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(Hansard)**

Monday 9 March 2009

Lundi 9 mars 2009

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 9 March 2009

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 9 mars 2009

The House met at 1030.

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

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mrs. Julia Munro: I would ask the members of the House to help me in welcoming friends and family of page Rachel Trow: Lois Fallis, Glenna Phair, Taylor Lipsett, Dylan Trow, Phil Trow, Betty Fallis-Trow, Alison Gold, Megan Gold, Ryan Gold, Josh Carr and Murray Fallis. Welcome to the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On behalf of the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound and page Reed Bell, we would like to welcome his grandmother, Doreen Bell, and his grandfather, Bob Bell. They'll be here this morning in the west members' gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

On behalf of page Emily Wilson and the member from Wellington–Halton Hills, I would like to welcome her nana, Ellen Dolan, and her uncle, Kevin Dolan, sitting in the west members' gallery.

Also, some guests of mine: Sharon and David Pell, from Fingal, and Foti Karkavilas, from Montreal, in the public gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

There being no further introductions, it is now time for oral questions.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: My question is to the Premier. Whenever the Premier talks of economics these days, he's sure to use the word "global." It's a see-through attempt to shift the blame, a tactic that the Premier has honed to a fine art. Of course the recession is global; everyone knows that. But that doesn't mean the Premier is powerless. He needs to take some responsibility.

BC, Alberta, PEI and Newfoundland are all faring better than Ontario, and economists predict that they will recover quickly. Meanwhile, we have lost almost 300,000 manufacturing jobs while the Premier has sat on his hands. This has been happening since 2004, and yet he has shown no urgency and no recognition of the serious-

ness of this issue. His lack of foresight has left us unprepared and led us to a deeper recession than we might otherwise have expected.

Premier, why are you satisfied with being last place in Canada?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: As usual, I welcome the question, and as usual, I differ with the interpretation of the facts and the nature of the cause of the challenge before us. I agree with my colleague insofar as he recognizes that the recession is worldwide, but I disagree with his inference that somehow it started here at Queen's Park in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

We've been doing a number of things for many years to lend further strength to the Ontario economy. It's just that we fail to receive the support from the opposition as we pursue those important initiatives.

For example, back in 2006, our budget was principally focused on investing heavily in infrastructure. We have hundreds of projects under way right now creating thousands and thousands of jobs right now, when we need them. It would have been nice to have the support of the opposition at that point in time, but fortunately we moved ahead notwithstanding, in the interests of the people of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: It's that kind of empty rhetoric that has led Ontario into have-not status. The fact is that the Premier squandered the good times, and in so doing has left us unprepared for the bad times. He raised taxes to record levels, levels that would make Bob Rae blush. He spent wildly and recklessly, including \$1 million to the Toronto Cricket Club. He dismissed us when we warned him that there was a looming recession and called us pessimists. And he spoke about a "small contraction"—a small contraction indeed. "This too shall pass," he said.

When the rest of Canada turns the economic corner, Ontario will still be struggling with the recession, because even now you won't take the necessary steps to ease the transition. Premier, are you frozen in fear, or are you stumped as to what to do?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, Speaker, I appreciate the observations, but I disagree with him. The official opposition has for some time now said that they are very concerned about the size of the deficit that we are projecting. But I want you to understand some of the demands that they have been putting forward, notwithstanding their concerns about the deficit.

We've been keeping track of their questions since we returned to the House. They have asked, so far, 25

“spend” questions. They are asking that we spend more on everything from an airport to adult literacy programs, a lumber mill, MRI machines, a bridge, several questions on hospitals and mental health. These are all good issues. They are very debatable and important concerns advanced on behalf of their constituents. But you can't have it both ways. You can't say we have to cut public services and invest in them at the same time.

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

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: The Liberal plan is simply not working. I wonder if the 1,500 recently laid-off steelworkers in Hamilton think your plan is working. I wonder if the 1,200 recently laid-off workers at Chrysler in Windsor think your plan is working. I wonder if the unemployed miners and workers in Sudbury think your plan is working.

It seems to me that the only people convinced this plan is working are the Liberal lapdogs that sit behind the Premier in this House, yet the stubborn Premier refuses to change course. Premier, are you ready to take ownership of the state of Ontario's economy? Are you willing to accept some blame for all these job losses? If not, Premier, why are you still leading this province?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: We take full responsibility for pursuing initiatives on behalf of the people of Ontario.

In particular, my colleague mentions that families are suffering as a result of job losses. That is absolutely true. Perhaps they are possessed of some special magic over there that would prevent any of that from happening anywhere in the province of Ontario, but we on this side of the House are not. We have to deal with reality.

We are going to continue to pursue our five-point plan. One of the most important aspects of that plan is to develop the skills and strengths of our workforce, and I'm happy that today we will be announcing that once again we have increased the high school graduation rate. It has gone from—

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It was 75% last year; it's 77% this year. It was 68% in 2003.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: —68% to 77%, which means we are having many thousands more young people graduating from high school every year.

1040

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Tim Hudak: A question to the Premier: Your outdated tax-and-spend policies have brought Ontario to have-not status and chased some 300,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs from our province.

According to the Ontario Real Estate Association, your mandatory energy audit will have serious implications for small business in the province of Ontario. In fact, OREA says, “Energy audits and corresponding retrofits will hurt the competitiveness of Ontario business at a time when they can least afford it.” This act will increase energy rates and it will cause problems for small

business with the mandatory audits. Isn't this just kicking small business when they're already facing a downturn?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

Hon. George Smitherman: I want to say to the honourable member, I'd be very happy, as I said to the critic from that party on matters of energy, to discuss any items in the proposed Green Energy Act on which they might have suggestions for amendment. But I want to make it very clear that the mandatory home energy audits would apply only to single-family residences, and therefore small businesses would not be implicated by any such audit.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: To the Premier on his job-killing policies: Not only are they facing new energy audits, but small businesses in the agriculture and landscaping industries say your pesticide ban is going to kill jobs this summer. Landscape Ontario says that more than 20,000 lawn care jobs are in jeopardy and lack of a phase-in will have serious economic consequences. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture says that 40,000 farming families and sale of their products will suffer from an already unwarranted negative impact brought about by this bill.

Why are you pushing forward these unwarranted, job-killing regulations during this unprecedented economic crisis?

Hon. George Smitherman: At the beginning of the honourable member's supplementary, he repeated what he had suggested in his earlier question, even though in a very, very clear way, I indicated to the honourable member that the information that he was presenting was not consistent with the plan. Accordingly, I would like to reiterate to the honourable member that energy audits are for homes and not for small businesses. More to the point, they are actually an opportunity to enhance the understanding of the circumstances related to energy use in the home.

We think also that on the idea of retrofit, there are examples for people, with support from the government, to be investing in bringing their homes forward to a lower overall energy use which actually can impact their operational costs. So we do see advantages associated with it, and we would very much welcome sitting down with the honourable member to brief him on those things or discuss other matters related to this bill with the critic of that party.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: I think the minister knows that those are the quotes from the Ontario Real Estate Association. So we're jamming up, under Dalton McGuinty, the real estate market.

Your pesticides bill coming down this summer is going to chase out 20,000 lawn care jobs and impact on small businesses and agriculture. The Association of Canadian Search, Employment and Staffing Services, ACSESS, said about your temp agency bill, Bill 139, “Some of the new rules ... will significantly damage an

industry employing 300,000 people a year in the province of Ontario.” They add, “The new legislation will create unfair and more onerous employer obligations for staffing services industry employers in Ontario compared to any other industry or geographic sector in North America.”

You’re attacking small business with higher energy rates, you’re attacking small business with new pesticide regulations. Isn’t it time to give small businesses a break in Ontario so they can create some private sector jobs again?

Hon. George Smitherman: To the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Peter Fonseca: What I say to the member opposite is that this government wants to ensure that we protect our most vulnerable workers. I say to that member, you should speak to the member from Sarnia from your party, because here’s what he had to say. He said, “In general, we are” very “supportive of the government’s efforts to offer protection to workers in temporary agencies.... I would have to wonder why the government would announce changes to the regulations today, December 9, that don’t come into effect until January 2,” 2009. Actually, that member wanted us to move even quicker, I say to the member.

But here’s what we are doing: We’re making sure that these vulnerable workers are not treated unfairly, that they’re not prevented from accessing permanent jobs. We think this is good for our economy. Eleven per cent of the workforce today works in temp work; we want to—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question. The leader of the third party.

Applause.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: To the Premier: I’ve spent the last six months travelling the province of Ontario. I’ve met thousands of workers who have lost their jobs at the pulp and paper mill in Kenora, the auto plant in Windsor, the parts factory in Mississauga and the steel mill in Hamilton. Premier, these workers and their families are scared. They’ve worked hard, but now they worry about keeping a roof over their heads and food on the table. With all the tools this government has at hand and at its disposal, how could the Premier let this happen?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I welcome the question from the newly elected leader of the NDP. I know she recognizes what a wonderful honour it is to serve as leader of her party, and I wish her the very best.

With respect to the question, I know that the honourable member also recognizes the worldwide nature of this particular economic challenge, and I know she will want to cast her mind back to the things we have done and continue to do, as a government, both in anticipation of and in the face of this particular recession. We continue to invest heavily in infrastructure, and that creates jobs right now as we need them; we continue to cut business taxes to enhance the competitiveness of Ontario busi-

nesses; we continue to strengthen our workforce; we continue to create new job training opportunities for people who have lost their jobs; and we continue to form partnerships with businesses and workers so that we can move forward together.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: These Ontario workers and their families know very well that we are in the midst of a terrible recession, and they are prepared to make the necessary sacrifices and do their part. In fact, we just have to look at the 10,000 General Motors workers and what they’re doing. They’re accepting frozen wages, reducing their pensions and getting fewer benefits. Before flowing more money, though, they want to know, will this government demand the same sacrifices from the high-flying corporate executives who got us into this mess in the first place?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The leader of the NDP raises a very important subject, which is the future of the auto sector in the province of Ontario. There is much at stake here. We understand that it is a fully integrated North American industry. We know that we have to move closely with initiatives pursued by Washington. We are, at present, working with the federal government and negotiating with GM and Chrysler in particular. We understand there are 400,000 jobs at stake in the province of Ontario; it’s a powerful contributor to our gross domestic product. We will continue to pursue those initiatives.

I’m pleased to hear of the news that came from the CAW workers. We have always known, notwithstanding commentary to the contrary, that they would be making concessions. We are pleased to hear they made those concessions, and we think that facilitates us reaching a final conclusion with the auto sector.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I think everybody would agree that that financial assistance needs to flow, but we need to know that there are going to be strings attached to that assistance. Jobs have to stay in this province. The government has failed in the past on those kinds of guarantees. Why should the workers and their families trust you now to get it right?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I would argue that Canadian auto workers—workers in the sector broadly, beyond the manufacturers—understand that we’ve been in their corner for five years now. Working together, we’ve now succeeded in becoming the single largest auto producer in North America. We are proud of that achievement. I think they also recognize that we have, by means of partnerships with various manufacturers, secured new plants and new jobs. They also understand that the future of the auto sector is going to look a little bit smaller here in Ontario, as it is across North America. Our commitment is to preserve our share of that sector and do everything we can to build a solid foundation so that we can launch a brighter and stronger future on a go-forward basis.

1050

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Back to the Premier: You need to look no further than Stelco in Hamilton, my own hometown. It received \$150 million just three years ago, and it issued 2,100 pink slips last week. There were no job guarantees then. Will there be job guarantees? That's what we want to know: Will there be job guarantees the next time that money flows?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: We will do everything we can to lend as much security, stability and guarantee to jobs, but I can't say for certain that we can enter into arrangements that will absolutely guarantee that we will have a certain number of jobs on a permanent basis; that's just not the world that we live in. I note that when it comes to the steel industry, there has been a dramatic drop in global demand for that. They have experienced closures in Michigan, Illinois and Minnesota.

What I can say is that we bring tremendous goodwill, determination and an earnest desire to find ways to build a stronger steel sector for the future. We understand the angst and pain that those families are experiencing at present. I know it's particularly pronounced in this member's community, but we will continue to work with them.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The world we live in is one where real people, real families, real communities are experiencing a severe impact. A typical steelworker's salary at US Steel's Hamilton plant: about \$65,000—\$1,250 or so a week. That pays for mortgages, that pays for a roof over the heads of families, that pays for kids to go to school.

When you forked over \$150 million three years ago, how could you possibly have given the company a free hand to wreak havoc on our community?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: That money, as I recall, was for assisting with pensions and pension protection. We thought that was important, and that's why we pursued those negotiations.

I know that people in Hamilton are a little concerned these days about their future. I want to assure them that I have spoken with the mayor and that he has expressed to me some of his concerns and some of the support that he's looking for; we're carefully considering that, and we will build on our record of support for Hamilton. It is there for people to see. We've always found a way to lend assistance to the people of Hamilton. I believe that Hamilton has a bright future, built on its single strongest asset: its people.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm simply sharing with the Premier the voices that I've heard over the last six months during the leadership race, the voices of hard-working women and men who believe that if government is going to dole out our money, it should go to protecting

and creating jobs right here, not elsewhere. Above all, the voices said to me, "When you return to Queen's Park, ask the government, 'When 300,000 good-paying jobs disappeared and countless pensions were threatened, where was our government here in Ontario when we needed it?'"

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I want to remind my honourable colleague that when it comes to Stelco, we provided money on behalf of Ontario taxpayers in support of those pensions. I want to also remind my honourable colleague that in her new capacity, she inherits a legacy that comes with her party. I want to remind the leader that the NDP brought in a rule that exempted Stelco from making—

Interjections.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The NDP changed the rule so that Stelco was no longer required to pay into its pension plan. It was considered too big to fail. It was at real risk, and that's why, on behalf of Ontario taxpayers, we made that contribution. But they got into that trouble because they changed—

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

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: My question is to the Premier. Premier, as you prepare to hand out millions of dollars in taxpayers' money to the auto companies, there is a worry, especially amongst our caucus, that this bailout will not come with conditions. After all, your government is not known for its careful handling in the spending of other people's money, and you can read into that the Toronto Cricket club and their \$1-million gift.

Premier, can you tell us today what conditions will accompany the taxpayers' support of the auto industry, and will that hard-earned taxpayer money be protected in your deals?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The Minister of Economic Development.

Hon. Michael Bryant: Yes. The conditions are that the industry and the companies are viable. They have to establish that they're viable. Secondly, the agreement has to be in the taxpayers' interests, and that's going to include a footprint—a level of production—in the province of Ontario. From the beginning, that's the position of Canada and Ontario, and it will continue to be.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Minister, that's rather a vague answer. It would be nice to have some specifics. How are you going to protect the taxpayers' money? You didn't do a very good job protecting it when you handed out \$1 million to the cricket club. For instance, have you indicated that the legacy funds may also be on the table and some of those costs will be covered by the people of Ontario? Is that true? Will this bailout include pension support?

Hon. Michael Bryant: The member talks about the investments the government has made, and I note that he

didn't complain when the government made a loan commitment of \$10 million to Roxul Inc. in Milton in the member's riding, in addition to the literally hundreds of millions of dollars that have been invested directly in companies either by way of loans or by way of grants in all circumstances involving a wide array of conditions to ensure that the dollars that are being invested are accountable and in the best interests of taxpayers.

I say to the member as well: This was a member who, time and time again, stood up and said, "Boy, those unions. They'd better be making some concessions. I'm worried about that." Time after time, the Premier of Ontario and this government said that we were confident the CAW would do that, and that's exactly what the CAW did.

NUCLEAR ENERGY

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for Toronto–Danforth.

Applause.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: You're a kind group. George, you, too.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Question?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker, for your indulgence.

To the Minister of Energy: Minister, recently you admitted that the final cost of nuclear mega-projects "very rarely looks like the price we talked about at the beginning." You said, "Prices go up. Yes, prices go up. These projects tend to get more expensive over time." It's an understatement, but still you said that.

You must know, Minister, that every nuclear plant in Ontario has gone over budget. You must also know that every Ontario household is spending about \$100 a year to cover the debt from reactors built over 30 years ago. So why are you about to saddle Ontarians with yet another huge nuclear tab?

Hon. George Smitherman: I do want to say to my constituent that we congratulate him on his run for the leadership. I can only say, as a Torontonian, that I continue to be disappointed that the front row of the NDP benches doesn't seem to be a place where Torontonians can ever be situated.

On the matter at hand, with respect to—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for Kenora–Rainy River.

Mr. Howard Hampton: Mr. Speaker, I'm overcome.

Hon. George Smitherman: That's putting it lightly.

To the honourable member's question, I think it would be helpful if, in his question, he also acknowledged that today in the province of Ontario just about 50% of all the electricity that we're gaining benefit from is emission-free nuclear power. We think that since Ontario has, for about 40 years, been relying substantially on nuclear power, we should make sure as we go forward that we have a good fleet. Therefore, we're looking for oppor-

tunities to renew the nuclear fleet in the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I don't know which diversion to go after, George, but I'll go with a third question.

As the minister knows, nuclear energy is not reliable; seven reactors were shut down in 1998 alone. He knows there's no safe way to store nuclear waste for a million years.

There have been reports that the Ontario government might buy shares in Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. as a way of covering cost overruns for new nuclear plants. Will the minister today promise Ontarians that the government of Ontario will not take a stake in AECL and will not dump a single penny from billion-dollar cost overruns onto the taxpayer or the ratepayer? Will you make that commitment today?

1100

Hon. George Smitherman: I do want to say to my honourable friend that the commitment we have on behalf of the ratepayers and the taxpayers in the province of Ontario, associated with what is admittedly a very large procurement, is to do our very best to create a circumstance where the vendors are under pressure to offer us their best deal.

We are evaluating bids that have come in from three companies which wish to provide for the province of Ontario two new nuclear reactors, which will be situated at Darlington and operated by Ontario Power Generation.

Over the next several months, through very serious negotiation, we will land on a preferred proponent for the purpose of these projects to be located at Darlington.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Khalil Ramal: My question today is for the Minister of Transportation. A top priority for our government is to get people out of their single-occupied cars and onto public transit. We have seen this with the Metrolinx regional transportation plan for the greater Toronto area and Hamilton, we have seen it with the Ontario bus replacement program for municipalities across the province and we have seen it with gas tax funding.

I am pleased with this government commitment to funding public transit through initiatives such as gas tax funding. In my riding, London–Fanshawe, and I am sure it's the same in many ridings across the province of Ontario, public transit investments such as gas tax funding will allow us to spend less time waiting for transit, provide more accessible transit and enjoy increased levels of service.

On Friday, London saw an additional \$9.5 million in gas tax funding for this year—

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

Hon. James J. Bradley: Good question. I'd like to thank the member for that question.

This past Friday, the province announced funding allocations for the fifth year of the gas tax program—

\$321 million is being distributed to 89 transit systems, serving 111 communities across the province.

The city of London did in fact receive more than \$9.5 million in gas tax funding, bringing the total gas tax funding shared with London to almost \$39 million since our government initiated the program in 2004.

In the past, the gas tax funding for London has meant: a new terminal at Fanshawe College, increases in service hours, new service areas, the implementation of smart bus technology and purchasing two expansion buses.

I look forward to seeing how this year's funding will help London and communities—

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

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I appreciate the minister's answer, and I also look forward to the improvements that will be made to London's bus transit system because of this gas tax funding.

Minister, I know that not only London received funding. Another 110 municipalities received the same funding. Minister, this funding is going to go to additional expenses for the bus terminals and to increase the hours. This investment will allow London transit to expand their services for the people of London and surrounding area.

Minister, I want to ask you a question. This investment is not just about the municipalities which have—

Interjections.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Those people, Mr. Speaker—

Interjection: I didn't do nothing. I'm sitting here. What are you looking at me for?

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Those people do not believe in public transit. Anyway, can you tell me, Minister, what you have for the people who have a transit system?

Hon. James J. Bradley: The McGuinty government has delivered on its commitment to use gas tax revenues as a source of long-term sustainable funding for public transit.

Since 2004, we have committed over \$1.3 billion in gas tax funding to Ontario municipalities. Ridership increases show our investments are working. We have seen an increase of 102 million passenger trips, removing 85 million car trips from our roads.

For those municipalities without transit systems, we are committed to supporting municipal road and bridges projects. Since 2003, the government has provided \$2.3 million in funding to support bridge and road projects across the province. That includes a \$400-million road and bridge fund announced in the 2008 budget and the \$1.1 billion announced under the Investing in Ontario Act in August 2008 for municipal infrastructure that can be used for roads, bridges, transit and other—

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

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Premier. Premier, earlier, in your answer to the third party leader, you mentioned preserving the jobs in Ontario's share in our auto sector.

Premier, the bids are in for new build nuclear in Ontario. What's left now is your decision on who will build those new reactors at Darlington. Considering that Ontario is bleeding jobs daily and you have repeatedly said that we are in extraordinary times, what is your plan to ensure that the almost 40,000 jobs, mostly in Ontario, associated with nuclear research, development and build are not lost if our own homegrown bidder, Atomic Energy of Canada, is not awarded the contract?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

Hon. George Smitherman: The honourable member's question is designed to make a mockery of a fair and competitive process over the most expensive item that you can procure in a province. So I just want to say to the honourable member that while he's a booster for one of the three bidders in particular, our process has been run with a very, very strenuous focus on extracting for the people of the province of Ontario the very best arrangement.

We have three quality bidders who are bringing their proposals to us in seeking to supply us with two new nuclear reactors. As we move forward to entering into a contract with one of those individual companies, it will be focused on the very best arrangements for the people of Ontario, which of course includes price, productivity and economic impact here in the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: The Premier likes to talk about the new economy and how it will create the jobs Ontario needs. Well, I have news for you, Premier: Nuclear new build, here and around the world—here and around the world—and the research and development it requires, is an integral part of the new economy.

If you agree that not building our own Canadian-designed and -built reactors here will make building elsewhere unlikely, I ask you again, what is your plan to ensure that these jobs don't go the way of hundreds of thousands of others under your leadership?

Hon. George Smitherman: As a component of the measurement of which of these proponents we will seek to be in contract with, we have established, in the very mechanisms and nature of the bid, opportunities for a company to earn points associated with the economic impact that they will have here in the province of Ontario.

We acknowledge, of course, that there has been a domestic industry for some time, and the province of Ontario has been their very best customer for a long time. But there are competitive technologies, and we think it's important, since it is such a substantial procurement—because it is for a 50- or 60-year lifeline—that we make a decision on the basis of what is the best price and what is the best productivity associated with the technology on offer. But economic development and the impact it has here in the province of Ontario is one essential component of all bids that are being evaluated at the present time.

PROPERTY TAXATION

IMPÔTS FONCIERS

Mr. Gilles Bisson: You're seeing team NDP in action here today, and I'm proud to say that we're one team, one family, all together.

I've got to say, I've got a question for the Minister of Municipal Affairs over there. It would seem that a number of people, not only in the city of Timmins but across the province, are pretty upset with what's happening with their tax bills this year. In our community, the city of Timmins, they've had to increase the taxes by 3.5%. But because of the flawed municipal assessment system, we're seeing people with far more than that. In fact I've got a constituent who has been on my doorstep, and at the doorstep of the municipality, knocking daily, because his taxes are going up by 13.5% this year alone.

My question to you is, do you think that's fair, and what are you going to do about fixing it?

1110

Hon. Jim Watson: Let me thank the honourable member for the question. It gives me an opportunity, once again, to talk about some of the positive investments the McGuinty government has made in communities like Timmins. Let me quote the mayor of Timmins, who said, "This Liberal government has been very good to municipalities. They realize the shortfalls we have in infrastructure."

As a result of investments that we've made in Timmins—for instance, \$380,000 in the fall economic statement for transit and transportation in Timmins; they received more than \$600,000 in gas tax revenue from the McGuinty government. We have also invested \$850,000 in 2005-06 and 2006-07 as a result of infrastructure investments.

This government takes seriously the partnership that we have made and signed on the dotted line with the municipal sector, and we look forward to working with them in the future to ensure that the taxes are kept low—

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

M. Gilles Bisson: Mais, monsieur le ministre, écoutez. La population n'est pas contente. La question devient que cet individu-là a besoin de payer plus d'impôts cette année à cause du système que vous avez en place. Il veut savoir ce que vous autres, le gouvernement, allez faire pour réparer la situation.

Ce n'est pas juste que ces personnes-là, comme mille autres personnes à travers Timmins et autres cités à travers cette province, ont des augmentations de 13 %, 15 % et 20 %. Je vous demande encore : êtes-vous préparé à faire quelque chose pour que ce monde-là puisse avoir de la justesse et ne paie pas plus de 3,5 %, comme toutes les autres personnes ont eu ?

L'hon. Jim Watson: C'est la même question en français qu'en anglais, et je vais donner la même réponse.

Let me just remind the honourable member about a couple of things. We brought in a seniors' property tax grant to help those individuals who are on fixed income,

representing low-income seniors. The NDP voted against that particular aspect, and I don't know why. I don't know why the NDP continues to vote against positive, progressive measures that this government has brought forward.

We're particularly proud of the fact that we have brought forward a series of infrastructure programs to reduce the burden on property taxpayers in communities like Timmins. Under the MIII program, the people of Timmins received \$7.2 million last year alone. That frees up additional revenue so that the municipality can put it into their priority projects and keep taxes at a lower rate.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

March 11 to 17 is Canadian Agricultural Safety Week. An average of 22 people die each year in farm-related incidents. All members of this House agree that just one death is too many and that our government should work with our partners to ensure the safety of our farmers and our farm workers.

The theme of this year's Canadian Agricultural Safety Week, as determined by the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association, is personal protective equipment. This week reminds us how important it is that we seek continued improvement in our farm safety record year after year. All members of this House know there is much work to be done to ensure the safety of farmers and farm workers across this province.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, what kinds of initiatives are being undertaken by her ministry and our partners in the agricultural sector that—

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

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: It is an important question, because farm safety is a very important issue, certainly in rural Ontario and for my constituents.

Our government is very pleased to work with the Farm Safety Association. Their mandate is to reduce the occurrence of workplace injuries on Ontario farms. My ministry has been working with the Farm Safety Association for over 10 years now to fund safety projects targeting farm families, youth and older workers alike. My ministry is pleased to provide this association with \$120,000 annually to support a number of projects.

The farm accident rescue program is one of those, where they specifically train volunteer firefighters in rural communities in terms of how to deal safely with incidents that occur on farms—a very, very important program. Also, the farm accident rescue program—

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

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: All around Ontario, farmers are very hard at work, working to put food on their tables and on our tables. But we all know that working on the farm can be dangerous. Many of my constituents in my

riding certainly are farmers, and they know first-hand about the hazards that face them each and every day.

Minister, can you tell them what your ministry is doing to improve their health and safety at their workplace?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: To the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I want to thank the member for the question and the opportunity to share what my ministry is doing in this area.

The health and safety of Ontario workers, including our agricultural workers, is our number one priority, so we've extended the Occupational Health and Safety Act to cover farming operations. Since 2006, farm workers have had the same rights as other workers, including the right to know about workplace hazards, the right to participate in workplace health and safety decisions, and the right to refuse unsafe work. This is helping to reduce farming injuries and fatalities, lessening human suffering and reducing economic costs. This is strengthening our economy.

We will continue to work with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the WSIB, the Labour Issues Coordinating Committee and the Farm Safety Association to help improve—

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

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

Mr. Frank Klees: My question is for the Premier. On November 27 of last year, following the announcement that 850 employees would lose their jobs as a result of a Magna plant shutdown, I called on the Premier to specifically undertake to ensure that his government would make resources available to the local communities for the retraining of these employees. Could the Premier tell us what specific plans since that appeal to him in November have been made to ensure that those programs are in place for these employees who will lose their jobs?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Hon. John Milloy: I think all members of the House are always concerned with news of a layoff. Within one hour of hearing news of a layoff, I can assure the member that officials with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities are in touch with the workers, perhaps through their union or other organization, with the company involved and other players, to offer support that's needed and to make sure that workers are aware of what services are available through Employment Ontario, such as training and retraining. In many cases, we work to set up an action centre which allows workers to come together and receive peer support and a network and a pathway into Employment Ontario services.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: I continue to receive calls and have meetings with employees who are very concerned that they are not going to have the kind of support that was promised. On November 27, I made specific reference to

the fact that many of these employees have English as a second language and asked that programs specifically for the training of people for language be put in place. To date, I have heard of nothing specific that addresses that issue.

I would ask the Premier once again, would he report to this House what specific programs have been put in place to address those retraining programs, and specifically, what programs and resources have been put in place for York region to provide English-as-a-second-language training for these employees?

