

Legislative  
Assembly  
of Ontario



Assemblée  
législative  
de l'Ontario

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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

F-9

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

F-9

**Standing Committee on  
Finance and Economic Affairs**

Pre-budget consultations

2<sup>nd</sup> Session  
42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament

Wednesday 12 January 2022

**Comité permanent  
des finances  
et des affaires économiques**

Consultations prébudgétaires

2<sup>e</sup> session  
42<sup>e</sup> législature

Mercredi 12 janvier 2022

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Chair: Ernie Hardeman  
Clerk: Michael Bushara

Président : Ernie Hardeman  
Greffier : Michael Bushara

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Wednesday 12 January 2022

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES FINANCES  
ET DES AFFAIRES ÉCONOMIQUES

Mercredi 12 janvier 2022

*The committee met at 0901 in room 151 and by video conference.*

## PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATIONS

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** I call this meeting to order. We are meeting today to continue public hearings on pre-budget consultations 2022 for the Ottawa region of Ontario.

As a reminder, I ask that everyone speak slowly and clearly. Please wait until recognized before starting to speak.

Are there any questions before we begin? If not, each presenter will be given seven minutes for their presentation. After we've heard from all of the presenters, there will be 39 minutes of questions from members of the committee. This time for questions will be divided into two rounds of seven and a half minutes for the government members, two rounds of seven and a half minutes for the official opposition members and two rounds of four and a half minutes for the independent members.

We have MPP Blais joining us yet before we start, so if we could just ask him to introduce himself and tell us where he's broadcasting from this morning.

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** Good morning. Stephen Blais, the MPP for Orléans, and I'm in Orléans, Ontario.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLÉE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE  
DE L'ONTARIO  
COLLÈGE LA CITÉ  
OTTAWA PUBLIC LIBRARY

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** The first panel is the Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario: Carol Jolin. If he would like to take the stand and the mike, and we'll hear from him for seven minutes.

**M. Peter Hominuk:** Merci, monsieur le Président. My name is Peter Hominuk. I'm the executive director of Assemblée de la francophonie. I am accompanied by the president of l'AFO, Monsieur Carol Jolin, who has a bad sore throat today and has asked me to address the committee. He may assist me in answering some of the questions.

J'aimerais remercier les membres de votre comité d'avoir accepté d'entendre l'Assemblée de la francophonie de

l'Ontario dans le cadre de ces consultations prébudgétaires de 2022. Nous sommes heureux de présenter les recommandations de la communauté franco-ontarienne.

Les Franco-Ontariens participent depuis plus de 400 ans à l'essor économique, social et culturel de la province, et ils continueront de le faire. Il y a d'ailleurs un million et demi de personnes qui parlent français en Ontario, dont 744 000 personnes qui s'identifient comme Franco-Ontariens.

Through a survey conducted by AFO, the Franco-Ontarian community has clearly identified two main priorities: increasing access to post-secondary education in French and access to French services in health and long-term care. The francophone community in Ontario is also committed to officializing the Ombudsman's bilingualism and moving forward with the expansion project of the Mouvement d'implication francophone d'Orléans, or MIFO.

Reinforcing post-secondary education in French is one of the ways through which the province's francophonie is strengthened and equipped to address the labour shortage.

Vous n'êtes pas sans connaître la situation actuelle de la Laurentian University. Cette situation a provoqué une onde de choc dans la communauté francophone, car notre communauté a vu son offre de programmes d'études en français en Ontario diminuer de moitié. It struck a major blow to the middle-north's economic, social and cultural vitality, while Laurentian University a complètement perdu la confiance de notre communauté.

Since last March, the University of Sudbury, an institution with zero debt—I repeat, zero debt—has begun the transformation to become a university run by, for and with francophones.

L'Université de Sudbury projette de mettre l'étudiant, et non le bien de son institution, au centre de ses préoccupations en proposant de moderniser la programmation de langue française dans le Moyen-Nord et de participer à l'essor économique, culturel et social du Moyen-Nord.

Whereas the Ontario government has put forward an initial strategy to address the francophone and bilingual labour shortage in this province, the University of Sudbury has proposed a project that will help the government move toward this goal.

La communauté francophone croit en ce projet. Nous croyons en une université forte de langue française, l'Université de Sudbury, et une université forte de langue anglaise, la Laurentian University.

Au cours des dernières années, le gouvernement de l'Ontario a posé des bases solides pour améliorer la programmation universitaire de langue française axée sur les besoins des francophones et du marché de l'emploi. On le voit avec l'ouverture de l'Université de l'Ontario français et l'adoption d'une charte pour l'Université de Hearst. La transformation de l'Université de Sudbury viendrait poursuivre ce tableau d'universités franco-ontariennes fortes qui auraient tout intérêt à échanger des services et des programmes tout en conservant leur gouvernance régionale.

This is why AFO is asking the Ministry of Colleges and Universities to submit the University of Sudbury's application for Canadian Heritage's post-secondary minority-language education funding, support the University of Sudbury in its planning and transformation and in securing annual core funding and, finally, encourage the creation of a Franco-Ontarian university network.

La deuxième priorité identifiée par la communauté franco-ontarienne concerne l'accès aux soins de santé et de longue durée. La pandémie actuelle a mis encore plus en lumière le besoin d'avoir des soins de santé et de longue durée de qualité en français.

On average, francophones in Ontario are four years older than the general population. As they age, they are at risk of losing their ability to communicate in a second language because of neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's. It is easy to imagine the great anxiety and confusion experienced by a patient living in a hospital or a long-term-care home who does not understand the language spoken to them by health care staff and professionals.

To give an example of the difficulty in accessing long-term care, one francophone bed is available for every 3,400 francophones across the province. This is 20 times less than the general population, where there is one bed for every 170 Ontarians.

La Commission ontarienne d'enquête sur la COVID-19 dans les foyers de soins de longue durée a soumis quatre recommandations touchant les services en français dans les foyers de soins de longue durée. L'AFO souhaite que les ministères de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée les mettent en oeuvre. Le manque de services en santé mentale en français est également un volet que notre communauté souhaite voir améliorer.

Finalement, nous souhaitons que le projet d'intégrer la variable linguistique à la carte santé se concrétise finalement.

J'aborderai maintenant l'officialisation du bilinguisme de l'ombudsman. Nous sommes très heureux de l'engagement important pris en ce sens envers l'AFO et l'AJEFO par la ministre des Affaires francophones, Caroline Mulroney, lors de la dernière modernisation de la Loi sur les services en français.

It is important to the francophone community in Ontario that the Ombudsman, who has taken over the functions previously carried out by the French Language Services Commissioner, be bilingual. We believe this qualification is essential for this position. While the

current Ombudsman is bilingual, nothing guarantees that the next one will be. We ask that the next budget contain a section or schedule amending the Ombudsman Act by making it mandatory for the Ombudsman to be bilingual. This commitment must come into effect before the dissolution of the House next spring.

Je termine cette présentation avec le projet du Mouvement d'implication francophone d'Orléans, communément appelé le MIFO. Cet organisme est l'un des plus importants employeurs franco-ontariens. À lui seul, il contribue à la hauteur de 12,7 millions de dollars au PIB ontarien et emploie plus de 300 personnes.

#### 0910

Pour lui permettre de continuer de fonctionner, le MIFO a besoin de rénover ses infrastructures et de les agrandir. Leur projet sécuritaire, inclusif, accessible et carboneutre a besoin d'être financé par les différents paliers de gouvernement. Au niveau de l'Ontario, nous croyons que la deuxième ronde du Programme d'infrastructure Investir dans le Canada devrait financer cet agrandissement. Nous recommandons que ce programme soit ouvert sans plus attendre et que le ministère de l'Infrastructure octroie 8,24 millions de dollars au MIFO dans le cadre de celui-ci.

Je vous remercie, monsieur le Président, mesdames and messieurs les députés, pour votre attention lors de cette présentation.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, ladies and gentlemen, for your attention during this presentation. I'll be available to answer your questions later.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Thank you very much for the presentation. With one minute left, I could just point out that I will give everyone a warning at one minute. I was just going to do that when you finished the "thank you very much."

Our next presenter is Collège La Cité: Lise Bourgeois.

**M<sup>me</sup> Lise Bourgeois:** Bonjour, membres du comité. Je suis Lise Bourgeois, présidente du Collège La Cité.

I really appreciate the opportunity to speak with you about investments in Ontario colleges and how it directly supports Ontario's economic recovery and resilience.

La Cité is Ontario's—and Canada's, actually—largest French-language post-secondary institution outside of Quebec. Currently, 5,700 students have entrusted their education and skills development at La Cité across 140 programs.

While the majority of our students are from the National Capital Region and eastern Ontario, many come from across Ontario, Canada and the world. French remains the second most spoken language on the globe and 1,400 French-speaking international students choose La Cité as their educational destination.

With an employment rate of 82% after graduation, students and employers know they can count on us. Our flexibility is what allows us to make a meaningful presence everywhere in Ontario where students and employers have a need, and this without creating unviable liabilities for La Cité and for the province.

In its fall economic statement, the government of Ontario declared it was working for workers and that restarting the economy safely is our collective priority. I agree. La Cité is the government's partner in this endeavour.

For this, we have three recommendations to put Ontario workers on a race to the top. The first recommendation: Increase investments in digital infrastructure for colleges and commit to a distinct approach for French-language institutions. Digital infrastructure empowers us to deliver safe and leading-edge programming that helps with access. This includes augmented and virtual reality programming that provides solutions for employers and prepares resilient and skilled workers where they are. This makes learning and upskilling and reskilling faster, more affordable, accessible and relevant.

For example, La Cité has heard the call from the provincial government to rapidly train more PSWs. We rapidly deployed a hybrid model with our partners that included Hôpital Montfort and Centres d'Accueil Héritage in Toronto. We could not have done this in a viable way without investments by the provincial and federal governments.

When designing funding that is meant to enhance our digital and delivery capacity, the government should consider the specificities, unique challenges and potential of French-language post-secondary institutions. This move, dedicating an equitable and local funding, adequately reflects our operational realities and linguistic distinctions.

For example, while Ontario supports access to online programming primarily through eCampusOntario and e-Learning Ontario, French-language students cannot benefit from the same diversity of choices and services. While 22 colleges contribute to these platforms in English, only two French-language colleges can contribute their expertise and resources, so numbers talk.

The second recommendation: Review the colleges funding formula to align with flexible programming expectations. Ontario's current college funding formula does not properly support colleges who choose to transform their operations and their programs to be more flexible. For example, it does not incentivize micro-credentialing and modular approaches to program delivery because it is still largely based on a full-time equivalency model.

As in the previous recommendation, a distinct approach is required to reflect our unique challenges and potential. It's like a hockey team being provided the same-sized skates for the big game: For those whom the skates don't fit, it will be cumbersome and difficult to reach the goal. For French-language institutions in particular, the skates do not always fit.

Yet we know that resources adapted to our reality can propel French-language institutions forward and allow us to continue sustainably. Our unique MobiliCité delivery model is a prime example of how we can adapt training delivery models to meet our specific needs with employer partners to create living labs, living classes right there in the workplace. The MobiliCité model could be rapidly replicated when and where needed across Ontario without

the need for costly investment in infrastructure. We can even share and extend the model and collaborative initiatives with other institutions, such as the Education City project with the four Ottawa post-secondary institutions.

My third and last recommendation: Cut the red tape, accelerate college program approval and explore credential reform for colleges. A no-cost initiative—reviewing wait times for program approvals—would dramatically increase our ability to develop and modernize our programs and our nimbleness to deliver high-demand training. Specifically at a time when Ontario employers are in dire need of workers, program approvals take up to a year. For many students and employers, it's too late.

Whether it is approving critical programs exemplified—

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** One minute left.

**Ms. Lise Bourgeois:** —at La Cité, such as nursing bachelor's degrees, applied artificial intelligence programs or agricultural business management, exploring credential reform can create pathways for graduates to enhance their credentials. Imagine, for example, a PSW training on the job while stacking credentials on a pathway towards a practical nursing diploma and then a bachelor's nursing degree. Great.

