now considered to be a hot topic and resonates with the voters—the cynical amongst us would suggest that this was the real motivation here for bringing this legislation forward at this particular time.

It's clear that there's no great philosophical commitment here, just a desire to show the voters how green they think they are, that we're seeing them proceed with this legislation at this point. In my view, the position that's been taken by the government with respect to this bill is disingenuous to say the least, because if they were truly committed to the stated aims of this bill, the protection of endangered species and species at risk and protecting their habitat, they would be listening to the voices of the people who are going to be directly concerned, who know about these factors, who know what needs to be taken into consideration, and yet those voices simply aren't going to be heard.

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There have been concerns expressed by a wide and diverse group of stakeholders, including the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the mayors of a number of municipalities, among many others. I would just like to quote from comments that have been made by a few of those groups about the fact that this matter has proceeded with undue haste.

Michael Power, mayor of Geraldton and president of the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association, has said, "No one that I know at the municipal level or among the resource stewardship community is opposing a species at risk act, but, considering what is at stake, we want to ensure the new legislation and regulations are

truly effective in protecting species at risk and that jobs and economic prosperity are not unduly sacrificed in the process.”

Lynn Peterson, the mayor of Thunder Bay, stated on March 12 in a media release, “No one is saying that we shouldn’t be taking action to address species at risk, but we want to make absolutely certain that we get this legislation right. It’s going to be with us for years to come and we shouldn’t be rushing headlong into it if we don’t know what the effects may be.”

Finally, Paul Mistele, vice-president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, said on March 26: “A fast-track approach to this legislation will not give us the ability to inform and involve the thousands of farmers who may be affected. It is imperative that the government put the emphasis on engagement, not expedience.”

I couldn’t agree more. But this is just another example of the McGuinty government’s attitude toward the public with respect to many of these issues: “We’ll tell you what’s good for you; we’ll tell you what you should be thinking about this,” whether it’s the right thing to do or not. As long as the optics are good, full steam ahead. This really does not do justice to a bill that is so important to all of us.

Mr. Murdoch: I’m glad to have some time to debate this crucial bill and another unjust move by the Liberal government to force this into closure. It was interesting to hear the minister today—and we have the minister for democratic renewal; I guess she should certainly be listening tonight, because this is what is wrong with this House, and it’s happened many times.

I’d like to mention that the minister mentioned that he was in Thunder Bay and said he listened to people about this. Let’s see what they had to say after he left:

“Today’s invitation-only, 90-minute meeting of select stakeholders is not the transparent and comprehensive public hearings that is required for the province’s new endangered species legislation, Bill 184, say those attending the session.

“Many questions and significant concerns were aired at today’s hastily organized meeting, and municipal leaders, industry and businesses from across Ontario have urged Minister of Natural Resources David Ramsay to take the necessary time and measures to ensure the province’s Endangered Species Act is on the right track. ‘Considering the new Endangered Species Act could be with us for 30 years or more, it’s far better to get this right than get it fast,’ stated Greenstone mayor and president of the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association, Michael Power. With second reading of the Endangered Species Act, Bill 184, continuing on Tuesday (April 17) night, the Legislature heard that the government has before it resolutions from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the Large Urban Mayors’ Caucus of Ontario that had not yet been addressed.”

Imagine that. And the minister says everything is fine.

“If, as government claims, the current language of the endangered species bill is the gold standard, then they should not be afraid to consult more broadly,” states

Mayor Power, who also notes that Premier McGuinty and Minister Ramsay have received resolutions from over 66 individual municipalities across Ontario,” including Grey county, “asking for greater public input in the legislation. Numerous stakeholder groups representing farmers, home-builders, forestry, waterpower, mining, anglers, hunters and trappers have also pressed for greater consultation.

“The minister heard that people represented here today want to support the Endangered Species Act, but as it is currently written, it is questionable if Bill 184 will adequately protect species at risk”—we’ve heard a lot about that tonight—“and there are deep reservations that there could be unnecessary job losses and negative impacts on people and communities across the province,” said president/CEO of the Ontario Forest Industries Association, Jamie Lim.

“Furthermore, Minister Ramsay is correct in his statement that there is misinformation being spread about the bill and that’s why we need government committee to take this to the north and to all corners of the province to seek clarity,” adds Mayor Power.