Hon. John Milloy: I'm very happy to look into the specific case that he is talking about and provide specifics, but in general, I think the member should be aware that through Employment Ontario, we treat about 900,000 individuals who come forward every year. There is a wide variety of programs available for those individuals, everything from job search to resumé-writing through to short-term and long-term retraining.

One of the angles that we pursue when it comes to retraining is offering individuals the opportunity for literacy and numeracy upgrading, an ability to get their basic skills up to speed so they can enter training and retraining programs. We've seen a success through the rapid re-employment and training service—as I say, the team that goes through that I referenced in my first answer. We've helped over 57,000 people in the last year. Over the last eight months, over 16,000 people have come forward for specific training opportunities—

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

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SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Queen Street East in the Beach was named by TVO as the best Main Street to shop in all of Ontario. Sadly, many merchants in my riding are hurting. They are finding it tough to weather this recession. As reported in today's Toronto Star, some have unfortunately had to shut the doors and put the padlock on.

Why has this government turned its back on small business people and local economies by not providing leadership and help during these tough times?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: First of all, let me congratulate the member and the new leader of the third party on a successful weekend. In the immortal words of Don Corleone to a new rival gang leader, "As long as your interests and mine don't conflict, I wish you well."

To respond to the member's very serious question, we have taken a number of steps to address—and let's not pretend that any single policy initiative is going to relieve the crisis that's going on in the world economy. We've reduced the business education tax, first of all. Last year, we raised the threshold for the small business tax rate on corporate tax to the highest in Canada. Those were two important initiatives that were applauded by the small business community. We will continue to work with them through this—

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

Mr. Michael Prue: These are very nice words that I've heard today, but the Queen Street merchants live, play and work in our community. They drive our local economy. Property taxes are driving them into bankruptcy. Small merchants pay more, regardless of their actual incomes and ability to pay.

Why won't this government implement a progressive property taxation system that is fair for small business owners by linking it to their revenues instead of forcing more of them to close up shop and board up the best Main Street in all of Ontario?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Our government has also undertaken a number of initiatives to upload costs from municipalities to help with the pressures associated with property taxes. Those include a range of things from public transit up through court security and social services.

I would remind the member, just as he voted against the business education tax reduction and just as he voted against raising the ceiling on small business income for tax purposes, he voted against those initiatives.

The proposal he puts forward will not help small business on Queen Street. He may think it does, and I'm sure he conveys that with great sincerity. The measures we've taken are the best measures in these times. I wish he would have supported them at the time.

ABORIGINAL LAND CLAIMS

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: My question is for the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. Minister, you and I had the pleasure of visiting the community of Kettle and Stony Point last month in my riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex. While you were there, you were able to see how far that community has come since the tragic events of 1995.

During our visit, we discussed the fact that the Ipperwash resolution table is developing an interim plan with the local community to determine how the land and Ipperwash park will be used and managed until the transfer of the park is complete. The return of Ipperwash park to the First Nations, of course, is just one of the recommendations coming out of the Ipperwash inquiry that your ministry is working on.

Your ministry is also acting on Justice Linden's recommendations for land claims reform. Minister, can you tell us about some of the steps that your ministry is taking to improve that process?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I want to begin by thanking the member for joining me on my recent visit to Kettle and Stony Point First Nation. But more than that, I want to thank the member for her leadership in her local community. This member really gets it when it comes to the need to build bridges between First Nations communities and surrounding communities, and she's working very hard in her riding to make sure that is done. That is in the interests of the First Nations communities and it's in the interests of all communities in this province, so I thank her for her local leadership in that respect.

The member is quite right. We're working very hard to implement the Ipperwash inquiry report, including, of course, the creation of the first stand-alone Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs in the history of the province of Ontario. We're also bringing in changes to speed up the land claims process. We're doing this not only because we know it's our obligation to—

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

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: Clearly, your ministry is working hard to implement these reforms, but First Nations' capacity to effectively participate in claim negotiations is essential in achieving settlements. That includes having the tools to assist these communities with the claim submission process. Minister, I've heard you talk about how you think settling more land claims will have a positive impact on the social and economic well-being of all residents in Ontario. Can you explain what you meant by this, and how settling a First Nations claim might have a positive impact on other Ontarians?

Hon. Brad Duguid: That's a very good question because there's absolutely no doubt at all that settling these land claims will have a positive effect not only in First Nation communities but right across this province.

Negotiated settlements result in a much more enduring solution for all parties. They strengthen the relationship between aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities by clarifying rights and obligations of First Nations through negotiations. Uncertainty is also reduced. What this does is it attracts more private investment, which is something we all need to attract to First Nation communities and certainly to all communities across this province.

This is our opportunity to build stronger First Nation communities. It's our opportunity to close some of those gaps that exist between First Nations' quality of life and the quality of life enjoyed by other Ontarians. I thank the member for her question. Again, I thank her for her leadership in her own—

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

HEALTH CARE

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is for the Minister of Health. Minister, last May I asked the previous Minister of Health about the movement of in-patient mental health beds from Rouge Valley Ajax hospital to Scarborough Centenary and quoted the psychiatrists at that hospital, who said, "It is our strong opinion that the elimination of the acute care beds will compromise the quality and safety of care for those seriously ill patients."

I was told by the previous Minister of Health not to worry; everything would result in enhanced patient care and that a psychiatric intensive care unit would be constructed at Scarborough Centenary. I recently visited that site and there is no intensive care psychiatric unit on that floor. There are 40 patients on the floor, many of whom are a danger to themselves and others.

Minister, why won't you release the rest of the growth-based funding to the Central East LHIN so they can construct this much-needed unit?

Hon. David Caplan: I want to thank the member very much for the question because in fact our government is the first which recognized the growth pressures in the province of Ontario, where previously, I would say to the member opposite, her colleagues, when they were on this side of the House, did not recognize those kind of factors when it came to health care spending.

In the last budget, my colleague the Minister of Finance outlined \$120 million over the course of three years to be able to provide—I can assure the member that, in the first year, \$30 million did flow to local health integration networks to be allocated to hospitals to recognize the growth pressures, as the member just recognized.

While I can't speak to the March 26 budget, I can tell you that our government continues to recognize growth and the growth needs that exist out there. We will continue to recognize the unique characteristics of a very high-growth community like Durham, as the member does represent, in meeting their needs as we do right around the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: This is an urgent situation. As a result of your government's failure to construct this psychiatric intensive care unit, not only are patients at risk; now so are staff. In late January, two nurses were viciously attacked by a patient on the psychiatric floor and both sustained serious head injuries, including a fractured jaw and facial lacerations.

Minister, the nurse-to-patient ratio at this hospital is one to eight. I'm told that the ratio at Rouge Valley Ajax is one to five. This is not safe for anyone, Minister. What are you going to do to fix this situation to ensure the safety of both patients and staff?

Hon. David Caplan: In fact, there has been considerable work which has taken place. I do acknowledge, as the member has pointed out, that nursing and provision of care in our health care system is, at times, a dangerous job. They are working under difficult circumstances. That's why we are driving out healthy work environments. That's why we have nurse team leaders. That's why, for example, for needle-stick injuries, bed lifts or a host of areas we are working in the Ministry of Health with my colleague the Minister of Labour to ensure a safe workplace for the people within the health care system.

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I want to assure the member that we are connecting and have connected with nursing leadership to ensure that we have the resources in place, the expertise in place and the supports in place that will be able to support. I don't want to recognize that these will never be issues—we know that they will be on an ongoing basis—but I want to assure the member that we will be there to continue to support our nurses as they move forward to provide outstanding care.

LIQUOR CONTROL BOARD OF ONTARIO

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le premier ministre. The LCBO, an agency of this government,

actively promotes the use of alcohol. Meanwhile, a new landmark study found that even one or two drinks of alcohol a day significantly increases the risk of breast cancer to the tune of 12% and rectal and liver cancer to the tune of 24% among women. The Ministry of Health foots the bill for alcohol consumption in Ontario to the tune of \$1 billion a year. How can the Premier justify spending millions of dollars on advertising to promote alcohol use when we know that it will turn out costing the health care system billions of dollars?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the finance minister.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Indeed we do own the Liquor Control Board of Ontario, and I want to remind the member that we still have something called "social reference pricing," which builds in—in fact, the minimum price of beer is the most recent example of that policy in force. The LCBO profits are, in turn, directed into the consolidated revenue funds of the government, which help to fund initiatives like the health care treatment that's associated with any range of challenging medical conditions.

The study the member references indeed reminds us of the importance of understanding the consequence of the use of alcohol, and I believe that the system we've developed for the distribution of alcohol is the best system available to governments of all political stripes.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Well, the reality is that the McGuinty government is actually seeking to increase alcohol use in Ontario. Between 2005 and 2006, the last figures available, the LCBO doubled its spending on advertising. I'm sure that everybody has seen the glossy promotional material that is put out by the LCBO to encourage people in Ontario to consume more alcohol, and it is under the McGuinty government's watch that the LCBO wants to further increase their sales by 30%. This is their objective: 30% more sales.

When will the Premier stop standing idly by while the government promotes health-damaging alcohol use? As the Minister of Finance says, it's a money loser: The money you bring in does not cover the health care costs.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The LCBO does promote the wine industry in Niagara, for instance, and I'm surprised the member from Welland wouldn't have asked his colleague to acknowledge that.

I ran the largest alcohol and drug recovery program in this country for almost eight years. What I can tell you is that the responsible pricing that is built into the publicly owned LCBO remains, in our view, the proper way of the distribution of alcohol here in Ontario. I would remind the member opposite that even if the LCBO were to do no advertising at all, the advertising of the big beer companies, the big liquor companies and the big wine companies from outside the province would overwhelm us in any event. So we do want to continue—the member from Welland—to promote the Niagara wine and grape industry.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Research and Innovation. Minister, in the town of Stirling, a company, Stonehedge, is driving clean technology forward and capturing global investment. Stonehedge is quickly becoming a pre-eminent hemp bio-refinery in North America, and they're doing it through respect for both the environment and the individual by promoting a safe workplace where employees can develop their capability and go through education and skills development; excellence in personal and corporate performance to meet or exceed their customer needs at every opportunity; teamwork in all endeavours that foster an atmosphere for continued improvement; innovation and technical superiority, and as a chosen core, competitiveness.

The question to you, Minister: What is the Ministry of Research and Innovation doing to help foster the growth of innovative companies such as Stonehedge?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to thank my good friend for the question. I was pleased to join the MPP for Northumberland–Quinte West as Stonehedge announced it will receive a \$2-million investment by a group of international investors from the United Kingdom. Starting in spring 2009, Stonehedge expects to build a new biorefining facility in eastern Ontario that will employ up to 27 people by 2011. The company expects to produce more than \$17 million per year in renewable hemp fibre, wood-like chips and pellets, as well as matting and seed products. Ontario, through the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the Eastern Lake Ontario Regional Innovation Network, which is funded by my ministry, has been providing Stonehedge with advice, expertise and support in building international partnerships.

Ontario is well positioned to develop innovative solutions in this area. The province has a wealth of renewable carbon, and companies such as Stonehedge are proving that the world is looking for the innovative processes and services that we are developing.

MINE TO MACE PROJECT

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Just to remind the members, the diamond cutting for the new mace has begun. The diamond cutter was ill, but he has begun work today, and it's a very interesting process. Just outside the Speaker's office in one of the heritage rooms the work has begun.

There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1136 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Reza Moridi: I'm delighted to welcome the deputy mayor of the town of Richmond Hill, Brenda

Hogg, and the chair of the Richmond Hill Women's International Day, Angel Freedman, to the House.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM
FUNDING

Mr. Ted Arnott: The residents of the town of Erin and the township of Centre Wellington are fuming because these communities' Building Canada fund applications were turned down in the most recent round. We are demanding that the Minister of Infrastructure provide a complete explanation for his government's failure to deliver results in these communities.

In the case of the town of Erin, the council was applying for funding to replace a bridge that has been deemed structurally inadequate and unsafe. The town council and staff made a strong case with a detailed and compelling proposal establishing the need for provincial funding. The tax base of this small rural municipality is inadequate to pay for all of their infrastructure needs, so they need help from the provincial government.

In the case of Centre Wellington township, a strong application was made to help finance the Elora waste water treatment plant upgrades. Again, they were turned down without a meaningful explanation as to why.

In my almost 19 years in this Legislature, I have consistently stood for generous financial assistance from the provincial government to small and rural communities. Their infrastructure projects must be a high priority—especially now, in this time of extreme economic challenge. I call upon the Minister of Infrastructure to review the Building Canada fund criteria, give priority consideration in future rounds to communities shut out in the last round and announce that he will begin to share the provincial gas tax with all municipalities, large and small, as he should, as the federal government does.

WORLD KIDNEY DAY

Mr. Charles Sousa: I rise in recognition that Thursday is World Kidney Day. As many of my colleagues in this Legislature know, March is Kidney Health Month and March 12 marks the fourth annual World Kidney Day.

World Kidney Day was conceived to raise awareness about the importance of kidney health, including proper screening, prevention and management, particularly in the context of chronic kidney disease, which is common, harmful and treatable.

The Kidney Foundation of Canada and other key organizations and partners in kidney care, including Baxter Canada in Mississauga, have issued a call to action to all Ontarians to measure, monitor and manage their blood pressure. As well, Ontarians are encouraged to speak with their health care providers about managing

their kidney health, including the opportunity to be screened for chronic kidney disease.

This is important now more than ever because of the link between diabetes and kidney health. Diabetes is on the rise. It can compromise kidney function, resulting in chronic kidney disease and subsequently requiring dialysis care either in hospital or at home. Approximately 10,000 Ontarians receive dialysis care. Another 500,000 Ontarians are at risk of developing chronic kidney disease.

That's why our government has taken significant action to help people manage diabetes with the launch of the provincial diabetes strategy in July. It included a commitment to focus on improving access to care and management of chronic kidney disease and specifically access to home dialysis.

I would like to thank the Kidney Foundation of Canada and their partners for their commitment to improving the lives of Ontarians and continuing to advocate for improving access to kidney care, from prevention and screening to appropriate management of chronic kidney disease.

TOWN OF CALEDON

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm pleased to rise today to congratulate the town of Caledon in my riding of Dufferin-Caledon on being named the safest place to live in Canada for the second year in a row by Maclean's magazine in their annual report.

The "safest place to live" designation is based on per capita crime data from the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics.

I'm very proud to represent a town such as Caledon, which takes pride in its people and its community.

I would like to acknowledge the Caledon detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police and the volunteers on the Caledon policing advisory council for their efforts to keep our community safe. Congratulations on another great year to Caledon OPP detachment Commander Andy Karski and Mayor Marolyn Morrison. I thank you both for your hard work to make Caledon a safer place.

Hundreds of volunteer hours are put in every year by outstanding organizations like Citizens on Patrol, Youth Leadership and Road Watch. A price cannot be placed on your dedication to community safety.

Finally, I congratulate the residents of Caledon. It is your hard work and pride in your community that bring you the recognition you so deserve in making Caledon a safer community in which to live, work and raise a family.

WARCKWORTH MAPLE SYRUP FESTIVAL

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I rise in the House today to invite all my colleagues here at Queen's Park to take a trip to my riding of Northumberland-Quinte West. The community of Warkworth will be hosting its 23rd annual Maple Syrup Festival this weekend, March 14 and 15.

There will be horse-drawn sleigh rides, syrup-making demonstrations, snowshoe races and taffy sampling. If square dancing and step dancing aren't your thing, then I bet that clogging will surely entertain you. As well, you will be entertained all weekend with old-time fiddling and country music.

The festival includes a variety of activities for the whole family, starting each day with a wonderful pancake and sausage breakfast. Free parking and shuttle buses are provided to transport you each day.

Did you know that maple trees are almost 40 years old before they can be tapped for syrup? Did you know that Ontario is the fourth-largest maple syrup producer in the world? Did you know that maple syrup is a good source of calcium, iron and thiamine?

This is only a sample of what you can learn if you join me at the Warkworth Maple Syrup Festival this weekend. I look forward to seeing you and I'll be there to welcome all the guests on Saturday morning.

Interjection: We'll be there.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Thank you.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. John O'Toole: Many doctors and indeed their patients feel that our local hospitals are being threatened. Citizens in the riding of Durham are concerned over the future of their ER and other acute care services in Bowmanville, as well as the obstetrics services at Lakeridge Health Port Perry.

Recently I met with Dr. Tony Stone, Dr. Ben Fuller, Dr. Will Lottering and Dr. Ed Osborne to gain a better understanding of the needs and priorities in our Bowmanville hospital. Citizens are standing up for the Bowmanville hospital with thousands of petitions asking for the continuation of ER, general surgery and internal medicine. I've also met with Kevin Empey, the CEO of Lakeridge Health; and James Meloche of the Central East Local Health Integration Network.

This is a province-wide issue. It is a concern raised by the wardens of western Ontario, eastern Ontario and northern Ontario. The wardens want to ensure that all small community hospitals will continue to serve small and rural communities. The McGuinty government must do its part through fair funding of the GTA and 905 communities, especially growth communities, and the policies that recognize the important role of small hospitals.

I urge the members of the government and the opposition to support the Healthy Communities Initiative, which really amounts to making sure that each community gets the population-based funding that it is entitled to. We wouldn't have a problem if they would fund people fairly across the province of Ontario.

OCCUPATIONAL CANCER RESEARCH CENTRE

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I rise in this House today to speak about the inception of the Occupational Cancer

Research Centre, a collaborative partnership that has brought together labour, the business community, medical researchers and charitable organizations to collectively seek ways of studying and preventing occupational exposures that lead to cancer. The collective expertise of the centre is a testament to the hard work and coordination undertaken by the Canadian Cancer Society, Cancer Care Ontario, the WSIB and the United Steelworkers.

Together with the Minister of Labour, I had the pleasure of attending the opening of the centre last Thursday, where it was made clear by all presenters that combining their individual experiences in dealing with cancer-related issues is the best way to make progress.

I understand the need to maintain workplace safety. Through my constituency office in my riding in York South–Weston, I hear first-hand the experiences of our area's WSIB injured workers. For far too long, carcinogenic exposures have endangered and claimed the lives of countless men and women earning a living in Ontario. Setting up this research centre will combine the talents of professionals from all walks of life to tackle this complex disease and find creative ways of making Ontario's workplace sites the safest in the world.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who were involved in setting up the OCRC, and to wish them well as they begin this historic partnership.

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JACOB MCGAVIN

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to congratulate an outstanding young man from the riding of Huron–Bruce, Jacob McGavin. Jacob is one of the recipients of the 2008 Ontario Junior Citizen of the Year Award. The award, which is run through the Ontario Community Newspapers Association, recognizes outstanding youth who are making a difference in their communities. Jacob has made a remarkable effort to help children in his local community—the community being the world at large.

On his 12th birthday, Jacob founded Kids Care, a group of young teens striving to make a difference in poorer areas of the world and to improve child education. Under Jacob's guidance, the group has collected food for local food banks and has raised a significant amount of money to build a school in Africa.

Young people such as Jacob are a testament to positive changes that one civic-minded individual can bring about. Jacob has demonstrated great leadership, and I feel we are certainly in good hands with this province going forward into the future.

I ask this House to join me in congratulating the recipients of the 2008 Ontario Junior Citizen of the Year Award on their recent achievements. I also want to add that Jacob comes from a long line of community-minded people. Congratulations to his parents and his grandparents.

JOURNÉE INTERNATIONALE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE

M^{me} France Gélinas: J'aimerais souligner que le vendredi 20 mars prochain, 870 millions de personnes vont célébrer la Journée internationale de la francophonie. Nous fêtons cette journée en exprimant notre solidarité et notre désir de vivre ensemble, dans nos différences et notre diversité, partageant ainsi les valeurs de la francophonie.

Comme membre du comité directeur des femmes de l'Association des parlementaires francophones, j'ai eu l'occasion de me rendre au Cambodge au début du mois dernier et de constater la perte de vitesse du français. Les efforts de reconstruction du Cambodge sont soutenus par plusieurs pays, incluant le Canada, et sont faits en anglais, sans prendre en considération le riche héritage francophone de ce pays.

Les Cambodgiens et Cambodgiennes adorent leur baguette de pain. Ils vivent dans des villes qui sont définitivement françaises, avec des arrondissements, et on y retrouve la rue Charles de Gaulle. Par contre, à l'école, les enfants n'apprennent plus le français.

Mais j'aimerais mentionner que notre Assemblée législative ici en Ontario n'a pas de quoi faire la leçon aux autres. Le français y est toléré, mais certainement pas encouragé, ni utilisé couramment. De plus, certains items de communication, tel notre site Web—c'est une honte à la francophonie, tellement il est cousu de fautes et de mauvaises tournures de phrases. Même les noms des députés n'ont pas les accents de la langue française.

Bonne Journée internationale de la francophonie à tout le monde; c'est le temps de célébrer. J'aimerais mentionner M. Jean-Charles Cachon de Sudbury, qui recevra l'insigne de chevalier dans l'ordre du mérite mercredi soir.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mr. Reza Moridi: Sunday, March 8, was International Women's Day, a day that the town of Richmond Hill has proclaimed to commemorate the contributions of women to the community.

This past Saturday, I had the pleasure of attending the town of Richmond Hill's celebration of International Women's Day with my colleague Dr. Helena Jaczek, along with Deputy Mayor Brenda Hogg and International Women's Day chair Angel Freedman.

This annual celebration inspires women throughout the world, and recognizes and reflects upon the progress made to advance women's equality and women's achievements in today's society.

The day is an official holiday in many countries, and is observed by men giving the women in their lives—that is, mothers, wives, girlfriends, daughters, granddaughters and colleagues—flowers and small gifts.

The women's rights issue that has been brought forward this year is the ignorance of specific health care needs of women that have been insufficiently taken into

account in war situations, where women are particularly at risk of rape and other forms of violence.

I would like to take this opportunity to ask all Ontarians to celebrate this day by pledging to stop the unlawful persecution of women by helping to increase the social awareness of the struggles of women worldwide.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Mr. Pat Hoy: I beg leave to present a report on pre-budget consultation 2009 from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs and move the adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Mr. Pat Hoy: Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the debate.

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

Debate adjourned.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT RENDEMENT SCOLAIRE

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think we all know that the future prosperity of Ontario relies on today's youth. They will be the innovators and leaders who will drive Ontario's economy, they are the citizens of tomorrow, and they will make this province a better place to live. So it is essential that they graduate high school and have successful careers and lives. To allow them to do so, we are providing them with a high-quality education that matches their skills, interests and ambitions. In Ontario, we're fortunate to have exceptional and committed teachers, school administrators and support staff who are focused on reaching every student. In addition, the support that we received from parents, employers and community members to improve student achievement has been overwhelming.

Avec nos partenaires, nous avons été en mesure de concevoir et de mettre en place de nouveaux programmes qui suscitent la motivation des élèves du secondaire. Ce travail collectif d'amélioration du système d'éducation publique de l'Ontario rapporte gros à nos élèves.

I'm proud to report that Ontario's high school graduation rate has increased for the fourth year in a row. It now stands at 77%, a significant increase from just 68% five years ago. What that means is that 36,000 additional students have graduated in Ontario since

2003-04. Another way of thinking about it is that 13,500 more Ontario students graduated in 2007-08 compared to 2003-04. These are very big numbers and they represent large efforts by everyone to reach out to struggling students and give them the support that they need.

Our government believes that a one-size-fits-all approach to education does not work. That's why we've introduced programs that allow students to customize their high school experience and make it more relevant. That includes specialist high-skills majors that are bundles of eight to 10 courses in a student's selected field such as information technology or hospitality. Our dual credit program allows students to participate in apprenticeship training and post-secondary courses while still in high school. It's these types of new options that let students focus on a career path that matches their skills and interests. Working with our education partners, we've created a more engaging learning environment for students that better prepares them to pursue future opportunities beyond high school.

I have heard countless stories from students and teachers across the province on how these changes are making a true difference. For example, Jonathan Camiré from Ottawa had his sights set on a career in an orchestra after falling in love with the French horn. However, he found it hard to motivate himself in the classroom, in part because of a learning disability. The specialist high-skills major in arts and culture offered by école secondaire catholique Béatrice-Desloges solved that problem. He took a bundle of eight courses in grades 11 and 12 that included a course about careers in the arts, in addition to at least one hands-on music course per semester. Then he found himself suddenly concentrating and participating more in school. So those courses allowed him to focus on what was going on in the rest of his courses. Last June, Jonathan successfully graduated from high school, and he plans to continue pursuing a career in music. His story is just one among thousands, and that's why we're committed to students' success.

Les élèves comme Jonathan méritent toutes les occasions d'atteindre leur plein potentiel. Notre gouvernement continuera d'aider davantage d'élèves à obtenir leur diplôme d'études secondaires.

We remain committed to raising the graduation rate even higher: to 85%. I'm certain we'll succeed because we have the support of wonderful educators, parents and community members. Together we'll ensure that Ontario has a bright, strong and vibrant economic future.

1320

RECHERCHE ET INNOVATION RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

L'hon. John Wilkinson: Je prends la parole aujourd'hui pour demander à tous les côtés de la Chambre de se joindre à moi pour célébrer la nouvelle d'une percée de la recherche menée en Ontario, la nouvelle que les expertes et experts appellent une « élégante découverte ».

Humanity hungers for cures for the diseases and injuries that plague us still. Today, with increasing confidence, we can imagine a world where we will unlock the power of our own bodies to cure diseases like diabetes, cancer, cystic fibrosis, kidney and heart disease and to reverse the devastation of injuries to the brain and spinal cord by repairing or even, one day, growing replacement organs and tissues derived from our very own cells.

We are on the cusp of a turning point in history. An organ damaged by disease or injury would no longer mean a death sentence or a lifelong disability. A person's own immune system wouldn't reject the new organ or tissue because they would not be foreign to our body because, instead, they would arise from our own body.

This is the promise of regenerative medicine. In my opinion, it will increasingly become part of our health care future because of stem cells, special cells found within our bodies that can and do turn themselves into any part of our bodies. Already, stem cells are being used in bone marrow transplants to treat leukemia, but the field is still in its infancy.

Due to the wise investments of successive governments, Ontario is known as a world leader in stem cell research. In fact, it was Ontario scientists Doctors Ernest McCulloch and James Till of the University of Toronto who discovered stem cells back in 1961. Ontario has built upon this discovery, developing a strong foundation in stem cell research, from Dr. Tony Pawson unlocking cell biology to Dr. John Dick discovering cancer stem cells to Dr. Janet Rossant developing induced pluripotent stem cells, and so many, many more in our province.

Now we have a major new breakthrough we can all be proud of. Dr. Andras Nagy, at the Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute at Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto, has led a team of researchers who have found a new, safer way to create stem cells from the most ready and accessible of sources: our own skin cells. They've just published their findings in the internationally respected science journal *Nature*.

Let me give you an idea of how important their discovery is. Not only did our papers here cover this as a front-page story, but it was in the news in Washington and California and as far afield as Ireland, England and Japan. The discovery made by Dr. Nagy and his team represents an enormous contribution to the future of health science.

What's more, Dr. Nagy and his team are among the 10,000 scientists, clinical investigators and other researchers who make Ontario the largest hub of biomedical activity in Canada and the fourth-largest biomedical research centre in North America.

As part of this cluster, Ontario is supporting other exciting stem cell research initiatives. For example, we've committed some \$357 million over five years to the Ontario Institute for Cancer Research, which has made stem cell research a focal point of their work. Through the institute, we have invested \$30 million to support the International Cancer Genome Consortium,

through which scientists around the world are working together to unlock the genome of the 50 most common cancer tumours that plague humanity. It is knowledge that could lead to innovative new treatments or even cures. Ontario will serve as the world headquarters of this global effort.

Ontario has also been tasked to serve as the global data centre. In essence, we are creating the largest health informatics database in history.

Ontario can't fund research all alone. We need all levels of government to support our leading-edge researchers so that they can rise to the challenge of overcoming diseases like cancer, diabetes and heart disease.

La recherche et l'innovation font un élément vital du plan économique en cinq points de l'Ontario. Le premier ministre, M. McGuinty, a créé la ministère de la Recherche et de l'Innovation pour orienter l'engagement de notre gouvernement de sorte à faire de l'innovation l'élément moteur de l'économie de l'Ontario. Au titre du programme d'innovation de l'Ontario de 3 \$ milliards, nous créons un solide milieu pour l'innovation en Ontario. Nous appuyons des chercheurs et chercheuses de calibre mondial, ainsi que des industries et des compagnies qui jettent un pont entre l'innovation de l'Ontario et le marché mondial.

That means top researchers will stay in Ontario and breakthroughs like Dr. Nagy's will keep happening here and, as we have seen, history will continue to be made right here in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses?