Members of the standing committee, as budget measures are considered for this pivotal year, supporting La Cité's ability to provide the right programs for employers and workers is one of Ontario's most efficient ways to rapidly increase highly skilled workers and the workforce.

Merci pour votre appui au Collège La Cité, un pilier et un partenaire très engagé au sein de la communauté francophone de l'Ontario.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Thank you very much for the presentation.

Our next presenter is from the Ottawa Public Library: Danielle McDonald.

**Ms. Danielle McDonald:** Good morning. Bonjour à tous. Je suis Danielle McDonald, DG de la Bibliothèque publique d'Ottawa. Je remercie le Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques de me donner l'occasion de participer à vos consultations.

Working for a public library brings me great pride because I know that we have an impact on millions of Ontarians every day. Public libraries are Ontario's farthest-reaching, most cost-effective public resource and community hubs. Their impact on the local level is significant, and over the past 21 months in particular, we have been a lifeline for community members. As we continue to confront the pandemic, public libraries are an essential part of Ontario's COVID-19 response and recovery. I want to say we acknowledge and appreciate that Minister MacLeod has supported libraries and helped keep us open.

Having said that, many people who depend on library services are still falling through the gaps. Ottawa Public Library has seen first-hand how equity-deserving and marginalized residents have been impacted by the pandemic. The closure of public libraries in the spring of

2020 had a significant impact on those most vulnerable community members.

Since we have been able to resume library services, we have provided vital services such as access to the Internet, computers and technology to those community members who need access in order to get by. Over the past 21 months, Ottawa Public Library has seen a significant demand for access to e-resources and e-books. In 2021, we saw more than two million online checkouts of digital material. Even for a large system such as ours, these resources are costly and have restrictive limitations in terms of the licensing, meaning that our residents are not always getting the access they need or deserve.

**0920**

Ottawa Public Library has had to develop new ways, like many organizations, to serve our community. We have shifted to virtual and online programming, and to ensure that we are able to provide our community with valuable literacy and inclusion services that they rely on. So we loaned out technology like Chromebooks and WiFi hot spots to people living in temporary housing, to newcomers and to families who are struggling with online learning. We shared 279 Chromebooks and 30 hot spots with 45 community partners. We made and continue to make a real difference in our community, despite the pandemic challenges, through some of these efforts.

Certainly these gaps existed prior to the pandemic, but this crisis has really highlighted the inequity faced by many Ontarians. The inequity is most sharply felt by Ontario's Indigenous communities. Approximately 30% of Ontario First Nation reserves have public libraries where the situation is more challenging. These libraries do not receive funding from municipal taxes. This has resulted in an unsustainable provincial funding model that has left many public libraries on reserves closed or with severely reduced access. At Ottawa Public Library, we have been collaborating closely with the Anishinaabe-Algonquin First Nation communities of Pikwakanagan and Kitigan Zibi. Over the past few years, we have learned more about these communities and know that increased funding would be an important asset to local First Nation communities.

I'm here today on behalf of the Ottawa Public Library and other libraries in Ontario to strongly advocate for three critical investments that will stabilize our public libraries and ensure that they can continue to perform their vital role in our communities.

First, we need to keep public libraries across Ontario sustainable by enhancing the provincial operating funding by \$21 million annually. This is our annual operating grant, otherwise known as the PLOG. It's a vital resource, and it's under provincial jurisdiction. There is a need to ensure that the funding remains stable and consistent in the face of economic pressures.

There has been no increase to provincial funding in more than 20 years, and as such, the value of the province's investment has really fallen by more than 60%. The amount that the Ottawa Public Library receives from the province has really not kept up with inflation and is insufficient to cover the range of services we provide. As a

CEO leading a public library in Ontario, I support this increase, but I really support a guarantee that these funds are indexed to match inflation so that we can continue to meet our mandate as determined by the Public Libraries Act.

Equally, if not more importantly, we must work alongside First Nations public library leaders to implement a sustainable funding model so that they can continue their important work in developing the critical literacy skills so key to improved graduation rates. Immediately, the First Nation salary supplement must be increased to ensure that all existing First Nation public library staff are fairly compensated for the work they perform. What we're looking for here is a modest investment of \$2 million annually, which would sustainably fund operations for existing First Nation public libraries and ensure a living income for front-line staff in these communities.

Finally, the province must provide critical, fair access to digital resources for all public libraries by creating an Ontario digital public library to support the government's mandate on e-learning. These resources are expensive—

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** One minute left.

**Ms. Danielle McDonald:**—especially when purchased on a patchwork, library-by-library basis. By leveraging the province's significant purchasing power, we can better negotiate to ensure that all Ontarians have access to a common set of high-quality e-learning and online resources through their local public library.

Le partenariat entre le gouvernement de l'Ontario et les bibliothèques publiques locales est vital.

These critical supports are needed to deliver important government services locally, and to do them relevantly, and to enhance economic development in Ontario communities.

Libraries matter, and this statement is even more relevant today as we move through this pandemic. We need to continue to work together for the good of our local library systems and to ensure that we have a strong provincial system of which we can all be proud.

I thank you for the time. Merci.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Thank you very much for your presentation.

We now will go to the questioning. As I mentioned earlier, there will be two rounds of questioning. We start the first round with the independent member for four and a half minutes.

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** Yes, thank you, Chair.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Ms. Collard, is it?

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** Yes.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Thank you. MPP Collard.

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** Merci à tous les présentateurs. J'ai vraiment apprécié l'information puis les recommandations que vous faites ce matin.

My question will be for Peter Hominuk. Tu as parlé de quatre recommandations importantes que tu voudrais que le gouvernement mette en oeuvre, notamment pour l'accès aux services de santé et de soins de longue durée pour les francophones. Je ne pense pas que tu as eu le temps de les



expliciter. Est-ce que tu pourrais prendre un peu de temps pour nous communiquer ces quatre recommandations?

**M. Peter Hominuk:** Merci, madame Collard. La première était que le ministère de la Santé mette en oeuvre des actions concrètes pour que la variable linguistique soit intégrée à la carte santé dans les plus brefs délais. Je pense qu'elle s'explique assez bien.

Que les ministères de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée mettent en oeuvre des recommandations de la commission touchant les foyers de soins de longue durée—je pense que ça aussi, ça découle de ce rapport-là.

Que le ministère de la Santé finance davantage de ressources, espaces et personnel de première ligne en santé mentale en français—puis on le voit : la pandémie a accentué les besoins en santé mentale. Il y a un manque de services. Il y a de la médecine de couloir. Le ministère de la Santé devrait analyser les zones géographiques mal desservies en matière de santé en français et les manquements au continuum de services. Puis il faut un meilleur accès à des navigateurs de services en français pour désengorger les hôpitaux.

La dernière recommandation était que le ministère de la Santé crée un organisme responsable des services de santé mentale aux enfants et aux jeunes de mandat provincial et francophone.

Désolé, il y en a une autre : que le gouvernement soutienne une structure de planification forte et alignée avec le système majoritaire pour les services de santé en français. Ça, je pense que j'aimerais en parler un petit peu. On a des entités de planification. Il y a une entité de planification des services de santé en français provinciale qui a été créée, et il faudrait aligner les territoires des entités de planification de services de santé en français avec les territoires de Santé Ontario. Il faudrait étendre le mandat des entités de planification à des secteurs importants pour les francophones, comme les soins de longue durée, les bureaux de santé publique et les services sociaux.

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** OK. Excellent. Merci.

Do I still have time for another question, Chair?

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** You have two minutes left.

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** Great. Thank you.

Madame Lise Bourgeois, my question for you—ma question est concernant les programmes d'appoint pour les immigrants qui sont au Canada, des francophones, et qui ont des « skills acquired internationally ». Do you have bridging programs? How can La Cité assist with the shortage of human resources by training these people with the required skills to Ontario standards?

**M<sup>me</sup> Lise Bourgeois:** Bonne question, madame Collard. Nous sommes responsables d'un projet qui nous a été alloué par l'IRCC, c'est-à-dire un projet du fédéral, qui nous permet d'accueillir des immigrants et—

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** One minute left.

**M<sup>me</sup> Lise Bourgeois:** —de les appuyer dans leur intégration. Alors, oui, on a plusieurs, plusieurs programmes qui nous permettent à la fois de les appuyer dans leur intégration dans la communauté et dans la

reconnaissance de leurs compétences, mais il y a encore des lacunes à ce niveau-là. Il faudrait avoir un centre de reconnaissance des compétences, qui n'existe pas à ce moment-ci en Ontario pour les francophones.

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** Puis c'est quelque chose que La Cité pourrait faire, pour être ce centre-là?

**M<sup>me</sup> Lise Bourgeois:** Absolument.

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** Merci beaucoup, madame Bourgeois. Thank you, Chair.

0930

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Thank you very much.

We'll now go to the government for seven and a half minutes. MPP Kusendova. Your mike is not on. Here it comes—nope.

*Interjection.*

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** We can't hear MPP Kusendova. We'll have to switch to MPP Ghamari.

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** Thank you very much. Merci beaucoup. I'll ask the questions until MPP Kusendova can figure out the audio situation. Thank you, everyone, today for the presentations.

Lise, c'est un plaisir to see you again. Merci beaucoup pour votre présentation. Je suis désolée, mon français n'est pas très bien, mais je peux parler un petit peu. Je peux comprendre.

*Une voix.*

**M<sup>me</sup> Goldie Ghamari:** Merci, MPP Bourgoïn.

Ma question pour vous, madame Bourgeois, is: You spoke a little bit about the red tape. That is something we discussed when I visited La Cité with Minister Dunlop back in the fall, as the parliamentary assistant for colleges and universities. Some of that red tape is definitely—we've taken that back and we are going to be considering that.

I wanted to know if you could maybe speak a little bit about specific examples of the red tape, maybe, that you faced in the past and also what our government can do to continue supporting French-language education. We did make a number of announcements not just for French-language training but, more specifically, French-language training in the health care sector. I know that La Cité is one of the leaders in French-language training when it comes to health care: nursing, PSWs. You have a fantastic lab for dental training as well. If you could maybe speak a little bit about that and some of the supports you've received and how this is benefiting the French-language community in Ottawa and Ontario. Merci beaucoup.

**Ms. Lise Bourgeois:** Très bien. I can say two things about this. Initiatives such as the PSW rapid training for the rapid needs of the health sector are a good example of initiatives supported by government that we could rapidly act on. Actually, I think we had 300-some students in post-secondary training in PSW—les préposés aux soins personnels. I am sure that this made a big difference in our health centres. This initiative could be reapplied in other sectors where there is a need for a quick “main d'oeuvre”—la pénurie de main-d'oeuvre.

About the red tape: I know that there was an effort from the government to reduce red tape. I don't know if it's because it's different for the francophone programs, but yes, I remember when you came to La Cité. I told you about programs that were in wait of approbation. Well, guess what? We're still waiting, and this is very, very negative for the francophone community. Actually, we have—and this one I know there is a process that has to be completed because it does not implicate only government; it's also the order of nursing and the Ministry of Health. But I think there has to be "une concertation" of all those players so that we can accelerate. We could deliver this program starting in September. This is what we were planning, but we're still waiting for the approval of the bachelor in applied nursing.

The other program that has been way too long is the applied artificial intelligence. We know that this is very sought-for training by employers and by students. They would benefit from this artificial intelligence program. So, it has been since last February. We are still waiting.

Specialized public administration: We did have the agricultural administration program that took almost a year for approbation, so I don't know if there is something different for the approval. The objective of government was to reduce it from a year to six months. Maybe some colleges did get that six months' time; for La Cité, it has been a long wait.

I think the government knows and the community knows that we are very on time; we are relevant with the training. We want to keep that pace. So we appreciate the support from the government to untie the knots, wherever they are.

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** Thank you. Merci beaucoup. I can promise you that this is something we are working on, and as soon as we have some good news, we'll definitely let you know. But rest assured that La Cité is a fantastic college and it has got such a fantastic reputation in Ottawa, and if there's anything we can do to support it, we will. We'll definitely follow up on that afterwards as well.

