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**Official Report  
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**Journal  
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(Hansard)**

**Monday 9 May 2016**

**Lundi 9 mai 2016**

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO**

Monday 9 May 2016

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO**

Lundi 9 mai 2016

*The House met at 1030.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

*Prayers.*

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS**

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I'm pleased to rise today to welcome Anne van Leeuwen, consul general of the Netherlands, who is here today for the annual Dutch Heritage Month flag raising, which is taking place right after question period. Welcome.

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** On behalf of Minister Naqvi, I'd like to welcome Mattias Falkner, Caroline Falkner and Beth Martin, who are the family of page captain Benjamin Falkner, here to the Legislature today.

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** It is my pleasure to welcome RNs from Windsor and Essex county: Carol Ahpin, Karen Bertrand, Vicki McKenna, Jo-Dee Brown, Cheryl Colborne, Bruce Jewell, Sandy Kravets, Barb Marcolin, Barbara Porter, Veronika Pulley, Sherri Sherbo and Gwen Spencer-Giswein. They are here to help us celebrate Nursing Week.

**Hon. Reza Moridi:** It's a great pleasure to welcome the delegation from Languages Canada to Queen's Park today. I would like to personally welcome Gonzalo Peralta, the executive manager, who is here along with chairs of the Ontario chapter, staff, members of the board, and international students who choose to come to Ontario to learn the English language and pursue their education. I invite everyone at Queen's Park to join us at the Languages Canada reception this afternoon from 4 to 6 p.m. in rooms 228 and 230, Mr. Speaker.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It's a great day for Nepean-Carleton and my dear friend, page captain Faiz Jan. His parents are all the way here from Ottawa today. I want to recognize them: Shireeh and Salman Jan, and his little brother, Faraaz Jan. They are joining us here in the gallery today, and I'm looking forward to taking them to the legislative dining room right after question period.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** It's my pleasure to welcome grade 5 students from Wilkinson school in my riding. Welcome to the Legislature.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, today is a really special day. We have some wonderful guests. You may have seen them on the national news last night. They're women and girls with Up With Women. Last night, we saw in the news powerful stories of resilient and strong moms who used to be homeless, as told by their very brave kids.

I'm proud to welcome Helen Vozinov and her daughters Angelina and Gabriela, Kimberley Niles and her daughter Destinee Simon, Lola Lawson and her son Livity Lawson-Bernard, Doina Oncel and her daughter Sarah Brindusha Cisse, Benya Arroyave, and the director of Up With Women, Lia Grimanis. Welcome all. We're delighted you're here.

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Today we're joined by two retired Toronto police detectives. Please welcome to Queen's Park Deborah Vittie-Pagliaro and Suzanne Kernohan, who are joining me for lunch today.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Please help me welcome, in the public gallery, grade 10 students from St. Augustine Catholic High School, from the great riding of Oak Ridges-Markham.

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** I would like to welcome to the members' gallery this morning Lindsay Stevenson, my brand new LA.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Further introductions? I'm not sure if the member from Renfrew—further introductions?

This morning, I missed something that I would normally do every Monday when this happens. This week, the House will be paying tribute to a deceased member, Mr. Leo Jordan, and I would refer our prayers during Monday to the repose of the soul of Mr. Jordan.

It is now time for question period.

**ORAL QUESTIONS**

**GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY**

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** My question is for the Premier. Last Thursday, hundreds of families of autistic children came to Queen's Park to ask for help; I should be asking about that. Last month, I learned about the closing of 16 beds and the cutting of 35 jobs at Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital; I should be asking about that. It's Mining Week, and the government still hasn't invested a cent into northern Ontario's Ring of Fire; I should be asking about that.

But unfortunately, for a record fifth time, the government is being investigated by the OPP, so I have to ask about that. How has the Premier allowed five OPP investigations to take place under her watch? How is it possible that not a single member of her cabinet or her staff has taken responsibility?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Well, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the decisions that we have made around

investment in energy and investment in electricity, we have made very different decisions than the Leader of the Opposition would have made. I absolutely understand that.

When we came into office, the energy system in Ontario, the electricity system, was degraded. It needed investments—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** That's false.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** It absolutely is not false, Mr. Speaker. The fact is, we have invested in over 10,000 lines across this province, kilometres of line across this province. We have shut down the last of the coal-fired plants. We've invested in renewables, and we have a clean electricity grid as a result of that: no smog days, a reduction in the pollutants in the air. We've made very different decisions than the opposition would have.

1040

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Again to the Premier: I asked a question about needing some level of apology or contrition on five OPP investigations into this government on the watch of this Premier, and all I get is an example of deflection and dodging at its best.

Mr. Speaker, I'll be a bit more specific. When Trillium Power Wind did a freedom-of-information search, looking for numerous documents back and forth with the Premier and the Cabinet Office on the offshore wind project, they turned up zero—not a single document. In fact, between the fall of 2010 and February 11, 2011, there was numerous correspondence. Unfortunately, all the correspondence on the government's side completely disappeared.

My question is, were those documents deleted, double-deleted, or did the Liberals cancel the offshore wind program on a whim to save their own seats?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** First of all, when the Leader of the Opposition is talking about the Premier's office, I will remind him that I became Premier in 2013—just as a reminder of the chronology. As I have said in this House, I was not aware of any investigation until the media reports. If we are contacted, we will, as always, co-operate fully.

We have made changes. We have made changes in the way we deal with documents in this government. Under my watch, we have new rules in place, including mandatory record-keeping rules and staff training. The accountability act prohibits the wilful deletion of records and creates a penalty. In fact, we worked very closely with the Information and Privacy Commissioner of the time to make sure we got it right. We implemented her recommendations as we put new rules in place.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Back to the Premier: Since the Premier has referenced the privacy commissioner, let me note that the 2013 report of the privacy commissioner detailed the deletion of the emails in the gas plant scandal. The report said that the Minister of Energy's chief of staff confessed to deleting all the emails. At the time, this was seen as an unethical attempt to hide evidence of the gas plant scandal from the public.

Trillium's lawsuit now proves the Liberals didn't just delete evidence from the gas plant scandal; they also deleted evidence from the cancellation of the offshore wind program.

These could be key pieces of evidence in Trillium's lawsuit, and if Trillium wins, the people of Ontario could be on the hook for \$500 million.

My question is: Will the Premier explain to the people of Ontario and this Legislature why they should pay for the potential illegal activities of this government?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I will just say again to the Leader of the Opposition that when I came into this office, we changed the rules around record-keeping. I will read from the Information and Privacy Commissioner's report—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Premier.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Come to order. Next step: individuals.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I will read from the Information and Privacy Commissioner's annual report from June 2014. What was said there:

"I have appreciated the co-operation I have received from Premier Kathleen Wynne ... the Premier issued a directive in accordance with the recommendations made in the report and committed the government to greater transparency and accountability.... In addition, political staff received in-depth training on record retention responsibilities. I applaud these developments."

## GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** My question is for the Premier. This government runs self-congratulatory radio ads at the same time as closing hospital beds. They kick kids off—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Steve Clark:** The truth hurts over there.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** You're not helping.

Please finish.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** They kick kids off the autism treatment wait-list just to make the list look smaller. At the same time, they add them to another wait-list. They cancelled the gas plants at a cost of \$1 billion just to save a few seats. They cancelled offshore wind projects in Liberal-held ridings. Now the evidence has been deleted—again.

It's been a while since the Liberals were looking out for the best interests of Ontario. Because of that, life has gotten harder in Ontario.

My question to the Premier is, does every decision this government makes need to be about their own political survival?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We'll talk about the initiatives that we are involved in, and that includes investing billions of dollars in infrastructure across this province. We're in year three of a \$160-billion investment, over 12 years, in infrastructure. That's roads, bridges, transit, hospitals, schools and universities.

We are in the process of putting in place a climate change policy, a cap-and-trade system that is going to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We only have to look around the world to recognize that climate change is the single most important threat that we are facing as a globe—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Now that I've got quiet to make sure that I don't have to be too loud, the member from Leeds–Grenville, come to order.

You have one wrap-up sentence.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We are investing in the post-secondary education of the young people of this province in a way that has not been done before.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Back to the Premier: Last week, we learned of the fifth OPP investigation into the Liberal government. This time, the government is accused of deleting key evidence in a \$500-million lawsuit. The Premier claimed that she knew nothing about it until the media reported it. But Trillium's lawyer, Morris Cooper, doubts that could be possible. He's quoted in an article in the Ottawa Citizen by David Reevely that he spoke to the government lawyers about it several times.

Speaker, we're not talking about a nuisance lawsuit here. We're talking about a lawsuit that has the taxpayers at risk for half a billion dollars. Will the Premier admit to the Legislature that she was aware of it, or is the normal way of doing business in her government just deletions, denials and cover-ups?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated. The member will withdraw.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Premier?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I have been very clear that I knew nothing about the investigation until I read about it in the media. The Attorney General has sent a statement to the Ottawa Citizen. If the member opposite has further questions, we can absolutely make sure that he gets a copy of that statement.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** At a half a billion dollars, she should have known about it.

Thanks to David Livingston and Laura Miller, we now know that all evidence in the Premier's office and cabinet

office about the Trillium project was wiped away. What about the other ministries—energy and environment? According to the Trillium lawsuit, in January 2011, just two weeks before the offshore wind program was cancelled, the government decided to give the offshore wind file a code name. It's no surprise, Mr. Speaker, since they called the gas plant file Project Vapour.

What's shocking is that this government gave orders to “purge all emails, records and documents except for Ohio and Sweden.”

Will the Premier tell us what code name was assigned to the offshore wind file, and will she release all the documents saved under that code name?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Premier?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** As I said, I knew nothing about this investigation until I read about it in the media. It is an investigation that is taking place outside of this Legislature, as it rightly should.

I will read from the statement that was sent to the media last week by the Attorney General: “The only information we have is what we have read in the media and if what we have read is accurate, you should address any questions you have to either the OPP, who have been quoted as saying they are investigating this matter, or to the Public Prosecution Service of Canada (PPSC), whose counsel has been quoted as saying they have not received any disclosure on this.”

Mr. Speaker, I would advise the same to the member opposite and I would then again refer back to my earlier answer, which is, we have instituted training. We have instituted changes in terms of the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Yes, but you wrote the code names.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Nipissing, second time.

1050

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Dodge, deflect, deny, delete—oh, sorry.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Being sorry is not really meaningful if you continue to do it.

New question.

## NURSES

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Premier. More than 1,440 nurses have been fired since January 2015. With those kinds of cuts, it's no wonder that health care is the silent crisis of this government.

This morning, I stood with nurses from Toronto to call for an immediate moratorium to nursing cuts in Ontario. On the first day of Nursing Week, will the Premier agree to stop firing nurses?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care is going to want to comment.

I want to acknowledge the nurses and nursing students who are here today. Nurses obviously play an essential role in our health care system. What the leader of the third party doesn't talk about is the nurses, who have been hired, because there are two sides to this equation.

There are more than 26,000 more nurses in our system than there were in 2003, and that includes 11,000 registered nurses. I know there has been a distinction made between different kinds of nurses. The reality is, there are more nurses now in our system, whether they're registered or whether they are RPNs, than there were in 2003. There's a clear trend line in terms of an increase in nurses in the system.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The trend line is 1,440 nurses fired since January of last year.

People across Ontario know that nurses are there to care for them—nurses like the ones from Windsor who have made the long drive to Queen's Park to be in the gallery this morning. When people are at their most vulnerable, Speaker, they count on nurses to be there for them.

After four years where hospitals didn't receive a single increase, and now with increases failing to match inflation or a growing population, hospitals are being cut yet again. For the last 16 months, that meant 90 nurses a month—three nurses a day—being fired, over 1,400 of them since the start of 2015 alone.

Will this Premier agree that no more nurses in Ontario should be fired?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I also want to thank our nurses who are here, our RNs, and also welcome the RNAO report that came out this morning, which provides us with exceptional guidance on the way forward and how we need to look at the nursing mix and the contribution that our nurses make across this province.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to set the record straight, because we can't look at gross changes like the third party wants to do; we need to look at the net changes of nurses in this province. In every single category of nurses, whether it's RNs, RPNs or nurse practitioners, we've seen, since 2003, an increase to date of every single—whether you measure it on a per capita basis or the absolute number of nurses, there are more nurses—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Answer?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:**—every category working in this province since 2003, and that continues today. I'm exceptionally proud of that, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The way you thank nurses is certainly not to fire them. It's actually to make sure that they can keep their jobs. That's how you thank them.

The minister can talk about 2003 all he wants. I'm talking about what's happened in the last 16 months in this province, and that is 1,440 nurses fired by this government.

After four years of cuts, if anything, Ontario doesn't—*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Sorry. The member from Durham, come to order.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** He's not even in his seat, Speaker. He's not in his seat.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thought you apologized.

Leader?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, after four years of cuts, if anything, Ontario doesn't have enough nurses. There's an old saying that if you find yourself in a hole, the first thing you do is stop digging.

Patients have watched as nurses have been fired across Ontario. But let's be clear: Fewer nurses doesn't improve health care for people; it hurts patient care. Will the Premier instruct her minister to issue a directive today to stop firing nurses in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I implore the leader of the third party to begin talking about the whole change in the nursing sector. There are from time to time nurses who, because of a variety of reasons where the jobs are lost—but other nurses are hired. She doesn't have to believe me—and I would ask all nurses who are listening to this, and others concerned, to look at the College of Nurses of Ontario. It's all there for everybody to see. You'll see, in the past year, that there were 2,799 additional nursing positions across all nursing categories. In the last four years, from 2011 to 2015, there were net increases in nursing positions in our hospitals. The majority of those new hires, those net increases, were RNs.

## NURSES

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My second question is also for the Premier. As I mentioned, nurses from Windsor are joining us here today. Under the Premier's watch, Windsor Regional Hospital is grappling with a \$20-million budget shortfall.

In January, the hospital announced that 166 jobs would be cut. Now, in fact, we know that 169 registered nurses' positions will be eliminated.

Will the Premier make that basic commitment today to stop forcing hospitals, like Windsor regional, to cut front-line nursing positions?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I would just go back to what the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care just said, which is that between 2011 and 2015, the reality is that most net new nursing positions in the hospital sector were filled by registered nurses, which I know is one of the issues that the leader of the third party has been concerned about.

Mr. Speaker, we heard hospitals' concerns about the fact that they hadn't seen increases. That's why there's 345 million new dollars going into hospital funding as a result of our budget. That's in the context of a billion dollars of new funding going into the health care system. We understand that there was a need for that, and we look forward to continuing to work with our hospitals, as

they work with all of the community providers, and as we transform the health care system so that it meets the needs of the people in this province today and into the future.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, the Liberals have been cutting hospitals to the bone and they've been doing that for years and years: 1,440 nursing positions have been cut over the past 16 months; hospitals across this province are making deep cuts to nursing care to respond to the cuts that the Liberals are making to their budgets.

Since January, hospitals in Kitchener, Hamilton, Ottawa, Toronto and Windsor have all been forced by this Premier and this government to cut nurses. Let's be perfectly clear: We cannot afford to lay off another nurse in this province. Whether you're a registered nurse, a registered practical nurse or a nurse practitioner, no more nurses should be handed a pink slip in this province.

Will the Premier do the right thing and issue a directive that no more nurses will be fired in Ontario?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Again, we need to talk about net changes, because as programs disappear, even as nurses move from one part of the hospital to another part of the hospital, necessarily layoffs have to occur. But in many, if not most cases, those individuals are rehired. In the case of Windsor, they are undergoing a skill mix review and some changes. Windsor is one of the very few hospitals remaining in Ontario that has a 100% RN workforce.

I just don't subscribe to the view of the leader of the third party that our RPNs, our registered practical nurses, have no value or have no value in our hospitals. I don't subscribe to that view. I believe that sometimes there is a role and it's up to the hospital administrations, based on good evidence and directing their administrations to focus on the quality of care and outcomes, that that skill mix needs to be determined.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Instead of throwing mud, this minister should look at the thousands of petitions that are going to be tabled in this House today, because he is firing nurses; the hospitals are firing nurses. That's why they're here on Nursing Week, Speaker, to say, "stop firing the nurses in this province."

For Ontarians, the health of their family is their number one concern, and so it should be, but it should also be the number one concern of this Premier. Ontarians deserve a government that is committed to making sure that the health care system is there for them when they need it. But that's impossible when the government keeps firing nurses.

Why won't this Premier and her Minister of Health face up to the silent crisis that they are creating in the health care system and put a stop to nursing cuts right here and right now?

1100

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Well, Mr. Speaker, for the member opposite, the leader of the third party, to somehow suggest that we are doing the opposite of what we are doing—we have increased the number of RNs in this province in the last decade by 11,000.

You need to look at the net changes. You need to look at the net changes. For example, when the NDP were in power—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Finish, Minister, please.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** When the NDP were in power, the net change, from beginning to end of their relatively short period of time in government—3,000 registered nursing positions were lost. The percentage of nurses that were working full-time was reduced under the NDP. We've done the opposite. However you want to measure it, I'm proud of that record. It's worth it: investing in our nurses, the front line. They do the most important work—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Start the clock. Thank you.

New question.

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** My question is to Premier. When it comes to remaining silent on workplace harassment, the government's ad campaign says, "It's never okay." In last Friday's Niagara Falls Review, we now learn that a former female employee of Kim Craitor said she was bound by a non-disclosure agreement. When asked about the harassment allegations made against Craitor, she said, "I just can't say any more about this."

Can the Premier tell us: Was the non-disclosure agreement tied to the settlement of the sexual harassment complaint, or are these women free to come forward to tell their stories?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** As the member opposite knows, one of the women did come forward and talk to the media, which is why I then made a statement.

I have made tackling the issue of sexual violence and harassment a priority. When I have been faced with an issue of sexual harassment, I've led by example. I made a statement on Friday: If a sexual harassment complaint is made against a Liberal MPP, an independent investigation is undertaken, and if that independent investigation determines that serious misconduct has occurred, then that MPP will no longer serve in my caucus.

In that process, there are confidentiality issues that arise. I was not prepared, until one of the women had

come forward, to breach that confidentiality. I would think that the member opposite would understand—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Before you do—stop the clock—I believe I heard something very unparliamentary, but I could not assign the person. I hope it doesn't happen again.

Please finish.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Back to the Premier: I would be shocked if the Premier's office were found to have muzzled victims of sexual harassment, but the media does beg the question.

It looks like the silence that the Premier has obtained is not meant to protect victims; it's meant to protect the Premier. If I'm wrong, then Michelle Tavano and all the other victims would be free to tell their stories.

It is a sad day for women in this province to learn that the Premier will do anything to save her own political career. So Mr. Speaker—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. Deputy House leader, second time. Come to order.

Please finish.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to silencing the voices of victims, why is it never okay, except when you're the Premier?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, let me just say that if the member opposite thinks that requiring that an MPP being removed from office protects me and protects my party, then she doesn't understand how politics works.

It is the complainant and the victim's choice whether they retain confidentiality, Mr. Speaker. Again, I would say to the member opposite that I would think she would understand that in order to create an environment where people feel free to come forward, they need to know that their complaint will be confidential. Quite frankly, I would say that there has not been an environment in our culture that would promote the coming forward by people who have been sexually assaulted or sexually harassed. It is my responsibility to create an environment so that more people will come forward, and confidentiality and the respect for confidentiality are part of that.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. Be seated, please. Thank you.

New question.

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** My question is to the Premier. On Friday, the Premier revealed that she asked former MPP Kim Craiton to resign because of allegations of sexual harassment. In response, Craiton said, "I do know that the party paid them"—meaning the victims—"to keep the allegations quiet, and had them sign a non-disclosure agreement not to talk."

A former staffer in the MPP's office has confirmed that she was bound by non-disclosure. Women should not be forced to go public with allegations of sexual harassment but they should not be muzzled either.

Did the Premier require the complainant to sign a non-disclosure agreement, and did she pay her to keep quiet about the allegations?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, I have to say I am really surprised by both of these questions. I really think that these questions demean—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** No, I do. I think that they demean the experience of women who make complaints.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order, please. Someone is tiptoeing around a request that I've made many times about using names. Thank you.

Premier?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** When a complainant suggests that a confidentiality agreement be part of a resolution, then of course we agree to that, Mr. Speaker. I respect—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Oh, that was their suggestion?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, come to order.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I respect that right of victims to ask for confidentiality, Mr. Speaker. I spoke out on Friday because one of the women in this particular case—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, come to order.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** —came forward and spoke to the media. That is why I made the statement that I did. But, otherwise, I was respecting the agreement of confidentiality that was in place.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** An editorial today rightly points out that secrecy about sexual violence and harassment does not serve the public good. Rather, it signals to victims that there's something to be ashamed of. Requiring victims to keep quiet, making them sign non-disclosure agreements and paying them for their silence does nothing to help survivors heal. Instead, it often protects perpetrators, and in this case it prevents embarrassment to the Liberal Party.

Again to the Premier: Were victims paid to keep quiet about allegations of sexual—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. Minister of Education, second time. Member from Durham, second time.

Please finish.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** If so, who ordered the payoffs and where did the money come from?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The confidentiality agreements that were in place were mutually agreed upon. I'm going to read from our policy because I don't know whether the opposition parties have workplace discrimin-



ation and harassment prevention policies that they operate by, Mr. Speaker, but I'm going to read from ours. The section on confidentiality says, "This policy recognizes that it can be difficult for a complainant to bring forward a concern of discrimination or harassment. Individuals making a complaint of discrimination or harassment are assured during that investigation and consideration of a complaint and following its resolution all information relating to the complaint will remain confidential. However, both complainants and respondents must have access to sufficient information about the allegations and responses of other parties and witnesses to allow for a fair and effective participation in the resolution process."

That's the process that we followed, and I am not prepared to breach the confidentiality of victims and revictimize them.

*Interjections.*

1110

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. Be seated, please. Start the clock.

New question?

#### SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION

**Mr. Han Dong:** My question is for the Minister of Education—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. If it happens again when I sit down, I'll deal with the individual.

The member from Trinity–Spadina.

**Mr. Han Dong:** Thank you, Speaker.

My question is for Minister of Education. Investing in our youngest learners has always been a priority of our government. In the 2014 Ontario budget, the province made a commitment to invest \$750 million over four years to support school capital projects that reduce excess space.

Last year, the province announced \$120 million over three years in new funding dedicated to building safe, high-quality licensed child care spaces in our schools across the province.

Minister, last Friday you made an announcement about funding for new projects under these programs. Speaker, through you to the minister, can she tell this House about the new and renovated school infrastructure announced last week?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I want to thank the member for Trinity–Spadina for the question. Every year, Ontario funds local school infrastructure projects to provide students with better places to learn and give young children and their families increased access to safe, high-quality licensed child care in schools.

Over the past few weeks, I've had the pleasure of visiting various communities in Ontario and making capital announcements. On Friday, we did the wrap-up and announced that this year Ontario is investing \$137 million to build new schools, expand or renovate existing schools and create new child care spaces across the prov-

ince. This year, that adds up to 20 such projects including four new schools and 16 additions and retrofits.

Additionally, families in Toronto, Kingsville and Oshawa will benefit through the construction of 19 new, custom-built child care—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Han Dong:** Minister, it's great to hear that our government continues to improve learning environments for our students. We know that schools are hubs for our communities. They are spaces where children gather to learn and play and for programs that benefit children, families and communities. I know students and parents in my riding of Trinity–Spadina are excited to have the funding approved for St. Raymond Catholic School and an addition added to St. Luke Catholic School.

Minister, can you tell us how a project qualifies for capital funding under this program?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** These projects are actually part of the largest investment in public infrastructure in the province's history—about \$160 billion over 12 years. That will support 110,000 jobs every year across the province with projects such as roads, bridges, transit systems, schools and hospitals.

In terms of qualifying for the funding, we consider funding projects under the School Consolidation Capital program that allow a board to reduce their excess capacity. Projects need to generate sufficient savings to warrant the investment in new space or renovated space and, where required, need to have completed the corresponding accommodation review.

Our government is very proud to invest in these capital projects that bring students and communities together and provide better buildings.

#### GOVERNMENT SERVICES

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** To the Minister of Government and Consumer Services: The minister, like his colleagues, has an obligation to ensure in-person services at ServiceOntario outlets are there for Ontarians who need them. Instead, he plans to close nine ServiceOntario outlets, forcing residents in my riding and other rural communities to drive long distances to get the services their tax dollars pay for.

The minister doesn't appear to be making any attempt to guarantee in-person interaction in local communities. Decisions over planning, agriculture, energy and others have left small-town rural Ontario behind. Is this just the latest cut, just another scheme to make Ontarians pay for your government's mismanagement?

**Hon. David Oraziotti:** I appreciate the question from the member opposite and obviously understand his concern. This is a very important issue, as ServiceOntario conducts about 50 million transactions each year, Speaker.

We are proposing to continue to maintain 277 offices across the province. The one the individual is referring to, in fact, has one staff person in it, and there are a number of alternative locations. We wanted to make sure that customers in Ontario and all Ontarians would have

good quality service. In fact, customer satisfaction surveys indicate about 98% are very satisfied with the service.

We are also moving more services online, Speaker. More than 40 services are online right now and we continue to see an increase in that area.

I'm happy to add more in the supplementary.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** While he may want to cut costs, the minister has no excuse for cutting in-person services for Ontarians who can't and shouldn't be expected to drive to another county to get the service.

The Auditor General warned that the interest on this government's reckless debt will crowd out public services. Is this what the Auditor General warned us about, or will the minister commit to preserving its existing in-person public services in rural Ontario?

**Hon. David Orziatti:** There obviously continue to be services in rural Ontario and these areas. This was a very thoughtful approach. I know it's difficult, but it was one that was evaluated and analyzed for well over a year to determine how we could modernize and make more efficient the services delivered through our ministry. We continue to take a responsible approach in this regard.

Guiding principles in these decisions were preserving the quality of customer service and ensuring that the capacity could be absorbed in surrounding areas that are no more than 28 kilometres away in every location. Those top three services—driver's licence renewal, val tag stickers and health cards—will continue to be available in all of these surrounding locations.

This is, I know, a difficult decision that we've had to make in our ministry. It's part of our modernization for ServiceOntario, and we continue to see more services online.

## ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. Instead of fixing Hydro One so that it delivers affordable, secure and green power for all Ontarians, this government has prioritized making money for shareholders, while at the same time driving up rates for customers.

Last Friday, it was announced that Hydro One shareholders will be paid more than \$36 million in dividends. On May 1, electricity prices in the province went up yet again. This is the eighth time in a row that rates have gone up by more than 9% over the previous year.

Speaker, my question is simple: When will this government start putting the interests of Ontarians first?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I appreciate the question. I think the member opposite fails to recognize that the majority of that dividend is for the people of Ontario, for the taxpayers. We're the major shareholder, Mr. Speaker. As a result of the improvements that we've made to this corporation, it now operates more effectively, the dividends are increasing and, contrary to what the member actually stated earlier, this deal is in fact better for the people of Ontario, better for the ratepayers in the end, as we reinvest where necessary.

At the same time, we're reinvesting in new infrastructure that wouldn't otherwise be available to us. They denied that opportunity, Mr. Speaker. We will not. We're helping the people of Ontario and we're investing to make it even better.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Ontarians don't need to be convinced that this government is mismanaging the electricity file. Some 85% of Ontarians want the province to stop the sell-off of Hydro One—85%.

The Financial Accountability Officer says that the sell-off of Hydro One will make Ontario worse off by half a billion dollars a year, every year. Businesses say that sky-high electricity prices are damping down growth in this province, and the OPP is once again—once again, Speaker—investigating the government for deleted documents over the cancellation of a multi-million-dollar energy contract.

Speaker, when will this government stop making Ontarians pay the price for its short-sighted and self-serving actions?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Further to the Minister of Finance's answer, what I think the member fails to realize is that, of the proceeds that came from the IPO, \$5 billion goes towards reducing the province's debt. We are reducing our interest payments already by \$100 million a year as a result of this transaction. So not only are we getting investments for infrastructure in the Trillium Trust, we're also bettering our fiscal position by reducing the interest we pay on our debt by \$100 million a year. As we do the next tranches, the reduction in interest payments will be higher. So we're very, very happy with a better-run company.

1120

We are also providing many mitigating programs for people, including tax deductions, which represent—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

New question.

## ABORIGINAL CHILDREN AND YOUTH

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** My question is to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. Last week, we recognized Children's Mental Health Week in Ontario. Now, more than ever, the well-being of the indigenous children, youth and families is in the spotlight. Indigenous communities in Ontario face challenges in accessing supports for mental health, child welfare, specialized services and youth justice.

I understand that our government is working with First Nation, Métis, Inuit and urban indigenous partners to develop a strategy to support indigenous children and youth in Ontario.