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: I'm happy to respond today in the House, first of all, to congratulate all the successful graduating classes of 2009 as they prepare for new and exciting careers in their lives; secondly, to reinforce the importance of identifying future opportunities for our students that fit with their skills and interest levels. Now, more than ever, we as elected representatives need to ensure that our students are completing their high school education.

We live in a global marketplace, and Ontario students should be positioned to be successful in that competitive arena. To date, our education system continues to be biased towards post-secondary education. We're edging further away from it, but we're still there. I believe in the value of post-secondary education, but we also need to realize that this is not the option for everyone. If a student feels that he or she is only staying in high school to continue on to post-secondary, and those are not their plans, we lose that student.

I would like to see a stronger focus on our skilled trades and apprenticeship programs and offer students more of an opportunity for alternate career paths. If we engage these students in high school and reinforce the importance of completing their high school education while offering them a career path that fits with their interests, then we can strengthen our graduation rates.

We are still losing those students because they don't see the value of finishing their education.

Likewise, our students in high-risk areas need increased mentoring and support to assist them in fighting off the elements that would like to see them fail. We want to see them succeed. Perhaps if the Minister of Education supported projects like CARES that capture these students when they struggle inside our education system, then we could save more students who are caught in a cycle of poverty and crime. As a government, we need to be thinking outside of the box. The current mindset and approach is not reaching the students who fall outside of the ministry's model for education.

I am pleased to see that we are making strides with our graduation rates for those students who are already working within the system. However, I don't see the statistics for the graduation rates of our high-risk students who have already fallen between the cracks and who have the most to lose. It is these students who warrant the attention of this government if we are truly to make a difference.

In the future, I hope to see a broader perspective taken by our guidance counsellors and support staff in our high schools to realize that there are a variety of options that lead to a successful, productive life. Much more emphasis needs to be put on relieving students from feeling stigmatized if they don't pursue a university education.

Another statistic that is not revealed, and should be, is: How well prepared are our graduates as they transition from high school? Are they prepared to succeed in their careers, or are they part of a politically motivated agenda?

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the Minister of Research and Innovation on his statement to do with recognizing Ontario breakthroughs in stem cell research. Certainly, I would like to add my congratulations to Dr. Andras Nagy and his team at the Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute at Mount Sinai Hospital. It truly is exciting news, their recent breakthrough discovery, where they found a new way of creating stem cells using human skin to reprogram them into pluripotent stem cells, which are cells that can develop into most other cell types. As well, whereas previously you had to use viruses to deliver the required genes, they now have a new method that doesn't require the use of viruses.

So this is truly exciting because of the difference this can make in the future for those people who suffer from spinal cord injury or macular degeneration or diabetes or Parkinson's disease. It gives hope for possible cures for those diseases and can really make a difference in the lives of the people who are affected.

I think, personally, of Aaron Lillie in Bracebridge, who was injured in a diving accident just last year and has a spinal cord injury. This sort of research and

development gives a person like Aaron hope that in the future it may be applied to him. So I'm very pleased; it's exciting news. As well, of course, there are economic spinoffs from developments like this. I'm pleased to see Ontario leading the way in stem cell research, and I congratulate Dr. Nagy and his team.

1330

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This is a response to the Minister of Education's statement. It would be very comforting for us to just accept the numbers. But even if we were tempted to do that, the numbers still show that almost a quarter of students are not graduating. That's nothing to celebrate. You wanted a number, and now you have a number. But what does the number really mean? That's the important question.

Unfortunately, just like EQAO results, the government is more concerned with generating a politically useful number than ensuring that real achievement and future success of students is taking place. In order to pad the numbers, secondary school teachers have been put under extraordinary pressure to pass students, according to the OSSTF. This is not my information, this is the OSSTF, and I would think they would know.

Their Education Forum magazine says that teachers are feeling pressure to adjust failing marks. From the same article, teachers are concerned about a system that "allows late assignments to go unpenalized, plagiarized essays to be rewritten, absolute deadlines to be repeatedly extended, unsubmitted work to be accepted after the semester is over, and obvious failures to be overturned."

Is this something to celebrate in our education system, I ask, rather than creating the alternative programming and providing students with the support staff they need? Students at risk need many more opportunities. Educators are concerned that the government is in fact lowering the bar. Subject teachers, student success teachers and support staff work hard to meet the needs of all our students, particularly those students who are deemed at risk. It would be really easy for the educators in this province to line up and applaud these numbers and take credit; why wouldn't they take credit for what appears to be student success? But they are not doing that; they are doing the exact opposite.

Over the past year, the OSSTF has had serious concerns about what passes for student success in this province. An OSSTF work group on credit integrity felt it was essential to define real versus artificial student success.

The OSSTF has requested a couple of things: All credit courses should be taught by certified teachers; all marks, grades and credits should be true and accurate indicators of student achievement; the subject teacher shall be consulted when principals—not the teacher, but principals—are considering a mark change for a student.

When the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation feels that these things have to be put in writing,

then we have a problem in this province, and it's a problem that will not go away simply because the government trots out some self-serving numbers. There are questions being asked, and while these questions are being asked, we have real concerns that your numbers may be less a measure of success and more a way of hiding failure.

These numbers announcements are not going to take the place of real alternative programs, adequate special education services, adult education spaces and more supports in the classroom. These are the important things we need to really change the education system in this province and ensure that it is student success we're focusing on, not government success, not government numbers games. That is not the way to make students succeed in this province.

You should stop playing the numbers game and make sure that Ontario's school boards have the resources they need to actually deliver real excellence in the education system in this province. That's what Ontarians expect, that's what parents expect and that is the very least, I would put to this minister, that students in secondary education in this province deserve.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Mr. Michael Prue: In response to the Minister of Research and Innovation, I stand here to applaud Dr. Nagy and the wonderful work that was done around the creation of stem cells. I applaud that research because I think this is the cutting edge of science, and it has been delayed far too long. I know there have been ethical issues in the past about where stem cells traditionally were received and how they were received, but this is an opportunity that he has brought forward in science to grow the stem cells from human skin.

The possibilities now are enormous and the ethical dilemma that many people may have had over the use of stem cells and stem cell research has now come full circle, and I think that it's a great day.

PETITIONS

ROUTE 17

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Cette pétition provient de la région de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

« À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Attendu que la route 17/174 a besoin d'être élargie à quatre voies, de la rue Trim à la route régionale Prescott-Russell 8 afin d'améliorer la sécurité routière;

« Attendu que la route 17/174 a été reconnue par le passé pour sa condition dangereuse ainsi que le taux d'accidents annuel notable;

« Attendu que cette route représente la principale voie d'accès à la capitale nationale pour la population ouvrière

de Clarence-Rockland, Alfred et Plantagenet et Hawkesbury;

« Attendu que les comtés unis de Prescott-Russell ont manifesté leur intérêt à effectuer une étude environnementale destinée à l'agrandissement de la route 17/174 en passant une résolution au conseil;

« Attendu que la ville d'Ottawa a passé une résolution au conseil demandant soit à la province ou aux comtés unis de Prescott-Russell de prendre l'initiative de l'étude environnementale pour la route 17/174;

« Attendu que le gouvernement fédéral et le gouvernement provincial se sont tous deux engagés à fournir 40 \$ millions pour l'élargissement de la route 17/174;

« Nous, soussignés, adressons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario la pétition suivante :

« Nous demandons que les fonds nécessaires soient alloués aux comtés unis de Prescott-Russell afin de réaliser l'évaluation environnementale obligatoire à l'élargissement de la route 17/174 de deux à quatre voies, du chemin Trim à la route régionale Prescott-Russell 8. »

J'y ajoute ma signature.

ROAD SAFETY

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm pleased to present a petition from Jack Logan, Laura O'Neill, Joanne Ritchie, Jim Park and Scott Mooney, just to name a few of the people who have signed it. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the recently passed Bill 41 with regard to speed limiters on every truck was passed without considering the effects on traffic flow safety concerns and interstate trucking; and

"Whereas the speed of 105 kilometres per hour creates a dangerous situation on our 400-series highways with consideration to the average speed of traffic flow being 120 kilometres per hour;

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

"That the Legislature suspend the enforcement of the speed limiter law until the Legislature can review all studies conducted pertaining to the effect of this law on road safety; and

"That the Ontario speed limiter law be amended from 105 kilometres per hour to 120 kilometres per hour to remove the increased risk of collisions on our highways and to prevent infringement on interstate trucking out of province and out of country."

I'm pleased to present this petition in support and I present it to Tariq.

TUITION

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have these multiple signatures on a petition given to me by a Mr. Eric Blondin from the Fédération canadienne des étudiantes et étudiants. They held a "freeze the fees," which is basically the students slept outside for two nights—48 hours—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): It's a petition, not a statement.

M^{me} France Gélinas: —to present their petition to me. It reads as follows:

"Whereas undergraduate tuition fees in Ontario have increased by 195% since 1990 and are the third-highest in all of the provinces in Canada; and

"Whereas average student debt in Ontario has skyrocketed by 250% in the last 15 years to over \$25,000 for four years of study; and

"Whereas international students pay three to four times more for the same education, and domestic students in professional programs such as law or medicine pay as much tuition as \$20,000 per year; and

"Whereas 70% of new jobs require post-secondary education, and fees reduce the opportunity for many low- and middle-income families while magnifying barriers for aboriginal, rural, racialized and other marginalized students; and

"Whereas Ontario currently provides the lowest per capita funding for post-secondary education in Canada, while many countries fully fund higher education and charge little or no fees for college and university; and

"Whereas public opinion polls show that nearly three quarters of Ontarians think the government's Reaching Higher framework for tuition fee increases of 20% to 36% over four years is unfair;

"We petition the assembly as follows:

"(1) Reduce tuition and ancillary fees annually for all students.

"(2) Convert a portion of every student loan into a grant.

"(3) Increase per student funding above the national average."

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

1340

LUPUS

Mr. Bob Delaney: I'm pleased to support my seat-mate, the member for Niagara Falls, with this petition that has been sent to the Legislative Assembly by Deb Duval of Nesbitt Drive in Sudbury. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas systemic lupus erythematosus is under-recognized as a global health problem by the public, health professionals and governments, driving the need for greater awareness; and

"Whereas medical research on lupus and efforts to develop safer and more effective therapies for the disease are underfunded in comparison with diseases of comparable magnitude and severity; and

"Whereas no new safe and effective drugs for lupus have been introduced in more than 40 years. Current drugs for lupus are very toxic and can cause other life-threatening health problems that can be worse than the primary disease;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to assist financially with media

campaigns to bring about knowledge of systemic lupus erythematosus and the signs and symptoms of this disease to all citizens of Ontario.

"We further petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to provide funding for research currently being undertaken in lupus clinics throughout Ontario."

On behalf of the member for Niagara Falls, I'm pleased to sign and support this petition and to ask page Emily to carry it for me.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Norm Miller: I have a petition to do with the Burk's Falls health centre. It reads:

"Whereas the Burk's Falls and District Health Centre provides vital health services for residents of Burk's Falls and the Almaguin Highlands of all ages, as well as seasonal residents and tourists; and

"Whereas the health centre helps to reduce demand on the Huntsville hospital emergency room; and

"Whereas the operating budget for Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare is insufficient to meet the growing demand for service in the communities of Muskoka-East Parry Sound; and

"Whereas budget pressures could jeopardize continued operation of the Burk's Falls health centre.

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

"That the McGuinty government and Minister of Health provide adequate increases in the operating budget of Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare to maintain current health services, including those provided by the Burk's Falls health centre."

I support this petition.

PROPERTY TAXATION

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontarians are angry over the volatility of the MPAC tax assessment system, the near impossibility to predict one's assessment or to understand how it is arrived at, the patent unfairness of assessments and that the current system leaves many homeowners worried they may be forced to sell their homes; and

"Whereas changes are needed that will make Ontario's property tax system stable, understandable, fair, and sensitive to homeowners; and

"Whereas property assessments in Parkdale-High Park have risen between 28% and 45% between 2005 and 2008;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: Support the 'freeze till sale' plan to bring fairness to Ontario's property tax system so that new assessments happen only at the time of sale and when a building permit is obtained for renovations totalling more than \$40,000."

I couldn't agree more, affix my signature and give it to Reed to take down to the Clerk.

SALES TAX

Mr. Pat Hoy: “Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the auto industry in Ontario and throughout North America is experiencing a major restructuring; and

“Whereas the current economic crisis is affecting the auto manufacturers and the front-line dealerships throughout Ontario; and

“Whereas many potential automobile purchasers are having difficulty accessing credit even at current prices; and

“Whereas a three-month tax holiday of the GST and the PST on the purchase of new and used cars and trucks would stimulate auto sales;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the provincial and federal governments to implement a three-month tax holiday, and that the Ontario Minister of Finance include the PST holiday in the next provincial budget.”

It’s signed by a number of persons from Comber, Harrow, Chatham, Belle River and Tilbury, and I too have signed it.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. John O’Toole: I’m pleased to present a petition—thousands of them, I might add—from the community of Durham. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the municipality of Clarington passed resolution C-049-09 in support of Lakeridge Health Bowmanville; and

“Whereas area doctors, hospital staff and citizens have raised concerns that Bowmanville’s hospital could turn into little more than a site to stabilize and transfer patients for treatment outside the municipality; and

“Whereas Clarington is a growing community of over 80,000 people”—soon to be home to the new nuclear reactors—“and

“Whereas we support the continuation of the Lakeridge Bowmanville site through access to on-site services, including emergency room, internal medicine and general surgery;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, request that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and the McGuinty government take the necessary action to fund our hospital equitably and fairly. And furthermore, we request that the clinical services plan of the Central East Local Health Integrated Network address the need for the Bowmanville hospital to continue to offer a complete range of services appropriate for” a growing community in Durham region.

I’m pleased to sign and support this and present it to Andrej.

PROPERTY TAXATION

M^{me} France Gélinas: J’ai cette pétition de M^{me} Evelyn Dutrisac, conseillère de la ville du Grand

Sudbury, et des membres du réseau d’action de son quartier. It reads as follows:

“Whereas 2009 is a reassessment year in the province of Ontario; and

“Whereas the assessments will be phased in over a four-year period from 2009 to 2012; and

“Whereas the assessed values for current value assessments collected as at January 1, 2008, were obtained during years of high real estate activity in the province of Ontario; and

“Whereas the downturn in the current global economic climate has greatly affected the real estate market, and subsequently, the assessed values in the province of Ontario....”

They ask the Legislative Assembly:

“That the Minister of Finance for the province of Ontario roll back assessed values to the base year of January 1, 2005.”

I support this petition, will affix my name to it, and send it to the table with page Patrick.

PROFESSIONAL HOCKEY FRANCHISE

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I’ve got a petition signed by people from Mount Hope, Milton, Hamilton, Burlington and Stoney Creek. It says:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment has the highest average ticket revenue per game in the National Hockey League; and

“Whereas the Toronto Maple Leafs are ranked the most financially valuable team in the NHL; and

“Whereas many Hamilton and greater Toronto area hockey fans are unable to attend professional hockey games due to a lack of adequate ticket supply; and

“Whereas the Hamilton and greater Toronto area boast the biggest and best market in the world for hockey fans, with Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment bringing approximately \$2.4 billion to the local economy over 10 years; and

“Whereas a new franchise in the Hamilton and greater Toronto area is valued at \$600 million by some economists; and

“Whereas competition in both business and sports is healthy for both the Hamilton and greater Toronto area economy and sports team performance; and

“Whereas despite having the most loyal fans in the world, the Toronto Maple Leafs have not won the Stanley Cup in over 40 years; and

“Whereas Hamilton and greater Toronto area fans deserve competitive professional hockey teams;

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

“To request that the government of the province of Ontario express its strong support to the board of governors of the National Hockey League for the relocation or expansion of a second NHL hockey team in the Hamilton and greater Toronto area in order to realize the economic advantages to the taxpayers of the province

of Ontario and to provide healthy competition to the existing Toronto NHL franchise.”

I agree with this petition, obviously, and will sign it and give it to Alexander to take down.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Milton District Hospital was designed to serve a population of 30,000” and the town of Milton is now home to more than 75,000 “people and is still growing rapidly; and

“Whereas the town of Milton is the fastest-growing town in Canada and was forced into that rate of growth by an act of the Ontario Legislature called ‘Places to Grow’; and

“Whereas the town of Milton is projected to have a population of 101,600 people in 2014, which is the earliest date an expansion could be completed; and

“Whereas the current Milton facility is too small to accommodate Milton’s explosive growth and parts of the hospital prohibit the integration of new outpatient clinics and diagnostic technologies;

“Therefore, be it resolved that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure take the necessary steps to ensure timely approval and construction of the expansion to Milton District Hospital.”

I approve of this petition. I’ll sign my name to it and pass it to Jacob, my page.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. It’s been sent to me by Hongwei Zhao, of Britannia Road West in my own riding of Mississauga–Streetsville, and reads as follows:

“Whereas wait times for access to surgical procedures in the western GTA area served by the Mississauga Halton LHIN are growing despite the vigorous capital project activity at the hospitals within the Mississauga Halton LHIN boundaries; and

“Whereas ‘day surgery’ procedures could be performed in an off-site facility, thus greatly increasing the ability of surgeons to perform more procedures, alleviating wait times for patients, and freeing up operating theatre space in hospitals for more complex procedures that may require post-operative intensive care unit support and a longer length of stay in hospital;

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

“That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care allocate funds in its 2008-09 capital budget to begin planning and construction of an ambulatory surgery centre located in western Mississauga to serve the Mississauga-Halton area and enable greater access to ‘day surgery’ procedures that comprise about four fifths of all surgical procedures performed.”

I am pleased to sign and support this petition, and ask page Rachel to carry it for me.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GREEN ENERGY AND GREEN ECONOMY ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 SUR L’ÉNERGIE VERTE ET L’ÉCONOMIE VERTE

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 3, 2009, on the motion for second reading of Bill 150, An Act to enact the Green Energy Act, 2009 and to build a green economy, to repeal the Energy Conservation Leadership Act, 2006 and the Energy Efficiency Act and to amend other statutes / *Projet de loi 150, Loi édictant la Loi de 2009 sur l’énergie verte et visant à développer une économie verte, abrogeant la Loi de 2006 sur le leadership en matière de conservation de l’énergie et la Loi sur le rendement énergétique et modifiant d’autres lois.*

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Further debate?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I’m very pleased today to have the opportunity to speak to Bill 150, An Act to enact the Green Energy Act, 2009 and to build a green economy, to repeal the Energy Conservation Leadership Act, 2006 and the Energy Efficiency Act and to amend other statutes.

Today, as a member of Her Majesty’s loyal opposition, it is my responsibility to point out the flaws and shortcomings in this legislation, and to speak on behalf of all Ontarians who have expressed concerns, asked questions and want to know that their concerns and questions will be addressed by this government.

Although I support green energy, I am concerned not only about the lack of detail in this bill, but also the details that may be buried in this bill and the haste to pass this bill by the government, without extensive consultation with stakeholders and the public.

If we take a look at the media, it’s obvious there are concerns. From the *Ottawa Citizen*: “The Premier’s new green energy plan is just a badly planned distraction from Ontario’s worsening economic outlook.” If we take a look at the *National Post*, “The Province’s Green Energy Plan Is Turning Ontario into a Green Police State,” and if we take a look at the *Hamilton Spectator*, “Green Audits Won’t Work.”

It’s obvious: The public should be entitled to answers from this government.

I have to question whether this government, in bringing forward this bill and acting so hastily, has taken the time to ask the tough questions. I wonder whether they have done the necessary in-depth analysis about the impact and how they plan to implement this bill, or is this energy bill, as some suggest, more about the McGuinty government seeking to associate with the icon of appearing green?

We do know that Premier McGuinty so little understood Ontario energy needs that in the 2003 election he

irresponsibly, without a plan, promised to close Ontario's coal-powered plants by 2007. To date, the only government to close a plant was our government when we closed Lakeview.

We also know that the Minister of Energy and the Premier have indicated they have no idea how the 50,000 jobs that they're promising will be created. But if they hearken back to the real world, Ontario, in January alone, lost 71,000 jobs.

We also know that the Minister of Energy and the Premier have no answers when it comes to targets, electrical rates or the cost of this plan for consumers and businesses. They seem to forget that the Ontario economy depends on a secure supply of affordable energy that will enable us to compete with our neighbouring American states. That is critical if we are to retain jobs in Ontario.

However, since I only have 10 minutes, let me put some concerns and unanswered questions about the bill on the table. I will not deal with the issue of the erosion of democratic rights or the loss of local participation in decisions that directly impact the communities affected by the act. I will not deal with the mandatory \$300 energy audit, which must be reconsidered since it imposes another layer of bureaucracy that will cost homeowners money. Other people are doing that, and they will do so effectively.

I want to go back, again, to whether or not this government and this Premier asked the tough questions or did the necessary in-depth analysis about the impact of the changes proposed in this bill.

As health critic, I want to look first at the health risks of wind turbines. Bill 150 does not address health concerns. It is a bizarre omission. The health of Ontarians should surely be mainstreamed in all government policy decisions, particularly those where the potential impacts are either obvious or widely reported by independent professionals with expertise.

Let's take a look at what Dr. Nina Pierpont said: "I can tell you, definitely and unequivocally, that wind turbines of the size you are contemplating do, in fact, cause harm to human health when placed within two kilometres of peoples' homes." There is no peer-reviewed scientific report written by a certified clinician that disputes Dr. Pierpont's conclusions. Indeed, her research findings are supported by eminent research scientists, academics and medical bodies around the world, and I have the list here.

Extensive research on the health and safety effects of wind turbines confirms that noise from turbines can be heard up to two kilometres away and can induce sleep disturbance, depression, chronic stress, migraines, nausea and memory loss. Dr. Robert McMurtry, former dean of medicine at the University of Western Ontario, points out that the Ontario environment ministry's existing regulations regarding acceptable noise levels are flawed, as they fail to measure low-frequency noise. He states, "It is not possible to develop authoritative guidelines for setbacks of wind turbines if low-frequency noise is not taken into account."

So we have the Premier making pronouncements that there aren't any health concerns related to industrial wind

turbines. However, in saying so, his pronouncement flies in the face of worldwide evidence to the contrary. The World Health Organization states: "It is important to promote the development and the application of health impact assessments in the energy field."

So I go back to where I started. Why has this government not taken action to ensure that the health concerns in this bill are addressed? Why are there no provincial standards for wind turbine setbacks? In Germany and Denmark, setback distances are typically between 1.5 and two kilometres. Would it not be negligent on the part of the government to proceed with the construction of industrial wind turbines without establishing setback standards based on a full epidemiological study of the health risks and the impacts as recommended by Dr. McMurtry, the former dean of medicine at the University of Western Ontario?

Another question that needs to be answered is whether wind power really is that green, or even a viable economic alternative to other renewable energy options. Has the McGuinty government examined the European experience, where wind power has been in existence for a decade or more? Unfortunately, the evidence is mounting that wind power has not delivered on its promise. We know that Denmark is the world's most wind-intensive nation, with more than 6,000 turbines generating 19% of its electricity. But, apparently, not one fossil fuel power plant has closed, 50% more coal-generated electricity is needed to cover wind failings, pollution and carbon dioxide emissions rose 36% in 2006 alone, and Danish electricity costs are higher than in Ontario.

1400

And what are the Danes saying about wind power now? "Windmills are a mistake and economically make no sense," says Niels Gram, Danish Federation of Industries. "Wind turbines do not reduce carbon dioxide emissions," says Flemming Nissen, head of Denmark's largest energy utility.

In fact, *Der Spiegel*, in Germany, says this about the German plants: Germany's "CO₂ emissions haven't been reduced by even a single gram," despite all their wind turbines. In fact, Germany has had to build many more coal- and gas-fired plants.

As you can see, when we take a look at this bill, there are many unanswered questions and concerns. Time does not allow for me to raise any more at this time, but I would recommend that this government go back and ask the tough questions that you have refused to ask thus far. Do the in-depth analysis of the health risks associated with wind turbine setbacks. Determine whether wind power is really that green or even a viable economical alternative to other options.

Unless and until those questions are answered and that analysis is completed, it would be irresponsible to support this bill. People in this province deserve answers. I trust that this government will take the time to get it right. I hope there will be extensive consultations and amendments.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Howard Hampton: I listened carefully to my colleague from the Conservative Party. I want to say that while I do not necessarily agree with everything she has said in her comments, she does raise some questions that the McGuinty Liberals are very reluctant to answer. She raises some questions that I think are very worrisome for individual homeowners and people who are thinking about residential electricity. She especially raises some very troublesome questions, I think, for the manufacturing sector.

One of the realities of Ontario's economy is that the manufacturing sector needs affordable electricity if they're going to continue to operate in Ontario. Indeed, I think we can already see some things happening: ZENN cars—electric cars. It's an Ontario company, but they have chosen to do their manufacturing in Quebec. Why have they chosen to do their manufacturing in Quebec? One of the reasons: affordable electricity.

Let me give you another example. This is office paper; hundreds of thousands of tonnes of office paper are utilized in Ontario virtually every week, but no office paper is produced in Ontario any longer. A company like Domtar has 10 mills—in Tennessee, Kentucky, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Wisconsin and Quebec—but no longer produces office paper in Ontario. Why? The industrial hydro rate. And the government refuses to answer those questions.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Phil McNeely: I'm pleased to offer my comments on the member from Kitchener–Waterloo. One of the real issues behind this—there are many improvements in providing the proper electricity to our great province, but renewables and conservation are at the centre of this, and conservation is energy number one. We all know that. So this bill includes many things.

One of the things I'd like to talk about is local investments. Part of this bill will be community assistance facilitation, which will support community investments in providing small-scale grants in support of soft costs—engineering and legal—for renewables and conservation, and retrofits were part of that. We have certain initiatives in this bill that will have to be defined—the health concerns that this member has brought up—but that will be part of developing the regulations under this bill, so that has some time. It will be going to committee, and obviously it will have good input from around the table.

We're looking at really improving the conditions in Ontario to let the bio-gas energy come in, to let the wind energy to come in. One thing: Solar energy, all those flat roofs in a city like Toronto, has been mentioned by the minister a few times, and that is certainly energy that we can use and recoup efficiently in this province.

For many reasons, this bill, with the major investment in the grid and making that grid available, is getting us ready for five years or 10 years down the road when that grid will be needed for electric cars. This is a modern approach, this is a good approach, and this bill will do that.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's my pleasure to address the comments made by our deputy leader, Mrs. Witmer, the member for Kitchener–Waterloo. I would remind this chamber that in 2001 it was under her leadership as Minister of Environment that an implementation plan was put forward to eliminate and close the only coal-fired plant in this province. It's a statistic and it's a fact that those opposite would like to forget. They don't like to talk about it much because, quite frankly, they failed to act on the environment and in our energy crisis since they've been elected.

This piece of legislation is very disconcerting. Not only are there plans that are unachievable and based on issues that we think are grabbed out of thin air—i.e. the jobs they believe they will create; it has serious economic and consumer-related challenges that have not been addressed by the McGuinty government. A number of different statutes and acts will be amended as a result of this piece of legislation, and it is not clear to the official opposition that the ministers responsible for those pieces of legislation or those ministers whose portfolios will be impacted have been adequately briefed on the impacts. I can tell you that, in my 10 minutes that will be coming up in the next rotation, I will focus on some of the consumer protection issues that will arise. These are very serious concerns that we in the official opposition have. That is why we asked this government to put this legislation before the people of Ontario before we had this debate. It is an omnibus bill and it needs to be treated as such.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Mike Colle: I think many of us and the member from Waterloo certainly forgets what happened on August 14, 2003. Fifty million people ended up with no lights, totally in the dark, and that was during the watch of her party because they weren't paying attention to energy. They weren't pay attention to transmission. They let things basically go to seed. They talk about the economic impact or the environmental impact: When you ignore something as fundamental as energy production, conservation and transmission, you not only suffer environmentally; you suffer economically.

Interjection.

Mr. Mike Colle: There's the member from Kenora–Rainy River. When he had a chance to extend the hydro line from Conawapa, he said no and he closed it down. We could have had clean electric power from Manitoba, and there the member from Kenora–Rainy River was so forward-looking that he said, "No, we're not going to extend that power from Manitoba and Conawapa." He's the one who killed Conawapa, and he has the nerve to stand here and lambaste reliance on nuclear. He's the one who pushed more nuclear down our throats, because he closed Conawapa. He closed that renewable, green hydro power from Manitoba. If we had had that power from Manitoba, we would not have had the blackout in 2003. That's on the member from Rainy River's legacy: He

killed Conawapa; he put us back 20 years by killing Conawapa. People will never forget what he did.

Interjections.

