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Green Energy Repeal Act, 2018

1st Session
42nd Parliament

Tuesday 30 October 2018

Chair: Nina Tangri
Clerk: Eric Rennie

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SP-6

Comité permanent de la politique sociale

Loi de 2018 abrogeant la Loi sur l'énergie verte

1re session
42e législature

Mardi 30 octobre 2018

Présidente : Nina Tangri
Greffier : Eric Rennie

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL POLICY

COMITÉ PERMANENT DE LA POLITIQUE SOCIALE

Tuesday 30 October 2018

Mardi 30 octobre 2018

The committee met at 1500 in committee room 1.

GREEN ENERGY REPEAL ACT, 2018
LOI DE 2018 ABROGEANT LA LOI SUR L'ÉNERGIE VERTE

Consideration of the following bill:

Bill 34, An Act to repeal the Green Energy Act, 2009 and to amend the Electricity Act, 1998, the Environmental Protection Act, the Planning Act and various other statutes / Projet de loi 34, Loi abrogeant la Loi de 2009 sur l'énergie verte et modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur l'électricité, la Loi sur la protection de l'environnement, la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire et diverses autres lois.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Good afternoon, everyone. We are meeting today for public hearings on Bill 34, An Act to repeal the Green Energy Act, 2009 and to amend the Electricity Act, 1998, the Environmental Protection Act, the Planning Act and various other statutes.

Pursuant to the order of the House, dated October 24, 2018, each witness will receive up to 10 minutes for their presentation, followed by up to 10 minutes of questioning from the committee, divided equally amongst the recognized parties. Are there any questions before we begin?

DAVID SUZUKI FOUNDATION

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Seeing none, I'd like to call our first witness, the David Suzuki Foundation, and if you can please introduce yourself for the record.

Mr. Gideon Forman: Thank you, Madam Chair and members of the committee. I appreciate the opportunity to speak this afternoon. As mentioned, I am with the David Suzuki Foundation. My name is Gideon Forman, and I'm a climate change policy analyst with the foundation.

In my brief remarks today, I'd like to say a few words about the overall thrust of Bill 34 and why we believe it is harmful to the people of Ontario. This bill and the cancellation of some 750 renewable energy contracts will (1) deter investment in the province, (2) deprive Ontarians of low-cost electricity sources and (3) kill local jobs.

First, let's talk briefly about investment. Globally, renewable energy is now an enormous sector. How big is it? In 2015, twice as much international capital—twice as much—was invested in clean energy as in fossil fuels. In a 2017 publication entitled Investing in Climate, Investing in Growth, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development writes, "Since 2010, 50% of private finance in infrastructure (USD $1.3 trillion) has been directed to renewable energy." So from 2010 to 2017, fully half of all private finance in infrastructure, $1.3 trillion US, was targeted at renewables.

That's a staggering sum of money. And to reiterate, that statistic doesn't come from environmentalists; it comes from the OECD. Clearly, renewables are of great interest to the private sector, but with this bill the province is saying, in effect, we don't want this investment in Ontario. If a private wind developer or a solar company has a choice between, say, Ontario and Texas, this bill invites them to invest in Texas. If Bill 34 passes, Ontario will turn its back on the massive economic stimulus that the clean energy sector can bring.

Secondly, by standing in the way of renewables' adoption, this bill rejects an energy source that's easy on Ontarians' wallets. The province's Environmental Commissioner tells us that, "Going forward, nuclear costs will rise and solar and wind power costs will fall."

The OECD report I just mentioned says, "Solar PV costs have declined by about 80% in leading markets since 2010." A 2017 article in the prestigious journal, Science, reminds us that from 2008 to 2015 in the US, the cost of wind power dropped 41% while the cost of utility scale photovoltaics went down 64%. Here in Ontario, the cost of solar fell 55% from 2012 to 2016. That's a cost reduction of more than half in just four years. Bloomberg New Energy Finance says, "The lifetime cost of wind and solar is less than the cost of building new fossil fuel plants." And a 2016 research paper from Goldman Sachs concludes, "Wind provides the lowest-cost source of new capacity."

So leading business experts—and, Madam Chair, I stress these are business leaders—suggest investing in renewables is just common sense, especially since renewables' cost to consumers is dropping dramatically.

Renewables don't create pollution but they do create a lot of employment. In my role as a policy analyst, I've had the privilege of talking to Ontarians working in the renewables sector across the province and I've seen how solar and wind projects generate good jobs.

For example, a new 44-megawatt solar project in Nanticoke will create construction and maintenance jobs for members of the Six Nations, and I think we can all agree that this is vitally important in a community like the

Six Nations, where unemployment—which stands at about 25%—is at crisis levels.

I've spoken with developers of the Sundance solar project in Timiskaming. They tell me that the project is helping to create a renewable energy workforce in the north. A part of the province that formerly had little solar energy expertise is now gaining it, with obvious benefits for the job market.

I've spoken with developers at the Gunn's Hill Wind Farm in Oxford county. This project produces enough electricity to power some 7,000 homes and employs local people in construction and maintenance of the windmills.

I could go on. But the point is, renewables are creating jobs across the province, including in First Nations communities, where job growth is especially important.

Bill 34, with its barriers to renewables development, will scare away investment and choke off the jobs that investment could bring.

In 2017, American solar and wind companies employed more than twice as many people—twice as many people—as the coal power sector; some 360,000 jobs in renewables versus about 160,000 in coal. That's something Canadian lawmakers should keep in mind as well.

Today I've focused on three reasons why Bill 34 is harmful. It discourages private sector investment; it threatens an affordable energy source; and it sends away jobs that could have come to Ontario.

Given the government's desire to pass Bill 34 quickly, one would think renewable energy is unpopular, but in fact, the opposite is true. Renewables are widely embraced by Canadians. Recent polling by Environics found that 93% support solar, 86% support wind and 91% support hydro power—what we call informally water power.

In conclusion, we ask you to withdraw Bill 34 and instead create legislation that promotes our most popular energy source: renewable energy. Doing so would strengthen our economy, create jobs across the province and offer Ontarians low-cost electricity.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much. We'll start with the opposition. Who would like to speak first? Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Mr. Forman, thank you for appearing here today.

Mr. Gideon Forman: Thank you.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: You noted that Goldman Sachs had commented that wind power was or was becoming one of the lowest-cost sources of power.

Mr. Gideon Forman: That's right.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Can you tell us a bit more about the context of that report?

Mr. Gideon Forman: Sure, yes. This was a 2016 research paper that they did, looking at wind power generally—not just in Canada but overall. Their conclusion was really quite simple: that wind at that time—2016—provided, in their terms, the lowest-cost source of new capacity.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. And you noted a number of others who talked about the cost-effectiveness of wind investment.

Mr. Gideon Forman: That's right. We made a point of really looking at what the business community was saying in this. That's why we looked at the OECD, we looked at Bloomberg New Energy Finance and we looked at Goldman Sachs: We really wanted to see what the business community was saying. Repeatedly, in the research we did, time and time again, they were saying how cost-effective renewables are.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: So does it make sense for Ontario to close the door to a source of electricity generation that has dropped and will continue to drop?

Mr. Gideon Forman: Not at all. It just doesn't make any business sense at all, in our view.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. I don't have further questions. Maybe my colleagues do.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Mr. Harden.

Mr. Joel Harden: Thank you for your presentation. Often what we've heard here and what I've read to date when people debate the growth or lack thereof of renewable energy in Canada is that it's not scalable to the extent that large centrifugal sources are, like nuclear. I wonder if you could comment on that.

As you do, I wonder: Could you also comment—and perhaps I missed it because I came in a sketch late, and I apologize for that—on the real cost of those centrifugal energy generating forces, whether it be nuclear—

Mr. Gideon Forman: Nuclear or fossil. Sure.

Yes, so, thanks, Mr. Harden—a really good question. I think initially, in the early days of renewable energy, that was a reasonable question: Could we get it on scale? Could this ever be more than a niche market? I think the fascinating thing to those of us who follow the industry is just how it has grown exponentially in the last little while.

I had an opportunity in 2015 to do a study tour of Germany, and I saw what the Germans are doing. German energy experts told me, "When we first started this process of bringing on renewables, they said we wouldn't be able to have more than about 7% of the grid. The grid just wouldn't be stable after about 7% renewables."

1510

Well now, as you probably know, they're at about one third; 33% or 35% of their power comes from renewables. The most robust, the most successful economy in Europe is now getting a very significant proportion of its power from renewables, mostly wind and solar in the case of Germany. So yes, absolutely it's scalable. That's not just our view. If you look at experts around the world—absolutely.

To your question about real costs of nuclear fossil, I think that is also an excellent question. We do need to look at the complete life cycle costs of these different forms of energy; no energy form comes without cost. But if we look at nuclear, we have to look at all the uranium mining. That's very carbon intensive. You're digging that up. That's a cost in terms of pollution and in terms of dollars for nuclear.

In terms of fossil fuels, the costs, particularly around coal—or the human health costs, which are enormous; they were in the billions of dollars in this province before,

wisely, Ontario phased out coal. When you stack nuclear and fossils against wind and solar, and the latter don't have those health costs, renewables start to look awfully good.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Mr. Arthur, you have just over one minute.

Mr. Ian Arthur: Thank you so much. Just quickly, would you speak to the role of storage, anticipating a critique that may come out for renewable energy generation in Ontario?

Mr. Gideon Forman: Just so I'm clear on your question—some of the challenges associated with storage?

Mr. Ian Arthur: The potential of storage, paired with renewables in Ontario.

Mr. Gideon Forman: Sure. I don't have specific stats on that. In general, they're not technical problems that would bar us from doing that. We'd need to figure out exactly what the appropriate technology is for Ontario. There are different ways to store power—without getting too much into the weeds—but there are no technical barriers to doing that.

Mr. Ian Arthur: Thank you. That's all I wanted.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much.

On the government side: Mr. Calandra.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Thank you, Mr. Forman. I appreciate you coming here.

Let me ask you, is it your suggestion that, although there's a 40-year lifespan on our nuclear capacity, we shut that down tomorrow?

Mr. Gideon Forman: I don't think, Mr. Calandra, that anyone would say we would shut nuclear power—

Mr. Paul Calandra: So we shouldn't shut it down. I don't need a long explanation—

Mr. Gideon Forman: I wouldn't say we should shut it down overnight, no. Not at all.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Okay, thank you. Clearly, nuclear power is going to be there a long time. I'm really encouraged—

Mr. Gideon Forman: Not necessarily a long time, Mr. Calandra.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Well, there's a 40-year lifespan, but we can argue that offline. I'm just glad that you realize that we have to keep it for the life cycle.

I'm also encouraged by the fact that you referenced Bloomberg and the corporate interests. Some of the corporate interests also suggest, through Bloomberg and CNBC, that it would be cheaper for us to have a pipeline from western Canada to eastern Canada to supply our energy needs through Canadian oil, as opposed to importing it. I'm assuming that you're in support of that as well, given your interest in supporting—

Mr. Gideon Forman: I'm not sure that that's really what we're talking about today, Mr. Calandra.

Mr. Paul Calandra: I'm just asking you that—

Mr. Gideon Forman: Are you asking me a question about pipelines when we're talking about renewable energy today?

Mr. Paul Calandra: Yes, I am.

Mr. Gideon Forman: It's just not something I'm prepared to talk about today. We're talking about renewables today. I'm happy to have that conversation with you, but I don't think this committee is the place to talk about pipelines.

Mr. Paul Calandra: All right—so the corporate sector only when it fits your narrative.

Mr. Gideon Forman: No. I'm happy to talk about any corporate sector issue connected to renewables.

Mr. Paul Calandra: You were big supporters of the Green Energy Act back when it was being contemplated.

Mr. Gideon Forman: Is that a question?

Mr. Paul Calandra: Yes.

Mr. Gideon Forman: We're big supporters of renewable energy.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Were you big supporters of the original Green Energy Act as well?

Mr. Gideon Forman: Yes. We thought that it did a lot to support renewable energy in the province.

Mr. Paul Calandra: I noted from an article back—I think it was in 2011. It was actually the first time Mr. Suzuki endorsed a political party, and that was the Liberal Party, in part because of the Green Energy Act.

There are a couple of things that I found interesting. You referenced it. You talked about the decline in the cost of energy—

Mr. Gideon Forman: Of renewable energy.

Mr. Paul Calandra: A couple of quotes I found interesting—we heard this yesterday as well, talking about losing the advantage.

This is an article from February 26, 2009, from the Globe and Mail. It said that then-Minister Smitherman had toured European nations with much more advanced renewable energy portfolios.

Toronto Star, July 21—again, as I mentioned, David Suzuki endorsed the Green Energy Act.

In the Georgia Straight, there was an article—actually, it was submitted by somebody from your organization: "The Ontario government is getting behind a Green Energy Act proposed by the David Suzuki Foundation...."

Finally—and this is a quote, again, from an article that was written by your organization: "Governments such as Germany's already have a considerable head start when it comes to renewable energy, and even the US is becoming a world leader."

My question to you is, was it your advice that led the government to lock in such high costs of wind and solar on the renewable portfolio when the Green Energy Act was introduced and passed into law? Was that your advice 10 years ago?

Mr. Gideon Forman: Well, I don't even agree with the premise of the question. I don't think that any high costs were locked in. I don't agree with the premise of the question.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Right now, the OEB suggests that solar is costing us 48.1 cents. That's not a high price?

Mr. Gideon Forman: What year is that from?

Mr. Paul Calandra: From last year. Is that not high?

Mr. Gideon Forman: I guess you have to decide—

Mr. Paul Calandra: Wind is at 13.3 cents. Is that high? Because yesterday, we heard that Alberta is at 3.7 cents.

Mr. Gideon Forman: The cost of renewable energy is competitive now, and the trajectory is downward—

Mr. Paul Calandra: But my question specifically: Nine years ago, when you proposed the Green Energy Act—because you took credit for it, back in an article that you—

Mr. Gideon Forman: I didn't personally, but—

Mr. Paul Calandra: No, your organization did an article in the Georgia Straight.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): You have one minute.

Mr. Paul Calandra: You said that you proposed the Green Energy Act. Was it your advice that the government had to lock in such high prices in order to encourage it? If so, why? Yesterday, we heard from other organizations that we should not lose the advantage that we have after spending so much money.

So if Germany was so far ahead, if the United States were so ahead, why, over the last 10 years, have Ontario taxpayers paid $4.5 billion in subsidies and are on the hook for $40 billion? Was it because of the advice that you gave the government? If so, why the heck should we listen to you for the next 40 years on what was quite clearly the most disastrous energy procurement process in the history of this province? What makes you the expert, given how disastrous your advice has been?

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Fifteen seconds, please, if you can just wrap up.

Mr. Gideon Forman: What makes us the experts? I think that we've tried to draw on private sector analysts to convey to you that the price of renewable energy is coming down precipitously. Anyone who follows the issue knows that the trajectory is downward. We've always thought that the prices were reasonable, and now they are becoming even more reasonable and cost-effective. But that's not just our view.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much for joining us today for your presentation.

