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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 1 April 2014

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Mardi 1^{er} avril 2014

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT AGENCIESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES
ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX

Tuesday 1 April 2014

Mardi 1^{er} avril 2014

The committee met at 0904 in committee room 1.

AGENCY REVIEW: METROLINX

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Good morning, everybody, and welcome to the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. When we adjourned last week, the committee was considering a motion put forward by Miss Taylor, and that's our first item on the agenda. I've asked the Clerk to, again, schedule just one intended appointment today, and I ask for the committee's co-operation in dealing with our agenda. Would the committee agree to first consider the intended appointment, then to vote, in the remainder of the time, on the motion by Miss Taylor? Miss Taylor.

Miss Monique Taylor: No, Chair. I would like to move ahead with the motion that's before us, and then we'll go ahead with the appointment, just as the agenda set out.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Any discussion? All right. Let's try to co-operate with the motion and get through it. There's just one appointment here today.

The committee has two mandates: to conduct agency reviews and to consider intended appointments to those agencies. What we'll do is debate the motion and, if we can get it completed, hopefully today, then consider the appointment.

I just wanted to have someone move the report of the subcommittee on committee business dated Thursday, March 27, 2014. Miss Taylor?

Miss Monique Taylor: I move adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated Thursday, March 27, 2014.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): All right. Any discussion? All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Now we'll move back to the motion by Miss Taylor. Did you want to read it one more time? We all have a copy in front of us.

Miss Monique Taylor: Sure, Chair. I move that the Standing Committee on Government Agencies request from Metrolinx and the Ministry of Transportation the production of all documents related to Metrolinx advertising between January 1, 2012, and March 18, 2014; and that these documents be produced within 30 days of this motion passing; and that responsive documents be provided in an electronic, searchable format.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Did you want to speak to the motion?

Miss Monique Taylor: Yes, thank you, Chair. There have definitely been a few days for the committee to look at this, to see the value of these documents coming forward. I'm hopeful that the government, being the Liberals, would not filibuster this motion, and allow it to pass in a timely fashion so that we can move on with the further business of this committee.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Any further discussion on the motion from Miss Taylor? Ms. Hunter.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Mr. Chair, I would like to suggest a friendly amendment to the motion. To provide for the opportunity for the agency to gather the required information, I suggest moving it from 30 to 45 days. I believe that this is a reasonable request and that this would allow for us to gather the required documents so that it is productive for this committee once we receive that information. I would like to suggest that amendment to this motion.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): All right. Any further debate? Mr. Marchese.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Mr. Chair, this issue has been in the media for quite some time. We believe that Metrolinx is ready to bring forth these documents. They do not need another 15 days. We are repeating the same problem as we did before. For some bizarre reason, the government members believe that a 30-day timeline is not correct, not adequate, and that they need to give more time. It has been in the media for quite some time. They are prepared, in my view, to bring forth these documents, and I think that 30 days is more than adequate.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): So we have the amendment by Ms. Hunter. Any further discussion on it? None? All right, then we'll do the amendment put forward by Ms. Hunter first. All those in favour of that amendment? Opposed? That does not carry.

We'll move to the motion that Miss Taylor has put forward. All in favour of the motion? Opposed? The motion carries. That's done.

0910

Miss Monique Taylor: Chair?

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Yes, Ms. Taylor?

Miss Monique Taylor: I have another motion to put forward. I move that the Standing Committee on Government Agencies request from Metrolinx and the

Ministry of Transportation the production of all documents related to the expenses of all Metrolinx board of directors and executive members between January 1, 2012, and March 18, 2014; and that these documents be produced within 30 days of this motion passing; and that responsive documents be provided in an electronic, searchable format.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Ms. Taylor, do you have copies of the motion?

Miss Monique Taylor: I do, Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): As the committee Clerk is distributing copies of that motion, I wonder if I could ask the committee's permission that we get through this appointment today, and then after the appointment is done—the consideration of the appointment here—we move back to this motion. Is that fair?

Miss Monique Taylor: Yes, we're fine with that, Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): All right. Any further discussion? All those in favour of doing the appointment now? Yes, Ms. Damerla?

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Chair, I know that you want to move on to the selection of delegates—Joe Vaccaro—but I was just going to ask a quick question. A motion has been put on the floor. Can we get some time to look at it before we move on to the next business? Can we get a recess?

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): You—
Interjections.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Yes, 15 to 20 minutes. A new motion has been put on the floor and we'd like time to—
Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Hang on. Mr. Marchese?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: So do you want to deal with the appointment first and then make your request after that?

Ms. Dipika Damerla: I just want to make sure that I will get that time because I will not have the time while we are questioning Mr. Vaccaro.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): All right. Sorry, Mr. Marchese?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No, I was just recommending to MPP Damerla that we could listen to the witness who is here, review that, get that done and then come back to her request, which I think will allow her the opportunity to ask for a recess, if that's what she wants.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Okay. Do we have agreement by the committee to do that? All those in favour? Opposed? That carries.

INTENDED APPOINTMENTS

MR. JOE VACCARO

Review of intended appointment, selected by third party: Joe Vaccaro, intended appointee as member, Species at Risk Program Advisory Committee.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): We'll do the appointment review. The member that's present today is Mr. Joe Vaccaro.

Mr. Vaccaro, if you want to come forward and just take a seat at the table. I'll just go through the rules with you of what's going to happen. You could begin with a brief statement, if you wish. Members of each party will then have 10 minutes to ask you questions. Any time used for your statement will be deducted from the government's time for questions. The questioning this time will start with the government. If you have a statement and you want to speak a little bit, we'll keep an eye on the time and then we'll just rotate from the three parties, if they have any questions which they may wish to ask you.

Welcome to the committee, and please go ahead.