**M<sup>me</sup> Lise Bourgeois:** I would just like to add that many colleges have had their announcements for the bachelor of applied nursing. La Cité is ready. It would be a great announcement for La Cité.

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** Well, we'll see what we can do. Thank you so much, Madame Bourgeois.

How much time do I have left, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** One minute, 24 seconds.

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** Oh, thank you.

In the remaining time I have, I'd like to just ask Ms. McDonald: With respect to Ottawa Public Library, Carleton, the riding I represent, is very rural. In Ottawa, I represent communities like North Gower, Richmond, Manotick, Metcalfe, Ashton, Greely, Osgoode and Kars. There are a lot of rural libraries there. Oftentimes they don't have the same hours as some of the more central ones. What could we do, perhaps, to support rural libraries and rural communities to have better access to public library facilities in those rural branches?

**Ms. Danielle McDonald:** Thank you very much for your question. We did have a survey several years ago that we did through Nanos; I'm hoping that everyone who was asked was able to respond. It was fairly extensive, so there was some sense of participation throughout Ottawa on the hours.

But I know that people always want more hours, and that sort of relates to the first ask, about increasing the public libraries operating grant. Our system gets about \$1.3 million a year from the provincial government, and it has never even been inflated, so—

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** That concludes the time for this round. We'll have to save that answer for the next round.

We'll now go to the official opposition. Mr. Bourgouin?

**M. Guy Bourgouin:** Ma première question est pour l'AFO. Dans votre présentation, Peter, vous avez parlé de l'Université de Sudbury. J'ai eu la chance de rencontrer le recteur, Serge Miville, justement pour avoir ces discussions-là avec lui. L'université a absolument raison. Ils ont zéro dette. Ils sont prêts. Ils ne font pas partie—il faut être clair—de la LACC. J'ai eu la chance de parler avec la ministre aussi, de lui dire que, écoute, moi, quand j'ai rencontré Serge, il est prêt à travailler avec l'Université Laurentienne. Il est prêt à faire les démarches. On veut tous que l'Université Laurentienne survive. Mais, tu as absolument raison : la communauté a été très claire qu'elle n'a plus confiance. On veut avoir notre université pour et par.

J'aimerais que tu puisses élaborer, parce que je pense que c'est important que tout le monde comprenne ce que ça veut dire, le fait que la communauté n'a plus confiance, pourquoi c'est important d'avoir notre université pour et par, puis aussi le réseau—je pense que tu as mentionné le réseau; puis ça, c'est encore plus important aussi, que ce soit pour répondre à la communauté. J'aimerais que tu élaborés là-dessus parce que je pense que c'est un point très important que le reste des députés doivent comprendre pour qu'ils fassent une grosse différence quand ça vient aux décisions. Ils ne font pas partie de la LACC, puis je trouve qu'on manque une opportunité comme ça. Le gouvernement passe à côté d'une grosse opportunité.

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**M. Peter Hominuk:** Merci beaucoup, monsieur Bourgouin. Je pense qu'un des plus gros problèmes c'est le manque de nouvelle programmation depuis des années à Laurentian University. C'est très frustrant. C'est une communauté très vibrante dans le Nord. Il y a un besoin pour plus de services. Dans le contexte de cette institution bilingue, Laurentian University, il y a eu peu d'avancements dans les services en français. Nous, on croit que le modèle de l'Université de Sudbury, un modèle qui serait géré entièrement par et pour les francophones, serait la bonne solution. M<sup>me</sup> Bourgeois parlait avant, puis on regarde le succès du Collège La Cité. On regarde le succès des institutions, des conseils scolaires gérés par et pour les francophones. Quand les francophones ont le contrôle de leurs institutions, on prend les bonnes

décisions, on met en place les bonnes solutions pour notre communauté, et on le fait de façon très responsable. Les institutions francophones sont bien gérées en Ontario.

Il y a aussi l'opportunité d'aller chercher du financement du gouvernement fédéral. Le gouvernement fédéral veut aider la création de ce réseau, aider au financement de l'Université de Sudbury. Il y a une demande qui a été déposée. On veut voir le gouvernement de l'Ontario soumettre cette demande au gouvernement fédéral.

L'Université de Sudbury est prête. Depuis le 12 mars 2021, le conseil des régentes de l'Université de Sudbury a voté à l'unanimité pour revenir à ses sources et se transformer en université par, pour et avec les francophones. Depuis, il y a eu la déconfessionnalisation, et l'université est maintenant entièrement francophone. Il y a eu le dépôt d'un nouveau plan d'affaires, l'embauche d'un nouveau recteur. Puis la transformation de l'Université de Sudbury est appuyée massivement par la communauté francophone.

On veut garder que Laurentian University existe, mais on veut qu'elle soit là pour la programmation de langue anglaise et que l'Université de Sudbury soit forte pour la programmation de langue française. Il pourrait y avoir des partages puis des échanges puis de l'appui, mais ça, ça reste primordial.

Tu m'as aussi demandé de parler du réseau. Nous, on veut que le ministère des Collèges et Universités encourage la formation d'un réseau universitaire franco-ontarien. Depuis 2020, le gouvernement de l'Ontario est en train de mettre des bases solides pour une programmation universitaire de langue française moderne et axée sur les besoins des francophones et du marché de l'emploi. L'Université de l'Ontario français a ouvert ses portes en septembre 2021, et depuis, l'Université de Hearst a obtenu sa charte. Le modèle des universités du Québec pourrait servir d'inspiration au gouvernement de l'Ontario pour faire ce travail, et l'AFO va toujours être là pour appuyer le gouvernement à aussi mettre en place cette nouvelle structure.

**M. Guy Bourgouin:** Merci, Peter. Ma prochaine question—how much time do I have left, Chair?

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Three minutes.

**M. Guy Bourgouin:** Good. Ma prochaine question est pour Lise de La Cité. En passant, bonjour, Lise. Ça m'a fait plaisir, le temps que j'ai visité votre campus. J'étais même émerveillé du beau campus que vous avez. C'était la première fois que je visitais La Cité, puis je sais que dans ma région il y a beaucoup de gens qui vont à La Cité.

Je voudrais vous entendre, parce que vous savez, dans nos régions, on manque de spécialités dans—je pense justement à la situation de la COVID : nos hôpitaux, puis les « PSWs », puis les « nurses », puis—écoute, la liste est longue. Ce que je t'entends dire, c'est que les programmes ne sont pas approuvés assez vite; que vous avez une solution pour répondre aux besoins de la province, mais le gouvernement semble traîner les pieds. C'est beau dire qu'on s'est rencontré. J'ai entendu la députée Ghamari dire que, oui, on vous écoutait, mais écoute, on est dans

une crise. On a besoin de ça, puis vous avez les solutions pour répondre à ça.

Vous m'avez dit qu'il y a d'autres collègues qui ont été approuvés, mais il semble que quand ça vient aux francophones, ça traîne les pieds. J'aimerais vous entendre : pourquoi puis qu'est-ce que—parce que, écoute, on n'est pas tous des experts dans ça. J'aimerais comprendre plus pourquoi ça prend tant de temps à approuver des programmes quand vous avez les solutions pour nous aider à passer à travers la crise qu'on vit dans les régions puis à la grandeur de la province comme c'est là.

**M<sup>me</sup> Lise Bourgeois:** Merci, monsieur Bourgouin. C'est une bonne question : pourquoi ça prend du temps? Je ne peux pas y répondre. Est-ce que ce sont des processus internes? Est-ce que c'est parce qu'à l'interne pour les projets et les programmes francophones, il n'y a pas assez de ressources pour accélérer le processus? Bon. Ce que je sais, c'est que, pour moi, ce n'est pas normal qu'on ne puisse pas rapidement—puis quand je parle d'approbation de programmes, pour moi, il y a une différence entre—parce que l'approbation de programmes, ce sont de nouveaux programmes. Les programmes qui existent, La Cité peut les offrir en région.

D'ailleurs, on a fait cet effort-là, monsieur Bourgouin. On avait eu une demande très, je vais dire, urgente de la région de Hearst, le corridor Hearst à Kapuskasing, qui nous demandait : « Avec le modèle MobiliCité, pourriez-vous rapidement venir combler nos besoins? » Et nous, on peut faire ça de façon—oui, on peut le faire. On a travaillé d'ailleurs avec eux, avec les instances de santé, parce que la condition pour appliquer le modèle MobiliCité : il faut que les partenaires soient parties prenantes du projet. On le planifie ensemble, on le développe ensemble, on utilise les espaces comme laboratoires, et il y a même du personnel qui devient le personnel qui appuie les formations avec nos professeurs.

Donc, oui, on peut le faire rapidement. Ce qu'on a besoin en ce moment-là, c'est du financement pour appuyer le développement du partenariat. Mais—

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Thank you very much for that—

**M<sup>me</sup> Lise Bourgeois:** OK. Merci, monsieur Bourgouin. Bonne question.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Thank you very much.

We will now go to the second round, starting with the independents. Before we start, I do believe we have MPP Fraser.

**Mr. John Fraser:** Hi, Chair. It's John Fraser. I'm here in Ottawa South.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Okay. Thank you. MPP Blais, for the independent.

**M. Stephen Blais:** Merci tout le monde pour votre présence ce matin, Danielle, Lise, Peter et Carol. Peter, tu mentionnais le Mouvement d'implication francophone d'Orléans pendant ta présentation.

For members, the MIFO is an important francophone cultural and recreation facility in Orléans that serves

broader eastern Ontario. It's a daycare. It runs cultural programs and all sorts of important events for the Franco-Ontarian community.

Et donc, Peter, peut-être que tu peux expliquer un peu le rôle que le MIFO joue dans notre communauté, mais aussi il y a une demande pour une subvention, il y a deux ou trois ans, du niveau provincial pour une expansion du MIFO. They've had a request for funding for a major expansion of the MIFO to the province for several years. Et donc, Peter, peut-être que tu peux le décrire un peu—je sais que tu ne représentes pas le MIFO nécessairement—l'importance du MIFO pour notre communauté, pas seulement à Orléans mais la région de l'est de l'Ontario.

**M. Peter Hominuk:** Merci beaucoup pour votre question, monsieur Blais. Le MIFO est un des centres culturels, ou je pense qu'il est le centre culturel, le plus gros dans la province de l'Ontario avec une programmation culturelle pour des gens de tout âge qui est très diversifiée. Il offre aussi des services de garde, des camps, une série de spectacles envoyée à travers la province, en plus d'avoir une infrastructure qui a besoin d'être modernisée.

Présentement, le MIFO est un des plus gros employeurs franco-ontariens et il y a un besoin important de rénover et agrandir ses espaces. Si les fonds gouvernementaux—et ils sont en train d'aller chercher des fonds des trois paliers de gouvernement : du municipal, de la province et du fédéral. Le projet est très bien pensé et le projet pourrait démarrer en automne 2022. Présentement, le MIFO est en attente du démarrage de la deuxième ronde du Programme d'infrastructure Investir dans le Canada.

Notre recommandation est que le ministère de l'Infrastructure de l'Ontario octroie 8,24 millions de dollars au MIFO dans le cadre du Programme d'infrastructure Investir dans le Canada dont nous demandons la mise en oeuvre de la deuxième phase dans le cadre du prochain budget.

Je vais rajouter : en ce moment, le MIFO emploie 300 familles. Puis c'est beaucoup des femmes et des jeunes qui bénéficient de pouvoir travailler au MIFO. C'est un employeur très important qui est en train d'aider des populations vraiment importantes. Il y a plusieurs communautés à travers la province qui aimeraient avoir un MIFO avec les mêmes services, les mêmes programmes à travers la province. C'est vraiment envié.

**M. Stephen Blais:** Merci beaucoup, Peter.

Monsieur le Président, je pense que la députée Collard a une question.

**Mme Lucille Collard:** Yes, thank you. My question for Danielle McDonald: on entend beaucoup parler de l'importance d'avoir des salles de classe qui ne sont pas trop grandes. C'est un problème dans la région d'Ottawa. Presque toutes les écoles francophones sont en surcapacité, et quand ça arrive, malheureusement—

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**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** One minute left.