Mr. Gideon Forman: Thank you.

REGISTERED NURSES' ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): If I can call upon the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, please. If you can please state your name for the record. You have 10 minutes to present, and then five minutes from each of the parties here. Thank you very much. Go ahead.

Ms. Hilda Swirsky: My name is Hilda Swirsky and I am the region 6 board representative for the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario. With me today is RNAO senior economist Kim Jarvi. On behalf of RNAO, I wish to thank the Chair and members of the Standing Committee on Social Policy for this opportunity to present the views of Ontario's registered nurses, nurse practitioners and nursing students on Bill 34, the Green Energy Repeal Act. We are here to speak to the health implications of this bill.

First, we stress that Ontario must respond in a serious way to climate change and recognize the role that renewable energy must play. As the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario pointed out this month, the effects of climate change in Ontario are very evident. For example, the province is 1.5 degrees centigrade hotter than it was in 1948, warming much faster than the global average. A further 2.5 centigrade to 3.75 centigrade rise is expected by 2050.

These changes are very unevenly distributed, with some regions very severely affected. Extreme weather events are increasingly common; for example, the 2016 drought in eastern Ontario; flooding in eastern Ontario and Quebec in 2017; the 2018 wildfire in Parry Sound and elsewhere; and the 2018 Ontario-Quebec tornadoes.

The latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change makes the response more urgent. It warns that the planet is already one degree centigrade hotter than it was in the pre-industrial era, and it could rise above 1.5 degrees centigrade by 2030. This change will bring widespread heat waves, wildfires, droughts, famines and huge losses in ocean food production. If the temperature rise hits two degrees centigrade, the situation will be dramatically worse.

1520

The unprecedented growth in greenhouse gas is driving climate change. Today, the levels of carbon in the air far exceed those at any other time in the last 800,000 years.

In your handout, you will see graphs from the US Environmental Protection Agency that show an alarming spike in carbon dioxide concentrations since 1950.

This warming and extreme weather bring increasing health costs to Ontarians: vector-borne diseases like West Nile and Lyme disease; increased mortality from heat waves and extreme cold snaps; illness from increased mould in flooded homes; worsened asthma from more pollution and greater pollen exposure; illness from pollution promoted by higher temperatures and smoke from wildfires.

Economic costs are soaring as well. For example, Ontario insurance losses are trending up exponentially, exceeding $1.3 billion in 2013, the year of the Toronto floods.

Ontario has taken important action. For example, between 2005 and 2014 it shut down all its coal plants. This greatly reduced provincial greenhouse gas emissions, which is good for our health, but the co-benefits included a reduction in smog days, from 53 in 2005 to zero in 2014 and 2015. This was important as coal emissions attack human respiratory, cardiovascular and neurological systems, as do many other pollutants.

The resulting cleaner air brought health benefits. For Toronto alone, air quality improvements between 2004 and 2014 were estimated to have reduced air pollution deaths by 23%, from 1,700 to 1,300, and reduced air pollution-related hospital admissions by 41%, from 6,000 to 3,550. Toronto Public Health cites the coal closures as a factor in these gains.

Mr. Kim Jarvi: I'm going to take on the policy dimension. Ontario has announced plans for a climate change

plan and is holding anonymous online consultations on climate change, but we're concerned about Ontario's capacity to meet its greenhouse gas commitments.

Cap-and-trade was making emitters pay for their carbon pollution and that was a powerful incentive for them to reduce that pollution. Unfortunately, Bill 4 took away that tool. It also removed a major source of revenue for programs to address climate change.

Bill 4 also removed the greenhouse gas targets from Ontario legislation, and that creates uncertainty about Ontario's commitment to meet those targets.

In any case, to make necessary progress on climate change and face those challenges, Ontario needs a comprehensive climate change plan to address all emitting sectors, including transportation, industry, buildings, electricity, agriculture and waste. Essential strategies include expanding public transit, expanding active transportation, encouraging energy efficiency in transportation, industry and buildings, and more renewable energy, which is what we're talking about here today.

But how do we do that when making carbon polluters pay has been taken off the table and when the government is opting to reduce its revenues? With the limited possibilities for subsidies and the limited possibility of using market mechanisms, the government will have to rely heavily on regulation.

We urge you to reconsider Bill 34's tilt against renewable energy. Renewable energy is not only healthier; it's also becoming the cheapest option, as was pointed out by the previous speaker, even without considering the health savings, and I think that should be entered into any calculation.

For example, Alberta, in 2017, signed wind energy contracts that averaged out, on a weighted basis, at 3.7 cents per kilowatt hour, which is very competitive with anything that's available here in Ontario.

We would also like to endorse the call by the Renewable Energy Alliance of Ontario to remove provisions in the bill that discriminate against renewable energy; to wit, the proposed removal of the right to appeal local decisions about renewable energy applications, and the proposed right of cabinet to prohibit the issuance or renewal of renewable energy approvals in prescribed circumstances. Those prescribed circumstances could include a requirement to demonstrate need for that energy.

We believe it's not fair to impose these constraints on renewable energy if they're not imposed on other forms of energy.

In summary, we offer the following recommendations. First, we would like you to commit to a comprehensive program to address climate change through measures to mitigate that change and measures to adapt to climate change. These measures must address all sources of greenhouse gases, including transportation, industry, buildings, electricity, agriculture and waste.

Second, we ask you to commit to greenhouse gas reduction targets that, at a minimum, meet Ontario's existing targets, which are 15% below 1990 levels by 2020, 37% by 2030 and 80% by 2050.

Third, we ask you to withdraw the court challenge to federal carbon pricing.

Fourth, we ask you not to create an uneven playing field for renewable energy projects versus other kinds of projects, in particular those discrepancies I mentioned before. Don't remove the right of appeal for renewable energy projects so long as other types of projects retain that right, and don't empower cabinet to prohibit issuing or renewing renewable energy approvals in prescribed circumstances, including—

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): You have one more minute.

Mr. Kim Jarvi: —a requirement to demonstrate the need for energy.

Finally, on the matter of transportation, we urge the province to take all necessary steps to:

—work with the federal government and municipal partners to ensure dedicated, sustainable revenue for ongoing operation and expansion of transit and active transportation;

—support the cost-effective and expeditious delivery of those expansions, implemented through transparent governance and informed expert opinion; and

—avoid resorting to asset sales like the privatization of Hydro One to facilitate that.

I want to thank you very much for this opportunity to present. We're happy to take any questions that you have.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much. We'll begin with the government side. Who would like to speak first? Mr. Calandra.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Thank you very much. I do appreciate you both being here.

Obviously, I think we would all agree that climate change is an issue. Your members have been on the front line of dealing with it for a very long time, so I don't think there's any disagreement on that. The disagreement is how we tackle the issue and how we've tackled it in the past and how we can tackle it going forward.

Some of your comments that you have made are going to be addressed in the climate plan that the minister brings forward, so I'm not going to really get into that, but I welcome your comments on that.

Not to belabour it, but many groups are coming to us and touting how cheap clean energy is now. Now it's down to 3.7 cents in Alberta and Saskatchewan. The fact that we have subsidized it to the tune of $4.5 billion at a bare minimum, and we'll be subsidizing it to the tune of $40 billion in terms of the Fair Hydro Plan—I think that has escaped a lot of the presentations that we've heard. That's a lot of health care, $4.5 billion, and $40 billion, going forward—a lot of health care.

But I think the RNAO is also part of the—is it the clean energy alliance, or clean air alliance?

Mr. Kim Jarvi: That's correct.

Mr. Paul Calandra: I wanted to just talk a bit about that, because in your presentation you talked about the carbon tax and how it changes people's behaviour so they pollute less. But in the report that the clean air—is it the clean air alliance? Ontario Clean Air Alliance?

Mr. Kim Jarvi: Clean Economy Alliance.

Mr. Paul Calandra: In the report that they issued—I think it was 2017. I'll get it to you, but—it's page 6. It was very interesting.

Mr. Kim Jarvi: There are a lot of reports from them.

Mr. Paul Calandra: I'll get it to you. I'll make sure I get it to you. You probably remember it because you helped—you were part of the—authored it.

Again, you reiterated—in a recent release, the RNAO suggested that a strong price signal will promote behavioural change. You just repeated that again. I appreciate your comments on that.

On page 6 of your report, you noted that gasoline use had not fallen following the carbon tax. You noted that gasoline and natural gas costs had not decreased at all. On page 15, you went on to say, "The carbon price doesn't appear to have reduced greenhouse gas emissions in the province due to the fact that it is still a very low price."

1530

Your report clearly indicates that it didn't change behavioural attitudes at all, but—

Mr. Kim Jarvi: I don't think—that's not what the report says.

Mr. Paul Calandra: I was quoting directly—because the price is low. So let me ask you: What carbon price do you think we would have to have—again, it's pages 6 and 15; I'll make sure I get them to you so you can refresh your mind on it. What price do you think we would have to have to actually do what you said we need to do, to change behaviour, so that people stop using it and you actually see the corresponding decrease?

Mr. Kim Jarvi: I'm going to start out by saying that the cap-and-trade approach was different. It just limited the number of permits, so the amount of emissions would drop by the drop in the number of permits. That approach forces the reduction. As an economist, I know that there are multiple factors involved in influencing quantity in and price. Given exchange of the—

Mr. Paul Calandra: I'm not an economist, so forgive me. You issued the letter after the government was elected, and in the letter you said that a strong carbon price would help change behavioural attitudes. This was in July 2018.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): You have one minute, please, to conclude.

Mr. Paul Calandra: But your report also suggests that it had no impact whatsoever. So I'm asking you very specifically as an economist: What price—

Mr. Kim Jarvi: Well, you're selectively quoting, because we're saying that the use of other fuels did decrease. It was only with respect to gasoline that the behaviour—that there wasn't a net reduction.

Mr. Paul Calandra: No, no. Your actual quote on page 15 was, "The carbon price doesn't appear to have reduced greenhouse gas emissions in the province."

Mr. Kim Jarvi: If you're speaking about Ontario, the reason for that is that the cap hadn't been reduced. It was only set at one level. There was no way it could have reduced anything in that year. When the cap comes down, that's when the reductions are forced to take place.

Mr. Paul Calandra: At what price would it have to be?

Mr. Kim Jarvi: In this case, you're talking about reducing—

Mr. Paul Calandra: The carbon price.

Mr. Kim Jarvi: We didn't have a carbon price; we had cap-and-trade.

Mr. Paul Calandra: No, but your report says—

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much, Mr. Calandra. We're going to move to the opposition. Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Kim Jarvi: We'll continue that later.

Interjection.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much. We're going to move to the opposition.

Thank you, Mr. Tabuns, please go ahead.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you both for coming in today. We really appreciate your presence.

I just want to continue on some of the tone of the questioning by the parliamentary assistant: Are you now or have you ever been an environmentalist?

Laughter.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: You can name names, if you want.

Mr. Kim Jarvi: I suppose I could confess to that, yes.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I think you probably could say that.

I was around for the hearings on the Green Energy Act. I remember the RNAO supporting that. My understanding at the time was that you were supporting that because you felt it was very important to reduce air pollution and increase people's quality of life and length of life. Is that fair?

Mr. Kim Jarvi: That's correct. We also supported a feed-in tariff that would encourage a new industry, knowing full well that it wouldn't add that much to the total prices, because of the fact that the size of the industry wasn't very large—the portion of the energy delivered by that sector. Basically, the rise in costs, I think, can be pretty much chalked up to the capital expenditures in the nuclear industry.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Actually, do you want to enlarge upon that a bit?

Mr. Kim Jarvi: Nuclear energy, once it's up and running, can be competitive, but the cost of building the plants is quite high, and invariably the cost overruns were in the order of 150%. So what seemed marginal proved to be quite costly in the cited figures. the clean air alliance cited figures that by the mid 2020s, it will be 16 cents a kilowatt hour, and that's going to be not very competitive with any new renewables.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: No, going from six cents a kilowatt hour to 16 cents a kilowatt hour will have a real impact on price in Ontario—a big impact.

I know that at the time we were discussing the Green Energy Act, no prices were included in the bill itself. You may be aware that at the time, although immediately after the bill was passed, wind developers were offered 13 cents a kilowatt hour; natural gas plants were being paid anywhere from 12 cents to 31 cents a kilowatt hour. I'm sure you're aware of that as well.

Mr. Kim Jarvi: Thank you for reminding me.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Do my colleagues have questions?

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Would someone else like to speak to that? Mr. Arthur?

Mr. Ian Arthur: Do you have any projections for the health costs that are going to come out of climate change for Ontario and what that's going to do to us?

Ms. Hilda Swirsky: If you look at the news, almost every single night you have some extreme-weather event that has happened. Billions of people now are environmental refugees—no longer in their homes. We didn't hear about tornadoes happening in places they are happening now. Ottawa, Gatineau—totally devastated. You talk to these people, and they have nothing. They have lost absolutely everything as a result of climate change.

Climate change has been going on slowly. Climate change does occur, but it's the rapid, extreme-weather events that we have had in the last couple of years that have not happened before. The costs are enormous for what's happening.

Flooding—who had heard of so much flooding? Just a couple of days ago, there was flooding near the Dead Sea. People were killed, and a whole school of students had to be rescued. That's the lowest point on Earth, and you never saw flooding there. Flooding where we never had flooding before; places that are hot that were never hot before; the ice caps disappearing. You talk to somebody up north and they say, "We know climate change is happening rapidly because our ice caps are"—

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thirty seconds, please.

Mr. Ian Arthur: Sorry, just one more quick question, if you don't mind. If you, in theory, had overpaid for something at some previous time, do you think that justifies underpaying for something in the future?

Mr. Kim Jarvi: I think if you have an opportunity to buy cheap electricity, you should jump on it.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much for coming out today. We appreciate it.

NORTH AMERICAN PLATFORM AGAINST WIND POWER

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): If I can call upon North American Platform Against Wind Power, please.

Interjections.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): If I can ask you gentlemen to please allow our next speaker to present.

If you could please introduce yourself. You have 10 minutes to present, followed by five minutes from each of the recognized parties. Please go ahead.

Ms. Sherri Lange: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. It's a pleasure to be here and to address all of you. I am really encouraged by this movement in the government. We all are. We represent a large number of people across North America—380 groups and over two million active members at this time.

You'll note that the name of our agency is "against wind power," for a very good reason. It's unreliable and intermittent, it doesn't work, is not clean, is not safe and it destroys habitats and people's lives.

This is a little book from England, in its 14th printing: The Wind Farm Scam. It will change your viewpoint quite a bit about wind farms and what they do. We don't even call them wind farms in our business; we call them factories.

I know you're going to look at this binder and say, "What are we going to do with the next five minutes?" I don't want to intimidate anyone, but in this binder are some very important facts about why we need to repeal this bill and why we support Bill 34.

We also would like to point out the numerous misrepresentations that have come along the way by the Liberals and by the NDP. I'm sorry to say, respectfully, that we've had a history now of disastrous policies—disastrous. That's it in a nutshell.