Through you to the minister, Speaker: Would the minister please tell us how our government is engaging with indigenous partners in the development of this strategy?

**Hon. David Zimmer:** Speaker, our government is committed to helping First Nation, Métis, Inuit and urban

indigenous children in Ontario get the best possible start in life. That's why the work that we are doing together with the First Nation partners on the Ontario Indigenous Children and Youth Strategy is now more urgent than ever.

In fact, last week, during Children's Mental Health Week, I had the pleasure of joining the Minister of Children and Youth Services for a very important round table with First Nation leaders from across Ontario, including First Nation youth. We heard from First Nation leaders and youth about the tragedies, the challenges and the solutions to these issues.

The involvement of First Nation leaders and youth is the key to the development of our strategy. It ensures that they have a voice in the development of community-driven, integrated and culturally appropriate supports for First Nation youth and their families here in Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** Thank you, Minister, for that response.

My supplementary question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. It's great to hear about the hard work that the ministers are doing to improve outcomes for indigenous children and youth in Ontario. I would like to thank both ministers for their leadership in bringing First Nations leaders to discuss how we can work together to develop solutions to these important issues.

I understand that the work our government is doing to address jurisdiction over child care is just one part of the Ontario Indigenous Children and Youth Strategy. Can the Minister of Children and Youth Services tell us more about the significance of last week's round table meeting with First Nations leaders?

**Hon. David Zimmer:** Minister of Children and Youth Services.

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** I want to thank the member from Barrie for this very important question. Last week's round table did highlight the many ways we're working across our government to improve the mental health and well-being of First Nations children, youth and their families.

One of the topics we talked about was the need for a critical path forward on advancing jurisdiction on child welfare, which our government is committed to, working with our partners and the federal government on this. Honouring First Nations' jurisdiction over the well-being of children is a vital step going forward in this process. That's why jurisdiction over child care is one of the pillars of our government's Ontario Indigenous Children and Youth Strategy.

It's also why we will also be engaging with Métis, urban indigenous and Inuit partners to develop solutions to the unique challenges that they, too, face in addressing issues surrounding child welfare.

#### SEXUAL HARASSMENT

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** My question is to the Premier. The former employee of Kim Craiton told the media, "I just

can't say any more about this." The Premier said she disclosed Kim Craiton's name because this woman came forward.

Will the Premier set aside the non-disclosure agreement and allow Michelle Tavano to tell her story?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Again, as I said, the woman came forward, and she is free to talk and to tell her story as she sees fit. Confidentiality agreements that are in place are mutual, Mr. Speaker. I am not prepared to breach a confidentiality agreement.

I'm trying to create an environment where people feel free to come forward and where, when they tell me or they tell someone in our government or they undergo an investigation and they are assured of confidentiality, that confidentiality is kept in place.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** It's clear that Michelle Tavano wants to tell her story. I'm sure the Premier would encourage all women who want to speak to tell their stories. Is Michelle Tavano free to tell her story without fear of being sued or having to pay the money back?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Well, Mr. Speaker, you know, the—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Just answer the question.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, second time.

**Interjection:** Third time.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I don't need any other armchair quarterbacks, either. Premier?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** My first concern is for the victims in these situations.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I hear the heckling from the other side, but it's actually quite the contrary. My concern is for the victims. My concern is for the people whose lives have been so negatively affected by these situations. It is up to the victims. It is up to them what they choose to talk about publicly or not.

Mr. Speaker, I will always respect the confidentiality of the victims. I will not engage in a process that will revictimize them. I would have thought that the member opposite would have felt the same—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Lanark, come to order—second time.

New question.

#### AUTISM TREATMENT

**Miss Monique Taylor:** My question is to the Premier. On Sunday, an editorial was published telling the Premier that the way she's reducing the wait-list for autism therapy is "all wrong." This decision has left parents devastated. Hopes for their children have been crushed. The editorial argues that kids already on the wait-list and in the program should get the treatment they need and they were promised because it's the right thing to do and the fair thing to do. I believe the Premier knows it. Capping treatment based on age is not only wrong, but

it's discriminatory, as former Liberal Premier McGuinty once said.

Will the Premier do the right thing and immediately remove the age cap for children receiving access to intensive behavioural therapy?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know that the Minister of Children and Youth Services is going to want to comment.

I had the opportunity, when I was in Ottawa last week, to meet with members from the Alliance Against the Ontario Autism Program, which is one of the groups that has been talking to us over the last number of days. I had an opportunity to talk about how this change is intended and is being implemented in order to get children—whether they just started getting service or whether they've been sitting on a waiting list for years and haven't had any service, to get them the right intensity of service, to move them into service right away. That is the whole point of this, because it is unconscionable that we would keep kids on a waiting list and not getting service when we have the opportunity to move them into the right level, get them an assessment and help them through that transition so they'll get a tailor-made program for themselves.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Speaker, this Premier is moving them from one list onto another. That's what's unconscionable. It's not just parents who are concerned; it's experts, too. The school boards are wondering how they will support an influx of autistic kids who haven't received therapy. As the editorial states, "To suddenly strip children and families of the hope to which they have clung, sometimes for years, is too cruel a way to save money...." Speaker, I agree. It's cruel to try to balance the books on the backs of kids with ASD.

Another article about autism changes says that in this Premier's Ontario, it "has become abundantly clear some ... special interests are far more important than others."

1130

Will the Premier finally admit that she got this one wrong? Will she remove the age cap from children with ASD receiving evidence-based, intensive therapy immediately?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Children and Youth Services.

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** Well, from the same articles I've read, from talking to groups and experts and parent groups, there is a lot of agreement. There is agreement that \$333 million is a wonderful, historic investment. There is agreement that the 16,000 new spaces for children with ASD are very important.

It's very important—and I encourage, again, the opposition to be very clear on what they're saying, because we are not removing children from the IBI wait-list into nothing. They are currently, unfortunately, not getting service and they will get service immediately with the payment of the \$8,000.

As for schools, the Minister of Education is very actively engaged on this file. We already have children

with ASD in schools and we have programs and services to support them.

Is there more to do? Yes. In fact, I'm meeting with the minister tomorrow.

## POVERTY

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** My question is for the minister responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy. I know that the Local Poverty Reduction Fund, or LPRF, is an important component of our government's renewed Poverty Reduction Strategy. The LPRF funds community organizations providing innovative and local solutions to poverty in their area.

I read in the budget that last year, the LPRF funded an impressive 41 projects in 20 communities across our province, meaning that hundreds of lives are being impacted with locally based solutions—an exciting number to see.

However, I wanted to know more about the projects that were supported through the LPRF. Speaker, through you to the minister: Can you tell us more about the Local Poverty Reduction Fund and what kinds of initiatives were supported through the first round of funding?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you to the member for Burlington for the question and her ongoing commitment to this issue.

The Local Poverty Reduction Fund invests in initiatives that help break the cycle of poverty for children and youth, increase employment and end homelessness in Ontario.

One such great example is Up With Women. Up With Women is one of the organizations that received a grant from the first round of local poverty reduction funding. They're here today and they starred in the national news last night. They're all about helping recently homeless and at-risk women build sustainable, empowering careers with the goal of helping them permanently exit poverty.

Today they've joined us. We celebrate them. I celebrate them on Mother's Day. Since working with Up With Women, these moms have been able to access supports and transition—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

Supplementary.

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** I'd like to thank the minister for her answer. I'm delighted to hear that Ontario is investing in front-line community organizations like Up With Women—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** I would also like to welcome our guests here today. We applaud you for all of the challenging things that you've done and for the exciting work you're doing now. We are so pleased to welcome you to Queen's Park.

I'm also very pleased to hear that the first round of funding for the LPRF has distributed funding to such valuable programs. But I know too that the fund is a six-year, \$50-million total investment. There is definitely more to come.

Minister, I know that all members of this House are interested in the fund's potential for their communities, so could you please share with us when the next round of funding will be available and how interested organizations can apply?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Information on the second round of the local poverty reduction funding is available on the Ontario Trillium Foundation website and on [ontario.ca/povertyreduction](http://ontario.ca/povertyreduction). We'll be accepting proposals until early June.

For this year's round of funding, we're dedicating up to \$10 million total targeted for projects related to homelessness. The dedicated funding will help reach this government's bold goal of ending chronic homelessness in 10 years.

We've also dedicated at least \$2 million in this round to support projects in indigenous communities and by indigenous-led organizations. I want to say thank you to my parliamentary assistant, the member from Newmarket–Aurora, for his work in engaging with a variety of indigenous leaders and community members on how to make the application process more accessible and ensure that the program is more responsive to indigenous communities.

#### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. The minister's office was informed that her seamless rollout of SAMS was flawed from the get-go, but she plowed ahead anyway. She inflicted chaos on the system, chaos that came with a hefty price tag of almost \$300 million. Now municipalities and service providers have been left to foot the bill for significant overtime costs, extra staff to handle the problems with SAMS and, in some cases, even new equipment in order to run SAMS.

Municipalities are not responsible for paying for this government's mistakes. Will this minister finally take responsibility for the SAMS disaster and reimburse municipalities for their expenses?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** As I've said many times in this House, we do acknowledge that the rollout of SAMS posed many, many challenges for front-line staff. I want to take the opportunity yet again—and I met some just last Friday, actually, in terms of the challenges that they faced and they worked very diligently through those challenges. Of course, as the member has alluded to, I was given assurances that, in fact, we would not be facing those types of challenges.

However, as he is referencing assistance to municipalities: To date, we have helped municipalities with an additional payment of some \$15 million to assist them through the transition, and I know that this has made a great deal of difference to those municipalities.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** The money that the government has already provided comes nowhere close to

meeting the need. Brantford and Brant county require \$600,000 to cover the problematic rollout of SAMS. Ottawa has estimated they need \$4 million. In Waterloo region, the costs add up to more than \$1 million. Hamilton needs at least \$820,000. Stratford passed a resolution calling for a permanent fix to SAMS, as they estimate they spent \$175,000 in the months after SAMS release. And the list just keeps going. It has come to the point where legal action is being considered to recoup these expenses.

Will the minister do the right thing and reimburse municipalities and their taxpayers, or is she going to add millions in legal fees to the massive SAMS bill?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Of course, we've been having ongoing discussions and conversations with municipalities, including the ones that the member referenced. I'm in ongoing discussion with those particular locations and the dialogue continues.

Apart from the \$15 million that I referenced earlier, we are looking very specifically at those centres. If they have some additional costs, I know that I and my officials are very open to looking at their particular concerns. In fact, it was the city of Brantford where I visited early on, and I was pleased to have the opportunity to talk to front-line workers in that city. They did have some particular difficulties that were unique to their location. The conversations will definitely continue and we will try and see what we can do to mitigate their concerns as we go forward.

Just one last piece: I think we all remember that the SDMT situation introduced by that party cost—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

New question?

#### HURONIA REGIONAL CENTRE FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** My question is to the Premier. In December 2013, the Premier apologized to the survivors of Huronia and said, "We will protect the memory of all those who have suffered, help to tell their stories, and ensure that the lessons of this time are not lost."

Yet in discussions on the future of Huronia, the survivors have been left out. The Premier's apology is empty words if the survivors of Huronia are not part of these discussions. How can the survivors expect to be consulted about the future of the Huronia property when last fall the government did an investigation of the sewage pipes of the institution's cemetery and didn't share the results with the survivors?

I've had several conversations with the Minister of Economic Development and received no answers. They want to know if any bodies were disturbed in the cemetery. Will the Premier commit to honouring the survivors and engage with them in discussions about the future of Huronia?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I appreciate the question from the member opposite. I had the opportunity to express to her last week that I'm very concerned that we

do work with the survivors as any changes are made to this site. I think it's a wonderful site. I visited it very early on when I was an MPP because I had constituents whose children had been there from the time they were two years old—and they were 50-year-old men when I visited them. So it was a very poignant visit that I made. That impressed upon me how important it is that, as we go forward, whatever happens with this site, we are very sensitive to the grounds and we're very sensitive to the usage going forward.

We commit to working with the survivors. I know that there is a more involved discussion going on with people in the community who have ideas for how they'd like to see the site used in the future.

### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Point of order, the member from Thornhill.

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** I just want to introduce in the members' gallery Asphandiar—who is better known as Aspi—Wadiwalla, Jimmy Yu, Julia Cosby, Amira Hashaby, Sheref Sabawy and Daniela Chivu. Welcome and bienvenue.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Attorney General on a point of order.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the member from Ottawa Centre and the minister of public safety and corrections, I'd like to introduce in the gallery Mattias Falkner, Caroline Falkner and Beth Martin, who are here to watch page Benjamin Falkner.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Point of order, the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I'd like to take this opportunity to wish my wife, Dianne, a happy anniversary for putting up with me for 39 years.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Newmarket–Aurora on a point of order.

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** I'd like to welcome constituent Damien Walsh, father of page Leah Walsh, to Queen's Park today.

### DEFERRED VOTES

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION  
PLAN ACT (STRENGTHENING  
RETIREMENT SECURITY  
FOR ONTARIANS), 2016  
LOI DE 2016 SUR LE RÉGIME  
DE RETRAITE DE LA PROVINCE  
DE L'ONTARIO (SÉCURISER LA RETRAITE  
EN ONTARIO)

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 186, An Act to establish the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan / Projet de loi 186, Loi établissant le Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1142 to 1147.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** On April 20, 2016, Mr. Bradley moved second reading of Bill 186.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

### Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Gélinas, France	Meilleur, Madeleine
Anderson, Granville	Gravelle, Michael	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gretzky, Lisa	Miller, Paul
Baker, Yvan	Hatfield, Percy	Moridi, Reza
Ballard, Chris	Hoggarth, Ann	Murray, Glen R.
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Horwath, Andrea	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Bradley, James J.	Hoskins, Eric	Natyshak, Taras
Chan, Michael	Hunter, Mitzie	Oraziotti, David
Chiarelli, Bob	Jaczek, Helena	Potts, Arthur
Colle, Mike	Kiwala, Sophie	Qaadri, Shafiq
Coteau, Michael	Kwintar, Monte	Rinaldi, Lou
Crack, Grant	Lalonde, Marie-France	Sandals, Liz
Damerla, Dipika	Leal, Jeff	Sattler, Peggy
Del Duca, Steven	MacCharles, Tracy	Sousa, Charles
Delaney, Bob	Malhi, Harinder	Tabuns, Peter
Dhillon, Vic	Mangat, Amrit	Takhar, Harinder S.
DiNovo, Cheri	Mantha, Michael	Taylor, Monique
Dong, Han	Martins, Cristina	Vanhof, John
Fife, Catherine	Matthews, Deborah	Vernile, Daiene
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Mauro, Bill	Wong, Soo
Fraser, John	McGarry, Kathryn	Wynne, Kathleen O.
French, Jennifer K.	McMahon, Eleanor	Zimmer, David
Gates, Wayne	McMeekin, Ted	

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

### Nays

Arnott, Ted	Hillier, Randy	Pettapiece, Randy
Bailey, Robert	Jones, Sylvia	Scott, Laurie
Brown, Patrick	MacLeod, Lisa	Smith, Todd
Clark, Steve	Martow, Gila	Thompson, Lisa M.
Coe, Lorne	McDonell, Jim	Walker, Bill
Fedeli, Victor	McNaughton, Monte	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Norm	Yakabuski, John
Harris, Michael	Nicholls, Rick	Yurek, Jeff

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 68; the nays are 24.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 5, 2016, the bill is ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

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

*The House recessed from 1151 to 1300.*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Please join me in welcoming members of the Sikh Motorcycle Club of Ontario and

their supporters. We have Manohar Singh Bal, Kanwaljit Kaur Singh, Jasbir Singh Saini, Varinder Kaur, Sawarn Singh, Bhupinder Kaur, Rampal Singh Dhillon, Gurmeet Singh Grewal, Bhupinder Singh, Sandeep Singh, Parvinder Singh, Jasbir Singh Hundal, Inderjit Singh Jagraon, Lakhvinder Singh, Bikram Singh Bal, and Jagdeep Singh.

And no, all these Singhs aren't related to me directly, but they are my family by association. Please join me in welcoming them all to the assembly today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Welcome.

Further introductions?

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** I would like to welcome nurses from Windsor and Essex county today: Carol Ahpin, Karen Bertrand, Vicki McKenna, Jo-Dee Brown, Cheryl Colborne, Bruce Jewell, Sandy Kravets, Barb Marcolin, Barbara Porter, Veronika Pulley, Sherri Sherbo and Gwen Spencer-Giswein. They should be up in the gallery momentarily.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I want to rise to welcome members in the gallery who are here to honour the Battle of Monte Cassino.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I'd like to welcome Monique Savage, Louise Decaen, Carmen Godin and Aline Savage. They're here to watch the introduction of a petition they worked very hard on.

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** I would also like to welcome all of the members who are here on behalf of the Bramalea-Gore-Malton member. Welcome to Queen's Park.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### BATTLE OF MONTE CASSINO

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I rise today to honour the heroes of the Battle of Monte Cassino. The Battle of Monte Cassino, also known as the Battle for Rome, was one of the most important campaigns of the Second World War. Marked by outstanding military achievement in appalling conditions, the battles of Monte Cassino opened the road to Rome and the beginning of the end for the German occupation of Italy.

On May 18, 1944, Allied forces, including Canadians and the Polish Corps led by General Wladyslaw Anders, pushed on to Monte Cassino and raised their flag over the 1,400-year-old Benedictine abbey.

In commemoration of this sacrifice, the Italian and Polish communities have come together to create a replica of the war memorial display from Monte Cassino Hill in Italy. The replica contains 12 panels, with photographs and writing in English, Polish and Italian, describing the victory by Allied forces, and will be featured this month at Toronto city hall, Parliament Hill and here at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

Today, with veterans and members of the Italian and Polish communities who are here with us at Queen's

Park, we commemorate the heroes of the Battle of Monte Cassino for their immense bravery and sacrifice.

### NURSES

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** It's my pleasure to rise today, on behalf of my community of Windsor West, on the first day of Nursing Week in Ontario. Our dedicated and professional nurses are critical to delivering the quality health care that people living in this province know and deserve. Today, I'm joined by some of these caregivers from my riding, and I thank them for taking the time to come to Queen's Park.

While our front-line health care workers work hard every day to ensure our families stay healthy, the Liberal government's underfunding of hospitals continues to make their jobs more difficult. This year, Windsor Regional Hospital announced that 169 nursing positions will be eliminated. This is equivalent to the loss of 330,000 hours of hands-on RN patient care per year. Aspiring nurses may be forced to seek out employment in the US, costing us our next generation of trained and dedicated caregivers in Ontario. These cuts will have a real impact on people in their most vulnerable moments.

Hospitals must not be forced to make decisions based on dollars and deficits. Nearly 10,000 caregivers, health care recipients and families in Windsor and Essex county signed a petition calling for an end to these short-sighted hospital cuts. Enough is enough. It's time for this government to listen.

New Democrats know nurses are vital to making sure families and seniors in Windsor and across Ontario get quality health care they can count on. It's time for this government to recognize the value of our nurses in delivering patient care and commit to a moratorium on nursing cuts.

### BATTLE OF MONTE CASSINO

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** Earlier today we gathered to remember one of the most important campaigns of the Second World War: the Battle of Monte Cassino. Many Allied troops perished—including some members of my family—or sustained injuries during this long and difficult military campaign.

On the final push for Monte Cassino, 923 brave heroes of the famed Polish II Corps lost their lives and thousands more were wounded. Polish visitors always lay red and white flowers at these heroes' final resting place, the Polish army cemetery at the top of Monte Cassino. The memorial's inscription reads:

"For our freedom and yours

"We soldiers of Poland

"Gave

"Our soul to God

"Our life to the soil of Italy

"Our hearts to Poland."

This is the 72nd anniversary of the Battle of Monte Cassino, and we were honoured to join the president of

the Canadian Polish Congress, Ms. Teresa Berezowski; the vice-president of the National Congress of Italian Canadians; the consul general of the Republic of Poland, Grzegorz Morawski; and the consul general of Italy, Giuseppe Pastorelli, to recognize their amazing work to create the display named “For Our Freedom and Yours” here at Queen’s Park. Today is made even more special as Polish President Andrzej Duda is visiting the GTA and our nation’s capital.

Today, let us remember and honour the sacrifices of the brave and patriotic men who served during this campaign, as well as our veterans and military personnel who uphold our democracy and our values.

#### ONTARIO SMALL URBAN MUNICIPALITIES CONFERENCE

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Last week, the town of Goderich—known internationally as the prettiest town in Canada—hosted the 2016 Ontario Small Urban Municipalities conference. Running from May 4 to 6, this year’s theme was “Are You Prepared?” and featured speakers such as famed tornado hunter Greg Johnson. He was a big hit with the group in attendance in Goderich last week.

Also on hand was Gary McNamara, president of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, who highlighted some of the challenges facing our rural and small urban municipalities. Central to his message was the disconnect that seems to exist in the government here at Queen’s Park with respect to smaller municipalities. These municipalities don’t always have the resources that larger urban centres do in order to tackle the red tape surrounding projects such as grant applications, development funding or even lobbying.

He pointed to the fact that the government is currently more concerned with projects for cities and large urban centres, such as rapid transit. I would suggest, Speaker, that in smaller municipalities, bridges and roads are oftentimes the only lifeline available to build up local economies and they’re equally important.

Projects such as bridges can be costly—upwards of several million dollars—and raising the money to get matching federal and provincial funding is difficult with a smaller population. I’d like my colleagues on the other side of the House to keep that in mind when they are looking for new projects to invest in to “build Ontario up.”

Congratulations to the planning committee and Mayor Kevin Morrison, and I look forward to next year’s conference as well.

#### CHILD CARE

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Families in Ontario face a child care crisis: too few spots, unaffordable rates and a huge financial burden on families. Because parents are desperate, they register on multiple child care lists in their

communities. Since they often have to pay to register, this becomes an additional burden on these families.

A number of parents in the east end of Toronto have come together to address this issue. At the beginning of April, the Minister of Education committed to changing regulations to protect parents from these fees and to ensure waiting lists are administered fairly. As of today, there has been no presentation, no public statement that in fact this change is coming forward.

Last week, I introduced a private member’s bill, at the request of the parents, to take on the issue. I urge the minister to bring forward regulations to actually deal with the waiting list expense and fairness issue. Failing that, my hope is that the government will take on this private member’s bill, take on this legislation, and move the issue forward. I think that families, children and the child care system deserve no less.

1310

#### LAKESHORTS INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** I am pleased to rise today to speak to the House about the sixth annual Lakeshorts International Short Film Festival. Last Friday and Saturday nights, this event took place in my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore at the Assembly Hall, where filmmakers, both local ones and from around the world, were invited to submit their wonderful short films.

This event, which has been organized for the last six years by Michelle Nolden and Chris Szarka—and the emcee is the renowned movie critic Richard Crouse—is a wonderful event that brings together filmmakers from around the world, and a great cultural event in my community of Etobicoke–Lakeshore that attracts people from across the GTA as well.

These wonderful filmmakers create stories that aren’t Hollywood blockbusters but are important short stories that tell us about the lives and cultures of people from around the world.

This wonderful event demonstrates the great cultural vibrancy in my community, in the city of Toronto and in Ontario. Ontario continues to be the number one film and TV production place in Canada and the third in North America. Events like this cement our standing internationally as one of the cities for film around the globe.

#### NURSES

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I am proud to stand here today on behalf of the PC caucus and our leader, Patrick Brown, on the first day of National Nursing Week. National Nursing Week first came into being in 1985, when the second week of May was officially proclaimed National Nursing Week in Canada in an effort to recognize the dedication and achievements of the nursing profession.

This year’s theme is “Nurses: With You Every Step of the Way.”



Speaker, nurses do build strong connections with the people, families and communities they care for. Ontario is blessed with dedicated RNs, NPs and RPNs, all of whom work hard to do what's best for their patients.

Due to the ongoing mismanagement of the health care system from this government, though, our system is being rationed. We have seen years of frozen hospital budgets, which have led to many nurses being fired. RNs, NPs and RPNs all have a role to be played in our health care system. Their role should be based on an expanded scope of practice, not on budget shortfalls due to the incompetence of this government.

I invite all MPPs to partake in RNAO's Take Your MPP to Work Day, a day that has been ongoing for the past 16 years.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all the nurses across Ontario for their hard work and dedication to our patients. Our nurses go well beyond their duty, despite year after year, being forced to do more with less.

#### FIRE IN FORT McMURRAY

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** We are all touched by the unfortunate devastation that unfolded in Fort McMurray over the past week. My heart goes out to those who have lost their homes and means of livelihood.

The pictures coming from the scene are scary and sad to watch. The plight of more than 80,000 people who fled is beyond imagination. The danger to the well-being of those on the front line, including brave firefighters, is clear.

Fortunately, Canadians are coming together to support their fellow Canadians. It is encouraging that the federal government is matching donations. Even a group of Syrian refugees in Calgary is raising funds to help their new friends.

I applaud the Ontario Sikhs and Gurdwara Council and the Ontario Gurdwara Committee for fundraising in support of the people of Fort McMurray.

I want to thank our Premier for her leadership in sending 100 firefighters from Ontario to assist.

Mr. Speaker, let's all pray for those who are caught in the grip of this natural disaster and open our hearts and wallets to help them in their time of dire need.

#### RUSSELL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY LADIES' NIGHT

**Mr. Grant Crack:** Last Friday, I had the distinct pleasure of being able to attend the Russell Agricultural Society's 13th annual Ladies' Night event, the sold-out "Evening in Paris" dinner and auction in my riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

Over the last 13 years, the Russell Agricultural Society Ladies' Night events have gone on to raise more than \$340,000 for a wide variety of charities doing amazing work, including but not limited to the Canadian Cancer Society, cystic fibrosis, juvenile diabetes, the

Make-A-Wish foundation, and ALS Canada. This year, over 500 individuals raised \$30,000 through silent and live auctions and donations for the Alzheimer Society/La Société Alzheimer.

Since 1983, the Alzheimer Society has been committed to raising awareness and moving forward with the goal of finding a cure as well as continuing the vital efforts of improving the quality of life for many Ontarians living with Alzheimer's and other dementias. I applaud the society for the great work that they do in our communities.

Additionally, this year's event helped raise funds for the victims of the Fort McMurray wildfire in order to help alleviate the burden of the ongoing tragedy in Alberta.

Today I am highlighting the invaluable charitable work done by the Russell Agricultural Society, as well as extending a very gracious thank you to the honoured guests and the many volunteers who selflessly donated their time and efforts to this event for a very important cause. It was a pleasure for me to participate again this year. I'd like to send out a special thanks to co-chairs Judy McFaul and Lynne Rochon and also to a good friend, Suzanne Perras Campbell, and their team for their outstanding dedication and service to their community.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (HELMET EXEMPTION FOR SIKH MOTORCYCLISTS), 2016 LOI DE 2016 MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (EXEMPTION DE L'OBLIGATION DE PORTER DU CASQUE POUR LES MOTOCYCLISTES SIKHS)

Mr. Singh moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 196, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to exempt Sikh motorcyclists from the requirement to wear a helmet / Projet de loi 196, Loi modifiant le Code de la route pour exempter les motocyclistes sikhs de l'obligation de porter un casque.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** I want to welcome the Sikh Motorcycle Club of Ontario for their support on this.

Section 104 of the Highway Traffic Act requires that persons riding or operating a motorcycle or a motor-assisted bicycle on a highway must wear a helmet. This bill exempts members of the Sikh community who have unshorn hair and who habitually wear turbans from section 104. The exemption exists in the UK; it also exists in other provinces such as Manitoba and British

Columbia, which notably has a large Sikh population as well. This is a matter of freedom of expression, and I strongly support the adoption of this bill.

ALLERGY FRIENDLY  
SCHOOLYARD ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LES COURS D'ÉCOLE  
NON ALLERGISANTES

Mr. Kwinter moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 197, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to the planting of allergenic plants on school premises / Projet de loi 197, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation en ce qui a trait à la plantation de plantes allergènes dans les lieux scolaires.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** The bill amends the Education Act to require every district school board or school authority to ensure that no new allergenic plants are planted on school premises. A plant is considered allergenic if it meets the allergenicity requirements prescribed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon. David Zimmer:** Mr. Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed. Minister.

**Hon. David Zimmer:** I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot item 42 be waived.  
1320

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The minister moves that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), the notice for ballot item 42 be waived. Do we agree? Agreed. Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON ESTIMATES

**Hon. David Zimmer:** Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice with respect to the Standing Committee on Estimates.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed. Minister.