“Thunder Bay Mayor Lynn Peterson notes, ‘We have told the minister that more time must be taken to make certain that the act is properly focused and that the people—the landowners, the cities and towns upon which the success of the act depends—can work with the legislation and regulations.’

“As Nipigon’s Mayor Richard Harvey told the minister, ‘If we can’t get the act right, how can we get the regulations right,’ summarizing the sentiments of municipal leaders who attended.

“The meeting at Thunder Bay’s Prince Arthur Hotel was one of the three meetings put together” just in one week. “The minister was steadfastly told that public hearings must be taken on the road to communities across Ontario where, in an open forum, the government can hear what is needed to make the Endangered Species Act work for both species at risk and for the people of Ontario.”

Now, that was sent from the north. It’s unfortunate that tonight I haven’t heard from any members of the Liberal Party speaking in favour of what their mayors from the north want. They have gone quiet. The members who represent this government in the north are afraid to come here and say, “We want this to go out.” I see some of the members are in the House, but they won’t speak up. They’re afraid. They’ve been whipped to force us to put this bill ahead of everything else, get it out of the way. As the member from Sudbury said, there are 70 species at risk and they’re not going to put this bill in force until next summer. What is wrong, then, with going out and meeting the people?

Some of the resource groups across Ontario, like the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the Ontario Mining Association, the Ontario forestry alliance, the Ontario Fur Managers Federation, the Ontario Waterpower Association, would like this government to come and hear what they have to say.

The minister said, "I've talked to them." Obviously, you didn't talk to them or we've got a problem here. You're saying you did and they're saying you didn't. Then they say that the Ministry of Natural Resources has money to help out. We've heard about their bake drives and things like that. Just maybe, though, the minister could go to one of the other ministers who sit behind him. They seem to have a big slush fund. Maybe they would help the ministry out. Maybe that slush fund money could go to the Ministry of Natural Resources and help some of the conservation officers get money for gas for their trucks, and maybe for this bill.

I think the Minister of Natural Resources should be up sitting beside the other minister instead of the minister he's sitting beside, because she doesn't seem to care; she's just fine. Democratic renewal: what's that? I'm sure there are Liberals who say, "What is that word anyway? We talked about it in the election, but we sure forgot about it once we got elected."

Here's another one: "The Ontario Federation of Agriculture ... representing the interests of over 38,000 farm family members and businesses across Ontario, wholeheartedly supports the protection and recovery of species at risk. However, we do have serious concerns with a number of provisions within the proposed Endangered Species Act, 2007," and they list them—this letter went to the members.

"For these reasons, we request that standing committee hearings be scheduled to enable closer public scrutiny of the act, to ensure its potential impacts are known and to provide amendments as necessary to ensure it is practical legislation.

"Furthermore, we specifically request that these meetings be held across rural and northern Ontario, to allow the individuals and organizations who will be directly impacted by the Endangered Species Act, 2007, to have the opportunity to make their views on this legislation known."

What would be wrong with that? That is just democracy. But I think this government has forgotten about that. They sort of promised something, like democratic renewal, but what's a promise these days when you're in government? Just forget about it. We can blame the other government that's been around for a while. That will last for a few years, but unfortunately that excuse runs out, and it's run out for this government. They've run out of time. They'd like to get out of here. I think their slush fund is running dry and they have no more money to send out to all these people so, "We better get out of here." The unfortunate part is, we have Liberals who were elected in the north. They're afraid to come to this Legislature and stick up for this bill and have it go out so that people in their ridings can hear about it. They're afraid to stand up here and say, "We think it should go out," and that is a sad tune to have happening in our province.

I thank you for my little bit of time and will leave it for somebody else.

2050

Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): It is a pleasure to join the debate to talk about the time allocation motion that is before us on this particular evening. One of the things that I've always been proud of, being in the government in which I am privileged to serve, is the few times that the government has used time allocation. So far, my calculations show that of 97 bills that the government has passed, it has time-allocated 17. If you're keeping track, that's about 18%. We can contrast that with, for example, going back a decade and a half—what did the NDP time-allocate? They time-allocated, in their first and the only term in government, 31% of their bills, nearly one in three, and considerably less than the Conservative government that we replaced, a government that time-allocated a whopping 107 bills. Nearly 50% of all the bills they passed were time-allocated—closure, debate shut down.