1540

I'm going to just change it up a bit because the previous speakers mentioned things that did not compute with my experience and my knowledge.

I wanted to just mention that Germany is no longer the poster child of the wind industry. They call it a bust, not a boom. It has ended a certain period of its subsidies now. It is trying to disengage from its green platform. It's a mess. They had 800,000 people going into the forest or—cut off from power. Many of those couldn't afford their electricity. It's a heat-or-eat kind of syndrome, which Premier Ford also alluded to in his campaign. This is a very real phenomenon, heat or eat.

You were all alluding to the cost of power. It's untenable. We have to do something. These subsidies that you were all talking about—yes, they're untenable; they have to go. We strongly recommend that you end the FIT program as quickly as you can, repeal the Green Energy Act and act in the good conscience of doing things properly for the province and for the people.

The clean air fallacy has been promoted around and around for many, many years. Ross McKitrick has debunked that, and I think if you will be kind enough to look in this binder, you will see the material from Professor McKitrick from Guelph University referring to the fact that if so many people are dying of smog, where are the bodies? You have to actually be able to prove it when you're saying that. He's a very, very brilliant man, obviously.

I know I don't have a ton of time. We would encourage all the political parties to work together to rejig, rethink, improve and reset the pins for Ontario. We absolutely need to do this.

In this binder—I'll just quickly go through it for you—the very first picture is a picture of a little brown bat, endangered. It's not legal to kill an endangered bat in Ontario. Developers are allowed to kill 14 small birds, whatever that is, and 10 bats per turbine per year. We don't know how many are being killed. We know that the limits are being exceeded constantly. So we have an environmental debacle going on. We have polluted water. I think,

Mr. Tabuns, you brought some polluted water into the Legislature.

So, yes, it is not a partisan issue. We need to work together to make the right decisions.

Solar: I won't even get into that because it's got its own problems as well—as you know, much higher subsidies than wind power.

The first tab is talking about the subsidies. All right? That's under the blue tab, and I'll go through this very quickly because I also have comments.

Please, I beg you to read this report by Robert Lyman and Michelle Stirling from the Friends of Science in Calgary, a very reputable group that has studied climate change issues and the enormous subsidies. You will be so surprised when you read this material. The subsidies swishing across all of the economies of Canada are so unfathomably large, you'll be surprised. She says there's no such thing as a low-carbon society; it's red ink and green subsidies. I kind of agree with that. At any rate, that's the section on subsidies, and I encourage you to read that.

The next section is two projects that I singled out. We have over 7,000 wind turbines in the province right now—complete destruction. Many of them are along the shores of our Great Lakes. Okay? Unbelievable. The American Bird Conservancy says not within 10 miles of a shoreline—we've got them right smack up against. Thank God the Liberals did give us an offshore moratorium in 2011. We will never forget that.

Anyway, two sections here—if you'd be kind enough to look at the pictures of Amherst Island, they've got 23 turbines running now. I know they have submitted over here as well. I believe one of these documents is a duplicate from what is over there. They have had tremendous problems. The subtrades have not even been paid, and the developer and the subtrades have put liens on the land of the people who are hosting the turbines. It's a complete financial mess. That's two projects that we encourage you to look at.

Now we'd like to talk about the ERT. The ERT is captured in EPA 142.1, which I think many of us have written to our legislators requesting be repealed, like, immediately, like tomorrow or today maybe. It's very problematic. This is the regulation that says that people have to prove irreparable harm to human health or to the environment. The people have to prove that. What's wrong with the developer proving that his project is safe? These turbines are not safe. They are emitting electrical pollution across the province. Many of the transmission lines and substations are illegally in place. We know this. We know that there are people who can't live in their homes; over 100 people that we know about can't live in their homes. They're so toxic. We know we have water contamination. These projects have been streamlined by that regulation, okay? This has to stop.

You cannot put it on the citizens of Ontario to prove that it's safe. That's insane. We call it the "dead man walking" clause—these groups that go and they spend tons of money, money they don't have, millions of dollars. Clearview and Collingwood got off the hook. I can't even tell you how much, I'm not allowed to say, but it was in the millions, and seven lawyers, and they won on airport safety issues and also on the environment—the bat problem.

Just for a brief moment, because this is so important to me and the people of Ontario, if you are kind enough to look at this page in the beginning section: The developer testified under oath that there was no habitat for bats. Then, when he finally visited the site, he said, "No, this habitat is not suitable."

Mrs. Richardson, she's the mother of Sarah Richardson, the designer—she's got that designer program. She's an amazing lady, a former city of Toronto planner. She went out with her bat meter and she found the bats—three of them were endangered species—all around the project area. So, this project could not have gone ahead when we know there are endangered species in the area.

The point is that the developer hires people who lie. I'm sorry to use that strong word—I know it's not parliamentary—but they don't represent the truth. They are pushing through a harmful project. They've done this all across Ontario.

We don't know what the real numbers are—the US Fish and Wildlife Service says 585,000 birds and about 800,000 bats per year. We know the numbers in the United States are between 13 million and 31 million birds and bats respectively per year. The numbers don't match. We know one is a government body and we know what the real numbers are from Spain, Germany and the Scandinavian countries. They've done counts—phenomenal damage to the environment.

The other thing we need to talk about just briefly is the next section under the purple tab, which recently came out in August 2018. William Acker compiled a list of projects around the world that have proven irrefutably that there is harm to human health—irrefutably: unusual bleeding, tissue damage and flexural deformities in Portugal at a stud farm—Dr. Mariana Alves-Pereira. Alec Salt studies sleep disturbances, tinnitus and headaches. People are not functioning very well right now in Ontario.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): You have one minute to conclude.

Ms. Sherri Lange: One minute? Thank you.

I'm going to get back to my favourite subject, climate change, because everything seems to thread through the climate issue. I've heard it mentioned many times already today. This is a book that is also one of my very favourites: Climate Change: Natural or Manmade? It's a 500-year romp through climate history and the lies that have been told about the climate. It's very, very funny and interesting; you won't be able to put it down. I have a very dear friend who says every child coming out of the womb should have this book in her hand. That's just something for you to consider, and I'll be happy to give you the contacts for the author if you would like to order that.

In conclusion—I knew this was going to happen—we cannot build energy policy on weather. Some people are just calling it "weather." We don't know if it's going to get

hotter or colder. There is a scientist over in Denmark using a very famous film recently by a Danish fellow, obviously. He's a climatologist and he said, "I don't think we know if tomorrow we might need our own umbrella—

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): I'm going to ask you to stop there.

Ms. Sherri Lange: Wrap it up?

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): No, I'm afraid you've passed your 10 minutes so I'm going to go to the opposition. Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you for coming in and presenting this afternoon.

Ms. Sherri Lange: Thank you.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: You noted that book and you have these articles why climate change is a flat-out hoax, and another article about why we shouldn't worry about CO_2. Does your organization believe that climate change is real and human-generated?

Ms. Sherri Lange: We believe that the climate has changed for millions and millions of years and it will continue to do so, and many of those processes are natural. Thank you for that question.

We also believe that some of the—sorry to say—but hyperbole about extreme weather events is that. The storm that happened off of North Carolina recently was downgraded. If you look at the graph, there really are not more extreme climate change or weather events than there have been historically. Actually, you could chart it out.

1550

As an organization, we try to respect everybody's opinions, because it seems to be like almost a belief system, right? We're careful. We want to respect what people believe, but we also want to encourage them to look at the other viewpoints, which are staggeringly informative. We would suggest that everybody looks at all the viewpoints, because Lawrence Solomon says we're going into a cooling cycle and we're totally unprepared for that. We don't know what's going to happen. We just say please don't base policy, energy policy, on climate. Please don't do that.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I have no further questions.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Mr. Harden.

Mr. Joel Harden: Thank you. Are you aware of the recent report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change from the UN?

Ms. Sherri Lange: Yes.

Mr. Joel Harden: Do you believe that report has scientific validity?

Ms. Sherri Lange: The IPCC has been inundated with errors. They've been charged with a lot of errors and fraudulent statements, so honestly, no. We don't—

Mr. Joel Harden: So when they reference the fact that 97% of climate scientists agree with the trajectory and assumptions in their report, are you telling us we need to focus on the 3%?

Ms. Sherri Lange: I'm telling you the 97% is incorrect. It is completely incorrect. It has been proven. I'd be happy to send you that information—

Mr. Joel Harden: I will caution you.

Ms. Sherri Lange: Yes.

Mr. Joel Harden: I don't want to belabour this and I respect your right to present here as much as anybody else's, but I have a seven and 10-year-old at home. I want to make sure they have clean water to drink, clean air to breathe. If you're telling me to focus on 3% of scientists when 97% of their colleagues, including my friends in government, acknowledge that climate change is an existential threat to the planet, there are some ethical assumptions you're making there which trouble me.

Ms. Sherri Lange: Mr. Harden, with due respect, I encourage you to look at the alternative views. The 97% was a very small group of scientists. It wasn't 97% of the—and some of them were not qualified to make those statements. I will send that to you when I get home to my computer, if I may, and I would respectfully ask that you read it, because that is one of the biggest lies the IPCC has engendered, and now they're engendering more. They want more money. By 2050, we have to contribute even more.

We have to be very, very careful. We are not saying, "Listen to the 3%." We're saying listen to the—most people now understand the IPCC has been fraught with errors—fraught, seriously fraught. I will send it to you, Mr. Harden.

Mr. Joel Harden: Great.

Ms. Sherri Lange: Thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Any more questions? Seeing none, we'll move over to the government side. Who would like to speak? Mrs. Fee.

Mrs. Amy Fee: Thank you, Ms. Lange. I'm just wondering if I could take you to the purple tab, and that is the one where you've put in for us about the court of law making a ruling on different things that have happened based on different renewable energies, wind turbines. I'm just wondering if you could walk us through some examples that may be in there.

Ms. Sherri Lange: In this section on health?

Mrs. Amy Fee: Yes, please.

Ms. Sherri Lange: Yes, okay. This is really huge. So much is happening around the world. I think sometimes in our lovely little bubble in Ontario we neglect to look at the world and how they're experiencing wind turbines.

Germany, as you know, should never be held up as a poster child anymore. France had 1,500 anti-wind groups. It's building offshore still. They're mostly nuclear, France. Fukushima, somebody referenced that earlier—I'm digressing just a tiny bit, because it all relates to the health. Fukushima: That's why Germany first went into wind turbines and renewables, because of Fukushima. At any rate, just as of a few days ago, they had three turbines up there that were—two feel-good turbines just off the coast there. One of them has now been decommissioned. It doesn't work. It's too expensive. We expect, maybe, a bit more bad news about the other two remaining.

These medical reports: Cape Bridgewater was a blind study. The wind industry continually says, "Well, there's no proof. There's no proof." They refuse to look at infrasound and low-frequency noise, which is the big culprit,

not audible noise. It's the one that is truly, truly harming people, giving them cardiac arrhythmias, all kinds of things.

This was a landmark study. It was done by Steven Cooper. He got permission from the developer, Bridgewater, to have the turbines turned off. Then he tested the people for pulsation sensation. They did not know whether the turbines were on or off. They reported with 100% accuracy their symptoms—100% accuracy. That's a very landmark case. So when people say, "Well, we need more testing," well, we really don't. We know what harm is being done.

Poland: Poland's institute of public health in the Polish state has got a new regulation. Ten times the height of the turbine: That's how far the resonance, the receptor can be, and no more than two kilometres close to a forest. So they're changing their rules as we go along.

Alec Salt is a genius about the inner ear and how people feel seasickness etc.

The World Health Organization just released, for the first time, their wind turbine noise guideline—about two to three weeks ago. Our organization wrote a piece on that on MasterResource, which has been picked up a large number of times around the world. They have now recognized wind turbine noise is a problem. They've got community noise health guidelines; now they have them also for wind turbines. That's going to be a really important ruling.

I could go through this all with you but—does that help?

Mrs. Amy Fee: I think we have some other questions.

Ms. Sherri Lange: Okay. Sorry.

Mrs. Amy Fee: Thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Ms. Triantafilopoulos?

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: I have one question as well. I know that a number of people in Ontario registered these concerns around health with the Ministry of the Environment, and it appears that not much was done. Could you elaborate on that?

Ms. Sherri Lange: Yes. This has been very, very, very frustrating for the people of Ontario. They have met with a wall of silence. There have been well over 4,000 complaints that we know about to the so-called spills line. Why it's called the spills line we're not really sure, but they're told to register their complaints in a certain manner. We suspect there are many, many more.

We know of one gentleman who has been on a toxic farm for 10 years. He has lost over 30 animals; he has prized goats. The three families around him have had to leave. He's the last man standing and he's suffering so much. These people have registered and registered and called and emailed and, honestly, you would not expect this in Ontario. I'm really glad you asked that.

Now, it's interesting: People can get through on the phone all of a sudden. Isn't that interesting? With Ms. Elliott's phone, somebody answers it every single time. They actually engage; they talk to the people.

These are people suffering—

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): You have 30 seconds to wrap up.

Ms. Sherri Lange: For the health, the environment, which is completely devastated, we have no reason—and the cost is ridiculous. And they don't produce much power: Worldwide it's 0.2 of 1%—net zero power worldwide for wind turbines. We need to seriously examine what we're doing, back it up and do the right thing.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much. We appreciate you coming out and presenting to us.

Ms. Sherri Lange: Thank you so much.

OTTAWA RENEWABLE ENERGY CO-OPERATIVE

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Our next presenter will be by teleconference. I'm just going to give a few seconds. It is the Ottawa Renewable Energy Co-operative. If I can ask you to please introduce yourself. You have 10 minutes to present, and there will be questions, five minutes from each of the recognized parties. If I can please ask you to speak very clearly. Thank you very much. Please go ahead and introduce yourself.

Ms. Janice Ashworth: Sure. Thank you very much. My name is Janice Ashworth. I am the general manager of the Ottawa Renewable Energy Co-operative, and I'm here to speak to two elements of the Green Energy Act: the renewable energy and renewable electricity component, as well as the conservation program. I'll focus on the former, because that is our area of expertise, but I will mention the latter as well, because it is very important.

On renewable electricity: Because it can be of all sizes and embedded in communities, it provides a unique opportunity for individuals to invest in and benefit from energy dollars that circulate in our economy. Ontario is currently a leader in North America in the green energy sector, thanks in large part to the Green Energy Act. Over the last nine years, the sector has matured and currently directly employs 20,000 Ontarians, with about 50,000 more jobs indirectly benefiting from green energy activities.

Because of the distributed nature of these projects, many of the jobs are in rural communities. There are also 26 facilities in Ontario that once built cars and trucks, that were about to be mothballed in 2008, but thanks to the Green Energy Act the workers were retrained and rehired to build solar and wind energy equipment. Prices of solar technologies in particular have plummeted over the last 10 years globally, but also in Ontario, and now have reached grid parity, meaning that it's cheaper to produce solar power on the roof of your building than it is to buy from the grid.