**Mme Lucille Collard:** —c'est souvent au détriment des bibliothèques des écoles. Je sais que les bibliothèques publiques offrent des ressources très importantes au

niveau électronique ou même des livres physiques. Est-ce que les bibliothèques peuvent être des partenaires pour les écoles? Est-ce que les espaces qui sont sous-occupés dans nos bibliothèques pourraient être utilisés pour aider les écoles?

**Mme Danielle McDonald:** Merci. Oui, on a toujours travaillé avec nos partenaires, avec les écoles. En ce moment, je ne me souviens pas exactement quels sont les partenariats, mais quand on travaille et quand on fait nos programmes, on est en consultation avec les écoles. Alors on a ces ressources-là. Mais ça fait beaucoup de temps que les écoles viennent dans nos bibliothèques avec les enfants et ce sont des programmes que nous faisons ensemble. J'espère que c'est une réponse à votre question.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Thank you very much. That concludes the time.

We will now go to the government.

**Mme Natalia Kusendova:** Bonjour. Est-ce que vous m'entendez?

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** MPP Kusendova.

**Mme Natalia Kusendova:** Merci beaucoup, monsieur le Président. Bon matin à tous : Lise, Carol, Peter et Danielle. Merci pour vos présentations. Je suis ravie d'être avec vous. Merci pour votre partenariat et votre support pendant notre premier mandat comme gouvernement de l'Ontario.

Je voudrais dire à Lise au sujet du baccalauréat des soins infirmiers, je suis une grande fan de ce programme, car je sais à quel point c'est important de former des infirmières francophones. Je sais qu'on travaille dessus, alors « stay put ».

Mais mes questions ce matin vont être adressées à l'AFO. Merci de nous avoir envoyé le mémoire dans le cadre des consultations prébudgétaires et merci aussi d'avoir inclus ma motion sur les soins linguistiquement appropriés. C'est un sujet pour lequel je me passionne beaucoup. C'est important qu'on développe plus de lits francophones en soins de longue durée en Ontario, comme dans ma région de Peel, qui n'a récemment pas de lits—mais je travaille dessus.

Je voudrais juste souligner nos accomplissements. Comme vous le savez, la ministre a tenu sa promesse de moderniser la Loi sur les services en français, qui est restée pratiquement inchangée depuis 30 ans. Alors merci pour votre soutien de cette part, car c'était un grand projet, et on est vraiment ravi d'avoir pu le faire avant que notre premier mandat ne finisse. Aussi, bien sûr, on a tous assisté à l'inauguration de l'Université de l'Ontario français. On est vraiment fier que cette université soit ouverte et que le premier corps d'étudiants soit maintenant inscrit—la première université franco-ontarienne gérée par et pour les francophones.

Je voudrais adresser un peu le sujet de l'ombudsman. Comme vous le savez, c'est un sujet très important pour moi et pour la ministre. On va continuer de travailler avec vous, l'AFO, et les autres intervenants francophones pour s'assurer que l'ombudsman continue d'être bilingue et on va explorer tous les « tools » qu'on peut utiliser à ce sujet. Alors, on veut continuer de travailler avec vous sur ce sujet important.

Je voudrais un peu vous demander, au sujet des entités de planification—comme vous le savez, on a transformé notre livraison de soins de santé en Ontario. La question des entités de planification est une question importante. Le mandat de la ministre Elliott pour les entités est jusqu'à la fin de cette année. Est-ce que vous pourriez me donner plus de suggestions de comment on peut continuer d'utiliser et explorer le rôle des entités de planification pour la livraison de services en français?

**M. Peter Hominuk:** Merci pour votre question, madame Kusendova. Heureux de vous revoir. Je suis content que vous me posiez cette question-là, parce que la structure de planification qui est en place présentement pour les entités a besoin d'être modifiée. Elle a besoin d'être adaptée à la nouvelle réalité du système de santé. On recommande que le gouvernement continue à soutenir une structure de planification forte et alignée avec le système majoritaire pour les services en français. Les entités de planification ont créé une entité provinciale, puis nous, on croit que les mandats des entités dans les régions doivent être alignés avec les territoires de Santé Ontario.

Il faudrait aussi étendre le mandat des entités de planification à d'autres secteurs qui sont quand même importants pour la francophonie, comme les soins de longue durée, comme les bureaux de santé publique et les services sociaux. On pense que ça donnerait un meilleur aperçu de l'ensemble du système de santé, des services sociaux qui sont nécessaires pour les francophones et ça pourrait aider le gouvernement à mieux comprendre comment bien desservir puis mieux desservir les francophones dans leur langue.

**M<sup>me</sup> Natalia Kusendova:** OK, merci beaucoup. Au sujet des soins de longue durée, comme vous le savez, maintenant la désignation des lits francophones, ce sont des désignations volontaires que les fournisseurs de soins de longue durée prennent volontairement pour faire ces désignations. Comment est-ce que le gouvernement peut mieux soutenir les fournisseurs anglophones qui, peut-être, veulent désigner une unité ou quelques lits dans leur bâtiment de soins de longue durée anglophone, mais pour s'assurer que la population minoritaire francophone, comme dans la région de Peel, a accès aux lits francophones? Comment le gouvernement peut-il mieux soutenir ces fournisseurs anglophones?

**M. Peter Hominuk:** Je pense que la première façon, ça serait que les ministères de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée mettent en oeuvre les recommandations de la commission qui touchent les foyers de soins de longue durée.

En ce moment—je l'ai dit avant—il y a trop peu de lits de soins de longue durée francophones qui sont disponibles dans la province de l'Ontario. Il y a un lit pour chaque 3 432 Franco-Torontois. À l'échelle de la province, c'est un lit pour chaque 3 400 personnes. C'est beaucoup moins élevé que la moyenne de la population générale. C'est 20 fois moins élevé. L'AFO souligne les investissements du gouvernement à offrir 700 lits francophones supplémentaires.

Puis quand on revient sur les recommandations de la commission, il y avait de concevoir et mettre en oeuvre

une stratégie provinciale qui vise à accroître les services de soins de longue durée en français et à augmenter le nombre de lits dont l'occupante ou l'occupant peut être servi en français, en accordant la priorité aux désignations en vertu de la Loi sur les services en français et aux désignations culturelles en vertu de l'article 173 du règlement de l'Ontario 79/10. On veut adopter une définition claire de lits adoptés par des francophones, parce que ça exclut les foyers de soins de longue durée, qui n'ont pas démontré leur capacité à fournir des services en français.

Les efforts de recrutement du ministère des Soins de longue durée des titulaires de permis de la direction des foyers des soins de longue durée devraient être ciblés afin d'attirer et de retenir—

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** One minute left.

**M. Peter Hominuk:** —du personnel infirmier auxiliaire autorisé, du personnel infirmier autorisé, du personnel infirmier praticien et des préposées et des préposés aux services de soutien à la personne francophones.

La dernière recommandation, c'était de fournir un soutien et des incitatifs supplémentaires aux organismes donnant la priorité aux soins adaptés à la culture et à la langue. Les incitatifs supplémentaires, c'est au gouvernement [*inaudible*]. On aurait des suggestions. Probablement, ça va demander des investissements puis des incitatifs. Ça serait au gouvernement de décider c'est quoi les meilleurs incitatifs.

**M<sup>me</sup> Natalia Kusendova:** Alors, on fait déjà beaucoup de différents projets pour former une plus grande main-d'oeuvre bilingue ou francophone avec nos partenaires comme La Cité et d'autres. Mais une chose qu'on explore maintenant c'est d'avoir un fonds pour les services de traduction pour les maisons de soins de longue durée—

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** That concludes the time.

We'll now go to the official opposition. MPP Harden.

**M. Joel Harden:** Bonjour, tout le monde. Merci à tous mes amis d'Ottawa pour être ici. C'est excellent de voir les voix et les images des amis d'Ottawa.

Donc, je vais commencer avec une question pour mes amis de l'AFO. Bonjour, Peter et Carol. Peter, vous avez parlé déjà du fait que c'est important pour le gouvernement d'Ontario de savoir que les services publics pour les francophones sont tellement importants, et l'accès est important.

Donc, j'ai un dossier ici dans le quartier important et j'aimerais, si c'est possible, pouvoir commenter sur ce dossier-là. C'est sur les questions de l'école Louise-Arbour. C'est absolument important. C'est l'éducation élémentaire centrale d'Ottawa. On a eu déjà une annonce en 2017 que le gouvernement de l'Ontario continuerait avec une nouvelle école située dans le nouveau Village Gladstone. Mais ici, on a eu l'annonce récente qu'il n'y a pas de fonds. Il n'y a pas de fonds maintenant pour une nouvelle école au centre-ville d'Ottawa pour les écoles élémentaires, et le bâtiment qu'on a déjà, Louise-Arbour, est plein—c'est presque plein. Il y a 144 personnes et

étudiants dans ce bâtiment-là, et il est tellement, tellement vieux, ce bâtiment.

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Donc, Peter, Carol, avez-vous des commentaires sur ce dossier-là? Parce que c'est un dossier chaud ici.

**M. Peter Hominuk:** Oui, merci pour votre question. M. Jolin m'indique qu'il aimerait répondre à celle-là. On pourrait peut-être ouvrir son micro?

**M. Carol Jolin:** Oui, merci. Bonjour tout le monde. Heureux d'être avec vous, mais pas de ne pas pouvoir parler pendant aussi longtemps que je voudrais. Maintenant, la question de l'école Louise-Arbour est extrêmement importante pour le conseil scolaire public. Ça fait déjà un bon moment qu'ils ont approché le gouvernement pour avoir des fonds pour se retrouver dans une vraie école, parce qu'ils sont dans des locaux loués, comme c'est là, des locaux qui ne sont pas adaptés et qui ne répondent pas aux besoins, parce que, là, on est rendu avec des portatives, si je ne me trompe pas. Donc, dans ce sens-là, le conseil scolaire, c'est leur priorité principale depuis quelques années, et puis on a accordé une autre école qui était leur quatrième priorité.

Donc, ce qui est important c'est que le gouvernement réalise que cette priorité-là, c'est vraiment la plus importante pour le conseil scolaire et qu'on prenne les devants pour s'assurer qu'il a une construction d'une nouvelle école pour ce conseil scolaire, pour les élèves, pour les parents qui attendent ça depuis plusieurs années. On ne peut pas continuer à fonctionner de cette façon-là dans des locaux qui sont inadéquats, qui doivent être constamment rénovés—et on est obligé d'investir de façon importante en rénovation, parce que je sais que le conseil scolaire a déjà investi plus de 800 000 \$ en rénovations simplement pour pouvoir vivre dans des locaux à moitié, je dirais, respectables. Donc, ça, c'est totalement inacceptable. Il faut que le gouvernement prenne les devants et s'assure que cette priorité-là du conseil scolaire public devienne une priorité du gouvernement et qu'on réponde aux besoins des parents et des élèves dans cette section.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Merci, monsieur Jolin. I will just mention this, also—in English, just so my colleagues who are more English speakers can appreciate the gravity of the matter. We had already had an announcement in 2017 of a new school in the French public board in the Little Italy section of Ottawa Centre. It was extremely popular.

On the 19th of December, the Minister of Education received an urgent letter from the French public school board, from their president, Jacinthe Marcil. They have received more recently, as of yesterday, a communication from the parent council for Louise-Arbour school. The parents are concerned about the safety of their children in the school, given how old this building is, its lack of effective ventilation. There is no elevator in this building for students with disabilities. It's a major, major problem.

So I flag, in good faith, collegially, to my friends in government today, Louise-Arbour school. CEPEO really needs a response. We need a response to this. It is a critical issue. I believe, as the school board has raised, there is a

section 23 charter right to access to education in French. We do not want to deal with this matter legally, with lawyers; we want to deal with this matter collegially, with good public policy, to continue rebuilding the school.

Chair, I am going to pass the remainder of my time to Mr. Bourgouin.