People who are watching out there will say, "What is time allocation? Why do you time-allocate things?" Well, sometimes you time-allocate it to simply get it out into committee. And other times you time-allocate it to get it passed and get it implemented. In this case it's to get it out to committee.

Earlier, my colleague the member for Simcoe North asked rhetorically, "Why have we increased spending in this province by \$23 billion?" I think this is a good question. Let's look at some of the answers to that. So that health care can remain publicly funded, publicly controlled and publicly accountable. So that in Mississauga we can have our capital projects at Credit Valley Hospital, we have our fourth linear accelerator a year ahead of schedule. So the Trillium Health Centre can have its project under way, so that William Osler can get underway.

Why have we increased spending in this province? So that our schools will remain publicly owned, so that our students have access to the resources that they need for the type of first-class education that they all deserve. For example, in my own riding, Stephen Lewis Secondary School just opened in Churchill Meadows, St. Joan of Arc Secondary School in Churchill Meadows, and no fewer than six elementary and one new middle school—new schools.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: What do new schools have to do with endangered species?

The Acting Speaker: I will let the member get to his point. He's only been on this for a second.

Mr. Delaney: Thank you, Speaker.

Let's get back to the point of time allocation. Now, in their last session, in 2003, the Conservatives time-allocated 83% of the bills that they passed—83%.

What are some of the other reasons that we've increased spending in this province? While the Conservatives time-allocate five out of six bills, this government passed bills to have clean water to drink, passed bills to have meat inspectors, passed bills to be able to hire 8,000 nurses that we need to replace the ones the previous

government let go. Let's be clear: We're not going to treat this House with the disrespect that some of the opposition parties—this is how they earned their privilege of being in opposition—did, by just time-allocating willy-nilly. We've time-allocated when it has been necessary. We've time-allocated so that we have the time to debate some substantive bills, bills that sustainably balance the Ontario budget, something this government has done for the past two years, bills that enable us to now begin paying down the \$40 billion of debt added by the Harris-Eves Tories and the \$80 billion of debt from the hapless half-decade of the NDP.

The Eves government, in its last session, used time allocation five out of six times in eight years. The Harris-Eves government never had more than three days of second reading debate on a budget bill—never, never, never.

So now we have a proper and sustainable greenbelt that's not only all of the promised 500,000 hectares pledged in 2003, it's twice that.

One of the rare and fast-disappearing species in Mississauga, because of course this bill is all about Bill 184, the species-at-risk act, is of course a bird known as the most bittern, perhaps allied to my colleague from Beaches–East York, who told this House that a petition read by many government members in support of community mediation is in some way related to a properly documented facilities renewal grant.

Of course we have to keep coming back to time allocation, and the NDP, when they were in power, used time allocation five times more than the Liberal government they replaced.

Our communities of new Canadians, some 50,000 of whom are served by an agency called Inter-Cultural Neighbourhood Social Services, are today able to see NDP rhetoric for the self-serving empty rhetoric that it truly is.

Let me tell you about how that one agency is led. Its executive director started with one part-time assistant and took a salary cut when she accepted the position 14 years ago.

Interjection.

Mr. Delaney: This is something that the member for Hamilton East seems to be very touchy about, and well she should be.

The executive director took that position so that she could be near her sons as they grew up. That was under the NDP government, and that was about eight years before I met her. She found ways to fund programs in the years of Tory cuts and now supervises 70 staff in four locations, and they are my constituents. They serve 50,000 new Canadians in Peel region. Andrea Seepersaud is my partner. I'm proud of her, and I'm proud of the agency that is my constituent in western Mississauga. I supported their bid to bring community mediation to a broader spectrum of people in Mississauga, as well as in Brampton and Caledon. The proposal was supported by the local city councils. They received their client referrals from the Peel police and bylaw enforcement officers.

Mr. Sterling: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I think it's incumbent on us to either talk about the time allocation motion or the Endangered Species Act. That's what this debate's supposed to be about. They're cutting off debate as it is, and they're not even talking about the subject.

The Acting Speaker: I think the point is well taken. I think the member should go back to the point at hand, which is species at risk or the time allocation.

Mr. Delaney: Thank you very much, Speaker.