This means that it should be a good time for the green energy industry, but business needs policy stability and predictability. Currently that is lacking in Ontario, so the sector has been scared off. Many of the Ontario-trained workers are headed south to the US and west to Alberta. Community-based groups like ours are not going anywhere, however, so we are looking to continue to work

with you, the policy-makers, to make sure that Ontarians have the opportunity to choose the cheapest energy option, that rural jobs are created and maintained and that Ontario builds on its momentum as an energy leader.

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The feed-in tariff program was the most publicly known element of the Green Energy Act. It provided predictability for the green energy industry to get a foothold in Ontario. The tariff program was phased out as of 2017. Because of the grid parity that I explained earlier, it was no longer necessary.

Policy globally has been trending away from feed-in-tariff-type programs towards net metering. In fact, the feed-in tariff program limited the growth of green energy jobs towards the end because it made the industry jump through many unnecessary hoops. Ending that program was a reasonable step for the government. However, cancelling the already awarded contracts is costing the government more time and more money than it would have cost to complete the last round of contracts, because those contracts were at the lowest rate throughout the whole round of the feed-in tariff program. These contracts, in fact, were at such low rates that they would have provided a downward impact on the electricity prices over the 20-year terms of those contracts.

With that said, however, the Green Energy Act and the feed-in tariff program allowed a diversity of players to participate in the development of the renewable energy sector in Ontario. Renewable energy co-operatives are a fantastic example of this, as are the many Indigenous-based projects and municipal-based projects across the province.

Looking at the co-operative sector in particular that we can speak to, there are over 10,000 Ontarians who have joined renewable energy co-operatives like ours because they wanted options in their energy choices and they wanted to support their local economies by stopping the hemorrhaging of energy dollars out of their communities.

Collectively, those co-operatives have invested over $150 million in our communities into capital assets such as solar and wind projects. With that, we've built solar projects on high schools, non-profit-housing facilities and commercial buildings in our own communities, and we are paying energy dollars to our neighbours rather than out-of-province.

These distributed energy projects strengthen the resiliency of the grid. For example, in situations such as the tornado we experienced in Ottawa on September 21, causing a power outage of over one third of the city for two days, having more energy generation locally would increase our resiliency to long-distance transportation and the large transmission facilities that are making us vulnerable in those kinds of disaster situations.

My ultimate suggestion today for the renewable electricity component of the Green Energy Act is to continue to build on the momentum and leadership position of Ontario and to create rural jobs whilst keeping energy dollars in the hands of our residents. It is just simply to get the government out of the way and open up the marketplace, which is possible through a virtual net-metering program, which is a common policy across the US. This gives residents and small businesses a choice as to where they get their energy from.

The IESO has already developed the parameters for such a program, and no government financial support would be needed. A small change to the Electricity Act can enable virtual net-metering and bring Ontario-trained green energy workers back from Alberta. This legislation was put on hold earlier this month, but it's time for it to go through.

As I mentioned earlier in my intro, I said that I would speak to two elements of the Green Energy Act, the next one being conservation. The other important success of the Green Energy Act were the conservation targets and programs which resulted in lower monthly bills for residents and businesses. These programs have saved individuals not only money on their bills but also improved the long-term capital value of their buildings, and it has also saved the government the headache and cost of having to build more expensive and contentious transmission lines, as well as increasing the gap in nuclear generation facilities in the province. It enabled programs that gave residents and small businesses help to reduce their energy bills and keep their doors open. These programs should be maintained and strengthened through some new program if the Green Energy Act is indeed to be cancelled.

I welcome questions from the floor.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much. We'll start with the government side. Who would like to speak first? Mr. Calandra?

Mr. Paul Calandra: Thank you for your presentation. Early in your statement you had talked about the amount of jobs that were created. I didn't catch the number. Can you just repeat what that was?

Ms. Janice Ashworth: Sure. The 20,000 jobs is the direct job creation, and then there's indirect jobs that I've seen numbers anywhere from 50,000 up to few hundred thousand. These numbers are coming from Power Advisory.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Okay. Not to belabour it, but it's significantly less than we've heard. I know they left, but the Suzuki foundation estimated that it would be 50,000 jobs that were created with the Green Energy Act, so that's significantly less.

Having said that, I congratulate you on your success. I know the similar project in Stouffville went bankrupt five years after it started. That's my hometown, Stouffville. It went bankrupt. It was a horrifying disaster, for all intents and purposes, for our community. But I congratulate you on better success.

Did you have a FIT contract?

Ms. Janice Ashworth: We have many projects under FIT contracts, yes.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Can you tell me at what rate you were promised, if that's not private?

Ms. Janice Ashworth: No, that's public. We have projects under FIT rounds 1, 3, 4 and 5. The series 5 were all cancelled. The rates for each one, for each size and technology, are different.

Mr. Paul Calandra: So how much were you—the OEB tells me that it was 44 cents, if I'm not mistaken. Sorry; I don't have it right in front of me. Solar: We were paying on average about 44 cents a kilowatt hour, or 48 cents.

Ms. Janice Ashworth: Like I said, they range. They have come down significantly, with prices decreasing about 10% every year since 2008. The—

Mr. Paul Calandra: But 48 cents, in and around that range, doesn't seem unreasonable?

Ms. Janice Ashworth: The latest contracts that were—

Mr. Paul Calandra: No, not the latest, just the historical ones. I'm sorry. I'm going back and then I'll come forward.

Ms. Janice Ashworth: Yes, okay. There was a spread, with the latest ones being at 19 cents and the earlier ones of equivalent size being at about 60 cents, 64 cents.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Wow.

Ms. Janice Ashworth: So there is a range. Somewhere in the 40s for average might make sense. That's right.

Mr. Paul Calandra: And going forward you're at 19 cents, but there's still a range, is what you're saying.

Ms. Janice Ashworth: Yes, and they have continued to come down. That's right.

Mr. Paul Calandra: It's still quite expensive, but I hear what you're saying. We've heard a lot about, going forward, how the prices are coming down. Not to quibble with you, but 19 cents is still a pretty expensive cost. Having said that, to me, it's kind of a strange conversation because we know that there has been a $4.5-billion subsidy for renewables. That's fine. That was a policy direction of the previous government. They had the right to do that. Whether it was right for the people of Ontario, the people have decided that and we move forward.

But ultimately, isn't it kind of disingenuous to suggest that—we've been hearing a lot about wind, how it's going to be at 3.7 cents. The price is going down. But the fact is, we have a $40-billion debt that we're paying over the next number of years to artificially bring down the price of renewables. How would that factor into your pricing, if we took that $40 billion and said, "We're not going to put it on the future generations. We're going to actually factor it back into the price of renewables"? That would have a devastating impact, presumably.

Ms. Janice Ashworth: The renewable energy program has been unique in that all of the costs associated with the electricity generation have been borne by the ratepayer. In every other aspect of our electricity grid and generation capital costs, those costs are—it's the least fair market economy, when you look at the electricity sector. It's such a hybrid between public dollars and private dollars that you really cannot weed out subsidies from rates. Only in the renewable electricity sector has that been more clearly broken out and more clearly put on the rate base.

I would ask you to also apply the same level of scrutiny to nuclear contracts and natural gas contracts and how those are awarded, and long-term hydro contracts, for that matter, to make sure that everything is being calculated in the rate-based calculations, not on the tax base.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): There's 30 seconds left in this.

Mr. Paul Calandra: OEB-approved rates, 2019, are 7.7 cents per kilowatt hour for nuclear, with previous expenses factored in. You're still at over 19 cents a kilowatt hour, which is quite stunning. The range from 19 now up to 60 cents—

Ms. Janice Ashworth: And again, I would ask you to take a look at historical trends of actual nuclear generation costs, from their estimates versus the historical, and also factor in the insurance costs and the decommissioning costs—

Mr. Paul Calandra: The 7.7 cents is the all-in cost.

Ms. Janice Ashworth: —that are currently borne by the public tax base.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): I'm going to have to stop you there, and we're going to move to the opposition. Mr. Harden?

Mr. Joel Harden: Thank you very much for the presentation, Janice. What I really want to point out to my friends from government here is that on the phone is an organization that has led the province in the creation of renewable energy at a local level.

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Janice, there are a couple of things I would like you to flesh out a little bit, because one of the things I'm hoping we discuss here with some vigilance is making sure that renewables are going to be part of our energy future—a livable part. Some things that you've mentioned more recently in OREC's work in the Ottawa area is that FIT and microFIT might have been important to start an industry—because the fossil fuel industry, as studies from the University of Ottawa and other places have noted, has been funded roughly to the tune of $1 billion a year in the last 20 years. We haven't heard any objection from my friend in government about that.

To start an industry, the Liberal government proposed the Green Energy Act. But what I understand you saying lately is that the renewable industry, if done co-operatively in a prudent financial manner, has the capacity to grow at a very impressive rate through the technology of virtual net metering. I just want to make sure that all of us in this committee understand what that entails, how it would grow, how businesses would take advantage of it and how consumers would take advantage of it.

Ms. Janice Ashworth: Absolutely. Would you like me to explain a bit more about what that means?

Mr. Joel Harden: Yes, I would. I think it's important.

Ms. Janice Ashworth: It's a terrible term, but really what means—other places are calling it "community solar" or "community energy." What that allows is that somewhere within your region on the same electricity grid, the local distribution company's grid, there would be a renewable energy generation facility built that achieves economies of scale.

For example, on the old landfill site in Ottawa, we could put a 15-megawatt solar farm. The credits generated from that facility could then be used to offset all of the libraries

across Ottawa's municipalities. This is a project that was very much ready to go, in the queue for the pilot program that was meant to be rolled out this month and has been put on hold, I believe.

But this is where virtual net metering comes into play, right? If your rooftop is not ideal or doing many roofs in small installations doesn't achieve the best economies of scales, by having a centralized generation facility still within your community, still on the same local distribution grid and achieving those grid benefits that would be incurred—the resiliency bit that I mentioned. By having that generation close to the load centre and not coming from hundreds of kilometres away, that would then allow you to reduce your bill, because that solar generation facility can produce power at—let's call it—10 cents a kilowatt hour, offset your bill within the municipality or, perhaps, all of the high schools of a certain board or something like that, just through a virtual sharing of the credits.

The investment can also come from the local community. So not only can the credits and the energy dollars stay in the local community, but the investment can come from there, so that the municipality, for example, when they're paying their electricity bill, they would be paying those bills to their own residents rather than to Hydro One, for example.

Mr. Joel Harden: Thank you for that. I just want to also ask the question, because we've heard from municipal energy authorities that they want the opportunity for a more decentralized grid. How would OREC fit into that picture, to be able to give people and municipal energy authorities choice?

Ms. Janice Ashworth: Yes, a lot of municipal energy authorities are in the business of distributing power—they're operating the grid line—but not many of them have gotten into the energy generation space. Some of them have, and they have sister organizations that get into energy generation. But not all of them have, and that's where groups like ours can help them out. Even in collaboration with energy authorities that are in the generation space, because we bring that local investment opportunity or that local investment mechanism, not only can we work with them on the generation expertise that we've been building over the past eight years, but we can also work with them on getting local dollars from their community invested into the capital of these projects.

The revenues go back to your local community, but you also get that local buy-in, that social licence to operate that's so important when you're thinking about community benefit and community governance for these renewable energy projects. If you are an investor in the project, if your money is going into that wind turbine, all of a sudden it doesn't sound so bad or look so bad, and that's—

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much for presenting to us today. Our time is up, but I do appreciate you presenting to us.

Mr. Joel Harden: Thanks, Janice.

Ms. Janice Ashworth: Okay. Thanks very much.

MR. BRUCE PARDY

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): I'd like to call upon Mr. Bruce Pardy, professor, faculty of law, Queen's University. Welcome. You have 10 minutes to present, followed by five minutes from each of the recognized parties. If you could please state your name for the record. Thank you very much.

Mr. Bruce Pardy: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you for having me. This government has done great things on the energy file.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Can I ask you to state your name for the record first?

Mr. Bruce Pardy: Yes, I'm sorry. My name is Bruce Pardy. I'm a professor at the law school at Queen's, but I am appearing here today on my own behalf and not on behalf of the university.

As I was saying, this government has done great things on the energy file. It has cancelled cap-and-trade, which is excellent; it has resisted carbon taxes, which is the right call; it has cancelled some 700-odd contracts that were not yet finalized, which is good stuff—it's a drop in the bucket, but it's the way to go; and it has now set out to eliminate the regime that led to the previous government's ill-advised venture into renewable energy, and that is an excellent objective.

Unfortunately, Bill 34, as it is, is not really up to that job. It is, for the most part, merely symbolic. It leaves most of the regime in place. In my opinion, Bill 34 is not up to the standards that this government has set for itself, not based upon its admirable record in such a short period of time.

This government has been a government for the little guy: anti-corruption, anti-red tape, anti-elite, anti-central planning. Those are beautiful things, things that Ontario needs. I would like to urge you to do those things on this bill.

I'd like to suggest four things—these are my top four wants for this bill. I'm referring now to the single page, which I hope you have in front of you.

(1) I would like Bill 34 to give residents their legal rights back. Individuals have legal rights. It's great to involve municipalities, again, in these questions. There's no argument about that. But individuals have legal rights too. Under the existing regime, those legal rights are abridged in a way that affects only the relationship with respect to renewable projects.

As the prime example of that, I would refer you to section 142.1(3) of the Environmental Protection Act. This section creates a higher threshold for complaints for renewable energy than for any other activity in the province, including all other energy sources. If, indeed, renewable energy is harmless, as the industry suggests, then you do not need this section. What this section does is insulate review for harms that are less than serious and irreversible, which means that those harms must exist. So I suggest a repeal of this section.

It is not the only example. In the bill itself, in Bill 34, there is a section that allows the government to designate

a project so that it is free of all other legal restrictions, which again seems to be an uneven playing field.

(2) Bill 34 does not do what I would like it to do in the context of contracts, and that is either cancel them or modify them. We have heard, yesterday and today, about how the costs for renewable energy are going down, and that's great, but we are stuck paying astronomical costs, many times the market rate for electricity, on long-term contracts. If, in fact, those costs are down, then it is reasonable for the government to modify those contracts and pay what the costs actually are now.

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There is a clear legal authority to do this—there is no legal question about it—and there is a democratic principle here as well. No Legislature is able to bind a future Legislature. If it is considered to be improper for a future Legislature to change those contracts, that means you have given a mandate to the previous government that extends beyond its democratic mandate. How would you ensure, as a government, that your policies exist beyond your mandate? You sign long-term contracts and extend your mandate to 20 years, as it were, instead of four. So it is well within the democratic, legitimate actions of this government to cancel or modify those contracts.

(3) Bill 34 includes provisions that require people to report to the government on their energy use, water consumption and so on. There's no need for that. We are a free country, a free province and a free people. That information should be private information. I'm concerned that by pursuing the interests of the system, we are in danger of rolling over the interests of the individuals. People should be entitled to privacy in their own consumption information.

That includes smart meters. Smart meters are a kind of tyranny. They require you to report, all your information is out there, and you have no choice. As long as people are paying their bills for the energy and water that they use, I don't see why it should be anybody else's business how much they are using.