**M. Guy Bourgouin:** Merci à mon collègue Joel, and thank you, Chair. Ma question est pour Peter. Écoute, Peter, je sais que tu as mentionné le MIFO, qui est très important. C'est assez extraordinaire que la communauté franco-ontarienne ait ramassé ces fonds, ait fait sa part. Mais on voit que c'est le gouvernement qui semble traîner les pieds. S'il y a de quoi que le gouvernement devrait faire—puis l'importance que le gouvernement délivre sur ce programme-là, délivre sur leur côté monétaire, puis comment ça l'affecte : j'aimerais t'entendre encore plus là-dessus.

**M. Peter Hominuk:** Merci, monsieur Bourgouin. Je veux rajouter un peu d'information à ce que j'ai dit avant, parce que j'ai parlé du financement municipal, provincial et fédéral, mais j'aimerais donner des chiffres, parce que la communauté a aussi prélevé des fonds elle-même pour ce beau projet. Il y a eu des dons privés de 1,14 million de dollars—un chiffre quand même impressionnant à prélever dans une communauté. La ville d'Ottawa a un engagement de 1,22 million de dollars. La demande au fédéral soit de 28,71 millions de dollars, et la demande à la province soit de 8,24 millions de dollars. Donc, mettant ces fonds-là ensemble, on va être capable de bâtir un beau projet.

Et je réitère, le projet est fait de façon très responsable. On veut que ça soit un projet qui est carboneutre, qui va être bâti pour l'avenir et qui va donner les espaces nécessaires à la communauté francophone d'Orléans à vivre, à s'épanouir en français et avoir un lieu de rassemblement, ce qui est tellement important pour les diverses communautés qui sont desservies par le MIFO.

**M. Guy Bourgouin:** Merci. Puis, Lise, je sais que tu as été coupée. Vite fait, j'aimerais te donner l'opportunité—

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** One minute left.

**M. Guy Bourgouin:** —de finir sur tes points.

**M<sup>me</sup> Lise Bourgeois:** Merci, monsieur Bourgouin. Je veux mentionner que la rapidité à laquelle on peut offrir les programmes, je pense que c'est ça qui est maintenant la clé du succès, et encore plus pour les francophones, parce qu'on sait que si on ne l'offre pas à temps, au bon moment—alors, tu sais, le « just in time, just enough ». Il est très important pour les francophones. Sinon, les étudiants francophones vont choisir des organisations qui peuvent l'offrir plus vite que nous à cause de majorité.

Donc, mon point était que pour les francophones, on ne peut pas avoir la même recette que pour les anglophones. Et c'est sans doute ça qui nous a permis, par exemple, d'offrir rapidement des programmes en « PSW ».

So we need to have rapid access for francophones; it has to be a quick process. I'm not saying not a quality process. Quality does not mean—

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Thank you very much. That does conclude the time for this panel. We want

to thank the panel for all being here and making presentations and helping to move this project along.

We do want to remind everyone, all the presenters, that the deadline for a written submission is 7 p.m. on Wednesday, January 26, 2022. This makes room for all the things that I had to cut the answers off on. You can put them all on paper and you can send them in as written submissions, and they will be in the record the same so that people can read it. I apologize to those I've cut off, but that's the only way we can try and keep on time. Thank you all again for presenting.

CHAMPLAIN REGION  
FAMILY COUNCIL NETWORK  
CANADIAN LIVE MUSIC ASSOCIATION  
OTTAWA REAL ESTATE BOARD

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** We now will go to the next panel. The first presenter will be from the Champlain Region Family Council Network: Grace Welch, if she wants to come forward.

I will remind you that we have seven minutes for each presentation. I will give a reminder near the end, at one minute, and then we will cut it off exactly at seven and a half minutes, and four and a half minutes for the independents.

With that, we'll ask Grace Welch to come forward.

We also remind anyone who is speaking to make sure they introduce themselves and their office before they speak. Thank you.

**Ms. Grace Welch:** Great. Good morning. I'm Grace Welch, co-chair of the Champlain Region Family Council Network and chair of our advocacy committee. Jane Coyle and I will be co-presenting on behalf of the network, and we'd like to thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today about the issues and concerns facing long-term care, both in our region and across the province.

I've been an essential caregiver and volunteer in long-term care since 2008 and have been involved in advocating for improvements in the sector since 2012. I was also a member of the advisory panel for the 2020 ministry staffing study.

Jane joined our executive in 2020. She was an essential caregiver for her mother, who was a resident in one of the region's long-term-care homes that was hit hard by COVID during the first wave. She is also the co-chair of the Almonte Country Haven family council.

Our network is a volunteer group that supports the family councils in the 60 long-term-care homes in the Champlain region. We meet regularly with the region's family councils and other family council networks from across the province. If you'd like to learn more about our work, I invite you to visit our website. The link is at the top and bottom of our written submission, which I hope you've had a chance to look at—or it should have been sent to you by now.

As the voice for concerned families, we bring issues forward to all levels of government with the goal of

improving the quality of life and quality of care for residents in long-term care. We have prepared submissions and presentations for this very committee every year since 2015. Sadly, we're repeating many of the recommendations we made when we first appeared before you seven years ago.

**1010**

Advocates for quality care in long-term care know that the ravages of the pandemic in long-term care can be traced directly back to long-standing systemic issues: chronic understaffing, poor compensation and working conditions for front-line staff, the need for more beds and the need to redevelop older homes, ineffective inspection processes, over-documentation at the expense of care, and a climate of for-profit.

The pandemic, sadly, continues to demonstrate that as a society we have failed the nearly 78,000 residents in long-term care and their families. Long-term care has become a place to be feared. Very few people see long-term care as a positive option when they can no longer be safely supported at home and need 24-hour medically supervised care.

We are asking today that long-term care be fundamentally transformed from an institutional, task-oriented model to one that puts the needs and preferences of residents at the focus of care, that is, person- or resident-centred care.

To quote from the Ministry of Long-Term Care staffing study in 2020, we need to make long-term care “a better place to live, and a better place to work.”

I'm turning it over to Jane to continue the presentation, so if she could be unmuted, please.

**Ms. Jane Coyle:** There have been significant investments in long-term care since the pandemic began, but there remain many challenges, and critical to the success of these investments is addressing staffing challenges. Chronic understaffing is the number one concern we hear from families, and staffing shortages have a direct negative impact on residents' quality of life and quality of care. Residents are suffering daily and having their rights infringed upon due to insufficient staffing levels. Staff are overwhelmed, underpaid, undervalued and are leaving the long-term-care sector. Even before the pandemic, most homes were short-staffed. How can the system be expected to function safely on a day-to-day basis with chronic understaffing, let alone during a crisis? Residents can't wait until 2024-25 to receive the four hours of care, which means recruitment and retention issues must be urgently addressed.

The government announced subsidies to attract new workers, but we're hearing disturbing stories about PSW students in private colleges not being treated fairly, insufficient staff to mentor for clinical placements or students leaving prior to employment due to working conditions or the work just not being a good fit. This investment in training PSWs and nurses will be wasted unless the government gives priority to developing a robust human health resource plan that focuses on recruiting the right people and includes plans for retention

that improve working conditions and compensation, not only for today but for the needs of homes to be constructed in the next two to five years.

The culture of long-term care must be changed to one that focuses on person-centred care, one that fosters supportive relationships between staff, residents and their families. Person-centred care also empowers staff and offers job satisfaction. But this type of care is difficult to provide, again, without adequate staffing levels.

Building design also has to change to support person-centred care. We call them “long-term-care homes,” but they’re nothing like homes, and long-term-care homes continue to be built as large hospital-like institutions. We recommend current building standards be revised to create smaller, home-like environments for residents that promote improved comfort, privacy, ventilation, temperature control and infection control.

We welcome the improved inspection enforcement process, but we want to see it balanced with coaching, sharing of information and promoting best practices across homes to promote quality-improvement initiatives and consistency of best practices.

As the regulations for the new long-term care act are revised, we expect to see a regulatory framework that emphasizes quality in care over unnecessary reporting.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** One minute left.

**Ms. Jane Coyle:** We’re pleased that the role of essential caregivers has been recognized as essential to the emotional and physical well-being of residents. As long-term care is transformed, residents, families and caregivers need to be included in the decision-making. They are the eyes and ears on the ground.

Grace?

**Ms. Grace Welch:** [*Inaudible*] long-term care reform and transformation has already been provided by many, many reports on long-term care: most recently, the COVID-19 commission report and the 2020 staffing studies. The commission recommendations represent the opinions of residents, families, staff and experts on how long-term care can be rebuilt on a foundation of compassion, dignity and respect for both the residents and all those who provide their care.

The Premier has said long-term care must be fixed. We can’t wait any longer. We owe it to the nearly 4,000 frail seniors in long-term care who lost their lives to COVID, to the existing residents and their families, and to the 100,000 staff who provide that care to create a long-term-care system that would make the people of Ontario proud.

Thank you for your time and we look forward to your questions.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Thank you very much for the presentation. Jane, if we could ask you to introduce yourself and your title for the record to make sure we have it properly in Hansard.

**Ms. Jane Coyle:** Yes, absolutely. My name is Jane Coyle and I am a member of the Champlain Region Family Council Network.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Thank you very much.

Our next presenter would be from the Canadian Live Music Association: Erin Benjamin, president and chief executive officer. I ask them to come forward.

**Ms. Erin Benjamin:** Good morning, everyone. I very much appreciate the opportunity to be here to speak to you today. On behalf of Canada’s live music industry, we would like to thank both the government and the public service for your hard work over the last two years, and most recently for the small business grant and other support programs, with a special thank you to Minister Lisa MacLeod and her team for their hands-on, tireless efforts.

My name is Erin Benjamin. I am the president and CEO of the Canadian Live Music Association. We represent both for- and non-profit small, medium and large organizations, venues, concert promoters, festivals, clubs, performing arts centres, talent agencies, suppliers of goods and services, and many other stakeholders whose work brings exponential economic, social and cultural benefit to the province of Ontario.

The last 22 months have meant different things to different industries. To us, it has meant the erosion of what is now a tremendously fragile cultural infrastructure, alongside countless obstacles such as the pandemic-long insurance crisis, labour shortages, the substantial accumulation of debt, liquidity issues, an alarming consumer confidence challenge and, above all, what has become chronic uncertainty. This moment in the pandemic is our hardest yet.

I’m here today with recommendations for both the short- and long-term future, which we know can only get brighter, though there can be no avoiding the true reality that, for us, recovery needs to come first and hopefully soon, at which point our live music industry, formerly contributing upwards of \$3 billion to Canada’s GDP and creating 72,000 jobs, will be able to provide the kind of leg-up for Ontario that only thrilling live concerts and festivals and major events can bring. Economically, socially and culturally, live music activity is a strategic must-have for Ontario’s recovery. By acting on our recommendations, you can help to ensure not just our survival but our ability to help lead Ontario’s revival.

Our first recommendation: We’re asking the government to take action—immediate action—on commercial insurance. Faced with disproportionately challenging market conditions, live music venues and many others across hard-hit sectors continue to struggle to find appropriate commercial insurance coverage. Although rates had been rising pre-COVID, venues have been confronted with exorbitant increases in quoted premium rates and deductibles. Even those with no recent claims whatsoever against their policies have been unable to ensure commercial liability coverage at any cost. The threat of unaffordable or unobtainable insurance may force even more venues out of business. Those venues are at the heart of Ontario’s live music ecosystem and a hallmark of our provincial cultural identity.

Ontario has historically been blessed with a vibrant live music scene, with hundreds of bricks-and-mortar venues



featuring live music as a primary element of their business. In a 2020 study, we set out to measure the impact of these spaces and found that Toronto's venues, as an example, were generating over \$850 million in annual GDP contributions and providing the equivalent of 10,500 full-time jobs. Today, they face a very uncertain future.

Members of the committee, I can tell you that rounding the corner into year three on this, we still haven't managed to move the needle despite all the efforts to find viable solutions with industry and government. It is among the greatest of ironies that live music businesses may ultimately fail not because of COVID but because of the price of insurance. How can this be right? We're asking you to do whatever you can to help rectify this, including, if necessary, subsidizing commercial premiums until fairness and reason can be restored.