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The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): It used to be quiet in here before the change in NDP leadership. Nevertheless—

Mr. Howard Hampton: On a point of order, Speaker: I'm upset when I see Liberals stabbing a good Liberal like Bob Rae like that.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): That's not a point of order, but I probably drew that out of you.

Member for Kitchener–Waterloo, you have two minutes to respond.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I want to thank the members for Kenora–Rainy River, Ottawa–Orléans and Nepean–Carleton, and I would take exception to the comments by the member for Eglinton–Lawrence. For him to suggest that the power brownout in 2003—

Mr. Mike Colle: Blackout.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: —blackout; whatever you want to call it—was our responsibility, when the whole world watching knew that it originated in the United States, shows you how preposterous are the statements being made by the government. In fact, it leads you to question even more whether this government ever asked any of the tough questions related to this bill, whether they ever did the in-depth analysis.

As I said in my remarks, your Premier made a very irresponsible commitment in 2003 to close the coal plants without any plan. I can tell you personally, as Minister of the Environment, that the only reason the coal plant at Lakeview closed was because we made an announcement that was based on an in-depth analysis; there was a plan of action with targets. We are proud of the initiative—the action we took—because the only coal plant that has ever been closed is the one we closed at Lakeview, and we take credit for that, because we had a plan.

You've never had a plan. You continue to make irresponsible announcements, and then the plants are going to close in 2009. Who knows when it will ever happen? It's just like today: You're proposing that all this good is going to happen; however, you have no answers about how the 50,000 jobs will be created, what the rates will be, what the price of power is going to be for consumers and business. This government is out of touch. They never do the analysis that is needed.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you to everyone. Further debate?

Mr. Howard Hampton: I'm very pleased to take part in this debate, especially at this juncture.

I want to remind the member for Eglinton–Lawrence that it was someone named Dalton McGuinty who was all in favour of privatizing the grid, selling off Hydro One. If he wants to see it, I'll be glad to show him the video clip again and I'd be glad to show him the press clippings again. When you stand up and try to pretend that somehow Liberals are the protectors of public power,

please, just go and read your own press clippings. It's there in black and white.

I want to talk some more as well about why this bill at this time? The reason we see this bill at this time is because the real electricity policy of the McGuinty Liberals is to go nuclear—go big. If you want to see what the real electricity policy is, there's a rule: Follow the money. You cannot produce electricity unless you make capital investments. Now, the McGuinty Liberals would want the people across Ontario to believe that billions of dollars will be invested in green energy. But if you follow the money, the fact is that the billion-dollar investments, the multi-billion dollar investments, are not going to happen in green energy; the multi-billion dollar investments are going to happen on the nuclear front. The McGuinty Liberals say, "Oh, \$26 billion." I invite Ontarians at home to call up their local electricity utility and ask them how much they believe the nuclear program as proposed by the McGuinty Liberals will cost, and they will say, "If the McGuinty Liberals are saying \$26 billion, then multiply by two. It will be at least \$50 billion, if not more." So the real electricity policy of this government is to go nuclear and go big—go very big. What that will mean is huge costs on the hydro bill.

But the McGuinty Liberals don't want to talk about that, so they're looking for something to hide behind; they are looking for something to throw out there and say, "Don't think about the massive spending on nuclear power. We've got something else over here."

But what is in this bill? Well, the government says, and I find it interesting, that there are stronger building code standards. The government doesn't need a bill to change the building code. The building code is set in regulation. The McGuinty Liberals could go into a cabinet meeting tomorrow and say, "We're upgrading and updating and making the building code stronger so that if people are going to build apartments or duplexes or triplexes or homes, they will have to build according to a higher energy efficiency standard." No legislation is required for that.

They say this bill deals with more efficient government buildings. You don't need a piece of legislation to require government buildings to be more energy-efficient. The government, when it puts out tenders for a contract, can simply say, "This building will be built according to these energy efficiency standards." If you want to do things like rely on geothermal heating, you can make it part of the contract. If you want to install solar panels on top of a government building, you can make it part of the contract. If you want the building constructed such that it has the structural stability to be able to support a wind turbine on the 21st floor, you make it part of the contract. You don't need legislation to do that. You simply make it part of the contract.

Then it says more energy-efficient appliances. Once again, energy efficiency as it applies to appliances is set down in regulation. This government could go into a cabinet meeting tomorrow and come out and say, "You're no longer allowed to sell refrigerators or freezers or cooking

stoves or other electrical appliances unless they meet the energy efficiency standards already established by California.” These products are already being manufactured; they are being manufactured for that huge California market. You don’t need to have legislation.

So if you don’t need to have legislation, if this could all be done by cabinet regulation, why is this bill here? This bill is here for one simple reason. This bill is nine parts smokescreen. It is nine parts media relations and public relations and only about one part substance. Why this smokescreen? Once again, the desperate attempt by the McGuinty Liberals to hide the fact that their real electricity agenda, their only electricity agenda, is to go nuclear and go big—very big, \$50-billion big, huge-increases-in-the-hydro-bill big, huge-increases-in-the-debt big—and people will be paying for generations and generations.

The government says, again, you need this in order to establish a “culture of conservation.” They’ve been using this term “culture of conservation” for about six years. In fact, residential electricity use is increasing. The only thing that is decreasing in the province is industrial use of electricity. Every once in a while they put out a press release saying, “We’ve achieved incredible electricity efficiency.” No; another 10,000 workers got laid off. That’s what’s really happening. I’ve never seen a government celebrate the loss of so many thousands of manufacturing jobs and then try to pretend that it’s energy efficiency. When a paper mill shuts down, that’s not energy efficiency; that’s the loss of thousands of jobs, and it’s the loss, in many cases, of the whole economic base of a community. When Stelco shuts down and 2,100 workers in Hamilton are given pink slips, I have to tell the McGuinty Liberals: That is not energy efficiency; that is an economic disaster.

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You don’t need legislation to implement practical energy efficiency programs. This government today could announce that it’s going to provide every Ontarian who wants to purchase a state-of-the-art, energy-efficient fridge with a \$500 or \$1,000 low-interest loan and then allow people to pay back the loan based upon how much they save every month on their hydro bill. We know that the most up-to-date energy efficient fridge uses only about a third of the electricity of a refrigerator that’s 10 or 15 years old. You don’t have to have a new bureaucracy going around and hunting in people’s basements. You don’t have to be conducting searches and inspections. People want to do the right thing. But a lot of people in this province don’t have the extra \$2,000 or \$3,000 of cash to go out and purchase that energy efficient fridge. They need a loan, preferably a low-interest loan, and they can make the purchase. But do we see that? No, we don’t see that.

Similarly—and I invite all the people at home to do this—Manitoba has a very effective energy efficiency strategy. The NDP government in Manitoba has a very effective energy efficiency strategy. It provides very big, long-term loans so that people can go out and do things like purchase energy-efficient windows, energy-efficient

doors, energy-efficient appliances, super-energy-efficient natural gas furnaces, and you pay the loan back not out of your pocket but based upon how much money you save on your heating bill every month and how much money you save on your electricity bill every month. Six or seven years after you’ve paid back the loan, here’s what’s happened: You’ve done the right thing for the environment, you’ve done the right thing in terms of your home and gee, you’ve also done the right thing in terms of your pocketbook.

Do we see a strategy like that from the McGuinty Liberals? Nope. No strategy. Instead, they want to create a new bureaucracy to go out and hunt around in people’s homes—“Aha, you’ve got an energy-efficient fridge in your basement.” This bill is nine parts superficiality, nine parts media spin, and only about one part substance. I believe that the people of Ontario deserve better. When industrial hydro rates are closing mill after mill, factory after factory, and when low-income people can’t afford to pay their hydro bills, people deserve something better than this from the government.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier) Questions and comments? The member for Algoma–Manitoulin.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: Following a well-reputed author on electricity issues, I feel somewhat taken aback. But I would like to just point out that the Green Energy Act will be important to the constituents I represent. First of all, we have, and are proud to say, the largest wind farm in all of Canada, in Prince township just on the edge of Sault Ste. Marie. It is something that my constituents believe is good for the environment. But we need to be able to move electricity. I think the member would understand that. We do need better distribution. Our distribution system in Ontario needs considerable upgrades, and a great part of this act is providing the opportunity to improve the distribution of lines in a timely fashion across Ontario so we can move. The Schneider people on Manitoulin island are looking to be able to build more than the three present wind turbines that they have, but they need to be able to move that electricity beyond the district of Manitoulin, beyond places like Killarney, and into the grid to make those kinds of investments viable. Those are the highways of electricity, and the member clearly would favour an improvement in distribution and he would know that in—

Mr. Howard Hampton: You don’t need a bill to do that.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: The bill actually does assist to do that. The member knows that also.

I represent a constituency that at one time employed 4,000 people in the uranium mines of Elliot Lake. He can be proud to say that his government, the one that he supported, went and put 4,000 steelworkers out of work overnight in Elliott Lake. He might also want to tell my constituents in Blind River who worked for Cameco that they aren’t part of it. And he would like to tell the Legislature about completing the largest nuclear—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you.

Questions and comments?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I do appreciate the opportunity to comment briefly on the remarks made by the member from Kenora–Rainy River. Perhaps surprisingly, I do agree with quite a lot of what he had to say. Although I come to a different conclusion ultimately, I do agree with him that the people of Ontario do deserve better than what they're getting with this bill, that a lot of it is just a lot of dreams and hope and a lot of supposition and trying to convince the people of Ontario that all of a sudden, with the snap of a finger, we're going to have green energy throughout the land.

Of course, it's not going to happen that way, and that's one of the biggest things that we as Progressive Conservatives take issue with. There's no plan here and no idea about how we're going to integrate the development of nuclear power, which we still rely on for 50% of the power in this province and which we're going to need if we're going to try and develop the kinds of industries and businesses that we need to replace the lost jobs here.

If we're going to continue to innovate and grow the economy of this province, we need to have a reliable supply of energy, and that's not what we're seeing with this bill; we're just seeing one small piece of it. Of course, who wouldn't want to believe in green energy? We certainly do encourage the development of alternative energy sources, but that's not going to be fully developed for a number of years. In the meantime, we need to carry on business and we don't have a plan. We don't know how that aligns with the development of nuclear power. We also don't know how that aligns with the closing of the coal-fired plants.

Quite frankly, we've heard that promise before. We heard it for 2007; now we're hearing it for 2014. Whether that's actually going to happen is a matter of speculation at this point. We haven't heard anything definitive on that point, and really, it's something that we as Progressive Conservatives advocated some years ago, to put those scrubbers on the coal-fired plants to keep them going and to eliminate some of the health-related concerns that so many people in this province have. But it hasn't happened, and we don't know from this bill what is going to happen. The government needs to get its act together and give us a full plan.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's an absolute honour and a pleasure to welcome the member from Kenora–Rainy River to the House business of the afternoon. We haven't been blessed by that in the past.

The member is absolutely correct. This bill is a piece of greenwashing. There was a name—"greenwashing"—developed to describe exactly what this bill is. Those who are in the environmental movement recognize immediately what it is. They have come out with one voice, from David Suzuki to Greenpeace to Pembina, saying that there's not going to be the money for renewable and to please stop this rush to go big and go nuclear. Fifty billion dollars is the single, biggest expense this province will ever put out there. If anybody out there who's

watching thinks that this is going to mean a lot of new wind farms and a lot of new renewable energy projects, they are incorrect. Because to put this in perspective, over the next 20 years, according to this bill, Ontario will install less than one fifth the solar panels that Germany has put up in one year. Remember, Germany is the country that has 30%-plus in wind power already. So there's no need to wait; the technology in fact is there.

In 2027, according to this plan, Ontario will have less wind capacity than the state of Texas already has today. By any standards, that's pathetic. Again, a Liberal spin bill that's meant for the media and not meant to put renewable energy into action, that gives it crumbs rather than substance, that would be—maybe not; just the order of the day, quite frankly. But in fact our planet's at risk, as well as the province of Ontario. We know they can do better, and they should.

1430

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Pat Hoy: I guess my first comment would be for all members of the House to remember that we have extended the PST exemption on energy-efficient appliances. We're playing a role in many aspects of energy use and consumption, and providing for energy into the future.

Bill 150 will make it easier to bring renewable energy products to life. It's a vehicle that would allow for that. There will be great jobs coming out of this: domestic manufacturing—as part of the content of the bill and its future once it's passed—assembly, architecture, construction, trucking, installation, financing, engineering, electricians, inspectors, computer software, and the list goes on and on.

On Friday, Minister Papatello; Minister Duncan, the member for Essex, who's here with us now; and myself, along with many others, hosted an alternative manufacturing summit. We were hoping that perhaps 300 people would attend that meeting and hear from people who are involved, and experts in wind, solar and, indeed, nuclear. We were hoping for 300 people, and 800 persons came. They were looking for the job opportunities that will flow from Bill 150. They're going to make component parts, they will be involved in construction and they're looking for their opportunity to be part of what is a new future in energy use and consumption here in Ontario.

As an example, I have wind farms in my riding. It has been beneficial to the landowners, who in many cases are farmers, but it's not exclusive to farmers who own land. It has been beneficial to the municipality in terms of the tax that is paid to them in property taxes, and there have been jobs flowing from this. So this bill just enhances what we've started. It's going to give us great opportunities in energy in the future.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Kenora–Rainy River, you have two minutes to respond.

Mr. Howard Hampton: I do want to respond. I want to say to the member for Algoma–Manitoulin that if the McGuinty Liberals want to reopen the uranium mines in Elliot Lake, I invite you to make that announcement, because you know and I know that those uranium mines were heavily subsidized—unbelievably subsidized. If the McGuinty government wants to go down that road again of paying four or five times the existing price of uranium, then you make that announcement. Otherwise, if you're not prepared to make that announcement, I suggest that you leave the issue alone.

I want to address some of the other points here, and one is this: Quebec has a 60%-Quebec-content rule when it comes to green energy projects. So someone who wants to construct wind turbines in Quebec understands that they've got to do 60% of the work in Quebec. The result? There is now a wind turbine facility in Quebec. Similarly, someone who wants to participate in terms of the solar energy industry in Quebec has to do 60% of the work in Quebec. The result? You have new plants opening in Quebec to produce components for solar electricity.

Quebec has been very clear: 60% Quebec inputs. I searched this bill from top to bottom, backwards and forward, looking for that. Do you think you can find it? No; you can't find it. There is no requirement. I remember, just a short while ago, the then Minister of Northern Development promising that there was going to be a wind turbine plant in Sault Ste. Marie. I invite McGuinty Liberals to go and see if you can—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you.

ROYAL ASSENT
SANCTION ROYALE

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to a certain bill in his office.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The following is the title of the bill to which His Honour did assent:

Bill 103, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act and to make amendments to other Acts /
Projet de loi 103, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfance et à la famille et apportant des modifications à d'autres lois.

GREEN ENERGY AND GREEN
ECONOMY ACT, 2009
LOI DE 2009 SUR L'ÉNERGIE VERTE
ET L'ÉCONOMIE VERTE

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Mike Colle: The Green Energy Act is a real paradigm shift. For many years, there's been all kinds of

nibbling at the edges of what we do in terms of a comprehensive energy policy, but the minister, Mr. George Smitherman, has undertaken a comprehensive approach to this. The big shift I've seen in this bill is, for the first time, a government in Ontario has invested a great deal of time and energy and planning in looking at the conservation mix in terms of our energy and investing in enhancing conservation in a systematic way, also in terms of renewables.

For too long, when we've looked at renewable energy, so-called green energy, it has been an ad hoc approach. It's been a piecemeal approach. What this bill does is emphatically state that investment in conservation and renewable energy is an integral part of our energy future here in Ontario, and that is why this is a very complex bill. There are many different component parts. It is a bill that, again, strikes debate in many, many areas, and that's good, because for too long we've talked about conservation. We've been ready to accept it, but this bill, I think, outlines a plan to get there.

The thing that we must go back to is August 14, 2003. Essentially, the power energy system in Ontario and parts of the eastern United States collapsed, and that's because Ontario's system of energy infrastructure, along with that of the northeastern United States, was not up to standard. We took it for granted that those old transmission lines and power generation stations would be able to handle these loads, and we found out in a very stark way that it was not up to acceptable standards.

So, in 2003, people in Ontario, especially southern Ontario, went without power for a couple of days, and they began to realize—I remember people going to gas stations and saying, "Hey, I can't get gas." It soon became very real to them because the gas pumps are electronically run; therefore, without electricity you can't even get gas. We never thought of those implications.

I think it was a wake-up call. That's why our government, since then, has invested massive amounts of money in infrastructure upgrading: our transmission lines and refurbishing many of our power plants. There's also the new Beck tube that's going underneath Niagara Falls, a billion-dollar project, giving us more green power out of Niagara Falls. That's a huge, massive undertaking that's going on right now as we speak, a billion dollars in renewable energy.

This bill also ensures that for the energy projects that are proposed—whether it be for solar farms or wind farms, whether it be for renewable hydro projects, bio-mass generation of power or geothermal projects—there is going to be a streamlining of the approval process. It is beyond belief how slow and cumbersome the process is, and the amount of duplication and time it takes to approve any of these renewable energy projects. This bill attempts to give them much more direct focus so they'll be passed in a reasonable amount of time. There are so many hoops that these projects go through, it's no wonder we have lost so much time. We just have too much bureaucracy, too much delay, too much opportunity to deflect the purpose of good green energy projects in this province. So this bill takes that on head-on,

to get rid of the bureaucratic delays that stop green energy from occurring. That is very, very important.

I look at the city of Toronto itself. There have been transit projects in Toronto and in the GTA for years and years. You have to go through about five years of environmental approvals and planning approvals by about five different levels of government to put a streetcar line on the street that saves the environment, saves money and gets rid of the CO₂ emissions. Even though there's government money ready, it still takes five years to do this. In many parts of the world, these projects take six months, to build subway approvals and to build light rail approval—six months; five years here in Ontario to clean our air, whether it be a transit project or a green energy renewable project. That's what happens, and that costs money and delays.

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The other important thing is in terms of the green-collar jobs. As our economy is being transformed, as the economies in North America and the world are being transformed, it is certainly agreed upon that the new jobs of the future are going to be for people who produce—whether it be wind turbines, solar panels, geothermal devices, on-demand water heaters, insulation technology or new home building, these are the opportunities as we get into this green economy. The bill is an enabler to do that. Right now, there are all these roadblocks where these green jobs can't go online because of the delays and because of the approval process.

The other thing to keep in mind is that these projects being planned right now are now going to be given a priority. In fact, in the act it says that there's now going to be a obligation, if this bill is passed, for the responsible power purchasing authority to grant priority to, and obligatory purchase of, green energy projects. In other words, right now the power authorities don't have to give priority for transmission etc., for green power projects. This will make sure that they give priority to the green energy projects rather than them languishing in the background.

There are so many incredible opportunities for jobs, for cleaning up in our projects—in this bill they refer to projects like green roofs. If you go up high in the city of Toronto, you will see hundreds and thousands of acres of rooftops, all flat, and there's nothing on top of them. Could you imagine, Mr. Speaker, if you had green roofs all across the city of Toronto and the GTA and industrial sites in Mississauga or in downtown Toronto, and all the green roofs had insulation through natural soils and the growing of grasses whereby in the wintertime they would act as insulation, keeping buildings warmer, and in the summertime they would cool buildings, plants and industrial sites? This bill enables that to happen to a greater extent and incents people to do that. We need to utilize these green roofs that are sitting there right now basically being energy pigs because they spew heat out and also keep the cold.

Another great opportunity for jobs is one of my pet projects. In all of our homes across Ontario in our

basements we have these 50-gallon energy pigs. These energy pigs are boiling hot water 24 hours a day. We're not home, yet it's boiling away. It's like leaving the house and leaving a hundred kettles on. Would you leave your house in the morning and leave a hundred kettles on? You wouldn't do that, but we do leave that hot water tank gurgling away. Can you imagine if we replaced those energy pigs in our basement with on-demand water heaters like they've been using in Portugal, Brazil and Guatemala? The whole world uses on-demand water heaters, which could be manufactured in Hamilton, Toronto, in Leamington, providing green jobs for the people of Eastview; they could work producing these on-demand water heaters. Instead, we keep these energy pigs in our basements, boiling away, boiling away, day after day after day so that we can take that one shower in the morning and then wash the dishes at night. And these big kettles boil away.

That's the culture we have to change. This bill begins to change that.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I very much look forward to speaking to this a little bit later. Unfortunately, I don't have that much time.

I wanted to make some comments on what the member was speaking about. First of all, on the hot water heater, most people don't realize that 22% of all energy costs in the province of Ontario are associated with the heating of water, whether it's for cooking, cleaning, bathing or other aspects—dishwashers etc.—22% of all costs. There is some technology out there, and I know because I happened to do a pilot project on one where a building actually used the hot water heater to heat the building in the wintertime. What they did was pump the hot water through the building in order to heat all the rooms, and when they wanted hot water, they turned on the hot water, and guess what? It came out. That way, it was being utilized in other fashions. There are some technologies out there that have been in existence for a while, and that's just one of them.

Another one is the flat roofs you spoke about, and what happens there. Most people don't know that the reason they utilize flat roofs is that in the summertime, they collect water. As the sun beats down, it heats up the water and it evaporates into the atmosphere. The theory behind that is that the water actually draws the warmth out of the building; it helps to cool the building by drawing it up to the roof and then evaporating it. It causes a cycle much like a termite mound; that would be an extreme example of how it works.

There are some other things. You talked about the five-year delay process for a lot of stuff. It's the same with all governments of all stripes; we've all had that difficulty. In the province of Ontario, we have some significant components—you mentioned travel or road infrastructure. A lot of that has to go with research that is done, whether it's a simple thing like digging up artifacts to ensure you're not going through a First Nations burial

site when you're putting in a new road, to make sure that is in compliance. We've also got the Ministry of the Environment looking at all these things. A lot of things are happening out there.

The member from Manitoulin mentioned the Sault Ste. Marie aspect. There was a lot of research done by previous governments on that in order to initiate it, which is another example of how you bring these things to happen in five years. But things are happening, and Ontario is getting a lot better.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Let's hear what the people who are in the field, the environmentalists themselves, actually say about this bill. Greenpeace: "The government's 2006 electricity plan caps the development of green energy, so the government could meet its self-imposed target of maintaining nuclear at 50% of supply."

Pembina: "Ontario's electricity plan actually halts construction of new wind turbines in 2018, in order to leave space for the new reactors that the province is ... purchasing."

According to the David Suzuki Foundation, "To be effective in making Ontario a global green energy leader," the government must "avoid new investments in nuclear facilities to avoid 'capping' renewables and efficiency gains due to oversupply from non-renewable sources."

You can't have it both ways. You can't have this huge expenditure on nuclear reactors and give the crumbs over to renewable energy and conservation. It doesn't work that way.

By the way, two University of Western Ontario professors interviewed 63 wind developers. They also say that the act doesn't go far enough because it fails to include long-term targets for renewable capacity and leaves too many decisions to ministers.

We're going nuclear, and as the member from Kenora–Rainy River says, we're going nuclear, we're going big, and that is the real energy policy of this government. This bill is greenwashing to cover up the fact that they know as well as we, in the New Democratic Party, that nuclear reactors are unpopular with a lot of people who are voting in Ontario elections; they're just not popular. They know, unlike the McGuinty Liberals, that a nuclear reactor has a lifespan of 20 years, goes over budget—we're talking \$30 billion to \$50 billion here—and the radioactive waste from the nuclear reactors lasts for thousands of years. Again I say this is greenwashing.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Reza Moridi: I'm pleased to rise in this House and comment on Bill 150, the Green Energy Act. I would like to commend the Minister Smitherman and his staff for preparing and proposing this bill to the Parliament.

Green energy is the thing that is going to change fundamentally energy policy and energy distribution in this province. When we are talking about green energy,

we are not only talking about windmills or solar power; we are talking about other forms of green energy: biomass, biogas, fuel-filled gas, geothermal and other methods of production of green energy.

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In response to the comments made by the member from Kenora–Rainy River and the member from Parkdale–High Park about nuclear reactors, I must mention that there are about 400 nuclear power reactors in operation in the world as we speak, and they have been in operation for the past 60 years. Each reactor doesn't cost \$25 billion, as these members just indicated. They cost much, much less than what they have quoted to this House right now. I suggest that these honourable members ask the operators and builders of those reactors how much they do cost. They cost much, much less than that.

I have been to reactors several times. The nuclear industry is one of the most heavily regulated industries among all industries in the world. It is not a dirty industry; it is actually a clean industry. I recommend that members visit one of these nuclear reactors not very far from Toronto, either at Pickering or Darlington.

This bill, once it is passed, is going to create 50,000 new jobs in various areas of engineering, manufacturing, assembly, installation and so on and so forth. It's going to diversify energy production in this province.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It amazes me that the Liberal member from Eglinton–Lawrence would choose to focus his debate on how it's a great thing that Bill 150 is going to limit the ability of the public to have input on the placement of generation projects. By far the greatest number of conversations, e-mails and phone calls that I have had on Bill 150 are around concerns raised with our municipal partners and the landowners, who are saying, "Why are the Liberals allowing the removal of our input when it comes to placement of turbines?"

It comes out beautifully in an e-mail that I received: "Bill 150 essentially excludes Ontarians from any say in the establishment and location of industrial wind turbine plants. It provides a glaring example of the Liberal government's systematic indifference to the rights and interests of rural Ontarians, and an inexcusable disregard for public health concerns."

The lead-in to that is that after approval is given, there are 15 days for an Ontario resident to appeal one of these approvals to the Environmental Review Tribunal. Fifteen days? You would have to go onto the Environmental Bill of Rights essentially daily to monitor what kind of approval processes have been occurring and how quickly they are going, and then you have a mere 15 days to put together your process and arguments against an approval process.

It's unconscionable to me that that would be what this member and this Liberal government hold up as the beautiful part of Bill 150, and to me is an indication of how little respect they show for homeowners and our municipal partners.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Member for Eglinton–Lawrence, you have two minutes to respond.

Mr. Mike Colle: I want to thank all the members for their input.

The thing that the last speaker, from Dufferin–Caledon, doesn't understand is that right now, to get an approval for a green energy project or to get an approval for a transit project, you go through provincial liaison, local planning, regional planning. Every ministry has to sign off on it. They're all doing it one after the other. Why not streamline it and let them all do it concurrently?

If the Tories are so interested in creating job opportunities in their ridings, why are they so interested in bureaucratic delay? I'm not talking about doing something in a year, or even two. I just don't think a green energy project should take five years. We're not building a smokestack. We're building a wind turbine; we're putting solar panels on roofs. It shouldn't take five years to get an approval.

You'd think the Tories would be in favour of eliminating red tape; the old Mike Harris Tories talked about that. This one—I'm not sure where she's coming from, but she wants more delay, more excuses. Therefore, we lose jobs?

We desperately need jobs. That's why we need new ideas, and that's why I liked listening to the member from Oshawa, who always has an idea rather than just some negative criticism about everything. The member from Parkdale–High Park is negative about everything. I've never heard her say a positive word in any day she has been here.

Interjections.

Mr. Mike Colle: Once—one positive word. But anyway, sure, this is not a bill that's going to solve everything. But I like the fact that we are discussing ideas. We need to put these ideas into practice. We've been talking about conservation and how good wind turbines are and how good solar panels are. It's about time we started doing it, because there is an environmental imperative that we do it; there's an economic imperative. Climate change is almost here, folks—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. Further debate? The member for Nepean–Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I appreciate the opportunity to debate here. May I just move away from my script for one moment. The previous member called my female colleague from Dufferin–Caledon “this one” and he called my female colleague from Parkdale–High Park somebody who is always negative. I think that he should consider his words in targeting the women in our caucuses in the opposition.

Let me stick to my script because I do have grave concerns about this legislation as the official opposition critic for consumer services. This is a power grab. It's also a tax grab, and it could be considered one of the most dangerous pieces of legislation to impact consumer protection in this province's history. I'm disappointed that last week, when asking a question of the minister

responsible for consumer affairs, instead of standing up and answering a question related to consumer issues in this chamber, on this bill, he sat down, he remained silent, he referred the question. It is his responsibility, as Minister of Consumer Services, to stand up and take notice. I think myself and my colleagues in the official opposition, and I imagine my colleagues in the third party, are quite concerned that this is an omnibus bill which will impact several different ministries and several more pieces of legislation.

This legislation is being forced through this chamber without adequate public debate. This bill, this tax and power grab, ought to be approached not only as an energy and environment bill but also as an economic bill. It should be looked at in the context of the current economic climate and what it will mean to the everyday taxpayers, homeowners and of course the consumers who use electricity in this province.