**Hon. David Zimmer:** I move that, notwithstanding standing order 60, the Standing Committee on Estimates consider the 2016-17 estimates of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs on May 17 and May 18, 2016; and

That the Standing Committee on Estimates resume consideration of the 2016-17 estimates of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care on May 31, 2016; and

That, upon completion of consideration of the remaining 2016-17 estimates of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, the committee shall resume consideration of the 2016-17 estimates of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The minister moves that, notwithstanding—

**Hon. David Zimmer:** Dispense.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Dispense? Dispense.

Do we agree? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

PETITIONS

PROMPT PAYMENT

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I have a number of petitions entitled "Support Prompt Payment Legislation in Ontario." It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas delayed payments are a harmful practice in Ontario's construction industry;

"Whereas Ontario's trade contractors incur significant costs when payments are delayed from general contractors;

"Whereas cash flow risks have forced many contractors out of business and discouraged others from investing in capital or hiring new workers;

"Whereas payment delays have led trade contractors to hiring fewer apprentices, which will lead to fewer qualified tradespeople in the future;

"Whereas prompt payment legislation offers government the opportunity to provide stimulus to the economy without spending a dime;

"We, the undersigned, call on the Ontario Legislature to support Ontario's construction industry by adopting prompt payment legislation as a means to address the payment delay issues in Ontario."

I sign this petition and support it.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** I have a petition that's only from Windsor and Essex county, with nearly 10,000 signatures on it. Another 17,000 names have signed on online. It's called "Nurses Know—Petition for Better Care."

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas providing high-quality, universal, public health care is crucial for a fair and thriving Ontario; and

“Whereas years of underfunding have resulted in cuts to registered nurses (RNs) and hurt patient care; and

“Whereas, in 2015 alone, Ontario lost more than 1.5 million hours of RN care due to cuts; and

“Whereas procedures are being off-loaded into private clinics not subject to hospital legislation; and

“Whereas funded services are being cut from hospitals and are not being provided in the community; and

“Whereas cutting skilled care means patients suffer more complications, readmissions and death;

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

“Implement a moratorium on RN cuts;

“Commit to restoring hospital base operating funding to at least cover the costs of inflation and population growth;

“Create a fully-funded multi-year health human resources plan to bring Ontario’s ratio of registered nurses to population up to the national average;

“Ensure hospitals have enough resources to continue providing safe, quality and integrated care for clinical procedures and stop plans for moving such procedures into private, unaccountable clinics.”

On behalf of myself, the member from Windsor–Tecumseh and the member from Essex, we fully support this petition.

#### CHILD CARE

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** I have a petition on a file I’ve been working very hard on with constituents and advocates.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas many parents and caregivers are being charged non-refundable fees to place their children on wait-lists for daycare centres;

“Whereas non-refundable daycare wait-list fees can range from tens to hundreds of dollars;

“Whereas due to the scarcity of quality daycare spaces, many parents and caregivers are forced to place their children on multiple wait-lists;

“Whereas non-refundable daycare wait-list fees impose a significant financial burden on parents and caregivers for the mere opportunity to access quality child care;

“Whereas daycare wait-lists are often administered in a non-transparent manner which creates the risk that they will be administered in an unfair and/or discriminatory manner;

“Whereas parents and caregivers in Ontario already face significant barriers accessing daycare due to high costs and limited numbers of daycare spaces;

“Whereas quality child care is a public good and not a commodity and the costs of child care should not operate on a supply-and-demand basis;

“Whereas there are currently no regulations in place to prevent daycares from charging parents and caregivers exploitative fees;

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

“That all members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario recognize that we have a responsibility to take action now, and support a requirement for transparent administration of daycare wait-lists and a ban on non-refundable daycare wait-list fees.”

I agree with this petition. I’ve been working hard to make it happen, notwithstanding the other member’s bill, and I sign my name to it.

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Mr. Bill Walker:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the current government under Premier Kathleen Wynne is calling for the sale of up to 60% of Hydro One shares into private ownership; and

“Whereas the decision to sell the public utility was made without any public input and the deal will continue to be done in complete secrecy; and

“Whereas the loss of majority ownership in Hydro One will force ratepayers to accept whatever changes the new owners decide, such as higher rates; and

“Whereas electricity rates are already sky-high and hurting family budgets as well as businesses; and

“Whereas ratepayers will never again have independent investigations of consumer complaints, such as the Ontario Ombudsman’s damning report on failed billing; and

“Whereas the people of Ontario are the true owners of Hydro One and they do not believe the fire sale of Hydro One is in their best interest;

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

“To protect Ontario ratepayers by stopping the sale of Hydro One.”

I fully support it, will affix my name and send it with page Aadil.

#### SPEED LIMITS

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I have a petition here signed by over 2,000 people from a good part of northern Ontario, and it says:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas driving at a high rate of speed has contributed to many fatal snowmobile accidents on lakes and rivers across Ontario; and

“Whereas the safety of individuals is put at risk when snowmobiles are driven at a high rate of speed on lakes, rivers and within close proximity to people, ice huts and other vehicles; and

“Whereas section 14 of the Motorized Snow Vehicles Act, RSO 1990, c. M.44 states:

“No person shall drive a motorized snow vehicle at a greater rate of speed than,

“(a) 20 kilometres per hour,

“(i) on a highway where the speed limit established pursuant to the Highway Traffic Act is 50 kilometres per hour or less, or

“(ii) in any public park or exhibition grounds; or

“(b) 50 kilometres per hour,

“(i) on any highway which is open to motor vehicle traffic, where the speed limit established pursuant to the Highway Traffic Act is greater than 50 kilometres per hour, or

“(ii) on a trail. RSO 1990, c. M.44, s. 14(1).”

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

“(a) That no person shall drive a motorized vehicle at a greater rate of speed than;

“(i) 20 km per hour within 200 feet of any person, ice hut or other vehicles

“(ii) 80 km per hour on a frozen waterways

“(iii) set speeding fine for driving in excess of 20 km/h when within 200 feet of person, ice hut or vehicle

“(iv) set speeding fine for driving in excess of 80 km/h on a frozen waterway.”

I'd like to submit this petition to the Legislature with page Leah.

#### WATER FLUORIDATION

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to update Ontario fluoridation legislation.

“Whereas scientific studies conducted during the past 70 years have consistently shown that community water fluoridation is a safe and effective means of preventing dental decay and is a public health measure endorsed by more than 90 national and international health organizations, including the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health and the Ontario Dental Association...;

“Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing urges support for the removal of provisions allowing Ontario municipalities to cease drinking water fluoridation, or fail to start drinking water fluoridation...;

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

“That the Premier of Ontario direct the Ministries of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Health and Long-Term Care to amend all applicable legislation and regulations to make the fluoridation of municipal drinking water mandatory in all municipal water systems across the province of Ontario before the end of the first session of the current Ontario Parliament.”

1330

Mr. Speaker, I support this petition, affix my signature to it and hand it to page Benjamin.

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I have a petition here from Traci Steadman, a registered nurse from my riding.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas providing high-quality, universal, public health care is crucial for a fair and thriving Ontario; and

“Whereas years of underfunding have resulted in cuts to registered nurses (RNs) and hurt patient care; and

“Whereas, in 2015 alone, Ontario lost more than 1.5 million hours of RN care due to cuts; and

“Whereas procedures are being off-loaded into private clinics not subject to hospital legislation; and

“Whereas funded services are being cut from hospitals and are not being provided in the community; and

“Whereas cutting skilled care means patients suffer more complications, readmissions and death;

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

“Implement a moratorium on RN cuts;

“Commit to restoring hospital base operating funding to at least cover the costs of inflation and population growth;

“Create a fully-funded multi-year health human resources plan to bring Ontario's ratio of registered nurses to population up to the national average;

“Ensure hospitals have enough resources to continue providing safe, quality and integrated care for clinical procedures and stop plans for moving such procedures into private, unaccountable clinics.”

I agree with this, I'll affix my signature and send it down with Spencer to the table.

#### GASOLINE PRICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have close to a thousand names on this petition, and I'd like to thank Darlene Bailey from my riding for signing it. It reads as follows:

“Whereas northern Ontario motorists continue to be subject to wild fluctuations in the price of gasoline; and

“Whereas the province could eliminate opportunistic price gouging and deliver fair, stable and predictable fuel prices; and

“Whereas five provinces and many US states already have some sort of gas price regulation; and

“Whereas jurisdictions with gas price regulation have seen an end to wild price fluctuations, a shrinking of price discrepancies between urban and rural ... and lower annualized gas prices;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

“Mandate the Ontario Energy Board to monitor the price of gasoline across Ontario in order to reduce price volatility and unfair regional price differences while encouraging competition.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Samantha to bring it to the Clerk.

#### WATER FLUORIDATION

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly, which was sent to me by some residents in southern Mississauga. It is entitled “Update Ontario Fluoridation Legislation,” and it reads as follows:

“Whereas scientific studies conducted during the past 70 years have consistently shown that community water fluoridation is a safe and effective means of preventing dental decay and is a public health measure endorsed by

more than 90 national and international health organizations, including the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health and the Ontario Dental Association; and

“Whereas recent experience in Canadian cities that have removed fluoride from drinking water has led ... to a dramatic increase in tooth decay; and

“Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care urges support for amending the Fluoridation Act to ensure community water fluoridation is mandatory; and

“Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing urges support for the removal of provisions allowing Ontario municipalities to cease drinking water fluoridation, or fail to start drinking water fluoridation, from the Ontario Municipal Act;

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

“That the Premier of Ontario direct the Ministries of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Health and Long-Term Care to amend all applicable legislation and regulations to make the fluoridation of municipal drinking water mandatory in all municipal water systems across the province of Ontario before the end of the first session of the current Ontario Parliament.”

Speaker, I am pleased to sign and support this petition and to send it down with page Emma.

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas repeated cuts to health care funding under the present government are having a negative impact on the residents of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, including seniors, diabetics and those suffering from eye or cardiovascular conditions; and

“Whereas the heart rehabilitation program at the Seaway Valley Health Centre provided a valuable service for many residents; and

“Whereas it is in everyone’s interest to help all Ontarians stay healthy and prevent the occurrence of acute and dangerous conditions, such as heart failure; and

“Whereas this interest is best served through adequate funding to programs that have proven their value;

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

“To take all necessary actions to restore the heart rehab program at the Seaway Valley Health Centre.”

I agree with this and will be passing it off to page William.

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Privatizing Hydro One: Another Wrong Choice.

“Whereas once you privatize hydro, there’s no return; and

“We’ll lose billions in reliable annual revenues for schools and hospitals; and

“We’ll lose our biggest economic asset and control over our energy future; and

“We’ll pay higher and higher hydro bills just like what’s happened elsewhere;

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

“To stop the sale of Hydro One and make sure Ontario families benefit from owning Hydro One now and for generations to come.”

I agree with the petition, and I’ll sign my name to it and give it to Leah.

#### SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas one in three women will experience some form of sexual assault in her lifetime.

“When public education about sexual violence and harassment is not prioritized, myths and attitudes informed by misogyny become prevalent. This promotes rape culture....

“Sexual violence and harassment survivors too often feel revictimized by the systems set in place to support them. The voices of survivors, in all their diversity, need to be amplified....

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

“Support the findings and recommendations of the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment’s final report, highlighting the need for inclusive and open dialogue to address misogyny and rape culture; educate about sexual violence and harassment to promote social change ... and address attrition rates within our justice system, including examining ‘unfounded’ cases, developing enhanced prosecution models and providing free legal advice for survivors.”

Mr. Speaker, I agree with this petition, will affix my signature to it, and will give this to page Brendan.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### ENERGY STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2016

##### LOI DE 2016 MODIFIANT DES LOIS SUR L'ÉNERGIE

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 5, 2016, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 135, An Act to amend several statutes and revoke several regulations in relation to energy conservation and long-term energy planning / Projet de loi 135, Loi modifiant plusieurs lois et abrogeant plusieurs règlements

en ce qui concerne la conservation de l'énergie et la planification énergétique à long terme.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** When we last debated this bill, the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke had the floor, and I assume he wants to speak again.

I am pleased to recognize the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Well, if I may, Speaker, and I thank you for that, I'm not prepared to relinquish it just yet. I have a few moments left on the clock, and I intend to use as much of that as possible.

When I left off, we were talking about the mess that we've already seen this government, through ministerial directives and political interference, cause in the energy sector. I was speaking, I believe—and the member for Toronto–Danforth was helping me, and I appreciate that—about the gas plant cancellation decisions that have cost Ontario over \$1 billion.

In Bill 135, we actually take the power that the minister has and expand upon that. Essentially, under schedule 2—changes to the Electricity Act—the minister has almost unfettered powers. It talks about a more consultative process, but at the end of the day it also puts in there that, well, he can talk to people but he also has the power to ignore everything they say. It's a perfect Liberal bill, perfectly in keeping with the philosophy of this Liberal government: Go around and talk to everybody—the Premier loves to talk about how she loves to consult and collaborate with people and sit together with people to discuss what is best for the people of Ontario, and at the end of the day pays no attention to anything that has been said. At the end of the day, it's the Liberal way or no way at all.

1340

Under Bill 135, the Minister of Energy—and I believe I said that he would be crowned as the emperor of energy under this bill. The member from Toronto–Danforth said that we'd be creating an energy czar, and I just didn't think that that actually gave him enough power. The “emperor of energy” would actually be more appropriate.

Look at some of the things that they're doing. The minister spoke about all of the wonderful things they're doing in the energy sector. Speaker, I think it's incumbent upon me, as the opposition energy critic, to perhaps disagree with him a little bit. He's going on about how everything they've done is so wonderful in the energy sector. Yet, when I go home in my riding—and I guarantee you, Speaker, when the Liberal members go home to their ridings, they're hearing the same thing. The difference is, when they come here, they have to check in to the Premier's office on the way in—there's a little corridor they go through—and they get the electronic muzzle. They can't say a thing against the Liberal government while they're here, but they know what they're hearing in their ridings about the energy sector and hydro rates. They know.

**Mr. Grant Crack:** It's all positive.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I hear the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell say “all positive.” Well, I hope the folks up in GPR just heard that. He says that it's all positive, folks. I would implore you to write to your member about energy rates in Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, because I hardly think they're all positive. You've got his email address; fill that box, ladies and gentlemen in TV land, particularly you people in Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. The member just said that everything's hunky-dory in Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, everybody's happy. If you're happy about energy rates in Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, let him know. But if you're not happy, let him know that too.

One of the things that—and this is just too cute by half. I've got to believe that there's some influence here, not that I would ever accuse anybody of doing anything. If you're a Hydro One customer, which I am—most people in rural Ontario are. I love this part in the hydro bill now; I get so many calls about this. People are just livid when they read this on their hydro bill. They took away the clean energy benefit—10% right up on your hydro bills. They've gone up every time you turn around. They went up again on May 1—the fastest-rising rates in North America, the highest rates anywhere.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** You're wrong.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The member from Mississauga says that we're wrong. So one increase that might be higher than this specific increase—but there's nowhere in North America where energy rates have risen like they have in Ontario over the past few years, and the member knows that. If he wants to debate and dispute that, well, he'd be more than welcome to it. He likes to talk, but he never likes to talk about the facts.

Anyway, here we go: On your bill now—after they've raised it to the point that they're putting people into energy poverty—as of January, they took the debt retirement charge off the residential bills. But the debt retirement charge, for the purpose of calculating it on a residential bill, should have gone off in January 2012. It was paid by 2011. But this government continued to put it on people's bills because they were taking that money and spending it on their pet programs, or they had already spent the money and they had to keep extracting it from the pockets of energy ratepayers.

So you had paid, as a residential customer, the debt retirement charge. But now they have the gall, the unmitigated gall, to put this on your hydro bill—I'm looking at my own hydro bill, with the two little asterisks, and then: “Debt retirement charge exemption saved you” X number of dollars. So they are now saying that they took a charge off that I'd actually already paid for years ago, that I should have stopped paying for years ago, and now that they finally got around to taking it off, they're saving me money. They're saving me money by not charging me the debt retirement charge I'd already fully paid for years ago. They have the gall to put that on your hydro bill like they are doing you some kind of a favour.

Can you believe it? Even the banks haven't got that much gall. Even the banks haven't got that much gall as

the Minister of Energy does to have Hydro One, which is still 70% owned by the province—they've sold off 15% and then 15% of Hydro One. We're going to get into that if we have time. I'm sure the member for Toronto–Danforth—I don't think you folks are in favour of that sale, are you? God, that's just a disaster. It's going to be a bigger disaster when they stop getting the revenue from Hydro One. They're talking about the revenue from the sale of Hydro One like they've somehow struck gold in the California gold rush and they're all running into the saloon and buying everybody drinks because it's time to celebrate because it's never been better. But wait till the money stops coming in from Hydro One. Wait till the revenue stops coming in from Hydro One, and then you people—well, for God's sake, surely to goodness by the time that rolls around, somebody else will be in charge of the government of this province.

But all these people want to do—they're bound and determined that whatever they do, no matter how many mistakes they make—and I can't even count that high—they will do their level best to keep this one promise that by 2017-18 they are going to have a balanced budget, and it doesn't matter what they have to sell.

Well, last week, they just sold the Ontario Liquor Control Board—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Two hundred and sixty million dollars. It's going to be a fire sale for anything they've got out there because they just want the cash to stuff into the corner and be able to say, "Oh, look, we've tamed the deficit." But that's not how you tame a deficit. You tame a deficit by changing your spending patterns and balancing revenue and expenses, not one-time revenue that can never repeat itself.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** When you sell that property this year, I say to the member from Barrie, who must be a financial wizard because she seems to think she's got all the answers—when you sell this property once, can you sell it twice? That's what you're depending on when you start selling property for a one-time fire sale, because you can't get rid of a structural deficit by selling off assets. You can't get rid of a structural deficit by selling off assets, and what we've got here in this province is a structural deficit because they can't balance the expenditures with the revenue. They're hoping that, at one point in time where those lines intersect—they are hoping that in 2017-18, those lines intersect and somehow we have a balanced budget. That's what they're hoping for. They are going to go to the people on June 14, 2018—I believe that's the scheduled date of the election. They're going to be able to go during that 28-day period or, before that, when they bring in the 2018-19 budget, and they're going to say, "We've got it balanced. We've got it licked."

But they haven't got anything licked, because the structural problems will still exist, because they haven't done anything to correct that. They're just selling off the family jewels. They are selling off the inheritances. It's like the guy who is spending like the prodigal son, and

then he gets the inheritance and he thinks, "Oh, I'm good." He was broke. "Oh, I've got lots of money now. Everything is fine." But unless he has balanced his income with his expenses, as soon as he spends off his daddy's money, he's broke again. That's what this government will end up doing in Ontario, because they're just spending the inheritance. They're not doing anything to attack the meat of the matter, which is the problems in budgeting here in the province of Ontario.

Now, I know I drifted a little bit there, but it's all about Hydro One and it's all about the energy sector, because that is the single biggest crown asset we have in this province and they're going to sell it off. I guess what people have to ask themselves is, "After Hydro One, what next? What are they going to sell next?"

But this was the thing that just got me: when we started getting this little note on our hydro bill this year that said, "We saved you money by you not paying the debt retirement charge." I don't owe it, but somehow they saved me money by not putting it on my bill. Wow. It's beyond unethical; it should even be illegal for them to make that claim, that somehow they are saving you money by having you not pay for something that you didn't owe. It's wrong.

1350

**Interjection:** There should be a forensic audit.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** There should be a forensic audit, but at the very least it's shameful that they'll play that kind of game with energy customers who are on the brink as it is, Speaker.

I asked a question in the House this past week and got no fitting response from the energy minister; nothing whatsoever. But I spoke to a lady who volunteers at the food bank in Eganville. She told me that use of the food bank was up 30%. This is Eganville; it's a village of 1,300 people. The use of the food bank was up 30%. In fact, they ran out of food. When they would ask the people who were coming in what was bringing them there—because you have to wonder what causes a 30% increase in the clientele in a short period of time—almost to a person they told her, "We have to make a choice: If we pay the hydro bill, we can't afford food. If we buy food, we can't pay the hydro bill." Their hope is that they pay the hydro bill so they don't get it cut off and hope the food bank is there to help them through that crisis.

What happens when the food bank runs out of food? They've had no expectation that the increase would be that rapid and that severe, but that's what this government has done. They have forced people into energy poverty and driven them to food banks. In a province this rich, it's really sad.

It's also indicative and illustrative, Speaker, of how out of touch they are with the average person, particularly those people in rural Ontario who don't have high incomes. They have to drive to work and have no opportunity to get on public transit. They have to drive to work, if they're fortunate enough to have a job. But there's no public transportation so they have to invest in

a vehicle. They have lower incomes but they still must own a vehicle, which is expensive.

Then you've got gas prices. The municipalities don't even get a share of the gas tax from this government, even though they pay it on every litre of fuel put into one of those vehicles in rural Ontario. But this government doesn't give it to rural municipalities to be able to build their infrastructure.

They talk about what a priority infrastructure is. Now they've got these ads.

They're spending more of the money that maybe could go to families of autistic children, but no. Can you believe this, Speaker? They cut off IBI at the age of five now.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** That's very misleading.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Oh. I'm going to sit down for a moment.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I have to ask the Deputy Premier to withdraw that unparliamentary remark.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I withdraw.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has the floor.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Wow. I've been accused of many things in this House, but that isn't one of them.

I appreciate that the minister withdrew the comment.

Let me clarify: The government has cut off IBI treatments for children over the age of five. That is, in fact, the case—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'm anticipating a point of order, and I would ask the member to ensure that his remarks are relevant with respect to the bill.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Thank you, Speaker. That was indeed my point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member has the floor.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I want to preface this by saying that everything I'm talking about references Bill 135. I want to bring this into the broad view of it if I could, because it is what happens when power becomes unfettered. When power gets unfettered and you don't have to talk to the people and you don't have to sit down with the opposition parties and you don't have to sit down at committee—when you can do whatever you want—that's when the greatest damage to the people gets done. That's what I'm trying to emphasize.

I will try to be a little more direct on Bill 135, but that's the principle I'm trying to illustrate here on how dangerous this bill is.

On Bill 135: This bill, and particularly schedule 2, which gives those unfettered powers to the minister, is perhaps one of the most dangerous pieces of legislation I've ever seen. This is something that I never actually anticipated when I came here. I never believed it would happen, but here it has happened.

We had committee hearings on this bill—my colleague from Toronto–Danforth was there for every one of them—and we suffered through them because we saw

exactly what those deputants were talking about. It didn't matter if you were representing an environmental group; it didn't matter if you were representing an energy association; it didn't matter if you were representing a group of unionized professionals that know the system inside out: The refrain was the same. "Don't proceed with this schedule, giving those kinds of powers to one person. It is dangerous." I don't think they could have emphasized it more.

I know that we brought amendments to the bill to the committee, hoping that somehow the government would change its view on that schedule. You see, under this new bill, we've got two organizations established by this government or other governments for the very purpose of protecting the people and the government from their own mistakes. The IESO, the Independent Electricity System Operator, is now an amalgamation of what the IESO was as well as the OPA, which was the Ontario Power Authority, which was established by this government under Bill 100 in 2005. I remember that Dwight Duncan was the minister at the time. He talked about how Bill 100 and the OPA were going to protect the consumer and protect the system and take the politics out of the electricity sector. Well, I guess the best way to not worry about those organizations that were supposed to take the politics out of the electricity sector was to just get rid of those organizations.

The OPA—I think correctly—was amalgamated into the IESO, but now the minister could just get all of the input from the IESO on a particular move that the government is talking about doing or considering, and then say, "Thank you very much for all your work. I appreciate it. We value your opinion, but I'm not going to pay any attention. I, the energy minister; you, the group of experts in the field that are in your positions because of your expertise because this is what you do for a living"—this is the group that have the letters behind their names that actually indicates that they are engineers or electricity experts. "Thank you for your input. It's well considered, but I don't like it because it doesn't fit with the political goals of this government."

**1400**

Is this what it has come down to? Is this what we're left to believe is the way to operate an electricity system: that the experts can be called upon to give their view and the minister can simply say no?

You have to ask yourself—and I say this to be kind to the minister: Why would you want that kind of power? For every mistake that you make—and if your previous record is any indication of what your record in the future is going to be, there will be many—you will have no one else to blame for your mistake.

That's what we're going to get with Bill 135, because the reality is that there are more of them than there are of us. We can't stop this bill from passing any more than we could force them to approve some of the very, very well-considered and sensible amendments that the third party and our party brought to the table in committee. If I'm counting right, I think there were 34 amendments.



I don't recall if any of yours were passed, I say to the member from Toronto–Danforth. I'm only being cheeky. I know that absolutely none of yours were passed and none of ours were passed either by the Liberal-dominated majority on the committee.

The spin doctors: Oh, boy, have they been out, Speaker. The Minister of Energy must buy ink by the barrel because he has been writing letters. I want to read you a letter that he wrote to the people in my riding.

“To the editor:

“This letter is in response to ‘Hydro Rates Pushing People to Breaking Point: Yakabuski,’ which appeared in the Feb. 28 edition of the Renfrew Mercury.

“As a long-standing member of the Legislature, MPP John Yakabuski, whom I consider a friend, should know that sooner or later his bombastic rhetoric would come into contact with the facts—and the facts will win. In a recent news article you quoted him saying ‘...since November the average bill has gone up \$187.’ This is an incorrect and an outlandish claim; as calculated by the Ontario Energy Board, the average household pays \$150 per month using 750 kWh.

“Mr. Yakabuski casts Ontario's recent 2.5% increase as ‘irresponsibly high,’ notwithstanding these recent increases in other provinces: British Columbia (4%), Saskatchewan (5%), Manitoba (3.95%), and Newfoundland (3.6%). Residential rates in Ontario are higher than some provinces and competitive with other provinces, even after eliminating cheaper dirty coal generation, which most provinces continue to burn. We are less expensive than most US and European cities. Our industrial rates are among the lowest in North America....

“There are available price mitigation programs for residential and business consumers and conservation programs for both; has MPP Yakabuski been active enough promoting these benefits to the benefit of his constituents? Examples of conservation programs include Home Depot's 161 outlets using conservation programs to reduce consumption by 29 million kWh, saving millions, and taking the equivalent of 3,000 homes off the grid; or the city of Barrie using a program and replacing all street lights, saving taxpayers \$2 million annually; and more small businesses are participating every week across Ontario.

“By contacting your local utility or your MPP's office you can learn about programs to reduce your consumption.”

That was in the Renfrew Mercury, April 29, 2016.

It's a lovely story that he's telling you. On one occasion, the rates in Manitoba, British Columbia or whatever may have gone higher than ours, on one particular increase, but if you measure this over the last few years, the gap continues to widen. In fact, in the province of Quebec, it's way less than half of what we pay.

The Minister of Finance said electricity rates are going down. The Minister of Energy says energy is a bargain.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Yes, he says rates are going down. He's in the Hansard.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** No, no.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Oh, you guys aren't going to start correcting Hansard.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The Minister of Energy says energy's a bargain. He's quoted in Hansard as having said that.

Well, I would want to say to the people in my riding—I'm not just talking to the folks in Glengarry–Prescott–Russell; I'm going to talk to the people in my riding, which I have on many occasions, and I say, if you agree with the Minister of Energy's—Bob Chiarelli, it says right on there. If you agree with his assessment of the energy sector, please write me. But if you agree with what I'm trying to do to reduce hydro bills and hold this government to account on the skyrocketing nature of those bills, please write the Minister of Energy.

In fact, I'll challenge the Minister of Energy. At the end of June, let's do a tabulation to see who's got more emails taking a position counter to what the recipient of the emails has taken. I'm very confident that the folks from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke are not going to agree with the Minister of Energy.

Another little story we've been talking about is these exorbitant contracts. The Minister of Energy is now saying that—we all know about the Green Energy Act, or maybe there are some Liberal backbenchers who haven't paid any attention yet because they're just doing what they are told. But in 2009, that passed. The Minister of Energy then was George Smitherman. It began this cascading mess which has driven up rates beyond recognition in the province of Ontario, because it seemed that the government was so zealous in promoting particularly wind that they were willing to pay just about anything. They signed contracts that were so lucrative to the developers that the developers were going around basically offering huge inducements to landowners, and now to municipalities themselves. The government now is allowing them to even offer inducements to municipalities. Some people would call them bribes. I don't even know—I wouldn't characterize them as that. Apparently, I can't even characterize them as that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** You can't say indirectly what you can't say directly, so I'm going to ask the member to withdraw that unparliamentary remark.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** By all means, I withdraw, Speaker. I've just heard some people say that, but I won't repeat it.

But certainly inducements in order to declare themselves a wind-friendly community—and they are in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. You could transfer it to the millions of dollars over the 20-year life of a contract. You have to ask yourself how much a developer is making on a contract when they can take millions of dollars and use that to get the positive motion from a municipality in declaring themselves wind-friendly, how much money they must be making when they can go to fundraisers with the Premier, the Minister of Energy and

the Minister of Finance where it costs \$7,500 to buy one ticket. What are they serving at these dinners: golden caviar? Like, what is going on: \$7,500 for one ticket for a meal? That's the kind of things.