Mr. Joe Vaccaro: Good morning, and thank you for this opportunity to present myself to this legislative committee. I respect the legislative process that appointments require and welcome the opportunity to express my interest and qualifications—

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Mr. Vaccaro, sorry, I don't mean to interrupt—a little bit louder. I'm just having trouble hearing you.

Mr. Joe Vaccaro: No problem.

Good morning, and thank you for this opportunity to present myself to this legislative committee. I respect the legislative process that appointments require and welcome the opportunity to express my interest and qualifications to serve on the Species at Risk Program Advisory Committee.

This committee makes recommendations to the Minister of Natural Resources about matters relating to the implementation of the province's Species at Risk Program. Its focus includes: the development of policy to support the implementation of the act; incentive and stewardship programs; best management practices; public education outreach programs; recovery strategies and management plans; the assembly of scientific information, including community knowledge and aboriginal traditional knowledge, that should be given to the Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario to assist in the classification of species; the role of agreements and permits under this act in assisting in the protection and recovery of species; approaches in the classification of species; and approaches that may be used under this act to promote sustainable social, economic activities that assist in the protection of recovery of species.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): I'm sorry, Mr. Vaccaro. I don't mean to be jumping in all the time, but if you could just slow down a bit and speak a bit louder because I'm trying my best to hear you.

Mr. Joe Vaccaro: Sure.

Its membership draws on various experts with relevant knowledge about resource use, land use or environmental sectors.

For the benefit of this legislative committee, I would note that the committee is currently constituted with a number of association-based members, such as myself. I

believe that drawing from this professional and expert group of individuals does support the function described above, as the role of this committee is to inform and support the implementation of the Endangered Species Act and the work of the scientific group, the Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario.

Since I left Queen's Park nine years ago, I have had the privilege to work with the Ontario Home Builders' Association and the greater Toronto area affiliate of the Building Industry and Land Development Association, BILD. The opportunity to advance in the position of director of policy, to VP of policy and government relations, to my current title as CEO has provided me the opportunity to work under a variety of legislative, regulatory and policy items that impact the industry, but also to work within a framework that encourages research and evidence-based policy and decision-making. I would also add that, as a provincial organization, I have had the opportunity to understand the impact of provincial legislation and policy across the entire province, and with that, an understanding of how important it is to take into account how a policy decision at Queen's Park has to be implemented in Sudbury, Windsor and Toronto.

I would like to outline a few items regarding my qualifications for this possible appointment. Let me begin with my ongoing work with the Ontario Biodiversity Council. The council is composed of volunteer members who are to guide the implementation of Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy and to: involve the public, aboriginal peoples and a wide range of stakeholders in identifying a set of annual implementation priorities; coordinate implementation planning in association with other groups; evaluate progress and report on implementation annually; and lead the five-year review of the strategy and its implementation.

Working with various groups around the biodiversity council table, we have been focused on working together to implement the broader strategy and connecting our various constituencies with that broader strategy, to the benefit of Ontario. I believe I have benefited from the experience with the council, sharing information, industry experiences and outlining implementation approaches as we remain focused on the strategy, looking for opportunities to strengthen Ontario's biodiversity.

Specific to the Endangered Species Act and through my work with the Ontario Home Builders' Association, I have been an active stakeholder in highlighting some of the implementation challenges the legislation has presented to the building and development industry. I continue to support the principle and need for a strong Endangered Species Act, but the challenges are always around the issue of implementation. I believe that through my experience and work in land use, building and development industry issues, I have earned a strong understanding of how legislation, regulation and implementation need to work together to achieve the stated outcome.

Through my association work, both at the Ontario Home Builders' Association and BILD, I have worked

professionally with the chair of this committee, again with a focus in improving implementation and identifying future opportunities regarding the ESA, and he has been kind enough to serve as a reference.

If you visit the MNR website regarding the ESA, an entire section is dedicated to planners, developers and resource professionals. I have a working understanding of the land use approvals process, the development approvals system and the role of Ontario's public planning process to coordinate and reconcile a number of legislative, regulatory and policy objectives to deliver an outcome in the public interest. I believe my knowledge and experience in working policy areas of land use permitting will benefit the committee and will support the work of the committee members as we identify common issues and, more importantly, common opportunities and solutions.

I look forward to serving on this committee, as I believe I bring an approach that will serve to support the stated committee function of developing and delivering incentive programs and stewardship programs, along with the best practice approach. In my experience, it is these two concepts that best serve to support and improve implementation of any legislation. In fact, in my work at Queen's Park at various legislative committees, in my interaction with members of provincial Parliament from all three parties, it has been a consistent theme of my approach to establish the research base and evidence that support the policy initiative, along with identifying the necessary implementation approach to bring the public policy outcome forward. As we all say, the details matter when it comes to public policy. The details and implementation really serve to bring forward the best outcome.

0920

Let me also state for the benefit of this committee that I am not a landowner—except for my home in Etobicoke, obviously—I am not a developer, nor do I have any material interest in any development projects.

Recognizing that it is April 1, I will end by thanking you all for the opportunity to present myself for this opportunity and welcome the first of many April Fool's references that I am sure will come forward. Thank you for that.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Thank you very much, Mr. Vaccaro. You've spoken for almost four minutes, so we'll give six minutes to—

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Oh, I'm sorry. Actually, the Liberals will have four minutes, then we'll rotate to the other two parties. Are there any questions from the Liberal Party? Ms. Damerla first, then Ms. Hunter.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Thank you, Mr. Vaccaro, for coming down this morning and for that great presentation. I just had a question. This is the Species at Risk Program. I know that you're part of the Ontario land developers—

Mr. Joe Vaccaro: Ontario Home Builders.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: The Ontario Home Builders' Association. As suburbia creeps into more and more rural

areas, I know that sometimes, whether you're a farmer or you're a developer, there could be a clash of agendas in terms of, "We want to develop this piece of land, but on the other hand we want to protect this environment."

