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**Official Report
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(Hansard)**

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des débats
(Hansard)**

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**Standing Committee
on the Interior**

Building More Mines
Act, 2023

1st Session
43rd Parliament

Wednesday 5 April 2023

**Comité permanent
des affaires intérieures**

Loi de 2023 visant
l'aménagement
de davantage de mines

1^{re} session
43^e législature

Mercredi 5 avril 2023

Chair: Aris Babikian
Clerk: Thushitha Kobikrishna

Président : Aris Babikian
Greffière : Thushitha Kobikrishna

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE INTERIOR

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES AFFAIRES INTÉRIEURES

Wednesday 5 April 2023

Mercredi 5 avril 2023

The committee met at 1000 in Cedar Meadows Resort and Spa, Timmins.

BUILDING MORE MINES ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 VISANT L'AMÉNAGEMENT DE DAVANTAGE DE MINES

Consideration of the following bill:

Bill 71, An Act to amend the Mining Act / Projet de loi 71, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les mines.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): Good morning, everyone. Welcome to Timmins, Ontario. I call this meeting of the Standing Committee on the Interior to order. We are meeting today to begin public hearings on Bill 71, An Act to amend the Mining Act.

I want to remind members and witnesses that broadcasting will control your microphones, so you don't need to control your microphones. Broadcasting will take care of that for you.

I'd also like to ask the committee if there is agreement to allow the deputy minister to attend in person with the minister for this meeting. No objections? Okay. Deputy Minister, you're welcome to join the minister.

Finally, are there any questions before we begin?

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER AND RESPONSES

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): I'll now call on the Honourable George Pirie, Minister of Mines, as our first witness this morning. Minister, you will have up to 20 minutes for your presentation, followed by 40 minutes of questions from members of the committee. The questions will be divided into two rounds of 7.5 minutes for government members, two rounds of 7.5 minutes for the official opposition members and two rounds of five minutes for the independent members of the committee as a group.

Minister, the floor is yours. Please begin.

Hon. George Pirie: Good morning, everyone. Aanii, wâciye, bonjour. I am George Pirie, Minister of Mines for Ontario and MPP for the great riding of Timmins. I want to acknowledge that these lands we are sitting on today are in the Treaty 9 territory. Treaty 9 was made between 1905 and 1906 on lands traditionally used by the Anishinaabe and Omushkegowuk Cree people. I'd like to pay special

recognition to the community of the Mattagami First Nation, as well as surrounding Treaty 9 communities: Flying Post First Nation, Matachewan First Nation, Apitipi Anicinapek Nation, Taykwa Tagamou Nation, as well as the Métis people of the area. I wish to recognize the long history of the First Nations and Métis peoples in Ontario and show them respect today.

It's a great honour for me to present before the committee on the interior with important details about our government's proposed Building More Mines Act. And to be here in Timmins is very special for me.

It's no secret that the last several years have been challenging ones for Ontario, for Canada and for the global economy. Yet Ontario's mining sector has weathered these challenges and continues to make significant contributions to the provincial economy. Ontario is a world-class mining jurisdiction and is among the top 10 jurisdictions in the world for mineral exploration spending. The industry contributes nearly \$13 billion annually to Ontario's GDP and provides 28,000 direct and 47,000 indirect jobs associated with mineral processing and mining supplies and services.

Ontario's mining sector has the highest proportion of Indigenous workers of all the industries in the province. Indigenous employment accounts for 11% of direct mining jobs in Ontario. We know that mining is, and will continue to be, a key driver of growth and prosperity for Ontario, especially in northern and Indigenous communities.

But even with these impressive statistics, we can and must do better. We find ourselves at a turning point in the global economy. The war in Ukraine and other socio-political factors have exposed weakness in the global supply chains for natural resources such as critical minerals. Ontario must act now, Chair, because the demand for critical minerals needed in strategic sectors such as electric vehicles, telecommunications, national defence and battery storage is growing exponentially. Unlocking northern Ontario's critical minerals is the key to moving our economy forward.

Our allies are looking for a stable supplier of responsibly sourced critical minerals from a jurisdiction with the highest standards. Ontario is that supplier. In fact, during President Biden's recent visit to Canada, he emphasized the importance of the Canada-United States partnership with respect to critical minerals. During his speech to Parliament, he stated, "I believe we have an incredible opportunity to work together so Canada and the United States can source and supply here in North America everything

we need for reliable and resilient supply chains ... our shared prosperity is deeply connected to our shared security.”

Ontario’s vast mineral wealth, skilled workforce and expertise makes us ready to lead the critical minerals and electric vehicle manufacturing revolution.

Our government is also steadfast in our commitment to ensuring Indigenous communities participate and benefit from the critical minerals opportunities we have in this province. There are eight resource revenue-sharing agreements today, representing 40 First Nations communities and two organizations representing Métis communities. These agreements enable Indigenous communities to share in the economic benefits of mining operations near their communities, and that is exactly how it should be.

We know Ontario has what the world needs, and we are one of the first governments to pave the way for this exciting sector by investing in exploration and innovation and by cutting unnecessary red tape. That is why we launched the province’s first-ever Critical Minerals Strategy last year: to help us create more opportunities in Ontario’s mining sector while supporting the EV revolution. This comprehensive five-year blueprint will strengthen Ontario’s position as a global leader in supplying critical minerals. Through this strategy, we are working to build an integrated supply chain, a made-in-Ontario supply chain, by connecting critical minerals producers in the north, including those in the Ring of Fire, with the manufacturing might in the south.

Ontario has a responsibility to help build the critical minerals supply chain. To do so, we need to create conditions for companies to build mines more efficiently while maintaining our world-class environmental protections and meeting duty-to-consult obligations. Here in this province, we have the mineral resources and industry expertise to supply and manufacture the innovative technologies for the economy of the future, but we need to have a legislative and regulatory environment that will help attract investment, optimize competitive advantages and allow the mining industry to do what it does best: build mines.

Under the leadership of Premier Ford, a thriving mining sector has always been and will continue to be a key priority for our government. However, there are barriers we need to address before we can truly accomplish our goals, because there can be no integrated supply chain without a legislative framework that supports a modern, robust and efficient mining sector.

Simply put, members of the committee, it shouldn’t take 15 years to build a mine. I’ve heard time and time again from industry partners that a more modern legislative framework and regulatory regime is needed to reduce red tape, meet the demands of the global supply chain and support the transition to a sustainable economy.

This commitment to regulatory reform is a pillar of our Critical Minerals Strategy. Our government knows that a coordinated, graduated regulatory approach that supports proponents throughout the mining sequence is necessary to ensure competitiveness. Ontario has witnessed project

delays, increased cost and lost opportunities due to a lack of flexibility in the closure planning and a lack of clarity in the Mining Act. In addition, we heard that some processes and requirements create uncertainty and are burdensome and result in long delays. This is simply unacceptable. Through the proposed Building More Mines Act, our government is seeking to amend the Mining Act to address these challenges.

Allow me to quote Chris Hodgson, president of the Ontario Mining Association, and a very important industry stakeholder: “As the world shifts to a greener, more connected and more tech-driven economy, the demand for Ontario’s responsibly mined minerals will continue to grow. This presents a generational opportunity—to create rewarding jobs, build a strong domestic mining-to-manufacturing supply chain, and be a key player in the global energy transition.” And he goes on to say, “Given that we are competing with jurisdictions across the world to feed the decarbonization-driven commodity super cycle, the government must take bold action to help Ontario succeed. This includes addressing current challenges in the Mining Act and providing a regulatory pathway forward for our industry leadership in the global marketplace.” His message is clear, members of the committee: We need to support the development and building of mines in Ontario, to keep up with demand. Technology does not wait for jurisdictions that lag behind or are held back by inefficient processes and regulatory burdens.

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The companies and associations that make up our world-class mining sector have suggested practical ideas on how to improve the Mining Act and to move the industry forward. The purpose of the Mining Act is to encourage mineral exploration and development in a manner consistent with the recognition and affirmation of existing Aboriginal and treaty rights, including the crown’s duty to consult, and to minimize the impacts of these activities on public health and safety and the environment. These foundational elements set the context of the proposed amendments we are bringing forward in this bill, Chair.

With this in mind, I would now like to go into a little more detail about some of the changes we are proposing. Let’s be clear: These changes would help save mining companies time and money, without compromising our world-class environmental protections or duty to consult. For instance, these proposed changes would help advance critical minerals projects by making it easier for companies to get a permit to recover minerals from mine tailings and waste from a previous mine—that is, the materials left behind after the targeted minerals have been extracted. This would provide greater flexibility for recovery permit applications and encourage companies to search for value in mine tailings and waste.

Our proposed amendments would also simplify and improve closure planning by strengthening qualified professional certifications of plans and allowing companies to conditionally file a closure plan, while deferring certain elements to a later date. Other proposed changes would allow more flexibility in the techniques used to rehabilitate

mines once they are closed, while upholding Ontario's world-class environmental protection standards. The Mining Act requires that mining companies have filed closure plans before starting advanced exploration or mining production. A closure plan describes the measures that the proponent will take during the life cycle of the mine to rehabilitate the mine site. The closure planning process always includes an assessment of impacts to Aboriginal and treaty rights, and ensures the crown's duty-to-consult obligations are met.

Our proposed changes would also create more options for companies to pay financial assurance by allowing it to be paid in phases tied to the project's construction schedule. The ministry will continue to ensure necessary consultation has occurred before plans are submitted and submissions are complete, and will continue to receive financial assurance.

The changes will also align the Mining Act with other provincial legislation and other mining jurisdictions. Capital is mobile, and we are constantly competing with Newfoundland, Quebec and Australia. Our changes ensure that we are keeping up.

Our proposed changes are improving the ministry's processes and cutting red tape that is causing project delays and cost overruns. This will create the conditions for Ontario to claim its rightful place as the number one jurisdiction in Canada for mineral investment and development. The modifications to the Mining Act would help generate investment in northern Ontario to provide significant economic development opportunities for northern and Indigenous communities.

Members of the committee, the time to act is now. At a time when Ontario is securing game-changing investments in its growing automotive sector, these changes would benefit the entire minerals sector and advance Ontario's plan to build an integrated supply chain for electric vehicles.

The Building More Mines Act will enable our government to deliver on our mandate priorities, including advancing development in the Ring of Fire and fully implementing our Critical Minerals Strategy. I cannot emphasize enough that all the amendments will maintain Ontario's strong standards for environmental protection and meet the duty to consult with Indigenous communities.

Since the introduction of this bill, my ministry has engaged First Nations, Métis groups and associated Indigenous organizations on the proposed legislation and regulatory amendments, inviting participation in virtual information sessions and identifying options for providing feedback. Ministry staff are also addressing direct requests for further information and meetings on the regulatory changes.

As we move forward with these proposed changes, we will be further engaging with stakeholders, industry and Indigenous communities.

To conclude, we need to provide the world with the critical minerals needed to fuel the innovations and technologies of tomorrow. Our proposed legislation will carve a path to build a supply chain for minerals critical to building electric vehicles. Modernizing the Mining Act is

crucial to support our plan to lead the EV revolution right here in Ontario.