Specifically, this power grab will come at a significant cost to consumers. Let me explain. The cost of Mr. McGuinty's power grab is \$5 billion over three years just to update transmission alone. This means that Ontario's 4.2 million electricity consumers could see a 30% increase in their electricity bills. Home energy audits are a key component of Dalton McGuinty's power grab. This scheme alone will cost homeowners an extra \$300 if they choose to sell their home. Warrant inspections and search and seizure are all aspects of Dalton McGuinty's power grab. The toaster police don't even have to notify a homeowner when applying for a warrant to search and seize energy-inefficient household appliances. Interfering in Dalton McGuinty's energy search-and-seizure scheme is punishable by a fine of up to \$25,000.

We currently pay 5.5 cents for energy, but Mr. McGuinty's power grab will force us to pay for more expensive wind and solar electricity, which could be as much as nine times the price. Mr. McGuinty's power grab creates more expensive government programs that will be passed on to taxpayers by increased monthly bills from their gas and hydro companies. Instead of directly raising taxes, the Green Energy Act will force gas and hydro companies to raise their rates, and consumers will be the ones paying for these Liberal pet projects. Mr. McGuinty's power grab will also increase the size of the bureaucracy by creating one more government agency. It will interfere in decisions made by consumers on the power that they purchase by allowing the government to order any consumer to change their habits. The jobs created by Mr. McGuinty's power will largely be public sector.

This legislation, this power grab, is a threat to consumer protection. It is the worst possible set of policies to be brought forward during an economic downturn. There have been many criticisms on this power grab, ranging from the Ontario Federation of Labour to the Canadian Taxpayers Federation. In all, the critics see this power grab for what it is: “A waste of time and money when the province should be focusing on ... the economy,” as the Ottawa Citizen wrote on February 25, 2009.

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Let me share some of the very concerns people across Ontario have over this legislation. Wayne Samuelson of the Ontario Federation of Labour says, "It needs to be part of a ... broader economic package that includes infrastructure spending, support for people who need help...." Mr. Samuelson and I rarely see eye to eye, but I agree with him on this point. At a time of economic distress, I am concerned that hiking rates, raising taxes and growing the bureaucracy are the very last approaches we should take. But also, if you're going to implement any approach of this kind, there needs to be a plan. Instead, this bill is part of a series of one-offs that will only exacerbate the pain that this province is currently going through. For example, Kevin Gaudet of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation says, "It's a new green tax." There may be disagreement about what the best way is to respond to challenging economic times, but the one area on which there is no disagreement is the issue of raising costs, fees and taxes: This is exactly the wrong time.

In a nutshell, this power grab will leave most consumers powerless when dealing with their energy prices, because they are going to skyrocket. One specific measure which has been panned by consumers is the energy efficiency audit, which will cost them at least \$300. This will cost homeowners much more than \$300 on the face value alone. The demand for those people who are offering the audits will increase, but as Gerry Weir of the Ontario Real Estate Association says, "It's not the initial cost of these audits that concerns us. These audits will be used by homebuyers as bargaining chips to significantly reduce the final selling price." This is an important point, because the government of Ontario under Dalton McGuinty has now become a major player in Ontario's real estate market. Caveat emptor, let the buyer beware, because, as Weir points out, "Home sellers are already worried about lost equity in their homes. A move like this, which will reduce their value even further, will not help them in any way." This power grab, quite simply, not only will come on the backs of homeowners across the province, but there is also a high level of unpredictability in the Liberals' energy plan.

You will recall that the Liberals once promised to eliminate coal-fired plants by 2007. It is now 2009, and they have not met that target. They are now aiming for 2014. As Guy Holburn of the Richard Ivey School of Business at the University of Western Ontario says, "We have had a new minister pretty much every year. Each minister has his or her own preferences and issues new directives and abandons the previous plans. This creates a climate of uncertainty within the sector, which scares off developers."

The one certainty there is is that this is a power grab. It centres around one minister, the minister of everything, and in total, 20-some acts within 15-some ministries will be amended. Troublesome still is that this power grab will allow the minister more influence in how renewable energy projects move forward. One concern that I have in meeting with stakeholders, and this is why, I think, at the

end of the day—the question that our critic and our deputy leader asked very early on when this piece of legislation moved forward—it should actually go to the public. It is an omnibus bill. As I said, it is quite extensive in how many different acts it will open up and it is quite extensive in how many ministries it will impact. We must consider the fact that it will override existing title laws, contract laws, condominium bylaws and municipal bylaws. This is sweeping power for the Minister of Infrastructure and Energy, one of which I think the consequences have not yet been determined. I know that many people will approach this as an energy bill, and I encourage them to do so. I am focusing on it as the critic for consumer protection. In the consumer protection area, this is a failure, and I would urge the minister responsible for consumer protection and the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure himself to figure out how we can best protect consumers with this piece of legislation.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Thanks to my friend from Nepean–Carleton for her comments.

I'd like to go back to what the stakeholders are saying about this rush to nuclear reactors, the rush to nuclear energy, over and against—instead of—renewable and green energy. That's what we're doing here; let's be clear about it.

The Ontario Clean Air Alliance shows that for every dollar that the Ontario Power Authority spends on energy conservation and efficiency, it spends \$60 on new energy supply. Group after group, from David Suzuki to Pembina to World Wildlife to Greenpeace, have all spoken with one voice. They've all said that it is entirely possible to meet the energy needs of Ontario with the three Rs, that we don't need to go to the fourth R, nuclear "reactors." That's not where we need to go and that's not where we need to put our money. That's what they're saying.

The question here is, why isn't the government listening? Why do they bring forward this piece of greenwashing legislation that simply acts, as you've heard the member from Kenora–Rainy River say, as a kind of smokescreen for their real energy policy, which is all about nuclear reactors?

Certainly, according to the Ontario Clean Air Alliance, Ontario's wind-power potential is more than 10 times greater than our total electricity consumption alone. Ontario's biomass potential from agriculture and municipal waste is equal to 25% of our total electricity consumption. These are from the experts in the field. These are from those people who spend all of their time looking at energy issues and how we're going to meet our energy challenges in the future.

Why don't we listen to David Suzuki? Why don't we listen to Greenpeace? Why don't we listen to Pembina? Why do we not listen to the Ontario Clean Air Alliance? Why don't we listen to the experts in the field? Why does the McGuinty government continue with its ill-thought-

out, ill-strategized rush to nuclear, a nuclear that, I may point, out is riddled with problems of its own: cost overrides and, of course, the ever-present risk of radioactive waste, which, as we all know, lasts longer than we do—and longer, we hope, than the McGuinty government?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I'm happy to have an opportunity to offer some comments on behalf of small business people in my riding—I would think maybe the largest group of small business people, as my stakeholder group—and they would be farmers.

Actually, I've listened very carefully to what farmers have been telling me since the introduction of the act, and they're really quite excited and quite hopeful. Also, I have a release that was put out by the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. I think all members of this House know that the OFA is a very reputable voice for farmers in the province of Ontario. This is what their release has indicated:

"Monday's announcement by Minister George Smitherman, energy and infrastructure, of the Green Energy Act, is viewed by Ontario farmers as an excellent opportunity to accelerate their entry into the energy production market, says Bette Jean Crews, president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture.

"When the act is fully operational, Crews says it will 'create new opportunities for our farmers to participate even more in Ontario's green energy revolution. Through their (increased) involvement in energy production, Ontario farmers will create new manufacturing opportunities and fuel other economic initiatives,' she says. 'OFA will work with the government to ensure necessary safeguards accompany green energy developments to preserve farmland and protect the interests of rural residents.'"

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So we have the representative of the farming organization. I have heard from farmers in my riding who are very eager to participate in this initiative. They want to be a part of the solution to enable this province to produce cleaner, greener renewable energy, and I'm very proud of that. They represent a very large sector of small business people in my riding. That's what they have been telling me.

I'm very grateful that they put this out in a release. The people of Ontario need to hear this.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I've seen the wind turbines on Manitoulin Island, and I've seen, as many of us have—up Highway 10, I believe it is—that there are aspects taking place, and a lot are wondering: What's happening? The minister read correspondence from the Ontario farm council—

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Ontario Federation of Agriculture.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: Ontario Federation of Agriculture, yes. I was thinking of the Ontario farm council.

I'm not going to hold it up as a prop, but I just received this today: "Wake-up Call to Ontario's Political Leaders, Attention Premier McGuinty." This letter goes on to read as follows:

"It is our belief that environmental concerns could be best addressed through a government policy that directs investment towards the improvement of conventional sources of power generation. In the case of coal generation, this means research and investment in new and improved clean coal technology. Current technology eliminates almost 98% of all emissions produced in coal generation." This letter goes on to say:

"A new direction in policy that makes power generation dependent on unreliable sources of power such as wind and solar generation will not, in our view, result in competitive electrical pricing. We feel that these sources of generation will add significant and unnecessary costs to the province's economy," which means that people in the long run are going to pay for it, and they don't necessarily want those aspects taking place. Of course, in the downturn of economy right now, anything that's adding costs is a disincentive to get things going.

"We ask again that your government reconsider its current policies, which include, most notably, the Green Energy Act."

That was just sent to us today by the Sarnia Construction Association and the Sarnia Building Trades Council. These are happening all throughout the entire province because people have concerns. As new legislation comes forward, there are always concerns, but we need to make sure they're heard from on all aspects, from all parts of the province. I would hope that the entire province will have a chance to comment through the committee process.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Ms. Laurel C. Broten: I'm pleased to have a chance to spend just a few minutes responding to the concern raised with respect to the ability to create jobs. I want to talk again about the detailed analysis that has come forward and the transformational nature of this piece of legislation.

This piece of legislation will set the foundation for a new way of generating electricity and a new way of transmitting electricity in the province, ultimately with the goal of creating new industries and a new manufacturing sector here in Ontario for the production of the types of things that we can put in our homes, in our businesses and out on our farmland to produce that new green energy. The jobs that will be created—we know that there will be a number of critical areas, and they're going to be good jobs for Ontarians.

I know that when I travel in my community in Etobicoke-Lakeshore, that's what my residents want to hear about. Approximately 40% will be jobs in transmission and distribution upgrades. The member opposite talked about the \$5-billion investment in the transmission and distribution systems as an example. We will see many direct jobs created in construction, equipment

supply, equipment manufacturing, design and transportation for the reconstruction and, frankly, revitalization of our transmission sector, so that we can get electricity from where it's generated to where it's needed. That's of critical import, and also, transforming that transmission grid to a smart grid, which I hope to talk a little bit about again later today, where the majority of direct jobs are specialty jobs, communications software systems, and these are exactly the types of investments that we are seeing made in the United States by President Barack Obama. We're going to make them here. They're going to be good jobs for Ontarians.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Nepean–Carleton, you have two minutes to respond.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I want to thank my colleagues from Parkdale–High Park, Oshawa, the Minister of Agriculture and, of course, the former Minister of the Environment, the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

I appreciate the opportunity. I think that by prolonging this debate we're bringing much-needed attention to this piece of legislation. Again, I would reiterate my calls for extensive public hearings on this piece of legislation. I also firmly believe we must travel the province, because it will impact so many different pieces of legislation.

I do have a serious concern with the number the Liberals have used in terms of how many jobs they believe will be created. I do not believe it will be as high as 50,000. I also believe that many of those jobs will be public service jobs, and that is not what Ontario needs right now. Ontario needs private sector jobs, well-paying jobs, and we need to start getting those 71,000 jobs that we lost in the month of January back here in the province of Ontario.

I want to make a comment with respect to what I heard from the Minister of Agriculture but also from my colleague from Oshawa. He was pointing out some of the criticisms for this bill. I appreciate the minister bringing forward the OFA's endorsement of the legislation, but, sadly, that is just one voice. There are several other voices that she seems to be uninformed of, and they range from the Ontario Federation of Labour to the Ontario Taxpayers Federation. They come from the Ontario Real Estate Association; they come from the Canadian title registries.

There are serious concerns with this legislation that we must look at, not only in terms of the power grid and how we are producing energy in this province but also in how we can ensure that, for example, title law, contract law, agreements between individuals, municipal bylaws and condominium bylaws are all protected. We also must remember that this is going to impact the taxpayer severely. We must look at it also in that context.

We have some time. I urge the Liberals to work with us.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. Further debate? The member for Oxford.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Well, he was the first one up.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Well, just one second. We will go in—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Did I miss you? Let's go in rotation. Lambton–Kent–Middlesex.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: There's a little bit of confusion there as to what the rotation is, I guess.

Certainly I'm very pleased to stand up and speak in support of Bill 150. In terms of my own experience in my riding, as my farmers have wholeheartedly endorsed this endeavour in terms of renewables, the fact that the legislation is proposing a framework for a single point of entry for approvals of processes for their projects is very important.

Over the last five, almost six, years I have worked with a number of my farmers who have been trying to get biodigesters online. A big frustration for them has been that they have had to go to a number of ministries to get approvals, and every time they thought they were a little bit closer to getting their project off the ground, there was another approval that they needed to get. This is going to make this much easier for them to do.

I certainly know that when I talk to my farmers about this, they're very enthusiastic about being part of this. We talk very often to farmers about diversification as farmers, and they see this as real diversification; they see this as another way of supplementing their farm incomes, by becoming farmers of energy, and that is very important to them.

I see a number of them, when I talk to them, who tell me they are very enthusiastic about biodigesters. I talked recently to a young farmer who was on the roof of his drive shed, working away at the roof itself that had lifted in a bit of a wind storm. He was up there, and he said it got so hot that he couldn't think of anything else but, "How can I harness this energy? How can I make this work for me?" That's exactly what most farmers are thinking as they watch the wind turbines in their communities. They're thinking, "How can I make this work for me?"

I have a dairy farmer, who's not very far from my farm, who has a smaller turbine, and he supplements his electrical use with that turbine. I have two other producers in the livestock industry who are using manure as a biodigester system, and again, they are going to create more energy for themselves and their neighbours. As a matter of fact, in Ilderton, there is the hope that Stanton Farms will be able to supply energy for their entire community over there. That is going to be a substantial impact on that community, in terms of reliability of energy, because it's from biodigesters, and biodigesters work all the time.

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Before becoming a member of provincial Parliament for Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, I worked with and for the federation of agriculture as their member services representative. That was in the counties of Lambton and

Middlesex. One time the Lambton federation, at their monthly meeting, had a representative come in from one of the chemical industries in Sarnia to talk about the possibility of biodigesters. His concept was that farmers would work in a co-operative and site a biodigester on one farm. Everyone else would move their surplus nutrients, as we now call them, to that farm and they would share, in a co-operative, in the development of energy from that. That was a few years ago, and at the time the cost of doing so and the amount of organization sort of had people, and in particular, that group of farmers, saying, "That's a great idea. It sounds good. But financially we're not sure that we can do this."

They've changed their minds about that. In the last while, many of them have come to understand that we can't just continually try to find another way to put the manure back into the soil. Soil tests show that we've hit those points where we know exactly how much we can use of it, and they are often left with surplus. So now they have an opportunity to take that and turn it into energy.

The same concept goes in my riding in the community of Watford-Warwick, where we have a landfill. A lot of the Toronto garbage comes to that particular landfill. I have seen operations on the States side where the methane gas that's produced by those landfills is then used to drive generators and turbines to create energy for those communities. Again, it's a renewable source. The methane is going to continue for a number of years. It's very predictable and very reliable, and people know that the electricity will flow as it should. Those are all the kinds of things that we see in my community.

I also have a number of wind turbines. I have, as I say, turbines that are small, on individual farms. I also have seven turbines at Kettle Point. I know some people may say they don't like the appearance of them. Personally, I think they are quite elegant. I think they are amazing to watch. Maybe it's my heritage. Windmills are a part of the Dutch culture and I just happen to like windmills, right? Maybe that's part of it, but I really do find that they are beautiful and elegant. But they're not a new concept. As I say, I look in my heritage and we used the wind to help us to grind the wheat and the grains.

Farmers for years have had windmills. We've had windmills, and they predominantly were used to draw the pump and to draw water out of wells. Now, many farmers, actually, where electricity isn't readily available, will use solar pumps; that's a new innovation that we have. But the original use of the traditional farm windmill was to bring water up from the ground. That drove the pump and moved the water into the barns and into the house. It was something that was taken very much for granted. We expected that that was how we were going to get the energy to do those things. So it's not a new concept, as much as some people want to say that this is something different, that we don't know what we've got here and that we don't know how to handle this.

Quite honestly, I think that we are trying to make more of it than something that we know traditionally has

always worked. It's renewable. It's something that we don't have to try and dig out of the ground. I know people who talk about coal. Certainly, many people have heard of the concept of peak oil. The same applies to coal: We will run out at some point. It is not a renewable source.

We're talking in this act about renewable sources. We're talking about solar; we're talking about wind; we're talking about biodigesters. Those are things that will always be with us, we will always be able to rely upon them, and they do no damage to the environment. They are very much a part of what we've always had and always will have with us.

The one thing that I think is very important and that we need to also address here is the need to have part of this as a made-in-Ontario solution, which allows us to also have Ontario content in these. Yesterday at church, I was talking to a couple of farmers, and one of them has a large windmill on the farm where they actually subsidize the electricity for two farms and still generate into the system. They were talking about the fact that they were down for four months because they had a breakdown and the parts were an issue. They couldn't get the parts.

We need to bring this industry into Ontario as well. When we talk about job generation and economic stimulus, I think that's where we are. I think that when we start to look at who is going to build these, who is going to do the repairs and who is going to have the parts available, that's exactly what's going to happen. It needs to come to Ontario, so that as we build these and have them working, we can keep them working in a timely way.

The one individual told me he lost thousands and thousands of dollars in those four months while his turbine was down. He certainly appreciates the need to have it up and running, and he appreciates the need to have suppliers within the province so he can have it readily repaired when it does break down. It is machinery, and things do break down, so it's important for them to have that here. When we look at the green energy bill, we know that that is where we are moving as a province, and I think it's incredibly important for us to do exactly that.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):
Questions and comments?

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I'm pleased to join the debate on Bill 150, and I want to commend the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex for her remarks. Ontarians are certainly telling me, and I think they're telling all of us, that it's time to get on with this; it's time to make some moves in a positive direction.

If there is any way we could perhaps classify ourselves in the past, I think we've had a case of what marketers call unwholesome demand: It's something we want for our lifestyle but something that we know has some bad implications for our environment. If we continue to produce energy the way we thought it was okay to produce energy in the past, we're going to do further damage to the planet, and we don't want to do that.

I've heard a lot of people throwing around quotes that this person said this and the environmental movement

thinks this. Let me give you some real quotes that were introduced just recently. They're from people I think many of us should recommend. I want to start with Dr. Hermann Scheer. I think Hermann Scheer is renowned and accepted as a worldwide expert in the provision of alternate energy. He's general chairman of the World Council for Renewable Energy and also a member of the German Bundestag. He said, "Ontario's Green Energy Act represents North America's most ambitious and far-reaching enabling legislation and will place Ontario as a world leader in renewable energy development, industrial innovation and climate protection."

A little closer to home, Dr. Rick Smith, executive director of Environmental Defence, says, "The introduction of this legislation means Ontario will be a world leader in green development, and it couldn't come at a more opportune time as it directly addresses both our environmental and economic needs." With the economy in the state it's in, I think it's something we can use to actually improve that situation as well, something that is certainly agreed to by Joseph S. Mancinelli, international VP of the labourers' international union. There's lots of good support; it's time to move on with this. Let's have a vote as quickly as possible, and let's all support it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: A lot of us had great hopes for Bill 150, and a lot of us are looking at it very carefully in the hope we can find something there that can move forward in a very productive and positive way. However, in my review of the bill so far, there has been far more symbolism than substance in this document. I think it's another one of the government's pushes to try to label something "green," and if you say it's green, then it must be green and we must move forward with it as quickly as possible. "As quickly as possible" quite often leaves out the comments by the very public this bill will affect. The public isn't going to be fooled by something that they don't understand. They aren't going to accept something just because someone says there are going to be 50,000 jobs created. Are those permanent jobs? Are those temporary jobs? What kind of jobs are they? Are they going to replace the permanent good jobs that have been lost since this government took power in 2003? I think that the public is waking up to the fact that, as I've said, there is more symbolism than substance to much of the legislation that this government has brought forward, especially that I've seen in the two years I've been here.

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It's unfortunate, because this is a huge opportunity missed to allow us to move forward to become leaders, which this bill does not allow us to do. The sorry part is, we're not even going to be able to figure most of it out until it has been passed and people begin experiencing the adverse effects of this bill in three years.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Certainly it's absolutely critical that we have movement toward a green economy. There

is no question about that. The question here is, does this bill do the job? And the answer is unequivocally, from the stakeholders, no.

Despite the member for Oakville's quotes, what was interesting was not so much what he quoted as what he didn't quote. As I said, when I have my 10 minutes, I'll go into that in more detail, but certainly you didn't hear the names Greenpeace, Pembina, David Suzuki. David Suzuki is a physicist by trade. Why is he so anti-nuclear? Why is he so anti this government's rush to put huge amounts of money—the greatest amount of money this province has ever spent—in one direction of energy production, and that's nuclear?

I listened also to the member for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex with profound interest, because it is true that farmers are a group who don't really get their shrift in this place quite often. They don't get enough time. It's interesting to hear somebody stand up and defend them, but the reality is, this bill is not going to give them the money they need to move forward in a green direction. Farmers right now are hurting as much as any group in the province, possibly more. They don't have the money to go toward energy efficiency and green energy unless they get some help from this government. That's what we were all hoping to see in this Green Energy Act, Bill 150. That's what we didn't see in Bill 150, this Green Energy Act.

It is a case of greenwashing. I'm going to say the word over and over again because I like it. It's a case of greenwashing. That's what this bill is, and it's designed to hide the real expense, which is nuclear.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: It's my pleasure to add a couple of comments to this debate. Frankly, this is something that I think a lot of people have been waiting for in Ontario. I can speak about a proponent in my riding who has a couple of small water-generating capability projects. For years, he couldn't get to first base. As I discussed this piece of legislation with him, he welcomed the idea. He has also given me some input that I'm able to pass to the minister as we move forward with this piece of legislation.

I want to take a minute to comment on the comments from friends from the official opposition and the third party. They're talking about process, and they're talking about red tape. I haven't heard one solid suggestion from those folks about what we should do. We heard from the minister loud and clear in question period, a whole number of times, that he's willing to work with all sides of this House. We're going through a process.

We talk about consultation. I can look down the aisle from me, and I see a couple of members who were part of a government when consultation didn't exist. That particular government talked about the need to reduce red tape. That's all they talk about every day. What we're trying to do is streamline so we can get things done.

We talk about, as I said, consultation. On some omnibus bills that I was a recipient of when I was in the municipal sector, there was no consultation at all. We're prepared to consult. We're having extensive debate on this bill.

Like I said, I would like those members opposite to come with concrete suggestions, as the minister has been asking for. He has opened up the door. Tell us how we can best work together. Let's hear it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Lambton–Kent–Middlesex has two minutes to reply.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I want to thank the members for Oakville, Burlington, Parkdale–High Park and Northumberland–Quinte West.

In terms of the comments made by the member from Burlington, saying there is no substance to the bill, I think he even looked at the bill she would know that in 65 pages this bill moves to act on well over 10 acts in terms of amendments, as well as talking about setting up a framework that will enable farmers and other proponents and people like the member for Northumberland–Quinte West was talking about, who are trying to get themselves on the grid and become local producers of energy. I certainly see this as an opportunity in terms of the localization of energy production. In Europe, we see that very often, where the grid does not go very far afield from the generator, so it's very easy for people to know where their power is coming from, and it's important to do that as well.

I'd like to also just take a quick moment to talk about the economic stimulus. This past weekend the Minister of Energy, George Smitherman, was in Chatham–Kent–Essex with the member Pat Hoy. At that time, the local Chatham paper reported the following, and this is a quote from the minister: "But, as we build more wind and other renewable energy projects in the province of Ontario, we're going to work hard to make sure that even more economic benefit lands in Ontario," to which the local economic development office, represented by Ron Anderson of Chatham–Kent, said, "That's the way it has to happen. It has to become law or (companies) search the world for these products." That's true. You have to give the impression and very clearly state that you're in support of renewable energy, and you do that through the law.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I look forward to speaking on Bill 150 in the time that I'm allocated. First of all, I would like to comment to the member from Northumberland–Quinte West that there have already been suggestions taking place in the House. Quite frankly, I'm going to make a number of suggestions in here when I speak, as I always do or try to.

I want to do a little bit of a disclosure. You see, I'm one of those individuals who uses 60 watts of solar, and for the past year or two years, I have been in negotiations with companies on developing a wind turbine that's specifically going to address the 22% cost of energy associated with the heating of water. I'm still in it. We have another meeting in two weeks to find out how successful we are on that.

To the member for Northumberland–Quinte West, I would ask what's happening with the Wesleyville site in

his particular riding. It has been sitting abandoned. It was designed for the production of energy, and we haven't seen anything happening in that area. I certainly hope that we'll find out.

The minister said that there were going to be 50,000 new jobs created. Basically, there is a strong concern about where those jobs are going to come from and what the infrastructure is going to be. I know that individuals who have graduated from UOIT in the alternative energy fields are looking abroad because there just doesn't appear to be anything. This particular individual wants to install wind turbines and work on generation and that aspect, but he had to go elsewhere in order to find some aspect.

There is a lot of concern within the constituencies regarding the audit process for the households and the cost, particularly individuals selling their houses and retired individuals in today's economy. It's an added burden that people have concerns with.

However, now I'm going to get to some of those points. I'm going to do a couple of plugs, as I always do. A previous government established a committee between two ministries, the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Energy. The design of that committee was to establish the usage of current infrastructure in the province, being the dams in the province of Ontario. Most people don't realize that the MNR controls about 2,600 to 2,800 dams throughout the province, and each of those dams could be utilized for low-flow generation. It was the alternative fuels committee—that was an all-party committee brought in by that Mike Harris guy, and we did a lot of extensive research on this, and that's where I found out about low-flow generation.

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Low-flow generation can use the dams that are out there in producing energy, from one to five megawatts of energy. One of the key things with these dam sites is that a lot of them are at end of lines. What that means is, for those who don't understand, end-of-line sites are the transmission lines that run long distances to get the energy to certain communities. These communities would then use that energy. The difficulty is, the line loss to supplement or supply those communities is sometimes greater than the amount of energy that's shipped out. When you utilize these dams or potential dams at end-of-line sites, it has a huge impact on the grid, so you can virtually double—instead of producing one megawatt in one particular low-flow generation site, the amount of energy that would have to be transmitted to that community would then be this large supplement back onto the grid so it doesn't have to go there, which has a huge impact.

The other side of that coin—and I would hope the members from the third party know; they may or may not—is the impact of utilizing those dams. Most of the MNR dams are designed to control water flows. A previous minister with a previous government set a new directive that any upgrades, retrofits or reconstruction of any dam site were to take into consideration the develop-

ment of energy usage, to make sure that they could be used for low flow.

The point I want to make to the third party is that when you use a dam, it stops the water. For those who know the movie, for example, *A River Runs Through It*—Robert Redford starred in it—after his exposure to what happens in that industry, they realized that the dam stopping the water actually caused a lot of environmental problems in that when you stop the water, the sun comes down, warms up the dam and actually heats up the water. Warm water then rises up to the top of the surface and flows over the dam, and can increase the stream's temperature by as much as 10 degrees, which has huge impacts on bacteria growth and development. You actually turn cool or cold water streams into warm water streams, and that's not very good for the environment when we're talking about global warming and all those aspects. This is one of the key ways that it happens. Where do you think all that warm water goes when you heat it up and it's 10 degrees hotter, and it flows down into the stream or into the lakes, and those water bodies heat up?

One of the things that I've been able to do is work with bottom feed dams, which means that essentially, when you stop the water, there is a flow valve at the bottom of the dam. Not very many places use it or know how to use it. What they do is they open the bottom feed, and it allows the cool water from the bottom of the stream to continue on. It virtually maintains the constant stream temperature as it flows into those dam sites, which is much better for the environment.

The concern with this committee was that after there was a change in government, I happened to meet the committee Chair here in the hallowed halls of Queen's Park, and he said, "You know, the committee is not going anywhere; they shut it down." So I would hope that the government is looking at the potential development between those two ministries, and I would expect that the work within this bill would reflect some of those aspects of potential work between the two ministries in utilizing those underutilized sites.

Some of the other things: We talk in some of the research about the utilization of biomass from the forest sector. What that means is, normally, in a forestry operation, you go into the forest, take out the trees, strip off all the branches and leaves and leave that in the forest. Then you take the log out to make paper, as mentioned by the former leader of the third party, or wood chips or whatever goods you're producing, the paper and that, and you leave all those residuals in the forest.