There were no public hearings when the NDP raised the gas tax by 3.4 cents a litre. And there were no public hearings when the NDP ripped up collective agreements for their social contract and no time allocated for third reading debate.

I realize that some of the members are rather touchy about this. I say to those who are watching in Mississauga, we should be bigger than the remarks made earlier today about an immigrant woman from Guyana, about the agency that she built and the 50,000 people she enriches. I know the member from—least bittern—Beaches–East York, as a gentleman, I know him as a skilled parliamentarian and I would, across the party divide, call him a friend.

I'll continue to speak not only in favour of this motion for time allocation, but for my constituent Inter-Cultural Neighbourhood Social Services and also for funding for community mediation, not because Andrea's my partner, but because the cause is right, the agency is worthy and the people need it.

During the entire 37th Parliament, the PCs only averaged slightly higher than a shameful half-session day, 0.66 days, in terms of third reading debates.

My time is about up, and frankly I've made my point, so I thank the House for its indulgence and I defer to the next speaker.

2100

Mr. David Oraziotti (Sault Ste. Marie): It's a pleasure to speak this evening on the closure motion before us on Bill 184.

It's interesting to hear the comments from across the floor. I think we have consensus that we need to move forward on this piece of legislation. The original piece of legislation of 1971 is very outdated—36 years old. We only have 42 of 176 endangered species currently protected, and I think we're not living up to the responsibility of future generations or present-day Ontarians who want to see more done to protect endangered species in the province of Ontario. Certainly, the Conservative Party had eight years to move forward on this, and nothing happened. The NDP had five years, and nothing happened.

We on this side of the House certainly—I hear some of the comments about consultation, discussions and potential amendments to this piece of legislation. During the committee process, we'll obviously be having a very thorough look at anything that comes forward that is constructive, critical or evaluative to improve and enhance this legislation, because we want to move forward

with a piece of legislation that is effective and responsible in meeting the needs when it comes to endangered species. But we need to get past the rhetoric of the opposition parties who continue to delay and drag on this process so that we can deliver what Ontarians want to see happen.

On the one hand, I hear opposition members saying we need more consultation, and then we're not moving fast enough. I'm not sure which it is, but on this side of the House we know it's been 36 years and only 42 species out of 176 that need to be protected are going to be protected under this piece of legislation. I think it's a very progressive piece of legislation.

I also want to commend the Minister of Natural Resources, the Honourable David Ramsay, for introducing this piece of legislation and for doing the work—much of the groundwork here—that has brought us to this particular point.

When it comes to consultation, I want to talk about a couple of aspects of consultation. We began our consultation a year ago in May. We've consulted widely with key landowner organizations, conservation organizations, aboriginal communities, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the public, through newspaper ads and through the Environmental Bill of Rights registry. There has been consultation after consultation after consultation. Thirty-six years have gone by with no progress on this, and we're either going to be a government this day in Ontario that will move forward with legislation or we're going to continue like past governments did and drag our feet—and we're not going to do that, because on this side of the House we want to be responsible when it comes to endangered species. We can't afford in Ontario, frankly, to have more species join the ranks of the endangered lists, lose their habitat and so on, in the province of Ontario.

We've talked to the aboriginal community. On May 10, 2006, MNR mailed invitations to all First Nations and provincial tribal organizations, and put forward a discussion paper called *Towards Better Protection of Species at Risk in Ontario*. In fact, on September 15, MNR sent a further invitation for a series of 10 meetings to be held across Ontario which included many of the First Nations groups and tribal organizations in the province of Ontario.

Let me tell you a little bit about the organizations that were consulted. The Fort Severn First Nation, the Sandy Lake First Nation, Sachigo Lake First Nation, Keewaywin First Nation, Poplar Hill First Nation, Deer Lake First Nation, Pikangikum First Nation, North Spirit Lake First Nation, Cat Lake First Nation, Fort Hope First Nation, Webequie, Summer Beaver First Nation, White-water Lake First Nation, Northern Chiefs tribal organization, Matawa Chiefs, Windigo Tribal and the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation—all invited to participate, give us their feedback, give us their concerns and play a role in what is a very progressive piece of legislation.