**1020**

Our next recommendation: resourcing for recovery. In addition to recommendations you'll receive from colleagues regarding increases to the Ontario Arts Council, which we also support, we're asking you to increase investment to the Ontario Music Investment Fund and the Reconnect program and support artists directly through Canada's leading music industry charity, the Unison fund.

The Ontario Music Investment Fund, administered by Ontario Creates, is a vital component of business development with demonstrated impact and, in a post-COVID world, will be urgently needed to help businesses begin to reinvest in domestic and international activity. The shows we are losing today due to restrictions are much more likely now to be cancelled than postponed and, as a result, we are seeing a permanent contraction of economic activity.

Meaningful investment into the sector through this program is one of the straightest lines to recovery. Like the Ontario Music Investment Fund, Reconnect is essential to our festival and event ecology. Increases to both of these programs should be made permanent to harness the obvious benefits of hyper-local events, which in turn will stimulate and service regional economies.

Above all, we need to be thinking about our artists, who make all of this concert activity possible. In 2021, Minister MacLeod was able to provide Unison, Canada's leading music industry charity, with \$2 million, enabling them to quickly and directly, with minimal red tape, provide essential financial and mental health supports directly to artists, helping to manage unprecedented demand for their services.

Increasing the Ontario Music Investment Fund and the Reconnect program and supporting Unison will help our industry to more quickly mitigate the blows we continue to suffer to our artists, to infrastructure, to human resources, to domestic talent development and to mental health—challenges that will persist until COVID is truly in the rear-view mirror.

Finally, building business back: We are asking you to expand testing access, work with the federal government to forgive loans and offer grants to manage increased pandemic-related expenses.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** One minute left.

**Ms. Erin Benjamin:** In line with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, we agree that Ontario should expand rapid antigen tests and access to these tests and promote a safe return to business, that government should work with financial institutions and the federal government to forgive loans to businesses most severely impacted by the pandemic and offer additional grants to businesses required to implement things like vaccine certification protocols and other increased pandemic-related expenses.

Action based on these and other recommendations will help to reduce uncertainty, save businesses and ensure all Ontarians can once again—and, hopefully, very soon—have access to the world-class live music spaces, artists and experiences that we have all missed so very, very much. Thank you for your time today.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Thank you very much for the presentation.

We now have the Ottawa Real Estate Board: Teresa Whitmore, chair of the government relations committee; and Dwight Delahunt, director of eastern Ontario Real Estate Association. If you want to come forward and introduce yourselves and where you're at, and then we'll carry on.

**Mr. Dwight Delahunt:** Good morning, Chair and members of the committee. My name is Dwight Delahunt, and I am a realtor at Re/Max Affiliates Realty in Ottawa. I'm also the provincial director for eastern Ontario for the Ontario Real Estate Association. Joining me is Teresa Whitmore, a realtor with Re/Max Hallmark in Ottawa and chair of the Ottawa Real Estate Board's government relations committee. It's our pleasure to be here today to participate in the pre-budget consultations for the 2022 budget.

Ontario has reached a breaking point when it comes to housing affordability. Housing supply is at historic lows, prices continue to increase dramatically, and year after year, the salaries of Ontario families are not keeping up. No matter where you live or want to live, prices are increasing rapidly. What was once a GTHA-centred problem has now permeated every region across the province—in fact, the country—including the city of Ottawa. Here in Ottawa, the average cost of a home in 2021 was almost \$710,000. That is an 18% increase from only a year ago.

The lack of supply in the market and the corresponding price increases are putting the dream of home ownership out of reach for more and more Ottawa families, and we are here today to bring forward ideas that will get more homes onto the market to begin to address the existing affordability crisis.

With that, I'm going to turn this over to Teresa. If you could unmute her, please.

**Ms. Teresa Whitmore:** Good morning. Ontario's largest urban neighbourhoods, including here in Ottawa, Ontario, should implement as-of-right zoning, to allow the seamless and legal development of gentle-density housing, including duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes, without any unnecessary and lengthy case-by-case zoning approvals.

In many neighbourhoods in Ottawa, it is currently illegal to convert a single-family home into a rental property without a zoning bylaw change. Requiring a bylaw change delays projects, costs additional money and brings opposition from local residents. Allowing for the conversion of single-family homes into multi-family rentals without a zoning bylaw change would increase housing supply.

Ontario should set a definition for where as-of-right zoning could best be implemented—close to transit hubs like the Ottawa LRT, for example. Modernizing Ontario's zoning framework should also be accompanied by creating a municipal challenge fund to support timely zoning updates and the reduction of zoning approval times in suburban and rural Ontario.

A recent study conducted by the Fraser Institute found that long and uncertain approval times for building permits, costly fees and local opposition to new homes slow the growth of housing stock. The result is fewer new homes and a growing pool of buyers, leading to rising prices and increasingly inaccessible homes. Ontario should be financially incentivizing municipalities to update zoning, to reduce approval times for new projects and to get more housing supply to the market sooner.

I'll turn it over to you, Dwight.

**Mr. Dwight Delahunt:** As the province continues to look for solutions to the affordability crisis, the Ottawa realtors—and, in fact, Ontario realtors—want to urge the government away from knee-jerk policies that will do more harm than good. We strongly oppose the banning of the traditional offer process in favour of an auction-style offer process. Such a move would make Ontario the only jurisdiction in North America mandating auctions for home sales, and would take away the property rights of Ontario's 3.5-million homeowners to sell their homes how they want.

Proponents of an auction-style offer process argue it would reduce the home prices; however, there is no evidence this would be the case. Auctions are the norm in Australia and New Zealand, where the prospective homebuyers crowd on lawns with a live auctioneer or online and enter into an open bidding process. Far from making the homes more affordable, auctions have in fact driven prices higher in these jurisdictions. According to the Australian Accounting, Business and Finance Journal, the high-energy, almost hysterical, process of trying to overpower and outbid the person standing next to you actually does inflate prices.

The government of Ontario has already made a decision to allow home sellers and buyers to share all the contents of offers to those making an offer on a home, provided all parties consent. Mandating that Ontario homeowners sell their homes through an auction-style process takes away their fundamental right to sell their home through the preferred-offer process, and will drive home prices up even further.

In conclusion, the Ontario housing supply crisis will not fix itself. Ontario needs innovative solutions to tackle the problem, and we hope the 2022 budget will include ideas

to bring more homes on the market and help address affordability. In addition to what we've already discussed, the government should consider increasing the first-time homebuyers' land transfer tax rebate from \$4,000 to \$8,000. The land transfer tax is paid up front—it cannot be rolled into the mortgage—so increasing the rebate would provide immediate relief for those hardest hit by the affordability crisis, those being millennials and new Canadians. Ontario should also consider accelerating the conversion of commercial properties into residential units, to help meet the existing demand for housing.

Thank you, Chair and members of the committee, for your time today, and we're happy to have any questions you may have at this time.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Thank you very much for your presentation, and we'll start the first round of questions with the government. MPP Roberts?

**Mr. Jeremy Roberts:** Thank you so much to all of our presenters this morning—three very different topics, but three incredibly important topics as we look at this year's budget and our ongoing efforts to emerge out of COVID.

I'd like to start today with Teresa and Dwight, with some questions for you. I'm a millennial myself. I'm not fortunate enough to be a homeowner yet, but hoping to be one day in the future, so obviously questions of home affordability are top of mind for me, and certainly for a lot of folks in my generation.

I'm curious to hear a little bit from you. You touched on this a little bit, but are there any interesting policies you're seeing out of other jurisdictions that are helping to tackle the supply problem? There has been a lot written recently about what the Labour government in New Zealand introduced recently to try to boost supply and deal with some of the exclusionary zoning policies that had been happening there. I'm wondering if this is something you could touch on a bit as to any innovative policies that you're seeing making a difference in other jurisdictions on this all-important supply issue that we're dealing with.

1030

**Mr. Dwight Delahunt:** Teresa, do you want that one, or do you want me to take it?

**Ms. Teresa Whitmore:** Go ahead, Dwight. I'll follow up.

**Mr. Dwight Delahunt:** Okay. We are following that through the Ontario Real Estate Association. I wasn't prepared for that particular question today, to be very honest with you. I'll be happy to get back to you with what we have uncovered. Certainly using commercial space that is not being utilized now for residential would open up a lot of space. As you can imagine, there are empty office buildings downtown. There are empty offices everywhere that we don't think, in the long term, are going to be completely filled again, so there are opportunities there, certainly, to create and increase its supply.

Let's be clear on this: supply is the issue. It's supply and demand, and if you have the demand and you don't have the supply, prices are going up.

**Mr. Jeremy Roberts:** For sure. I know there had been some moves taken by our government through the More

Homes, More Choice Act. My understanding is that we've seen some of the housing start numbers going up, even over the past period of time. Obviously, there's still a lot more that needs to be done.

But I'm wondering: In terms of our housing supply action plan, what have you actually seen on the ground in Ottawa? Is this making a difference? Are we seeing some more housing starts in the Ottawa area?

**Mr. Dwight Delahunt:** We are seeing housing starts in the Ottawa area. What we're not seeing are the timelines that we need. If the land is released today, it's three years before a shovel goes into the ground to build a house. By the time the infrastructure is done, by the time the red tape has gone through and you jump through all of the hoops—you do the environmental and you do everything else—it's just taking too long to get those houses out there. For every home we have right now, we have approximately 15 buyers. That's just not sustainable. We've got people who need homes, who need places to live in, and we just don't have enough product.

This isn't something that's happened over the pandemic. This isn't something that's happened over the last three years. This has been building and growing for probably the last 15 years.

The controlled increase in density in the downtown core along the LRT has been part of the problem. We just haven't opened up, and not everybody wants to live 15 floors up in 900 square feet. They are looking for all kinds of housing, but not necessarily apartments, and that's where the focus has been for just a little bit too long now.

**Mr. Jeremy Roberts:** For sure. This is something top of mind. Of course, in my constituency, Ottawa West-Nepean, we're going to have the next phase of LRT coming right into my riding at Algonquin College and Moodie Drive, so it's certainly something top of mind for a lot of my constituents.

Sorry, Teresa, go ahead.

**Ms. Teresa Whitmore:** I was just going to say too, as we talk about cutting some of this red tape, that there are big houses we could be reworking, to make them duplexes, triplexes or fourplexes. There are corner lots where there's land available, but it's the red tape that gets in the way of creating this extra housing shortage we have. If we can cut through the red tape and get these things done—you've got one person living in a great big house. That can be repurposed and create more housing. Instead of having one unit, you end up having four units, or you have three units, but you have multi-units. Like Dwight said, nobody wants to live in a 900-square-foot box.

We need to have a look at this and see what we're doing. Some of these things are archaic, some of these zoning bylaws are archaic, and it's time to make a change to them so that we can create more housing for people just like you, Jeremy, and get you moved into a house as well, and other people.

Like Dwight said, we've got 15 people for one house, and it's a nightmare for people. Everybody thinks, "Oh, it's great being a realtor, because you're making all this money selling these houses." No, you've got 14 people

walking away, including the realtors, not able to find houses. This has got to stop, because we're getting serious buyer fatigue—and seller fatigue as well, quite frankly, because the sellers can't sell their house, because they've got no place to go. Something has to give. Something has to change.

**Mr. Jeremy Roberts:** For sure. I imagine a lot of this feedback is similar to what you provided to the city of Ottawa as they are considering their official plan. Any feedback that you shared with the city that you would like to share with the committee today as well?

**Ms. Teresa Whitmore:** Dwight?

**Mr. Dwight Delahunt:** OREA did not do a presentation to the city of Ottawa. We have a local board there, the Ottawa Real Estate Board, that I believe did a presentation on that.

**Mr. Jeremy Roberts:** Sure, I appreciate that. Certainly, I think a lot of these issues are definitely crossing different jurisdictions between both the municipality and the province. Obviously, we need to see a lot of cross-jurisdictional collaboration.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** One minute.