It's imperative that governments, industries and Indigenous leaders work together, because it is the coming together and the exchanging of ideas that will help us build on opportunities, forge new partnerships and work towards overcoming obstacles in the mining sector.

I've seen first-hand how the mining industry can help build strong communities, especially in the north. These communities become places where Ontarians can settle, raise families and grow strong roots. As Minister of Mines, I will never stop working to unlock the industry's full potential to ensure continued prosperity for generations to come. We can't have a clean future without mining.

Thank you to the committee members and all who are present here today for giving me the opportunity to speak about our Building More Mines Act and about how we feel it can benefit the entire mining sector and the entire province. It will be my pleasure now to answer your questions.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): Thank you, Minister.

This round of questions will begin with the official opposition. MPP Mamakwa.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch, Minister. First, off the top, you mentioned that we are on the traditional territories, treaty territories, of Treaty 9. Treaty 9 is the only treaty that was signed by Ontario. At the same time, you still treat First Nations as stakeholders. We are partners. We don't share the benefits of the treaty.

But also, thank you for the presentation. Thank you for the comments. Thank you for reminding me that oppression still exists. Thank you for reminding me that colonialism still exists. I say that because, when settlers arrived long ago, they took our lands, and then you're doing the same thing, without any consultation with the First Nations that are affected in some of the territories, traditional lands. For example, last week, it was very clear when those First Nations came to the Legislature and you did not mention any of that. You talk about free, prior and informed consent. You talk about duty to consult. But there was no discussion with these First Nations at all. You talk about money, to save money, easier-to-provide permits, flexible closure plans—you talk about those.

I think it's important to acknowledge that the way you're approaching this bill is very colonial. We have been here for thousands of years. We've cared for the environment. How long have you worked for the environment? The science is our way of living. What are you doing today to make sure the leadership that came to the Legislature last week—what are you doing so the Premier sits down with them? Can you answer that?

Hon. George Pirie: Well, let me be clear: Our government understands how important it is to work with Indigenous partners to create opportunities that meet the needs of Indigenous people and advance shared priorities. We understand fully the duty to consult, and in this act, the duty to consult and the language associated with the duty to consult has not been changed. Neither has the language

in this proposed bill changed from the previous or the current bill.

It's imperative that everybody understands that the duty to consult will always be undertaken by the crown. It's not in the middle of the process; it's not a part of the process; it's the heart of the process. And that's why Webequie and Marten Falls are leading the duty to consult on building the roads in the Ring of Fire. They are consulting to all the communities and all the Indigenous peoples in that area, and that is the way it should be. They are leading. The Indigenous leaders are leading the consultation process in the Ring of Fire. They are in the heart of it.

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I've met those leaders. Those leaders support the process. They support the process because they want a better life for their children, as everybody else does. They want their communities to benefit from the development that they see happening around them. They want their communities to flourish. They want their communities to grow. They want their children to stay there to get educated—

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Excuse me, Minister.

Hon. George Pirie: They want their children to come back.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Excuse me, Minister. I know that. I wasn't asking about the two First Nations that you have agreements with. I was talking about the other First Nations, and was trying to see what you are doing to make sure that there is dialogue. And right to this day, there is no dialogue.

I know with that answer, where you pivot to the work that you're doing with other First Nations, that type of playbook comes from a colonial playbook where you divide and conquer, and that's exactly what you're doing. Again, I'm asking you: What are you doing to meet with Neskantaga and other First Nations in the territory that are affected by that agreement with the two First Nations?

Hon. George Pirie: And it must be understood: There is an open invitation from myself, from this ministry, to meet with any Indigenous community at any time, any place, anywhere. We'll meet with anybody, any place, anywhere, any time.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: I know that I think last week at the Legislature, the leadership had asked for a meeting with the Premier. What are you doing to make that happen?

Hon. George Pirie: As I said, my obligation and my duty and, quite frankly, my pleasure, is to meet with any Indigenous community, any place, any time, anywhere. I've written the letters.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: I remember you showed up in the Matawa chiefs' annual general assembly, and you never came to the meeting, but you kind of peeked in the door and then you only met two First Nations. And that's why I say that you need to meet with all First Nations, not just certain First Nations.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): One minute.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: I know that there was a statement from Matawa chiefs. Matawa stated that Matawa member First Nations were informed of the amendments, not consulted. You keep throwing these words of "duty to consult," "free, prior, informed consent," and when I had the

briefing on this file, none of the First Nations were even spoken to. I received that briefing from one of the staff. How can you do better?

Hon. George Pirie: Well, as I say, this is part of the process of what we're doing right now. That's why these hearings are being held in committee. Again, the duty to consult is taken very seriously and it will be upheld by this government.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: The biggest room in the world, Minister, is the room for improvement. I think you're working in this small room, but you need a big room.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): Excuse me. Sorry to interrupt, but time is up. I just want to remind members that if you could ask your questions through the Chair, I'd certainly appreciate that.

Now, we'll go to five minutes for the independent members. MPP Hsu.

Mr. Ted Hsu: I have three questions which I'll just ask at the beginning and ask the minister to address them.

The first question is about section 18(1). There's a line in the legislation that says, "The condition of the land with respect to one or both of public health and safety or the environment following the remediation is comparable to or better than it was before the recovery."

My question for the minister is, the way it's worded now, you could have public health and safety or the environment be worse as long as the other one is better. So my question is, why don't you just say "both public health and safety and the environment" in that line of the legislation?

My second question is about qualified persons who are going to replace ministry staff to do the technical assessment of mine closure. They're called "qualified personnel," but qualified personnel in the industry also refers to the people who evaluate the economic potential of a mine. And I'm worried about the moral hazard if the qualified personnel who work on the mine closure and the qualified personnel who are there to protect investors come from the same firm and they share the same bottom line. So I'm wondering if the minister can assure us that that moral hazard will not be in place when this change happens.

And my third question is, how can it be that there was no consultation with Indigenous communities before this bill was tabled and before I got to see the bill? It seems like the Indigenous communities, First Nations, are being treated the same as me, but that should not be the case. Those are my three questions.

Hon. George Pirie: Thanks so much for those questions. Again, I'll reiterate that there has been no change to the duty to consult in the language in the proposed act—none at all. There are no changes contemplated in the act in relation to the environmental protections. The mines are always built using qualified professionals: professional engineers, CAs, financial people. That's how you build a mine. You can't build them without qualified individuals. The fact is that every part of building a mine and every part of getting the financing associated with a mine requires qualified people and especially professional engineers who carry the personal liability for that.

But let's be clear. This act is about one thing: It's about this ministry becoming more efficient and effective so that they get the job done without any compromising on any of the abilities, the company's ability, to build sustainable operations—

Mr. Ted Hsu: But Minister—excuse me—you haven't answered the question. I understand we need qualified personnel. What I'm worried about is the qualified personnel who are replacing ministry personnel to evaluate mine closures work at the same firm as those other qualified personnel with very different skills, who are there to protect investors. So on the one hand, you might have geological engineers, mining engineers, geologists to protect investors. When it comes to mine closures, maybe you'll need biologists and environmental science people. These are two different groups of people, but if they work at the same firm and they have the bottom line that pays their salaries, there could be a moral hazard. So you haven't answered that question.

Hon. George Pirie: Quite frankly, I think I have, when I talk about things like professional standards within the industry. There are professional people that have professional standards, and that must be understood.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): One minute.

Hon. George Pirie: What happens right now, of course, when there is a change contemplated or, in fact, to a closure plan, they come back out to the ministry staff and, quite frankly, there are numerous delays back and forth with questions, back and forth and back and forth and back and forth, and that's the reason why it takes 15 to 17 years now to permit a mine. We've got to do better than that.

And the result of this—I want to talk about Côté Lake specifically. There's an operation that ends up holding 20 million ounces of critical mass of gold. The Indigenous communities fully supported the development of this operation. They were way ahead of, in fact, the ministry being ready. The result is, when it was basically on the back of this government's involvement, the permits finally got in—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): Sorry to interrupt, Minister, but time is up for this round of questioning.

The next round will be with government members. You have 7.5 minutes. MPP Leardi.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Through you, Chair, to the witness: Thank you, Minister, for being with us here today. It's a pleasure to be here in Timmins, and it's a pleasure to be here in your hometown.

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My first question to you, Mr. Minister, through the Chair, is as follows: Over the course of your career in the mining industry, you must have experienced the struggles that companies have been going through to build the mines in the province. We've heard about the permitting delays being experienced by companies, even when northern and Indigenous communities are supportive of a project. This has obviously led to lost opportunities for the province. Can you elaborate on how your experience in this industry has helped you to quickly identify the challenges in the Mining Act that were holding this sector back?

Hon. George Pirie: Thank you very much for the question. As you all know, I was raised in the mine site village of Dome and Dome-Ex, in the shadows of the headframe of the Dome mine. My father was born in a house behind the mill in 1921, so there's a member of my family who has been associated with mining for well in excess of a hundred years. I grew up in the operations.

I was lucky enough, through my career, to work internationally, around the world, globally, in some places that made you very, very happy to be a Canadian mining with Canadian standards in these countries. In fact, I've closed mines in Tunisia, and have been acknowledged by the government of Tunisia because we closed those mines to Ontario standards, when no other company would do that. Canadians do that. They know how to do things correctly. They're proud of what they do. They know that they're the best in the world when it comes to mines, especially in Ontario.

When I look at the challenges associated with permitting a mine, I know that Kidd Creek, from the time it was discovered to the time of production, was three years. Suddenly, a number of decades later, it takes 15 to 17 years—that's to build a mine—and that's completely unacceptable.

We have challenges in front of us. We know we have to meet the demands, secure the supply of critical minerals that is required, decarbonize and participate fully with the extraction of the resources in northern Ontario, to be matched with the manufacturing might in southern Ontario, so that we participate in the electronic revolution that is taking place around the world, but especially in Ontario. In this process, of course, we will create numerous jobs throughout Ontario, including northern Ontario. It's just not acceptable that it takes so long to permit a mine. That's the objective, what this bill is all about.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Thank you, Minister, for that thorough answer. My second question for you is this: I know there have been engagement sessions being held by the ministry, and I know that you have a ministerial advisory council that I'm sure you've been working with on these changes. What has the reaction been from industry? And can you talk about how important business certainty is for the mining industry?

Hon. George Pirie: Thank you very much for that question. My mining industry advisory council has been instrumental in helping us identify the challenges that exist with this ministry. It must be understood: These include exploration people, development people, First Nations communities at the table with us to get their advice on how to improve this act. I want to thank them on the record for dedicating their time to support the sector. We will continue to make changes to improve the sector because we have a responsibility to secure the supply chain for critical minerals.

I was at PDAC 2023, and you know that that's the world's best mining conference, in Ontario. It was a phenomenal gathering this year. I met world leaders, and they're talking to us about what we're doing with our Critical Minerals Strategy and how they can learn from us,

because we have a great strategy. It's working. You can see it. The exploration drills are turning. The industry and the province and the citizens of every community are excited about this. Timmins itself is booming on the back of the fact that we've got those deposits close to us, accessible. It's a real honour for everybody to understand that they're participating in a fundamental change in the global economy, happening right here in northern Ontario, and to be a part of that, and to create a cleaner future through the extraction of minerals in northern Ontario.