I'm just curious: When that sort of clash does happen, what would you do? What would your reaction be?

Mr. Joe Vaccaro: My personal view—and I'm speaking as an individual here, seeking an appointment to this committee, obviously—is that we should have a great deal of respect and trust for the public planning process.

The reality is that planning approvals require a public process. They require public meetings. They require studies, and municipal tests, in some cases, that have to go forward and be vetted by the public, municipal leadership and provincial leadership. The process involves a great deal of research. It also involves a great deal of planning and approval.

In that process, I would say that the first thing to remember is that the province has created a framework around Places to Grow where they've identified where development needs to go, how it should go and how we accommodate the population growth in Ontario. And we are still in a growth environment.

As you work through that process and the public process that comes with that, the reality is that there will be tensions, but it has always been my view that that public planning process provides the opportunity to—I won't say "negotiate"—resolve some of those issues with a series of remedies, and also in that way to bring forward what should ultimately be in the public interest.

Whether it's an expansion in rural Ontario or a condo development in downtown Toronto, there is a process there that engages everyone who wants to be engaged, but there is also a series of tests that have to be respected. For the most part, when you work through that process, you should arrive at a good outcome for everyone involved.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Would you be able to give me any examples where tensions arose, as you mentioned, but they were resolved and you were part of that table?

Mr. Joe Vaccaro: Sure, I can give you some examples. When you think about a situation like—let's pick on Brampton for a second. Obviously, Brampton has been asked, as part of the legislative structure, to accommodate for planning growth through the provincial Places to Grow.

It's now incumbent on Brampton to determine not just a question of where you put the people, but also what kind of community they want to develop. What is the housing mix, as we refer to it? How many will be single-family homes? How many will be townhouses? How much of that will be intensification, condominium development?

It's also incumbent on them to look for where the infrastructure goes to support those pieces. There will always be tensions in terms of—

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Sorry. Just to interrupt: There's less than 50 seconds to go, and then time will be—

Mr. Joe Vaccaro: Sure. It's always incumbent on the municipality to put that work together, but that work ultimately will be challenged. Whether it's challenged by private citizens, Brampton ratepayers, other developers, other conservation authorities or other groups, they have an opportunity through that public planning process to bring forward their vision. Then you work through a public process to determine, ultimately, the final outcome.

And so I think that in a place like Brampton, what we've seen is an expansion of the community, but it has to be done in a way that the community is comfortable with.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Okay, that's about it. We're down to one second. I'm sorry.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Can we have at least a few seconds?

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): We're down to three seconds.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I just want to remind that the aboriginal concern is also very important to this committee.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Thank you. We'll move on now to the official opposition.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Thank you, Joe, for coming. You represent an organization that's one of the drivers of prosperity in Ontario: the Ontario Home Builders. We all know that development has a responsibility in line with municipal planning priorities. How would you describe the government's approach to planning and development and how it has evolved over the last decade? Has it become more interventionist, directing or influencing decisions, or has it left it more to the community to decide?

Mr. Joe Vaccaro: In my capacity at the Ontario Home Builders—it's important to go back in history and think about it. In 2000, we started a discussion about Smart Growth, and that discussion was about how communities should evolve and develop around infrastructure, with transportation being a key driver.

The reality is that now that I have had the opportunity to work and to meet with people from across Ontario—there has to be a recognition that communities are different. There are different levels of infrastructure, different levels of their own vision of how their community should grow.

The provincial framework has grown from a Smart Growth framework to a Places to Grow framework, and the province is much more engaged now in planning issues and providing guidance, if I can use that terminology, when it comes to municipal plans.

I would say that along with other ministries, including MNR, the Ministry of the Environment, and conservation authorities, there is an active group engaging, commenting and providing input and evidence as to how communities should grow and shape. There is a natural tension, obviously—or there is sometimes, at least—between municipalities and the provincial government in terms of their visions. But, again, I think the public planning process provides an opportunity to work your way through that, and there obviously are remedies, if

there is disagreement, to adjudicate and to discuss and to really test the planning principles behind any community.

I think the one thing I've really valued over my career here at the Ontario Home Builders is a real understanding of how communities engage on planning issues and that it's not one-size-fits-all. Communities have different visions as to how they want to grow and how they want to attract not just residents but also employment opportunities.

There is always that challenge where sometimes the province can be seen as being a great accelerator of opportunities, and sometimes the province is seen as being a barrier, but you have to work through that process.

Mr. Jim McDonell: In a recent presentation and prospectus of the Endangered Species Act, you referenced that the development process could take up to 10 years and that the bureaucracy can be frustrating. The committee that you're being appointed to duplicates some of the functions of COSSARO, the Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario. What have been the most frustrating aspects of the home building bureaucracy, and what would you do to reduce some of that?

Mr. Joe Vaccaro: In my work at the Ontario Home Builders, one of our consistent themes is around the issue of implementation but also respecting earned applications, earned permissions, earned approvals. I think one of the implementation challenges around this legislation, and many legislative pieces that come forward, is trying to reconcile what has already been granted as an approval to move forward and what is being asked of the applicant today.

There are a number of examples I could give you, but I'll give you an example in Brampton, where, as part of a development, a site was set aside for a future school. Over the course of eight years, as the community grew and the community finally got a population that triggered the need for that school, it became incumbent to go back to that parcel of land and determine exactly the uses.

Of course, the parcel had been farmed and, in that farming process, had established habitat for a species on the list. So now the challenge becomes that this area has already been identified as being a site for a future school. There's an expectation by the municipality and by the community at large, the new ratepayers in that area, that there will be a school there. How do we now reconcile a decision that we made six or seven years ago, to put a school there, with the requirements of this act? How do we get around that? Ultimately, that's the question. There's an expectation that the school will be built there, based on a past approval.