**Mr. Jeremy Roberts:** Chair, one minute remaining? Just quickly, I'll pivot over to Champlain, if I can, for a moment. Thank you so much, Grace and—I believe it was—Jane for your presentation. I've been actively involved in the long-term-care issue since I got elected. I had the chance to work as a PSW for a day at one of the long-term-care homes in my riding to really get a sense of what it was like on the ground.

One thing I'm curious about is performance standards. We want to make sure that our homes are meeting the quality of care that we would like to see. Just quickly, in the time remaining, is there anything that you guys would like to see added in performance standards that isn't there at present?

**Ms. Grace Welch:** I'll start, and ask Jane to fill in. I think one of the things is that we're not capturing quality-of-life indicators. Certainly, there are some culture-change initiatives, and they're trying to—

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** We'll have to take that one to the next round, because that's the end of the time.

We'll go to the independents. MPP Fraser.

**Mr. John Fraser:** I would like to thank all the presenters for joining us this morning. I'll share my time with my colleague Stephen Blais.

My question is for the Champlain family council's presenters, Grace and Jane. Thank you very much for your advocacy over the years. What I'm interested in talking to you about—you mentioned the long-term care commission and the 85 recommendations that came out of it. It's unfortunate that the government is not reporting back on that. One of the things that came up out of this commission is the use of the word "mission-driven," which is in the legislation that the government just put forward, which is a really nebulous term to be using. I think it's being misused. And what I'm driving at is you also

mentioned your desire to see for-profit care no longer in long-term care. I can't agree with you more.

I would like to tease out a bit with what you briefly mentioned there, because I think one of the challenges around it is the connection between the community and long-term care, and you have some experience in that, being an association with all those family councils.

**Ms. Grace Welch:** Thank you. Jane, did you want to comment? And then I will add a few things.

**Ms. Jane Coyle:** I'm just thinking. I wasn't quite prepared for the "mission-driven" question. Grace, you go ahead. I'll just give this some thought.

**Ms. Grace Welch:** I actually was a little disappointed that that was included in the commission report. I would have liked to have seen stronger language, because I think that opens the door—I sort of know where they're coming from with that statement, because there are good for-profit homes. They're not all bad. So it opens the door—I think I saw a Twitter comment that everybody, all the chains now, will be writing "mission-driven" statements.

Yes, I just think we saw terrible results in the pandemic from the for-profit sector. I mean, 5.2 deaths in for-profit homes compared to 1.4 per 100 in municipal homes, and even in non-profit homes, 2.8 per 100.

I'm quite disappointed that, as the new beds have been awarded, they've been awarded predominantly to the for-profit chains. I was glad to see that the government did provide some initiatives or some help for the non-profits. It's a big issue. I'd like to see it finally addressed and I'm not sure that doing the "mission-driven," that letting that in, is necessarily the right way to go.

Jane, did you want to say anything else on that?

**Mr. John Fraser:** I may have to come back to you in the second round, so maybe Jane can answer in the second round.

1040

I'll let my colleague Mr. Blais—

**Ms. Grace Welch:** Okay, sorry.

**Mr. John Fraser:** Thanks a lot, Grace.

**Ms. Grace Welch:** You're welcome.

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** Thank you, everyone, for your time this morning. Dwight and Teresa, it's great to see you again. MPP Roberts mentioned the potential benefit of stage 2 of the light rail in Ottawa through his riding. Certainly, Teresa, as you know, it's coming to Orléans as well. There are large landowners along the corridor that have not yet participated in the process to evaluate—

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** One minute.

**Mr. Stephen Blais:**—how they can change their land to residential considerations. Choice REIT, the Loblaw's income trust, is one of those. I'm wondering what measures you think the province can take to incentivize those groups to participate in the redevelopment process for their properties, to encourage housing.

**Mr. Dwight Delahunt:** Go ahead, Teresa.

**Ms. Teresa Whitmore:** Actually, I'm not ready for that question this morning. Dwight, do you have more information or input, or should we come back to this with MPP Blais?

**Mr. Dwight Delahunt:** I'd like to come back to you on it and answer the question properly, rather than just taking a blind stab at it.

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** That's perfectly fair. So in terms of the as-of-right zoning, how do you see that rolling out in real life? Do you want the province to order that, or do you want to work with municipalities to implement that at the official plan stage in their program?

**Ms. Teresa Whitmore:** I think—

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** They'll have to get back to you on that one too. The time is up.

I do apologize. I did take them out of order. The opposition should have been first, so we'll turn it now to the opposition. MPP Fife.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Thanks to all the presenters. I'm going to start with the Champlain Region Family Council Network, with Grace and Jane. Today we have 271 COVID outbreaks in long-term-care homes. That's 43% of the homes in Ontario that once again are in outbreak.

We have been hearing for many months now the negative impact of Bill 124, which holds compensation at 1% for three years and does not include support for workers in long-term care, be they PSWs or nurses. You mentioned the importance of valuing the people in long-term care and having a robust human resources strategy. Well, what we have heard from front-line health care workers in this sector—it confirms what you've said to us—is that they feel devalued. They do not feel respected, and the language that the government uses—they call them heroes, but yet hold them at 1% all in, including benefits, which includes mental health supports for those workers.

I wanted to give you a chance to weigh in, so that this government can hear first-hand how devastating it is for those who are in this sector to be so disrespected by a 1% cap, when inflation is at 3% or 4%. Please be really clear on this, because we need to repeal this legislation. Please go ahead.

**Ms. Jane Coyle:** Grace, I can start on that one.

We are hearing all the time—I co-chair the family council network, and so we hold Zoom meetings with families regularly. Through the Champlain Region Family Council Network, we chair meetings and gather information from the chairs, and I'm in conversation with staff who are working in long-term care, and people are devastated. On the ground, people are coming to work, they're doing their jobs, but it is brutal. It is absolutely brutal for them. People are burnt out. People who have had long-standing careers in long-term care are burnt out, and they're leaving the sector. We can't afford to continue to do this.

You're absolutely right: The cap at 1% is not sustainable. It's not reasonable in normal times, let alone what we're seeing right now, what people are having to live through with the pandemic. But it's also the PSWs: The additional pay that they were getting for the pandemic pay is not solid; it's not permanent. That needs to be increased. As Pat Armstrong has said, the conditions of work are the conditions of pay. Is that the phrase, Grace? It's so true.

Grace, do you have anything to add?

**Ms. Grace Welch:** I just think we can't keep applying Band-Aids as the solution. The pandemic pay and the fact that it hasn't been made permanent is a real slap in the face to the front-line workers. Also, it's brought them up. In fact, now you've got a problem where the PSWs are making the same as the RPNs, so they're not very happy with that.

Anything that we can do to show how valued those workers are, rather than just calling them heroes—that bill has to be repealed. We have to make compensation and working conditions—changing them—a priority for the government.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Thank you very much, Grace and Jane. Also, thank you for advocating for a long-term-care-home model which is more community-based and smaller. We have listened to you, and this is reflected in our platform going forward. But we have heard, even on Monday and Tuesday, that homes across the province have beds available in those homes, but they don't have the staff to open the beds. Rainycrest in northern Ontario has 42 beds open right now. There's obviously 20,000 people waiting for long-term care, but you can't open a bed without a nurse, a PSW or a front-line health care worker. So, thank you very much for bringing forward that message to this committee.

I'm going to move over to Erin. Erin, thank you very much for presenting today. Your messaging on the commercial insurance is so strong. When we started this process—which was 20 months ago—this committee did four months of consultations. One of the first questions I asked then-finance minister Rod Phillips was what was he going to do about insurance, commercial insurance, because it is provincially regulated. For 20 months, this government has heard that this is a barrier to, as you point out, rebounding and reviving the industry.

So I really need to ask you, and I really want you to be very clear with this committee: What is the rationale for this government to not address commercial insurance, not to recognize that it is a barrier for businesses to open and recover and rebound? Can you please expand on that? What rationale have you heard from the government to not take action on commercial insurance?

**Ms. Erin Benjamin:** I think that the government, in conversations I've had, have been sort of hoping that the insurance industry would step up a little closer to the problem. We've had many conversations with the IBC, most recently last week, who recognize the issue and are trying to do what they can, I believe, in good faith. I believe that the government hasn't necessarily felt that stepping in is their role. This type of insurance isn't regulated. What we have asked government in our many meetings over the last two years has simply been, at this point, to be a convener, leaning in on the industry a little bit to help them encourage and foster a more comprehensive dialogue.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** One minute left.

**Ms. Erin Benjamin:** But part of it is that it is so intricate and complex, and obviously this was in motion before the pandemic as well, this hard market, as the insurance industry calls it. All I can say is that I think that the problem is so big and so overwhelming and really hitting so

many sectors that perhaps it's been hard to take small bites. But I'm optimistic. Some of our meetings have borne a bit of fruit. It's just been such baby steps at this point and we're really not seeing much of a difference.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Erin, thank you for coming forward today around this issue. I mean, there is action that the government can take on commercial insurance, and I hope that we can agree, but, as you said, the government is hoping that the commercial insurance sector will do the right thing. But hope is not a plan for these businesses that have been denied liability insurance and therefore can't open. So I hope that your optimism carries forward to the government members on this committee and that businesses actually are—

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Thank you very much. That concludes the time.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Thanks very much.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** We will now go to the second round and hopefully get it back in the right order. The first is the government. MPP Yakabuski.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** There we go. I guess I can't unmute myself. But the person who has the big control button, he or she, can, so thank you very much.

Thank you very much to everyone for joining us this morning.

I'm getting some feedback here. I don't think it's me; I don't have any other phone on. Oh, okay, I just hit that "okay" button and things are okay.

**1050**

Thanks again to everyone for joining us this morning. It's a little warmer this morning. I'm sure it was really cold up in Guy Bourgouin's riding yesterday.

First of all, I just want to touch on, with you, Erin Benjamin—and thank you for joining us. Live music is something that touches my heart. I've probably sung several hundred times in a live venue in my almost 19 years as an MPP. I've released two CDs. That's not live, but they were recorded live—ostensibly live. But I do appreciate your issues that you're bringing forward. It's a great opportunity for us to hear them, because we can then take them back. I think this is something that is—

*Interruption.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It goes crazy when somebody sends me a text—that we can take them back to our finance folks, and particularly to Minister MacLeod. I really appreciate the compliments that you paid Minister MacLeod, because she has been absolutely unbelievable on this file throughout the pandemic, recognizing the challenges that an industry like yours faces. So we will definitely be taking those back.

Some of the things that you've had to do to adapt during COVID—did you want to expand on that at all?

**Ms. Erin Benjamin:** Absolutely. First of all, thank you for that. And I have to agree: Minister MacLeod has got hundreds of Erin Benjamins at her every day, so just when I think my job is harder, I'll remember how hard the minister's job is, and I agree to get out of bed to do this important work.

We've seen venues, especially, pivot multiple times now. In the early days, it was immediately to live streaming inside venues with no audience, to try to facilitate some sort of work opportunity for artists and crews. There was a time in the province when even live streaming was restricted and not able to proceed as a result of gathering restrictions. However, I think live streaming has become a useful component, at the very least, to capture and share content and most importantly as a way to continue to flow money to our artists, who have paid a dear, dear price. In fact, I would say that we are very close to losing a generation of artists.

I must say, it's difficult to sit here on behalf of the live music industry with colleagues from the long-term-care community. I really appreciated your words. It's very, very moving to hear that and understand how everyone is in their own corner of our COVID universe, trying to resolve some major issues. I just wanted to thank Grace and Jane for your comments.

Live music venues have moved to expanding patios, takeout food and these kinds of things. But ultimately, we're talking about an ecology, a food chain, of types of organizations and companies that have been exponentially impacted when live music activity has contracted to the extent it has. You can think about the TD Places and the Scotiabank Arenas, and you can think about the Red Bird cafés, as Joel would know, and the Horseshoe Taverns and all of the individual stakeholders in between.