It can't happen without the minerals being mined, and we do it in a responsible, sustainable development. Our Canadian miners know how to do this. They've been doing this for years, and they continue to get better at it. It's a phenomenal opportunity that we have at this time, to participate in this economy, that is instrumental in changing the future of the lives of everybody in this province and, quite frankly, globally.

That is our part in this process. You cannot be environmentally responsible anywhere without getting these minerals out of the ground.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): One minute.

Hon. George Pirie: We have numerous projects that are right here around us in the Timmins area. One you didn't hear—well, you probably will a little bit later. But you won't hear about the critical minerals industry that's just west of Otter Rapids. They're taking out the rare earths that are required to build the magnets that are required to build the engines to power the electric vehicles, right here in northern Ontario.

Normally, where do those minerals come from? They come from Congo. No one supports that. Absolutely no one supports that, and we've got the opportunity here to secure the supply chains with those minerals, mined here right in northern Ontario. Every community will benefit from this: the ones that are in fact employed in Volkswagen's new factory that has been announced in St. Marys, as well as—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): I'm sorry to interrupt, Minister, but time is up for this round of questioning.

The next round of questioning will be with the official opposition. You'll have 7.5 minutes, and I recognize MPP Mamakwa.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: On September 3, 2022, Matawa Chiefs Council submitted a statement, a formal letter, a submission to this committee on Bill 71, Building More Mines Act. One of the things that they talk about is recovery permits avoiding the duty to consult and accommodate First Nations' historic grievances and new revenue interests by grandfathering out old mines not returning to production.

I think it's very clear that the Ontario government needs to ensure that the recovery permitting process reflects the legal requirements set out by the Supreme Court of Canada on the duty to consult and accommodate or address any outstanding historic revenue interests of First Nations across the province in the old and closed mine sites that

are about to go into production again. What have you done with Matawa First Nations regarding this?

Hon. George Pirie: As I said, that's exactly why these committees are taking place.

But let me talk about what you're talking about in recovered minerals. That's one of the things, of course, that we want to amend in the Mining Act, because right now we can't do that. Nobody can do that, even the companies that own them, and there is significant economic benefit in the rare earths that are included in the tailings, which prior to now weren't economic. But because of the electric vehicle revolution that's happening across Ontario, there's value in them now. There's value in the research required that is going to have to be done to ensure that they're going to be recovered economically.

It fits with the environmental responsibility of the circular economy, if you will, that we can—and Vale holds a significant resource of those in Sudbury, and Glencore hopefully owns a lot of them in the tailings facility right here in Timmins. There's significant opportunity for our communities, for all communities, to benefit from the extraction of what was previously waste and gain economic benefit from that activity. That is what these changes are all about.

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Again, we want to build more mines. We want to be able to get at these critical minerals in time to meet the demand that's currently being met by places like the Congo or Russia or other parts of China, where, in fact, we know we're not dealing with responsible countries. We've seen with Russia's aggression in Ukraine what happens when one partner or one country has a stranglehold on a resource. We've seen how the continent of Europe has been strangled by the fact that they weren't allowed in to get the energy out of Russia.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Excuse me, Minister. One of the points that the nine chiefs from Matawa First Nations talk about is a potential fox guarding the hen house as mines will be self-monitoring, or privatized, on mine closure plans. How are we going to ensure that does not happen, with that term of the fox guarding the hen house?

Hon. George Pirie: Well, thank you very much for the question. But capital is mobile. Capital will go to any jurisdiction that it can. Our biggest competitors are Quebec, Newfoundland and Australia, and within their act, the minister has the ability to ensure that things happen at a reasonable pace. If that's what you're talking about within the changes to the Mining Act, that's what this is all about. We want just to catch up with what the best practices are in other jurisdictions because capital is mobile.

In my career, we've seen projects lost because we're not able to get them across quickly. I worked internationally. I know how competitive it is, because you have to stand around the board of directors' tables and you're competing for the funds to build a mine in your jurisdiction. And it will move. It will go someplace else.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: This statement is signed by Chief Dorothy Towedo, Aroland First Nation; Chief Ramona Sutherland, Constance Lake First Nation; Chief Sol Atlookan,

Eabametoong First Nation; Chief Sheri Taylor, Ginoogaming First Nation; Chief Judy Desmoulin, Long Lake #58 First Nation; Bruce Achneepineskum, Marten Falls First Nation; Chief Wayne Moonias, Neskantaga First Nation; Okimaahkaan Michael Sugarhead, Nibinamik First Nation; Chief Cornelius Wabasse, Webequie First Nation. They say, at the end, “The province of Ontario must be held accountable for this exploitive and aggressive approach contrary to principles of reconciliation and the spirit and intent of treaty.”

What you’ve shared with me so far is you’re going that route where you are in the mode of divide and conquer. It is very clear, as a collective region in Matawa, despite a very aggressive legislative and public agenda to our access our traditional territories, that they need communication. They call this bill, the policy and regulatory changes, “the legislative bulldozer.”

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): One minute.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: I think it will be on you, Minister. I’ve heard it already; without their free, prior, informed consent, the Ring of Fire will not happen. What do you say to that?

Hon. George Pirie: Well, as I said already, there’s nothing in this bill that changes the duty to consult, as I’ve said already publicly in written letters. I am open to any consultation with any group at any time, any place—anytime. So that’s my stand. That’s the government’s stand.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): You have 10 seconds.

MPP Jamie West: Sorry; I’m just curious—15 seconds. Why are we meeting in Timmins and Sudbury? I love your riding; I love my riding. But we’re talking about the Ring of Fire, which is a long way away—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): Sorry to interrupt, MPP West, but that’s time for this round of questioning.

The next round will be with the independent members, and you will have five minutes. MPP Hsu.

Mr. Ted Hsu: There wasn’t enough time for the minister to answer my first question last time, so I’ll ask it again: Section 18 of the bill, part 1, allows either public health and safety to be worse or the environment to be worse after the mine closes, as long as the other one is better. I don’t think that that is really related to helping mines get opened faster. So I think the minister should support an amendment to make sure that public health and safety and the environment are both either comparable or better than they were before the recovery from the tailings. I was just wondering if the minister could confirm that.

Hon. George Pirie: Thank you very much for the question. As I said, the intent of the changes is to ensure that Ontario’s environmental regulations—and they’re world-class; they’re the best in the world—and the duty to consult are not impacted. It’s not the intent of any legislation, proposed or otherwise, to make things worse. It’s always our intent to at least maintain what we’re doing right now.

As you know—and I’ve said this, again—the language that exists right now in section 2 of the proposed bill is the

same language that’s in the bill right now. The language in that bill is not different than the proposed bill. It’s the same thing. We don’t shy away from any environmental liability. In fact, we’re very proud—in fact, every mining company is very proud of the fact of what they do. I can speak specifically—and you know this—that at Vale, they spent \$1.5 billion to eliminate the emissions from the Superstack. They did not ask for any support from the government; they did it on their own. They’re spending \$900 million to make the mines deeper, and they’re electrifying those mines—

Mr. Ted Hsu: Sir, excuse me—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): I’ll recognize—

Mr. Ted Hsu: Thank you.

I’m an optimistic person. I’m going to take that as a yes, that you would support that amendment.

I wanted to also get back to my questions about the term “qualified persons.” Would you support just making sure that the two types of qualified persons, one to deal with mine closures and the other one to deal with protecting investors, are working at different firms? Yes or no? Do you think that’s a good idea?

Hon. George Pirie: Could you repeat that question, please?

Mr. Ted Hsu: To make sure that the people, the qualified persons, who work on the technical aspects of mine closure are working at a different firm, a different private company, than the qualified persons who are there to assess a mine’s potential and protect investors—just make sure they’re at different firms to get rid of the moral hazard.

Hon. George Pirie: Now, you have to understand, when a mine is being built and it’s permitted, the mine has to supply a closure plan while they’re still building the mine. The qualified persons across that effort may in fact be at the same firm, and quite frankly, this bill is designed to make the ministry more effective and efficient. And the fact that what we’re doing right now hasn’t caused a problem—I don’t see why the changes that were proposed in the Building More Mines Act would be relevant to what you were proposing, Ted, at all. Can I call you Ted, or should I call you something else?

Mr. Ted Hsu: If I could—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): I’ll recognize MPP Hsu.

Mr. Ted Hsu: Sorry, I just want to make a comment. Currently, it’s officials in the ministry, in the government, who would, by definition, not be part of any private firm of qualified personnel, who would be assessing a mine’s potential and protecting investors. So the difference is that the people assessing mine closures now can move into the private sector and potentially work at the same firm and be paid out of the same revenue as those other kinds of qualified personnel who evaluate a mine’s potential to protect investors. That’s my concern.

Hon. George Pirie: But if I’m allowed, can I answer that question?

Mr. Ted Hsu: Yes, we have time.

Hon. George Pirie: It's because that hasn't changed. What we're talking about in the closure process still comes back out to the ministry. The ministry folks still see and still have to sign off on the closure process. So it's not like they don't have any input in the proposed changes. They do and they always have and they always will.

1050

Mr. Ted Hsu: My question is, why bother changing it, then?

Hon. George Pirie: Because, in fact, it's—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): Sorry to interrupt, Minister, but time is up for this round of questioning. We'll begin the next round with government members. I'll recognize MPP Flack. You'll have 7.5 minutes.

Mr. Rob Flack: Welcome, colleagues, to Timmins. Great to be here.

Through you, Chair, to the minister: We've seen billions of dollars invested in future battery plants in southern Ontario. Companies like Volkswagen are coming to my riding of Elgin–Middlesex–London, Stellantis in Windsor and many more on the way. Talking to the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, I think we all know that there are other companies looking to set up shop or invest in Ontario and in Canada, which is great news, I believe, for Canadians.

They know that more minerals like nickel, lithium, cobalt and others are needed to create jobs and economic development. What I see is we're linking the mining potential in northern Ontario to jobs and manufacturing in southern Ontario, and we're doing it in a good way that's going to create sustainable jobs for all Ontarians.

Maybe, sir, if you wouldn't mind, could you please elaborate on what other opportunities you see for critical minerals in this province and highlight the changes that are being proposed that will help us capitalize on these opportunities?

Hon. George Pirie: Thank you very much for that question. We have a responsibility in this province to ensure that the critical minerals and rare earths are extracted from northern Ontario in a responsible fashion, without any denigration to the duty to consult or the environmental regulations that are in place, so that in fact we can secure the supply chain that is going to be required to get the minerals out of the ground to build the batteries that are going to power the electric vehicle revolution that's happening right now. That's our responsibility, and it's a serious responsibility.

The majority of these materials right now are coming from places like the Congo, Russia and/or China. We have what the world needs right now in northern Ontario at this time and this place to ensure that we get these done. We've got projects right here in northern Ontario that have the possibility of creating thousands of jobs, and they're fully supported by the First Nations.