That's just a small example, but that's sort of the tip of the iceberg in terms of how we reconcile new legislation with past approvals. That's where I see that this committee and its work in the area of implementation, and talking about those situations and understanding those situations in advance, can provide some guidance to the minister.

0930

The list is the list, and you have to respect the list. The real question now is: How do we take the list and apply it

to the environment that we're working in and decisions that have been made?

I know, for example, that the decision in Windsor to do that work required a great deal of work around the Endangered Species Act. So again, how do you reconcile that? You've made the infrastructure commitment; you have plans to expand that highway for trade and a whole bunch of other reasons, but you have to also respect the legislation that's now in place and find a way around that and make it all work in a way that respects the list, respects the principles of the bill and the public policy outcomes they're driving towards. But the reality is that there is a series of approvals that have been granted. Implementation, really, is a process to try to reconcile some of those conflicts.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I see your education is in humanities and of course your experience in the home builders—what do you see yourself bringing to this committee as far as your background and education?

Mr. Joe Vaccaro: I think my educational background, with a real focus on political theory, part of that is, again, trying to understand where people are coming from—their perspectives on the issues—but also trying to reconcile that with the reality of the world we live in. That has been a constant in my approach, generally, on issues.

I'm a big believer in research and evidence. What are the facts? And then, more importantly, do we agree on the facts? Then trying to connect that to the broader discussion on the public policy outcome. I have a very strong working knowledge of the land use planning system. I've spent most of my teen years on a subdivision, framing homes with my father, so I have a very good understanding of what's happening in the field and that sort of relationship from that point of view as well.

I think what I will bring to this committee is a working knowledge of what the development industry is dealing with, not just in Toronto, which in the GTA area tends to take a lot of the focus, but also how does this play in a place like St. Thomas, Cornwall or Perth. How does that all work? Because there are different realities in those places.

That's what I'm hoping to bring to this committee: a working knowledge and a real desire to see this piece of legislation work and be implemented. It's a lot like the work I do on the Ontario Biodiversity Council, looking for opportunities to push forward the mandate, looking for volunteer leaders who are willing to put themselves forward and be interested in the stewardship programs to bring about those outcomes. I think it's connecting some of those dots, bringing in that practical knowledge, being a bit of a problem solver but really with a spirit of supporting the legislation in a way that we can all be proud of.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I know sometimes some of the worst cases always hit the news, but you see some projects that are delayed. I think there was one last year in Ottawa where, after six weeks of delays, they found out it was a different species than they thought it was.

Sometimes reason doesn't seem to appear front and centre. I go back to the Environmental Commissioner, in his first report that I heard when I was here, talking about looking at a species that really didn't belong here. It was endangered here but really because we were outside of its realm of habitat or on the very northern fringes.

I guess the point is: How do you see your impact in bringing some reasonableness to the whole situation? You really want to have some impact where you can, and where you can't, it's really acknowledging that and moving ahead.

Mr. Joe Vaccaro: Well, I think it will go to a practical understanding of the research of what do we actually—again, the list is the list, but there is criteria around that list. But the next part of that is, once we've identified that the species is endangered and once it's on that list, the next real piece of the work is: What are doing about the habitat protection? That's the real issue here, because ultimately a species that's on the list needs to be protected. There's no way around that.

If you're a landowner or a homeowner and you want to do some work on your property and you come across the turtle or whatever you may be dealing with that day, you have a responsibility, as clearly stated in the act, to ensure that that turtle is protected. The real next step is around the issue of habitat protection because now you are engaging in a discussion around how that works.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Excuse me, there's one minute left—

Mr. Joe Vaccaro: And I think my experience is in understanding the habitat designations and how that work really works, and reconcile that with the natural activities of farmers, landowners in rural communities and municipalities looking for infrastructure development. That seems to be, in my mind, the gap, and that's sort of the space that I work in today.

As for the actual list itself, we'll leave that to the scientists to work out. They have to work it out, and there is no doubt that there are species that make their way onto the list that are challenged, that some people will question if it's valid to be on that list or the classification on that list. I'm not really interested in challenging that. I'm interested in saying, "Once we've made that decision, how do we actually make it work in the real world?" Because that seems to me to be the broader challenge that we all have to work with.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Thank you, Mr. Vaccaro. Time's up. We'll move on to the third party, Mr. Marchese.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Good to see you, Joe. I've got a couple of tough questions for you. The researcher here, this good man right there, writes on page 3 of the research that we're given, "According to the Office of the Premier, the witness is a former chief operating officer of the Ontario Home Builders' Association and a former vice-president of policy and government relations with the" building industry. But what it doesn't include is the fact that you're currently the chief executive officer of the OHBA. That's wasn't included. And that is the case?"

Mr. Joe Vaccaro: This is a recent appointment, yes. I was serving as chief operating officer, and I was recently promoted, if I can use that term, to CEO.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: So my point is, although you say you're not a developer, you represent the development industry as a lobbyist for the industry. Would you say that's a fair assessment?

Mr. Joe Vaccaro: I would say that my background is very similar to other backgrounds on the committee, and that is to serve as an association member. Yes, one of my primary responsibilities is to serve as an advocate for the industry, absolutely.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: According to the same research—where it talks about position requirements, it states that the applicant should have "good knowledge of concepts and techniques related to the protection and recovery of species at risk." Do you bring that to this advisory body?

Mr. Joe Vaccaro: In my work with the Ontario Home Builders and, more importantly, in my work around the Endangered Species Act, working on this file with MNR staff, I have come to have a very strong understanding of how those techniques work, including the need to avoid, when possible, in terms of once a species is identified and the habitat has been identified, all actions on the part of any development application, whether it's a municipality, a landowner, the province itself—the first act is always to avoid those areas. I also understand that one of the best techniques is that, if you cannot avoid, then it's important to not just establish an area where the habitat for that species can be protected, that it's also important to establish linkages, buffers.