Well, under this latest—the minister is now saying, well, these contracts aren't quite as lucrative under the large renewable procurement. That's the LRP, the new program. Interestingly enough, under this latest LRP, the seven developers that received contracts—horror of horrors, shock to my system—made donations to the Liberal Party over the last three years of over \$255,000. That's documented, Speaker. Now, I'll let the people decide what they want to call that. It's not for me to say, certainly not here in the Legislature—not directly or indirectly. But I'll let people decide what they think of \$255,000 to the Liberal Party from the very developers who were the successful bidders on the most recent round of renewable energy contracts. I'll let the people decide.

**1410**

I think, actually, that my colleagues in the third party have a motion that we're going to debate tomorrow that should delve into some of the fuzzy language in these contracts, or maybe some of the costly effects of these contracts. I'll be looking forward to being here for that motion tomorrow, because we sure would like to find out what's been going on.

I have another letter here that I read this morning. It's a pretty good letter. It captures it pretty well. A gentleman from Tweed, Ontario, Jim McPherson, says:

“Gridmonsters attack!

“Wind, solar power are inefficient, unreliable and make electricity grid more costly than it has to be.”

As you know, the Auditor General said that we have paid, under this government's signing of all of these contracts—this is not about are renewable energy. It's about any energy at the right price, because it doesn't matter whether something is good or not good; if you pay too much for it, you have not done your job.

This government, according to the Auditor General—who is not seeking re-election, is beyond reproach, has no skin in the game and doesn't go to political fundraisers—she has said that this Liberal government paid over \$9.2 billion more than it should have paid for the renewable energy contracts—\$9.2 billion. Do the people out there even understand that, or is it too big of a number? This is huge. It's a scandal of epic proportions. They paid \$9.2 billion more in these contracts.

I say to these good folks in the gallery: That's all going on your hydro bill. Those contracts could have been signed for \$9.2 billion less, and that would have a marked effect in reducing your hydro bills—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** You have to speak to the Speaker. We welcome our friends from the gallery, but you have to speak to the Speaker.

The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Thank you, Speaker. That would reduce your hydro bill, Speaker. You pay too much—\$9.2 billion on those bills and you're paying too much. But it's not just you, Speaker; it's all of these

Liberal members, but I guess they figure it's a small price to pay to make the lady in the corner office on the second floor happy.

Let me read Jim McPherson's letter. It's not quite as big printing as I'd like.

“In his April 26 letter to the editor, energy minister Bob Chiarelli wrote that ‘for the first time the cost of producing electricity from wind is below the average cost of producing electricity in Ontario.’

“Using this Orwellian ‘doublespeak,’ Chiarelli failed to mention that under his 20-year ‘feed-in tariff’ (FIT) contracts, we pay wind energy corporations much more, not less, than the rates we pay for each kilowatt of the hydro, nuclear or gas-generated electricity that wind energy replaces.

“In addition, in Ontario, most wind and solar energy is generated when not needed.

“In fact, wind and solar “farms” have become troublesome ‘gridmonsters.’

“They are uncontrollable, cruel and unreasonably costly.

“Gridmonsters have a licence not only to kill, but also to bill.

“Enabled by Ontario's Green Energy Act, they drive up electricity prices while ravaging rural neighbourhoods and wildlife.

“They are malignant tumours attached to our electricity grid.

“They will continue to force electricity rates to rise unless we act now to bring them under rigorous control.

“When gridmonsters were in their infant stage, we were able to store their fluctuating output in rechargeable batteries for later use in electric cars or household power.

“But they have grown much too big for batteries, and they keep growing because governments keep feeding them subsidies.

“Gridmonsters were created by huge wind and solar corporations that lobbied governments for subsidies that guaranteed ongoing profits.

“That was the beginning of the scam, to which governments and citizens succumbed because of our fear of climate change.

“But unlike other energy sources, the sun and the wind cannot be turned on and off when demand fluctuates.

“On dark and still nights, gridmonsters lurk in rural fields.

“Then, when the sun shines or the wind blows, they invade power transmission lines.

“With government permission, they replace cheaper electricity from hydroelectric power, nuclear, or gas plants. Electricity rates then rise.

“When the wind dies or when the sun is obscured, the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) routinely fires up recently added backup natural gas power plants.

“Rates routinely rise again.

“Whenever we can't find consumers for this unneeded electricity, we pay solar and wind energy producers to not produce power. Rates rise more!

“Gridmonsters keep metastasizing. Ontario is exporting more and more excess green energy to Quebec or Michigan, at a loss of millions more dollars every month.

“Rates keep rising.

“Amazingly, the Ontario government recently invited proposals for even more subsidized, unneeded and unreliable wind factories and solar farms.

“In his April 26 letter to the editor, Chiarelli tries to make us believe that subsidized ‘renewable energy is now on a level playing field with other forms of generation’!”

“To what end?”

“We now know gridmonsters cannot fight climate change. Ontario’s”—

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Point of order, the member from Mississauga–Streetsville.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Speaker, while I have no problem with what the member is reading, I do suggest to the member that standing order 23(d) does preclude him from making what are called lengthy quotes directly from whatever it is he’s reading. He’s welcome to make his point with it but may not fill his remarks entirely with what it is that he is reading verbatim, which are in fact the words of someone else.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I don’t interpret the standing order that way. I don’t find that there’s a point of order.

I return to the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakubski:** Thank you very much, Speaker.

“To what end?”

“We now know gridmonsters cannot fight climate change. Ontario’s professional engineers report wind and solar factories are actually causing an increase in carbon dioxide emissions.

“The federal government is an accomplice.

“It budgets our tax money to support the proliferation of provincial green energy fantasies.

“It ignores its responsibility to protect endangered and migrating wildlife from habitat destruction and migration hazards, and to protect humans from unhealthy turbine noise.

“It ignores its duty to safeguard charter rights of rural citizens seeking quiet enjoyment of their homes.

“Rural municipal governments know that wind and solar factories damage local economies and tourism.

“They realize gridmonsters are hazardous to humans and wildlife, drive up electricity prices, devastate neighbourhoods, depress property values and erode municipal tax bases.

“Provincial and federal governments do not care about local constituents, endangered and migrating wildlife and electricity prices.

“Rural municipal governments do care.

“They need to regain their authority to manage energy-related industrial developments in their own backyards.

“If we can’t consume the energy generated by gridmonsters at the moment it’s produced, we need to store it, or get rid of it affordably.

“It would probably be better to get rid of the politicians and the legislation that caused this problem.

“One way or another, we must put a stop to the gridmonster scam.”

Mr. McPherson is a retired professional engineer now living in Tweed, where there are no industrial wind turbines. Mr. McPherson has said, in a colourful way, what I have said many times in this House about what the Green Energy Act has done to electricity prices and to our electricity system. To capture what he said: They continue to drive up the prices. They create instability in our grid, because the wind doesn’t warn you when it’s going to start to blow or not. So we have this challenge of trying to balance the system at all times.

**1420**

Speaker, for those who don’t know, the energy system has to be continuously balanced. You cannot produce more energy than you can consume. If you produce more, you have to get rid of it some way. If it means you have to sell it or give it away, which is what we’ve been doing, because we accept all of the wind, that’s costly. Or if we order generators to shut down because the wind has suddenly come on to the system, we have to pay them penalties for shutting down. That’s the contractual mess that this government embarked on under the Green Energy Act: an unbalanced system that forces us to pay for energy when it’s produced, or forces us to pay people not to produce energy.

When the minister talks about energy prices, and he says that the energy prices under the new LRP and the new contracts are actually competitive with other generation, don’t be fooled for one second. If the minister wants to talk about the per-kilowatt-hour rate, good for him, but let’s be clear. If you want to know what an energy contract costs the people of Ontario, you have to see the whole contract. The minister can’t cherry-pick and say, “Oh, this is the rate that we’re going to pay them for energy produced.” We need to know what they’re being paid in all of the add-ons, what they’re being paid when energy is not produced, what they’re being paid to shut down. We need to see copies of every energy contract this minister signs and every energy contract signed under this government because then and only then will the people of Ontario know what it is actually costing them to put the name on the dotted line. Don’t just pretend that the per-kilowatt-hour rate tells the story, because it doesn’t. I would challenge the minister.

The Premier talks about “accountability” and “transparency.” How many times have we heard those words? How many times have we heard her talk about accountability and transparency? It’s like that’s why she was put on this earth, to bring accountability and transparency to this Legislature. Well, let’s be accountable and let’s be transparent. Let’s bring every single energy contract out there and let the people see what’s being paid, because if you think for one minute that you can be paying someone

for a wind contract in the seven-cents range and that same company can be paying a municipality \$100,000 a year just to declare that municipality friendly to that project, you must be dreaming in Technicolor. We know there are other clauses and there are other add-ons, and the people of this province have a right to know, because every day or every month, for sure, whenever you get your hydro bill—I get a hydro bill every month. Every time you pick up a hydro bill, every disastrous mistake that this government has made is on it. It's on that price.

We are paying—according to the Auditor General, we've already paid—not just in renewables, which is \$9.2 billion, but \$37 billion more than we should have paid since 2006. That's when we first heard about—they used to call it the provincial benefit because back in the day, sometimes it actually reduced your hydro bill. Now it just seems so ridiculous to call anything that is putting some businesses out of business a provincial benefit.

Now they call it the global adjustment. You'd think they were Galileo or somebody: "It's the global adjustment." Global adjustment: It's so big that it encompasses the world. Well, if you're looking at your hydro bill, sometimes you figure that there must be an extension cord for your outlet to the rest of the world, because that's what it seems like when you pay your bill—

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Yak, I think that Nostradamus would be closer than Galileo.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Well, whatever.

The member from Timiskaming–Cochrane likes Nostradamus.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I don't think that's quite what he said.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** No.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** But anyway, we can have that scientific argument some other time.

The point that I'm trying to make is that they bring out such a term—"global adjustment"—that you'd almost think that they were powering the world, and with the rates, they probably are. Well, they're certainly feeding every Liberal-friendly developer out there—and not just at the \$7,500-a-plate dinners. I don't know what they're feeding them there, but it better be good.

But the people at home, Speaker—I'm going to have to get more time, because I barely got into some of the matter of the bill. I'm running out of time, and I see that I only have a minute or so left. I have got so many stakeholder comments here that I'm going to have some more time.

Every deputant but one who came to the committee said that this bill had to change, particularly schedule 2: It had to be eliminated so that the minister's power was not absolute. There's an old saying: "Absolute power corrupts absolutely"—I'm not suggesting that for a minute; I'm just saying an old saying, because I haven't got time to withdraw.

What I'm saying is, why would we do that? Why would the government want to do that? To protect the minister, we should not proceed with this. The government shouldn't proceed with it to protect themselves. But

the fact that they're doing it makes me very nervous, because if they can make this many mistakes and sign this many lucrative, exorbitant contracts under the old legislation, what are they going to do under the new? The people of Ontario: Where will they turn to with more power in the hands of this government? They've put people into energy poverty under the old rules. Under the new rules, no one in this province will be safe. Shame on them.

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

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I'm glad to be able to weigh in on the thoughtful and enthusiastic comments from the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke today on Bill 135, the Energy Statute Law Amendment Act. I always appreciate listening to the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. Sometimes I learn things, and sometimes I'm just—

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Amused?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:**—sometimes I learn things.

I would like to comment on some of the fine points that he made, especially in terms of energy poverty and connecting it with his community and the food bank usage. We've been having this conversation since I've been elected. When people are forced to make the tough choices between keeping the lights on or feeding their families, those are impossible choices. Driving people to the food banks is an important part of this conversation.

He also brought in the voices of those in rural Ontario. You know what, Mr. Speaker? I've learned that, even though the government doesn't often talk about it, there are people with voices in rural Ontario and northern Ontario. It is very important to continue to bring voice to their issues and their situations. To his point, that they might not have the high incomes or the public transit: With the cost at the pump, the cost of living in our rural and northern communities, and when we're talking about hydro and the cost of hydro, these are challenging times.

**1430**

Also, the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke brought us back to the committee process. I didn't sit in on this committee process but I sat in on many others, and it seems to be the same situation, that while we hear from people who are experts and weigh in, this is a government that is disregarding what they're hearing.

I'm out of time. That keeps happening.

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

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** It is always a pleasure to follow my friend from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, who appeared to have ascribed to himself a description of "bombastic," but I've known the gentleman for 13 years, and he's not bombastic. It may have been an unfocused, rambling harangue, but it was not bombastic.

There was one point that I'd like to clarify of the member's remarks. He was talking about the price of electricity. Let's look at the current price of electricity. off-peak, it's 8.7 cents; mid-peak, 13.2; and on-peak, 18 cents. This means that for most homes, their actual price

per kilowatt hour is in the 10-to-12-cent-per kilowatt-hour range.

At the end of last year, I looked up, through the US Energy Information Administration, as of the end of last year, what the electricity rates were in the various states around us. I converted them to Canadian cents per kilowatt hour using the then prevailing exchange rate of 75 cents: Connecticut, 25.9 cents per kilowatt hour—most places in Ontario, 10 to 12; Maine, 20.7; Massachusetts, 26.1; Vermont, 22.9; New York, 23.4; Pennsylvania, 18.8; Michigan, 19.4; Ohio, coal-powered, 16.81; Indiana, coal-powered, 14.8; Illinois, 15.8; Wisconsin, 18.4; and Minnesota, 15.7.

Speaker, any suggestion that Ontario power rates are the highest or growing faster just does not withstand an examination of the facts and a comparison with surrounding jurisdictions.

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

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** What a job our energy critic did. He spoke, as always, in a very articulate and eloquent way. He laid out our party's position on Bill 135.

I was, like every MPP, in my constituency over a week ago and met with a number of my local mayors. There was one conversation for me that stood out above all others, and it was meeting with the mayor of a small town. There's an arena in that small town, and hydro bills every month now are at least \$22,000 per month. That means that kids playing hockey, girls playing ringette, are paying higher fees, so it's really affecting moms and dads in my riding—and that's a small arena. I know some of these city arenas are a lot bigger, and the cost would be a lot more.

I was in a grocery store in my riding a year ago. Their hydro bills were \$8,000 a month; they're now \$10,000 a month—just a small Foodland grocery store in a small town in my riding. That means consumers, my constituents, are paying more for the cost of food, and ultimately, this small business is struggling to keep their lights on and those coolers operating.

Lastly, I met with an owner of a Crabby Joe's franchise in my riding. He was telling me that with the cost of electricity and this new ORPP that's coming in, they're going to really struggle to keep that business open.

This government is out of touch. They hear the same stories I'm hearing in my riding, and I just urge them to rethink their energy policy.

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

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I, too, listened with attention to the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. He has a way of delivering his message that makes you listen; good for him. But the message is still very important. At the end of the day, he talked about people not being able to make ends meet because of something as important as electricity. We have no choice. In 2016, all over our province, each and every one of us needs electricity. We

need it to be dependable and reliable and we need it to be there 24/7. Now we have a government that has decided to privatize our electricity system, despite everybody telling them that they don't want to. Eighty-five per cent of Ontarians tell this Liberal government that they do not want them to privatize Hydro, but it's as if they know better than 85% of the people of Ontario.

There was a huge rally in Sudbury—the Sudbury riding—this weekend for “Hydro One Not for Sale.” It was a miserable day. It was raining hard, but it didn't matter. Those volunteers came out and did some leafleting and delivered petitions to the MPP for Sudbury to make it clear that, in Sudbury people do not want the Liberal government to sell their assets.

Whenever I hear words like “broadening the ownership,” those are funny words to me, Speaker. Nobody uses those words when they want to be clear. You use words like this when you want to muddy the situation. You are selling Hydro One. You are privatizing our electricity system. Those are words that Ontarians understand, and this is what you're doing.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our questions and comments. I return to the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for his reply.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I appreciate the comments from the members from Oshawa, Mississauga–Streetsville, Lambton–Kent–Middlesex and Nickel Belt.

I want to focus on the comments from the member for Mississauga–Streetsville, who loves to play the numbers game, just like the minister. He cherry-picks the jurisdictions. Plus, in those jurisdictions, they talk about electricity in a single number. He didn't mention Manitoba and he didn't mention Quebec, but he mentioned Connecticut. What connection do we have to Connecticut? It's absolutely ridiculous that he'd bring it up. But they talk about an all-in price for hydro in those jurisdictions. When we talk about it here in Ontario, it's up to 18 cents a kilowatt hour, and that's just for the electricity. It doesn't include all the add-ons.

I just looked at my own hydro bill, which is not bad because it's just my wife and me there, and I'm away most of the week. But even at our place, it's about 23 cents a kilowatt hour when we do the add-ons. If you're a family of four in my riding—take a look at it—who has to do the wash and do clothes during the day because you can't be up all night because you've got four kids, then it's even more because it's 18 cents a kilowatt hour just for the power. So the member from Mississauga–Streetsville actually just perpetuates the silly numbers game that the minister tries to play.

To get up in here and pretend to those people struggling in my riding and other ridings that somehow electricity is a bargain in this province is absolutely ridiculous. It's shameful of them to try to play that charade. People are struggling and they're suffering in this province, and it's all because of the hydro policies of this government. When will they get it? When will they show some compassion for those people that can't take any more of it? Speaker, I've had enough of it. The

people in this province have had enough of it. It's time to change what you're doing.

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

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I appreciate the opportunity to rise and speak to this bill, Bill 135, a bill that slams shut the door on public intervention in the development of hydro planning in this province, a bill that one presenter who came to committee described as giving the Minister of Energy the powers of an energy czar—a massive concentration of power in the hands of one person and one cabinet. Because of that, this is a bill that will be condemned for years to come. This isn't one that will simply be lost in the woodwork; this is one that, in the future when there are inquiries into electricity scandals, will be cited. Committees, judges and commissions of inquiry will trace back where damaging, expensive and scandalous decisions started out, and they will have started out with this bill.

**1440**

This bill will be condemned as the public deals with unmanageable rising power rates. You can be sure, no matter what this government says, that rates are rising in a way that makes it unmanageable for families, for businesses and for institutions.

This bill will be condemned by a public that deals with the unexamined and unassessed environmental problems that flow from a process that has had environmental protection surgically removed.

Last week, I listened to the Minister of Energy and the member for Burlington as they did their leadoff speeches on third reading about this bill. Then I went and read what they had to say in Hansard. Their speeches were a festival of self-congratulation which surpassed most displays of that strange art even in this place. I had expected a variety of defences from the minister, defences around the issues of efficiency and timeliness with regard to this bill. They would have been wrong, but I would have understood why they tried to use them. What shocked me, Speaker, was that the key defence was the so-called success of the electricity policies pursued by this government. The mind boggles. The sheer boldness is breathtaking.

Let me just touch on a few of the noteworthy “successes” of this government on the electricity file.

The \$1.5 billion in surplus power that Ontario dumps every year on the electricity markets: a gift at pennies on the dollar to power users in New York and Michigan. Worse than that, we have been paying people to take the power, paying companies to take the power. The Auditor General notes in her 2015 report that Ontario paid \$32.6 million between 2009 and 2014 for other jurisdictions to take our power. We have paid provinces and states to take our power. Let that sink in: paid others to take our power. The surplus power that we sell at a huge discount or pay people to take is power that we, the families and businesses of Ontario, have to pay full price for. Is it a wonder that power rates are soaring in Ontario? Absolutely not.

Let's look at another “success”: smart meters. In 2006, the government relegated the Ontario Energy Board to the role of implementing ministerial directives related to the smart metering initiative, with no independent public scrutiny. As a result, Ontarians wound up with a \$2-billion boondoggle. Smart meters were supposed to substantially cut peak power that was used in Ontario, and if that in fact had been the case, it would have allowed a reduction in costs for gas peaker plants. It didn't do that. It didn't even come close to doing that. We spent \$2 billion with virtually no savings, opening the door at the same time to a variety of cyber security and privacy problems that this government has yet to address. The government ignored the Ontario Energy Board as a regulator when it brought in smart meters. In the end, no regulator, no public process, allowed for a detailed examination of the assumptions and conjectures of the government. Effectively, they were allowed to plunge forward unchecked, and we got stuck with the tab.

Yet another “success”—and I find it astounding to think of how the Minister of Energy considers these things a success—the gas plant scandal. Yes, Speaker: With these successes, this is truly a planning regime to write home about.

This bill perpetuates a regime of power planning that the Auditor General picked apart in her 2015 report and one that faced strong objections at committee hearings on the bill. I'll turn to that Auditor General report for more backup as I get further into the speech, but first I want to bring in some of the voices of those who appeared before committee to talk about the more damaging aspects of this bill.

The first presenter I want to quote is the co-chair of the Sustainable Energy Initiative at the faculty of environmental studies at York University, Mark Winfield. Now, one of the things that was—what could I say?—surprising or, in fact, shocking to me was how this witness was dismissed by the Liberal members of that committee after he had made his testimony. Professor Winfield is a heavy hitter. He's a man who has got long experience in environmental issues, is well respected for his analysis of power issues in Ontario—not someone to be dismissed lightly at all. What he had to say, on background:

“The electricity system planning process established in 2004 through the Electricity Restructuring Act”—so this was an act brought in place by the Liberal government of the time—“created and mandated the Ontario Power Authority to develop integrated power system plans for the province's electricity system. These plans were then subject to review and approval by the Ontario Energy Board on the basis of their cost-effectiveness and prudence.”

Professor Winfield sets out the legislative history of the planning process that we're dealing with and that this government is dismantling:

“Ontario regulation 277/06, made under the Electricity Act around the same time, required that the OPA demonstrate to the OEB that it considered sustainability

and environmental protection and safety in the development of those plans.” He set the context for us. What did the government intend? How did it refine its intent to ensure that the major issues that are to be considered in power planning were addressed?

He went on to say, “At its core, Bill 135 would abandon even this very limited structure of public review of proposed system plans. System plans would be developed by the Minister of Energy and approved by the cabinet. The OEB and the IESO would then be required to implement these plans. There would be no requirement for review or approval before the Ontario Energy Board.

“In my view, quite bluntly, this proposal is bad in terms of energy policy, it’s bad in terms of economic policy, it’s bad in terms of environmental policy and it is also politically unwise. It seems the government hasn’t learned very much from the gas plant cancellation adventure.”

Those are very strong words. This is someone with substantial background in this matter, who knows the energy system in Ontario and is well regarded in the environmental field, who has said that this bill is profoundly damaging, bad in terms of economic policy, bad in terms of environmental policy and politically unwise.

He says,

“Electricity system plans are the largest single net infrastructure investments made by the province.” And he’s right. We’re talking about the nervous system for Ontario. We’re talking about the circulatory system. We’re talking about critical factors for the running of a society. Anyone who was around for the failure of the electrical system in August 2003 knows that when the electricity system goes out, society grinds to a halt.

He says, “They”—the electricity systems—“carry with them major economic and environmental risks around the technological choices, costs and performance of different technologies. They carry risk of underbuilding or overbuilding infrastructure in a period of high economic uncertainty, and they carry risks of technological lock-in in what may be the most significant period of technological innovation in the electricity sector since the emergence of utility systems a century ago. We have seen game-changing developments in renewable energy technology, smart grids, distributed generation and energy storage.”

He’s right. It’s been a century since large-scale electricity production and widespread transmission have become a reality in industrialized societies. We are now going through, in this decade and the decade to come, far-reaching and profound changes to the way electricity is generated, distributed and used. This is not a time for ad hoc, partisan-driven planning. This is a time for sensible assessment of the options before us and planning for the long term, not planning for the next election.

**1450**

He notes, “The proposed legislation would mean that system plans and their contents would be subject to no meaningful external review”—no meaningful external review. “There would be no review of their economic rationality, cost-effectiveness or prudence through the

Ontario Energy Board. There would be no environmental review under the Environmental Assessment Act or any other mechanism. There would be no review in terms of their resilience and ability to adapt to changing economic, social or technological circumstances. And there will be no opportunities for non-governmental stakeholders—non-governmental organizations, industry, consumers and others—to challenge in a formal way key assumptions, data and risks that the plans may embed.

“In effect, this legislation abandons the notion of rational planning in the electricity system. The long-term design and management of the system would be effectively treated as a political matter. Ontario needs a rigorous, independent review of electricity system plans before they’re finalized to move toward implementation.”

This bill—and I think his words are entirely reasonable—“abandons the notion of rational planning in the electricity system.” That abandonment of rational planning has already damaged Ontario. It has damaged Ontario families and it has damaged those who try to cope with rising electricity bills and with a system that is not adapted to a changing climate.

What he has to say is a profound warning for this province, for this government, for all of us as legislators who are supposed to do our best to protect the interests of Ontarians. He said that this bill is not going to protect them. In fact, and I’ll go on, it puts them at risk.

Let’s see what others had to say. We had Scott Travers, president of the Society of Energy Professionals, come and speak. The Society of Energy Professionals represents the technical and managerial staff who work at Hydro One, the Independent Electricity System Operator, Bruce Power, Ontario Power Generation, Toronto Hydro, the Ontario Energy Board, the Electrical Safety Authority. It represents those people who have the professional and technical ability to run the system that this province depends on, and they are not pleased with this bill. They see this bill as undermining, as Mr. Winfield did, rational planning of the electricity system.

Mr. Travers said, “To be able to ensure that Ontario maintains the energy system’s integrity over the span of decades requires a technical plan that emphasizes evidence-based planning.”

Yes, Speaker, we want evidence-based planning when we’re investing billions of dollars. We want evidence and scientific methods when we’re deciding how exactly we’re going to provide ourselves with electricity over the decades to come. The abandonment of that approach is an irresponsible approach.

“As history has shown, when we get the energy planning process right, Ontario’s sizable investment in infrastructure pays dividends in Ontarians’ quality of life, our environmental health and economic well-being. However, we also know that if the government fails to get planning issues right, the results can be very costly, resulting in wasted time, wasted effort and wasted public money.”

It’s a very clear outline of the issues by the head of the Society of Energy Professionals, the head of the

organization that represents those who run our electricity system. He notes that in 2004, the Liberal government brought in the planning system that is being abandoned with this bill. At the time, Dwight Duncan, who was the Minister of Energy, stated that the system that he was bringing in aimed to provide “concrete action to put the energy sector back on a solid footing after years of mismanagement and political interference by previous governments.”

Speaker, it has to be recognized that with this bill, the whole notion of putting the energy sector back on a sound footing is being abandoned.

Mr. Travers talked about the integrated power supply plan that is supposed to be at the centre—at the core—of power planning in Ontario. “The ultimate strength of the IPSP process lies in its use of the Ontario Energy Board hearing process to allow a full vetting of the plan in an open, transparent and participatory venue. It is natural and, in fact, desirable that complex and contested issues such as electricity system planning should attract competing visions, approaches and interests.”

Speaker, note how different that is from what the minister wants to put in place. What he wants to put in place is a system where he, the minister, dictates. He gets to put out a plan that people can comment on. He can ignore those comments and go on. It is very different, profoundly different, from what is supposed to exist now: a process in which, in an open forum, an open tribunal, evidence can be assessed, witnesses cross-examined and, frankly, skepticism can be allowed full rein so that the truth of what is happening and the truth of what’s being put forward can be assessed. That is not what is going to happen with Bill 135.

Mr. Travers notes, “The open nature of the OEB processes allows industry stakeholders, consumer and ratepayer representatives, community and specific interest groups, as well as members of the general public, to make comment or participate as intervenors. They may introduce their own evidence, seek to have plan proponents provide additional evidence, challenge evidence which has been presented by others, and make arguments based on evidence that’s in the record.”

Again, Speaker, what Mr. Travers outlined is a process very different from the informal one that the Liberals have had in place for the last decade and that they want to formalize with this bill. Again, effectively, the government gets to put together their plan and people get to comment. They don’t get to cross-examine. They don’t get to present their own evidence. They’re just along for the ride. And the regulator, the Ontario Energy Board, simply is cut out of that process.

Mr. Travers notes that “the 2015 annual report of the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario included an in-depth review and audit of the electricity system planning process in Ontario. The Auditor General found that ‘over the last decade, this power system planning process has essentially broken down, and Ontario’s energy system has not had a technical plan in place for the last 10 years. Operating outside the checks and balances of the

legislated planning process, the Ministry of Energy has made a number of decisions about power generation that have resulted in significant costs to electricity consumers.’”

Speaker, he noted that the Auditor General found that this planning process that the minister has in place, that he’s trying to formalize with this bill, still was “‘not sufficient for addressing Ontario power system’s needs and for protecting electricity consumers’ interests.’”