Consultations took place and meetings were held in Peterborough on October 13, in Timmins on October 17, in Sudbury on October 18, in North Bay on October 19,

in Parry Sound on October 24, in London on October 26, in the Ottawa area on October 30, on November 7 in Kenora, on November 8 in Sioux Lookout and on November 9 in Thunder Bay. The sessions were extensive and we were obviously working toward gathering important information and feedback from organizations right across the province, and we were very pleased to do that.

I should point out that on April 17 we also conducted consultations in Thunder Bay, on April 19 in Sudbury and on April 23, today, over at the Sutton Place Hotel. Last week I was in Kingston. MNR staff were in Windsor, and last Thursday the Minister of Natural Resources was in Thunder Bay for further consultations.

I think we need to get beyond the excuses on the other side of House that there has not been adequate consultation, that we're not interested in listening to First Nations or any other organization in the province of Ontario, and let's deal with the issue at hand, which is whether or not we're going to pass legislation in the provincial Legislature that is going to further protect endangered species in the province. If you're not interested in supporting it, you're going to have your opportunity to stand in your place and vote however you feel most reflects the views of your constituents. Certainly I know what I'm going to do. I'm very pleased to support this legislation, and I'm pleased that we have a minister that has done a fantastic job when it comes to this bill and a government that's prepared to deal with the real issues here, as opposed to sliding things under the carpet, as has been done in the past on this type of legislation, and really not taking the time to deal with this.

There are all kinds of organizations in the province of Ontario that have come forward and supported this particular legislation. Let's hear what the chair of the Conservation Ontario organization, Richard Hibma, has to say: "Conservation Ontario commends the government of Ontario for undertaking a review of the Endangered Species Act, which will result in improved protection for species at risk. The province led a very inclusive consultation process"—let me say that again—"a very inclusive consultative process during the review and the conservation authorities were pleased to participate."

The other aspect of this legislation is that the federal Species at Risk Act, which came into force in 2004—as part of the national accord, there is a responsibility of the provinces to live up to their end of the agreement. What we're doing on this side of the House is living up to that end of the agreement. We are passing legislation, as agreed to with the federal government, living up to the national accord, to make sure that we do our part in the province of Ontario to protect species at risk.

Another comment, from Dr. Rick Smith, executive director of Environmental Defence: "The new Endangered Species Act is a significant step forward for Ontarians and the natural heritage we all value so highly. This new legislation will provide an inclusive, science-based and effective framework within which to balance different environmental and economic priorities."

The other important aspect of this legislation is that we take out the political assessment as to what is endangered and what is not. The scientific community will determine whether a species at risk will be identified, and the proper steps will be taken to ensure that their habitat is protected and that they will in fact be on the list. On this side of the House, we're not going to leave that to political chance, for any political party. I'm not a scientist; I don't profess to be. I want someone who has the scientific background and knowledge making those assessments to ensure that the endangered species at risk list is based on empirical and scientific data and information that we can all hold up and say, "This stands the test of science, and it's legitimate." This is an important aspect of the bill and we're pleased that we're moving in this direction. It is going to mean a significant step forward in protecting the species at risk in Ontario.

Again, only 42 of 176 identified are on this list. We can't delay any longer, we can't wait any longer, and we can't allow the opposition parties, who want to stand here and drag this on and on, to not move forward with this legislation.

2110

Mr. Sterling: It's wonderful to get a small opportunity to speak on this bill, because debate is being cut off. Within the time allocation motion, in the generosity and charity of the government, they're going to give two days of committee hearings here in the city of Toronto.

This bill affects, in large part, the more rural and remote areas of the province of Ontario. A lot of people have talked about northern Ontario, but I want to tell you that the rural part of eastern Ontario has significant endangered species in their environment as well. I speak from experience with regard to how this kind of legislation can affect a person's property rights. You know what? This bill is about trying to protect endangered species for the good of us all, but often that good for all of us comes at the expense of an individual. It's a hard balance to reach between what all the citizens of the province as a whole should benefit from and how much a particular property owner should suffer as a result of that. If a farmer's field is the habitat of an endangered species, he's restricted in what he can do in that field, whether he can go out and take the hay or the crop off that particular field. If a person's forest is designated as a habitat for an endangered species, then they're restricted in what activities they can undertake within that forested area. Therefore, you have to strike a balance that is acceptable to the people.