It's also important to understand that the activities you surround that habitat with are important, because ultimately, as you leave that community—for example, if you leave that community and what you've done is you've built a high-density community around that habitat, what you really are inviting is an opportunity for those residents, whether they're aware of it or not, to potentially damage that habitat. What you've actually done is put that species at risk.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Okay, Joe. Let me link the previous question to the following because this is an advisory body to the Minister of Natural Resources and the title of it is the Species at Risk Program Advisory Committee.

The Environmental Commissioner has raised some concerns in his report of July 1, 2013, where he says that the regulatory amendments have been changed on July 1, 2013, which created broad exemptions from the requirement of the act that government permission must be obtained prior to harming a species at risk and/or its habitat. While it doesn't make recommendations, that committee suggests that the Ministry of Natural Resources has failed to support the operation of the act by, among other things, delaying the habitat protection and stalling recovery strategies for endangered and threatened species. He alerts us to a problem here, which worries many of us.

Your appointment as a representative of the development industry worries us as well, because it doesn't

appear to be consistent with the objectives of this advisory board and does not appear to be consistent with what the Environmental Commissioner is speaking of. Your appointment, in this regard, makes me nervous. Do you have a comment about what the Environmental Commissioner has talked about or a comment about the amendments weakening the act, and how you fit into that?

0940

Mr. Joe Vaccaro: I will happily make a comment. I'm presenting myself for this appointment. Again, as I look at the other members of this advisory committee, I see that many of them serve in a role with an association. I think that's a great place to pull experts who have a broad understanding of how legislation and policy need to work together.

I would also note that in one of the earlier structures around this committee, there was a representative from the Building Industry and Land Development Association as well, again because of that expertise.

I think that what the Environmental Commissioner is speaking to is the challenge of implementation. It is the challenge of bringing forward legislation and putting it in place, and then having to understand what has already been determined and decided, and how you actually make those two pieces work. It is the challenge of implementation with any act as you move forward. I would say that the commissioner's concerns, as he has stated, really speak to the issue of the disconnect between implementation and legislation.

I think in my experience and in my work as an individual, my approach has very much been to identify those gaps and to try to make sense of how we make this work, maintaining the principles of the act and maintaining the principles of the work in front of us for a positive public outcome, but also understanding that on the ground there are practical realities. I would also say that this was not just a challenge for landowners and developers; the challenge was for farmers as well, who had a difficult time trying to make the Endangered Species Act work when they had been farming crops for many, many years and those crops suddenly became a habitat for a species, and it was time for them to turn over their farm practices. So it's not simply a development issue.

There are many municipalities that stopped bridge construction, mid-construction, as they waited for clarification from the ministry as to how to proceed with their bridge. I know that that caused a great deal of stress and concern for those municipalities as that construction stalled for six, seven, eight, nine months and then the cost to re-engage and re-assess became an issue.

I would go back to the challenge of implementation, and I would like to think that my experience working for this association, my personal approach on these issues, really focuses on how we take the legislative will, the legislative spirit of the act, and put it into play in a practical reality. I see this with all sorts of legislative pieces. The details matter, and implementation is where you come up with a plan and the approach to bring it forward.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Chair, thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): You still have two and a half minutes left if you want to ask some more questions.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I'm done with the questions.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): All right. Miss Taylor.

Miss Monique Taylor: I have questions. Thanks for being here today. You've put your life's work into the home builders' association and getting to that position, to the point where you're now the chief executive officer. You've built a lot of relationships. You have a lot of eggs in that basket. I'm sure that's how you paid for your own home. I'm concerned about the fact that you're now going to put yourself in a part-time position on a committee that is possibly going to be very challenging. How is it that you're going to be able to put your relationship with other builders—you're their leader—over a decision that needs to be made for an endangered species? How are you going to do that? I kind of feel, without being disrespectful, that we're putting the fox in the henhouse.

Mr. Joe Vaccaro: I would put it this way: Again, when I look over the current structure of this committee, I see a number of people who serve in association roles on this committee. I would also say that this is an advisory committee to the minister, and ultimately the minister must determine what advice the minister is willing to take in making those decisions. Again, this committee has nothing to do with the actual list. The list will be determined by a scientific group.

As for my approach, I think that my approach has been very consistent in terms of my work here and the work that we're speaking to in terms of evidence- and research-based approaches. That's the approach I've taken on all the files that I've been working on. On this file specifically—

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): We're down to one minute.

Mr. Joe Vaccaro: —we have been very consistent in saying we support the principle of the ESA. We support the need for the act. The issue is the challenge around implementation.

But again, I would say that when I look at who is on this committee today, when I look at my skill set, when I consider the advice that the minister is looking for on implementation, the challenge is really being able to bring to the minister examples around implementation but also opportunities, solutions and considerations. That only really happens when you have people on the committee who can actually see those opportunities and bring them forward in a way that moves the act forward and moves the principles forward.

Miss Monique Taylor: Are you going to be able to stand up for an endangered species against your builders?

Mr. Joe Vaccaro: I do it every single day. That includes when I get calls from farmers and municipalities asking for help. I remind them that the act is the act and you have to work your way through the act.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Okay, thank you, Mr. Vaccaro. The 10 minutes have been used up. If you just want to take a seat back there, the committee will now discuss the concurrence.

Miss Monique Taylor: Chair?

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Miss Taylor?

Miss Monique Taylor: May I have a recorded vote, please?

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Sure.

We will now consider the concurrence for Joe Vaccaro, nominated as member, Species at Risk Program Advisory Committee. Would someone please move the concurrence?