“Bill 135 seeks to make fundamental changes to the planning process, including eliminating the requirement for the IESO to develop an IPSP—or a technical plan, as the AG refers to it—vesting such planning authority in the Minister of Energy. At the same time, the Bill 135 approach would reduce the mandatory oversight role of the OEB to a simple review of the capital costs of implementation. The society believes that the proposed alterations to the planning process would severely hamper the political independence and effectiveness of the electricity system planning process and oversight in a way detrimental to the public good.

“In essence,” he says, “Bill 135 seeks to enshrine in legislation a planning process which has been found severely wanting. It is the opinion of the society that the effect of Bill 135, as written, is inherently incompatible with complying with system planning best practices and with the recommendation of the Auditor General’s report with respect to the system planning process.”

#### 1500

Speaker, the representative of the body of women and men who are the professionals that we rely on to run our electricity system has said that this bill fundamentally undermines what is needed in Ontario for proper power planning. When you put it in terms of proper power planning, it’s sort of a distant, dry, administrative thing, but it determines whether your bills, my bills, our bills for electricity will be affordable. It determines whether or not the system will be sustainable. It determines whether or not the system will be reliable.

All of those things rest on the ability to actually plan the system properly and ensure that the considerations that dominate when we invest tens of billions of dollars are those that relate to the best interests of Ontarians, not to the short-term political interests of the party in power.

In summarizing the failure to maintain proper oversight of this process by the Ontario Energy Board, Mr. Travers says, “Removing the OEB from this role would mean that there would be no public forum or regulatory decision-making body to vet the technical and economic soundness of the energy plan.”

That is what happened to us with the smart meters. The Ontario Energy Board was not asked to review the process, they were not asked to do an analysis and they weren’t asked to assess the evidence. They were simply told to implement.

In the end, the consequences could have been foretold. In fact, Howard Hampton, the former head of the Ontario NDP, said at the time that this was a bad business decision, a mistake. He referred to the smart meters as



“McGuinty meters”; that’s about as damning as you get, I guess. And he was right: \$2 billion with very little to show for it.

I asked Mr. Travers what risk this bill posed to the people of Ontario. He said, “There’s quite a bit of risk, actually. There’s risk of failure to vet the plan against the objectives. In Bill 135, the problem would be that you still state objectives at the beginning, then you ask for technical input, but no one actually tests that the plan that ends up being produced is the most economic, reliable, efficient way to meet the objectives. There’s no oversight. There’s no testing of the plan....”

“There’s no opportunity to vet that input, so stakeholders could be giving erroneous information to the ministry. There’s no opportunity for other stakeholders to challenge the veracity of that information, nor do we know what the ministry does with the information” provided by stakeholders.

Speaker, the people who actually run the system, who have the professional background to run a sophisticated 21st-century grid over a huge land mass, believe that this electricity planning process is fundamentally flawed, a mistake and one that shouldn’t be going forward.

We also had the Canadian Environmental Law Association come to speak to committee and make a presentation. Their presentation was focused more on environmental factors, but was as strong in its rejection as the rejection of the Society of Energy Professionals. To quote them, “We are opposed to the bill.”

“In my presentation today,” said Jacqueline Wilson, counsel for the Canadian Environmental Law Association, “I’m going to focus on three issues. The first is the reduced accountability for long-term energy planning brought in by Bill 135; in particular, the concentration of power for long-term energy planning with the minister and the reduced role for the Independent Electricity System Operator and the Ontario Energy Board. The second issue I will address is the decreased opportunities for public participation in the system brought in by this bill; in particular, our concern with the reduced access to documents. Finally, the third issue I’m going to address is that environmental considerations have been sidelined by this bill. There’s no mandatory duty on the minister in the long-term energy planning process to consider a whole slew of very important environmental concerns, and the long-term energy plans are again exempted from the Environmental Assessment Act.”

She went on to say, “In terms of reduced accountability, power is concentrated now for long-term energy plans with the minister. The power of other actors in the system has been significantly reduced by the amendments brought forward in Bill 135.”

Speaker, that’s consequential. We spent a lot of money setting up the Independent Electricity System Operator. We spent a lot of money setting up the Ontario Power Authority, which has now been merged with the IESO. We spend a lot of money on the Ontario Energy Board, the regulator, and yet in terms of the planning that needs to be done in this province, they have been largely

sidelined. That will be consequential for us; consequential in terms of the environmental sustainability, cost and reliability of the electricity system that we depend on.

She notes that, “Under the old system, the Ontario Energy Board hearings would provide an independent eye and look at” the plans brought forward by the Independent Electricity System Operator. That process “included significant public participation rights.” That power is completely removed by this bill. “There’s absolutely no independent review of the long-term energy plans contemplated by this bill.”

That’s right, Speaker. The minister can say all he wants about consultation, but the reality is that the level of public participation in this process of electricity planning has been dramatically reduced in this bill.

Ms. Wilson notes that the minister has said that all kinds of documentation on power use and projected power demand will be provided to the public, but she notes that the section in the bill that relates to this matter “contemplates the release of other important documents only after the long-term energy plan is issued. In its language it contemplates ‘key data and cost projections’” being made available. They would be released at this time at the end of the process “when it’s too late, when the long-term energy plan has already been issued. It’s absolutely essential for the public to have access to that type of information before the long-term energy plan is issued and during the consultation process. Those two sections do not provide enough information to the public for true engagement on the minister’s long-term energy plan.”

Speaker, it can be dressed up in as fancy a way as the minister can imagine, in as fancy a way as the communications director for the minister’s office can imagine, but the fundamental reality is this: The key data that people will need to do an in-depth assessment of the energy plan that comes forward won’t be released until after the energy plan is all put together. People can go on and chat as much as they like, they can talk about what they don’t like and what they do like, but their ability to get at the critical pieces of information won’t be there. That is a fundamental flaw in this bill.

She notes that people should compare the process in this bill to the Ontario Energy Board’s, previously, “where the interveners had access to all of the written evidence that would be relied on to justify the plans. They could submit alternative evidence, argument, interrogatories and cross-examine witnesses.”

That’s a process in which the public actually has the opportunity to get at the heart, the nub of the issue, to really delve into the information, find the flaws, bring them out and have a process that will really make sure the public is a partner in all of this. They’re done in; that’s it.

Ms. Wilson noted that “The Environmental Assessment Act is also exempted under this legislation. Long-term energy plans and all related undertakings are again exempted. Not only is there no Ontario Energy Board process, there’s no independent process to study the

environmental impacts of these long-term energy plans either.”

**1510**

That’s a huge problem. There’s all kinds of discussion about environmental protection, all kinds of discussion about sustainability. But if in fact the energy plan, which will be so central to the operation of the province for decades to come, is exempted from an environmental assessment, then the ability, in this case—setting aside the numbers on demand, on cost—to get at the environmental consequences of what’s being brought forward have been profoundly damaged.

She notes, “An Environmental Assessment Act review of a long-term energy plan would require appropriate consideration of alternatives and the likely environmental effects of the proposal. That analysis of long-term energy plans is totally missing from Bill 135.”

Whatever the influential group of insiders decides that the minister needs to actually put forward as a plan—whatever minister is subject to the pressure, to the inducements, of those insiders, those lobbyists—that will be the plan that comes forward. An assessment of the alternatives, looking at what perhaps is more cost-effective, perhaps more environmentally beneficial—that process won’t exist. This bill rolls back protection for consumers for protection against soaring hydro rates, but it also sets aside protection against profound environmental mistakes. That is not supportable.

Ms. Wilson concluded by saying, “In summary, CELA does not support the changes to the long-term energy planning system. There’s decreased accountability and transparency. Power is concentrated with the minister, and the role of other important actors in the system, like the IESO, the OEB and the public, are significantly diminished, and the environment is sidelined, including by exempting long-term energy plans from the Environmental Assessment Act.”

That is a powerful list of negatives that flow from this bill, a powerful list of negatives that should say to everyone in this chamber that this bill must be defeated.

This is a bill that rolls back decades of transparency. It rolls back the development of environmental assessment in this province. This is a bill that makes for a much riskier planning system and a much less reliable, much less sustainable electricity system in the years to come.

I have to say, after her testimony, we had an opportunity to ask questions. My colleague Mr. John Yakabuski asked, “Can you find me anywhere in here”—referring to the bill—“that this Bill 135, as written, strengthens the Ontario Energy Board?”

Ms. Wilson: “No, I don’t think this bill does strengthen the Ontario Energy Board. As I mentioned, the main role of the Ontario Energy Board in the past, under the old legislation, was to provide an independent forum of review for the IESO’s plans.... That power is gone in Bill 135.”

On a regular basis, you can listen to the minister talk about the power of a rejuvenated Ontario Energy Board and its ability to protect consumers and protect the

province against unreasonable price increases. But Speaker, it is very clear that this bill is all about eviscerating that Ontario Energy Board, making it a sock puppet—not a guard dog, a sock puppet. That’s what this government wants to do with it.

I had an opportunity to ask Ms. Wilson a follow-up question, and I asked, “This bill certainly doesn’t strengthen the OEB. Does it diminish its powers?” Her response was: “Yes, I think this bill significantly diminishes the power of the Ontario Energy Board.” That was very powerful testimony from that witness.

We also had before us the Green Energy Coalition, with two speakers: counsel Mr. David Poch and a senior energy analyst at Greenpeace Canada, Shawn-Patrick Stensil. Mr. Stensil noted that the Auditor General came out with a report in December discussing the problems with power planning over the last decade. He noted that the government had tried to portray this bill as a response to the flaws, the problems that were pointed out by the Auditor General. Mr. Stensil would take issue with any suggestion that the bill that was coming forward was a positive response to the flaws pointed out by the Auditor General.

He said, “We actually see that this bill will make some of the problems identified in the auditor’s report worse by removing checks on the power of the minister and by lowering transparency.”

Speaker, this bill rolls back transparency. It drops a heavy curtain over the information that the public needs to assess power plans. It concentrates power in the hands of one man, the Minister of Energy, the energy czar. It is a step back for democracy, not a step forward.

Mr. David Poch, counsel for the Green Energy Coalition, spoke: “I’ve styled the bill the ‘energy czar act,’ with all due respect to the minister. That’s what it de facto is. It’s a total concentration of power. It’s a retreat from public process. I’m astounded by the doublespeak that we’ve been hearing. It’s going to eliminate the OEB’s public hearing review of energy plans and eliminate environmental review of energy plans. It will not ensure transparency or accountability. And I think the conclusion is that it’s going to encourage more gas plant fiascos and white elephant megaprojects.”

I think Mr. Poch is entirely right. I don’t think that this government has learned anything from the gas plant fiasco. It certainly learned nothing from the smart meter boondoggle. All of the conditions that allowed for those two monumental wastes of public money are going to be codified and brought forward in this bill: an elimination of meaningful public participation; a dramatic reduction in transparency; and a dramatic concentration of power in the hands of the minister. None of this bodes well for Ontario. All of this speaks to future threats and risks to this province and its electricity system.

In talking about the removal of environmental assessment, of environmental protection in this process, Mr. Stensil had this to say: “What I would also flag from an environmental perspective that we didn’t get to in the presentation is that this bill effectively ends sustainability

assessment in the Ontario legal system. This has been death through a thousand cuts. You may remember Minister Broten justifying a regulation in 2006 that removed provincial environmental assessments. This is now basically codifying that as well. From an environmental perspective, that is not a good thing moving forward. We hope that could also be addressed in the longer term.”

Mr. Poch added, “Part of the rationale for taking energy projects out of environmental assessment per se was because this IPSP process could look at those things—or the joint board process before it. Now there’s no such thing, so there is no environmental review of the choice between alternative energy paths.”

Speaker, this bill narrows the potential for the public to actually have an impact. It narrows it to the point of invisibility. It narrows it profoundly.

Last week, the minister talked about this bill and had a very different view of things. He said, “Mr. Speaker, we’re going to continue to focus on ensuring that our electricity system is clean, reliable and affordable for all. That can only be accomplished with a modern, updated planning framework, which Bill 135 would provide.”

First off, to say that this system is affordable is—I’m looking for parliamentary language that I can use. It in no way reflects the reality experienced by the vast majority of Ontarians. I think that’s about as neutral as I can get. They would not call it affordable. As I go through my riding of Toronto–Danforth, which, compared to many other ridings in the province, is relatively well off, people are starting to complain about their electricity bills because they find they are growing at an unsustainable rate.

**1520**

I also want to note the question of reliability. This is a government that has not planned for adaptation to a changing climate. In 2013 in Toronto, a significant storm wiped out power in a big chunk of the west end of the city. This is a threat that we had known about for a long time. This government was not prepared for that. The ice storm in December of that year, something that we had been talking about since the mid-1990s: The government was not prepared for that.

This planning process is not going to address reliability. This planning process will make some specific, individual, private interests very wealthy; no question there. That’s apparent. But in terms of the public, openness and protection of the system, no. This bill is a set-up for failure.

This is a government that has been ignoring its own laws for years. The energy planning regime that will be legitimized with this bill is the one that has actually been in place. So we don’t need to guess or speculate about what impact it will have when it’s actually formally put into law, because we’ve already seen the result of its operation. Frankly, it does not bear out the minister’s claim.

I’m going to go back to the Auditor General, who published her 2015 annual report at the end of last year.

One of the most important chapters was the one that dealt with electricity planning in Ontario.

Her summary was fairly straightforward. She wrote, “An enormous amount of technical planning is required for Ontario to determine how it will meet its future electricity demands. The importance of this type of planning is reflected in provincial legislation: The Electricity Act ... was amended in 2004 to require the Ontario Power Authority ... to conduct independent planning and prepare an ‘integrated power system plan,’ a technical plan to help Ontario meet its future electricity demands. To protect the interests of consumers,” the Ontario Energy Board was to “review and approve the technical plan to ensure it is prudent, cost-effective, and consistent with the government’s supply mix directive.” She set out the context within which planning is supposed to happen in Ontario, what the history was of the legislation, what the role was of the different players in that system.

She goes on to write, “But over the last decade, this power system planning process has essentially broken down, and Ontario’s energy system has not had a technical plan in place for the last 10 years. Operating outside the checks and balances of the legislated planning process, the Ministry of Energy has made a number of decisions about power generation that have resulted in significant costs to electricity consumers.”

I want to note that the minister and the member from Burlington spoke glowingly about this bill last week, this bill that has been assessed and found wanting by the Auditor General. She says the power planning process has broken down, that the Liberal government has ignored its own laws.

Now, I don’t know about you, Speaker, but I find it kind of shocking that we go through all this debate, committee work, public consultation, proclamation, and the government ignores the law with a very casual approach: “Yeah, we passed that law—kind of interesting; nice to have it on the books—but we don’t have to operate the way the law says. We just ignore it.”

She notes that the decisions made with this process that has operated outside the law have resulted in significant costs to electricity consumers. This is not back-patting territory. This is ashamed-to-be-in-public territory. That’s what we have on our hands. That’s what is being codified in this bill.

The minister constantly uses the Ontario Energy Board as a shield against criticism for the sale of Hydro One, saying that this very vigorous regulator will protect the public against unreasonable price increases. But as the Auditor General made clear, the OEB has been cut out of the planning process and increasingly will oversee a smaller and smaller part of the electricity system. She writes that the Ontario Energy Board “was not given an opportunity to review the technical plans as is required under the Electricity Act.”

Interesting. Again, not only does the government write its plans ignoring the laws that it put in place, but it also doesn’t allow the Ontario Energy Board, the regulator, its legal task of reviewing those plans. The OEB “has not

been able to ensure that Ontario's technical energy planning has been carried out in a prudent and cost-effective manner to protect the interests of electricity consumers over the past 10 years."

Is anyone shocked that our electricity rates are soaring? Is anyone surprised that a plan that's not reviewed in an open forum where the public has a chance to actually go after the evidence—is anyone surprised that this process has resulted in soaring hydro rates? We shouldn't be. This government ignores the law in a very substantial part of Ontario's life, and we all pay the price, the consequences.

"From 2004 to 2014, the amount that residential and small-business electricity consumers pay for the electricity commodity portion (includes global adjustment fees) of their bill has increased by 80%, from 5.02 cents/kWh to 9.06 cents/kWh." When you have a planning process that is not transparent or open or one that brings in the public, then the door is open to all kinds of abuses, mistakes, white elephants, fiascos and scandals.

The OEB is becoming increasingly irrelevant as the minister continues on with his plans. What about these claims by the minister in his speech that the process is open, transparent and accessible? What did the Auditor General find actually happened on the ground?

"In 2010, the ministry published its 'long-term energy plan' ... a shorter, more policy-oriented document outlining Ontario's energy goals and supply mix for the next 20 years. Although there is no legislative requirement for the ministry to prepare such a plan, the ministry updated its policy plan in 2013...."

The Auditor General noted that while "the ministry's 2013 policy plan provided more technical information than the 2010 policy plan, we found that this plan was still not sufficient for addressing Ontario power system's needs and for protecting electricity consumers' interests."

I think that's a pretty profound statement for an Auditor General, to say that the plan was inadequate to protect the interests of the people of Ontario and did not actually provide the information, the analysis, needed for the system. She noted:

"—No cost/benefit analysis of other alternatives—The ministry's 2010 and 2013 policy plans did not present the detailed cost/benefit analyses of the different scenarios and alternatives included in technical plans, such as the plans the" Ontario Power Authority "prepared ... in 2007 and 2011."

Former leader of the Ontario NDP Howard Hampton made many impassioned speeches in this chamber about the need to put conservation first as a way of dealing with soaring hydro prices. As we were phasing out coal and building all kinds of gas plants, we could have invested heavily in far cheaper efficiency and conservation, sparing families and businesses much of the disruption that they've had to go through in dealing with soaring hydro prices. But this is a government that didn't want to consider those options or alternatives and still doesn't want to consider options or alternatives that are, environmentally or economically, far more beneficial for the people of Ontario.

The minister claimed that the consultation process would be open and transparent, consistent with the government's open dialogue program—which I have to say I found vastly entertaining, not that I've noticed a lot of openness. The minister talked about all those who participated in the consultations and about the number of submissions considered. I want to go back to the hard and fairly cold reality of what the Auditor General found. In her report, she had the headline, "Questionable stakeholder consultation process—The ministry undertook a two-month stakeholder consultation process for its 2010 policy plan but could not provide us with a summary of the responses it received."

1530

Speaker, if you have a—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'm sorry to interrupt, but I want to welcome to the Ontario Legislature this afternoon the former member from Mississauga South in the 38th Parliament, Mr. Tim Peterson, who was here for some time. There he is; he's still here. Welcome to the Ontario Legislature. You can't give a speech.

Again, I return to the member for Toronto—Danforth.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Thank you, Speaker.

The ministry undertook a two-month consultation and couldn't provide a summary at the end of what people had to say. There are different theories. One theory is that a summary was written, but it was a top-secret document. When the Auditor General's staff were hammering on the minister's door, the deputy minister was eating the only copy so that no evidence would be found. That is one option.

The other option is that the consultation—the words spoken and the documents presented—were never allowed to sully the untouched ears of ministerial political staff. They were never allowed to disturb the calm that the minister was feeling as he went forward with the plan. Did the deputy minister eat a secret document, or did the minister and his staff totally ignore the consultations? I leave it to discerning legislators to come to their own conclusions. What is most likely?

I note that the plan was released five days after the consultations were ended. So that's two months of consultations—five days after the consultation period ended. Now, again, there are two theories. The consultation ended and, frantically, over 48 hours, everything that was said was analyzed and synthesized, and people worked non-stop doing writing, editing, proofreading, laying out a report, publishing a report and bringing it out. That is one theory. The other is that the plan was written long before the consultations ended—laid out, written, edited, proofread and published, while people were still going on at length in meeting rooms. Again, I leave it to discerning members of the public or discerning legislators to establish which is the more likely course of reality. I have my sense, Speaker. I have my sense.

But I want to again ask the members in this chamber, do we vote for bills in the expectation that the laws that are passed will actually be of consequence? What are we doing here, when we pass bills that are supposed to bind

the government and which the government ignores, when the proclamation of a bill is, frankly, irrelevant to whether it will be of consequence in the years to come, because this government quite happily ignores them?

For those members of the public who may well want to comment on these energy plans, these electricity plans, knowing that, most likely, in the most plausible scenario, what they have to say is ignored, and the report is written and published before they're finished speaking—what kind of democracy is this, Speaker, where the laws are irrelevant and so are the opinions and thoughts of the public? With that approach, this Liberal government makes a mockery of democracy in this province.

This government has ignored the law and has ignored the technical bodies that it set up to assist it in doing planning. The Auditor General: “When the OPA/IESO merger legislation passed in July 2014, it included a provision still requiring the new entity (the IESO) to prepare a technical plan and submit it to the Ontario Energy Board for review. After the merger took place in 2015, the new IESO wrote to the ministry about potential changes to the long-term planning process. At the time of our audit—the Auditor General’s audit—“the ministry had not responded or provided the IESO with any direction regarding the preparation of a technical plan.”

The IESO, a pretty sophisticated body employing some very capable professionals, was treated as an irritant, as an errant child tugging at the minister’s jacket: “Please, Minister, what instructions do you have for us? Will we be following the law or not this year?” And what was the response? The response was silent.

If a sophisticated body charged with putting together technical plans and running the electricity system in Ontario is treated as a minor irritant that can be ignored safely, how, then, are the words and thoughts of citizens out there concerned about electricity planning to be treated? Will they be treated better than an operation that has a big operation here in Ontario and employs sophisticated power planners? I don’t think so. I think they will be treated with the same lack of respect, the same disdain, as the bodies that have been set up to actually run the electricity system in this province.

My time is short, but I can’t pass further without noting that this is a government that has set up the conditions for an incredible shrinking regulator. This is a government that has cut the OEB out of the planning process. This is a government that, because of the way it has defined which power contracts will be regulated and won’t, is increasingly making sure that the Ontario Energy Board doesn’t review rates. By law, the OEB may only review rates for nuclear power from Pickering and Darlington, and for hydro power produced by OPG. This means that OEB’s oversight is limited to about 35% of Ontario’s current installed capacity. The way things are going, it’s going to drop down to a quarter.

If 75% of the power system is not reviewed by the regulator, do you actually have a regulated power system?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** No.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I would say no. My colleagues have been interjecting, but I will echo what they’ve said: No. That’s not what you have. We hear from the minister that the OEB will protect the public from new, higher rates and protect them from Hydro One, but, in fact, this government has systemically made sure that the OEB is cut out. Sure, their offices may be shiny; I don’t know. Sure, people may have nice desks and great computers. But, in fact, they will be regulating less and less of the electricity system. That, for us in this province, means greater and greater risk.

This bill is odious. This bill damages Ontario. This bill perpetuates an approach on the part of the government that sidelines the public, puts us at risk for much higher electricity rates and puts us at risk for more gas plant scandals and smart meter boondoggles. This bill is a step backward for democracy in Ontario, not a step forward. There’s no basis whatsoever for anyone in this chamber to support it—not anyone who likes to say with a straight face that they’re interested in the condition of the people of Ontario.

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

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** It is always a pleasure to follow my colleague from Beaches–East York. I listened carefully to the remarks that he made—

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I am from Toronto–Danforth.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I beg your pardon; Toronto–Danforth. I correct my record on that.

He didn’t mention the present system, which I believe is called the Integrated Power System Plan or something very close to that. Now, one could ask, if the present system was so good, how many power plans, how many long-range plans, did it ever produce? Answer: none.

**1540**

So beginning just prior to the year 2010, when the province said, “There’s got to be a better way to do this”—and that became what we now know as the long-term energy plan. This is not something that was thought up last week, last month, or even last year. It had its first try in 2010 and a second try in 2013.

In 2013, for example, it was the biggest, most open and most comprehensive consultation on energy in the Ministry of Energy’s history—bar nothing. There were 12 regional sessions held, including roundtable discussions with stakeholders. There were open houses for the public. There were 10 aboriginal sessions held.

Participants sent in close to 8,000 questionnaires. The information gleaned suggested that there is indeed a methodology to effectively listen to people and to be able to take their comments into a plan, a plan that has produced not one but two long-term energy plans, each one building on the foundation of the other.

It’s that successful experience with an open, consultative procedure, one that listens effectively to Ontarians from all walks of life, from all regions of the province, that Bill 135 seeks to perpetuate in this Energy Statute Law Amendment Act.

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

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's my pleasure to comment on Bill 135. Our colleague has brought up a lot of good points. I think early in his chat he talked a fair bit about the challenge that this government has had within the energy sector. I think he referenced the Green Energy Act and really talked a lot about how much we pay—not give away our surplus power; we actually pay the United States and neighbouring jurisdictions like Quebec to take our power, which makes us very unproductive.

The cost is higher to residents, to businesses, to all of our public institutions, which seems, again, to go unnoticed as to how much those are impacting the budget. Then that's taken out of front-line health care services, Mr. Speaker, when your energy bill is doubling or tripling.

He talked about smart meters. He talked, of course, about the gas plant scandal and all of the money wasted there. He brought up the Auditor General's report which, again, has been very critical of the government and where their plan is going.

I just can't chat here today. My colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke brought up the fact earlier that one of the people across the hall—Glengarry–Prescott–Russell—said everything's well in his world. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to hydro in Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, the majority of people are not thinking that it's well, good or any of those types of adjectives.

At the end of the day, we have a very big concern when a bill comes out like this that's going to give even more power to the energy minister.

It doubly troubles me when the Minister of the Environment comes out and says things like they're going to get rid of nuclear power in 10 years, one of our cleanest, freest, most environmentally sound ways of producing power. So I find it—

**Interjection:** A strong employer.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** A very strong employer; lots of great-paying jobs.

It's a huge impact to our economy. So to give more power to a couple of ministers when they do that—they just actually had agreed that they're going to extend and refurbish all of our nuclear plants. To have the minister come out and say, "In 10 years it will be gone," I struggle, Mr. Speaker. There's trust, there's competency, and the track record of the Liberals on energy is not stellar.

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

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to put some comments on the record regarding the presentation given by my colleague from Toronto–Danforth. I always enjoy listening to my colleague, but I must say it was a sobering hour. It really was.

Then it got a bit more comedic when the member from Mississauga–Streetsville said that the Liberal long-term energy plans have been going so swell. I don't think there is anyone in my riding, specifically the people who can't pay their hydro bills, who thinks that anything's going so

swell. Specifically, the people who now got letters in the mail that say, "You know those smart meters you have on your wall? No, they don't work. So we're going to have to read your meters manually again." I don't think they think it's going so swell.

So I'd ask the member from Mississauga–Streetsville if the moving of the gas plants was part of the Liberal long-term energy plan that cost us all \$1 billion. Was that part of the plan?

Installing smart meters for people in rural Ontario: I had someone from Hydro One tell me, "Yes, we thought there were going to be problems because smart meters don't read well with obstacles like rocks and trees." In northern Ontario, who knew? Was that part of the plan?

Again, now that we have this issue coming up with these offshore wind farms that a contract was signed and, oops, the contract was pulled off the table and could cost big dollars to the taxpayers of Ontario: Was that part of the plan?

Then they come out with this law, which is going to give the minister even more power, since the plans are working so well. We have some serious problems with the Liberals' plans on energy in this province.

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

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri:** It's a privilege and honour to rise in support of Bill 135.

If I might, Speaker, for a moment, with your indulgence, speak not merely as a parliamentarian but also as a physician and how that intersects with the energy sector matrix changes that we've made. I think it is to be remembered that one of the legacies of the McGuinty government was an extraordinary commitment to close coal-fired generation plants in the province of Ontario. I would respectfully say to my eager colleagues who are attempting to interrupt me across the way that I would invite them to visit other parts of the world, whether it's Mumbai, Beijing or Athens or other cities around the world who have not had that same insight and that same energy matrix change.

I can tell you, as a physician, that that cumulative burden of airshed quality derangements—the pollution, essentially, whether it's particulate matter, the smoke, the layers of smoke that people find themselves in towards the evening—has an extraordinary impact on human, animal and environmental health. That is something for which I think we really should celebrate the McGuinty Liberal government and, by extension, of course, the Wynne government. It was a commitment that was made and a commitment that was honoured. Whether it's the removal of smog days, whether it's the effect on respiratory illnesses like asthma and chronic obstructive lung disease and so on, this is a remarkable thing.

The other thing I have to say with respect to my honourable colleagues from the NDP is that your national party wants to conserve its way in terms of energy. Basically they're saying, for example with the Leap Manifesto, however eloquent it is—it basically says to leave all the fossil fuels in the ground. I would like to

know if you folks actually support that. Are you going to conserve your way to energy self-sufficiency in Ontario?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our questions and comments. The member from Toronto–Danforth can reply.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I appreciate the opportunity to respond. I want to thank the members from Mississauga–Streetsville, Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, Timiskaming–Cochrane and Etobicoke North for their comments.

I was asked a question by the member from Mississauga–Streetsville. Two integrated power supply plants were brought forward, in 2007 and 2011; 2007 was pulled by the Minister of Energy and 2011 wasn't allowed to proceed and, frankly, should have proceeded. I think there may well have been items in that plan that were problematic for the government—that were politically problematic—and thus they yanked it.