(4) If Bill 34 was to create actual competitive markets for electricity, then the basis of the existing regime would genuinely change. I think that objective is in line with the objectives of this government. Governments should not be in the business of choosing winners and losers. That is what got us into this mess. The former government decided that renewable energy was the best way to go, and that's not the role of government. What you do is you create a market, and then the most efficient, able, clean energy sources are the ones that fulfill the demand. That doesn't just apply to renewable; it applies to all energy sources, nuclear and so on.

If you have a real competitive market for electricity, then you don't require subsidies. In fact, subsidies would be contrary to the whole idea. Therefore, the government wouldn't have to decide how much money goes to this and to that, what it might be worth now and what it might be worth in the future, what the costs are and so on. Those are questions that markets decide and decide much better than central planners do. If, in fact, that was the case, then all of the special protections that renewables have wouldn't be required. They would be out of place, they would be inappropriate and they could be repealed.

The fact of the matter is that the Green Energy Act—although, as I've said, its objective is a good one—deals with only a very small part of the regime created by the previous government. That regime was created by a different act, the Green Energy and Green Economy Act. The Green Energy Act itself is really just one part of 12 in that Green Energy and Green Economy Act. So kudos for what this government has done so far, and congratulations on the objectives that you've set, especially with respect to Bill 34. But I would like you to go further. I would like Bill 34 to do what it is, in fact, that you set out to do.

Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much. We appreciate you coming by.

We'll start with Mr. Harden from the opposition party.

Mr. Joel Harden: Thank you, Professor Pardy, for coming here today. It's nice to see somebody from my alma mater. I did my undergraduate at Queen's.

I had a few questions for you. I was doing my very best to listen intently. You're coming from a perspective, clearly, of wanting an open, competitive marketplace for energy where no subsidies are involved. So I take from that, then, that you oppose the current subsidies that exist for fossil fuel industries?

Mr. Bruce Pardy: I think it's fair to say that all subsidies are inappropriate, yes. We can go into the details about which industries are getting which subsidies, and there is also the technical question about what counts as a subsidy—like, is a tax break a subsidy?

Mr. Joel Harden: It is.

Mr. Bruce Pardy: I leave open those questions. I must point out that I'm not an economist. I recognize that there are questions about that kind of thing.

I'm not targeting renewable energy only for subsidies, but that fact does not avoid the point that over the past little while in the context of FIT contracts, renewable energy has clearly received outrageous subsidies in that time.

Mr. Joel Harden: I take your point about the subsidies for FIT contracts, but if I understand you correctly, you're in opposition to the billion-dollar-per-year subsidies that the fossil fuel industries currently have here in the province of Ontario?

Mr. Bruce Pardy: Well, that's your figure, not mine.

Mr. Joel Harden: No, it's actually not my figure. It comes from the International Institute for Sustainable Development, headquartered at the University of Ottawa.

Mr. Bruce Pardy: Well, you see, like so many sources, that source also has a self-interest. Whether or not that figure is right, I don't know and you don't know, but I do know that—

Mr. Joel Harden: In fact, I do, sir. The International Institute for Sustainable Development has set in place an objective of making sure that we can have the cleanest possible energy at the cheapest possible cost to the public purse. You're quite right: In their mix, tax exemptions and

various writeoffs are included as subsidies, as I think any reasonable researcher would realize.

So you want a subsidy-free marketplace for energy. I get you.

Mr. Bruce Pardy: Correct.

Mr. Joel Harden: And I take your point, whether you agree with the research or not, that that would apply to the fossil fuel sector inasmuch as it would to the renewable energy sector.

Mr. Bruce Pardy: Sure.

Mr. Joel Harden: Okay. I also want to understand, then, if the fossil fuel industry has been subsidized through various means for decades in this country, how is the renewable energy industry supposed to start up and compete on unequal terrain? Could you explain to me? Because as I understand it from my Liberal colleagues, who aren't here, that was their rationale for the Green Energy Act: The fossil fuel industries had been subsidized for decades, the renewable energy industry needed to enter the marketplace for the very reasons that we're all in agreement on, that climate change is a fact and we have to find a way to respond to it—

Mr. Bruce Pardy: Well, I wouldn't go quite that—

Mr. Joel Harden: How is the renewable energy industry supposed to begin in that context?

Mr. Bruce Pardy: Well, let's just back up to the premise of your question, which is actually not all that clear. The rationale for renewable energy is not climate change. That is not suggesting that climate change doesn't exist. On climate change itself, whether or not we are causing the climate to change—

Mr. Joel Harden: Is that a question for you?

Mr. Bruce Pardy: I am agnostic, but my presumption is this: The assumption of my analysis is that the worst-case scenario—let's assume the worst-case scenario is actually happening, and on that basis, let's evaluate what to do. If the worst-case scenario is happening, then what to do is not to subsidize the renewable energy market.

As Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said the other day, I believe, if Canada shut itself down tomorrow and emitted no more carbon, it would make no difference at all to anything. You couldn't even measure it. So the idea of managing your energy sources with a bit more of this and a bit less of this has no—

Mr. Joel Harden: Professor Pardy, I confess—

Mr. Bruce Pardy: It makes no difference at all.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): One more minute left.

Mr. Joel Harden: I confess, Professor Pardy, like a lot of things the Prime Minister says, I don't grasp the point there. My life's lesson, whether it's as a researcher or as a community organizer, has taught me that if you're in a hole, it's best to stop digging. My analysis of 97% of climatologists worldwide suggests that there is preponderant evidence for us to want to pursue—now, I get your point. You want that energy trajectory to be subsidy-free. My point, which I really do want you to take a stab at: How is a renewable energy industry 10 years ago supposed to get a foothold in our economy when the political class had been subsidizing the fossil-fuel industry for decades?

Mr. Bruce Pardy: Listen to me: If the renewable energy industry wants to compete, then they have to get their costs down and not ask the taxpayers of Ontario and the ratepayers of Ontario to foot the bill. If you're going to compete in a commercial activity, then figure out how to compete.

Mr. Joel Harden: I take your point. You didn't quite answer my question, but I take your point.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much. That's wrapping up for that session.

I'd like to come to the government side. Mr. Calandra?

Mr. Paul Calandra: Thank you very much, Professor. I appreciate you taking the time to come here, and I do appreciate your advice on moving forward.

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Obviously, you're energy agnostic in the sense that it's about competition and the low cost of energy. You couldn't care less what it is as long as it's the lowest cost and it works for the people of Ontario and so on and so forth. Basically, you'd agree with me that we don't build a climate change policy solely on the back of energy policy.

Mr. Bruce Pardy: Agreed.

Mr. Paul Calandra: We've heard a lot from the opposition and a lot of people—the Suzuki Foundation, and we heard Environmental Defence yesterday—all talking about these 10 years: "My gosh, it was the best thing ever because it allowed the industry to start." But in the very next breath, they talk about just how far behind we were to Europe and Germany and Japan: "They were so far ahead of us." And then in the next breath, they say, "Well, Alberta and Saskatchewan are really benefiting from the work that Ontario did over the last 10 years."

I guess my question is, why the hell did we not benefit from all the work that Europe did? Why are taxpayers, in your opinion—I know you're not an expert on it—but why the heck did our taxpayers have to foot a bill of $40 billion and a direct subsidy of $4.5 billion so that Alberta and Saskatchewan could benefit, but somehow our industry had to go it alone? We didn't learn anything from what the Europeans did. Do you have an answer to that? Because nobody else seems to have an answer to that.

Mr. Bruce Pardy: I can only say, bad choices. You don't want to be the one footing the bill. If we had simply waited, from the sounds of it, we would be in a much better position now to contemplate whether or not renewable energy is cheap enough to do a good job. I don't know if that answer is yes or no, but—

Mr. Paul Calandra: It's extraordinarily frustrating, the cherry-picking that goes on here. We heard a lot about nuclear, I would say, that suggests that it's a clean source of energy. It's something that Canadians should be extraordinarily proud of. The Canadian Candu reactor I think is something that should be held up to the world as an enormous success story for this country—thousands of jobs—

Mr. Bruce Pardy: I might be a little bit less enthusiastic about nuclear than yourself in the sense that it does rely

on some of the same kinds of things, central planning, subsidies and so on.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Absolutely.

Mr. Bruce Pardy: So there are some open questions about that as well.

Mr. Paul Calandra: And that's completely fine.

One of the things I'm stuck on is that the opposition, in particular, are suggesting that the costs are going to come down dramatically, and it would be crazy to let go of everything that we've paid for. But we really haven't paid for any of it. We borrowed $40 billion, which generations of Ontarians are paying.

I know you said that you're not an economist, but if, as you said, we retroactively ended the subsidy and put that $40 billion back onto the renewables, it would make it completely and absolutely unaffordable for Ontarians, presumably.

Mr. Bruce Pardy: That's my understanding, yes. Essentially, the future has been mortgaged, in a sense, in order to subsidize this fledgling industry, which now says it's ready to compete.

Mr. Paul Calandra: And there's the crux of it. We seem to have gone it alone. As you suggested, we didn't allow the open market to give our prices. We heard from the previous presenter; her estimate was 20,000 jobs—

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): We have one minute remaining.

Mr. Paul Calandra: We were told that it was going to create 50,000 and we were going to be a global leader, but we also saw that when the subsidies ended, so too did these companies leave.

We've heard some of these feed-ins for solar; I mean, an average of 44 cents—this is crazy.

Mr. Bruce Pardy: It is crazy. Yes, it's absolutely crazy.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Professor, if you had a student who came to you with a thesis that suggested that we should go forward with the Green Energy Act on the basis that the previous government went forward with it and with what the opposition is saying now, what kind of a grade would you give that person?

Mr. Bruce Pardy: I think I might send them back to try again.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Yes. I do appreciate your time. Thank you.

Mr. Bruce Pardy: Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much for presenting to us today.

ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPALITIES OF ONTARIO

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): I'd like to call upon the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. Please introduce yourselves for the record. You have 10 minutes to present, followed by five minutes from each of the recognized parties. Go ahead.

Ms. Lynn Dollin: Thanks for your time today. My name is Lynn Dollin. I am past president of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. Beside me is Cathie Brown, a senior adviser from AMO. On behalf of AMO, and our—we represent almost all of Ontario's 444 municipal governments, I want to say that we appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the committee's deliberations about the repeal of the Green Energy Act.

My comments will focus on the portions of the bill that restore planning powers to local governments. Let me open by saying thank you. Thank you for restoring planning powers to municipal governments, where they rightly belong. As the governments closest to the people, we have the greatest sensitivity to what initiatives and changes will work well for our citizens. We have deep experience in siting land uses. This proposed bill recognizes that expertise. Furthermore, this bill respects that some municipal governments do not want large renewable projects in their jurisdiction, while leaving it possible for other municipal governments to pursue these projects because they do want them. We appreciate that this bill restores to municipal governments the ability to develop in a way that meets the ambitions and the visions of the people at a local scale. So again, thank you.

The bill does raise some questions for us. As previously mentioned, some communities are urging their municipal governments to create more green energy. The bill indicates that new renewable energy projects will have to prove they are needed. We look forward to seeing details on how this need will be established, and trust that where there is a willing host, there is provincial willingness to ensure distributed energy will be considered. A framework to help us understand how local energy generation will be assessed in the context of the bulk electricity grid would also be helpful.

Where a municipal government has turned down an application for renewable energy, the draft bill gives the minister the right to appeal to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal. We would ask that this provision be cautiously used. In the event a minister is contemplating this kind of appeal, we ask for full consultation with the municipal government, with the hope of finding a mediated solution.

We also have some advice regarding the ongoing operations of existing green energy projects, a matter that has concerned municipal governments since the beginning of the programs initiated by the previous government: first, the daily operational management, and second, the decommissioning of larger green energy projects.

On the operational side, there continue to be concerns about noise, water quality, flicker and other nuisances. In fact, there have been thousands of complaints. The province holds contracts with the energy companies requiring them to keep the equipment in good running order. We support the province's continued roles as both the appropriate resource for complaints and to monitor compliance.

Finally, clean energy developers were to have provided decommissioning plans as part of the approval process. Despite strong AMO recommendations, financial sureties were not required to accompany these plans. Should a

company default, there are no assurances as to how the assets would be disposed of. Without the money to decommission, the structures become the problem of the property owner and, quite possibly, the property tax payer. While some have said that the metal has a resale value, frankly, municipal governments cannot afford to dismantle infrastructure and de facto become salvage companies. We ask the province to ensure that each project has a decommissioning plan and that some type of security be obtained to avoid default to landowners and municipal governments.

AMO is heartened by the comprehensive approach being used to decommission the proposed White Pines project. We would welcome a similar generic regulation and set of technical guides to address all existing projects when it is time for them to be decommissioned.

In summary, municipal governments are pleased with the restoration of local planning powers. We urge restrained use of any provisions that allow for exceptions. Our greatest concern now is with the management and decommissioning of existing projects, and we believe this government is demonstrating that it is on the right path. We ask that you formalize this direction for all existing projects.

We thank you again for your thoughtful consideration of our advice and comments on behalf of our member municipalities.

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The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much. I'm going to come to the government side. Who would like to speak first? Mr. Calandra.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Thank you very much for coming. I can certainly appreciate that the Green Energy Act in particular has been a source of enormous irritation for municipalities across Ontario, for a whole host of reasons. We've heard from a lot of them. I've heard it from my own community. We had a solar co-operative that didn't quite work out, the request came to the town to take it over and obviously we couldn't afford to do that. It caused a lot of grief.

Moreover, I was struck when I was in Chatham for the International Plowing Match. I spoke to a number of elected officials and public servants, and one of them said to me, "Just go there. Just go to a windmill. Walk up to it and then just look up." When he said that—you drive by and it's massive. The scale of these things is just unimaginable. But moreover, what he said was the way this has torn apart communities and the powerlessness of the elected officials to do anything about this—it just devastated communities and angered municipalities.

Not to go back, because we are moving forward, do you have any comments on that? Are there similar types of projects or programs where the same thing was done?

Ms. Lynn Dollin: Certainly, it has caused consternation, especially in rural Ontario, where projects have gone forward. Certainly, with any planning application, no matter what it is, or any activity on the land, when people are upset, they go to their municipal governments. They go to their town council. They see you in the grocery store. They ask for your help and you say, "I'm sorry, but we can't do anything about it."

I think that that has caused a lot of problems across Ontario, particularly in rural Ontario, where these large projects have taken place over time. It also—you're right—does divide communities. I remember sitting in a coffee shop in Dundalk and was told when I walked in the door that the noes were over there and the yeses sat over there.

Mr. Paul Calandra: I attended my first AMO conference as an elected official and met with a number of different municipalities on this. I have to tell you that, particularly the rural municipalities—I'm from Stouffville. Although it's noticeable, the increase in pricing of hydro, when I heard some of the stories of some of these northern and rural municipalities of the cost, a couple—I'm not going to single them out—could barely run their municipalities because of their rinks, their curling rinks, their ice hockey rinks. They just couldn't afford to keep them open because of stupid and bad decisions of a government.