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Chair, I move concurrence in the intended appointment of Joe Vaccaro, nominated as member, Species at Risk Program Advisory Committee.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Any discussion? None? All right. All those in favour of the appointment?

Ayes

Crack, Damerla, Holyday, Hunter, McDonell, Yurek.

Nays

Marchese, Taylor.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): The motion is carried.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Before we deal with the request by Ms. Damerla for a short recess, I just want to ask the committee's permission if I could briefly—there are several deadlines. There are five appointees who have been picked by the committee whose deadline or extension expires before the next meeting. We would require unanimous consent of the committee to extend the deadlines so that we may interview those individuals who are selected at a later date. There are five in total. I'll just quickly read them out.

(1) Justin Duncan, nominated as member, Environmental Review Tribunal and the Ontario Municipal Board (Environment and Land Tribunals Ontario);

(2) Karen Kraft Sloan, nominated as member, Environmental Review Tribunal and the Ontario Municipal Board, (Environment and Land Tribunals Ontario);

(3) Marcia Valiante, nominated as member, Environmental Review Tribunal and the Ontario Municipal Board, (Environment and Land Tribunals Ontario);

(4) Anne Egan, nominated as member, Building Materials Evaluation Commission; and

(5) Noble Chummar, nominated as member, Liquor Control Board of Ontario.

Do we have unanimous consent to extend the deadlines for considering the intended appointments?

We'll do them one by one: Justin Duncan, nominated as member—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It's okay. All of them at once.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Is that agreed? Okay.

Do we have unanimous agreement to extend Mr. Justin Duncan, Ms. Karen Kraft Sloan, Ms. Marcia Valiante, Ms. Anne Egan and Mr. Noble Chummar? All those in favour? Is that agreed? Thank you.

Can we get a date for the extension? There is one that—we're just going to pull up what the date is. It would be 30 days. I'll read out the first four: Karen Kraft Sloan; Marcia Valiante, number 2; number 3, Anne Egan—number 4 is Anne Egan. So it's Karen Kraft Sloan, Marcia Valiante, Anne Egan and Justin Duncan—those four—to move that date to May 2, 2014. Is that agreed, to extend that date? Okay. That's agreed.

The last one, number 5, is Mr. Noble Chummar, to move his extension to May 6, 2014. Is that okay? Agreed? Thank you.

That being done, Ms. Damerla has asked for a short recess, but we have to get unanimous consent. How long would you like to recess for?

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Chair, about 20 minutes.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): For 20 minutes? Okay. Do we have unanimous consent?

Miss Monique Taylor: No, Chair, we don't agree to 20 minutes.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): No? I heard a no.

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): I'm sorry. Mr. Marchese?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I think 10 minutes should do it.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): So you're moving a 10-minute recess?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Yes.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Is that agreed? Okay. Thank you. We'll take a 10-minute recess and come back at around 10 o'clock.

The committee recessed from 0951 to 1002.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): We're back in session now. We have in front of us the motion moved by Miss Taylor. We all have a copy of it. Any discussion on it? Yes, Ms. Damerla?

Ms. Dipika Damerla: There are just a couple of questions that I had on the motion. One is that there is already an FOI out on this, so I'm not sure why we are duplicating the effort—there is a freedom-of-information request on the exact same information—other than to make work for the bureaucrats or perhaps—I'm not sure; it baffles me.

The other thing is that much of this information is already online by Premier's directive, since 2010. Executive compensation is online, so again, I'm not sure why we need to make this request—I'm just putting it out there. I'm not sure about the board of directors, so that

might be fine, but for the senior executives, all that information is there.

I also wanted to clarify what type of expenses, because the motion just says “expenses.”

I’m also wondering what the committee’s position would be on credit card information, personal addresses, things like that. Perhaps we could have some kind of clearer definition, if the expenses are over a certain amount or—

Interjection.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: You’ll get your chance, Monique, to respond.

We’d like to amend the time frame from 30 days to 45 days.

The term “all documents” is really too broad, and we need to be helpful to Metrolinx and define what documents the NDP is clearly looking for.

Given that some of our questions are on the fact that some of it appears to be duplication, because the documents are subject to FOI; executive compensation is online—perhaps if there is an appetite to rework the motion. We’re not opposed to the motion, but we really don’t want to duplicate that which is already there.

In the spirit of that, Chair, I’d like to introduce some amendments to the motion.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): You have some amendments you’d like to move?

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Yes.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Do you have copies of them?

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Well, I’m going to read them in, and then we can pass copies along.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): All right. Go ahead and read them, and if we can get copies of them.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Okay. Our amendment would be to strike “all documents” and replace it with “only financial records directly related to the expense claims of Metrolinx executives.”

That’s the suggested amendment at this point, to clearly define it.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): All right. If the committee Clerk could come over and maybe get a copy of that?

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Sure.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): I don’t know if we should make copies of it so that all members have a written copy of that.

We’ll just move on to the speakers, then if—

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Sorry? Yes, in the meantime. I haven’t finished speaking, but if somebody wants—because I want to speak to why we’re introducing those motions and my colleagues might want to as well.

Laughter.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: I’m sorry, Chair, but that’s not professional. I’ll leave it up to you. If others want to talk in the meantime, I’m fine with that as long as we get a turn at some point to further speak to it.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Okay. Thank you. Ms. Taylor.

Miss Monique Taylor: I believe the motion that we put forward is quite clear. We would like all documents related to the expenses of both the board of directors and the executive members, and if all of that information is already there, then it should make this quite easy for them to provide it to this committee.

As a committee reviewing Metrolinx, we have the right to all of this information, and we would like to see it brought before us. Like I said, if it’s there before us, if it has already been produced for them, then it’s easy for them to send it here to us. I don’t think we need any extension and time delays.