I'll go back to 1988-89, the demand-supply plan. This addresses the member from Etobicoke North as well. That plan was one that was subjected to a broad range of inquiry, to an open tribunal. People may need to remember that that plan included a massive increase in nuclear new build in Ontario and far more coal plants. It was the environmental assessment that actually put a stop to that and made it clear that this was not going to go anywhere. If there hadn't been public input at that time, we would have been saddled with possibly tens of billions of dollars more in generating capacity that we couldn't use and, with coal plants, would be choking us today. So I actually think that an open, environmentally focused plan for Ontario makes a lot of sense.

I would say that my colleague from Timiskaming–Cochrane is quite correct when he says that people in his riding, and increasingly people in ridings around Ontario, ask themselves: "What kind of electricity system do we have—one that impoverishes us rather than one that allows this province to thrive, to flourish, economically and environmentally?"

This bill is one that will be remembered badly for decades to come.

1550

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

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** This debate on Bill 135, the Energy Statute Law Amendment Act, is an opportunity to remind Ontarians how far we have come in the past 13 years in planning the province's use of energy in all its forms.

Speaker, before I continue, I'd like to say that I am sharing my time with the member for Kingston and the Islands and also the member for Beaches–East York.

It is useful to begin by asking, what was the policy and the process by which Ontario planned its energy production and usage the last time that the official opposition formed government? It's also an easy question to answer, as well. There was no process; there was no policy. There were no means to any end. As a consequence, they got little of value done in the 1990s and the early part of the 2000s.

As the Ontario economy grew during that period, the province's ability to generate electricity actually shrank. Faced with shortages, both looming and present, the PC governments of Mike Harris and Ernie Eves reacted with the usual short-term measures. They cranked up coal-fired electricity generation to almost a quarter of Ontario's total and they bought whatever else they needed from the neighbouring jurisdictions, particularly the United States, much of which was generated by coal. That's a big part of why the greater Toronto area averaged about 50 smog days per year and why more and more kids were coming to our schools with puffers for the allergies and lung conditions that no longer proliferate like they did back then.

That's what this bill is about. Ontario needed a better process. Like most good things that have evolved from basic principles, how Ontario plans energy production and usage was a process that learned to walk before it could run, and that's what Bill 135 is. It is a law that says that Ontario has learned how to plan the production and use of energy in all its forms and to do so in a way that is more precise than before, more participative than before and more thorough than before.

It is a law that says that we will use the better method rather than the old, imprecise, ivory tower, incomplete method. By the way, the opposition in this House wants to keep using the old, imprecise, ivory tower, incomplete method. The old way never produced an Ontario energy plan ever—not even once. So what is this new precise, participative, thorough plan? Here are its key parts.

In doing two long-term energy plans, one in 2010 and one in 2013, the province has refined a responsive, thoughtful, well-consulted energy planning process. Bill 135 will have Ontario keep doing the things that have been proven to be effective. Bill 135 would establish in law a long-term energy planning process that is transparent, efficient and able to respond to changing policy and system needs. The essence of the process Bill 135 proposes has been tried twice. It worked both times, getting better with each usage. Bill 135 is about building on that successful and proven foundation.

As an example, in 2013, the long-term energy plan was the biggest, most open and comprehensive consultation process in the Ministry of Energy's history. The long-term energy plan discussion document was posted on the Environmental Registry. There were 12 regional sessions held, including round-table discussions with stakeholders and open houses for the public. Ten aboriginal sessions were held. This is important because energy transmission projects nearly always pass through aboriginal lands. Participants in 2013 sent in 7,883 questionnaire responses from which clear trends in the thinking of the participants could be seen.

The Ontario Energy Board is often the body that adjudicates such issues as rate change proposals. It is only fitting that they be listened to as well. Their jurisdiction and objectives give them some important insight into the energy planning process. Similarly, the Independent Electricity System Operator, which under-

takes competitive selection and procurement of transmission projects on a continuing basis, is now able to contribute to the process, and so, I might add, may some of the people who, in each subsequent plan, have said, "Deal us in too because we'd like to talk to you."

It has been my pleasure in the last few years to have talked to the Ontario Petroleum Institute, who have said that oil and gas will continue to be a part of our future in Ontario. And by the way, we have oil and gas in Ontario. Shouldn't we talk about oil and gas in the context of our energy future? Ontario actually produces about 1% of the oil and gas that it consumes. Should we talk about whether that proportion is appropriate, should be more, or should be less? I think we should. Such sectors as geothermal have asked us much the same thing. Shouldn't we be talking about the way in which geothermal energy can contribute to our province's future, particularly in regard to the space heating of homes?

This bill, if passed, means that the 2017 and future long-term energy plans could develop high-quality and consistent goals, objectives and plans following some key principles: cost effectiveness, reliability, the optimum use of clean energy, community and aboriginal engagement and a continuing emphasis on conservation and demand management. The outcome and as much of the process as possible is public and visible. That makes for a transparent plan that is much easier for Ontarians to understand and to support.

The 2017 long-term energy plan will look to engage Ontario families and businesses in how to save money on their energy bills. And there is much more to it than replacing incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs. Along with Ontarians, the plan will discuss how to reduce the need to build expensive energy infrastructure and, in so doing, ease price increases for energy of all types.

In that vein, Speaker, I'd just like to go over a few things here on the price of energy.

It's no secret that in December the world signed on to the Paris climate change accord. If a province or state still burns coal to generate electricity, as most of the United States still does, it means they have to turn it off—all of it—and replace it with clean energy. Ontarians have moved to a sustainable greenhouse-gas-free electricity system in the last decade. Ontario's dirty power generation is now all gone for good.

Our neighbouring states in the Great Lakes basin have not yet turned off coal, refurbished their nuclear reactors or moved to sustainable and renewable electricity. Very few generate less than half their electricity from coal and at that, not much less than half. The pressure on US electric utilities is to raise power rates, to build the energy generation and transmission infrastructure that Ontario has already done. Let's put it this way: Ontario bought tomorrow's electricity generation and transmission, paid for it using yesterday's money, and financed it over its lifetime at interest rates of nearly zero. In the Great Lakes basin in the states that adjoin us, they must scramble to buy today's electricity generation

and transmission, pay for it using tomorrow's money, and finance it all at interest rates that have nowhere to go but up.

So to be complete, because some people have mentioned this, British Columbia and parts of the US Pacific Northwest still have the same benefit as do Quebec and Manitoba, the two provinces to our left and to our right: abundant and already-built hydroelectric capacity. They will have lower electricity rates than Ontario and have fewer carbon-emitting sources to turn off.

If we look at what electricity prices are, winter off-peak rates in Mississauga, which I'm quoting, are 8.7 cents per kilowatt hour. Mid-peak rates are 13.2 cents per kilowatt hour, and on-peak rates are 18 cents per kilowatt hour. At our home, about two thirds of our electricity is off-peak power. At home we run the electricity-intensive dryer and dishwasher during the off-peak times and, like most of my neighbours, I've installed compact fluorescent bulbs everywhere I can.

#### 1600

Over the Christmas break, I compared today's electricity prices in the GTA with current rates in the United States from states all around Ontario. The source I used was the U.S. Energy Information Administration, as of December 2015. The US states are behind Ontario in moving to time-of-use billing, although they'll get there. Using the then prevailing 75-cent Canadian dollar, in Canadian cents per kilowatt hour, here is what the states that adjoin us or are close to us are paying for electricity: Connecticut, 25.9 cents per kilowatt hour; Maine, 20.7 cents per kilowatt hour; Massachusetts, 26.1 cents per kilowatt hour; Vermont, 22.9 cents per kilowatt hour; New York, 23.4 cents; Pennsylvania, 18.8 cents; Michigan, 19.4 cents; Ohio, most of whose electricity comes from coal, 16.81 cents; Indiana, nearly all of whose electricity comes from coal, 14.8 cents; Illinois, 15.8 cents; Wisconsin, 18.4 cents; Minnesota, 15.7 cents.

What it means is that low economic growth regions, which have not needed to build new power generation or transmission, may have lower electricity rates than Ontario. However, if you want to live in a growing metropolitan area or a province or a state with an expanding economy which needs a modern electricity infrastructure, then your electricity rates will almost certainly be higher than in Ontario.

So Speaker, to finish up: Along with Ontarians, the plan will discuss how to reduce the need to build expensive energy infrastructure and, in so doing, will ease price increases for energy of all types. Even many Conservatives are now conceding the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and cut air pollution, while contributing to Ontario's climate change strategy objectives that, however grudgingly, they now seem to accept.

One new issue to look at in the 2017 plan is the strong relationship between energy and water. Water is required to create energy, and energy is required to use water. Saving water means saving energy. Saving water also reduces carbon emissions by saving energy otherwise generated to move and treat water. Bill 135 would



establish a common framework for large building owners to know how well they are doing in measuring the consumption of water and in using it intelligently and economically. The bill would also set water efficiency standards for products that consume both energy and water, like dishwashers and washing machines, allowing Ontarians to make the best choices for themselves while shopping for new appliances.

Since the majority of the continent's appliance-makers have a footprint in northwest Mississauga, this means that the water issue is one issue that I will be tracking both closely and personally. Ontario needs to be in line with other jurisdictions in saving consumers money and showing our province's continued leadership in setting efficiency standards. I plan to ensure that Ontario's Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers has multiple opportunities for some fulsome input into how their industry is affected by the proposed regulations.

This is a bill about continuing to do what Ontario has learned to do right and continuing to improve that process as time progresses. There's not much in the bill that's complex. This is a bill that should be passed and proclaimed as quickly as possible. The men and women of this province and the companies in our energy sector need to get to work designing the next version of the long-term energy plan. Ontarians need their work to design, operate and regulate a clean, green, affordable and sustainable system of producing, distributing and consuming energy in all its forms.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Kingston and the Islands.

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** It is a wonderful pleasure to rise today in support of Bill 135.

I would like to focus my attention today on my community of Kingston and the Islands. I would like to let everyone in the House know that we have made a commitment to be the most sustainable city in Canada.

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** Wow.

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** Yes. We have very strong environmentally minded partners, such as the Kingston General Hospital and the Kingston and Frontenac Housing Corp., which are helping us reach our goal.

Thanks to the leadership and support provided by Utilities Kingston, between 2001 and 2014 our community has saved enough energy to power 5,714 average homes for an entire year. It has also exceeded both provincially mandated energy and demand conservation targets. This incredible achievement has earned Utilities Kingston provincial recognition in electricity conservation leadership. It gives me wonderful pleasure today to give them a shout-out for their efforts.

Through Ontario's saveONenergy retrofit program, KGH projects an annual savings of \$800,000 in total energy costs, money that can be put to work where it matters most: on patient care. The upgrades to heating, cooling, water and electrical systems and to the building itself have been comprehensive. Over 10,000 light fixtures were replaced with more energy-efficient fluorescents and LEDs. HVAC units and pumps were fitted

with new high-efficiency electric motors. Automation systems were redesigned to adjust the building's heating and cooling load more efficiently. New air handling systems were installed. This alone saves Kingston General Hospital more than \$100,000 per year. This is significant savings. In addition, insulation improvements to the heat distribution network and to the windows and doors of older buildings have had a major impact on heating needs and staff and patient comfort.

These initiatives are a shining example of the kind of proactive and forward-thinking approach that has far-reaching positive consequences for the province and for our collective future. Energy efficiency investments and projects help reduce costs for residences and businesses and return savings for many years to come.

Without a doubt, the best return on energy investment in our community and our province lies in conservation. Bill 135 would introduce two new conservation initiatives to help Ontario families, businesses and the province as a whole conserve energy and water to manage costs. We've already heard a little bit about this today, but I wanted to elaborate a little bit more.

The energy and water reporting and benchmarking initiative for large buildings would require property owners to track a building's energy and water use and greenhouse gas emissions over time to allow owners and renters to determine how a building's energy performance is changing and how it compares to similar buildings. Additionally, the water efficiency standards for energy-consuming products and appliances would set water efficiency standards for products that consume both energy and water, like dishwashers and washing machines, allowing Ontarians to make the best choices for themselves when shopping for appliances.

These initiatives would bring Ontario in line with other jurisdictions, saving consumers money and showing our province's continued leadership in setting efficiency standards.

This is why I support Bill 135. The new planning process proposed in Bill 135 would consider conservation as the first resource before building expensive new generation, transmission and distribution infrastructure. This approach will maximize the value and reliability of energy transmission projects while maintaining our government's commitment to energy conservation.

I would like to thank everyone who has spoken to this bill, and especially give a shout-out to my colleague who is the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy on his efforts at doing his own jurisdictional scan and pointing out what the energy prices are in areas close to Ontario. I think it's extremely important that we have a comprehensive look at competitive pricing, and it's not everything that the opposition is claiming that it is.

Thank you so much for listening today. I support Bill 135.

**1610**

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

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I listened intently to the remarks by the members for Mississauga–Streetsville and

Kingston and the Islands. They went on about energy pricing and they complained that the States are higher than us in different jurisdictions. I wonder how they explain that to a constituent of mine who showed me his hydro bill. He had zero usage for hydro and it cost him 95 bucks. How is that explained? He was at his cottage and he shut all the power off, and it cost him \$95 to get a bill that said that he didn't owe anything for electricity. Tell me how that seems fair. I don't think it is. What would you cost out for a kilowatt of power that way? I don't know—\$100 a kilowatt? Is that what it works out to—or for no kilowatts. He was very upset.

There is also a war vet in my riding. He's 93 years old. He lives by himself. His wife is in a home. He shut the house off. He just has a couple of rooms in his house that he heats, and he says, "I'm getting real close to not being able to pay this hydro bill." It's getting that serious with this war vet.

To stand there and say that they've had a long-term energy policy—no. Their long-term energy policy goes from year to year. When they get into trouble with all these projects, then they've got to change something. Just ask the people out in rural Ontario how impressed they are with the wind turbine farms that they don't want, and yet they keep approving these things.

I would suggest that we've never had a long-term energy policy in the last few years because, when they get into trouble with politics, they suddenly change things. This bill will give the energy minister too much power to do as he wants. So that's certainly one reason we don't support this bill.

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

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Once again, an opportunity to speak on Bill 135: I did listen intently to the member from Mississauga–Streetsville and the member from Kingston and the Islands, and their comments showed one of the problems with this bill.

They're talking about conserving water in dishwashers and hot water, which is fine, but it has really nothing to do with the gist of this bill because there are two parts of this bill. There's the good part that you want to talk about—energy conservation regarding water—and then there's where they're stripping all the power away from the OEB and others and giving more power to the minister on, basically, hydro plans. So it's kind of, "Watch what we're doing with water, and let's not talk about what we're doing with electricity."

Even on the water thing, I'd like to bring an agricultural point to this. Who is really worried about this on the agriculture side are the greenhouse operators. The greenhouse operators are worried about the water thing because you should look at how much production you're getting out of each building as compared to how much water and energy you're using as compared to the square footage. Greenhouse A may be vastly more productive using a bit more energy than greenhouse B, which is producing a lot less. We don't see anywhere where that's measured.

Another thing is that the member from Mississauga–Streetsville concentrated on his riding about the energy costs. I compliment him for that. I'll concentrate on mine, where we pay huge delivery fees because we have low-density delivery fees. The member from Perth–Wellington alluded to that as well. That's one of the big issues in rural Ontario.

One more way in how northern Ontario is treated differently: In northern Ontario, they are still building solar farms on the best land in the province. That's not allowed in southern Ontario. But in northern Ontario: "Keep on building." That has to be stopped.

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

**Hon. David Zimmer:** I want to speak to just one part of the bill, and that's the consultation process and, in particular, the consultation process with the First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities.

It was very important to engage our indigenous partners in this issue. There were 10 indigenous engagement sessions and meetings where there were a total of 275 participants representing some 100 First Nation and Métis communities and other organizations.

One of the pillars of Ontario's approach to indigenous policy is economic development. Participation by First Nation and Métis communities in the energy sector is one way the government is enabling this kind of economic development. The LTEP process provides an opportunity to understand First Nation and Métis community interests and needs in order to outline a clear vision for involving our indigenous communities in the energy sector. The LTEP incorporates the feedback they received from the most comprehensive consultation process ever undertaken by the ministry. Through the LTEP, Ontario is encouraging and supporting the participation of both First Nation and Métis communities in a new generation of transmission projects and in conservation and community energy initiatives.

It is very important, Speaker, that we engage our First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities in this exercise. Energy, especially in the Far North, has always been a challenge for First Nations, hence it's important that we engage them in this planning process. We have done that, Speaker.

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

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's a pleasure to rise and offer comments to the member from Mississauga–Streetsville and also Kingston and the Islands.

I just want to start off by asking the member from Mississauga–Streetsville—he talked a lot about planning and he talked at some point in there about nuclear, so I want to question him why his Minister of the Environment would come out and suggest that nuclear is going to be gone. It's emissions-free, very cost-effective, provides great jobs and has a huge impact on our economy. Just a month or so ago the Minister of Energy came out and actually suggested they were going to refurb all the units and that would extend their lifecycle—certainly in the Bruce Power plant—to 2064.

You've got an industry that's going to create a lot of jobs and a lot of economic opportunity, and Lord knows we need it in this province because they've driven most of our manufacturing sector out. So I find it very strange that the Minister of the Environment would stand up publicly and say that we're going to get rid of nuclear in the next 10 years. I wonder what the nuclear people who came to this government and thought they had a good deal and a good agreement thought of that coming out, and why that hasn't been unequivocally retracted by the minister at this point.

It's a little bit confusing for the public in my riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. They were told, "Conserve and this will all be better for us. It's going to be a wonderful thing that you're doing." Yet they conserved and their bills got higher. They conserved—they did what the Liberals asked—and their bills still got higher. Those who spent more and actually used the energy—they were telling you to use energy—their bills got higher, Mr. Speaker.

It baffles me when a bill like Bill 135 is going to give even more power to an energy minister who has doubled the rates over the last number of years. And we're told they're going to go up another 50% for our businesses, for those at home who can't afford it now, for those independent people, our seniors on fixed incomes, and public institutions like our hospitals that are actually now sadly firing nurses because of this government's mismanagement because they don't have enough money to pay their exorbitant hydro bills.

This is very concerning to me, Mr. Speaker. We'll have to debate it more.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our questions and comments. The member for Mississauga–Streetsville can reply.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I appreciated the comments of the members from Perth–Wellington, Timiskaming–Cochrane, Willowdale and Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

To my colleague from Perth–Wellington: I'm not sure if his remarks suggest that his cellphone or telephone bill would be zero if he goes away on vacation and doesn't use the phone, or if his cable bill would be zero if he were to go away and not watch television. Perhaps he could clear that up for me.

My colleague from Timiskaming–Cochrane, perhaps he did not hear the part of my remarks in which I described how such entities as the Ontario Energy Board are thus more empowered through Bill 135.

My colleague from Willowdale grasps how a long-term energy planning process works when it involves everyone's opinions, including Ontario's First Nations and Métis communities.

To my friend from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, let's be very clear about it: Ontario will refurbish the remaining six of the eight reactors at Bruce. Two of those reactors have already been refurbished. All eight reactors at Bruce will remain refurbished in brand new condition.

**1620**

All four reactors at Darlington will be refurbished. The four at Darlington will go first, followed by the

remaining six at Bruce. In order to continue to supply power during the refurbishment period, the life of the remaining six operating Pickering reactors will be extended. This preserves some 8,000 megawatts of clean, green, economical, sustainable electricity for longer than almost anyone in this House is likely to remain alive.

Let there be no doubt about it: Ontario needs its nuclear reactors. Ontario is proud of its Candu technology.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I want to recognize the member for Windsor–Tecumseh on a point of order.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** A point of order, yes, Speaker. Thank you very much. I'd like to recognize and welcome the tour group up in the members' east gallery. I just bumped into them down the hall. I had a short geography lesson about Detroit being due south of Windsor—or due north, I'm sorry, due north of Windsor. I got my geography all mixed up already. Because they were saying, "our American neighbours to the south," but in Windsor's case, they're actually due north. Welcome to Queen's Park.

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

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I'm glad to offer some comment on Bill 135 today. We're already at third reading. Again, we have another bill that has gone through the legislative process of first reading, second reading and committee, and again this government did not accept a single amendment put forward by the opposition parties. Thirty-four amendments were proposed, after listening to deputations of stakeholders, people who had concerns with this bill, who thought they could improve the legislation, which is how the democratic process should be working. Unfortunately, zero amendments were proposed, so obviously this government doesn't think that, once they come out with the bill, anyone could ever improve the legislation they put forward.

It's quite unfortunate, considering this bill was first read on October 28. We're dealing with a number of months to receive input and bring up some ideas that could enhance or strengthen the bill. Now, I don't expect all of the opposition amendments to be accepted, but you would think, somewhere out there, when stakeholders come forward to discuss the legislation, that some ideas had come forward that would have strengthened the legislation and made it more acceptable to Ontarians across the province.

I'd like to just discuss some of the concerns that were raised with Bill 135 over the many months of debate. I know that this bill will pass, considering the government has a majority, and their wanting to concentrate power into the Ministry of Energy. Unfortunately, with this government's history of energy planning, that's a concern—a concern with the fact that this government's energy minister says one thing and does another.

I only have to bring forward Dutton Dunwich in my riding. Recently, a company was awarded wind turbines in their municipality. Dutton Dunwich was the first

municipality in the province of Ontario to hold a referendum on whether or not they wanted wind turbines within the municipality: 84% of the respondents in the community said no, they did not want wind turbines. This minister had spoken publicly that they would start to listen to the voice of municipalities, that they would work with municipalities to ensure that those that didn't want turbines would not get them.

It's unfortunate, because on the east side of my riding is Malahide township. Malahide township was a willing host. Their council decided to support wind turbines and wanted to bring them into the area, but they didn't get the contract. Dutton Dunwich didn't want the wind turbines. They met with the ministry for the last year and a half telling them, "We don't want the wind turbines. We just want to let you know," and sat down and had many discussions with them. They got the contract and Malahide, of course, didn't get the contract but wanted the turbines.

It's a concern, the fact they're going to concentrate and give this minister more control and say over decisions on our energy planning. We have a minister who doesn't listen to constituents outside of his riding. That's a concern, especially for rural Ontario. This government has had a history of not listening to rural Ontario when it comes to certain issues, and in particular, about the wind turbines. I've seen it across the province. You've probably talked to the members from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, Huron-Bruce or Lambton-Kent-Middlesex. You see, when the wind turbines move in, the community starts to fight amongst themselves.

Dutton Dunwich, before this wind turbine project came forward, I would say was a unified, strong municipality—unbelievable the contributions each person has made to the community. Now, there's shoving and pushing matches and arguments within the community. Tall Tales, which is a great café in Wallacetown just out on the edge of Dutton—makes the best pies, though. I've just got to put an aside there that they're probably the best pies I've ever tasted. They actually have people arguing and almost coming to blows in the café over a wind turbine project which is not wanted or needed in the area. So that's a huge concern that they'd be increasing this minister's powers.

What's more frightening is the minister can now ignore the advice from the people at the IESO and the Ontario Energy Board. These are people whose job is to study certain projects wanting to go forward and to let the government know when it's a bad idea to head down that route. Now, through this legislation, the Minister of Energy doesn't even have to listen to the professionals at these organizations when they come forward. It's like the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke said: The minister has become a supreme being in which he can do what he wants to do whenever he wants to and he's the only decision-maker.

What's concerning is that this is a government that will bring forth a piece of legislation—this isn't the first one, by the way; this probably has been pretty consistent

across the board—not listening to consultations and amendments. Now, we're going to give the minister the power to go further and no longer have to consult with anyone. We've seen this act before. They might say, "Oh, we're going to reach out and talk to a few people," but as we saw with the budget this past year, when the government brought out the budget before the pre-budget consultations were done with the committee at the Legislature—they had yet to write their final report and submit it to the government and the budget was already printed and ready to roll.

So it's—I have a dry throat today. Excuse me. I don't like clearing my throat; it sounds bad on the microphone. Sorry.

So what is concerning is the future of energy policy in this province with regard to the centralization of power into the ministry. If you're not listening to the professionals, you're not listening to the opposition and you're not listening to stakeholders, you're bound to make a mistake down the road. The oversight that is needed by these organizations ensures the government stays in place.

Another concern is the home energy audit process that will be coming forward. Mandatory home energy audits were first debated back in 2009, when our then-critic—the same critic we had in 2009 as we do today, Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke—fought against them with the Green Energy Act. Unfortunately, six years—or even more, seven years later—they're back. What that does is—it's a debate that has been argued before and, again, they bring it forward. Through this bill, I think the confidence of the people of the province with regard to energy is going to be further eroded.

We have high energy rates. I know the government will argue that we don't. The Minister of Finance will even tell you in question period that they're coming down, even though we just had a rate increase on May 1. But listening to constituents who come into the office and the fact that they come—usually January and February would be the tougher months, when they're trying to heat their homes. They can't pay their bills and our office—and I'm sure most offices here—have to try to work on their behalf to try to keep the heat going and make sure they have payment plans so that they are able to afford food or other quality-of-living items that they may need. When you have issues like that, you need to ensure the long-term energy plan is done right and correctly so that people can try to ensure that they have a plan ahead in order to afford their energy rates. Unfortunately, this government changes their long-term energy plan quite often because I don't believe they look beyond the next year or so before making it.

**1630**

It's quite a concern that this government is going to take away the consultation or the voice of reason that they need to bounce ideas off of with this bill. I'm pretty sure that, legislatively, they think they're heading down the right way so they have more control, but we, the opposition and the people of my riding, need to ensure

that there's accountability and transparency through all of government. The fact that you will be creating a Minister of Energy with enormous powers and the ability not to listen to anyone is quite a concern down the road.

I think the best friend of many of the MPPs here was the Ombudsman for hydro costs in this Legislature. He was somebody whom we could call on to help push the government when Hydro One was being unfair to our constituents. This government legislated his oversight away in the past budget and now people do not have that person to contact for help to deal with the government over erroneous bills.

It was only a few years ago that I brought forward a constituent of mine whose farm operation was billed \$260,000 for one month. Obviously it was a mistake, but we had to get the Ombudsman involved. We had to call Hydro. I had to talk to the CEO at the time. A person shouldn't have to go through that with regard to a billing problem. Most private corporations, if they mess up the billing, fix it pretty quickly because you can lose that customer. However, Hydro One, with their monopoly, doesn't really have to act. Previously, it didn't act. It was shaming them with the Ombudsman, which brought out the changes now, with the fact that the Ombudsman is now gone from overseeing Hydro One. We're going to have a Minister of Energy with complete control and say over our energy policies. People are probably going to suffer because there's no one there for the people anymore with regard to energy policy.

To top it off, the government has sold a good stake of Hydro One, against the wishes of the people of Ontario. It mimics what happened in Dutton Dunwich, when 84% of the people of Dutton Dunwich voted against wind turbines. I would think that approximately the same amount of people are against the sale of Hydro One, which, again, this government has moved forward on.

The rates have gone up on May 1. Rural Ontario is against the selling of Hydro One and against wind turbines coming into their areas without their agreeing, without their say-so. Unfortunately, energy prices are going to increase. The government's response to all this is to remove the professionals to consult them on proper planning going forward and to let cabinet decide what is going to happen with their energy programs. To me, that's quite concerning. I think that even on the back-bench of the government side, it would be concerning, because they're going to have to answer for the cabinet's decisions on how the energy processes are going forward.

As we've seen with the Green Energy Act, hydro rates have skyrocketed, businesses have left the province and we're hearing stories of people being unable to afford their energy costs. The cost of living in this province has skyrocketed under this government in the last 15 years, and unfortunately, people are doing without or else leaving the province now.

I was hopeful, when this bill came out, that after this debate and discussions with stakeholders there would be a few amendments to ensure there was some sort of power left with the OEB and IESO and that people would

be able to have a chance that some long-term energy plan would come forward from this government. Unfortunately, we didn't get that. Unfortunately, businesses in my riding cannot expect energy rates to level off; they can see the rates continuing to skyrocket upwards. Unfortunately, the people in Dutton Dunwich will be getting their wind turbines, and unfortunately, the people of Malahide—maybe they'll get the next round; they'll get the turbines.

Unfortunately, when this government says that they are going to listen to municipalities with regard to energy policy and don't—we now are having a bill to strengthen the ministry, and I'm sure they'll say on the other side that he's going to listen and he's going to consult with people. We know that this minister is not going to do so, and it's a real concern.