How has this impacted rural investment over the last number of years across the municipalities that you represent?

Ms. Lynn Dollin: Municipalities do their best with cost avoidance as far as electricity is concerned. We've had great success with LED street lights. We've had great success with changing the street lights and the lights in arenas. We realize that there is more opportunity in water and waste water operations, but that takes quite an investment as well, so we're looking for affordable ways to avoid costs.

Mr. Paul Calandra: I think you raised a very good point with respect to decommissioning. We'll all take that under advisement going forward. I think I'd welcome the opportunity to speak a little bit further on that with you at some point, and on some of the other recommendations that you have with respect to appealing that. I think you raise some very good points.

I don't have any further questions. I just want to thank you, because it was certainly an eye-opener at AMO, meeting in particular with some of the northern and rural communities that have been just devastated by the energy policies, let alone the conflict between who should get a windmill or solar but, more importantly, how these policies have just had such a devastating impact.

There was one in particular—again, I'm not going to mention them, but a really good municipality, home to some really important Ontarians having to make the difficult decision of closing down their hockey rink because they just simply—the one hockey rink that they had for 400 kilometres, the one thing that their kids had to do, and they were struggling to keep that open because the cost of hydro had just gone out of control.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much, Mr. Calandra.

Mr. Paul Calandra: I want to thank you—

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you. I'll move on to Mr. Harden.

Mr. Joel Harden: Thank you very much for your presentation. What I heard you say, and what I note in your report, is that you appreciate more accountability that the government's bill provides you as municipalities, and I take your point there. I'm wondering if you could just briefly give us a sense of AMO's vision to enable measures to address climate change.

Ms. Lynn Dollin: This was not in my mind, about climate change. This was about the Green Energy Act and about the ability for local municipalities to plan their activity on their property or to plan their official plan and have their community's vision come forward into what they wanted as opposed to having someone tell them, "This is going to be here whether you like it or not."

Mr. Joel Harden: I get your point, but I'm just wondering, many organizations—we heard from registered nurses earlier this afternoon—are taking an interest in measures to address climate change, and renewable energy, as I understand it, is an important thing we're trying to do as a country, to make sure we have a planet and an environment, healthy air and healthy water for our kids. I'm wondering if this is something that AMO takes an interest in.

Ms. Lynn Dollin: AMO does have a task force, we're looking into climate change policies. We have talked in the past about building resilience into our water, wastewater and stormwater facilities, making sure that they are built to the proper size. We have community emergencies all the time based on rain events that we've had to learn to deal with. We are the ones who feel it the most and we are very proactive, but also we are the ones who are on the ground when there is an issue. So the task force will look into policies surrounding climate change and not only what we can do as municipalities but what policies we think the government should put in place.

Mr. Joel Harden: Terrific. I look forward to hearing the outcome from that work.

I'm wondering if you've been in discussion with any of the Ottawa River, Ottawa Valley communities west of me, because I have. They have talked to me extensively lately about the leakage on a slow basis of radioactive nuclear waste into the Ottawa River.

As you may not know, over half of our energy grid right now is powered by renewable energy. The town of Rolphton, Ontario, if you know where that is—that's west of Petawawa, up the river from there. They have a decommissioned nuclear site there that slowly leaks a steady amount of tritium and PCBs into the Ottawa River.

We also have another community which is dealing with an international debate on the Ottawa River about what we do with decades of nuclear waste. The current proposal that's being mooted by the federal government is entombing it in concrete and potentially dealing with more radioactive leakage.

I have serious concerns from a municipal—I take your point. Municipalities are the first source of complaint. They're the first group to have to deal with issues with respect to misuse of our energy planning. I'm wondering the extent to which you've heard any concerns from communities on the Ottawa River.

Ms. Lynn Dollin: Without my AMO hat on, I am also one of the chairs of the source water protection committees. I was on a conference call this morning with Raisin-South Nation and Mississippi-Rideau regions. They will look at items that are different, but if they have an issue that's contributing in their source water for drinking water, they will ask for it to be elevated. It'll become an issues-contributing area. We have places in Ontario that are trending high in sodium and policies are put in place for that.

Mr. Joel Harden: Okay. I take your point. This is something you're vigilant about and you'll be mindful, but I'll be happy to send you some information that I've heard from those communities upriver from me.

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I also just want to end—because my colleague mentioned the high cost of hydro and how that has hit small municipalities. I was raised in a small municipality so I actually can feel the hurt of that and the kind of tough choices that people are making. I'm wondering what thoughts you have, given that the government has actually embraced the Fair Hydro Plan going forward, on borrowing billions of dollars to subsidize energy prices.

I take your point that you're happy about the greater accountability that the government has introduced about the approval or non-approval of renewable energy projects. Do you have any concerns about the government of Ontario borrowing billions of dollars to subsidize energy prices going forward?

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): You have 30 seconds.

Ms. Lynn Dollin: I didn't come prepared to talk about whether or not energy was subsidized today. We looked at the bill based on how it was going to impact municipalities, and the impact that we saw today was more on the planning and being able to have autonomy in our municipalities as far as building a community that we want to live in. Then, we also believe that we are better for that, and we'll move forward with residents who are happier because they can choose to have—and there are communities that do want green energy projects, but it should be their choice and not the government telling them whether or not it's going to go there.

Mr. Joel Harden: I understand.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much. We really appreciate your coming out to present to us. Thank you.

Ms. Lynn Dollin: Thank you.

MR. RAINER PETHKE

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Our next presenter is via teleconference. Do I have Rainer Pethke on the phone?

Mr. Rainer Pethke: Yes, I'm on the line.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Please introduce yourself.

Mr. Rainer Pethke: Hello, and thank you. I'm Rainer Pethke. I'm going to be speaking on my personal observations as a private citizen. I'm a resident of Berwick, Ontario, in the eastern part of the province.

I'm going to start speaking, because I only have 10 minutes, if that's okay. Everyone should have received a copy of my speaking notes.

Cancelling the GEA is not enough. New directives must be given to protect citizens already impacted by green energy projects. Current approvals of industrial wind turbines must be investigated—

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): If I can just ask you to—one moment. Yes, you have 10 minutes to present. Yes, we did receive your speaking notes. If I can ask you to speak clearly. We are via teleconference and sometimes it doesn't come through very clearly, so if you could speak loudly and clearly. Thank you.

Mr. Rainer Pethke: Yes, okay. I will try my best.

I was just mentioning that there are industrial wind turbine projects that are already out there, and they must be re-reviewed to ensure people and the environment are truly protected from harm.

Most committee members have already heard testimony of why the Green Energy Act is just bad policy, as implemented. You're already aware that industrial wind turbines are a net contributor to CO_2 and other such subjects. What I'm going to do is focus instead on my personal experience with the 100-megawatt Nation Rise industrial wind turbine project, itself an unneeded and unwanted child of the Green Energy Act.

The project area for Nation Rise is in North Stormont township within eastern Ontario, on prime agricultural land. It has yet to put a shovel to the ground, and yet it escaped cancellation along with the other 758 projects not yet built, in what a reasonable person might see as an abuse of process.

Let me explain: Nation Rise was awarded a LRP I contract, the original set of the large renewable procurements, by the IESO without municipal or Aboriginal support. In fact, North Stormont council voted twice to be an unwilling host with the understanding that this project would not be imposed. This was despite the opportunity for a small, cash-strapped township to receive hundreds of thousands of dollars in annual payments. They decided that it still was not worth it. Nation Rise was imposed regardless via EBR 013-1674.

The International Organization for Standardization and Canadian Standards Association recognized that the then-current LRP I noise-modelling criteria were insufficient to protect humans from harm. The ministry adopted new standards but updated the Green Energy Act to allow contract holders the choice to still use the old standards from a decade ago, disguised as an option within the new ones. What do you think they chose to do?

If current noise guidelines were used, only seven out of 33 turbines would be allowed under Nation Rise. Considering that it's still approved, this means that the majority of residents will knowingly be made subject to a high risk of harm from excessive noise levels with the express approval of the ministry.

Industrial wind turbines must not be exempted from normal environmental regulations. In my experience the industry has proven itself not capable of self-regulation.

Noise levels are only measured and modelled in the audible range, yet as turbines grow, the noise spectrum moves downward into the harmful low frequency and infrasound levels. People are getting sick. Sonic weapons are designed at these frequencies.

Just as another example of issues with the GEA: Regulations prescribe that the proponents self-report bird and bat kills in a 50-metre radius of the hub, yet the proposed swept area is 136 metres for these new large industrial turbines. The Green Energy Act does not keep up with technology evolution.

We have a GEA process designed to mark off check boxes and frustrate public input. The EBR was quietly posted after 5 p.m. on a Friday night, the evening before Remembrance Day. Citizens were initially given until Christmas Day to respond to more than 4,000 pages of technical documentation. There were issues identified with each and every document. For example, my review of the property setback assessment identified roughly 100 gaps and/or concerns in total, from this reviewer alone. If this many issues can be found in a single smaller document, what does that say of the quality of assessment? Yet, it was approved without further mitigation.

I identified a major personal concern wherein riders in our equestrian operation would be passing only 18.3 metres from a blade tip at our property perimeter. The proponent ignored my input and made bogus assumptions that horses and riders would be inside in winter, thereby protected from serious harm, harm which can include death from ice fling. My reasonable enjoyment of property was denied, yet it was approved—without mitigation, I might say.

Citizens were given a strict EBR deadline, yet the ministry allowed EDPR, the proponent, to update documents as late as April 25 of this year, well after public input closed, as I mentioned, back in the holiday season. There was no opportunity for public or municipal comment to major construction design changes.

The renewable energy approval is signed by one Mohsen Keyvani, director, section 47.5 etc. etc. at the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change. Today we can find Mr. Keyvani listed as supervisor, team 5, MECP, on INFO-GO. How is it that someone who is now listed as the supervisor is also the signing director for millions of dollars of green energy approvals affecting the lives and health outcomes of thousands, if potentially not millions, of Ontarians?

Furthermore, a Mr. Arp from the MOECC identified in writing to us, "In the case of Nation Rise, the approval was issued on May 4 in order to meet the six-month service standard deadline of May 10, 2018." Is May 10 not the same day that the writ was publicly announced for the next election? The ministry would have known this well before. Why did they not wait and still meet the service level rather than rush a flawed REA?

Does the mandate to assess potential impacts to health and the environment, and the responsibility to mitigate and monitor, not trump a service level guideline? It would seem not. An outgoing government should not be able to

make a major 20-year commitment, estimated in the neighbourhood of $450 million, when it has itself made firm plans to call an election. It was unethical to do so, and it should be illegal, if it is not already.

The number of conditions in this approval highlight the material gaps that still exist today, as I mentioned. Yet, technically it was approved, and it can proceed on a technicality. As such, local citizens' only recourse is to fight our own government at our own cost in an Environmental Review Tribunal, ERT. My personal observations on the ERT follow:

—It's a strict legal process chaired by a single lawyer, despite being named a "tribunal," which to me is multiple;

—a single person's decision will affect thousands of lives; and

—our own tax dollars are used to pay for ministry lawyers who should be protecting us rather than a flawed decision. Yet, they are still working to old directives.

Serious harm to human health or serious and irreversible harm to the natural environment are the only conditions for ERT appeal. Yet, they cannot be proven until this has happened. Anything not identified in the filing of the appeal cannot be discussed, even if new and compelling evidence is found.

Any mention of groundwater contamination—this is our experience in the ERT—in North Kent or of lake K2 water issues brought fierce opposition from ministry lawyers. Our conclusion is that the ministry must feel exposed due to past failure of oversight.

North Stormont has similar but different risks due to the geology, leda clay, a sensitive aquifer, high flows in the water table, eskers and fractured limestone with karst. Any risk of irreversible harms to the North Stormont aquifer serving thousands of businesses and residents in eastern Ontario must not be allowed unless the risk can be proven to be nil.

It cannot be nil as we sit upon the west Quebec seismic fault underlain with leda clay, which can liquefy with vibration. There have been earthquakes and landslides in this watershed. The major landslide in Lemieux is as recent as June 1993—and it's not that far down the road; maybe only 20 or 30 kilometres from my own home.

1700

This risk to our fragile aquifer was not evaluated by Nation Rise in their public documents.

A senior geotechnical engineer to the MOECC testified under oath that EDPR investigations were inadequate. The proponent and ministry were advised, yet approval was granted and EDPR is not obligated to follow any of his recommendations.

On a more personal note, I identified at the ERT as the parent of a son with secondary progressive MS. My son is confined to his room 24/7 and cannot move away from harm. Other parents testified to critical heart conditions in children. All harm to health was discounted at the ERT by a single medical doctor flown in by the proponent from the Boston area. Could they not find a single Canadian medical doctor willing to testify in favour of industrial wind turbines?

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): I just wanted to let you know you have one minute remaining, please.

Mr. Rainer Pethke: Okay. You have the notes there. I'll let you read them afterwards. I'll go right to the main points.

There remains a concern that those who best understand local planning considerations can still be overruled under the Electricity Act. Future governments must not be left with an easy or alternate way to overrule municipalities on industrial wind turbines or large-scale solar.

Critically, with the repeal of the GEA, municipalities must be given the ability to reassess those wind turbines imposed on municipalities who identify as unwilling hosts. This repeal must remove any threat of legal action as initial contracts with proponents were as directed by the province through the GEA, not as decided through municipalities. This is especially—

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): I have to stop you there, sir. Thank you very much. I'm going to pass it to the opposition.

Mr. Harden, would you like to begin?

Mr. Joel Harden: I have no questions.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): On the government side: Mr. McDonell.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Hi, Rainer. How are you doing today?

Mr. Rainer Pethke: Hello, Jim.

Mr. Jim McDonell: One of the key issues I see with this site is the soils. I know you went over it. You just mentioned something about the soil issue and the fact that we've had a number of mudslides over the years, certainly, in this area. So it's not something that's hard to fathom as a possibility.

Mr. Rainer Pethke: Yes, it's very real. In Lemieux, which is not that far down the road—the entire village was forced to evacuate and shut down due to the underlying leda clay, which, as I said, liquefies with vibration. It's a serious concern with this project, and it has not been evaluated appropriately.

Mr. Jim McDonell: It's ostensibly in this area and through much of the territory that they're looking at actually putting these turbines up in. Is that right?

Mr. Rainer Pethke: Yes, it is. In the proponent's initial plans, they were planning on pile-driving down into the bedrock, and that itself is going to raise concerns with the fragile leda clay. They also made changes. However, none of those changes were put forward for public comment and have been evaluated. As the ministry expert himself identified, they have not been properly assessed.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I would take it that this would also make an issue with the water table, the aquifers from Crysler and Finch?

Mr. Rainer Pethke: Yes. There is a number of municipalities that draw from the same aquifer. North Stormont itself has over 7,000 residents, most of them on their own personal wells. There is a number of municipalities that draw from this water table as well. If this aquifer were damaged, it's irreversible. I don't know how the government would ever deal with risks to the water table. It

cannot be allowed, whenever there's any risk, especially with the topology here, the karst, fractured red rock—all these things can bring contaminants down into the water table.