What's currently being discussed is the removal of the biomass from the forest. When you're dealing with the Canadian Shield, it's not that much from the top of the surface to the hard rock that's down there, and what do you think fertilizes the forest? Most people don't realize that it's against the law to fertilize crown land in the province of Ontario. It's actually the residuals and all the bugs and everything else that takes place that feed the forest for future generations as fertilizers to ensure that it

continues on. We'll have a short period of time where we're going to utilize that biomass, but come 10 years from now, when they're looking and saying, "What's happening to our forest?" and "The growth rates are stunted," we'll be able to understand that there are some problems in there, and we need to make sure that we're making the right decision.

Part of the reason that I see that they're using this technology of the biomass and removing it from the forest is that in places like Hearst, for example, they used to burn all the residuals in a cogen plant where they used natural gas and forestry by-products, which would be the bark and everything that companies used to spend about \$10 a tonne to take to the garbage disposal sites. They were taking it up to Hearst, where they were getting paid for it so they could burn that. But when the mills aren't running, there are no residuals out there that they can utilize, so they have to find an alternative source that will be able to help to fuel some of those areas.

In the time remaining, I want to mention a couple of other things. They talk about other aspects that might be potentially utilized, and here's another point. For example, when you go to the mine in Timmins, the 9,600-foot level has a cooling station in there. For those who haven't—and the government members should take the time to tour the mine, because you'll get in there and it's an experience that's very interesting. It's probably a once-in-a-lifetime experience that you'll have.

When you get down to the 9,600-foot level, which is 9,600 feet below ground level, the temperature down there is a constant 40 degrees Celsius, because it's so close to the earth's core. What they have is, for 15 minutes out of every hour, the workers go into a cooling unit to keep them cool. Why don't we look at utilizing some of that core energy there, in old mine sites and deep mine sites throughout North America, for the heating of water and transmitting it to communities like Timmins, so it can be used? This would be a new technology, very much as utilized in Iceland, for example; that's how they've run their greenhouses in that environment for a long time, because they have all those fissures that come up, with the lava and that sort of aspect, and they use the heat from that to heat a lot of those areas. This could be another potential site that could be utilized. These are all sort of small things that we have.

In the time remaining, there was one aspect I wanted to mention. Can anybody in the House tell me what the definition of a protected area is, by the world standard?

Interjection: Yes.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: Okay. Three things: no mining, no forestry and no hydro development. What's taking place here is, we're waiting to hear back from Greenpeace and the World Wildlife Fund and a number of organizations along those lines, actually to find out what their position is, because by allowing dams and hydro development to take place in the provincial parks, you will effectively remove those parks from the world standard of being classified as protected areas.

What's the impact going to be on those particular areas? I've already explained what happens when you

use a dam to develop electricity, and now you're heating up the water in protected areas. Those areas will essentially be removed as protected areas in the province of Ontario, and that's something that the province of Ontario is so proud of. People need to stand up for those things, and people don't understand that. They don't know that we can change it.

I appreciate the time. I look forward to comments and I will respond at the appropriate time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It was a pleasure to listen to the member from Oshawa, a very knowledgeable man. It was an interesting exposition.

But certainly, in partial response to what the member said, Greenpeace, Suzuki, Pembina, the World Wildlife Federation and the Ontario Clean Air Alliance have very detailed and, quite frankly—in response to a member from McGuinty's Liberals—very concrete suggestions and solutions to how to meet Ontario's energy needs. Predominant among them is not new dams; predominant among them is conservation and renewable energy. That's what all the environmentalists want to see, and that doesn't seem to be on the agenda, not even with this Bill 150.

When it comes down to it, most of those listening at home aren't physicists; they're not engineers; they don't know about mining and dams. But the simple question for this bill is: "Will this help me put new windows in my house? Will this bill help me buy a new, energy-efficient refrigerator? Will this bill give me better air for my children to breathe?" The very simple answer, for most people living at home who are not technically adept and who are not professionals in the field is: "No, it won't." There is nothing in this bill that will help the average consumer of energy meet their energy needs in a more green or renewable, sustainable way. There is nothing here.

The hope, of course, is that in regulations and all the stuff that comes out of committee work—which is why we'd like to see it go to committee—that will come forth, but it hasn't yet. What we've got is platitudes when we need action. What we've got is a kind of overarching theme of "Isn't it wonderful to be green?" without any concrete way of bringing that about, and that means money.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: I always appreciate hearing from the member from Oshawa. I think he brings a good perspective often in his speeches and he comes from a time when he also served on this side of the Legislature in government. I'm interested, obviously, in his comments. I've heard them before around things like dams and the impact of the warming of water at the top of the dam that flows over and the impact that has on the ecology, on the environment, and the issues around water being drawn from bottom-feed dams. He always brings a

good perspective. I think they're the kinds of things that the government, that the minister, is looking for in the context of this debate: What are the issues that are out there? How can we capitalize on opportunities? The minister consistently says he's looking for constructive input, and I think the member has done exactly that.

I would ask him, though—I see he doesn't have much time in the two minutes, but there will be other opportunities, I hope. There are things locally, too, where he and I, in the area we represent, can add some value to the debate. I think there are things happening at UOIT with the geothermal initiatives that can be added into this discussion in a practical way, in a way that we can see, on the ground today, how we might be able to capitalize on those opportunities in the province of Ontario.

Energy from waste within Durham region: They're currently going through a process of developing an energy-from-waste facility using the most current technologies available. The member would have, I'm sure, a perspective on that—again, because it's local to where he lives and where he represents.

Finally, discussions around baseload: What about the maintenance of baseload through nuclear, and what about the rebuilds that could occur and that are in the process of approvals for both Pickering and Bruce, as well as the proposals for the new builds at Darlington and the capacity to ensure that we have the baseload on a go-forward basis to ensure that this province has the energy capacity it's going to need, in addition to our ability to bring renewables on and bring other forms of energy forward and do energy conservation?

I hope, given the opportunity, he'll have a chance to speak to those things that are more local to his experience, as well as having an implication for Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm proud to rise and to congratulate the member from Oshawa, my colleague, for the great presentation. The main reason is that, prior to his presentation, there were comments about coming forward with suggestions. The member said at the start of his presentation that that's what he was going to do. As I listened intently to the conversation, I was somewhat surprised that, in fact, his whole presentation was about things that could be done as related to green energy, none of which are presently in the bill. I would have thought that the minister, who had spent I presume hours, days, weeks and maybe months getting this bill ready—that some of that would have appeared in the legislation.

The member from Northumberland put forward his comment that the minister had said in the House that he was open to amendments, but if we go back over the record, the government doesn't have a very good record on acting on any of those amendments. It's one thing to say that you are willing to listen, but in the past, the examples are that they just listened but they didn't hear and did not make the changes that were suggested. So I would hope that with this presentation the minister would in fact do as he said: listen to the amendments and then

act upon those amendments, because in doing that, the bill would become a much better bill.

So far, the bill doesn't have a lot in it that actually accomplishes the title of the bill, which is to improve energy generation to improve our environment. Obviously, the bill is based on producing energy—wind and solar energy—but there is no way of dealing with that so we can use it at times when we need energy the most. I think the member talked about the baseload. I think that's one of the most important parts of this bill that needs to be addressed: When we generate that energy, can we in fact use it? Is it going to have an impact on the positive side of our environment?

So I thank the member for the presentation. It was very informative.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Laurel C. Broten: I'm pleased to comment on the comments made by the member from Oshawa. He raised the importance of various ministries working together—the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Ministry of Energy. That, exactly, is what the Green Energy Act proposes. It proposes to put in place an approvals process for renewable energy projects that will be more coordinated and where we will see those ministries work together. It will create a single, multimedia renewable energy approval at the Ministry of Environment to incorporate noise, air, waste water and waste certificates and permits to take water—all necessary approvals to move forward on a renewable energy project.

It seeks to set transparent requirements for setbacks and public consultation notice periods that need to be met as even a precondition to being considered for a renewable energy approval.

We will see better coordination between the Ministry of Energy and the Ministry of Natural Resources on approvals and permits and the provision of a service guarantee for proponents of renewable energy projects, again to meet the needs of having these coordinated approaches so that the ultimate gain is more renewable energy projects on board.

And to support this new process, the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure will establish a renewable energy facilitator to serve as a one-window point of access to government for renewable projects for interested parties and renewable energy proponents, should they wish to use that service.

So providing a little bit more detail with respect to the work that the Green Energy Act will move forward I think speaks directly to the comments made by the member from Oshawa, that it is critical that ministries work together, and that we will see that when the ministry moves forward with this bill. I thank you very much for your comments.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time that we have for questions and comments.

I'm pleased to return to the member for Oshawa, who has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I very much appreciate the comments by the members from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Oxford, Pickering–Scarborough East and Parkdale–High Park. We'll start with the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

Part of it is, for example: can anybody tell me, is Algonquin Park a protected area? Anybody? No, it's not, and the reason it's not is because 1% of the forest at any one time in Algonquin Park is forested, so it has been removed. Now, what I'm getting to is, who is going to have the final say when you're dealing with MNR-related issues as pertains to the provincial parks, as compared to the energy authority?

What I see taking place here is that the Ministry of Energy will now have the authority when they don't have the hands-on work with the files dealing with provincial parks. I would expect that in those areas it will be political Ping-Pong where they can say, "Oh, no, it's the Minister of Energy who has responsibility, and they made the decision to put that dam in that particular provincial park." I have some concerns about the political Ping-Pong that may take place.

There are a number of other areas. For example, I think it's Wolfe Island where there's a huge concern taking place right now with the wind turbines there. There's two sides. The municipality is strongly in support of it, yet I believe I saw a TV show on it that was adamantly opposed to it, and they can't get anybody to talk to it, because it's a huge benefit to the community in a number of ways: one, the amount of funds that are coming in to generate the electricity, as well as the infrastructure for the jobs that are going on.

There are going to be a lot of things taking place in, yes, UOIT, to the member from Pickering–Scarborough East. The geothermal aspect and the development that they are doing is very important and will continue on. Hopefully some of the comments that I made regarding mining will go a long way in ensuring that we can develop that. Most people don't know that in New Zealand, geothermal has limitations on their ability to use that, because for the tourism sector it draws away too much, in the same fashion that Beck 1, 2 and 3 can only be fully utilized at certain times, given the same tourism factor.

I look forward to further debate, and I look forward to listening to other members' comments on it as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Further debate?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's a pleasure and a privilege to rise and speak about the environment and what's being done, what's not being done, and what should be done.

I have to say that one of the most depressing ways of spending any time is to sit down and have a coffee with an environmentalist, which I have done on many occasions with many different ones. What you will hear from them is a litany of what governments don't do, actions governments don't take, responsibilities that

governments don't shoulder, with the end result, which is depressing indeed, that we have a planet headed towards catastrophe. That's simply what they'll tell you, and, depending on the environmentalist, they'll be optimistic enough to say that it's not too late, or some of them are even saying it's already too late.

That's the situation we are in. So this is a planetary problem, and we're looking at what we can do in our own little backyard—by planetary standards—of Ontario here. But the real response that we need here is that we must do something, and that we must do something dramatic. The time for small steps is over. The time for photo ops is over. The time for putting out bills that sound good but don't accomplish much has passed. We need to act, and we need to act dramatically.

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I know this is not the problem of our citizenry, because the people I speak to in my constituency and around this province all say the same things. They wish government would act too. They want to see a green economy. They want to see money being put into renewables. They want to see conservation as the first order of the day. Quite frankly, because of the education that is happening around the province and around the world, most citizens are doing everything they can. Most citizens are practising the 3Rs. Most citizens, were they able to financially accomplish it, would retrofit their houses and get energy-efficient appliances. They'd do it at the drop of a hat. I'd do it at the drop of a hat.

We had somebody come in to tell me how much new windows would cost on our old Victorian home. I can tell you it's a pretty tidy sum and we don't have it, so we're not going to be able to do it. The simple act of helping homeowners retrofit their homes would do a great deal toward helping the environment of our city. That is not in this act.

One member said that all we in the New Democratic Party do is attack; we don't offer concrete suggestions. Here is one: Why don't we do what Manitoba does and have a revolving fund that will pay people to retrofit their houses and make them energy efficient, and then pay back the government with the savings you have? It's been hugely successful in Manitoba. It's a good idea. It's not in Bill 150. It's not here.

It's one thing to bring forth legislation. But if you don't enforce the legislation, if you don't put money behind the legislation, it's just so many words, so much paper. I wish I could say differently about Bill 150, but unfortunately I can't. It's more paper, it's pretty words and it says "green" a lot. But it's not going to help me put new windows in my house. It's not going to help the tenants in Parkdale, who are paying their own utilities, by the way, and have no control over what those utility statements say. And it's not going to help their landlords, who have these massive buildings and can barely afford to keep them up and certainly cannot afford to do the major retrofits these buildings demand. That's downtown.

Green roofs? It would be nice to have caulking around the windows of some of these buildings. I would love to

show the Minister of Energy around Jameson Avenue and the shape some of the buildings are in, in terms of energy efficiency. It's not about green roofs for most people in Ontario; it's about simply making the tiny steps, the little steps, toward a more efficient, renewable world. This bill isn't going to help them do that. It really isn't.

Quite frankly, in terms of anything we look at, in terms of any area of expertise, shouldn't we first go to the experts in the field and ask them what they think we should do? This government has brought forward the name of David Suzuki over and over again in a number of contexts. Somehow, surprisingly, David Suzuki is not being mentioned in this one. Why not? Because we know what David Suzuki says about nuclear reactors and putting money into nuclear energy when you should be putting the same dollars—quite frankly, the economy isn't great. We're losing jobs, we don't have money and we're looking at a budget that's purported to come in with an \$18-billion deficit. Money is scarce, and the government is proposing to make the single biggest investment this province has ever made in anything into nuclear reactors.

All the environmentalists say, "No, this is not the way to go," partly because it's not really clean and green, and partly because the amount of money it takes to do that precludes spending money on renewables. That's a very simple concept. You don't need to be a physicist or an engineer to know there's a limited amount of money, and where you put it is really where your energy is—quite frankly, our energy in this place as well. We know what the government is doing: It's going full scale into nuclear reactors. That's the reality. They're going to be providing about 50% to 75% of energy in this province when we need to turn that ratio around and have that much in conservation and renewables. Every environmentalist says the same thing; it's not in this bill. It's not here. It's just not here.

In terms of our position vis-à-vis the rest of the world, we look around the world and we see other jurisdictions meeting a far greater portion of their energy requirements right now by conservation and renewables. But the problem with this discussion is that it always gets very heady, and it gets very professional and technical. That's why we need to make it simple; we just really need to make it simple. We are not spending enough money on conservation, we are not assisting our citizenry in being good conservationists, in being green and using renewables; we're just not. Do you think I wouldn't put solar panels on the roof of my house if I could afford it? I don't just speak for homeowners. I speak for all the small business owners around the province of Ontario. Do you think we wouldn't move forward if the government gave us some help, even in return for repayable loans? Of course we would. We'd love to. We'd love to retrofit our businesses and our houses; we'd love to do that. That would be a significant savings. It's not an expense, it's a savings down the road. We know this. It's like research and design, right? You put the money in up front and you

save the energy and the money down the road. Nuclear is expensive, the cost overruns are already historically documented—you're still paying for the last cost overruns on your hydro bills—and it's unreliable. We know that from history. We know that. We know that renewables are reliable. We don't have to look at history for that. We can look at present jurisdictional evidence around the world to see how wind works, how solar works, how it works together.

You know, we're not that different from Germany, Sweden, Norway or many other countries around the world where they take conservation and renewable energy seriously. I have a wonderful pamphlet in my office. I'm happy to send it to the Minister of Energy or anybody who asks. I used to campaign with it because it's so succinct and so good. It's put out by all of those people the government is not listening to: Pembina, David Suzuki, the Suzuki Foundation, Greenpeace, the World Wildlife Federation, the Ontario Clean Air Alliance. All of those groups came together and put out a brochure called Meeting Ontario's Electricity Needs. Now, these are scientists, these are physicists, these are engineers, these are people who spend their full days thinking about nothing but. They have the answers, they're right there in full colour. Why doesn't the government simply pick that brochure up and implement it? That's what the people of Ontario want. That's what my citizens want in my riding. That's what your citizens want in your riding. They don't want a full-scale rush to nuclear; they want renewable, they want conservation, that's what they want. I wish I could say otherwise, but they still want it even after the introduction of Bill 150, and they're still not going to get it. That's the reality. So I close again with that wonderful word, greenwashing, a new word in the dictionary, a new word in our vocabulary. We have a great example of it right here.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Laurel C. Broten: I want to take a few minutes to talk about how the Green Energy Act speaks directly to the two things that the member from Parkdale–High Park has been talking about: increased conservation, increased renewables. I think as we try to boil this down in what is certainly a very detailed and complicated act—and I know from when I first read it that it's not a fantastic read in terms of telling a story and explaining what we are doing. But I can tell you that those who are extremely knowledgeable understand why some of the issues that might not seem familiar to us, feed-in tariffs or smart grids, are so important and speak directly to the issues that the member from Parkdale–High Park was talking about. If you don't have a critical price, if you don't know the price that you're going to get for your electricity, how can you make the determination to put that solar panel up on the roof of your farm or put that windmill up or put that biodigester on your farmland? That's critical.

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We need certainty. We need to be able to connect into the grid, and we need a smart grid so that we can

transform our system to one where you can have power flowing both ways on a grid, either from your solar panel into the grid or back into your home, if the sun isn't shining that day.

That's what this act is about. It's about modernizing the infrastructure we have so that we can move aggressively forward with more renewables. The fact that we are committed to doing that builds on the work we have already done.

I'll leave you with one quote as I conclude. This is Steve Howard, CEO of the Climate Group: "I wish to congratulate Premier McGuinty on his Green Energy Act. The Premier is walking the talk by putting the legislative tools in place to move Ontario, and indeed Canada, towards a low-carbon economy."

That is critical. That is what we're doing for the future of this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to comment on the remarks from the member from Parkdale–High Park and her concerns over some of the things that are lacking in the bill.

On this side of the House, we go at it from a different aspect. We have concerns that the bill will do nothing but impose new costs on the energy system and consumers, that what it in fact is going to do is create a new bureaucracy with very little accountability to both the ratepayers and to the Legislature. We also don't believe that the government has really figured out how much this is going to cost consumers at the very end, and we believe that their initial estimates are way off. We also have called for committee hearings right away so that Ontarians can make their views known on this bill.

Despite everything that the government would lead you to believe, we feel that this bill is no panacea for the economic crisis in Ontario that we're experiencing right now. We also feel that, at the end of the day, Ontarians are going to end up paying a high price for the more expensive energy that these pet conservation projects are going to end up creating.

The job numbers that the government, through Minister Smitherman and others, is espousing are, we think, misleading. The jobs that will be created are probably for more inspectors to intrude themselves into people's lives and monitor their energy efficiency.

The competitive business in energy generation is over. This bill gives sweeping powers to the minister to direct power acquisition and transmission/distribution expansion in Ontario. Plus, there is no guarantee that this plan will attract sufficient new and replacement generation to meet our energy demands.

I look forward to the rest of the debate and an opportunity to make some more comments.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I think that it's important that when we consider—I know the honourable member talked about what her constituents are saying, and I've

been hearing a great deal from my constituents, in a rural riding. They really are quite excited and quite supportive of the proposed legislation. They too, I know, look forward to the opportunity that all Ontarians will have to provide input to this piece of legislation.

Any and every bill that has been introduced in this Legislature has gone out for public hearing. That has not always been the case with previous governments in this Legislature, but we are committed to ensuring that the people of Ontario, before bills become law, do have an opportunity to have their say.

One of my constituents, Don from Milford, writes: "Hello, Premier McGuinty, Minister Smitherman, MPP Dombrowsky," and he even talks to conservation officer Peter Love. There's a recognition that our effort to promote conservation—the conservation officer here has been identified. Don wrote: "I commend you ... for your strong stand on moving forward with your Green Energy Act, which will streamline the process for bringing clean," green, "renewable energy onto our grid and help create a green revolution with green-collar jobs"—green-collar jobs; from my constituent, this is his perception.

"We believe you must continue to do more to support and encourage small- and large-scale renewable energy in all ways possible.... Energy efficiency is the lowest-cost, cleanest and quickest option to keep our lights on and to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions that are contributing to" climate change. "Energy efficiency investments reduce our energy bills, create jobs now and make our industries more competitive." This is from Don. He recognizes the benefits of this bill, and I'm very happy I had the opportunity to share that this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): We have time for one last question or comment.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I want again to commend the member from Parkdale–High Park for her comments about the bill and what the bill doesn't do. I was most appreciative of the comments about the fact that the bill doesn't solve the problem, at the very least, with a \$300 tax on someone selling a home that identifies a problem. If that included, from what I got from the comments, some type of program that would help people put new windows in and put more insulation in their homes, then we would see some conservation. But the only thing we're going to conserve with the present approach is the bank account of the province or whoever is getting the \$300 for the audit, because nothing happens after the audit. It says, "You are deficient in insulation; you'd better reduce the price of your home and lose a little bit on it," but there is no direction to solve the problem. I think that's a glaring hole in the bill.

The other thing is in response to the Minister of Agriculture and Food and her comments about the rural community being very supportive of the direction this bill is taking. They're only interested or only supportive of the direction, not of the content of the bill. When it comes to what it will do, they say, "Well, yes, we like the opportunities to generate electricity from biomass and we can get approvals for that." They didn't notice in the bill that if Hydro One doesn't have the infrastructure to put

that into the grid, then they won't get a licence to do it. And there is no process in place on how you would go about getting that grid put into your community or your area, because local planning has been completely taken out by this bill. So there will be no more input from the same groups in rural Ontario as to how we facilitate the future transportation of the energy we generate, so we won't be generating. I think there are some shortcomings in this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'll return to the member for Parkdale–High Park, who has two minutes to respond.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: This bill has lots of aims and very little in the way of means; that's what we've got here.

I was very appreciative to hear the member from Sarnia–Lambton and the member from Oxford raise some issues, and they're absolutely right. This will create a new bureaucracy that will not have the desired effect, because it quite frankly doesn't answer the desired requirements of the people who live in the province of Ontario. It's a very simple question: What do we want when it comes to helping with the environmental issues of our day? We want some help in bad economic times to do the right thing. We want some help to do it. We need to put in new windows. We need to retrofit our homes, our apartment buildings and our businesses. We need to put solar panels in. We would love to see wind turbines generating energy. We'd love to do this. We'd love to start a company that would manufacture them in Ontario. But there's no money to do any of that. There's no money, and quite frankly there's no political will. If there were political will in this place, there would be money.

Where there is political will is to put over \$30 billion and up to \$50 billion into nuclear reactors, and that's not what I'm hearing from the people of Ontario. That's not what I'm hearing they want. That's not what we're hearing from the experts. That's not what we're hearing from David Suzuki. That's what we're getting. That's the substance of what we're getting from the government; not the spin, but the substance. Even though this calls itself "green," it doesn't mean it is. It's just that simple.

Will we in the NDP vote for it? Probably yes, because it's an inch where we need a million miles, like most Dalton McGuinty Liberal legislation—an inch where we need miles. But it leaves so much to be desired.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Charles Sousa: I am pleased to speak to the Green Energy Act. The proposed bill is indeed, in my opinion, a bold series of coordinated actions which would enhance economic activity and reduce our impact on the climate by making it easier to bring renewable energy projects to life and by fostering a culture of conservation by assisting users in making the transition to lower and more efficient energy use.

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Furthermore, if passed, the Green Energy Act would create needed jobs in domestic manufacturing and assembly, construction trades and the service trades, such as

financing and engineering. If passed, Bill 150 would make Ontario the North American green energy leader, further building on the elimination of coal fire.

The decisions we make today will have tremendous positive impact on our long term, on our tomorrow. As announced, the proposed Green Energy Act will enhance economic activity and reduce our impact on the climate with two equally important thrusts: by implementing and making it easier for renewable energy projects firstly and by fostering a culture of conservation.

If passed, the Green Energy Act, along with significant amendments to 15 other statutes, will set Ontario on a course for a greener environment, and more importantly, a greener economic future.

Here are some of the key measures proposed to help expand renewable energy, which include establishing a streamlined approval process and providing service guarantees for renewable energy projects; establishing, for the first time, province-wide standards for renewable energy projects like standardizing setback requirements for wind farms; implementing a smart power grid in Ontario, making it easier to connect renewable energy generation in our system; as well as offering incentives for small-scale renewables, such as zero or low-interest rate loans to assist homeowners in financing the capital costs of residential renewables.

If passed, the Green Energy Act would also implement conservation initiatives, making energy efficiency a key purpose of Ontario's building code: by greening Ontario government and the broader public sector buildings and facilities to LEED standard; by requiring the development of energy conservation plans throughout our public sector; by making more energy-efficient products available to more consumers; and by establishing mandatory conservation targets by requiring those targeted conservation measures to protect low-income Ontarians.

What gets measured, gets managed. Some of the key economic measures are creating a feed-in tariff regime by enabling domestic content rules for renewable energy projects and by providing opportunities for local communities, First Nations and Metis communities to build, own and operate their own renewable projects.

As mentioned, one of the key initiatives, if passed, would be the creation of an estimated 50,000 jobs we've spoken about. These investments would trigger not just direct jobs but indirect jobs with following initiatives of conservation, renewable energy in the smart grid and transmission and distribution upgrades, and more importantly, trying to ensure domestic content throughout. But don't take it from me. Here's what some of the experts and leaders in their field have to say.

"Ontario's Green Energy Act and supporting initiatives are the most comprehensive renewable energy policy entered anywhere around the world," as said by Michael Eckhart, president of the American Council on Renewable Energy in United States.

This one says, "This legislation, which is unprecedented in North America, will provide tangible, immediate stimulus to the construction industry and create thousands of good 'green' jobs. And it will help all of us

build a sustainable future for our children and grandchildren," as said by Ucal Powell, president of the Carpenters' District Council of Ontario.

"We applaud this forward thinking to stimulate the green economy, as well as the overall leadership shown in stimulating Ontario's and Canada's economy," said by Joseph Mancinelli of the Labourers' International Union of North America.

"Democracy is at work in Ontario! Homeowners, farmers, First Nations, co-operatives, municipalities and institutions have spoken. They want to be conservers and generators of clean, green, sustainable energy." That's Kristopher Stevens, executive director of Ontario Sustainable Energy Association.

This issue speaks directly to my resident groups in Mississauga. I grew up in Mississauga at a time when the Lakeview power plant was at its full capacity. Walking down the streets of Ogden Avenue going to school, the four sisters were spewing some of the worst pollution in this province.

Even with increased renewables and enhancements in transmission, we know that there's more need for reliable power. As such, we celebrated, at the same time, the demolition of that power plant. Now there's a need for more power, and they have put forward an RFP to have a power plant in Oakville, Mississauga or Etobicoke.

The fact is, tearing down the coal plants is the right thing to do. The fact is, making conservation the priority of our plan is the right thing to do. The fact that we've torn down that lakefront power plant allows us now to make great strides in redeveloping and revitalizing our waterfront.

Times have changed. Fifty years ago that power plant was the right choice. It was an enabler, and Mississauga South has done its fair share in supporting the province over these past many years. I'm proud of our commitment to this government. I'm proud that this government has taken the initiative and the lead on a number of green projects. Some of those concrete issues include the greenbelt and the protection of our northern boreal forest, and now we are looking forward to revitalizing the waterfront here in Mississauga.

I'm proud of our government's initiatives, but I'm also recognizing, as we all do, that we have a duty to our residents and to our constituents first. My family has been living in an area in Mississauga South for the past 20 years, where it has been proposed to possibly have a power plant. We recognize and appreciate the active involvement of our community and their concerns. We will continue to take those into consideration as we move forward. That's why the green act is such an important piece of legislation: to enable us to have before us more discussions around renewables and conservation.

I welcome the Green Energy Act. It is a bold proposal which will position Ontario to be cleaner and more competitive. We have a duty to our future generations to provide more energy efficiency and reliable, sustainable power. In the end, we have a duty to our future generations to be a more prosperous society.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to make some comments on the member from Mississauga South. He talked about the coal plant in his riding. I also have a coal-fired generating plant in my riding, and we want to see it remain open, whether we put additional scrubbers on it—we've got two of the cleanest units in North America and we'd like to see scrubbers installed on the other two units. I've got messages from my riding where they talk about solar energy being 42 cents a kilowatt hour, wind energy is approximately 10 to 15 cents per kilowatt hour and electricity from our coal-fired plants costs less than 4 cents a kilowatt hour. This works 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Wind and solar energy can only produce electricity, at the most, 25% of the time. The year has 365 days in it and 24 hours in each day.