When we bring forth legislation—and we've seen mistakes made previously from other governments with regard to improper oversight or giving too much power to one person or organization—we see from time to time, again, that errors will occur. At the end of the day, it costs taxpayers money, it costs ratepayers money, and we'd have to come together with a whole new legislation in order to fix the problems brought forward. Maybe down the road in two years' time or three years' time we'll be back discussing how we can fix this situation with energy pricing in Ontario, but we're not quite there yet. We're going to continue to see higher energy rates as we progress forward.

Mr. Speaker, one more note here before I end my talk because—I lost my page here.

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** Just wing it.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Do you want me to just wing it?

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Just tell us what's in your heart.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** There's so much in my heart to speak.

Anyway, I'm glad the government is actually listening to what I'm saying here. I thought you were busy way down there. But I do have to say I'm glad they're here listening. We're hoping, now that I've got their ear, that maybe we can work together and try to postpone the Dutton Dunwich wind turbines that are coming our way.

I know the President of the Treasury Board is here. I always like seeing her at the Legislature. She had a nice, new haircut just a few weeks ago. It was good to see her.

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** No hair jokes.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Did you get a haircut too?

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** No. I need to get a haircut.

Anyway, I'm off track, Mr. Speaker. I think I need to get back on track.

Hopefully, as we commence further with this third reading—and I'm sure this bill will pass and be enacted—we can take a look at how we're going to fix this bill going forward, because I'm fearful for the long-term energy plan that I'm sure will be the third or fourth one in the third or fourth year that we're still going to see energy rates rise. We're going to see power going to the Minister of Energy. We're going to see less consultation with the people of Ontario.

My riding needs some economic development. One of the factors that lay in the way is energy costs. We hope to get that under control. We've lost 6,000 manufacturing jobs in the riding since 2008. I think we can do better as a community with regard to drawing larger businesses to the area. We have quite a few small start-ups, but some larger employers would be great. I'm sure our Formet plant in St. Thomas would love to have lower or reasonable energy rates.

I've spoken to the owner of Wendy's and Boston Pizza, and their energy rates are through the roof. Remember MP Joe Preston, who's retired? That's his place. He has come and talked to me quite often about his energy rates. Now that he's retired and back in private life, he's taken a look at his bills over the last 10 years. It's a small business and he employs quite a few people, but he's having to deal with the higher rates, which does impede production growth.

On the health care side, I'm hearing from hospitals. Their energy rates are starting to grow. With the freezing of the budgets, I know the government has chipped in a little bit, but that money has got to come from somewhere in order to pay for these energy rates. I'd rather they not come out of the money allocated for health care. It's unfortunate that those decisions are going to have to be made down the road. We're hoping for a better plan for Ontarians that we're not receiving right now.

I would like to end my comments and listen to the questions and comments from the members of the House.

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

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'd like to thank the member from Elgin-Middlesex-London for his comments.

Speaker, I can go back a few years, and I can remember on Stoney Creek city council—it was the time that the Conservative government decided to deregulate Hydro. That was the beginning of the fiasco that has transpired in the last few years. Once you privatize or deregulate, then you run into problems. Now they've decided, in their infinite wisdom, to sell off Hydro, which is a big mistake. I get it from the population and I get it from businesses.

1640

Then I thought about this, Speaker. It went to committee, and at committee, several people of expertise in the field made presentations to the committee from various parts of our society. Engineers, hydroelectricity experts and people who worked on some of the major projects in Niagara Falls made presentations to the committee. The amazing part about that: Not one—not one—amendment was accepted by the government. That's pretty scary.

Now, I don't know if the government has expertise in electricity—I guess they do, and the minister is an expert—but usually, when I want to learn anything, I go to the people in the trenches. I don't go to people on Bay Street or other places to learn what you really want to know about the electrical system and grid in our province. When you have all the experts come forward

and warn you about the pitfalls and you don't take the warnings, you don't listen and you go ahead with your agenda, that's pretty arrogant—pretty scary. I think you're going to find, 10 years down the road, that we're going to be in big trouble financially because of this move. It's a sad state of affairs.

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

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** My colleague from Elgin-Middlesex-London mentioned the impact of energy on jobs. Let's just talk about jobs.

Ontario's net employment gains—gains—now exceed some 600,000 new jobs; in other words, more than we lost. Overwhelmingly, those are high-wage, full-time and high-skill positions. That meant that the money that the province borrowed during the recession actually did produce the result that it intended.

As well, some of Ontario's fundamental ratios, by which people assess how good a credit risk you are—Ontario's net-debt-to-GDP ratio is 38.5% now, 26% pre-recession; and our accumulated deficit-to-GDP ratio is 25.9% now, 17.6% pre-recession. They've all been coming down for the past three years, and all of them are headed back to their pre-recession levels. That makes us, by comparison, about the only developed economy to see those key ratios coming down and heading back to their pre-recession levels. If you're looking at those ratios in every other developed country, they're all going up.

There's something that Ontario is doing that's attracting good companies, keeping good companies, bringing on good jobs and keeping high-wage, high-skill, high-value employment right here in the province of Ontario. The fastest-growing of those sectors is manufacturing, so manufacturing in Ontario is doing well.

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

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak briefly to Bill 135 and comment on the speech from Elgin-Middlesex-London.

But of course, I would like to point out that the debt-to-GDP ratio for the province of Ontario when the Liberals came into power was 27% and it's now pretty much 40%. That seems to me to be trending the wrong way. Of course, we know the debt of the province has doubled—doubled—under this government, so it's nothing to be very proud of, that's for sure.

Now, this Bill 135 is giving more power to the Minister of Energy. I would say that is also heading in the wrong direction. We've seen, with this government, unprecedented political meddling in the electricity sector. It has been disastrous. We have some of the highest electricity prices anywhere and continuing increases. Just May 1, we had another increase. You just need to talk to some of your constituents and you certainly will find out how they feel about it, whether you go into Parry Sound and you go to the butcher and you talk to Murray Orr there—and that's usually what he wants to talk to you about: his monthly electric bill, which has gone up dramatically—or small restaurants which really don't

have a choice about shifting when they use power. They have coolers and equipment that just has to run to keep the food cool, and they don't have a choice in managing their electricity

Last week, when I arrived at the Parry Sound municipal meeting and talked to some seniors before the meeting, the first thing they talked to me about was electricity. Without me bringing it up, they brought up electricity rates and how high they are and how hard it is to pay their bills.

Or listen to the Auditor General who says that in the green energy area we've spent an additional \$9.2 billion and, overall, an extra \$37 billion. The numbers are so big that it's hard to conceive of: from 2006 to 2014, an extra \$37 billion that's on everyone's electricity bill.

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

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** While New Democrats share some of the concerns expressed by the member for Elgin–Middlesex–London—I mean, if this government had a strong record on the energy file, perhaps our concerns wouldn't be validated.

However, one has only to read multiple editorials and news coverage about this government. One was from the *Globe and Mail* from December 3, 2015, when the AG's report first came out. It reads as this: "On Wednesday, Ontario's Auditor General announced that, between 2006 and 2014, thanks to incompetence and mismanagement on the part of the province's Liberal government, Ontarians overpaid for electricity to the tune of \$37 billion. And over the next 18 years, consumers will be overpaying to the tune of another \$133 billion."

Now, the Minister of Energy, of course, we know how he feels. He thinks that the Auditor General got it wrong because it's so complex. However, that Auditor General ran Manitoba Hydro for almost 10 years.

The editorial goes on: "The inflated costs cover both consumers and business, so some of that shows up not on the consumer's bill, but on the tab of the province's businesses, which then pass those costs on to customers.

"Why is Ontario's electricity so costly? Because the Ontario government has for the past decade been running the province's power sector with something approaching the skill of Soviet commissars. It has politicized decision-making, taking it out of the hands of independent experts. It deliberately broke the system, creating huge new costs without benefits. And it doesn't seem to know how to fix it, or want to."

I guarantee you that government Bill 135, the Energy Statute Law Amendment Act, does not fix the problem. It doubles down on the incompetence of this government on the energy file, and we all end up paying the price.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That's four questions and comments. The member for Elgin–Middlesex–London can reply.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I want to thank the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek and the member from Kitchener–Waterloo for your points—very well-spoken. Unfortunately, the government didn't want to listen to the opposition benches during this process for this bill.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** What about Mississauga–Streetsville?

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Mississauga–Streetsville: Thank you very much for your comments, as well. You can throw out percentages that you like, but the fact remains that we're \$300 billion in debt now from this government; approximately \$22,000 per person. It's going to be a lot harder. We're at \$12 billion in interest payments a month, and interest rates move one way or another. It's going to be increasing—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** No, no, no. I think you mean per year.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Oh, sorry; per year. Thank you, Treasury Board. I knew that you'd be on top of this.

So it's even better than that. This must have been a goal to reach. It's \$1 billion a month in interest payments, \$12 billion a year. That's not any better than what I said, other than the numbers, but that's \$12 billion out of the system. I could work for the government. I could spin this to make it sound good.

Anyway, \$12 billion a year is quite unfortunate. It's the third-highest ministry: health, education and then interest payments—the amount of money you think that could be spent in other ministries to deal with our situations.

Parry Sound–Muskoka: great rebuttal, for bringing out your thoughts and the fact that you could talk about local issues that this government doesn't seem to understand. When you hear from us on this side of the benches, when we bring our ideas forward, it's coming from the constituents who live in our ridings and the concerns they're bringing forward. They're truly heartfelt and they are ideas that we think need to be dealt with.

1650

Thank you very much to everyone who contributed in the speech today.

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

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** A point of order, the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I'd like to correct my record, Speaker, from last Thursday. In my remarks concerning the government program, the \$100 million that was administered by Union Gas and Enbridge on energy retrofits, I used an example of converting oil to propane, that that would be less carbon, and it was pointed out to me that there is a debate on that. So I'm still very concerned about the program, but I didn't use a very good—because oil actually might, per BTU, have less carbon than propane.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Further debate? The member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I hope you're clapping at the end of it.

I'm pleased to rise today and speak on Bill 135, An Act to amend several statutes and revoke several

regulations in relation to energy conservation and long-term energy planning.

This bill comes from the very same Liberal government that has brought in the largest single hydro increase in Ontario's history. Hundreds of municipalities have passed resolutions against the privatization of Hydro One; the government has ignored their calls. The Auditor General released a report that tore the government's energy policy apart. It highlighted the many failures of process that led to this government's bad decisions—decisions that have unnecessarily cost Ontario residents tens of billions of dollars and will continue to do so. Instead of being humbled by the report, instead of taking on board its recommendations and instead of learning from past mistakes, the government is doubling down.

This piece of legislation is very important: It is, in one sense, the government's response to the Auditor General. You may recall that the Minister of Energy showed little respect to the Auditor General after a previous critical report was issued in December 2014. Scathing reports from the Auditor General on energy policy are, at this stage, an annual event. The minister belittled the Auditor General's knowledge of the energy sector, although we quickly learned that her knowledge and experience of the hydro sector is far greater than his. This legislation is a response in the same spirit as the minister's was. It ignores the Auditor General's recommendations. It sets in stone the same flawed policy-making process that has led to so many bad energy policy decisions by this government and past governments. It does not improve transparency; it does not improve accountability; in fact, it does the opposite.

With Bill 135, the government has abandoned once and for all the vision of an independent and transparent long-term energy plan and approval process that had been established in 2004. For the third time in just a year, the Liberal government is using what it brands a progressive policy to sneak in changes that upend electricity policy in this province without public review and with unknown and uncertain impacts. Bill 135 regulates the Ontario Energy Board and the Independent Electricity System Operator to mere arms of the government. It removes their planning and approval authority. It reduces these previously independent bodies to instruments of the minister, with little function other than implementing the government's policy-driven and evidence-free plans. By removing the independence of the OEB and the IESO, it will now be even easier for powerful private interests to lobby the government to approve expensive and risky energy projects without being subject to tough, independent public scrutiny. The harsh reality is, however, that this bill is in many ways simply copper-fastening the poor practices of this government in legislation. It already evades the checks and balances in existing legislation and regulations.

Whenever oversight, scrutiny and evidence are inconvenient to this government's energy agenda, it finds a way to avoid them. Not a single integrated power system plan has ever been approved in Ontario despite the

existing law that mandates one be approved and updated every three years. When it came to the privatization of Hydro One, one of the most consequential energy policy decisions ever taken by a government in this province, the government bulldozed through every check and balance. It refused to submit its privatization plan to the Ontario Energy Board for review. It refused even to release the analyses that were prepared for the Ed Clark panel, even though the process leading to the privatization decision was supposed to be transparent, professional and independently validated.

Speaker, at every opportunity the Premier and her ministers claim, hand on heart, to be committed to transparency and accountability. But with every action, we see the opposite, especially when it comes to energy policies. When words and actions are moving in opposite directions, we have a real crisis in a democratic government.

If the Ontario Energy Board is supposed to protect Ontarians from an increase in rates demanded by a privatized Hydro One, then why is this government moving to yet again undermine the OEB's independence and regulatory authority? How will the Ontario Energy Board protect us from the policies of this government and the effects of its policies if it is reduced to a mere arm of and a rubber stamp for the government and specifically the Minister of Energy, if it becomes but an instrument of the ministry it is supposed to, in effect, protect us from?

In 2006 the government delegated to the OEB the role of implementing ministerial directives related to the smart metering initiative, with no independent public scrutiny permitted. Thanks to the lack of oversight and scrutiny, Ontarians were left holding a \$2-billion boondoggle. Now the government has proposed to do the same thing with the entire electricity transmission sector, a sector that, thanks to this government, is now owned by private investors who have been promised billions of dollars' worth of expansion opportunities. This government is opening the door to even bigger boondoggles.

Let me shine some light on the government's arrogance and lack of accountability when it comes to pushing this legislation through—never mind making consequential decisions, but using the powers this legislation provides. This bill is 14 pages long. Fourteen groups gave oral presentations to the Standing Committee on General Government about this bill. Dozens of amendments were offered, yet this bill was reported back for third reading without one amendment. This government shot down every amendment. Presumably, the government members disagreed not only with all reasoned opposition to the bill but with every constructed proposal offered to the government.

Do they really believe that this bill is perfect, that it cannot be bettered, that it is the summit, the peak, of legislative accomplishment? Have this government and its ministers found Mount Everest, perhaps? Well, any of us outside the bubble have a very different opinion. The bar is so low that the construction of a molehill rather than a mountain would be this minister's least damaging



achievement in office. If this bill resembles any natural wonder, it is most akin to the Grand Canyon because that's where the government and this ministry are taking us with their hydro policies and lack of transparency.

The arrogance is astonishing, but in no way is it a surprise. We have become used to it around here. This government shows no respect to this Legislature, to its members or to the legislative process. Committees have become just rubber stamps. The government shows no respect to interested citizens and parties who take time out of their lives to conduct research and make oral presentations or written submissions to the committee that examine government bills. This government does nothing other than waste their time and energy.

I intend to devote much of my time today to bringing to the attention of this House the informed comments and reasonable contributions of a few of the witnesses who spoke to the bill at committee because, as has sadly become standard operating procedure in this Legislature, the government paid absolutely no heed to them at the time. Let their insights illuminate our discussions to date.

The Ontario Society of Professional Engineers appeared before the committee and suggested improvements to Bill 135. The society is the voice of Ontario's engineering profession. Although supportive of many aspects of the legislation, it highlighted that with this bill, if passed, energy decisions will be made by the Minister of Energy rather than by the technical experts at the Independent Electricity System Operator. The OSPE also warned against removing the requirement for an integrated power system plan for the sector, as this bill does. They believe that the IESO should remain as the developer of integrated power system plans in our province. Allow me to quote directly:

"Regional planning, conservation and demand management are all things that are very important to Ontario's economy. We believe that the minister should remain as the approver of the IESO's plan as it is submitted to the Ontario Energy Board, and that the plan should be subject to the board's hearing processes."

Furthermore, the OSPE is concerned that the government is reducing the bidding process to simply a low-cost bid system rather than a qualifications-based selection process. Relying solely on the lowest bid and taking no account of quality has cost this province dearly in the past and will continue to do so in the future. Did the government listen to the professional engineers and their many amendments to incorporate in its input? It did not.

Mr. Tom Adams, who has been an energy analyst for almost 30 years, was the second witness to the committee. He warned that Bill 135 will eliminate the last remnant of independence of both the IESO and the Ontario Energy Board, effectively making them extensions of the Ministry of Energy rather than independent sources of expertise and checks on government overreach and politicization of energy systems.

**1700**

The government has claimed that Bill 135 will solve the failures of governance identified by the Auditor

General in her most recent and scathing report on the province's energy system. Mr. Adams argues the contrary. He believes that instead of correcting these failures of governance, Bill 135 will only make it worse.

Our party's energy critic, the member for Toronto—Danforth, asked Mr. Adams in committee whether this bill would prevent problems like the gas plant scandal or the failed investment in smart meters. Mr. Adams's response was that this legislation would actually remove some of the checks and balances that exist within an already-flawed system.

I'll quote Mr. Adams directly, since it doesn't appear that the government members are paying much attention to this: "The original design of initially the OPA and now the IESO's power system planning function anticipated that those power plans would be produced by the professionals and then subject to public review. That provides multiple levels of professional oversight and public participation. All of that is gone under the provisions of Bill 135."

Speaker, you won't be surprised also to learn that the government made no amendments to Bill 135 in response to Mr. Adams's critical comments.

The third committee witness was Mr. Mark Winfield, co-chair of the Sustainable Energy Initiative in the faculty of environmental studies of York University. Mr. Winfield also spoke in strong opposition to the power grab that Bill 135 represents: "This proposal is bad in terms of energy policy, it's bad in terms of economic policy, it's bad in terms of environmental policy and it is also politically unwise. It seems the government hasn't learned very much from the gas plant cancellation adventure." They haven't learned much, for sure.

Mr. Winfield made the very important observation that electricity system plans are the largest single net infrastructure investments made by the province of Ontario. And yet, the government is advancing legislation that would mean that the largest infrastructure investments of all would be subject to no meaningful external review.

I quote again: The "legislation abandons the notion of rational planning in the electricity system. The long-term design and management of the system would be effectively treated as a political matter."

Any Ontarian listening to this should be alarmed at this. Look at the results of 13 years of Liberal political interference in the energy sector. They have been nothing short of disastrous for the everyday hard-working people of this province. They've been a crushing burden for people on fixed incomes, particularly seniors.

My own hydro bill—I opened it up the other day and there was more for transmission storage and other costs than my actual use. Who does that? Where in the world do you get charged more for it just sitting there? You're not even using it. I didn't use it, but I'm paying for something they screwed up—unbelievable.

This Liberal government's energy policies have chased business out of the province. I can speak for Hamilton. What's gone: US Steel; Procter and Gamble; Case; John Inglis; American Can; Continental Can—all

have left. Westinghouse—gone. Some 20,000 good manufacturing jobs in Hamilton in the last 25 years have gone. That's a good chunk of our population, but this government says, "We've created 300,000 new jobs." Well, it wasn't in Hamilton, I'll tell you that much.

The Auditor General has shown that the Liberal policies have imposed tens of billions of dollars of unnecessary costs on both energy consumers and taxpayers in this province.

You know what, Speaker? If they hadn't blown the \$3 billion dollars on those boondoggles—I won't go through the list because they've heard it a hundred times; \$4.6 billion dollars they blew—well, I guess they wouldn't have had to sell Hydro. I guess they could have done a lot of other things for front-line care, a lot of other things they could have done with that money that got blown by bad decisions, trying to save seats, all the things they did in the last few years. Speaker, \$4.6 billion dollars? That goes a long way—at least, it would in Hamilton.

Instead of drawing back from their disastrous policies, the government is doubling down now. Instead of listening to criticism, the government is seeking to eliminate it. This bill will further politicize the energy system of this province and remove the last checks and balances, or, in the mind of this government, the last obstacles to the Minister of Energy's divine will.

Mr. Winfield sounded the alarm in committee, but instead of calling in the emergency services, the government cut the power to the bell so he couldn't ring the bell. No amendments to reflect his warnings were accepted.

The final witness on the first day of hearings was Mr. Scott Travers from the Society of Energy Professionals. This guy should know what he's talking about. The society represents more than 7,000 professional employees who work throughout Ontario's electricity system for employers who include Ontario Power Generation, Hydro One, the Ontario Energy Board and the Electrical Safety Authority, among many others. So, Speaker, in a rational discussion of energy policy and legislation in this province, the society's expert opinion should carry significant weight, I would assume. I think you know where I'm going with this, Speaker.

The Society of Energy Professionals was highly critical of Bill 135, but most especially of the concentration of powers in the minister's office and the removal of planning processes that provided for public hearings and allowed for open participation by industry stakeholders, consumer and ratepayer representatives, community and specific interest groups and independent experts, as well as members of the general public.

The society warned that Bill 135 enshrines in legislation the deeply flawed practices of the last few years, which have seen the government circumvent the proper planning process, leading to nightmares such as the gas plant scandals, the sell-off of Hydro One and tens of billions of dollars in unnecessary cost to Ontario's energy consumers and taxpayers.

To quote Mr. Travers, "The society believes that the proposed alterations to the planning process would

severely hamper the political independence and effectiveness of the electricity system planning process and oversight in a way detrimental to the public good.

"In essence, Bill 135 seeks to enshrine in legislation a planning process which has been found severely wanting. It is the opinion of the society that the effect of Bill 135, as written, is inherently incompatible with complying with system planning best practices and with the recommendation of the Auditor General's report with respect to the system planning process." Furthermore, Mr. Travers stated that "the proposed process lacks transparency, accountability and non-partisan oversight."

After all that has happened, after the Auditor General tore the government's energy policy to shreds, how is it that we find ourselves debating legislation that will enable the government to repeat these policy mistakes over and over again, without any accountability, without any checks and balances, without any public or expert input to apply the brakes, or at least sound the alarm?

Did this government heed the warnings of the Society of Energy Professionals? Did it suggest or accept any amendments to allay their concerns? It did not.

Those are just a few of the witnesses who criticized this bill in committee and who said that it should be either discarded or significantly amended. But, as I said, the bill was reported from the committee without amendment, because this government won't listen to experts, they won't listen to evidence or reason, and they certainly won't listen to the opposition. They won't listen to the public unless they are completely backed into a corner or it's just before election time.

This Liberal government thinks it knows best, every single time, and this conceit is its greatest and most damaging character defect. Its arrogance has grown with every passing year, as it gets more and more comfortable in the big chair and feels more and more indispensable. When a government has been in power that long—any government—when it becomes that insulated from everyday people and so sure of its own righteousness, then that, more than ever, is when the public needs checks and balances as a defence of its own interests. That's exactly what we need and exactly what we're not getting.

In closing, the last thing we need in this province is less transparency, less accountability, but that is exactly what this bill provides. My colleague from Toronto—Danforth has said that this bill will be condemned for years to come, that it will be condemned in the same way the fire sale of Hydro One has been and will be condemned. He has said there is no doubt—none—that this bill will be condemned in future inquiries into energy scandals in this province.

This bill reduces accountability, it locks out the public, it suppresses criticism, it suppresses evidence and it suppresses expertise. This bill enables bad decision-making, enables arrogance and enables more scandals. This bill is a disaster for the people of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Grant Crack):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** I'm very pleased to join the discussion this afternoon on Bill 135.

I do want to offer some comments on the conservation aspect of the bill, which I know is going to be very important to the people in Kitchener Centre that I represent.

1710

But first, I feel compelled to offer some comments on the assertion that has been put forward this afternoon by some members that manufacturing is leaving Ontario, tied to energy. I would invite these members, these critical members, to visit my riding of Kitchener Centre, where, currently, we have about 2,000 jobs that need to be filled in the manufacturing sector. This information is from the head of our Workforce Planning Board. We're having great success in our region finding people for these positions. I even read an article in the paper today about Windsor and their economy turning around. Despite the negative spin that you hear, that we have this assertion that manufacturing is hurting, tied to the cost of energy, I would say the facts don't bear this up.

I do want to let people know about two new initiatives: the energy and water reporting and benchmarking initiative for large buildings, and the water efficiency standards for energy-consuming products and appliances. You know, this is going to help Ontario families, businesses and the province as a whole conserve energy and water and to manage our costs. It's going to help us to make some smart decisions about the products that we do use.

Now, Ontario is already showing leadership with energy reporting and benchmarking requirements for provincial government buildings and broader public sector buildings. We're proposing to expand that to private buildings, with energy and water reporting and benchmarking, to buildings that are 50,000 square feet and above. Those requirements are going to be phased in over a three-year period.

Benchmarking and reporting are innovative ways to help us save on our costs and save energy and money. It's another reason why Bill 135 makes great sense.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Grant Crack):** I recognize the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You look good in the Speaker's chair. Congratulations on your promotion.

I do want to say that I listened to the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. He raised a number of important issues with this piece of legislation and with the energy policy of this provincial government.

I also want to remind the member from Kitchener and the entire Liberal government that we've lost over 300,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs in the province. I represent a riding in southwestern Ontario that has been particularly hard hit, as has our entire region. Heinz, Caterpillar: The list goes on and on and on about the thousands and thousands of jobs that have been lost. I can say quite frankly that this government's energy policy has helped to create jobs in the United States of America.

This government's energy policies helped create jobs in other provinces within this country.

We have the most expensive energy in all of North America. That's a fact. The rates are continuing to go up and up and up. It's not just about per-kilowatt-hour pricing; it's the all-in price of energy in this province. It's undeniable.

As I said when I was up earlier talking about Bill 135, you just have to talk to small business owners in your riding. Every small business owner in all of our ridings will be saying the same thing, whether it's that Foodland grocery store that paid \$8,000 a month for hydro and is now paying \$10,000 a month; that Crabby Joe's restaurant that used to pay \$4,000 a month and is now paying \$6,000 to \$8,000 a month; or that hardware store that used to pay \$4,000 a month five years ago and is now paying \$8,000 a month. It's undeniable.

This government, like the member from Hamilton said, has been in power for 13 years. They are out of touch. That's what happens when governments are in too long. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Grant Crack):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Thank you, Speaker. I hope the good folks back in Glengarry–Prescott–Russell are aware that you are in the chair today, sir.

I'd like to make some comments on those that were made by my friend from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, who reminded us that the Ontario Energy Board is about to lose most of its power, that they used to hold public hearings when they were talking about new extensions to the hydro grid, and that citizen input, once valued, will no longer be valued because this bill will take away that public oversight and those public hearings, and give all the power on that decision-making over to the Minister of Energy, the provincial cabinet and the Premier of Ontario.

That's like saying, "Trust us. We're from the government and we're here to help." We know that when the people of Ontario have trusted this government before, we ended up with, "Oh, we're not going to sell Hydro." "Oh, yes, we are going to sell Hydro." We ended up with the gas plant fiasco. This \$40 million—this billion dollars. Ornge air ambulance: "Trust us. Oh, yes, we've got oversight." eHealth: "We'll just give the contract to some friends of ours, some buddies." The Sudbury by-election: "Oh, trust us, we did nothing wrong." The cancellation of the offshore energy contracts that could end up costing half a billion dollars: "Trust us."

The government says a lot about new jobs that have been created. Well, they did nothing for the Fiat Chrysler plant in Windsor. That corporation went out and created thousands of new jobs. In fact, they had the official launch of the new Pacifica in the plant last week. Not one government rep was invited because not one government dollar was put in there. There was no government input at all. They can take the credit for jobs that are being created, but they're not doing anything. The corporations are doing it on their own. These automotive manufactur-

ers are warning these guys: “Do something about energy pricing in Ontario, because if you don’t, we’re going to be leaving town. We’re going to be leaving your province if you don’t do something about it and do it now.”

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Grant Crack):** Questions and comments? I recognize the member from Kingston and the Islands.

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I have to echo the sentiments of my colleagues and say what a pleasure it is to see you in that chair. Well done.

I wanted to chime in here. With all due respect to the opposition member who suggests that it doesn’t appear as if the government is listening, we are listening. The massive number of consultations and round-table discussions that we have had on this bill has already been quoted, amounting to almost 8,000 questionnaires, as well as 100 First Nation and Métis community groups who were represented in numerous round-table discussions. Let’s make sure that gets on the record once again.

The other thing that I would like to highlight is a little bit more about the indigenous community engagement. One of the pillars of Ontario’s approach to indigenous policy is community economic development. Participation by First Nation and Métis communities in the energy sector is just one way that the government is enabling this kind of economic development. The long-term energy plan process provides an opportunity to understand First Nation and Métis communities’ interests and needs in order to outline a clear vision for involving indigenous communities in the energy sector. This is very important to us; it’s very important to our indigenous communities and to the indigenous economy in the future.

The 2013 long-term energy plan incorporates feedback received from the most comprehensive consultation engagement ever undertaken by the ministry, which included—and I repeat—10 indigenous engagement sessions and meetings across the province, with participation from nearly 100—hear it, everyone?—First Nation and Métis community groups.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Grant Crack):** I return now to the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek for his two-minute wrap-up.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I’d like to thank the members from Kitchener Centre, Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, Windsor–Tecumseh and of course Kingston and the Islands.