Mr. Jim McDonell: And the villages of Crysler and Finch both get their water from wells.

Mr. Rainer Pethke: Yes, Crysler, Finch, Moose Creek. There are two other villages, Berwick and Avonmore, which are on individual wells, but there are at least three with municipal wells.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Of course, the distance to either the Ottawa or the St. Lawrence is huge, so making a change here, if they were to contaminate the wells, would be a huge problem.

Mr. Rainer Pethke: It would be huge. This is a rural farming area as well. It's not just the people. There's livestock; there are dairy farms; there are equestrian operations. It's just unfathomable what would happen.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Yes. And the aquifer is interesting because just down the road at Maxville there is no water, just five miles down the road. It's unique that there's lots of water, but of course it is susceptible because of the clays.

Mr. Rainer Pethke: Yes. I remember one of the local experts here who is in the well-testing business—they have identified that they could not reduce the flows here sufficiently between the two main eskers, the Vars-Winchester esker and the Crysler-Finch esker. They wanted to determine if there was interconnectivity between them and they just could not pump fast enough to even identify that, so there are high water flows in this area.

Mr. Jim McDonell: How much time is there?

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): There's just over one minute.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Okay. Anything else you want to add, Rainer?

Mr. Rainer Pethke: Well, the main thing is, I had a number of points in there. It's in my written submission. I obviously wasn't able to speak fast enough. I appreciate the time to speak. It's in writing as well, so it's all in there.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Yes, and I guess the point with the municipality being an unwilling host—and what I think speaks louder is that they turned down something over $500,000 a year that was proposed by the developer if they would declare themselves as a willing host. So that speaks to the degree to which people were against the project.

Mr. Rainer Pethke: Yes, they understand the risks and decided it was just not worth it, despite the offer of money.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Thank you.

Mr. Rainer Pethke: Thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much, Mr. Pethke, for your presentation.

As we have a little bit of time before our next presenter, we will take a short recess, but we will begin exactly at 5:20.

The committee recessed from 1707 to 1720.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Good afternoon, everyone. We are meeting today for public hearings on Bill 34, An Act to repeal the Green Energy Act, 2009 and to amend the Electricity Act, 1998, the Environmental Protection Act, the Planning Act and various other statutes.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated October 24, 2018, each witness will receive up to 10 minutes for their presentation followed by up to 10 minutes of questioning from the committee, divided equally amongst the recognized parties.

Before we begin, does anyone have any questions? So we will continue.

CANADIAN SOLAR INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): I would like to call upon the Canadian Solar Industries Association. If you can please identify yourself for the record, thank you very much.

Mr. Wes Johnston: Hi. My name is Wes Johnston, vice-president of the Canadian Solar Industries Association.

Good afternoon, members. As mentioned, I am vice-president of the Canadian Solar Industries Association, the national trade association representing the solar industry throughout Canada. Our vision is for solar electricity to be a mainstream energy source and an integral part of Canada's diversified energy mix.

I'd like to thank you for having me here today to speak on Bill 34, the Green Energy Repeal Act, and to touch on red tape and regulatory burdens put in place by the previous government under a top-down approach that made solar energy more costly and inaccessible to the average Ontarian.

As an industry, we see the opportunity to effectively deploy solar to:

(1) lower energy bills for the people of Ontario;

(2) protect and create local jobs; and

(3) enable greater consumer choice.

Solar electricity is currently the lowest-cost way on earth to produce electricity, thanks to dramatic declines in the cost of solar equipment. Achieving low-cost solar in Ontario is simply a matter of reducing the soft costs associated with installing solar.

Ontario benefits from a homegrown industry with the capacity to install cost-effective solar. Unfortunately, as the industry evolved over time, the previous government did not evolve, and instead kept and put in place processes that were overly bureaucratic. They hindered the industry's ability to grow by adding complexity and unnecessary costs. The Liberal government created excessive red tape, regulatory burdens and restrictions which increased the cost of solar energy in Ontario, making it a power source of the wealthy when it could be a cost-saver for the average homeowner or small business owner.

The industry's vision for solar energy in Ontario is as an affordable source of electricity, made so through red tape reductions, regulatory reforms and free-market forces, rather than through incentives and subsidies.

Through effective regulations, including private-sector-driven net metering and virtual net metering, Ontarians will be able to save money on their energy bills, create and consume their own energy, spurring local job creation in the skilled trades while putting power back in the hands of municipalities.

We believe that these are the essential goals of Bill 34, and the solar industry shares those goals. We see this bill as a clear opportunity for Ontario to pivot forward, allowing Ontario families, farmers and business owners of small, medium and large enterprises to lower their electricity bills by reducing the amount of electricity they purchase from their local distribution company, and allowing more Ontarians to consume their own self-generated solar energy.

Through the system called net metering, consumers are only billed for their net electricity use, meaning that if they generate more electricity than they use in a given month, they can receive a credit to apply against next month's bill. Ultimately, this provides customers with another option to help reduce their energy bill and protects them against future rate hikes.

As I said before, and it's worth repeating, our industry is not asking for handouts or subsidies. We see the path forward under Bill 34. Now is the time to move forward. Should this legislation pass, we will work collaboratively with the Ontario government to create a more robust and streamlined regulatory framework that will reduce red tape, unlock the power of private equity and enhance customer choice, and then pass these savings on to Ontario consumers. This government has a chance to make meaningful regulatory changes that will deliver a win for Ontario families, farmers and business owners, making life more affordable while giving power back to municipalities and bringing jobs and businesses back to Ontario.

As a province, we can look to the west of us to see an example of a system, in Saskatchewan, that is providing SaskPower customers with choice through the creation of the Power Generation Partner Program. In announcing this program, Saskatchewan environment minister and minister responsible for SaskPower Dustin Duncan described the new program as an "example of real action on climate change without imposing a harmful carbon tax on the people and the industries in Saskatchewan."

The Saskatchewan program allows customers to develop generation projects, including solar, to sell electricity to SaskPower. Also, they have plans in place to announce an updated net metering program where customers can generate renewable energy such as solar to offset their own power use.

Ontarians, like many across the country, want greater energy independence and choice, and this government has the opportunity to make substantial changes for the people.

CanSIA has identified red tape and regulatory barriers put in place by the previous government that, if removed, will lower the cost of solar to consumers, generators and, in reality, the entire system, and enables customer choice and unlocks the power of private equity.

(1) Net metering regulations and third-party ownership: The new government has an opportunity to make bold changes to enhance the current net metering regulations to enable third-party ownership. The current system, put in place by the former government, put the burden of the upfront costs on the family or business owner and forced them to either pay the upfront cost or enter into a complex leasing contract agreement, making it an exclusive option for the wealthy. Innovative, third-party ownership models, like those seen in the US, will lead to a reduction in solar energy costs, while providing greater access to all homeowners and entrepreneurs who wish to manage their energy and lower their bills.

(2) Virtual net metering: Current regulations in Ontario prevent virtual net metering solutions from being implemented despite the fact that it is an economically viable option. Virtual net metering can take many forms, but ultimately it enables families who rent, or a small business owner who doesn't have a suitable roof for solar, to still take advantage of the financial benefits of solar energy and to lower their electricity bills. These projects should be located in municipalities that approve of them and where they provide the greatest value to the grid, ratepayers and taxpayers.

(3) LDC processes, timelines and costs: Currently there are over 60 local distribution companies—LDCs—in Ontario with disjointed regulations on processes, timelines and costs. As the benefits of solar technology increase and the costs continue to decline, we know that public interest will continue to grow. These customers deserve predictability and consistency to further drive down costs and increase certainty to the benefit of customers. Creating a system towards standardization reduces uncertainty for consumers and, ultimately, to all ratepayers. Furthermore, requiring the LDCs to tender services will improve competition thus lowering costs and improving customer service.

(4) Small-scale ground-mount siting restrictions: The previous government put in place bureaucratic regulations around small-scale solar projects on land that created arbitrary rules that were costly for property owners, especially those in rural Ontario. These regulations took the power out of the hands of landowners and municipalities and put it into the hands of the province, creating a costly top-down approach. This government has the opportunity to make changes that give power back to communities and municipalities, giving them the authority over the siting for both small- and large-scale ground-mount solar projects.

(5) The 1% net metering limit: The previous government put in place an arbitrary limit, not based on current industry best practices, that restricts net-metered solar energy on the grid system. Once the limit is reached, customers looking to lower their electricity bills and gain some energy independence will be shut out of the grid, and thousands of jobs will be lost. Consumers want energy options to help them control their costs. They should have the right to connect to the publicly funded grid through net metering, empowering them to generate their own

electricity to lower their bills, help further stabilize the grid system, leverage private equity, and protect and create good-paying, local jobs across Ontario.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): You have 45 seconds to wrap up.

1730

Mr. Wes Johnston: In closing, I want to thank the committee for inviting CanSIA here today. Our industry looks forward to working with the government to make energy more affordable and empowering homeowners and businesses while putting more power into the hands of the consumers and municipalities. Together, we can show that Ontario is open for business, create jobs and lower the day-to-day costs for the people of Ontario.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much. We'll begin with the government side. Mr. Calandra.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Thank you very much. I appreciate your testimony. I wonder if you could just—it might be an unfair question, but how many solar panel manufacturers do we actually have in Ontario?

Mr. Wes Johnston: At this point, we have about four module manufacturers that I'm aware of. In addition to module manufacturing, we also have racking companies, and we have balance-of-system companies as well—so companies that create cabling and other types of devices for solar panels.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Net metering: I'm interested in it as well. Is that, in essence, what you're suggesting is the way forward to make solar energy solutions viable going into the future? Because we heard from another witness this morning that they're still talking about 19 cents a kilowatt hour. It has ranged up anywhere from—I think they said, and correct me if I'm wrong—20 cents to 60 cents, and on average about 44 cents. So is net metering the way that we'll bring the prices down, that your industry, ultimately, will bring the prices down and will make it sustainable and viable going forward? Because honestly, some of the policies—and I appreciate what you're saying—have really turned people against your industry, and that can't have been a positive thing for you.

Mr. Wes Johnston: Yes, again, we're not looking for subsidies of any kind. We're looking for a regulatory framework which enables private equity to come into this marketplace and provides another way for the end consumer to participate in solar energy.

Net metering—allowing for third-party ownership and virtual net metering—is a very, very big component of opening up that regulatory framework for the industry to be innovative, to bring in private equity, to increase economies of scale. So that's one very, very, important element.

The other elements that I pointed out and that we provided in our red tape submission—if we can work on other soft cost issues such as LDC processes, timelines and costs, if we can work on ESA standards and interpretations—and another very big, important one, and I didn't get quite get to it, is around time-of-use bill settlement for solar net metering. Currently, for example, if you put solar on your home right now—you may be under time-of-use pricing for your current costs, but if you put a solar system on your home, you're actually reverted back to tiered rates. What that means is, when you're producing power during the day, during peak times, you're actually not getting the fair value for that power that you're generating. So the electricity or the savings are lower for you as well.

That small, little regulatory change, along with opening up net metering regulations, actually probably makes solar extremely viable. As mentioned, the cost of solar energy continues to come down and will continue to come down, but the real opportunity in Ontario right now is through soft costs, through regulatory reform and free-market private equity.

Mr. Paul Calandra: We had a former councillor—and it's interesting. As I say, we had a former councillor—I don't remember where he was from; maybe Listowel. But he testified yesterday that he also started to try to get a regulatory reform that would basically turn off the windmills, for instance, at night, because people were having trouble sleeping. I found that one a bit strange since we don't need any power at night; we're in a surplus position of power at night. I found it very strange that the windmills were operating at night in the first place. It seems like you're in a completely different set of circumstances.

I wanted to just ask you about something, because I know I don't have a lot of time. Mr. Harden—and if I'm wrong, you can correct me. With the previous witness, I had talked about the $40 billion that we are subsidizing the energy contracts with going well into the future through the Fair Hydro Plan.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): One minute to go.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Now, Mr. Harden—I was very happy—and expressed some extraordinary frustration, suggesting that we shouldn't be borrowing $40 billion through the Fair Hydro Plan, which would mean that we would have to redistribute that amongst those industries that received subsidy over the last 10 years. I'm wondering if your industry has given any thought to what it would do in terms of jobs and the viability of your industry going forward if that money were redistributed back, as Mr. Harden has—

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thirty seconds. Thirty seconds to wrap this part up, please.

Mr. Paul Calandra: If I'm wrong, please correct me.

Mr. Wes Johnston: If I understand the question correctly—if we, essentially, took out the Fair Hydro Plan and put all of the pricing back to where it originally was, what would be the impact?

Mr. Paul Calandra: Specifically, it would be on the renewable side. Whoever it cost would have to pay that back. What would it do?

Mr. Wes Johnston: We haven't done that analysis, I have to admit. But I can certainly get back to you and provide you with some additional insight into that.

Mr. Paul Calandra: I'd appreciate that. Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much. I'd like to go to the opposition. Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you very much for appearing today. Could you tell us the average cost per kilowatt hour of solar power installed today in small applications, like homes? You're looking at virtual net metering. What kinds of costs are we looking at, per kilowatt hour?

Mr. Wes Johnston: If we're looking at a residential system on your home, it depends on a number of different factors. But if you look at a system over 25 years, we're looking at 13 cents, give or take, plus or minus two cents, I would say, for a residential system. The bigger the system the better the economics.

Just to give you an example: In Saskatchewan, they had an RFP for a 10-megawatt project. The pricing for that project came in at seven-plus cents. And, for example, in Mexico, there was pricing in and around one to two cents per kilowatt hour. That's just an example of where we can go. But in order to get there, we do have to work on some of these regulatory items and soft cost items in order to get to those types of price points as well.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Fair enough. When you talk about the installation of net-metered solar panels or virtual net metering, what scale of production are we talking about? How many megawatts is there a potential for in Ontario?

Mr. Wes Johnston: Great question. We haven't done a full analysis on that, but I would say there is a lot of potential. It depends on the grid as well. We certainly favour putting in systems where it makes sense, especially for larger virtual-net-metering-type projects. If there's a need for electricity in a certain area, it can certainly be placed there. If the municipality wants it there, then we can place it there as well. We can certainly get back to you in regard to what the overall potential is.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I'd appreciate it if you would, because I understand Hydro-Québec has looked at the potential for solar in Quebec to take up roughly 10% of gross demand in Quebec. Are you looking at that scale of investment or production in Ontario?

Mr. Wes Johnston: It would take a long time to get to that point. Even in Quebec, I would think it would take very, very long to get to that to that point. I would suspect that it would take 10-plus years, if not many more years than that, to get anywhere near the 10% mark in Ontario.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. But 10% seems to be a ballpark that one could aspire to?

Mr. Wes Johnston: I think so, yes.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Given that we have so many hydro assets, nuclear assets etc., what do you suggest we do with what would probably be stranded assets if we were to put in 5% or 10% of our power demand from solar?