The members of my constituency association, as well as members of the construction association in Sarnia and the building trades, asked the energy minister and the government to look at installing scrubbers in these other two units to maintain that generating station and keep it going. There are a number of people who are employed in that plant who have good jobs, with probably \$300 million a year going to the local economy.

I would support the Green Energy Act as long as it looks at all aspects of energy, and coal-fired generation should be one of those.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's a pleasure, again, to rise and speak about the environment and offer some comments after the member from Mississauga South.

Certainly, I rang with the member over here from Sarnia-Lambton about coal-fired plants. Here's a classic case. They're still open despite Bill 150. Of course, they were originally supposed to be closed in 2007; now it's 2014. Quite frankly, all bets are off whether they'll even make that deadline—Nanticoke, one of the single biggest polluters in Canada.

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When your child comes home from school with asthma, there is an environmental component. There is a health cost to keeping coal-firing plants open, and the health cost is borne by our elderly, our weak and our children. That's what's happening here. We need to close them; we need to close them as fast as possible. But Bill 150 doesn't do that, either; it doesn't do that, either.

This is where actual Ontarians live—a child with a puffer, not enough money to retrofit their houses, looking at a future that goes nuclear but doesn't mean much to them in their wallet or in their own environment. That's where people live, and this bill doesn't address it.

Coal-firing plants are a classic case where Dalton McGuinty's Liberals have just failed the environment—no question about it, just failed the environment. You won't find an environmentalist who thinks coal-firing plants are a good thing; you won't. They all, to a person, think that they need to be closed as soon as possible for

the health of our children and our seniors, among others—among all of us. We all have to breathe, after all.

That's a clear omission here, a very clear one; the other, of course, as I came back to again and again, is that there's no money to make it happen. There's no money to make any of this happen.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Phil McNeely: I heard the last speaker say there's no money for conservation and for retrofits, and I want to read something about that.

First of all, one megawatt in four, as we go ahead for the next 20 years, 6,300 megawatts, is our aggressive conservation target for energy. Energy conservation is the number one way of producing it. The minister, not satisfied that we were aggressive enough, sent a directive in September 2008 to OPA to say that we want to have more conservation, more renewables and more discussions with First Nations.

But I would like to get around this \$150 audit fee. What the \$150 audit fee gives you is a bunch of eligible improvement retrofits. Canada has promoted this and Ontario has promoted it. The heating systems: You'll go from \$600 in an energy-efficient furnace up to—wow—\$7,000 for a groundwater source heat pump; the ventilation system; cooling system; domestic hot water system; you'll get \$1,200 for attic insulation; exterior wall insulation up to \$1,800; basement insulation up to \$1,000; basement header insulation, where a lot of the air losses are, \$200; exposed floor insulation, \$300; crawl space insulation, \$800. There are several more here. So the dollars are there. You pay \$150 to be able to take advantage of all those good grants from Canada and from Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: I think the member from Mississauga South has been given a pretty important script to read, but he should think of the consumer at the end of the day.

What I hear embedded in this legislation, Bill 150, is that they want you to conserve—and we would support that—but what they're actually saying in code language is, "You're going to use less," which is good, "but you're going to pay more."

All of these renewables and other generation sources are important, but in many respects, even the Ontario Power Authority, the OPA, in their report, recognized that there was a very finite amount of generation capacity that would be of value to the grid in Ontario. We should focus more on conservation, and I think that's clear.

When I really get into the substance of the bill, I'm troubled even further because it's an admission, first of all, that Bill 100, the earlier attempt on energy, was a failure. In fact, the smart meter that they're installing in your home is a failure. It's actually a time-of-use meter so that they can charge you more at different times of the day, as much as 100% more if you dry your clothes at the wrong time of day.

Not only that; it's important to recognize too that they promised back in the 2003 election to eliminate the coal plants at Nanticoke in 2007.

Interjection: And Lambton.

Mr. John O'Toole: And Lambton. Actually, they said 2007, then they said 2011; now they are not going to do it until 2012. In my riding, there's a nuclear plant, the Darlington nuclear plant. That plant is 5,000 megawatts; it's the same as the plant in Nanticoke.

So they haven't really got a solid plan here. I'm very concerned that this bill is just one more kind of deflection from the real issue, that we have an energy shortage. The price is going up—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. Member for Mississauga South, you have two minutes to respond.

Mr. Charles Sousa: I'd like to thank the members who spoke on this bill, from Sarnia-Lambton, Parkdale-High Park, Ottawa-Orléans, and Durham. I'd like to begin by saying to the member from Durham that I do, in fact, write my work.

We are indeed going to use less; we encourage everyone to use less. We are encouraging more conservation so that we can protect our environment and stimulate our green economy. I encourage all members to do the same when it comes to talking to their constituents and residents, sharing with them some of the programs that are available to us for retrofits and other things that of nature.

The bottom line: The discussions we are having today are about the long term. We are indeed doing a number of things concurrently, like long-run transmission. We are closing coal and we are going to do what we need to in order to expand renewables.

There is also a need for supplementary peaker plants in order to accommodate some of these green renewals as they come on-stream, and we're doing that in tandem with this strategy.

I take great pride in the work that we all do here in this House for the benefit of future generations. Some of the decisions that we're making today are not simply about the cost they have to us today but consider the long-term effects and the cost that they take in the future. I encourage everyone to support the bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Bill 150, the Green Energy Act: Is it truly about green energy or is it about a conscious Liberal decision to hide things in regulation and to defer and deflect what is happening in Ontario?

I know that I'm not alone to say that I've received many e-mails, phone calls and letters from residents in my riding of Dufferin-Caledon and across Ontario regarding Bill 150, the Green Energy Act. I have to say that most of the correspondence I have been receiving is asking me to speak out and question the government about the impact Bill 150 will have on communities, businesses and consumers. Much of the concern is because the specifics are not in Bill 150. They're being left to regulation, and as we all know, regulations are not open to public de-

bate or input. Cabinet will make them in secrecy, without any input from the public.

I want to highlight a few of the regulations that would be enacted with 150.

Under the Green Energy Act, permits: a regulation requiring people to provide information about energy consumption and efficiency of a property when trying to sell or lease that property. That, of course, is your mandatory \$300 home audit.

Another regulation authorizes public agencies and consumers to establish energy conservation and demand-management plans, and can require public agencies to consider conservation and efficiency when buying goods and services or making capital investments—again, under regulation.

Under schedule B, Electricity Act, it gives power to make regulations governing the smart grid and its implementation.

Under schedule D, the Ontario Energy Board Act, it expands the regulation-making authority.

We go then to schedule G, the Environmental Protection Act, which adds regulation-making power, including regulations governing location of renewable energy facilities and eligibility requirements for approvals. I will come back to that one. Schedule L, Ministry of Natural Resources, gives the minister power to allow generation facilities in provincial parks and conservation reserves, and that, of course, was formerly only under the power of the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

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One of the main concerns myself and many of my constituents have is the setbacks of wind turbines from homes. The issues of setbacks are not addressed in the legislation itself, and important decisions such as this one will be made without public consultation. This is very troubling for the constituents of Dufferin-Caledon. Many of my constituents have written to me with concerns about how wind turbines will affect the health of people in the community if proper and appropriate setbacks are not set out in legislation. Some people already are complaining of crippling headaches, nosebleeds and constant ringing in the ears, and these are people who support renewable energy and were supportive of wind turbines in their area. However, they were not told how this would affect their health.

This is not just coming from one person. In fact, a team of physicians have been examining such health hazards in New England and the Maritimes and are working on a research paper looking at the adverse effects of wind turbine noise on human health.

A company in Germany with the mission statement to "enhance the international promotion of environmental technology within the fields of recycling of ash and waste energy sources, renewable energy, environmental industrial development" says this about the location of wind farms: "The location under consideration should first be wind-intensive during the whole year. Buildings, particularly housing, should not be nearer than two kilometres to the wind farm." Please keep in mind that the minister at

this point has speculated that the setbacks would be 500 metres. Riverside county in California has stated, “Restrict the placement of wind turbines within two miles of residential development unless the applicant supplies documentation that the machine(s) will not produce low-frequency impulsive noise.”

There needs to be comprehensive planning and consultation for industrial wind-driven turbine electricity production in proximity to homes, pending full clinical evaluation and conclusions of health hazards. The New England and Maritimes research team have gathered a number of references, all current, from acoustical studies of wind turbines, studies from medical journals and journals of environmental health, documenting negative impacts of noise that are characteristics of noise emissions from wind turbines, and even a few small studies around wind farms in Europe. They also have some basic clinical research studies documenting the effects of wind turbine noise in children and adults. These studies show an increased incidence of heart disease and other cardiovascular complications, and potentially even more far-reaching implications in children.

Doctors who are participating in this study have reported that there is a public perception that wind power is green and has no detrimental impact on the environment. However, these turbines make low-frequency noises that can be as damaging as high-frequency noises. Dr. Bridget Osborne of the Royal College of General Practitioners has published a paper detailing a marked increase in depression among local people who are within close proximity to wind farms.

We cannot put a cost on the health risks associated with the harmful effects of wind turbines located within a close proximity to homes, schools and hospitals. I want to highlight an e-mail I received from a concerned resident of Ontario: “We experience sleep disturbances and deprivation, the sensation of skin crawling or being bit, ringing in the ears, headaches, heart palpitations, digestive problems and nosebleeds.” None of these symptoms were present before wind turbines became a part of their lives.

Another e-mail I’d like to share with you is from a constituent of Dufferin-Caledon: “As an Ontarian deeply concerned about our environment and active in trying to conserve, recycle and compost, but concerned also about health, I would ask that you carefully consider the effects of vibration and noise made by wind turbines.”

Mr. Speaker, do not get me wrong. I support energy renewal and conservation. Personal commitment to improving the environment by opting for greener alternatives is important. My family and many others have opted to change their consumer habits to incorporate conservation, or purchase low-emission or hybrid vehicles, or even to purchase renewable power for our homes and businesses. However, placing the word “green” in the title of a bill does not necessarily make it so. The residents of Ontario deserve to have their say. This is why I ask, what’s the rush? Why are we departing from the normal parliamentary tradition of introducing a bill, then

allowing the opposition to consult with interested stakeholders and the public?

We started debate on Bill 150 24 hours after it was introduced. One of the many e-mails I have received said, “The removal of the individual rights through the centralized and fast-tracking of the approval process is alarming and undemocratic.” It is unusual that an important piece of legislation such as this, with no less than seven pages of explanatory notes and 65 pages of clauses, opening up and amending over 15 pieces of legislation, including the Niagara Escarpment act, which would greatly affect my constituency in Dufferin-Caledon, was called for second reading debate within 24 hours of being introduced for first reading.

Another problem I and many of my constituents have is that the proposed Green Energy Act removes all planning approvals for renewable energy proposals from municipalities. My constituency of Dufferin-Caledon has been a leader in hosting wind turbines in our province. In Dufferin county, Melancton township has over 80 wind turbines operating and generating renewable power for Ontario. The township worked with the landowners and developers to site the turbines. Melancton was also able to negotiate with the developers to ensure that the entire township benefited from the power generation project. Under Bill 150, Melancton would not have been able to make those arrangements. All of the time and money municipalities have invested in updating their official plans will be wasted because, if Bill 150 is passed without amendment, municipal approval would be unnecessary.

The minister has estimated that this bill will cost approximately \$5 billion to upgrade the grid and transmission lines to accept new power generation. The unknown is how much more individual consumers and businesses will be paying in higher electricity rates. We need to slow down and determine the real costs for electricity consumers and the real impact on our economy. That is why I am calling for immediate and fulsome debate on Bill 150, and I hope this is not simply another rubber stamp for the Liberal government.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Certainly it’s always interesting to listen to the member from Dufferin-Caledon. She cares about her community. But I’d like to spend my time addressing the problems that were brought forward by the Ottawa-Orléans member who, for the first time in this debate, attempted to answer some of my questions about the practical issues that most Ontarians deal with: How do I put new windows in? How do I retrofit my house? Does this bill help me do that? And the answer is no—also, of course, businesses, apartment dwellings and everything else that sucks energy up and can’t, but would like to, be green.

He recommended all of these government programs. Please. Anybody watching this program, just about everybody who owns a home has gone through this, and I would love to see how much money you get back from any level of government, particularly this one, when you

try to put new windows in, buy a new refrigerator, put in an energy-efficient stove, do something about that old furnace in the basement or put solar panels on your roof.

My husband and I go through Bullfrog Power only because we want to be clean and green, and it's the only option out there right now for us. It adds a third more to our energy bills. We pay it because we want to be green. There is no substantive help for somebody who wants to be green right now. It costs a lot of money, and it usually takes nine to 12 years to recoup the investment, when you could do what Manitoba does and simply loan the money to people who do the work now and pay you back over time. That would be green, but, of course, it would not be greenwashing.

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The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Ms. Laurel C. Broten: I'm pleased to take a couple of minutes to talk specifically, if I can, about the issue of setbacks and to speak to the concerns raised by my colleague opposite with respect to what the government's steps in the Green Energy Act to tackle and find a way to deal with the patchwork of setbacks across communities would do to her community.

I can tell her that in the past, many municipalities have really struggled with the difficulty of balancing the proposal from proponents coming forward and the desires of their residents and their community. Municipalities did not have the ability to have the expertise with respect to the establishment of setbacks.

If this proposed legislation passes, the Ministry of Energy and the Ministry of Natural Resources will work with the Ministry of Environment in the development of province-wide standards for renewable projects adjacent to homes and sensitive areas, to eliminate that patchwork of municipal bylaws that made the local processes very difficult and encumbered.

A universal standard would be designed to consider the effects on human health and the safety of the environment. All of that would be established during a consultation process, to make sure that we had an opportunity to bring forward the most recent scientific evidence and advice and to establish what would be the appropriate setback in various circumstances.

I can tell the member, having had the opportunity to sit across the table from many a municipal councillor, that this was very much a request that many municipalities sought advice and assistance on from the province.

So, as we'd done with respect to smoking bylaws, now the province is going to come forward and help establish an appropriate setback to help push forward increased renewable power generation and make sure it's done in a way that protects the health and safety of Ontarians.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to first comment on the dissertation by the member from Dufferin-Caledon, in which she spoke about the health issues related to wind turbines, which have been well documented. I've

watched a number of programs myself and read some articles about it. At first, I thought it was maybe a bit of an urban legend. But as more and more of these have been raised and exposed to different comment on TV and in the media, and different reports by different scientists and different people who have talked about these issues—there obviously is something to it. I commend the member for representing her riding in this manner and bringing these issues up.

One of the comments I wanted to make was that I heard the member opposite say that municipalities had asked for opportunities like this from the government for advice and to help them manoeuvre through these things. But I don't think they wanted them to overrule them and tell them how to run their business, which I think this bill will do at the end of the day.

Also, the minister said he estimated that this is going to cost \$5 billion, and he said that would be a 1% increase to the ratepayers when the bills are all in. Some people did some calculations, and they say that \$5 billion divided by 4.5 million consumers is about \$1,200 per consumer, and this would be more like, over three years, a 30% increase.

I commend the member from Dufferin-Caledon. I agree that we need to have committee hearings and we need to have input and look at amendments and whatever way we can improve this bill. It's going to be with us for a long time if it's implemented as it's written, and we need to make sure it's the best bill at the end of the day.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Phil McNeely: I know that we've covered the aspect of how the standard setbacks from homes are going to be set for these turbines, and this was one of the major concerns that this member had. So I'd just like to go into other areas of conservation, which is just as powerful as renewables in making sure we get away from dirty coal and going on to provide a good system of energy in this province.

Under these targets we've set, 1,300 megawatts is the residential target for conservation. Of that, 650 is the part that's conservation. There's 650 from energy efficiency; but 650 is related to making our homes more energy-efficient. That 650 megawatts is something we have to achieve over 20 years. A great part of that is in section 9; homes up to three storeys are covered under section 9. If we're going to get those energy savings, then we have to do this over the next 20 years. That's the plan.

Presently we do 30,000 a year. The 30,000 a year is fine, but it takes 90 years to reach the 2.7 million homes in the province.

All these energy retrofits save the people money. You can get money back very rapidly for air sealing. It probably takes three years for you to get your money back, and then you get all that future stuff. So we have to look at what we're doing with conservation: 6,300 megawatts and maybe more once we get the new report back from OPA, and a good part of that's residential. I just ask the members to think of the residential retrofits. They're very important.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member from Dufferin–Caledon, you have two minutes to respond.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I can't let the comments go from the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore about the fact that municipalities needed their help to decide on setbacks.

Amaranth, Melancthon, Mulmur, Mono, East Garafraxa in my community of Dufferin–Caledon would love to have the money back that they've spent already on amending their official plan and doing all the planning to prepare for these wind turbines to come into their communities. They've done the planning, they've already done the work, and now what you're saying is, "Throw that out. Throw out the \$50,000 that you spent on that official plan amendment, and we'll look after you now, you dear little municipality." Very dismissive. I believe that taxpayers need to know the true cost of the Green Energy Act. I also believe in local planning. Municipalities in Dufferin–Caledon should oversee and approve renewable energy projects in their communities.

The majority of people I've been hearing from are in support of renewable energy and creating an Ontario that will be better for generations to come. All they want is for their voice to be heard. Many people in Dufferin–Caledon are in support of industrial wind turbines in our communities. However, they want them to be placed a safe distance from homes. I stand up and speak today on their behalf. Let's get the input from communities that have wind turbines, wind farms and energy experts. I hope we can work together to create legislation that meets the needs of communities across our province. Our communities are unique, and residents deserve to have their voices heard in this debate and not be sloughed aside by saying, "We'll look after you because we're the big, friendly Liberals."

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm very pleased today to be able to speak on behalf of my community, which has very warmly welcomed this bill, and speak in support of Bill 150, the Green Energy Act. The bill that has been proposed would enhance economic activity in Ontario at a time when we need just that, and help us move on to a newer, greener economy, but at the same time, it would have a positive impact on our climate.

There are two thrusts in this bill. The first is to bring renewable energy projects on stream much more quickly than we are currently able to do. The second is indeed to foster a culture of conservation. We want to assist homeowners, governments, schools and industrial employers to transition to lower and more efficient energy use.

I'd like to talk a bit about some of the initiatives that are in this bill. It's actually quite a lengthy bill—65 pages—a very technical bill, and I think it warrants looking at some of the things that are in it.

First off is what's known as a feed-in tariff, which is a standard price to promote the development of community-based and large commercial renewable energy projects. What it means is that proponents would be

guaranteed a market-viable price for energy generated from renewable sources; for example, solar, wind—either onshore or offshore—water, biogas, biomass and landfill gas. This is really important in Guelph.

1700

Guelph actually has one of the first landfill gas generation projects—possibly the first. When we put out the first round of RFP for renewable energy projects, the city of Guelph, in partnership with Guelph Hydro, was one of the first winners. There's an old dump in Guelph called the Eastview landfill—it was closed a few years back—and we are currently collecting the methane from that dump. It's going into a small generator, and that energy is being sold into the Ontario Hydro grid. This is the sort of project which would be helped along by a guaranteed feed-in tariff.

Another RFP that a Guelph proponent won is the corporation that collectively acts on behalf of farmers buying energy, Ag Energy Co-Op. They won an RFP to put solar panels all over their building and to feed that into the energy grid. Obviously, they draw some solar energy for their own use. The rest of the energy goes into the local grid. Again, having a feed-in tariff that you could rely on to pay a market-viable price for those sorts of projects, which we understand are more expensive than, say, burning coal, which we are going to get rid of, makes these projects much more viable.

Another thing, and I hear this from people like farmers and individuals who are trying to bring on a renewable energy project, is that there would be one point of entry into the government for the application process. Large corporations can deal with having to have lawyers and deal with a lot of different ministries for a lot of different permits, but that's very frustrating for the small proponent. So what this bill will do is have one entry point into the Ontario government for permits so that you can deal with MOE and MNR and whatever other permits are required with one-stop shopping.

In addition to that, this bill will introduce, and we've had some discussion about this, common setbacks for renewable energy projects. This is one of these things where it's a relatively new area, and, yes, some municipalities have moved forward and set their own standards, but what's happening is we're rapidly getting a mishmash of standards around Ontario. We need to have some commonality as to what the standards are for renewable projects, and this bill will bring us to this. They will be science-based. They will be based on looking at not just wind energy but health and safety considerations. They will be based on expert advice and not just whatever the political push and shove is in particular municipalities. So that will help proponents bring things to market.

Another problem that we've certainly noted in my part of the country: Guelph happens to be one of those communities that's at the end of the grid, so to speak. We noticed this very much during the great blackout of 2003: that Guelph was one of the last major municipalities in Ontario to come back up. We were out for several days.

That's because we were literally at the end of the grid. That's when people in Guelph and area started to think about the fact that our transmission lines in Ontario aren't necessarily as robust or as extensive as we need to meet current energy systems. There are two things that will happen as a result of this bill that are helpful. Number one, it will streamline approvals for large transmission projects so that we can get those transmission projects that will let us move renewable energy around the province up and going.

The other problem that small producers—farmers—are often having is that they want to have their own private windmill, they want to have a biomass project on their farm, but they go to Ontario Hydro and they're told, "No, you can't connect. The lines won't handle it." What we are doing is establishing a right-to-connect philosophy, which means we will facilitate the connection of those renewable projects rather than what tends to have been happening in many cases: the distribution company saying, "No, you can't really do that." This will help with encouraging getting power into the grid.

One of the things that is also happening in my community, and we're going to encourage this with the legislation, is that there's actually a co-op energy group that's looking at a group of homeowners having a co-op to have solar energy projects in their homes. This legislation will foster that.

That feeds into something the city of Guelph and Guelph Hydro developed a couple of years ago, the Guelph energy plan, which is looking at community energy generation to increase the renewable energy we can generate right in our own community, but also looking at community energy conservation. This bill will also help with the conservation piece.

For the first time, we're actually going to look at the building code, in terms of revising it to make energy efficiency a consideration when we're looking at building code rules. Right now, we obviously look at safety and construction standards in the building code, but we don't really think about energy efficiency. We're going to address that for new builds in the province of Ontario. We're going to require public sector building owners to have energy conservation plans, and that will be throughout the public sector—those large institutions that populate all our communities.

In terms of individuals, however, we will be requiring that new appliances meet energy efficiency standards—the sort of Energy Star standards you may see on some appliances when you go into a store. We're going to make sure all new appliances in Ontario meet those important standards.

We're working on something that my hydro distribution company is very pleased with, which is setting conservation targets for local distribution companies, because they often know what can best be done.

I'm absolutely delighted with these steps toward producing renewable energy and also conserving energy, but the side effect of all this is going to be a lot of economic activity. For example, we're going to set a made-

in-Ontario standard so that we ensure that part of the components of these new builds are, in fact, made in Ontario. We're projecting that there will be 50,000 new jobs in manufacturing, assembly, transportation, engineering, construction and computer software and hardware. So this is good for the economy and good for conservation and the environment. I'm very willing to support this act.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I want to respond to the member from Guelph. Certainly, the inch this bill puts forward is the inch that cuts red tape. What it doesn't do is what it purports to do, which is to really assist Ontarians with moving toward renewable energy.

Again, I appreciated the member from Ottawa—Orléans standing up and trying to make the case for the fact that governments help us retrofit our homes, businesses and apartment buildings, but quite frankly, that's just not the case. We have hundreds of thousands of laid-off workers in Ontario, we have people who can barely afford to pay the rent and feed their children, and we're the child poverty capital of the world. How could he even think that with whatever disposable income most Ontarians are blessed with, a few hundred dollars from a level of government against a \$10,000 retrofit bill is going to help them move forward in that direction? It doesn't; it won't; it hasn't. That's the reality.

In terms of the broader sweep of the bill, of course, I've already spoken about that. It really is just a greenwashing of the total agenda of this government, which is to spend as much money as we've ever spent on anything in this province on nuclear reactors.

So I just say to Ontario that if you're with David Suzuki, if you're with Greenpeace, if you're with Pembina, if you're with the Ontario Clean Air Alliance, you can't help but see this bill as what it is. It's greenwashing, that great word invented just for the very likes of this bill, Bill 150. If you want to see renewable energy and if you want to see Ontario move dramatically forward, which is what we need—we need dramatic action on this front—you're not going to find it and you're not going to see it in Bill 150.

1710

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I just wanted to add a few comments to what the member from Guelph had to say earlier. She spoke well on the bill, especially on some of the details of the bill. I'm going to have an opportunity to speak to the bill myself shortly, but I just wanted to say that what's really important to realize in her comments is that if we don't make change and make it fast, we're going to lose, and we're going to lose on two fronts: We're going to lose on the environmental front and we're also going to lose on the employment front. The jobs of the future are the green jobs and the environment of the future is a green environment.

She pointed out more of the specifics and fleshed out some of the details in this bill, which I'm going to have

an opportunity to do as well. But if we don't start doing that, if we don't take action now, but sit back—and with the greatest of respect to the comments made earlier by some of the other speakers, the time to act is now. Every day we wait, the planning gets a little bit less green and more people are losing jobs every day. All you need to do is turn on the television and see it.

This is not a cure-all for everything, but it's a start in the right direction. The jobs in the future will be green jobs. People will be employed in the green sector. Also, on top of that, the environment needs to be addressed; this bill does that. Where the government points its finger and says, "This is the way that we think is best to go"—in consultation, because the bill provides consultation in here—it's clearly an open invitation to involve those in the community, to be creative, to be innovative and to start bringing out ideas. It's not that much different from what happened with computers back 10, 20, 30 years ago. I'll have more to say about that later, but I thank you for the chance to speak.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to have a chance to add some comments to the speech from the member from Guelph on Bill 150, the green energy bill. I guess this government's actions to this point have not necessarily matched its words, and what better example of that than their promise in 2003 that they were going to shut down the coal-fired electricity generating stations by 2007? Now, I believe the current promise is 2014. I wish them well with that.

I have to put a plug in for my own riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka in their bid to find some substitute for coal and suggest that I know there are businesses in Parry Sound–Muskoka that are participating in the request for proposals from MNR and OPG towards supplying wood pellets. It may work, may make sense to use them in a coal-fired electricity generating station, and I would certainly hope that the government will consider our location. Parry Sound–Muskoka, in terms of an area that has forest products, is reasonably close to southern Ontario. That should be an area that's considered. I know the government has talked about 50,000 jobs supposedly being created by this bill. I think they picked that number out of a hat, frankly, but if there are jobs to be created, certainly Parry Sound–Muskoka would be a good location for some of these combined heat-powered generating stations that would also produce wood pellets that may be used in a coal-fired generating station.

I'm trying to assist the government to keep a promise, and that is the one they made to shut down coal-fired electric generation by 2014, and hopefully stimulate some jobs in Parry Sound–Muskoka at the same time.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

The member for Guelph, you have two minutes to respond.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Thank you to the members from Parkdale–High Park, Scarborough Southwest and Parry Sound–Muskoka for their comments.

There was a comment about our past actions, and I would like to actually agree that if you want to look at people's future intents, it's good to look at their past actions. With respect to the coal-fired generators, in fact, we have closed the largest of those coal-fired generators and are on target to close the rest. But what have we done in the green energy file? We've already brought about a thousand megawatts of new renewable energy since October 2003; the two largest wind farms in Canada are located in Ontario, new since 2003; and by the end of 2009, nearly 1,200 megawatts of wind capacity will be online, enough to power almost 325,000 homes. Investments in new renewable energy projects already in place or under construction in Ontario total about \$4 billion and in fact, I understand, if my recollection serves me, that some of that financing may be going into the riding of the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka because I believe there are some new small water-energy hydro projects in his riding. To date, the Ontario home energy savings program has provided \$38 million to assist homeowners with over 42,000 energy-efficient retrofits. So, in fact, our fellow citizens are retrofitting their homes with assistance from our government, and this bill will further facilitate that.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise today to address Bill 150, the so-called Green Energy Act, or, more recently coined, the greenwash act. I want to start off by making it very clear that I support green energy. Every member of this Legislature would acknowledge the importance of protecting our environment, and I agree that clean energy and green energy are an important part of that goal. However, we need to look at how we get there. We need to ensure that energy developments are sustainable, that they don't do further damage to our economy, and we need to make sure that these developments are part of a long-term plan that ensures that the lights will stay on in Ontario.

One of the things it appears that the McGuinty government seems to be trying to hide is the fact that, currently, generating green energy is significantly more expensive than the existing energy that we generate. They are guaranteeing prices for this energy that are far above the current average. As the amount of green energy at that cost going into the hydro grid increases, this is going to become unsustainable. Whether the cost is passed on directly to the consumers or whether the government provides direct subsidies, it is a cost that is going to be borne by the people of Ontario. Our taxpayers and businesses can't afford to pay three or four times the current rate for power. Our manufacturing businesses are already struggling to survive. Every day, we hear about more plants closing and more layoffs.