Canada Nickel has a marvellous project just north of us, and the Indigenous partners—there's two Indigenous partners right there. TTN is an Indigenous First Nation and that's one of them, and they also have the Wabun Tribal Council, which is a coalition of four First Nations that support this. It's a nickel-cobalt discovery and its host rock

is serpentine. Serpentine absorbs CO₂, so we have this possibility of creating a nickel-cobalt mine that's carbon-free, zero-emission, and to do that in combination with the electrical grid that already exists in northern Ontario.

But you also have ample natural gas opportunities here in northern Ontario, right here in Timmins. When you burn natural gas, you can create hydrogen. When you do that, it causes CO₂, but you collect that CO₂ in the rock in this region, serpentine. The research is being done right now, and it's supported by TTN. That's the First Nation that Bruce Archibald is the chief of. RoseAnne Archibald, you all know. Before they really bought in to the fact that development that really results from the duty to consult on the critical minerals that are included in their traditional territories, in partnership with the government of Ontario—before that happened, unemployment was 85%. After that, now—and Chief RoseAnne will tell you—it's less than the national average.

So you end up with a group of Indigenous communities just north of us in Timmins that are leading the world in transforming the economy, not only in Ontario, but globally, using hydrogen-fuelled haul trucks with electric vehicles on the rest of their operations. It's a huge opportunity, and it's world-class. It's world-leading, and it's led by the Indigenous people right here, just north of Timmins. These are the opportunities that we have here. They're generational opportunities to ensure that every community participates in this, and all it takes is participation, consultation. That's all it takes. And you've got a willing business partner. In fact, they lead it. They will own the transmission line from the subdivision in Porcupine back out to the mine site. They will own the revenue stream associated with that. They understand what that development means to that community.

Those are the opportunities that we have here in front of us with this community, with this committee. There's an opportunity to do this right now in the right way, and that will transform our economy and the people of northern Ontario right here, because we can do it faster, we can do it more efficiently without sacrificing anything on the duty to consult or the environmental regulations.

Canadian companies, mining companies know what it means to operate sustainably, and mining sustainably means that you meet the needs—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): One minute.

Hon. George Pirie: —of the current—sorry.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): I think MPP Flack. Yes, go ahead.

Mr. Rob Flack: One other question, Minister: You and I come from a world where supply chain is very important in building a business, making sure all elements of supply are intact and you can compete. I know this government has been working on that very thing for the electrical vehicle supply chain. So can you help me understand what regulations your ministry and this government may try to reduce so we can make sure we compete and we get those regulations, the regulatory burden, out of the way?

Hon. George Pirie: Well, again, that's what this whole effort today is all about, when we talk about the Building More Mines Act. It's to simplify, it's to streamline the

whole process so, in fact, we can get the mines built quicker.

Our Critical Minerals Strategy also has elements in it. We have the junior exploration program. We have the innovation fund. That's to encourage—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): I'm sorry to interrupt, Minister, but time is up for this round of questioning. I want to thank you for your time today before committee.

Hon. George Pirie: Am I done?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): You're done.

Hon. George Pirie: Well, thank you for having me here. I guess that's all I'm allowed to say. I guess my time is finished.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): Your time is done, Minister. Thank you.

AGNICO EAGLE MINES LTD.

FRIENDS OF THE ATTAWAPISKAT RIVER

EV NICKEL AND ROGUE RESOURCES

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): I'm going to restart here. I just want to say quickly, before we begin, that the remainder of our presenters have been scheduled in groups of three for each one-hour time slot. Each presenter will have seven minutes for their presentation, and after we have heard from all three presenters, the remaining 39 minutes of the time slot will be for questions from members of the committee. The time for questions will be broken down into two rounds of 7.5 minutes for the government members, two rounds of 7.5 minutes for the official opposition and two rounds of 4.5 minutes for the independent members as a group.

1100

I will now call on Agnico Eagle Mines Ltd. You will have seven minutes for your presentation. Please state your name for Hansard, and you may now begin.

Mr. Mohammed Ali: Good morning, everyone. My name is Mohammed Ali, vice-president of sustainability and environmental affairs at Agnico Eagle. I'm pleased to appear before this committee today to offer some remarks on Bill 71, the Building More Mines Act.

Just to give you some background, Agnico Eagle started operations in Cobalt, Ontario, in 1957. Agnico Eagle is a senior Canadian gold-mining company, producing precious metals from operations in Canada, Australia, Finland and Mexico. Based in Toronto, our global operations include 11 mines and a global workforce of more than 16,000 employees and contractors.

Our company is known for our commitment to our people and the communities in which we operate, and is seen as a partner of choice by stakeholders and investors. We have set a goal to become carbon neutral by 2050, and recently set the target of reducing our emissions by 30% by 2030.

In Ontario, our operations include Detour Lake mine, north of Cochrane, and the Macassa mine near Kirkland Lake. We employ approximately 4,000 people, employees

and contractors. In 2021 in Ontario, we spent \$1.5 billion on goods and services, including \$378 million with our Indigenous partners and firms, \$352 million in wages and benefits, and \$3.7 million on community donations and sponsorships. We have 11 agreements with our Indigenous partners in Ontario.

Our Macassa mine pioneered the use of battery electric in our underground operations. Our Detour Lake mine is the largest gold mine in Canada and roughly 22% of our workforce identifies as Indigenous. Both Detour Lake and Macassa have a long-term vision for growth, and we also have brownfield and greenfield assets in Ontario with investment potential.

Agnico Eagle is committed to working with the government of Ontario to create jobs, work with our Indigenous partners and decarbonize our operations, and create a mutually beneficial partnership with our Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners.

We all understand the role mining plays for Ontario economically and for the reconciliation with our Indigenous peoples, so I won't get into the stats of where mining plays. However, as we look forward to the future, there's no doubt that we are at a critical junction where Ontario's continued support of responsible mining is essential. Ontario has been a leader in fostering a safe, environmentally friendly mining industry that is driving long-term economic growth, providing good, skilled middle-class jobs for women and men across the province. In addition, the mining sector is making significant contributions to the goal of economic reconciliation with our Indigenous partners, and the growing global demand for critical minerals means that Ontario mines can play a significant role in contributing to a low-carbon future.

Clearly, there are many reasons why the government should continue to create a climate for continued investment and growth in Ontario while protecting the environment and Indigenous rights. A key factor in the investment and decision-making of any mining company is the quality of the regulatory framework and the regulatory robustness. Vagueness, unpredictability and uneven application of regulations is a red flag. Many mining companies may choose to ultimately invest somewhere else if they do not feel that robustness. A robust, predictable and efficient regulatory system is central to a policy environment that will attract global mining investment in Ontario, and Ontario must act swiftly and decisively to ensure the province does not miss out due to regulatory robustness.

We believe that Bill 71 strikes the right balance between the need to protect the environment, protect our Indigenous peoples and partners and the need to create a regulatory environment that will continue to attract investment. To that effect, several changes in Bill 71 will reduce redundancies and administrative burden for both government and proponents without weakening environmental protection or Indigenous rights.

Without going into all of the bill, I'd like to highlight three areas that we identified that I'd like to mention today. One is a very specific one on a proposal to allow some infrastructure to remain on site. Previously, the Mining Act

required all infrastructure to be removed. Our experience has been that when we're working with some of our Indigenous partners, they would like certain things like airstrips and roads to remain. If that is something that is required, now the bill allows us to leave certain proposed corridors or railroads, or for various infrastructure or energy lines to remain.

The second one is the phased financial assurance. The phased financial assurance is very specific in terms of the nature in the bill, but for a mining company such as ours, when you have large infrastructure spend—previously, the bill required all of the financial assurance to be provided up front, even prior to any of the investment or disturbance to be made. Therefore, a company like Detour Lake that has a \$300-million financial assurance—we phase them so that we put \$150 million forward, and before our next large infrastructure spend, we'd make milestone payments. That is actually happening today, but it was not in legislation. So it's now just formalizing just the practicality of that financial assurance, staging it.

Lastly is the notice of material change. Though there was no change to the actual act on the notice of material change, the evolution of the notice of material change became a check for materiality. The intent of the notice of material change was to provide notice of material change, and it was being enacted unevenly throughout the regions, depending on the regional person or officer. Now, putting back the notice of material change to the way it was intended, which is to provide the ministry notice of material change, will allow consistent application of the procedure rather than regional.

With that all being said, and other areas that I didn't want to touch on now, I'd like to thank everyone for this opportunity for Agnico Eagle and myself to present.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): Thank you for your presentation.

I will now call on Friends of the Attawapiskat River to present.

Mr. Michel Koostachin: *Remarks in Omaskêko Cree.*

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): I just wanted to let you know you will have seven minutes for your presentation. Please state your name for Hansard, and you may begin.

Mr. Michel Koostachin: *Remarks in Omaskêko Cree.*

1110

Bill 71 is in violation of our treaty. The federal government has a fiduciary duty with the grassroots people of the treaty, not the chief and council, not the tribal councils. You're in violation of our treaty.

Remarks in Omaskêko Cree.

Million of dollars he's talking about—we don't see it. Grassroots people are suffering. We have mental health issues. We can't access your dollars because the chief and council are not qualified enough to do the proposal. So we have kids suffering. We have kids walking with soaking diapers because of addictions in our community.

The root cause is [*remarks in Omaskêko Cree*], Indian residential schools. The government of Canada went after our kids. Now those kids are our parents, our grandfathers.

They're suffering. We still have issues. We have homelessness issues.

Remarks in Omaskêko Cree.

You're going to let them off, scot-free, once they destroy that water, that land, that wildlife. We respect those animals, because we don't own them; we're borrowing them. We have protocols in what we do.

I'd like to thank a couple of people who helped me, who reminded me to remind you guys. One of the ladies, our true leader, our matriarch, is Jennifer Wabano. I went to see her this morning. I needed help. She said, "Remind them that we have a treaty with the government of Canada. We don't deal with the province." So this is what you're allowing to destroy what the Creator gave us—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): I apologize, but unfortunately, your time is up.

Mr. Michel Koostachin: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): Thank you for your presentation—much appreciated.

I will now call on EV Nickel, who will be presenting virtually. You will have seven minutes for your presentation. Please state your name for Hansard, and you may now begin.

Mr. Sean Samson: Hello. My name is Sean Samson. I'm the president and CEO of both EV Nickel, which is a publicly traded company based in Toronto with projects just south of Timmins, in addition to being the president and CEO of Rogue Resources, which is another exploration and development company. We're based out of Toronto, with assets in Quebec and in northern Ontario. I speak to the committee with experience from across both companies.

I can say that my time dealing with permitting and interacting with regulatory bodies, including governments, with mining projects extends to an almost 20-year career now in the mining space, around the world. I have experience dealing with many different regulatory bodies, including, as mentioned, the two provinces in Canada, most recently with Rogue and EV Nickel. From my experience, I can say that the most important things for companies to try to develop mining projects include clarity and transparency. I've seen that done well in different countries around the world, whether they be in South America, Africa or Asia, where my experience has been. But also, right in Canada, my experience contrasting between permitting and interacting with government in Quebec versus Ontario has been radically different.