I’m really hopeful that when I hear the member opposite speaking about how she and all of her members would like to speak to this that they’re not planning on filibustering like they did for our previous motion that was brought before us. The government likes to talk about accountability and transparency. We think that this is part of that process, and we believe that the committee needs to see these documents.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Any further discussion? Ms. Damerla.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: I just wanted to address some of the issues raised by Miss Taylor. All we are saying is, if the information is already out there, why would we waste somebody’s time to re-collect it when it’s there? To me, it just seems—I’m trying to understand why. Why wouldn’t the committee agree to say, “Okay. We’ll go back and see,” and go online and check the records? If it has what you’re looking for, great; if it doesn’t, we can come back and say, “This is what’s missing.” But I find the argument that, “If it’s there online, well, let them print it for me,” seems to me—quite frankly, I don’t understand the rationale. Yes, as MPPs we have the right to information, but the right to information has to be balanced with being responsible, and not being irresponsible in terms of, “I can ask, so I’m going to ask” but rather, “I ask because I think there is a need to ask.”

All we’re saying is the information is there. Some of it is; we didn’t say all of it. The information that is there, perhaps you may want to reconsider asking for, and for the information that’s not there, we’re not contesting the right to ask for that information. All we’re saying is, could we have some more time. But we can talk about that.

But again, I come back to the whole notion of when you just say “expenses,” it is so broad. What does it mean? Can the committee get some direction around information that’s sensitive? Credit card information, personal addresses, that sort of thing: Is that something the committee is looking for? I’m just curious. Can we get some clarification on that?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Don’t you have professional redactors?

Ms. Dipika Damerla: But why go that far when we can—you could, yes, after the fact, but all we’re asking is, let’s be efficient. Isn’t that what we are all talking

about in government, not wasting money, not wasting time, doing things right the first time? If we know that we don't want that kind of information, why don't we just say that upfront rather than saying, "Oh, bring it out, then we'll look at it and then we'll redact it"? That's the point I'm trying to make.

Those are some of the issues, and that's one of the reasons we've introduced that amendment, and I'm hopeful—I'd like to hear why you don't agree with the amendment, rather than just saying, "It's all right." I understand it's our collective right to ask for information, but is it our collective right to—

Mr. Jeff Yurek: You hired Peter Faist.

1010

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Peter Faist? If you want to talk about Peter Faist, I'm happy to talk about Dimitri Soudas. You know, we can go into all of that. I don't have a problem at all. If you want to start talking about different employees, I'm happy to talk about that.

Just coming back to the motion, Chair, I'd like to reiterate one more time that it's really broad. We'd like some co-operation in defining it clearly so that the bureaucrats do what they need to do and don't do extra work. I'd also like to remove duplication. If that information is available online, let's not ask for it.

Again, the documents are subject to FOI. So I'm wondering if the committee can actually clarify, Chair, if very similar information is being asked for through a freedom-of-information, what are the rules around duplication? How do we say, "We have the right so we can ask to three different channels?"

It is something, I think, at least going forward, if we do not already have some guidelines around that, I would say there is some merit to pursuing certain guidelines going forward, so that if a certain topic is subject to FOI, should committees be then asking for that information through other channels?

Chair, would you be able to respond to whether we have some existing guidelines around that?

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): I'm sorry, can you repeat that? My apologies.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: My question is, does the committee in general, not for just this particular issue but in general, have any guidelines around—if a particular issue is subject to FOI, are there any guidelines around whether committees can request that exact same information through committee? Do we have any rulings around that in terms of—

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): It would be up to the Ministry of Transportation and Metrolinx to explain why or why not they're including those documents in there.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: But have we ever had a situation where there has been a duplicate channel through FOI as well as a committee? Have we ever considered this topic?

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): I don't think I can answer that question. One moment.

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Unfortunately, Miss Taylor stepped out, but in her motion, it's pretty straightforward, what she wants. Whether or not FOIable documents would be part of it—I don't have the answer right now.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Mr. Chair, we're saying all documents.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Yes, we're basically asking for all documents, so—

Ms. Dipika Damerla: No, my question is slightly more nuanced than that, Jim. It's not that you shouldn't get the documents. All I'm asking is: Have we ever ruled on something where it's a duplication of effort because something is being asked for through the freedom-of-information channel and then through a committee? Has there ever been an instance in the past? Because if there hasn't, I feel, leaving partisanship aside, that perhaps it's something to consider going forward. If a particular topic is subject to freedom of information and it has been asked that committees wait to get that information rather than start a parallel process at the same time, so you have two sets of bureaucrats or whatever looking for very similar information—I'm just wondering, what would your thoughts be on that? Would the committee have an appetite at some point to look at something like this, not just for this committee but generally for government?

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): I think Miss Taylor's motion is pretty straightforward. I'm just reading it, and it's pretty straightforward. They want documents, and she has not put FOIable documents in the motion, so I don't know what documents would come back. I don't know about any further rulings. I've only been Chair for a year, I think.

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): I've just been advised by the Clerk. The committee can ask for whatever documents they want. We can ask for any documents we want. I've read Miss Taylor's motion, and it's pretty straightforward. It doesn't specifically say FOIable documents, but I would expect that the motion would include all documents regarding expenses.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Also, Chair, I just had a question. Sometimes I'm not entirely sure—I know that if there are bureaucrats, we can direct questions at them. But the member has proposed the motion—when we have a question, what is the process to get a response?

My question would be around credit card information, personal addresses and things like that. That's my question: Is that part of it? Is there a way for me to get a response and a dialogue on that?

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): I don't know. The motion is in front of us. It's moved by Miss Taylor. If you want to cede the floor to her, then maybe she can answer that question for you about what her request is.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Yes. That's what I was just asking. That's my question, if you could clarify.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Okay. Miss Taylor.