In a recent survey I did of businesses in Oxford, 37% of businesses said they will have to downsize this year. If we see hydro rates double or triple, how many more layoffs will we have? How many more businesses will be forced out of Ontario? During the clause-by-clause on the

Planning and Conservation Land Statute Law Amendment Act, the Liberal member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell acknowledged the impact of high electricity costs on businesses. He said, “We keep hearing in this House that the paper mills are closing because of the cost of electricity, and in my home riding there was a windshield manufacturer that was really affected.”

How many other businesses are already struggling with hydro costs? How many others will be forced to close their doors if rates or other charges on the bill start rapidly increasing? The initial transmission investment alone that the McGuinty government is talking about is \$5 billion, which works out to \$1,200 per metered electricity customer in the province of Ontario. Add that to the cost of smart meters and the increased rates due to the guarantees the government is offering to the green energy companies and there is no doubt that the people and businesses across Ontario are about to be hit with significant increases. All of these costs will be set and forced upon taxpayers behind closed doors, with no consultation required. In fact, the province will now be able to dictate all the terms of green energy projects without the support of the people who will be affected.

Many of us have received letters from people who live near wind farms—and this is, again, the challenge of dealing with renewable energy behind closed doors. Many of us have received letters from people who live near wind farms. They raise some legitimate concerns about proper distance for setbacks or how far the wind turbines must be located from homes. I’ve never spent the night in a house located close to a turbine, and I would bet that the same is true for Mr. McGuinty, the energy minister or, in fact, the entire cabinet. So why would we trust them to make the decision, behind closed doors, through regulations, on how far turbines should be from homes? Why wouldn’t they ask the people who are presently living next to the turbines, to see what the proper distance should be? Why would we want to cut municipalities, and the people who have experienced living near turbines or are going to have them near their homes, out of this decision?

1720

Most of the people who have written aren’t saying that there should be no turbines. They’re just saying that we need to have them far enough away that the vibration and stray voltage aren’t a problem. That doesn’t seem unreasonable to me.

Many farmers in Ontario are already dealing with the effects of stray voltage on their livestock. Shouldn’t they have a right to be part of the discussion on new energy projects? Wouldn’t their input be useful when deciding how far away energy projects should be from their livestock?

I recently met with a constituent, Keith Leeson, who lives near a number of proposed turbines and is very concerned about the impact that any stray voltage would have. He provided me with an engineering report prepared for the Ontario Energy Board by Kinectrics which outlines some of the problems of stray voltage and looks

at a few of the possible solutions. Before the government imposes new energy projects on neighbourhoods and municipalities, shouldn’t we ensure that we understand the stray voltage that will be generated and how we should deal with it?

The Minister of Energy recognizes the value of local communities when it comes to local distribution companies. In an interview he recently said, “I guess the biggest strength of the LDCs is to be found in the ‘L,’ which is ‘local,’ or to put it another way, it’s community. I think that what we’re really talking about, the strength of the LDCs, is to be found in their connection to the community and their ability to operate at that level.” That’s a quote of the Minister of Energy. Yet at the same time, he’s pushing through a bill that will take decision-making away from local municipalities. This bill will force municipalities to accept energy projects wherever the province decides they should be located and however the province decides they should be built. It will remove the ability of municipalities to negotiate with energy companies to ensure that the costs of building and maintaining municipal infrastructure for the site are paid for by the company, not the property taxpayers.

During the committee hearings on Bill 130, the Municipal Statute Law Amendment Act, the parliamentary assistant for municipal affairs and housing, who is now the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, boasted about how much this government respected municipalities, when they were giving the city of Toronto new taxing powers. He said, “we’re showing confidence in the judgment of municipalities to determine, and give them the flexibility they need to ensure that they can make good decisions.” That was on December 11, 2006. But the attitude seems to have completely changed in the last two years. Perhaps the McGuinty government is becoming more arrogant. Perhaps they no longer believe that municipal governments are capable of good decisions. Or maybe they believe that decisions about imposing new taxes on citizens are less important than decisions about where to locate green energy projects.

In committee hearings on the Planning and Conservation Land Statute Law Amendment Act just two and a half years ago, the member from Oakville said, “All proponents in Ontario, for any energy projects, are encouraged to follow the municipal process. That’s clearly the intent of the government. I think that’s clearly what the public would like to see, and I believe all political parties would like to see that.” I’m here today to say I agree with the member from Oakville that day, yet just two and a half years later his own party is going against his position. His own party is cutting municipalities out of the planning process.

Under this bill, the government will establish feed-in tariffs to assist companies in developing green energy projects. This allows the government to give more subsidies to ineffective projects to make them economically viable, instead of trying to create the most effective energy sources. For example, a wind farm that is located in an area with limited wind may receive a rate for their

power that is far higher than that for a wind farm in a more ideal location. That just isn't the smart way to build.

The McGuinty government is once again showing that they are catering to popular opinion and governing this province by polling. The Green Energy Act sounds like a great title for a bill. But it's not enough for a government to come out with great-sounding bills. They need a plan to ensure that our province has a clean, affordable supply of energy and that they have enough power to keep the lights on.

In 2003, McGuinty ran on the promise to close the coal-fired plants by 2007, then 2009, and now he's extended that again. So far, there has been no progress in installing scrubbers to make the energy generated at those plants cleaner, and little progress towards replacing the energy from the coal-fired plants or anywhere else.

I believe we should be supporting clean, renewable energy. However, we need to ensure that we don't support this bill just because it has the right name. Instead, we need to really consider the impact that this bill will have and whether it will achieve its goals. That is why we're calling for immediate and extensive committee hearings, so we can make the changes necessary to ensure that we are leaving not only a healthy environment for our grandchildren but also a strong economy and an energy generation system that works.

Thank you very much for allowing me to put my few thoughts on this bill on the record.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Again, I reiterate the offer: There is a wonderful brochure in my office, put together by serious environmentalists—David Suzuki, Pembina, Greenpeace, World Wildlife Fund, Ontario Clear Air Alliance—that outlines exactly the way we should move in terms of energy for this province. Not a part of it is nuclear. It is highly dependent on conservation, it is highly dependent on renewables and it has all been thought out by folk who have way more knowledge at their fingertips than anybody here in this House. My only question really is, if this government was serious about being green, why don't they implement it? That's the question.

Here we have a plan that has no substantive money behind it to do very little in the way of substantive changes. It's not in concurrence with environmentalists. As I've said, I haven't heard David Suzuki's name once in this discussion from the other side. Quite frankly, it doesn't do anything to help the consumer of energy either—those folk who are having a hard time paying their utility bills, those folk who would like to retrofit their houses but can't afford it. Quite frankly, we're talking about the vast majority of Ontarians who are in that boat right now.

This is, as I said—and I'll say it again because I love the word—a greenwashing bill. Does it do something? Yes, it does something. It does an inch where we need millions of miles. It does a small, little bit about the red tape that goes into getting your projects approved.

But we've heard that the wind producers aren't happy about it. They don't feel it's going to help them. These are the very people, supposedly, that this bill is aimed to help. Who does it make happy? One very significant group; it makes happy all of those who are lobbying for nuclear and nuclear reactors in Ontario. We've all had them visit our offices. I know I have. It was a very spiffy display. Clearly, that's what this bill is aimed at—pleasing them.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I was certainly interested to listen to the member from Oxford talk about stray voltage. As my first private member's bill, I actually introduced a private member's bill about stray voltage. I think the member from Oxford should understand that wind turbines do not create stray voltage. Stray voltage is something that has been with us for at least three decades. It is something that is related to the transmission lines. It's how we move the current away from the wind turbines. The wind turbines themselves are not the source of stray voltage. As we talk about what we will do in terms of remedying the stray voltage situation, Dwight Duncan, when he was Minister of Energy, created a panel through the Ontario Energy Board to research the issue. That is still being undertaken right now. There is a discussion paper. I'm hopefully awaiting the response and the recommendations coming from the Ontario Energy Board to deal with this. We recognize it as a problem that we have had with our transmission and distribution system. It is certainly not something that is a problem with wind turbines. So I think we need to address the situation where it really sits.

Earlier the member from Oshawa talked about the Wesleyville project, which is located in the Northumberland–Quinte West riding. I think we should also remind the members there that they allowed the EA on that particular project to expire in 2002, and that's why that project hasn't moved forward at all.

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The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: I think this is another one of those cases where the emperor wears new clothes and we're all supposed to admire this as though there really were something there to admire.

This act is being touted to allegedly reduce the carbon footprint in Ontario. There have been no carbon reduction targets set and I'm sure that there aren't going to be any set, and the reason for that is that there probably won't be any significant reductions in the carbon footprint.

The minister talks about subsidies that will support renewable power. This will be accomplished through the feed-in tariffs. That's how it works in Europe, and that's where we're taking our example. In Europe, prices have soared as much as 40% for electricity and energy, and I'm not sure the people of Ontario understand how all that is going to happen. The sorry part of all that is that

the carbon footprint is no smaller now than it was before they started renewable energy and feed-in tariffs in Europe.

Clean, renewable energy is a good goal. This is motherhood; how can anybody argue with it? This important decision, the magnitude of this long-lasting decision, is something that we ought to take very seriously and carefully—listen to the people it's going to directly affect. I think that it behooves us to listen to Ontarians, as they want to tell us about their personal experiences and their thoughts. Just because it's opposing what the government is presenting doesn't mean we shouldn't listen. Isn't that democracy? What happened to democracy in this House? So I think that we need to have long and meaningful consultation.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Phil McNeely: I'm pleased to stand in my place in this House to talk about Bill 150 and how important it is to the future of this province.

The smart grid implementation, I suppose, has had the greatest degree of comment. It's \$5 billion and it's to support the establishment and implementation of a smart grid for Ontario, which will bring on additional renewable energy projects and set the stage for the electric car, solar panels on roofs, distributed generation etc.

I think this is one of the things that our government has done since we came here in 2003: We've invested in infrastructure. We have to look at the deficiencies in the grid in Ontario. This has to be a great investment for the next five years and a great investment for the future of our province. We have to make those investments. They were made in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, and unfortunately in the 1990s those investments were not made.

The minister is on record as saying that the cost of that \$5-billion investment in the grid is going to be 1% per year on electrical bills. When we hear the figures from this member, we're talking about significant dollars. It's something that's going to be invested for 30 or 40 years, and that's the way it should be paid for. It's going to be there for generations down the road. What I really like about it is that there are several things for community assistance facilitation and to support community power resources through municipalities. Because we're going to have a strong grid that will be able to access these communities, we're going to see those projects going ahead.

The Minto construction in Ottawa: Just this last couple of weeks I've seen it; they have a zero-energy home. That's where we have to go, and that's where we have to get on this bandwagon of supporting this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Oxford, you have two minutes to respond.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I want to thank the members from Parkdale–High Park, Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, Burlington and Ottawa–Orléans for their kind comments.

I did want to just quickly go back to that part of my presentation that dealt with the presentation from Keith Leeson in my riding, who was in the process of dealing

with a wind turbine farm that's being built just outside his boundary. In the EA that they're presently doing for that, there was an engineer's report that I mentioned in my presentation that was done for the Ontario Energy Board that speaks of that stray voltage that will be generated from the wiring, the process of the transmission from the turbine into the grid. That's the challenge we face. There is nothing in this bill that deals with that. To get the power out of the wind and get it into the grid is where the problem is. That is all part of building the turbine facility, and that is not being addressed with this. When Keith asked me what the government is doing in Bill 150 to protect him from that stray voltage, what they are doing about the setbacks, I said, "According to the bill, the minister gets to make all those decisions." "Well," he said to me, "who is the minister accountable to?" I said, "No one but his cabinet colleagues," because this bill gives him total right over setting separation distances, dealing with the stray voltage, dealing with where they go.

They've taken the authority away from everyone, including municipalities, and put it all at the minister's desk. The application comes in. He reviews the application. If he deems that it's appropriate, he'll decide how much he is going to pay for the power to come from that facility and then he will place it in someone's backyard without ever consulting with anyone in that process. I think that's what is so distasteful to my community, that in fact they've gone through this process of the environmental assessment and now it appears it won't even finish because the minister will override it and give approval to this application without the community having any further say in it. That's the challenge that this bill is presenting to my community.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I'm pleased to have an opportunity to add a few words to the debate so far.

I just want to preface my remarks by saying that it looks like a lot of the debate this afternoon is focused on detail, and although that is an important thing, we do have a process here in the Legislative Assembly where bills like this one are sent to committee. At that time, at committee, changes are made; the public is invited to come out and to speak to any potential changes. There's also an incredibly extensive process here for public consultation. So this is not a slam dunk. It's not that the bill is just in front of us here and it's going to be put into law tomorrow or the day after. I think there's going to be quite a bit of discussion, potentially some changes in the end, and I think that needs to be kept in mind.

Instead of focusing on those small little details, let's look at the broader picture of what this bill is trying to accomplish, and those are two things. I mentioned them earlier when I had a moment to speak. Number one is to ensure that Ontario becomes a leader in green technology. Number two, we want to make sure that Ontario begins to get jobs. Potentially, from what we've been able to study and ascertain, I think it's 50,000 jobs that are at stake here.

I just want to talk about a few people here and what they've had to say about this. Let's start with John Young. He was an astronaut. John Young actually flew more missions than any other astronaut. He flew on Gemini, Apollo and Skylab, and on the space shuttle missions. There's a quote of his that's kind of interesting. He says, "The human race is at total war. Our enemy is ignorance, pure and simple. The last 25 years of NASA's solar system exploration, including earth, is telling us what we need to do to preserve our species." In a movie that he was in called *In the Shadow of the Moon*, he says that from the time of Gemini, which wasn't that long ago, in the 1960s, until he flew in the space shuttle on one of his missions, he noticed while orbiting the earth that the changes were incredible. Now, above major cities, large brown clouds can be seen that were not there during the time of the Gemini flights of the 1960s. They were present in the 1990s and thereafter, and they are getting worse and worse.

But instead of looking to outer space or to John Young, one need only look across the street here at the University of Toronto. There's a professor who works here at the University of Toronto named Richard Florida. There's been some mention of him earlier. He has written a couple of very interesting books. The reason I want to bring them up is that they tie in to this bill, because this bill, as I said, is about jobs and green technology. Richard Florida, in his books *The Rise of the Creative Class*, *Cities and the Creative Class*, and also *The Flight of the Creative Class*, basically asserts that metropolitan regions with high concentrations of high-tech workers, artists, musicians and so on—he describes them as "high bohemians"—correlate with a higher level of economic development. Professor Florida posits the theory that the creative class fosters an open, dynamic, personal and professional environment. This environment, in turn, attracts more creative people, as well as businesses and capital. Professor Florida suggests that attracting and obtaining high-quality talent versus a singular focus on infrastructure projects such as sports stadiums or iconic buildings and shopping centres would be a better primary use of a city's regeneration resources for long-term prosperity.

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In simple words, I think what he's trying to say is, if you have the fertile field available, and we're trying to—that is, the government—create a fertile field with a good act here, people will come to this area, into this field and begin to utilize it and sow the seeds that will create the projects that we need. We need more Ph.D.s coming here to Toronto. We need more people who are creative and willing; more entrepreneurs. This has also been outlined by an economist who works for TD Bank, Mr. Drummond. I heard him on Saturday speaking, and he was saying that the creative group, the creative class, are the ones who are going to create the next set of jobs. And we're not talking about a few jobs here and a few jobs scattered there; we're talking about 50,000 jobs.

When I think about my riding of Scarborough Southwest, there are a lot of people who don't have jobs

right now. There are other ridings here, too, where people cannot find work. I'm seeing it more and more in my constituency office. What am I to do—support legislation that, as someone said earlier, doesn't go in this direction or that perhaps we're moving too fast? No. We're moving too slowly, or at least we're moving at a pace that allows for the proper change. We need to move in this direction as soon as possible.

I just want to point out again that Professor Florida talks about the creative class. It's a socio-economic class—distinct from a social class—that economists now know and believe are a key driving force for the economic development of post-industrial cities. We've seen a lot of industries shut down. We know that. It's not just in Toronto and not just in Ontario; it's worldwide. This creative class works in this post-industrial era. If they're going to work in this post-industrial era, how are they going to get things done? If you look at Bill 150 and you look at the preamble to Bill 150, what does the preamble to Bill 150 say? If I'm a member of this creative class, I'm going to take a look at this and I'm going to say, "This sounds pretty interesting to me."

"The government of Ontario is committed to fostering the growth of renewable energy projects, which use cleaner sources of energy, and to removing barriers to and promoting opportunities for renewable energy projects and to promoting a green economy."

Furthermore, it goes on to say: "The government of Ontario is committed to ensuring that the government ... and the broader public sector, including government-funded institutions, conserve energy and use energy efficiently in conducting their affairs."

"The government of Ontario is committed to promoting and expanding energy conservation by all Ontarians and to encouraging all Ontarians to use energy efficiently."

This is the map that allows the creative class, that allows the people who are going to make the jobs of the future, create those jobs. Those jobs are not going to be found, unfortunately, back in the manufacturing sector. Those jobs are not going to be found in the way of the past. It's not just in Ontario; this is a worldwide phenomenon. Do you want those jobs to be located only in Germany and in Switzerland and Japan? No. We want them right here in Ontario. We want to attract the right people here. This act allows them to come here and use their resources. We're not saying, "Throw away all the laws and just go ahead and build." There are going to be all sorts of consultation. It's going to go to committee. We're going to put some kinds of restrictions in place; we're not going to just let them throw up whatever they want to throw up and put into existence, but they're going to be creative, and the creative class is going to be the dominant class.

I just want to point out one more definition, and that is "innovation." The term "innovation" means a new way of doing something. To some people, that might sound scary because it involves change. But if we don't change and do things differently, we're not going to see things

get better. During the Great Depression—and I'm not saying that we're in a Great Depression—Roosevelt didn't try doing the same things; he innovated. He tried new things. In fact, in his first 100 days of office he passed more legislation, got it through Congress, than any other President in the history of the United States—and he got the economy moving.

“The goal of innovation is positive change, to make someone or something better. Innovation leading to increased productivity is the fundamental source of increasing wealth in an economy.” It sounds pretty good to me, and it's not just a bunch of fluff; this is coming from some pretty reliable sources. We want to see innovation and we want to bring in the people who will do it. As Professor Florida has said, we want to bring in the Ph.D.s.; we want to have them in this location. He has said that Toronto is prime, Ontario is prime to bringing in these new individuals. If we have a law in place that allows for new green technology—not the old technology of the past but new green technology where they get to use their creative powers, their Ph.D. knowledge and their entrepreneurial skills, we will see new jobs created, because they're going to have to hire new employees to do what they have to do to create that green energy. The green energy jobs are located together and they come nicely together in this bill, Bill 150, which I stand here today and support very, very strongly.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to have a chance to comment on the speech made by the member from Scarborough Southwest. He was talking about the fact that the bill will be going to committee. I'm happy to hear that. I know we were asking for committee after first reading, because it is a complicated bill, but I trust the government is going to send it to committee and get lots of input, because not everyone is in favour of this bill. It's the job of the opposition to make the government aware of those people who are critical. I note an article in the National Post by Lawrence Solomon, where he goes on, “No piece of legislation in memory will do more to simultaneously undermine Ontario's economy and environment.” There are concerns out there.

The member mentioned the study done by Professor Richard Florida and Roger Martin. I think the government spent \$2.2 million on the report. I would suggest that the government could have gone to the legislative library and checked out Professor Florida's book on the creative economy. They would have saved a lot of money. That's part of what the concerns with this bill are. The original philosophy of Ontario Hydro was “Power at cost,” and now it seems to be changing to “Power at any cost.” The question is, what harm is going to be done to our economy, particularly at this time when businesses are struggling in this province, when every day this government introduces another bill that makes it more difficult for small business to survive in the province with their new rules, regulations and red tape?

There are some serious concerns with this bill, and I think it's important that this government allow those who

are opposed or have concerns to make their voices heard when the bill goes to the Legislative Assembly committee.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to rise and add my ideas to the debate here after hearing the member from Scarborough Southwest, who I thought made some very, very good points that we should all be paying attention to. I think what we've got going on here is two very progressive ideas that are happening at the same time. I think people in Ontario are starting to realize that we need to move to an economy that has a safe and affordable supply of clean green energy in order to drive that economy, in order to allow us to have the lifestyle that we've come to enjoy in this province. At the same time, we know that that needs to work hand in hand with the economy.

In the past, it used to be that any environmental improvements were viewed as being at the expense of economic growth. I think that over the past few years we've come to realize that you can actually have those environmental improvements, such as those that are given under the Green Energy Act, and also improve the economy at the same time.

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Some of the people who have come forward to support this proposed bill are people who certainly have my respect, and I think have the respect of most people in this House, I would hope.

Let's go to the Clean Air Foundation. Ersilia Serafini, a young woman from Oakville and the executive director of that organization, says, “We congratulate Minister Smitherman for introducing legislation that will help make it easier for Ontarians to install renewable energy and look forward to working with the province to continue to increase our energy conservation efforts.”

We've heard a lot of talk today from the opposition as to things we shouldn't do, and that we should shut down nuclear and shut down coal. We are working to shut down coal. I think there's acceptance that nuclear is going to play a role in the future of this province. What the people of Ontario want to see is us all working together to ensure that that clean, green energy that we know is in place is actually bought into the energy supply stream.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to add my comments to the member from Scarborough Southwest. I find it interesting listening to his remarks. I was kind of interested, looking at an article here from the National Post the other day; he quoted this Clean Energy Alliance. Also, a number of these agencies that are supporting this green bill, Bill 150, receive funding from the Ontario government, so it's probably no wonder that they're in some agreement with it. Anyway, that's beside the point.

Someone earlier asked, “Where's David Suzuki on this?” I think it was a member of the NDP.

Mr. Mike Colle: How about Doug Chalmers?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Yeah, and Doug Chalmers. I don't know what Doug Chalmers thinks of Bill 150. But somebody asked where David Suzuki was. I saw him the other night on TV. He's running around people's houses with a caulking gun and a guy gets up and chases him out. Anyway, that's where David Suzuki is; I saw him the other night on TV.

A number of these government programs—it sounds like a big shell game to me. They take the funds. Through the Ontario Energy Board, they enforce Enbridge Gas, Union Gas and others to take these fees back from the householders so that they can say that they haven't, in fact, enforced these fees. It's really a tax grab and they're enforcing this, having consumers pay it through companies. It's a real fancy kind of a shell game; you move them around on the table. The government didn't want to raise taxes, so to do this they just had the electric and gas companies raise their rates. At the end of the day, Ontarians know that, whether it's on their tax bill, their gas bill or their hydro bill, they'll be the ones who are actually paying for these pet projects of the government.

We're looking forward to these committee hearings, where we're going to try to improve this bill through many amendments. And I look forward to further debate as the day goes on.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Again, it's a pleasure to rise and speak in favour of the environment, in favour of the citizens of Ontario and against attempts to greenwash what we really face as a problem—a life-and-death problem, if you will. The member from Scarborough Southwest talked about Richard Florida; that's an interesting name to bring into this conversation.

I totally agree with the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka: We could have saved the taxpayers a lot of money by simply taking that \$2 million, reading Richard Florida's book and giving it to those folks who would like to retrofit their homes or pay their utility bills and who aren't able to. That would be a better use of taxpayers' money than commissioning a report that essentially just redid his own book and his own suggestions from that.

I leave you with the words that I want to imprint on everyone watching this: This is greenwashing—there's a word to add to your vocabulary. Why is it greenwashing? Because the actual energy policies of this government are to put in excess of \$30 billion—some experts say \$50 billion—into nuclear reactors. If you put all the money into nuclear reactors, you don't have any money left over for renewables and conservation. Fifty billion dollars, \$30 billion: These numbers are staggering. This is more than we've spent on anything in the province of Ontario.

Other words to leave with the viewers: Yes, David Suzuki. Thank you for raising his name again. Yes,

Greenpeace; yes, Pembina; yes, Ontario Clean Air Alliance; yes, World Wildlife Fund. Why did the government not give the \$2 million to them, buy the brochure, if you will, and institute it? That's what we need. We need an environmental plan for this province still.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Mississauga Southwest, you have two minutes to respond.

Interjection: Scarborough Southwest.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Scarborough Southwest. Thank you.

Mr. Mike Colle: Scarborough's a beautiful place, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): It's late in the day, so forgive me. Scarborough Southwest.

Mr. Mike Colle: It's never late to visit Scarborough. It's beautiful. Come to the bluffs.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I just wanted to thank the members from Parry Sound–Muskoka, Thornhill, Parkdale–High Park and Oakville for their comments.

Just very briefly, with regard to Richard Florida, please, it's not a million-dollar project; it's a book. You can buy it over at Coles or you can get a copy of it in the legislative library, or you can do what I did: I borrowed my wife's copy and read it. It didn't cost me a cent. I hope my wife's not watching because she'll probably want money for it now.

Anyway, I just wanted to say again that Richard Florida's thesis makes a lot of sense. You're not going to get to where you were in the past. You've got to look forward to the future. And it's not just him. Mr. Drummond from TD Bank, who's on TV almost every night, has said again and again that the creative, the PhDs, those who are innovative, are going to be ones who are going to create the jobs of the future. It's not me saying it. It's not the Liberal Party saying it. It's not this act saying it. It's top economists and professors who are saying this, and I'm reiterating it.

All I'm saying is that this act, Bill 150, An Act to enact the Green Energy Act, 2009, assists those who want to be involved in something new, and they will be attracted to this bill and will want to take action on it. I want to see people in my riding, Scarborough Southwest—and I don't know about the member from Parkdale–High Park, who says this is a greenwash—working in jobs, whether they be in the green sector or elsewhere. I want them employed and I want them as part of the solution and not part of the problem.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you to everyone.

There's at least one timepiece in this House that reads 6 o'clock or some proximity thereto. This House is adjourned until Tuesday morning at 9 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1757.

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Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton–Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murdoch, Bill (IND)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres
		Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of International Trade and Investment / Ministre du Commerce international et de l'Investissement
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Runciman, Robert W. (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	Nipissing	Minister of Tourism / Ministre du Tourisme
		Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre
		Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services / Ministre des Petites Entreprises et des Services aux consommateurs
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Perth–Wellington	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
		Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	
Vacant	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Tim Hudak
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Garfield Dunlop
Gilles Bisson, Bob Delaney
Garfield Dunlop, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Tim Hudak, Amrit Mangat
Phil McNeely, Yasir Naqvi
John O'Toole
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jean-Marc Lalonde
Sophia Aggelonitis, Ted Arnott
Wayne Arthurs, Toby Barrett
Pat Hoy, Jean-Marc Lalonde
Leeanna Pendergast, Michael Prue
Charles Sousa
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: David Oraziatti
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jim Brownell
Robert Bailey, Jim Brownell
Linda Jeffrey, Kuldip Kular
Rosario Marchese, Bill Mauro
Carol Mitchell, David Oraziatti
Joyce Savoline
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Présidente: Julia Munro
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Michael A. Brown, France Gélinas
Randy Hillier, Lisa MacLeod
Julia Munro, David Ramsay
Lou Rinaldi, Liz Sandals
Maria Van Bommel
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeff Leal
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Christine Elliott
Peter Kormos, Jeff Leal
Dave Levac, Reza Moridi
Lou Rinaldi, John Yakabuski
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Bas Balkissoon
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Kevin Daniel Flynn
Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon
Bob Delaney, Joe Dickson
Kevin Daniel Flynn, Sylvia Jones
Norm Miller, Mario Sergio
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jerry J. Ouellette
Laura Albanese, Ernie Hardeman
Andrea Horwath, Phil McNeely
Jerry J. Ouellette, Liz Sandals
Norman W. Sterling, Maria Van Bommel
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Michael Prue
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller
Bas Balkissoon, Mike Colle
Gerry Martiniuk, Paul Miller
Bill Murdoch, Yasir Naqvi
Michael Prue, Tony Ruprecht
Mario Sergio
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon
Laurel C. Broten, Kim Craitor
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo
Helena Jaczek, Shafiq Qaadri
Khalil Ramal, Peter Shurman
Elizabeth Witmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Select Committee on Elections / Comité spécial des élections

Chair / Président: Greg Sorbara
Howard Hampton, Greg Sorbara
Norman W. Sterling, David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions / Comité
spécial de la santé mentale et des dépendances**

Chair / Président: Kevin Daniel Flynn
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott
Bas Balkissoon, Christine Elliott
Kevin Daniel Flynn, France Gélinas
Helena Jaczek, Sylvia Jones
Jeff Leal, Liz Sandals
Maria Van Bommel
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

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