There are many, many types of companies in our food chain who have absolutely not been able to pivot in any way what they do—for example, supply gear or production supplies or what have you—to some of this work. So the restrictions have been incredibly difficult for industry, and that's why we have been, of course, from day one, committed to public health and safety and working with government to the extent we can, hence some of the recommendations we've made. I think that the live music industry in this province is a great resource to the government and the people of Ontario in terms of rebuilding and recovery.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Thank you very much, Erin. On the insurance issue, it's one that bedevils us in many sectors, and I know that our Minister of Finance is continuing to work on that.

To Grace and Jane: Grace, it's nice to see you face to face. We've been working on trying to get a real face-to-face, and with this pandemic, it hasn't panned out. But I do appreciate, in your initial comments—and I certainly understand your stance on Bill 124. I would have been surprised if you didn't have that stance. You're an advocate, and that's what you're here for, and we're here to hear those comments.

But you talked about new beds, building and redevelopment beds and hiring more staff, which we've been absolutely active on, fundamentally reforming the industry. In my riding alone, we have a brand new home in Arnprior, which is a redevelopment that has gone from 60 beds to 96, and will be 132 when the old home is redeveloped as well. So we have done those kinds of

things for homes in my riding alone that are on that schedule. In the 15 years before, there were 611 beds built in Ontario. Even before the pandemic, we made a massive commitment to reforming this sector like never before—nothing since before we first built long-term-care homes in Ontario, which was, by the way, under a PC government as well.

I think that we accept—and the pandemic has laid it out in spades—that there is always more to be done. But would you not agree that the progress we've made in the last few years has been something more than has ever happened in the past, in the commitments that we have made, including the hiring of 4,000 more PSWs, with more to come? And I see the hiring fairs continuing to go on. We are recognizing the challenges ahead of us and doing what we can, in a market where everybody is looking for the same thing. It's not like there's no other jurisdiction looking to do similar actions in this sector.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** One minute left.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I just think that there is really something that we have really moved forward on, so thank you for your comments.

**Ms. Grace Welch:** I actually do not want to seem ungrateful, because we have seen huge investments in long-term care, primarily since the pandemic, and even before that we started to see new homes. But we were talking about systemic issues, and the homes that have been announced—it's still going to take two or three years to get those homes online, so there's still an issue of patients in hospitals waiting for a long-term-care bed. But I do very much appreciate it. I just don't want it to—there are still a lot of issues to address, primarily working conditions for the front-line staff, and compensation, and moving to that person-centred care that really gives quality of life and quality of work for both the residents and the staff. I sometimes feel a little ungrateful, but I think—

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Thank you very much. That does take up all the time.

We now will go to the official opposition. MPP Harden.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Thank you, Chair. Thank you very much.

Hi, again, everybody, this morning. Erin Benjamin, it's so great to see you this morning, and you know why—you know why. It's so great to see everyone, but I was hanging on your every word, and you know why. I want to say for the record that we have lost six music venues in Ottawa: places that are treasured; places where people formed relationships, met friends, started musical careers. Some of the biggest names in the industry have been through some of these clubs we have lost during this pandemic, Erin, and you know this better than me.

I want to read you some lines from something the Premier said on—let me make sure I have the date right—October 26, 2020, when this issue was first being raised about the high price of commercial insurance. The Premier said—and he was talking about the underwriters, I'm assuming—“They're absolutely just refusing to insure people, we don't play that game.... You guys don't get ... all the cream and gravy” to “just slough off everything else

and think we aren't going to insure it." An adjunct for then-finance minister Phillips went on to say, "The minister's message to insurance companies has been clear—we expect you to treat your customers fairly. We will be closely monitoring the situation to ensure companies are adhering to a high standard of conduct... All options are on the table."

Erin, that was October 26, 2020, and we have since lost six music venues in Ottawa. What bedevils me—and I'm not trying to play a partisan game here; I'm just trying to make sure we have a full sense of this. We now have, by way of promotion in Ontario—I'm a New Democrat. This is a Conservative government. We've had a promotion in Ontario in this particular job. The current finance minister comes from the insurance industry. Minister Bethlenfalvy knows the geography of the insurance industry. So help me understand why a billion-dollar industry has not come to you, your organization, with solutions to help keep clubs alive. We are losing them.

You mentioned Red Bird Live, a club hoping to emerge on Bank Street in my neighbourhood in Old Ottawa South, with an entrepreneur, the great Geoff Cass, who was just quoted \$24,000 in commercial insurance for this year. That's triple what Geoff was expecting to pay. So help me understand what has taken this government so long, and give us a possibility of some good news. What have you seen elsewhere? What could Ontario be doing to make this right?

**Ms. Erin Benjamin:** Well, thanks, Joel. I'm not sure I can speak for the government on why it's taking so long to really find some solutions working together. I think that the reality for the underwriters is that they think there's no money to be made. We have been mischaracterized, live music venues, and mistaken for—when I talked about no claims, we're misunderstood as an industry, and when we try to educate, there's no interest in that. So underwriters just recognized there wasn't enough money to be made, and therefore, ultimately, when that happens, often enough you get this hard market situation.

1100

I can only surmise that there's a hesitancy to step in to potentially regulate. I hope that with our case and some of the examples we've used, especially with the Bronson Centre here in Ottawa, another example of a situation that's very untenable, government will work more closely with especially the insurance sector. We have brokers who are very much champions of live music, live entertainment, who help us understand some of the complex nuance here and have said that—we keep being very optimistic that someone will come and close the gap. There is a great business opportunity here. That's something that we don't understand, why that gap hasn't closed. We have a lot of great operators, what we call good actors in our industry, who are of course running incredibly excellent businesses based on global best practices.

Speaking globally, this is definitely an issue around the world. We're hearing things like Lloyd's of London may be coming back into the Canadian market, which might solve some issues. Obviously, there was an exodus of

some major underwriters that put this in motion in the first place.

The reason this matters, to folks who don't understand the live music ecology, is because small venues especially—we have something called the venue ladder in the music industry, and they grow the careers of artists. They're very impactful for audience development. They bring people into neighbourhoods and towns and cities. Then you have this whole connective tissue that live music venues represent. They're essential to the development of artists you know and love who come from this country. That's why we need to do everything we can, in conversation with government and all of you, to resolve some of these major issues that have been exacerbated exponentially by the pandemic.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Well, thank you so much for all of that. To all of my government friends in this committee who just heard that: This industry is accountable to the province of Ontario, and we have a minister in charge who comes from the industry, so please do whatever you can to pull some levers, to make sure we don't lose more entrepreneurs, more clubs like Geoff Cass's Red Bird Live and all of the live music industry, which desperately wants to have a role in our lives—and it should, and must.

I want to move on. Chair, how much time do I have left?

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Two and a quarter minutes.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Okay. I'll try to be succinct.

Grace and Jane, back to you: Thank you for all your work. We've heard talk in this committee already about the need to have accelerated training for PSWs, but there has been an issue in particular with whether or not those students will have paid work placements. Many of the students who have enrolled here in Ottawa at Willis College are single moms. They were told they would have paid work placements, and there has been a discrepancy here.

I'm wondering if you could weigh in about whether we can get accelerated folks into this field and whether we can make sure that not only the tuition and books are paid but that when they're getting that practical experience, they're not just free labour for some of the big chains in the sector. Those largely working women deserve to have paid work placements, particularly if that's what has been advertised. Your thoughts on that?

**Ms. Grace Welch:** Jane, did you want to—

**Ms. Jane Coyle:** Absolutely. If those are the conditions that were set up for the placements, that they are paid, they should be paid for the work that they're doing. That's just basic entitlement. That just basically has to happen.

When we're looking at recruitment of people into these jobs, we need to be recruiting the right people, people who have passion for the type of work that PSWs do.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** One minute left.

**Ms. Jane Coyle:** Grace, did you want to add something before the time goes?

**Ms. Grace Welch:** I'll just say it's horrible to hear those stories, because, as Jane says, we need good people,

and a lot of those people who have applied to those schools did it in good faith, so they should be paid for their placements. Especially now, some of them are having to go into homes in outbreak and work with other infected people, so we have to take care of them.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** That's right.

Well, thank you, Grace. Thank you, Jane. I'll give you some good news: I have a meeting upcoming with Minister Dunlop, who, as I understand, is looking at this and wants to make it right. But what we're hearing from students is that this is a bigger cohort of people than we realized. We have to make sure, if folks are being incentivized to get into this field, as you both said, that they are safe and that they are compensated for the work they do, particularly at this moment, in a very dangerous context. Every one of these students I have talked to, the working women I've spoken to, wants to serve. It's like answering a call for service—

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Thank you very much. That concludes the time.

Now we'll go to the independents. MPP Collard.

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** To the Ottawa Real Estate Board: Affordable housing has become a top priority, and I think you've talked about opening zoning bylaws as a potential solution to build more housing. It makes me wonder why that hasn't happened yet. The municipalities haven't changed their bylaws, the government is not doing anything, so there has to be some kind of opposition out there to that. What is your knowledge about some of the valid opposition to opening bylaws that the government should be addressing?

**Ms. Teresa Whitmore:** Dwight?

**Mr. Dwight Delahunt:** Go ahead, Teresa.

**Ms. Teresa Whitmore:** It's a red tape issue, because what we're trying to do is have this as-of-right position come into play so that people who own the property, if they have a large property, can change that property designation to be a triplex, a duplex, a fourplex to provide extra housing units, because we have such a housing shortage.

We seem to have this red tape issue with the city. I have spoken with MPP Blais about this as well, like "Could the province put some pressure on the city to get this done?" The real estate board certainly has talked to the city about it, but we don't seem really to be getting anywhere with it. I don't know whether the Ontario Real Estate Association has done a presentation to the province about this or not.

Dwight, do you have any input for that?

**Mr. Dwight Delahunt:** I don't have anything from OREA right now. I can get back to the committee on that, if they like.

I know that Minneapolis, for example, has permitted as-of-right zoning across municipalities as a blanket approval, and that has certainly helped them with some of their housing challenge. This housing availability challenge isn't unique to Ottawa or Ontario or even Canada; this is going on all over the place. It has become a major issue.

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** Okay.

John, do you have a question? Okay. I'll pass it over to MPP Fraser for some time.

**Mr. John Fraser:** Great. Thanks very much, Lucille.

Before I get started, I want to correct my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke: There were 30,000 beds built between 2003 and 2018, roughly split between new beds and redeveloped beds, not 617 as he said. That's not what's important right now.

What I do want to get back to with the Champlain family council—if Jane could have an opportunity to comment on this—is actually how we deliver that care in our communities. We've talked a bit about "mission-driven." We talked about the need for a not-for-profit governance. So I don't know, Jane, if you want to add anything to that.

**Ms. Jane Coyle:** How we deliver the care?

**Mr. John Fraser:** Yes.

**Ms. Jane Coyle:** It would be through a person-centred care model, and in order to do that, it really, again, comes back to staffing. At the heart of all the issues is staffing. We spoke about having the right people.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** One minute left.

**Ms. Jane Coyle:** What that means is recruiting the right people to the positions: people who have that compassion, people who have that consistency of education across. So, a PSW learning the skills—I'm getting to consistency and quality of education. Are the private colleges delivering the same program as the college program PSW courses would be offering? We don't know. We don't think so. Certainly, my own personal experience in long-term care has been that there's a vast array of how people are delivering service at all levels. So I think that would be fairly key.

Grace, did you have anything to add to that?

**Ms. Grace Welch:** I think you've covered it. Thank you.

**Ms. Jane Coyle:** Okay.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Thank you very much. That does conclude the time, so we'll have to put the rest off.

That brings me to the next point to mention: the reminder that the deadline for written submissions is 7 p.m. on Wednesday, January 26. The answer to that question and all those other questions that were cut off can be sent to us, and we will be able to use them in formulating our report. I want to thank again all the delegations that presented for this morning—a great job, and I'm sure it will be quite helpful to us.

That concludes our business for today, and I want to thank again all the presenters. Again, a reminder to the committee that the deadline for written submissions is 7 p.m. on Wednesday, January 26. The committee is now adjourned until 9 a.m. on Tuesday, January 18, 2022, when we will continue with pre-budget consultations 2022 for the eastern region of Ontario.

*The committee adjourned at 1111.*









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