The good news is that in front of this standing committee, I can say that my interactions with the government of Ontario have been very clear, and I appreciate the interaction that I have with both the political in addition to the bureaucratic side in Ontario. I think that our civil service is professional, experienced and well set up to be doing their jobs, which is, in my experience, very different from our neighbours to the east.

I say all this to bring credibility and background to the statements I'll now make on Bill 71. There are two main things that I really appreciate with the proposed changes to the act. I think that the phased closure plan and bonding

related to that is really the way to go. That's an innovative approach, as mentioned to presenters earlier. It's already been done in practice, so it's wonderful that that will now be, hopefully, part of the code.

1120

I like the rethink on the closure plan and how to be more creative on that because that should unlock lots of additional asset opportunities across our province, in addition to the general streamlining and bringing clarity around the role of the political minister. And for a proponent like me, who is trying to sort of pull together and make a go of projects in a jurisdiction, knowing that these changes to the act will empower the political minister to be able to work through issues I think is a wonderful change to be made.

In summary, I would say that my view of the proposed changes to the act is positive. I come at that with experience around the world, but also within Canada, where I've seen in Quebec things be very different and very wrong. I frankly think that that the direction we're headed in in our province is a much better one.

Now, I'll pivot a bit to talk about what's going on with EV Nickel, my company, which is active in Ontario. We are at the front edge of the challenge of trying to source the critical minerals to feed the developing-in-Ontario EV supply chain. We have an enormous nickel resource that we announced earlier this year near surface—over a billion tonnes of lower-grade material. Like other proponents in Ontario, we're trying to make a go of lower-grade nickel mineralization than has ever been used before in the world. But, really, that's an important point because, as the world needs these critical minerals and as the world is becoming a much smaller place for the new buyers of nickel, the car companies with their pivot towards electric vehicles, it means that we're all being forced to rethink how we do things to get that supply. And in my very regular conversations downstream with the new demand from the car companies, we know that the importance of jurisdiction and clarity is becoming even stronger when they're trying to figure out where in the world they want to operate.

I say that because that means they're rethinking what's economic grade. We, on the supply side, on the mining, are rethinking what is economic grade and my company is part of that with an enormous mineralized resource just south of Timmins, which represents nickel in the ground for many tens of millions of electric vehicle batteries. That's just one fifth of what we believe we have up there based on historic work.

So we have in the Timmins camp, between our company's resource and others, including Canada Nickel and Aston, the nickel that the world needs for electric vehicles and we require, on the jurisdictional level, working with government, this continued streamlining and support of our projects—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): One minute.

Mr. Sean Samson: —because we can provide the world.

So keeping the environmental and the partnership with communities, but streamlining everything that happens on the regulatory side, we're definitely fans of.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): You still have time. That was a one-minute warning, but you're now down to about 30 seconds.

Mr. Sean Samson: Thank you.

We have 30,000 hectares just south of the city of Timmins. We have the low-grade mineralization. In addition, we have very high-grade mineralization, and working, we hope, with some private companies located down on the Shaw Dome with us, where there's already a permitted mill, we hope to be up and in production with our high-grade mineralization in three to four years, feeding into the EV supply chain and then following that up with the bigger promise of the lower-grade mineralization. Thank you for the opportunity to present.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): Thank you for your presentation. I want to thank all three presenters for your presentations.

This round of questions will begin with the independent members. You will have 4.5 minutes.

Mr. Ted Hsu: My first question would be for Friends of Attawapiskat River and I wanted to ask if Bill 71, being introduced without having done any prior consultation with Indigenous communities—how that has changed your attitude towards the mining industry. Has it?

Mr. Michel Koostachin: I worked with De Beers before, and I see how they operate. If they were to spill something, those employees are given tight orders.

You guys have regulations under the Mining Act. You guys have regulations under whatever you guys got the contract for. You guys are going to take care of environmental issues.

So we've seen—sometimes devastating—how the earth is being destroyed within their organization, within the company. I've seen it. They leave their empty drums of gas on the road, and they're leaking. How's that regulation for you?

Mr. Ted Hsu: But has Bill 71 in particular changed any of your attitudes?

Mr. Michel Koostachin: Well, that's the first time I've heard of Bill 71, the Mining Act. It's provincial, right? We deal with the federal government. You guys operate within our crown lands, which have equal opportunity for us to be on that land also, but you guys give us reserve land. So how can I see the provincial regulations when we don't deal with the province?

Mr. Ted Hsu: Okay. My second question for the other two witnesses is about phased financial assurance. I understand you're saying that this is something that's already done in practice, but can you tell me a little bit about how we make sure that maybe a company that's not well-capitalized—what happens if the market price for the commodity changes and for some reason the mine doesn't proceed? How do we know that the financial assurance that has been put up can handle changes in the price of the commodity and, potentially, a mine closure? How do we know enough funds are going to be there?

Mr. Mohammed Ali: Sure, I can start with that. It's Mohammed Ali here with Agnico Eagle. The phased financial assurance, in today's world, or how the bill acted today before the changes, was that you had to put all of the

money up front, which meant all of the potential future life-of-mine up front, which also still had uncertainty to some extent, because with the dynamic nature of mining, you may decide that you want to increase the pit size or shaft etc. The way the closure plan worked was you had to keep updating it on a regular basis. The phased financial assurance doesn't take away from the estimate from the beginning.

So, if we're using numbers, let's say that your mine's estimated closure is \$300 million but that includes tailings facilities that are going to be put up in 2030. You would bond in 2029 before the construction of it; therefore, the province will always have net-positive money prior to any closure. If there's a discrepancy, every five years you have to update your financial assurance anyways, so there's always an assurance in place for the province to have enough money for any infrastructure change.

Mr. Ted Hsu: Okay. If I could just go back to a point that I asked the minister, I wanted to get a confirmation. There's a section of the bill, section 18, where it says that "the condition of the land with respect to" either "public health and safety or the environment" has to be "comparable to or better than it was before the recovery." Is there any reason for not requiring that both public health and safety and the environment be comparable or better than before? Why should we allow one of those to be worse?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): Sorry to interrupt, but we're out of time, unfortunately. You can ask that in the next round.

The next round of questions will be the government members, and you will have 7.5 minutes. MPP Sarrazin, I'll recognize you.

Mr. Stéphane Sarrazin: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's a nice opportunity for us to be here in Timmins with my colleagues.

J'aimerais remercier tout le monde qui participe—les entreprises, puis les organisations—à cette consultation publique. C'est vraiment, pour nous, la chance d'en apprendre plus à propos de l'industrie minière.

I will start by asking a question to Mr. Mohammed Ali from Agnico Eagle. Minister Pirie has made the point that—he said many times that 15 years to open a mine is too long, especially these days. A lot happens in 15 years. So what are some common challenges and delays in the regulatory process and how would this bill address them?

1130

Mr. Mohammed Ali: Thank you for your question. As a practitioner of the closure plan—as the proponent that has to file them—folks around the room may not realize that when you submit a closure plan, there are various regulatory oversights that happen, and still happen. The improvement from this particular space is that within Ontario, we've got the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry; we have the Ministry of Mines, the Ministry of Energy, and all of them tend to review the closure plan, but the proponents are still working with all those other ministries on other aspects anyway. So we were providing redundant information or having a secondary review of information that was already reviewed by the Ministry of the Environment.

Therefore, those folks who are already busy looking at files would now have to comment on a closure plan, on comments that they've already done before. So this eliminates that redundancy. That's why I was saying it doesn't change the environmental oversight in any way, because all those ministries are still involved. It just prevents them from having to look at it twice with a different cover.

Mr. Stéphane Sarrazin: Thank you for that answer. And maybe one more question?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): Sure, that's fine. I recognize you.

Mr. Stéphane Sarrazin: There's a lot of attention on critical minerals at the moment, but gold is still the largest share of Ontario mining. How do the proposed changes help ensure gold mining continues to grow in Ontario as well?

Mr. Mohammed Ali: We as a gold company understand that there's a lot of focus on the critical minerals, and we understand it's a part of our green economy. Though gold and critical minerals sometimes are seen as separate or similar, it's very important to know that the skill set—what makes Ontario the best mining jurisdiction as well as the best miners in the world is the fact that these mining companies have transferable skills between the two. As critical minerals are emerging here, we want more Canadian companies to be the ones who are operating them because the philanthropic dollars then stay here. We want these Canadian companies to grow, and Ontario has an abundance of gold mining. Therefore, it will only strengthen that workforce here. The bill here doesn't discriminate against gold versus critical, so we do not see any issue that it would stop or hinder gold mining.

Mr. Stéphane Sarrazin: Another question: What else could Ontario actually do to create the conditions for growth in the mining industry?

Mr. Mohammed Ali: This is a bit of a tougher question. In my view, I think that the things we could improve are probably around Indigenous partners and Indigenous consultation. I think there are a lot of areas of improvement in that space, particularly because different ministries have different lists that they use for Indigenous communities. I think having a way to ensure that we centrally look at all of our Indigenous partners with a lens that is consistent, rather than different ministries having different lists that causes confusion between the Indigenous partners.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): MPP Bresee.

Mr. Ric Bresee: My question is for Mr. Koostachin, if I'm pronouncing that correctly.

Mr. Michel Koostachin: That's correct.

Mr. Ric Bresee: Thank you. I appreciate your presentation to us and thank you for being here today.

You mentioned in your presentation that there are many people in your community that are suffering, and that part of that suffering is a lack of resources, which actually extends that suffering. We know that, by example, the Five Nations Energy company brought resources—electricity—and some more prosperity to the nations involved in that. If we can do it right, would you not be interested in a resource revenue-sharing agreement that would benefit all

of the people in the various communities within your traditional territories?

Mr. Michel Koostachin: Thank you for the question. We have Five Nations Energy. They promised a lot of stuff to our people. What they forgot was they went out of our jurisdiction, our traditional territory. They're now stationed in Timmins. So we do go after their donations only, which—I received funding so I can help the community members through our ceremonies. That's all we can do to help find their voice, their purpose. What's your purpose in life?

The Creator gave us natural laws and a lot of our people don't understand that because of that disruption. That energy centre that was promised to us, it's not there. I worked the apprenticeship. They got rid of me. I got fired. I got a constructive dismissal. Is that a success story? They're supposed to help us, but why are we suffering? Our people still suffer today.

Mr. Ric Bresee: I'm sorry to hear that.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): MPP Leardi.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Back to Agnico Eagle: I want to ask a question about climate action. Ontario's mining sector is, in many ways, at the forefront of climate action. Can you talk a bit about some of the investments made and planned by Agnico Eagle to improve sustainability in the one minute that we have left?

Mr. Mohammed Ali: Sure. You are right that the mining companies of Ontario are at the forefront of climate action, compared to some of our peers, even when we look at some of our other jurisdictions like Australia etc., that don't have clean power. We are blessed after Quebec to have clean power, and clean power is essential for the mining companies to operate in a clean fashion.

Some of the investments we've made: In 2012 we started the battery electric movement before anybody else and actually built the first battery electric truck in Kirkland Lake. It was assembled in Ontario to build that skill set.