I think one of the problems we've experienced with regard to this bill is that people don't understand what the present law is and what changes to the present laws are put in this particular legislation. I agree with some of the changes, but I disagree with some other changes.

The one I am most concerned about is the lack of responsibility by the minister responsible for this act regarding decisions that are made in naming endangered species. I'm very much a believer that the buck stops with the minister who's responsible for a particular piece

of legislation. Therefore, I am very concerned, as are some of the stakeholders, about the fact that this bill gives away the final decision as to the naming of a specified endangered species to a group of non-elected, appointed people. As we know, their decisions are based upon science, but they're also based upon personal opinion, etc. It's very important that the makeup of that committee be balanced between not only those who are most scientifically capable but also that some of the people on the committee understand how the naming of those species will affect the people who own the property that I talked about.

This government has shown a callous disregard for the rights of anybody with regard to their property. We saw it with regard to the Adams Lake mine legislation, where they stripped the property owner of his rights and took away from him the right to sue in court for his proper damages for stripping away his property rights. Many newspapers, including the *Globe and Mail* and the *Ottawa Citizen*, said in their editorials that they could not understand how a government could absolutely ignore the rule of law, make a retroactive law and strip away property rights.

I think the members opposite, on the government side, can understand my hesitation at trying to give away the right to a group of people who are not elected, where nobody can go and complain about what has or hasn't happened to them.

I must say that I was amazed at the speech from the member for Mississauga West. I tried to bail him out by intervening and putting out points of order, but I guess he illustrates better than anyone why this government wants to get out of here and get out of here soon. To try to defend a grant to one's spouse in a program where there's no application, there are no requirements, where there is—

Mr. Delaney: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Standing order 23(b)(i) refers to matters under discussion, of which this is not one; and standing order 23(h) prohibits the making of an allegation against another member.

The Acting Speaker: Stop the clock.

The member is raising a point, but the member spoke at length on the same subject, and although he was warned, continued to do so. In terms of the allegation, I have not yet heard an allegation, but if one is made, I will stop it.

The member from Lanark–Carleton.

Mr. Sterling: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think this shows a total lack of regard by this government to take responsibility for their actions, whether it's a minister or a parliamentary assistant or a member who cannot understand where blatant conflict is apparent to everyone else in this place and in the public. This is a tremendous—

Mr. Delaney: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order—

The Acting Speaker: On a point of order. Stop the clock. I don't know. There's nothing to stop, but go ahead.

Mr. Delaney: Standing order 23(i) specifically prohibits the making of an imputed false or unavowed motive to another member.

The Acting Speaker: I have to tell you I have not heard an imputed or unavowed motive being made. In any event, the time has now expired.

Mr. Bentley has moved government motion number 334. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 2118 to 2128.

The Acting Speaker: All those in favour, please rise and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Peters, Steve
Bentley, Christopher	Leal, Jeff	Qaadri, Shafiq
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Levac, Dave	Ramal, Khalil
Bountrogianni, Marie	Marsales, Judy	Ramsay, David

Brownell, Jim
Crozier, Bruce
Delaney, Bob
Duguid, Brad
Fonseca, Peter
Gravelle, Michael
Hoy, Pat

Matthews, Deborah
McNeely, Phil
Meilleur, Madeleine
Milloy, John
Mitchell, Carol
Mossop, Jennifer F.
Oraziotti, David

Rinaldi, Lou
Ruprecht, Tony
Smith, Monique
Smitherman, George
Van Bommel, Maria
Zimmer, David

The Acting Speaker: All those opposed, please stand and be recorded by the Clerk.

Nays

Dunlop, Garfield	Martel, Shelley	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Elliott, Christine	Miller, Norm	Sterling, Norman W.
Ferreira, Paul	Munro, Julia	
Horwath, Andrea	Murdoch, Bill	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 32; the nays are 10.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

The time now being 9:30 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow afternoon.