I would like to address, first of all, the member from Kitchener Centre. I’m glad that things are rosy in Kitchener Centre, and that’s great. That’s a part of Ontario. But if she would like to take a bus tour through Hamilton, I could show her all the empty factories and I could show her all the jobs that have been lost. In fact, in 1976 when I worked there, just in the plant I was in alone, Hilton Works, there were 13,200 hourly employees and 6,000 salaried and support staff, which is 20,000 people. Right now, there are maybe 800 total, altogether.

That’s every factory. Down Burlington Street, which the transportation minister is aware of, the main

manufacturing street in Hamilton—a huge street—I used to have trouble getting a parking spot when I went to work as a tradesman. You could fire a cannon off now and you wouldn’t hit anybody; that’s how empty it is.

The member from Kingston and the Islands talks about all the outreach and all the amendments.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Paul Miller:** That member is not in her seat, by the way, Speaker, and she’s talking.

They talk about all the things, all the consultation they did. It’s amazing all the consultation they did, you know, outreach and everything. Well, guess what? Not one amendment did they accept. They didn’t pass. So why did you have all those consultations and talk to all those hundreds of groups when you didn’t listen to them? Not one amendment went with this bill. Talk about arrogant. Unbelievable.

**1720**

The member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex obviously touched on a sore spot when he said that some of the electricity rates in some of the businesses in his town have doubled in the last five to 10 years. Well, that’s probably true, but they keep claiming that we’ve got the best rates. Well, then why are all these companies leaving if we’ve got all these good rates?

Thank you, to the member from Windsor–Tecumseh—

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** You’ve got 5.4% unemployment.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Grant Crack):** The member from Barrie, come to order.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** There’s nothing like going for a couple of shots with a newspaper when you did absolutely nothing in that factory, but you show up for the news conference. Great stuff, folks.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Grant Crack):** I would just like to remind the members: If you’re interested in doing some crosstalk or, as we call it, heckling, I would remind you that you should be in your own seats to do that.

Further debate?

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** I, too, am absolutely delighted for this opportunity to speak to this very innovative and bold approach. What we’re seeing in this piece of legislation underlies the change that you are seeing in this government, elected in 2014, under the direction and the leadership of Premier Wynne, because she is brave and bold and is prepared to do things differently. We know the members on the other side of the House are the agents of no change. You don’t want to see improvements in this system, whereas we know that Premier Wynne is out to make things better, to build Ontario up, by doing government differently.

This is why, Speaker, I accepted the opportunity to run to be a part of this caucus in 2014: because I believe very much in a changed government. This is not the government that has been in power since 2003. This is a very new and bold government, doing things differently in ways that are more transparent, that are more accountable and that are being successful in building Ontario up.

We're moving down that direction on this bill, as we have on so many other initiatives before.

The members opposite complain. He talks about the arrogance associated with not accepting a single amendment. We get from the other side that there are too many amendments being proposed, and we're criticized for it. We get from the other side that there are too few amendments being adopted, and we're accused of arrogance. We won't be adopting amendments, Speaker, unless they make sense.

What we saw from the people on this particular bill, on Bill 135—it was about people who wanted the status quo. Let's understand what the status quo was. The status quo, the integrated power system plan, was adopted in 2004 as part of the new OPA arrangements. In 2006, the OPA directed the integrated power system plan to go into operations—over 10 years ago. In 10 years, not a single plan was developed under that process. The process was broken.

The process was broken, and this Premier and this Minister of Energy recognized that we need to have a far more flexible one, more inclusive of people's comments and expertise, but not to be held to ransom by the special interests, the lawyers and the consultants who went through endless consultations, review and challenges. The only people making money on the integrated power system plan were the consultants and lawyers—endless hearings in front of the OEB, challenging the evidence of experts with some other experts.

Now, we know how difficult it would be to get this House together to come up with a coordinated, integrated system plan, knowing the difference in opinions around this House. They can't even come to the table to talk about election reform financing. Obviously, we all agree that we need to have changes. But what do we get? The Green Party comes to the table, but the third party will have nothing to do with it. It's the same—

**Interjection:** Which party?

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** That's the NDP. They will have nothing to do with it. It's so disconcerting.

What we've recognized in the energy-planning process is we have to stand up and take leadership. It is leadership that is at the heart of this bill, because this bill will allow us—all of the government—to go out into the communities, as we did with the 2013 long-term energy plan, and have the experts tell us what they think. They will tell us, and there will be experts on every side of the equation. There will be experts from communities who say that we need to do more of this and more of that. We will sit back, we will evaluate all the evidence and all the intelligence that comes to us through this process, and we'll make decisions. We'll make decisions to do what we believe, on the basis of the input that we've had, is in the best interest of all Ontario.

Then people can judge us, as they will every couple of years. Every four years, we'll get judged on whether our plan was the smart plan and was the right plan, and we'll accept that judgment. But we will take leadership and we'll make tough decisions.

That's what we saw in the whole Hydro One debate. We made a tough decision because we knew the importance of building infrastructure in this province without increasing our debt load. We took a bold decision. We know that members on the other side don't agree with it. It surprises me to no end that members of the official opposition don't support it. It seems to be right down their bailiwick. But we took a tough decision and we're making it happen. That will be with every single plan that we come out with on long-term energy planning. The one that we complete for 2017 will have a plan set forward for the future of energy transmission and power in this province, and it will be a plan that we've decided is in the best interest of the province. Judge us in 2018 whether it's right or not.

Let's be very clear about the process that's being set out here. The government is the planning body. We will take responsibility to put a plan in place that will do the things that we need to do, and that's to move power and transmit it across the province in a way that helps the communities as best as we possibly can. We'll make that plan. We will be the planning body.

The OEB is the regulatory body which will oversee the prices associated with us implementing the plan. It will be on the basis of that that the OEB can make judgments about charging more for electricity or, frankly, charging less. If the plan works, we believe that we'll be attracting more consumers of electricity into the province and, then, with greater volumes, prices can come down.

I'm quite comfortable and confident in having the OEB continue that regulatory, overseeing role and not be confusing its role with the planning body, because that's the role of government: to plan and to take hard decisions and put them into place.

Then, the IESO becomes the implementing body. The rules that we're directing here are going to ensure that we have price-competitive quotes for every system build-out that's coming forward. We'll get the best price for the taxpayers of Ontario. We'll build where we need to be building because that will be the new role of the Independent Electricity System Operator.

I'm very comfortable with our decision to move forward in refurbishing nuclear power plants. We've heard some members across talk about it—

**Mr. Bill Walker:** What does your Minister of the Environment think about that?

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** He's fully supportive, too, as a member of our government. For him to be speculating that we may not need those power plants with the way the cost of energy—sustainable, free energy, in a sense—is coming down because the wind keeps turning and the sun will shine—that's fair game.

But for the next 25 years, the assets of those nuclear plants being refurbished will be absolutely essential to our mix. But it doesn't mean that 50 years from now they will be essential. I envisage a day when we will be able to provide 60% of Ontario's power through wind energy with the appropriate amenities of storage and usage and off-peak usage and pricing. The time will come, but for now, it's a totally consistent position—

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** It'll never happen.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** You can make all the hay you want about the contradictory position, but it doesn't take you anywhere. It's totally consistent to speculate what it will look like.

The nuclear refurbishments: I know that the members on the other side are delighted that we are putting in a plan to refurbish nuclear. It's going to cost seven to seven and a half cents a kilowatt hour, all-in costs, so much cheaper than the average cost of power—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I think I have to interrupt the proceedings for a moment and remind the members that the member for Beaches—East York has the floor. I need to be able to hear him, and the heckling is actually out of order.

The member for Beaches—East York

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** Thank you so much, Speaker. I knew that I would get a fair hearing from you as Chair. There was a little concern with the previous member who was on the bench. But I wasn't challenging the Chair; I was just saying.

So we know that we're coming in with a plan to provide baseload power at between seven and seven and a half cents a kilowatt hour.

1730

That's our long-term future. As the member from Mississauga—Streetsville talked at length about, we have done the heavy lifting already. We've done the heavy lifting to get us to a 90% clean energy supply in this province. Everything we're doing now—we're maxing out at the levels of our price increases in such a way that others are going to have to increase their prices dramatically as they get off coal to do the heavy lifting that we've already done. We are sitting in an excellent position as we move forward on climate change in our legislation that we'll be introducing for third reading tomorrow. There are very important measures contained in this bill which allow us to respond with the flexibility that we need in a long-term energy plan to take advantage of all the climate change opportunities that we will have, in order to use smart meter, smart grid systems.

What we saw under the previous planning process was so bogged down. Nobody understood the rules of the long-term plan, and that's a problem. It's a problem when you talk about greenhouses that are desperately trying to expand their operations. Under the old plan, it's difficult for them to put power into greenhouses behind the meter, so that the greenhouses can supply the carbon dioxide that's needed for these huge greenhouses that are growing the tomatoes and peppers for our marketplaces to displace the peppers and the tomatoes that we're getting from Mexico and California. It's difficult. We're putting in an energy plan which will make it easier for greenhouse growers in Windsor and all through the Niagara Peninsula to start growing 24 hours a day all through the winter using combined heat and power for heat, to heat the greenhouses and using LED lighting with off-peak

power pricing on electricity to grow tomatoes, vegetables etc.

I'm very, very excited about this plan and know that the bill we're bringing in here does what we know it needs to do to create the flexibility necessary, because we're not going to be sitting in endless hearings trying to get through the process. We're going to make decisions. In the two years, almost, that I've been here, it has been one of the most robust agendas of bringing forward new legislation that helps Ontario be built up. It's progressive—

**Interjection:** It's progressive.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** Absolutely. It's a progressive agenda and it has changed the channel on transparency, on retention of records—all the things that the members of the opposition will be critical of our government about things that happened before we were the government—because we now have the flexibility and power to put these programs into place.

Another piece that we're seeing in this is the importance of conservation in the system, how important it will be to find new ways of conservation. But I don't want to dwell on conservation. Even the members opposite get the importance of conservation because it makes a lot of sense. There's a little anomaly, we know, with the OEB giving a price increase because people were almost too successful in the conservation angle. I get that piece. There's fewer kilowatt hours being utilized, therefore some of the overall system costs have to be spread over fewer—it results in a small increase.

What happens when you think in the future of where we're going—with storage technology, with smart meter technology, with hybrid and all-electric vehicle technologies. We are going to be using more electrons in this program by displacing fossil fuels.

My brother Gordon Potts works for Northland Power, a sustainable energy developer. He tells me about the future he sees where we are not just doing demand management, but encouraging more demand, because every kilowatt of electricity that we can use from low-carbon sources—zero-carbon sources in 90% of the case in Ontario. If it displaces fossil fuels, we do an incredible thing for our greenhouse gas reductions. The more cars using fossil fuels we get off the streets and put into electric vehicles, the better; the more charging stations we can set up in a network across this province so that people can feel comfortable about driving 120 kilometres or 140 kilometres, stopping to get a coffee, do a quick energy boost in their car and continue their journey—it's fantastic.

The possibilities of energy storage associated with having electric vehicles, cars with batteries that at night use off-peak power to charge the vehicle and then during the day, as they drive to work, use off-peak power—when they plug into their work charger, they become a storage mechanism. So when they go on and turn on their computer, when they flick on their lights, when they turn on the machinery that they are being paid to work for, that energy is coming from their car, and other people's

cars are in the system. This is what our smart meters—under the old planning process, it was far too complex and difficult to get us past that process. That's why it is absolutely essential we get to this bill and that we adopt it as quickly as we can.

I note that others have already spoken, but we've had over 16 hours of debate on this bill; five and a half hours on third reading alone. As I said, it's no surprise that there were no amendments passed; we actually got this bill absolutely right. We did so in the first drafting because we had a year and a half of planning around the 2013 long-term energy plan to demonstrate how it could work and should work. And it has worked that way, Speaker.

We have a plan that came out of the long-term energy plan achieving balance. That's exactly where we need to be: a balance between the generation—off-peak and baseload—the consumption and storage opportunities. By pumping water up a hill—in Marmora, Ontario or in the Great Lakes, like Lake Superior—to run it back downhill again when we need the power at peak times, this is the kind of storage technology that we can invest in so that we can achieve the balance that is being proposed under the 2013 long-term energy plan.

This is, I think, why we need to think about curtailing debate. We've been over all the issues.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** A closure motion?

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** We've been over all the issues. It's not my role to bring closure at this point, but we've been over the issues in a repeated way.

We know that the member from Toronto–Danforth is stuck in the past. I see him all the time going door to door in the community that I used to live in. He goes door to door and he's Mr. Negative, Mr. No to everything. He walks around and he has got to say, "We can't have this. Put up a sign. Be against that. Be against this."

What are you guys in favour of? Where is your long-term energy plan? Your long-term energy plan is stuck in the planning process that you have been posing all these motions for to denude the government of the power to take responsibility for decisions. We don't want to see that. We're fully supportive of this bill in its present form.

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** The cup is half empty.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** The cup is full—

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** That's right; his cup is half empty.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** —with the planning that we're doing around this.

Speaker, on that happy note, I'm going to take some of my own advice. I think it's time to stop debate on this thing and I'm going to sit down.

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

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** That was really interesting. The member across certainly is quite vocal, enthusiastic and everything else. Unfortunately, I remember our leader saying, "Nobody has a corner on good ideas." We'd certainly support a good idea.

As we've seen from the committee process, this government doesn't believe anybody has a good idea because they accepted no amendments—nothing. They didn't accept good advice that was given to them.

Certainly, we've seen this from their past actions. Selling Hydro One is certainly one of them. Some 80% of the people of Ontario, I believe, thought that was a bad idea. But no, not these guys. They just kept right on going and they put the second offering up here just the other week.

It's interesting to me, listening to the last speaker, that he believes that they got it right. I wish that every piece of legislation put in front of this House was exactly perfect, which the speaker seemed to think it is. Really, if it was perfect, what are we doing here? It's not perfect.

It takes away a lot of the things that we're used to. It removes the independence of the Independent Electricity System Operator, and things like this certainly leave no oversight to the minister.

The minister can pretty much do what he wants. The minister can make rules and regulations whenever he wants and nobody can stop him.

It's too bad there weren't some changes that we and the NDP proposed, and that weren't adopted by this government. I'm really afraid that this is going to be something that we're going to really regret in the future.

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

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** The comments from the member from Beaches–East York should give us pause because they are completely and utterly irrational.

**1740**

I'm reading from the *Globe and Mail*, from the editorial from April 29, "Coming Soon: Ontario's Green Energy Fiasco, the Sequel." It goes on to say:

"The size of the disaster in the province's electricity system is hard to get your head around. But voters, consumers, businesses and especially the Liberal government should be rereading Ms. Lysyk's report. Because a document leaked to the *Globe and Mail* this week suggests that the Liberals, who a decade ago broke the electricity system through a fatal combination of good intentions and a wilful disregard of both expertise and experience, may be preparing to repeat the exercise with their next greenhouse gas reduction plan"—which the member mentioned.

"A decade ago, the government of Ontario started driving up electricity costs with a simple objective in mind: It wanted to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the production of electricity. This was the right objective. But the way it went about it was all wrong. Instead of encouraging the electricity sector to be as efficient as possible, the government essentially ordered it to become costly, inefficient and irrational....

"The result is that the cost of generating electricity in Ontario has exploded, even as power costs plummeted elsewhere. Between 2004 and 2014, power generation costs in Ontario increased by 74%, according to the auditor."

So when the member gets up and says that they've done the heavy lifting—these are his words—what they've done is that they've left the people of this province with few options to even afford their hydro bills. They've driven businesses out of this province. The Auditor General has the stats and the proof that should give you pause. I can guarantee you that Bill 135, the government bill, will not get this government under control, because they will do everything in their power to run this province out of its own electricity system.

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

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I have a limited amount of time. I want to spend just a moment or two—I don't have any specific questions for the member from Beaches–East York. I actually want to take some of my time to pay tribute to that man. In his presentation here this afternoon, he not only spoke passionately, as he always does here in this Legislature, on behalf of the good people of Beaches–East York—the people who were wise enough to send him here to this Legislature two years ago to be their ambassador, to be their champion. I also have to say any time a member of the governing side can provoke such an outrageous response from the members of the Conservative caucus and the members of the NDP caucus, it warms my heart. It tells me that, in this case, he has hit the nail right on the head. So I want to thank the member from Beaches–East York for his presentation here today, for standing up for what he knows to be right with respect to how the energy system is evolving, not just here in Ontario but around the world.

I want, with my remaining time, to kind of latch on to one of the words used by the member from Kitchener in the NDP caucus: “irrational.” There are so many examples that could be provided here, in limited time, about the irrational approach that both the Conservatives and the NDP have taken on so many issues over the last number of months, including with respect to the electricity system and the energy system, that I don't have enough time to go into every single aspect, except to say that, again, this bill, this legislation is all about moving the province forward, building the province up, making sure that we can continue to do things like build an LRT in Hamilton, like support an LRT and deliver two-way, all-day GO service to Kitchener and do so much across the infrastructure spectrum that many people in the Conservative caucus would want.

Speaker, the irony in all of this is that every single time we try to move the province forward, they vote against budget after budget after budget that would help all of their communities. That, unfortunately, is a shame.

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

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's a pleasure to bring comments to my colleague from Beaches–East York. He started off by saying that we didn't like change. Well, I will agree with him. We didn't want him to sell Hydro One, along with 85% of the people of Ontario. We didn't want them to double our debt. We didn't want the highest energy rates

on the continent. We didn't want to lose 300,000 manufacturing jobs. So no, we didn't want any of that change.

Then he went on to say that Premier Wynne was going to do government differently. Well, if deleting emails and changing Hansard is doing government differently, you have succeeded; five unprecedented OPP investigations under your government, you have succeeded; doubling the debt in 13 years, you have succeeded; a record number of closure motions in this House, you have succeeded; record spending or overspending, you have succeeded; decimated the horse racing industry, you have succeeded; election reform—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Sorry. I apologize.

The member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek knows he's got to be quiet while someone else has the floor. The Minister of Transportation knows he's got to be quiet while another member has the floor.

I'm going to give you extra time. The member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The member actually talked about election reform very, very briefly, but I want to ask him a very pointed question. Back in October, I presented my private member's bill to do this. I want to ask him how he voted and I want to ask him how every single member of his caucus voted on that private member's bill about election financing and third-party advertising.

Half a billion dollars a year we spend on excess energy that we produce and pay the United States and Quebec to take, making them doubly competitive. I'm not certain how he wants to talk about that one.

He talked about how we need to be planning. The only good planning they do is disaster planning, because they're creating it.

Finally, he talked about balance. I just wish, for once, in the 13 years I've been here, they would have—or not 13 years I've been here; I've only been here five. But in their 13 years, would they just balance the budget once and not sell the cow that produces the milk?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our questions and comments. The member for Beaches–East York can now reply.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** Thank you for the very spirited remarks from the members for Perth–Wellington and Kitchener–Waterloo, the great Minister of Transportation, who is doing more to build this Ontario up with the systems he's putting in place, and, of course, my friend from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

I wouldn't even know where to start. What surprises me the most from the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound is that he wants to know how I voted. I'd think, after five years, he'd know how to look up Hansard, but I'd be happy to show him. It's not a difficult thing.

What I do want to focus my remarks mostly on is, actually, the Minister of Transportation's remarks, because it is his ministry that some of the greatest reductions of greenhouse gases are going to come from and



some of the great new demands for electricity are going to come from as we do transform our rail system in Ontario to be an electric system. The regional express rail, all electrified across Ontario, is going to become the greatest source of new use of electrical energy, displacing fossil fuels. That is so critically important.

Yes, there's a little bit of extra supply generation capacity in the marketplace, and we have to be doing something with it, but my godfather Larry Higgins, who was the chief forecaster for Ontario Hydro many, many years ago as they were building electrical nuclear plants, used to like to say that forecasting in hydro is a lot like what John A. Macdonald said about gin: A little bit too much is probably just the right amount. So we do have a situation when there is excess, but as we move and get into the storage technology and we have a smarter grid, that will be repaired.

I do appreciate—oh, one last thing. The other largest source of reduction we're going to get in fossil fuels will be coming in First Nations properties, where we've identified something like 21 of 25 First Nations rural communities as prime—it's economical, now, to move with wiring. This plan will let us get there and help our First Nations people all across northern Ontario.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Point of order.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** I'd like to welcome four new constituents in my riding. I just received word today that four babies were born at my home. They are the robins on the windowsill outside the laundry room. We welcome them to Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'm pretty sure that's not a point of order.

Further debate?

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this somewhat interesting bill, Bill 135. I wanted to start with the Ontario Energy Board Act and the Electricity Act, because it does amend these two acts.

The main issue is that this bill removes the independence of the Independent Electricity Systems Operator. The bill centralizes all transmission and electricity sector planning with the minister's political staff and cabinet, thereby overriding those who should know about how to run an energy sector, such as industry experts at the IESO and the OEB.

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When it comes to choosing what is best for the province and the electricity system within it, that decision will be made with a partisan and political lens. Building power lines to the north could easily be vetoed by a desire to bring hydro in from some other place.

Also, energy is a necessity of life. The government should not be able to dangle needed electricity projects that would improve affordability and reliability in front of certain ridings come election time to secure a victory. We should do what's best for the province, not what's best for the government.

By making the IESO bend to the will of the minister or cabinet, political goals may differ from what is need on more than just transmission. For example, the long-term energy plan may, according to the bill, include goals or targets surrounding air emissions from the energy sector, or even the use of cleaner energy sources. By explicitly naming these two objectives, the ministry may prioritize them over reliability, cost-effectiveness or issues with energy supply. Essentially, the minister or government of the day can create whatever policy they like, on which grounds they like. This is hardly a stable system that acts in the best interests of all Ontarians.

The IESO does not have the ability to object to any of the directives or targets that they are given by the ministry. Even if functionally impossible, they are forced to create an implementation plan that the minister can alter any portion of or outright reject until he or she is satisfied. Again, the IESO cannot reasonably object to any project.

There is no requirement for the minister to hold consultations with Ontarians or people within the energy sector. The bill only suggests groups, later writing that the minister must only consult with "groups that the minister considers appropriate given the matters being addressed by the long-term energy plan."

Speaker, that's very dangerous. We have seen the disaster of the Green Energy Act; we've seen that. If they had consulted the right people, they would have known that wind farms are nothing but trouble in other countries that they were put in. We already are seeing countries in Europe—Britain and wherever else—cancelling these contracts because they're just too unaffordable. Some of these places are very energy poor right now because they can't afford the cost of it. The people are poor, who are having to pay for this. If the government had taken time to look at green energy, especially when it pertains to wind turbines, they'd have seen that. But again, they did not consult with experts or people who had experience in this type of thing.

It also means that the government can make critical decisions regarding the expansion of natural gas without ever consulting Union Gas or Enbridge, for example. In addition, even if the government does consult these groups, they are under no obligation to act on their advice. They're only legislatively required to "consider the results of such consultation." That's very dangerous.

Since cabinet and the minister write and approve the long-term energy plan, none of the documentation rationalizing any of the plans will be made public. All of these plans will be drafted in secret. In addition, because the OEB and the IESO are no longer allowed to hold hearings or raise opposition to any plans put forward by the government, the technical analysis regarding anything from cost to impact on energy supply will not be brought forward. That means if the government wants to move ahead with an expensive transmission project—say, new lines to Quebec—they can put the entire cost onto the rate base of hydro bills without any objection from any entity. They also can do this even if the project is not needed in the first place.

I want to talk a little bit about the Green Energy Act, which I have touched on previously. The Green Energy Act, I believe, was thought of for good reasons: to help control pollution in our environment. However, when it was first contracted, the prices they were paying for these projects was just way too high. The government set those prices—under what consultation, we don't know, but they were setting prices higher than what was normally given to some of these projects.

Now, we've seen, certainly in the time I've been here—actually, one of the reasons I got involved in politics at this level was that when I was a councillor in North Perth and these projects were being proposed, they took our planning rights away. Municipalities could not object to wind turbines being put in the municipality. That caused a lot of trouble in our municipality and certainly in municipalities throughout Ontario. The fighting, if I can use that term, amongst neighbours—we saw churches broken up; we saw incidents in public schools with bullying. It got that bad. Yet this government keeps on okaying these projects.

One of the worst examples I can see is allowing a wind farm project up around Collingwood, at the airport. How ridiculous is that? Nobody is taking any responsibility for that. I can assure you, Speaker, that if an airplane crashes into one of those things, "Oh, it's not my fault. It's not my fault."

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** It's a federal responsibility.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** It's a federal responsibility and the feds have no jurisdiction over those two airports, for various reasons, as explained by the member from Simcoe.

I can see what's going to happen. Hopefully, it won't happen, but if it does, there's going to be a crash. If there is a crash, "It's not my fault. We're trying to save the environment." Unfortunately, the person in that airplane probably won't live to see any changes in the environment.

I can't understand why this government has introduced a bill that perpetuates that kind of thinking. They

can do, by this bill, whatever they want and they can continue on doing it, and they won't listen to anybody else. They won't listen to experts. They won't listen to us. As we've heard from previous speeches here, they wouldn't accept any amendments to the bill. And as much as what has been said this afternoon by the government—as one speaker said, "We've got it perfect." Well, I'm sorry; that just doesn't happen in this world. It isn't perfect. And to say that the opposition parties had no good amendments for this bill is just pure arrogance, I submit.

Part of this bill has to do with energy audits. The bill will allow the government to quietly enact home energy audits through the changes to the Green Energy Act and the proclamation of past sections of that act.

The bill also leaves the door open to applying these mandatory audits to businesses as well. By forcing homeowners and businesses to report the amount of electricity, water and gas they use, the government is setting themselves up to be able to easily tax the use of these resources in the form of a sin tax. They could easily be the next step in a carbon-intensive agenda.

The elimination of new FIT contracts is a step in the right direction; I would agree with that. However, the bill still allows for microFIT projects and only codifies the new large renewable procurement method being exercised instead of FITs, which are the large wind and solar projects.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Time, gentlemen, please. Time.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** One more sentence.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Okay, that's it. I'm done.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much.

*Third reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

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Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, William Short

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Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b>	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
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Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brown, Patrick (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiques, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
<b>Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
<b>Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)</b>	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
<b>Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)</b>	Vaughan	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
<b>Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)</b>	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
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
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
<b>Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
<b>Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)</b>	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)</b>	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)</b>	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	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
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
<b>Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonnell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)</b>	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
<b>Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)</b>	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
<b>Nicholls, Rick (PC)</b>	Chatham–Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Oraziotti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
<b>Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)</b>	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
<b>Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)</b>	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint du gouvernement
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
<b>Wong, Soo (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Agincourt	Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
<b>Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Vacant	Scarborough–Rouge River	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

**Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Présidente: Cheri DiNovo  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor  
Grant Crack, Cheri DiNovo  
Han Dong, Michael Harris  
Sophie Kiwala, Arthur Potts  
Todd Smith, Monique Taylor  
Glenn Thibeault  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /  
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Yvan Baker  
Laura Albanese, Yvan Baker  
Toby Barrett, Han Dong  
Victor Fedeli, Catherine Fife  
Ann Hoggarth, Peter Z. Milczyn  
Daiene Vernile  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité  
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lou Rinaldi  
Mike Colle, Grant Crack  
Lisa Gretzky, Ann Hoggarth  
Harinder Malhi, Jim McDonell  
Eleanor McMahan, Lou Rinaldi  
Lisa M. Thompson  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité  
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Présidente: Cristina Martins  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Daiene Vernile  
Robert Bailey, Wayne Gates  
Monte Kwinter, Marie-France Lalonde  
Amrit Mangat, Cristina Martins  
Randy Pettapiece, Shafiq Qaadri  
Daiene Vernile  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de  
la justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti  
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney  
Randy Hillier, Michael Mantha  
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris  
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qaadri  
Laurie Scott  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité  
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Monte McNaughton  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Steve Clark  
Granville Anderson, Robert Bailey  
Steve Clark, Vic Dhillon  
Sophie Kiwala, Michael Mantha  
Eleanor McMahan, Monte McNaughton  
Soo Wong  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent  
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod  
Chris Ballard, John Fraser  
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield  
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi  
Peter Z. Milczyn, Julia Munro  
Lou Rinaldi  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité  
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Présidente: Indira Naidoo-Harris  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry  
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney  
Joe Dickson, Jennifer K. French  
Amrit Mangat, Kathryn McGarry  
Indira Naidoo-Harris, Bill Walker  
Jeff Yurek  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de  
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh  
Granville Anderson, Lorne Coe  
Vic Dhillon, John Fraser  
Marie-France Lalonde, Gila Martow  
Kathryn McGarry, Jagmeet Singh  
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Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch









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