Other investments we're making are in the electrification of material movement. We are looking to have more material movement done through electrification. That is an investment we're also making.

We're also looking at recycling some of our batteries, because we are ahead of other mining companies—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): I'm sorry to interrupt, but that's all the time we have for this round of questions.

The next question will be with the official opposition. You will have 7.5 minutes. I recognize MPP Mamakwa.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch. *Remarks in Anishiniimowin.*

Mr. Michel Koostachin: Meegwetch, Sol. *Remarks in Mushkegomowin.*

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Seventy per cent of water is in our body, just like our Mother Earth.

Remarks in Mushkegomowin.

You're allowing that water to be destroyed, poisoned. Your carbon, the peatlands—you guys can't breathe without that once you destroy it. We have prophecies. We're

not protesters; we're protectors. The white race is the end race. The red race—we are the red race. We know what we saw—we know. That's why the Creator gave us ceremonies, natural laws. Honesty is one. If I lied to you guys, I'd feel guilty after.

The Creator only gave us four natural laws. That is one too many for you guys. You're allowing something, some company, to destroy the water for profit. The money that you guys want to raise for your company, for your government, through your royalties, we don't see that from Ontario. That's why we don't deal with the Ontario government. We deal with the government of Canada through our—they have fiduciary duties as grassroots. What do they do? They talk to our chief. Our chief doesn't even talk to us. That's why we're suffering, because of the colonial system that's there. It doesn't reach us.

You can talk about laws all day, all night, but there are only four that remind us every day we have them; we're symbolic people. That teepee has a meaning; the big dipper has a meaning; the sun has a meaning. Everything we see has a meaning as reminders. We're oral people. We don't write stuff. We don't own stuff. We borrow stuff. The stuff that we live on, you're allowing it, in Bill 71, saying, "Okay, go ahead, guys. Go destroy the land. Make our kids suffer in the future." That's what you guys are saying.

You guys are going to pay for air and water pretty soon. It's going to be a commodity under your stocks. We see that. Is that what you guys want? So today I'm just reminding you guys.

Remarks in Mushkegomowin.

Our language is very descriptive. We're very descriptive people.

Remarks in Mushkegomowin.

That's "water," but it means "life" also.

Those animals that we don't see have a meaning. Nobody knows what that thunderbird looks like. It's there. That's what it brings: water. It thunders first, so we call them thunderbirds. After thunder, it rains, so that thunderbird has a role to bring water so that everybody could have life.

Remarks in Mushkegomowin.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): I'm sorry to interrupt, but the time is up for this round of questioning.

The next round will begin with the independent members. You'll have 4.5 minutes.

Mr. Ted Hsu: Thank you. I just wanted to try to get clear in my mind—again, I understand that land has been taken away, but what I really wanted to focus in on was how Bill 71, this bill—has that made things better or worse? It sounds like it's made things worse, maybe not from a technical point of view from the operation of a mine, but it's made people trust the government less. Is that fair to say, that Bill 71, because of the lack of consultation, has made people trust the government and the mining industry less?

Mr. Michel Koostachin: Under your Mining Act, it says that you're now going to allow these companies to put money up front. Instead of waiting 15 years, you want

to open the mine probably tomorrow, if not today. It's still going to affect us in the long run. If you look at your environmental assessments, your environmental acts, they're no longer there. Your province, the government of Ontario, eliminated their laws so these companies can come in. This is what Doug Ford mentioned. This is the bulldozer. He's using the legislation—MPPs, Parliament, whatever you call it in Toronto—this is what he meant. This is what it is. He's not going to go specifically get on the bulldozer. He's going to use your Mining Act. He's going to ease up the regulations that your provincial Parliament established.

So I'm concerned. I am very concerned. I wouldn't be here—I shouldn't be here—if I had trust in my own politicians. They would be screaming their heads off, especially our chiefs, our tribal councils. But they're not here today. It's going to affect two tribal councils. It's going to affect all Treaty 9 territory chiefs. Where are they today? Because that water is going to be poisoned. That's the prophecy. The Mining Act will open that door.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): I recognize MPP Hsu.

Mr. Ted Hsu: I wanted to pursue that a bit and I wanted to ask Agnico Eagle and EV Nickel about section 18. I don't know if the minister really meant this, but it says that "one or both of public health and safety or the environment following the remediation is comparable to or better." So the wording, the way it's written, either public health and safety or the environment could be worse, as long as the other one is better. Is that really needed to speed up mine development as the minister is wanting to do, or can we amend the legislation so that public health and safety and the environment are comparable to or better than before the recovery? Is it really needed?

Mr. Mohammed Ali: I can't comment on the wording or the ability to change the wording from my perspective, obviously, because of where I sit, but as a mining company with ethical and moral standards, for us, we would be looking at all of those and not compromising one over the other. It wouldn't be acceptable, not just to us, but our own communities.

Mr. Ted Hsu: So we could amend this section 18 and take out this loophole and I don't think it would affect the way you would operate.

Mr. Mohammed Ali: I don't, and I think the checks and balances, as Minister Pirie said, are still being reviewed. So if there's a closure plan that's in submission that has a health and safety issue—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): I'm sorry to interrupt, but we're out of time for this round of questioning.

The next round will begin with government members. You'll have 7.5 minutes. I recognize MPP Dixon.

Ms. Jess Dixon: My question is to Mr. Koostachin. Thank you for your presentation. You talked about the suffering in areas in your communities with mental health, with addiction, with children. What I am curious about is, what would you bring to your community in terms of infrastructure or services that would make a difference?

For example, in my home—I'm on Haldimand land—there's a supportive living treatment facility that needs \$3 million. I would fund that if I could snap my fingers and do it. So I would like to know, based off of what you're describing, what would your community need? What would you bring in if you could?

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Mr. Michel Koostachin: Well, right now, for your information, the government of Canada—we don't have a lot to build new subdivisions. We are maxed out to our borderline. The 91A reserve is limited; it's at its full capacity. We can't build outside it.

What the council member told me once was, "Oh, we're waiting for Mrs. Cannauton from Indian Affairs." What Indian Affairs says is, "Oh, we're waiting for council." So they're playing tag to build our infrastructure. The last one we built was back in 2000, and subdivisions, as well. They had to build a school around our subdivision because of our contaminated site.

We have a new youth centre, but it got contaminated by construction because of the pandemic, so they're going to tear that down.

We had a youth centre; I helped build a youth centre. I was about 10 or 11 years old and I had to carry shingles. That youth centre was turned into an office, which was turned into something else. Kids are left out all the time.

So I would see infrastructure; I would see new buildings for youth.

The federal government has Choose Life funding that Attawapiskat doesn't have. We could use that for mental health. The government of Ontario just announced millions of dollars for mental health and addictions. Attawapiskat First Nation didn't apply or send in a submission. We don't have that.

That's what I meant: the suffering, the colonialism, the genocide of our people. That's what I meant. The system's there. It's not perfect; it's still broken. That's why we call that broken promises.

I went home last May. The Red Cross was there, humanitarian aid. I said, "Let's go have a meeting. I'll help you. Let's build a temporary shelter so we can have soup kitchens, build a homeless shelter." The worker at the Red Cross said, "No, I can't go. I have to wait for council's approval." Council members didn't show up.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): I recognize MPP Dixon.

Ms. Jess Dixon: Just so I understand, you were talking about how you're not able to build outside the borders, and you said that you yourself actually participated in trying to help build a youth centre and it got turned into an office?

So right now, what facilities, if any, are there for young people in your community, and what would it look like if you could fix that?

Mr. Michel Koostachin: Well, just like what the city has. They have a sportsplex for an arena. We have an arena, but they have a swimming pool; we don't have a swimming pool. A lot of our kids go swimming down the river that's carrying mercury because of De Beers, right? They still go swimming. The kids almost die in there because they're not being supervised by their parents. It's

a hot day, plus 30, so that's where they go cool off. We don't have lifeguards. It's just parents looking after other kids, which they gladly do. Sometimes they gladly save other kids because they're going too deep, right?

It would be nice to have that Choose Life funding for Attawapiskat. It would be nice to fix that contaminated new youth centre that wasn't even finished. It would be nice to have youth programming.

Ms. Jess Dixon: Thank you, Chair. Those were my questions.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): MPP Bresee.

Mr. Ric Bresee: I appreciate and know that First Nations people have been the keeper and the protector of the land and water for generations. I personally have been involved in a number of water treatment processes in a number of water treatment facilities and know that, in modern terms—well, I know in past years, there was much damage caused by inappropriate water treatment and management. But modern minds and modern water treatment facilities actually produce water that is cleaner than what is found in nature. So I'm wondering how you feel about that, or how that would impact the Attawapiskat River.

Mr. Michel Koostachin: The government of Ontario, I believe, just announced that they will provide clean water to one of the mine companies in Ontario. How come they can't do that in Attawapiskat? This is our second water plant, but they didn't change the pipes underneath. The pipes are old, probably eroding, so they carry toxins to our homes, to our water system. That's why a lot of our people are getting sick. They get rashes, so they go to the hospital and are turned away. They just give them Tylenol. They're not getting proper treatment. That's an issue with our health care system.

It would be nice to fix our water lines, underneath. A new water treatment centre would be nice—a new water intake.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): MPP Smith.

Mr. Dave Smith: I'd actually like to go to EV Nickel. I know that we don't have a great deal of time left. You've worked in both Ontario and in Quebec. To seize the opportunities to provide energy transition, we need to get some of those critical minerals out of the ground, and we need to do this as soon as possible. Can you talk a little bit about how the financial assurance in phases will accelerate project development?

Mr. Sean Samson: Thank you for the question. I can speak about how phasing financial assurance allows smaller companies to go after potential assets with critical minerals in them and not have to—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): I'm sorry to interrupt, but unfortunately we're out of time for this round of questioning.

I'll now go to the official opposition. You'll have 7.5 minutes. I recognize MPP West.

MPP Jamie West: Thank you, Chair, and thank you as well to the presenters today. I'm going to try to get to everybody, but there's limited time.

Mr. Ali, from Agnico Eagle: I'm curious about—I would assume this is true. Does Agnico Eagle have a policy for consulting with Indigenous communities?

Mr. Mohammed Ali: True. Correct.

MPP Jamie West: Okay. And then Mr. Samson, from EV Nickel: Do you, as well, have a policy on consulting with First Nations and Indigenous communities?

Mr. Sean Samson: Yes, always.

MPP Jamie West: Okay. And so my question is—we're receiving documents. The Matawa Chiefs Council formally put on the public record to the Ontario Legislature and to Ontarians that member First Nations were not consulted and have not endorsed any of the proposed amendments through Bill 71. As well, other Indigenous communities have reached out to us about not being consulted with free, prior and informed consent.

I'm wondering: Related to the policies that your two companies have, would you be agreeable to not moving this bill forward for third vote, which would bring it forward, so that the government would have time to consult with these Indigenous communities? You can start, Mr. Ali.