The House adjourned at 2130.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. James K. Bartleman
Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. Brown
Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma–Manitoulin	Brown, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (L) Speaker / Président	Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)
Ancaster–Dundas– Flamborough–Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Haliburton–Victoria–Brock	Scott, Laurie (PC)
Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC) Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
Beaches–East York / Beaches–York-Est	Prue, Michael (ND)	Hamilton East / Hamilton-Est	Horwath, Andrea (ND)
Bramalea–Gore–Malton– Springdale	Kular, Kuldip (L)	Hamilton Mountain	Boutrogianni, Hon. / L'hon. Marie (L) Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique
Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Hamilton West / Hamilton-Ouest	Marsales, Judy (L)
Brampton West–Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest–Mississauga	Dhillon, Vic (L)	Hastings–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Huron–Bruce	Mitchell, Carol (L)
Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Kenora–Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Burlington	Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Milloy, John (L)
Chatham–Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Kitchener–Waterloo	Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	Van Bommel, Maria (L)
Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (L) Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, deputy government House leader / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement	Lanark–Carleton	Sterling, Norman W. (PC)
Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (L) Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation	Leeds–Grenville	Runciman, Robert W. (PC)
Dufferin–Peel– Wellington–Grey	Tory, John (PC) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Matthews, Deborah (L)
Durham	O'Toole, John (PC)	London West / London-Ouest	Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (L) Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Eglinton–Lawrence	Colle, Hon. / L'hon. Mike (L) Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration	London–Fanshawe	Ramal, Khalil (L)
Elgin–Middlesex–London	Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (L) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail	Markham	Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L) Minister of Revenue / ministre du Revenu
Erie–Lincoln Essex	Hudak, Tim (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (L) Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship / ministre des Petites Entreprises et de l'Entrepreneuriat
Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (L) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports	Mississauga East / Mississauga-Est	Fonseca, Peter (L)
Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Peterson, Tim (IND)
Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (L) Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement	Mississauga West / Mississauga-Ouest	Delaney, Bob (L)
Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Nepean–Carleton	MacLeod, Lisa (PC)
Guelph–Wellington	Sandals, Liz (L)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)
		Niagara Falls	Craiton, Kim (L)

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)	Stoney Creek	Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)
Nipissing	Smith, Monique M. (L)	Stormont–Dundas– Charlottenburgh	Brownell, Jim (L)
Northumberland	Rinaldi, Lou (L)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (L) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Oak Ridges	Klees, Frank (PC)	Thornhill	Racco, Mario G. (L)
Oakville	Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Mauro, Bill (L)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Thunder Bay–Superior	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	North / Thunder Bay–Superior- Nord	
Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (L) Premier and President of the Council, Minister of Research and Innovation / premier ministre et président du Conseil, ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation	Timiskaming–Cochrane	Ramsay, Hon. / L'hon. David (L) Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (L) Minister of Health Promotion / ministre de la Promotion de la santé	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Ottawa–Orléans	McNeely, Phil (L)	Toronto Centre–Rosedale / Toronto-Centre–Rosedale	Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (L) Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / vice-premier ministre, ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Ottawa–Vanier	Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (L) Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones	Toronto–Danforth	Tabuns, Peter (ND)
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Trinity–Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Parkdale–High Park	DiNovo, Cheri (ND)	Vaughan–King–Aurora	Sorbara, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (L) Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / ministre des Finances, président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Parry Sound–Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Waterloo–Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC) First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Perth–Middlesex	Wilkinson, John (L)	Whitby–Ajax	Elliott, Christine (PC)
Peterborough	Leal, Jeff (L)	Willowdale	Zimmer, David (L)
Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge	Arthurs, Wayne (L)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (L) Minister of Economic Development and Trade, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Prince Edward–Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Windsor–St. Clair	Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (L) Minister of Energy / ministre de l'Énergie
Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Yakabuski, John (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	Kwinter, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (L) Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Sarnia–Lambton	Di Cocco, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (L) Minister of Culture / ministre de la Culture	York North / York-Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
Sault Ste. Marie	Oraziotti, David (L)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	Ferreira, Paul (ND)
Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Duguid, Brad (L)	York West / York-Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)
Scarborough East / Scarborough-Est	Chambers, Hon. / L'hon. Mary Anne V. (L) Minister of Children and Youth Services / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse		
Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)		
Scarborough–Agincourt	Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (L) Minister of Government Services / ministre des Services gouvernementaux		
Scarborough–Rouge River	Balkissoon, Bas (L)		
Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)		
Simcoe–Grey	Wilson, Jim (PC)		
St. Catharines	Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (L) Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, government House leader / ministre du Tourisme, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées, leader parlementaire du gouvernement		
St. Paul's	Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L) Attorney General / procureur général		

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

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