Mr. Wes Johnston: I think it is important to take a responsible, managed approach to all of the generation assets that the province has. One thing that's important, in our view, is to ensure that there's a rate-design system in place whereby the infrastructure that the province has put in place is still being paid for. As a quick example, if you put solar on your home through net metering, you can never get your bill down to completely zero because you're still required to pay the delivery charges and other charges that, essentially, cover the infrastructure costs.

On the commercial and industrial side, the Ontario Energy Board is currently going through a rate-design process that will likely land in that same place. There is a way to ensure that we add solar energy while still ensuring that the grid infrastructure is maintained and is being paid for and that the LDCs remain whole as well.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It isn't so much the grid—

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): You have one minute remaining.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I was thinking about generating capacity and generating assets. If you have 10%, say over the next 15 years, of demand taken up by solar virtual net metering, that's a lot of generating capacity that becomes redundant. What are your suggestions for dealing with that as stranded assets?

1740

Mr. Wes Johnston: I think we also have to look at what will be the demand over time. That's not a clear answer at this point in time. But electrification is something that is taking place right now in Ontario and around the world, so we do predict that there will be additional electricity demand over time. Also, if there is economic growth and development as well, there will be additional need for electricity in Ontario.

It's a very, very challenging question, but I think managing the system, whereby we can maximize those assets—once they are up and once they are finalized, I think it is important to look at other options, which are, frankly, likely less expensive. As mentioned, solar energy is the least-costly energy source in the world. If you couple that with storage technology, which is following similar trends as solar energy, then solar plus storage and other renewables can essentially play that bigger role over time.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much. We really appreciate you coming out to present to us today.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you. I appreciated it a lot.

ONTARIO REAL ESTATE ASSOCIATION

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): I'd like to call upon the Ontario Real Estate Association to come.

Thank you and welcome. If you could please introduce yourselves and give us your name for the record. You have 10 minutes to present, followed by five minutes of questions from each of the recognized parties.

Mr. Steve Kotan: Perfect. Thank you very much.

Good afternoon, Madam Chair and fellow committee members. Thank you for allowing us to present to you on Bill 34, the Green Energy Repeal Act, 2018. My name is Steve Kotan. I am a realtor of 29 years from North Bay and a director with the Ontario Real Estate Association. Accompanying me is Matthew Thornton, vice-president of public affairs and communications at the association.

OREA is a provincial trade association of Ontario's 70,000 real estate brokers and salespeople who are members of Ontario's 38 real estate boards. We support the government's decision to repeal the Green Energy Act, 2009, and more specifically, section 3 of the act, which

mandated time-of-sale home energy audits. Ontario realtors are grateful that the government has decided to put an end to this program. We note that, in a column from the Toronto Star on Friday, October 12, 2018, a representative from the ministry stated that "the repeal will terminate mandatory energy audit initiatives", something our association and Ontario's tens of thousands of homeowners wholeheartedly applaud.

To provide the members of the committee with some background on the issue of mandatory energy audits, the idea of mandatory energy audits came to fruition with the introduction of the Green Energy Act, 2009. The act stated that a buyer had "the right" to request an energy audit from a home seller. While this section of the act was never proclaimed, the previous Liberal government brought forward a new mandatory energy audit scheme in their 2016 Climate Change Action Plan called the Home Energy Rating and Disclosure program. HER&D, if enacted, would force a seller to conduct an energy audit and then post the results of the audit upon listing their property for sale.

Mandatory energy audits add an unnecessary layer of red tape making it more difficult for Ontarians to sell a home. Energy audits can take weeks to schedule and perform. They're done by individuals who have, in many cases, only a weekend of training and who have no regulatory oversight. If an energy auditor behaves badly, a homeowner has no one to complain to except the courts. More importantly, consider how they would hurt Ontario homeowners. I'm from northern Ontario. Most homeowners in my community heat their homes using wood, gas and/or oil-based furnaces. Many of these properties would fail a home energy audit, forcing owners to pay the consequences in the form of lost equity. This scheme would punish seniors and low-income families the most. They don't have the money to fund expensive green retrofits recommended by a government-mandated home energy auditor.

But it isn't just about home equity; it's also about the litany of unintended consequences that come from mandating an unregulated inspection on a complex transaction like buying or selling a home. Consider the case when a homeowner is forced to sell quickly for personal reasons. Or consider the case of a family going through a divorce or a relocation due to their job. A mandatory audit scheme would punish these folks by delaying the sale, putting the weight of additional mortgage payments, bill payments and delays on their shoulders during an otherwise trying time.

Home energy audits would also hurt Ontario's housing market. With tens of thousands of single-family homes being transacted each year, we are concerned about whether the energy auditing industry will have the capacity to meet the demands of the market and deal with rural areas of the provinces and instances where home sellers have to move quickly. Every resale home transaction generates an average of $55,000 in additional economic activity. This activity creates jobs and supports Ontario's economy. Mandatory energy audits will hurt the housing market by making it more difficult for Ontarians to sell their homes, resulting in delays. So kudos to this government for repealing the Green Energy Act and mandatory home energy audits along with it.

While we support the repeal of the Green Energy Act, we do have one concern with one section of Bill 34. In particular, our issues pertain to the current wording of section 25, subsection 35, paragraph 3, which states:

"(1) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may, by regulation,

"(a) require a person prescribed by regulation, other than a public agency, to report to the ministry, in the manner prescribed by regulation, energy consumption, water use, ratings or other performance metrics in respect of energy consumption and water use and such additional information as may be prescribed by regulation in respect of each of the person's properties prescribed by regulation."

If the bill were to pass in its current form, Ontario realtors believe that this section could open the door to a future government implementing a mandatory energy audit scheme. OREA realizes that this is not the intent of this section. However, we are concerned that a future government will use it to punish Ontario families with a Drive Clean type of program on Ontario homes. We urge the government to include an exemption in section 25.35.3 for single-family residential homes. Including an exemption would prevent any future mandatory audit schemes from being enacted by the Lieutenant Governor in Council and force a vote in the Legislature. We do not want to see the good work of this government on Bill 34 be reversed by a simple order in council, which could create a huge new piece of costly red tape on Ontario's three million homeowners. While Ontario realtors support energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, we oppose mandatory energy audits.

To sum up, mandatory home energy audits would be to homeowners what Drive Clean was to car owners: a pointless program that costs families precious time and money but does nothing for the environment. That's why we support Bill 34 and the amendment of section 25 to protect Ontario homeowners from unnecessary red tape and another Drive Clean type of program into the future.

Thank you very much. I'd be happy to answer any of your questions.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much. We'll begin with Mr. Harden.

Mr. Joel Harden: Thank you for your presentation.

I want to understand the objection you've raised here about the mandatory audit. This is something that's not currently enforced. Am I correct?

Mr. Steve Kotan: That's correct.

Mr. Joel Harden: So the substance of your submission today is to make sure that this never happens. It's not currently the practice.

Mr. Steve Kotan: That's correct.

Mr. Joel Harden: Okay. Your concern about making sure this never happens is that it would unduly drive up the

cost of homes, particularly for people in precarious positions having to sell a home quickly—marital breakdown, whatever the circumstance may be. As I'm understanding you, you're saying that this particular rule would encumber those sorts of customers of yours.

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Mr. Matthew Thornton: There are a litany of issues associated with the program. That's a very good one that we're very concerned about. It would punish, I think, a couple of folks—particularly seniors, low-income people—because it forces an energy audit to be done at time of sale. Those folks would be hurt the most. They don't have the income available to do the retrofits to make their property better from an energy efficiency point of view.

In addition, the sector is unregulated. That's another concern that we have. There's no one watching over these energy auditors making sure that they're doing good work, that they're acting ethically, unlike most other professions in the province. The previous government brought forward a program that they were looking to move forward into law; they decided to postpone the implementation of the program until after the election. And then, here we are today.

That's just one of many concerns that we have with that program.

Mr. Joel Harden: Okay. I understand, then, you're looking out for the financial well-being of your clients in this measure. Is that correct?

Mr. Matthew Thornton: I think we're looking out for the benefit of all homeowners who have invested their life savings into their properties.

Mr. Joel Harden: Understood. If this is linked to prices I wonder, because you've raised the issue—I mean, we're talking about renewable energy, but ostensibly in your brief here you're raising the issue of homes and prices. I'm wondering if your organization has any opinions on the way in which your fees that are contracted on every sale contribute to the rising of prices in neighbourhoods. The typical fee that I'm familiar with in Ottawa Centre is 5% going to the agent on the sale of every home. Is that something that concerns you?

Mr. Matthew Thornton: No, no, because ultimately that negotiation is between a client and the realtor, should they choose to work with a realtor.

Mr. Joel Harden: That's too bad, because in my neighbourhood what I've seen is the tripling of house prices and the crowding out of any low- or modest-income people, so I would welcome from realtors any—

Mr. Matthew Thornton: But to suggest that that's related in any way to commissions is a giant reach—

Mr. Joel Harden: I'm sorry. My colleagues from the government often criticize us of not being exercisers in math, but if I form a multiple in my head of 5% of a home over a 20-year period, it's a market increase in price.

Mr. Matthew Thornton: In fact, I think the concerns—

Mr. Joel Harden: The other thing I wanted to ask you, sir, is what responsibility do you think realtors bear—because we all bear—to deal with the issue of climate change? We've had registered nurses here today, we've had a number of different professionals here today, and all of us recognize that we're on a tight deadline. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change just issued a report saying that, effectively, we have 12 years to make serious inroads to substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Has your organization pursued any research or any inquiry into what you can do to help that happen, to help ambitious action on reducing emissions, encouraging renewable energy, whatever the path may be?

Mr. Matthew Thornton: Let me, if I can, first address the point that you made at the end.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): You have one minute to conclude.

Mr. Matthew Thornton: With respect to prices, what we're seeing driving prices the most is the lack of housing supply in markets like GTA, in markets like Ottawa, a lack of access to single-family homes. That's an issue that definitely needs to be addressed.

With respect to your question around climate change, absolutely. We wholeheartedly support programs that work. This program, the mandatory home energy program, doesn't work in terms of addressing the reduction of home energy consumption.

Mr. Joel Harden: I hope when you do the research that you think about—with builders in the province and others—how, as an industry, we can make sure that homes, apartments, units that are sold are meeting our green standards.

Mr. Matthew Thornton: If I can, on that—

Mr. Joel Harden: The other thing I'll say, in response to something that was raised earlier, is one of the things we are thinking about—because we are passing on an enormous climate debt at the moment to future generations. I think, as my friend Mr. Calandra was mentioning earlier, our opposition to an accounting trick in allowing for $20 billion of additional revenue to subsidize energy prices—that's something that concerns us a lot. It gives rise to the need for us to have a substantial rethink on renewable energy.

I want to thank you for coming. I encourage you to continue that research into climate change, because I do think there are financial impacts for homeowners who absolutely are price sensitive. I take your point.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you, Mr. Harden. We'll move on to the government side. Mr. Calandra will speak first.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Thank you. You've been a realtor for how long?

Mr. Steve Kotan: Twenty-nine years.

Mr. Paul Calandra: A lot has changed in 29 years; right?

Mr. Steve Kotan: Plenty has changed in 29 years.

Mr. Paul Calandra: You know, my dad used to be a realtor. It's one of the jobs he had. He was a hairdresser and he couldn't stand. His back would hurt. So he went into becoming a realtor. I remember when he first started. He wasn't a realtor for that long, he unfortunately passed

away young, but when he first started 6% was the mandatory fee. And I know you're not here to talk about fees, but let me ask you this: Are your fees negotiable, or is it just a hard—

Mr. Steve Kotan: Fees are negotiable, yes, definitely.

Mr. Paul Calandra: One of the interesting things is that because of the energy policies of the previous government, supported by the opposition, the cost of our renewable energy has not been negotiable. In fact, it's been just the opposite. We heard earlier today that, on average, solar was 44 cents, up to 60 cents; it's still 19 cents. I bet that's the kind of negotiating you would like to have.

I'm not going to even ask you to answer too many questions. I think that's part of the difference that we're seeing here, right? I guess part of the difference also is that I appreciate the fact that small business owners, as realtors are—in my riding, they do a great service. You have a government that, of course, is not going to continue to attack you because you're small business owners. I appreciate the fact that you've given some thought to climate change, because guess what? As individuals, it impacts you as well, and your kids; so not just as realtors, but as individuals.

I'll just give you as a summary: I think part of the reason why in my area—I'm in Stouffville, just north of Toronto—part of the reason why we've had such an escalation in house prices is because there's just nobody in the trades. It's been very, very difficult to get tradespeople to build houses, to renovate houses. Frankly, it's been horrifyingly difficult. As you probably know—I'm not going to ask you about it, because it would probably be unfair—but presumably, having more people to build homes faster would bring down the price of houses, and that should be embraced by individuals. I think OREA would probably—not to put words in your mouth, but is that a correct assumption?

Mr. Matthew Thornton: Yes. The short answer is yes, Mr. Calandra. I think fixing the ratios was a great first step in terms of getting more folks involved in the trades. That red tape example is one of many around housing supply that we're chatting with Minister Clark's team about solving going forward. The approvals process around getting shovels in the ground and those homes built faster is something that we're hoping this new government tackles as well.

Mr. Paul Calandra: So the good news is, I suppose, in summary—I guess part of the bad news is that the jobs that we were told would result from the Green Energy Act never happened. We were told by the David Suzuki Foundation that there would be 50,000 jobs, which would have meant great things for the realtors, a lot of houses to buy. Another witness told us that that never really materialized. We were told that Ontario would become a centre of green energy, but we got four solar panel manufacturers. We saw that when the subsidies ended, the wind producers left.

But the good news, I suspect, the interesting news—and I'm looking forward to working with the opposition on this—was to hear that the NDP wants to stop borrowing, and at least in this instance, they're talking about the Fair Hydro Plan. They seem to want to stop borrowing money immediately. We'll have to figure out—I'd love to hear from them—how we are going to redistribute the billions of dollars that we are not going to be borrowing. I'm heartened by that, to be honest with you.

Look, in summary, I appreciate that you came. Were there any other closing comments that you wanted to add?

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): You have one minute to conclude.

Mr. Matthew Thornton: Just with respect to the one section that we highlighted in our presentation—that's section 25—we realize that the intent of that section is not to bring forward a new mandatory home energy audit program in the future, but the way it's currently written, it's very prescriptive in nature. We'd just like to see that tightened up a bit to make sure that if a government were to, they would have to get it through the Legislature first.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Thank you very much.

Mr. Matthew Thornton: Thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much for your presentation. That will conclude our public hearings on Bill 34.

Just a quick reminder: The deadline to send a written submission to the Clerk of the Committee is 6 p.m. today, which has just passed. The deadline to file amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee is 12 p.m. on Monday, November 5, 2018. The committee will meet for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill at 9 a.m. on Monday, November 12, 2018. As of today, we will adjourn. Thank you very much.

The committee adjourned at 1800.

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