Mr. Mohammed Ali: As a company, we do have a policy to consult on our projects. When it comes to the bill, obviously it's not within our jurisdiction. We assumed it's the Ontario government's. In terms of supporting a delay, I don't think that's a position that Agnico can talk about, because it's not our bill, nor is it our project to consult with our partners.

MPP Jamie West: Okay. Mr. Samson?

Mr. Sean Samson: I would echo Agnico Eagle. We consult. That's our company policy. Also, we do it directly in conjunction with what the province tells us to do, so we're completely aligned with that.

I wouldn't want to comment about the province's progression of the bill. You're hearing us speak today. My company is supportive of the bill—we look forward to the changes to the act—but I can't speak to the legislative process.

MPP Jamie West: Okay. Fair enough.

Mr. Koostachin, do you think it makes sense to pause movement on this bill until the government has time to fully consult with the Indigenous communities that are being affected in Ontario?

Mr. Michel Koostachin: Yes. I would like to see that put on pause.

MPP Jamie West: One of the things that I'm struggling with, Mr. Koostachin, that I'm hearing about is—my understanding is that we require a nation-to-nation agreement with First Nations and the government. But what I'm hearing about is prosperity for mining companies—and I'm all for that; my background is with mining—but I don't hear about the nation-to-nation agreement. What I hear about often are donations. Is a donation the same as a nation-to-nation agreement of shared prosperity?

Mr. Michel Koostachin: Well, nation-to-nation is the government paying these chiefs and councils. That's not a nation; that's a second man, like a dealership. Ford sells vehicles, but it has to go to a dealership, paying these guys to sell their vehicles. What we call chief and council is a decoy for the government. They work for the government, they get paid an honorarium with the government.

On behalf of the community itself, let's say 91A reserve, Attawapiskat First Nation, our chief doesn't consult us. When they came with the De Beers IBA agreement, we were divided. The chiefs were divided. We didn't sit down together as a nation. They divided this just the way right now with Webequie and Marten Falls. They're not a nation. You have to include the grassroots. When we signed that treaty, the chief wasn't even established yet. It was the Indian Act that established the chief and council, put it on reserve. They already had legislation in Ottawa in 1876. In 1905, that's when we signed the treaty—hey, wait a minute.

MPP Jamie West: I appreciate the clarity, because I didn't fully understand it.

Mr. Samson, a follow-up, probably, to the previous question a little bit. They're talking about closure plans, and one of the concerns that I have is the burden if a mining company is unable to fulfill the fiduciary burden. We know that Kam Kotia mine near Timmins—you talked about operating near Timmins, so I'm sure you're aware. I think it's \$27 million that the public purse had to pay for the closure of the mine. I know this was before, but this is one of the loopholes that I'm worried about in this bill and that my constituents talked to me about in the bill: When it comes to pollution, when it comes to closure plans, how do we ensure communities will have clean drinking water or places where our children can swim afterwards with the changes to the closure plan?

Mr. Sean Samson: I think you're conflating more than a couple of things here. My understanding of the changes with the phases would include that, with a proposed disturbance, the financial assurance to cover said disturbance would be made. You're not asking for any loopholes or back doors. I think when you talk about—I don't know the specifics of your example you raised, but I have been involved in a forced closure done by the province in Ontario relatively recently, and the issues with the current closure plan structure—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): One minute.

Mr. Sean Samson: Sorry, was I cut off?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): No, one-minute warning.

Mr. Sean Samson: You need to trust your bureaucracy. We have a professional bureaucracy in the province. The province needs to continue to make sure the closure plans are up to date and relevant. The big concern about closure plans is, of course, ongoing inflation and the fact the closure plans don't keep track with the inflation. That was certainly the instance when I was involved in a forced closure in Ontario.

I will note, when you think about phased, conceptually, by having more opportunities to go back and update the closure plan as you go through phases, it means you will have a much better eye on inflation. I would just add that in there. There's no interest in mining companies that I've ever been involved with—publicly traded mining companies—to somehow take advantage of an opportunity to get out in front with the disturbance away from your financial assurance.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): Thank you. That's all the time we have. I want to thank all three presenters for coming to committee today. I want to thank all the members for your participation. The committee will now recess until 1 p.m.

The committee recessed from 1205 to 1300.

FIRST MINING GOLD

BLUE HERON ENVIRONMENTAL

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): Good afternoon, members. The committee will resume its public hearings on Bill 71, An Act to amend the Mining Act.

I will now call on First Mining Gold. You will have seven minutes for your presentation. Please state your name for Hansard, and you may begin.

Mr. Steve Lines: Thank you [*inaudible*].

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): Sorry. We're having some audio difficulties. I don't know if it's on your end or our end, but—

Interjection.

Mr. Steve Lines: I'm hearing it as well.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): Okay. I think we've fixed the problem.

Mr. Steve Lines: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My name is Stephen Lines, and I'm vice-president of environment and community relations for First Mining Gold. It's a pleasure to be with everyone here this afternoon.

If you'll allow me to share my screen, I had prepared a few slides to help walk through the presentation here today. Are you able to see the screen?

Mr. Ric Bresee: Mr. Chair, are we able to see the screen?

Mr. Steve Lines: Thank you. Is that okay? Can you see the screen?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner): Yes.

Mr. Steve Lines: Okay. Thank you again for having me here today on behalf of First Mining Gold. It's a privilege to be able to present to you on the proposed improvements to the Mining Act and Ontario's regulatory system for mines and mining projects as well, for those of us who have projects in the pipeline.

My name is Steve Lines. Like I said, I'm the VP of environment and community relations for First Mining Gold. It's our privilege to note that we work in both Treaty 9 and Treaty 3 regions of Ontario. As you'll see today through my presentation, the environment and community relations is a key focus for us as part of who we are and how we advance our projects, and it's something that we're very proud of.

Quickly, on slide one: First Mining—I think it's kind of relevant to today's discussion regarding the Mining Act and closure plans and what it means to be a qualified person in the industry. First Mining has five directors, all of whom have outstanding experience in the mining industry, and a management team as well with decades of experience in mine planning, mine construction, operation

and also on the permitting side of building and permitting new mines.

First Mining is what you'd consider a junior mining company. We don't currently operate mines at present, although we do have a significant pipeline of projects in the exploration phase and advance permitting towards development. For a junior like First Mining, that's rather extraordinary.

Our flagship project in Ontario includes the Springpole gold project. It's located about 110 kilometres east of Red Lake, and First Mining acquired that property in 2015. Overall, to advance a project like Springpole to where it is today, having completed a pre-feasibility study and well advanced in the environmental assessment process, just over \$120 million has been spent to get the project to where it is. Springpole is one of the largest gold projects in Canada in terms of its potential gold production and is forecast to create 370 new jobs for Ontario. In addition to that, over the 20-year lifespan, it's forecast to create a total of over 44,000 person-years of employment and add to Canada's GDP by over \$8 billion.

Our other interesting projects in Ontario include our 100%-owned Cameron exploration project and our exploration project joint venture with Auteco Minerals, all of which are located in northwestern Ontario. We also just acquired an advanced-stage project in Quebec. It's a multi-million-ounce gold project as well. So there's a lot going on in First Mining.

Just quickly, before getting into some of the details of the Mining Act and closure planning, I think it's important to note and highlight where First Mining is and where the industry more broadly is sitting today with respect to environment and social performance. It's at the forefront, like I mentioned, of what we do. First Mining, again, is a junior company. We've spent over \$9 million in the last two years alone on environmental studies. That includes things like a four-year advanced research project on boreal caribou that will help form and establish long-term conservation practices for caribou in Ontario.

We also have a strong Indigenous employee base: 51% of our employees at-site are Indigenous. And we've contributed \$3.5 million last year to Aboriginal-owned businesses.

Moving into what it is to build new mines in Ontario and some of the challenges and opportunities: Prior to joining First Mining in 2020, I had the opportunity to work on the Hardrock project for Greenstone Gold Mines over the course of seven years. That's really kind of where we sit today: Building a new mine in Ontario typically takes upwards of seven years to acquire the authorizations needed to put shovels in the ground. On that project, it started in 2014. The EA was approved in March 2020—

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakabuski): You have one minute remaining.

Mr. Steve Lines: Thank you—and it still required a year after that to obtain the closure plan.

Moving on to Springpole: We're in a similar case today, and I think there's an opportunity there to look at avenues for approving a closure plan in conjunction with the EA.

We also have significant infrastructure proposed as part of the Springpole project, all of which has a lifespan longer than the mine life itself and presents significant benefit opportunities for local communities, including First Nations, to keep that infrastructure in place long after the mine may be closed.

The last key areas are around some of the brownfield redevelopments in the project. At two of our sites we've been trying to file closure plans recently and have encountered certain challenges in being able to file the closure plans—

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakabuski): Thank you very much. Your time has expired.

We will now move to our next presenter, Blue Heron Environmental. You will have seven minutes for your presentation. Please state your name for the Hansard and you may begin.

Ms. Linda Byron: Thank you. My name is Linda Byron. Blue Heron Environmental is my company. Thanks again for allowing me to participate. I am the founder and owner of Blue Heron Environmental consulting based in Timmins. We have satellite offices in Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie, Thunder Bay, Red Lake and all the mining camps. We're a fairly small firm, but we're in the mining camps.

Prior to starting the company in 2004, I worked in the mining industry for 15 years at gold mines and base metal mines in the Timmins area. I'm Timmins born and bred, and so this is where my home is.

My company is a little different than other consulting firms. We're boutique and we're more on-the-ground support, so we work very closely with the site personnel, and one of the things that we do is closure planning. The other thing, just based on my experience: In 2021 and 2022, we were hired by the Ontario Mining Association to author something called the Proponents' Guide to Developing a Closure Plan because to develop a closure plan is a little bit difficult and unclear, and so the Ontario Mining Association hired us to build a how-to book on how to do it. I'm the author of that document. It's still in draft stage, but I think in the authoring of it, it became clear to those of us at the Ontario Mining Association as well as myself on where there was lack of clarity and maybe some administrative burden that could be helped a little bit. So that's just a bit on my background.

We also worked very closely with the local Indigenous communities. We have staff that work with Indigenous communities to help them understand mine closure plans. We mentor community members, and we help facilitate discussions between Indigenous community members and the mining companies so that they can understand what each other are saying and come to the table together. So we work, like I say, with Indigenous communities and the mining companies as well, and we feel that we're impacted stakeholders because about 75% to 80% of our clientele are mining companies, and a good chunk of our staff works on mine closure plans on a regular basis.

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Some of the issues that we encounter when we're offering mine closure plans—because that's some of the

things that we do—is lack of clarity. The Mining Act and the mine closure plan and the rehab code—some of the parts of them are not clear or they’re contradictory, which leads to confusion when we’re submitting closure plans and they’re being reviewed by Ministry of Mines personnel. Some reviewers will take things a certain way and some reviewers will take it a different way, and so we will literally offer the closure plan based on who we know the reviewer is going to be because they’re going to look at it from a different perspective. So that leads to some confusion, especially when the public or Indigenous communities are looking at it. We’re like, “Well, this section of the province is doing it this way and this section of the province is doing it another way.” So there’s a definite lack of clarity that I think Bill 71 will help a lot on.