Miss Monique Taylor: Chair, we're happy to support the amendment for the financial records.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): All right. So, there you go; there's your answer.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Okay. Well, that's very helpful. Thank you.

I believe that my colleague Mitzie Hunter has a few things to add as well, so I'll cede the floor to her.

Miss Monique Taylor: We're supporting it, and you still want to speak to it? You still don't want to go ahead and vote for it? This is filibustering at its best, again.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): All right. My suggestion would be, and I'm speaking to all members, that we vote on the amendment and see if that carries, and then vote on Miss Taylor's motion, since it appears that Miss Taylor is okay with that amendment.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It makes sense.

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Mr. Marchese has said that the amendment makes sense.

Any further discussion on the amendment? We're discussing the amendment moved by Ms. Damerla. Ms. Hunter.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I do think that it is important that we speak to these motions, because they do generate a tremendous amount of work from the agency, and we want to ensure that the effort that is being put into preparing these documents adds value to the work of this committee. I feel that it is very important.

We just received this motion this morning. My colleague Ms. Damerla has put forward a very reasonable enhancement to the amendment in terms of specifying what we mean by "all documents" and ensuring that we follow good procedure and practice when we're asking for information, particularly as it relates to expenses, credit card information and the work of the committee.

I also want to speak to the time in which we are asking the agency to gather this information with respect to—

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Sorry to interrupt, but actually, that would be outside the scope of the amendment that's in front of us. I'm not being rude; I'm just saying that we have to speak to the amendment that was moved by Ms. Damerla, which we have copies of now—the handwritten amendment. The debate is basically around that issue.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Okay. Thank you, Chair. As it—

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): One moment. Mr. McDonell.

Mr. Jim McDonell: There seems to be general agreement with the amendment. Could I move that we vote on it and put closure on it? There's agreement from all sides to move ahead on this.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Yes. I'm aware of that, but if they want to speak for a few more minutes on it, I think it's a bit too early to call the question or just vote on the amendment, as much as I would like to.

Miss Monique Taylor: Chair, you do have the inherent right to say that there has been enough debate on this, and we've already agreed to their amendment.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Yes, I know. It is a fine line. I would like to vote, too, but I just think I have to allow debate to continue a bit longer. I'd like to move on and get it done before this meeting so we can move on.

Okay, Ms. Hunter; sorry. You have the floor.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I think that it's very important to have the opportunity to speak, and I believe my comments were in keeping with the amendments, really underscoring the importance of—only the financial records that directly relate to the expense claims of Metrolinx executives. That's adding a bit of scope and specificity to the requests that we're making, and it is a responsible thing for this committee to do.

It is a responsible thing for us to speak to these motions and to the amendments so that we're not asking for requests that add undue time on the part of agencies to bring their documents forward. I think that our ability to speak to these amendments, the opportunity to offer our input, is extremely important, Chair. I'm very surprised that we're not being given the room by our opposition members to be able to do that. I think we have that right to do that.

1020

My colleague has talked about the risk of duplication, particularly when requests are already in the agency or information is already available within the public. Is that a responsible thing for us to do as a committee, to be able to really respect and value the work of these agencies and the time they will put into it, and also, to what end, in terms of how this information is going to be utilized and in terms of our assessment of the work of the agency and the work they're doing to build out the critical infrastructure that we so need? That's really where we want to hold the agencies accountable. It's really to the output of the work that they do on behalf of the ministry and then the community.

I just wanted to say that our ability to make reasonable requests—and requests that add value to the work of this committee—and to give direction that is clear to the agencies is also something that we have to be mindful of, and I'm very pleased that Miss Taylor and others have agreed to the changes that have been proposed. But I also think that being on record is very important to us as well and having the opportunity to do that in committee is really the work of our committee and the reason why we're here.

My confirmation is just to really thank Ms. Damerla for offering these suggestions. I think that they really speak to the importance of giving clear direction to our agencies, ensuring that they are able to respond appropriately and to provide the committee with what we need so that we can make good decisions while we're here.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Thanks, Ms. Hunter. I'm going to interject.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Okay.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): There are a few minutes left and I think, in my view, there has been enough discussion on the amendment. It seems to me there's agreement. At this point, I'm just going to call the vote on the amendment.

Mr. Grant Crack: On a point of order, Chair: I haven't had the opportunity to speak to the motion, if I may. I know my colleagues have expressed some concerns as well, and I think it would only be fair, as a new member of the committee, to be able to make a few comments.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): In my view, I think there's agreement here. You may consider me to be rude, but I am going to call the vote, just on the amendment at this point in time. I apologize that I'm going to cut you off, but there seems to be unanimous agreement here on this amendment.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Chair?

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Ms. Damerla?

Ms. Dipika Damerla: My understanding was that—I know that it's a fine line between what is reasonable debate, but I think each MPP has the opportunity to at least speak for a short while, to get on record if they have something important to say. I don't know that we can judge them before they've had that opportunity to speak.

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): Okay. There are only a few minutes left before—I want to just move on because we have other appointments to go through and there are only a couple of minutes left. We have the main motion as well, so at least let's vote—

Mr. Grant Crack: On a point of order, Chair: If I may, I think that I've had the opportunity and the pleasure to be Chair as well and I'm not putting into question your direction here; I'm trying to move this forward, but at the same time I've also participated in many, many committees where if a member does want to speak to a particular issue, they are entitled to do so. I was just hoping that perhaps you could provide me that same privilege to make some comments with regard to this particular amendment that's on the table, because this amendment does change the original motion, and I need to make sure, as a new member, that I'm clear on what's—

The Chair (Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti): I'm going to interject here. The first thing next meeting is we'll still do this amendment and get a vote done quickly, and then we'll move to Miss Taylor's motion, unless there are any other amendments put forward.

At this point, I'm going to adjourn the meeting. Thank you.

The committee adjourned at 1025.

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