The other thing, too, is that the technical review times—and you’re probably hearing this a lot—are very lengthy, and a lot of that comes from the lack of clarity, but also that some of the technical reviewers—you know, we’ve got qualified professionals that are writing these closure plans and they’re stamping them and we’re sending them for a technical review, but because it’s so subjective and because the guidance isn’t clear, there’s a difference of opinion. It’s not all about technical components; it’s just differences of opinion sometimes.

A lot of times, we’re submitting closure plans and the reviews come back with 100-plus comments. It has taken six months to get to this point and some of the comments are irrelevant; some of the comments have no merit; some of the comments are not even linked to regulatory requirements. So what used to take us three to six months to do and about \$25,000 to \$40,000 to do is now taking us well over a year and is costing proponents in the range of \$100,000 to develop a mine closure plan—and that’s just writing the document. That’s not counting the baseline studies and the years that it takes to get ready. This is writing the document, and that’s because there’s a lack of clarity. We call it the closure plan merry-go-round. You submit a closure plan and it goes for a first-round review and then a second round—it just goes round and round and round to reviews and it never gets off the merry-go-round. We think that Bill 71 will help facilitate that administratively.

In terms of flexibility and how we think Bill 71 will help is that currently there are some components of the code that are very restrictive. For example, you’re required to remove all the buildings, right? All the buildings have to come down. All the infrastructure has got to come down and it has got to look green and look like it’s close to what it was before the mine got there.

The problem with that is that, in some cases, species at risk, for example, have taken up residence in a headframe or in an open pit. The Endangered Species Act says you cannot destroy that habitat and so you’ve got environmental legislation that’s contradicting the Mining Act and the code. The Mining Act says you have to flood your open pit or close it out, and the Endangered Species Act says you can’t destroy the habitat. There’s contradiction there and there’s no flexibility in the code to be able to say, “Or something that will also do the trick.” Bill 71 allows for that flexibility.

Along the same lines, Indigenous communities are very interested at the end of the day what the site will look like.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. John Yakabuski): You have one minute remaining.

Ms. Linda Byron: Sure. So the communities would sometimes like us to maintain a road for long-term access. The code doesn’t allow for that. You have to close it out, and that’s it; that’s all. Whether the community wants it or not, you cannot. So we think that from an Indigenous consultation perspective, it will allow for a more meaningful contribution to how closure plans look at the end of the day.

In summary, I think that’s all I had to say in general. As a proponent and a helper of proponents, I think we support Bill 71, and we think it will allow for less administrative burden and a little more flexibility to do what needs to be done in terms of closing out a mine.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. John Yakabuski): Thank you for your presentation—both presentations.

We’ll now move to questioning by members of the committee. This round will begin with members from the government side. You have seven and a half minutes.

MPP Leardi.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: To Mr. Lines: Very quickly, Mr. Lines, you mentioned a junior mining company. Explain to the committee, please, what is a junior mining company, very quickly.

Mr. Steve Lines: Thank you for the question. For me, it’s often companies that are at the exploration phase. We have a smaller market cap than some of the major gold producers that you would see, like Newmont or Barrick, for example, so we’re often earlier in the door trying to find new resources, trying to prove up new resources and advance them through developments. First Mining, for example, doesn’t have an operating mine going. We don’t really have a source of revenue other than what we can raise in the market.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I’d like to jump in right there, because you said something important: You don’t have a source of revenue yet, right?

Mr. Steve Lines: Correct.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: So you’ve already spent \$120 million of investments. Is that correct?

Mr. Steve Lines: In total on the project, it’s the ballpark number. First Mining on its own, since about 2015, I would say, has spent about in the neighbourhood of \$40 million to \$50 million.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: When you say you don’t have a source of revenue, it means you haven’t sold any product yet, right?

Mr. Steve Lines: Correct. We have not produced any gold.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Okay. Now, let’s talk about infrastructure. Are you building infrastructure, or are you planning on building infrastructure?

Mr. Steve Lines: We are planning on building infrastructure. The Springpole project is in a remote area of northwestern Ontario; it’s a fly-in exploration camp currently. To support a mine construction, we would need to

build an access road and an 89-kilometre transmission line to bring power into the site.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: All right. Thank you very much. My last question to you: We've heard that the regulatory process causes delays throughout the mining sequence. How will the proposed changes affect the proponents in the exploration phase of the mining sequence?

Mr. Steve Lines: Even in the exploration phase, as an exploration company with an operating site, we're also required to file a closure plan with the ministry—

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Let me jump in right there. So, what you're saying is you haven't moved any gold yet, but you're still required to file a closure plan?

Mr. Steve Lines: Correct, among the other permits that we might need to undertake the activities at the sites.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Okay. Sorry for interrupting. Continue.

Mr. Steve Lines: So, for example, at our Cameron exploration property, that was originally explored by others prior to us in the 1980s, and there's a small stockpile that's been stored there for the last 30-some-odd years that we've been looking to clean up and remove from the site. To do that, we require a closure plan, and to date, it's been challenging to even get that off the ground with the ministry.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Thank you very much.

I'm going to turn my attention now to Ms. Byron from Blue Heron. Ms. Byron, could you quickly give the committee a very brief synopsis of your qualifications?

Ms. Linda Byron: I have a degree in biology from Laurentian University, and then my other qualifications are related to experience—close to 30 years of working in the mining industry. I have no other professional designation.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: So you've been 30 years at this?

Ms. Linda Byron: That's correct.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: You used a phrase called the "closure plan merry-go-round." What did you mean by that?

Ms. Linda Byron: I mean that we submit a draft closure plan, it comes back months later with hundreds of comments, we address all of those comments, we send it back. By this time, there are new people at the table. They look at it again. We get another round of 75 comments, the same components that have been looked at. We address those, and around and around it goes. Sometimes it goes four or five times. Because of the length of time that it takes, there's been turnover at the ministry level, and so different professionals are looking at it.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Now, I'm going to ask you about qualified persons. How will relying on qualified persons ensure that Ontario's standards for rehabilitation are met?

Ms. Linda Byron: What they're looking at in Bill 71—my understanding is it's using the qualified person designation to certify components of the closure plan so that QPs that have the right level of experience and qualifications can sign off and say, "This is the right thing to do." For example, for geochemistry, which is the chemistry of the rock, a geochemist would sign off and say, "We have assessed the geochemistry and we have stamped it and it's

certified. I am the qualified person to look at it." There's no need to go and ask another similarly qualified professional or somebody that may even be less qualified than the person that's signing off on it.

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Mr. Anthony Leardi: Last question from me: I want to know, what was the best-case scenario you've had so far with regard to a closure plan, that is to say, the shortest period of time it ever took for you to get one approved and the worst-case scenario, that is to say, the worst amount of time or the longest amount of time it ever took you to get one approved?

Ms. Linda Byron: My experience is 30 years. Early days, it would have taken 45 to 90 days to file one. I'm talking 15 years ago. Currently, we're having difficulty filing any. It's taking two years and then some. So it's very difficult to file a closure plan. We do a big happy dance when we do.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Okay. I see I have a little bit more time left. I'll give that to my colleague here, Mr. Smith.

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakabuski): MPP Smith.

Mr. Dave Smith: My question is for First Mining Gold. With respect to the closure plan, I've got a nepheline syenite mine in my riding. It is the largest in North America. They started mining it in 1904. They figure that they still have a little over 100 years' worth of product left in the ground to come out.

On a closure plan, is it realistic to say that what we were talking about doing in 1904 won't be what we are talking about doing in 2125, when that mine actually gets to the point of being closed? To me, it makes sense that we have an easy ability to adjust the mining closing plan. Is that a safe assumption?

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakabuski): You have 30 seconds remaining.

Mr. Steve Lines: Just to clarify, the question is regarding whether the practices today are the same as what they were about 100 years ago? Is that the question?

Mr. Dave Smith: Basically, yes. Has technology changed, have things changed so it makes sense to be able to adjust the closure plan very easily?

Mr. Steve Lines: Yes, absolutely. Everything has changed in the mining processing world—

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakabuski): Thank you very much. The time for government questions has concluded.

We will now move to the opposition. MPP West.

MPP Jamie West: Mr. Lines, if you want to finish your answer, I know it's tough when getting cut off. And if there's any more of your presentation you want to finish, if you want to just—or were you done?

Mr. Steve Lines: The presentation, I was okay with that. Thank you very much. Just to maybe conclude the last response, the technologies have changed. Understanding of the environment has changed. Closure practices have changed dramatically, and there are a lot of new and

innovative tools at the industry's disposal to implement for sites that need to be closed out and reclaimed, for sure.

MPP Jamie West: I'm going to ask Ms. Byron—I like the small and mighty in your presentation. It resonates. I'm also a Laurentian grad. You were talking about qualified people. At the technical briefing we went to, there was no definition for a qualified person. I like your reference when there's a clear definition of why someone would be qualified. My concern is when there isn't a definition, that we could deem somebody as qualified.

I don't even know where to start for one of the definitions. I don't even know what courses you would take. And if someone deemed me qualified, I can do a terrible job on it. This will be a weird question, but would you agree that there should be some sort of basis of definition for a qualified person?

Ms. Linda Byron: Absolutely, and I think there are a lot of references we can pull from out of environmental legislation, out of other instruments we can pull from. It definitely needs to be defined, and we could use examples that exist. I don't know what it actually looks like, but it's got to be a level of experience, education and some sort of ethics exam or something, something that would—

MPP Jamie West: A checklist.

Ms. Linda Byron: Exactly, yes. It's got to be defined, and I think there are things that we can pull from. We're not starting from scratch. There are examples in other legislation that we can use.

MPP Jamie West: I thought it was interesting as well, when you talked about the closure merry-go-round. You were talking about endangered species and then also maintaining a road and how to balance those. And I could see how you can do this in the act, but I almost feel like it might also help to have some sort of appeal process or some way to explain: Does it make sense to remove the transmission line? Does it make sense to remove the road? Because the way I read the act, it's just that the minister can determine. But it's not spelled out clearly in the act to me how you determine or how the minister makes the determination. Was it clear to you? I don't know if you—

Ms. Linda Byron: No, there are a number of places in the act and the reg and the code that it's not clear to me. I tried at one point to develop a flow chart, and there are a lot of places where we don't know how they determine these things. It's determined by a person, but how that determination is made is not defined. So there's a lot of room for definition in there, and that's one place, for sure.

MPP Jamie West: Okay. There's a section in the act where a lot of the roles in the past that used to be by the director are being replaced by the minister. Now, the minister currently has a mining background and a decent understanding, but cabinets get shuffled, governments change, parties and stuff. The director has always been a non-partisan role. Are you comfortable with it shifting to a minister who can change roles and appointments so their background can be different? So your Minister of Mines could be a dairy farmer, I'll say. John from our party could be the minister. I don't think we would make John the—but I'm just saying, does that make sense to you?

Ms. Linda Byron: I guess it depends on their staff and their staff's level of experience and how they're delegating those things. Really, I don't know how that works, but I think you're right. The person that's making that decision needs to be an informed person or at least have the staff that can be qualified to inform them.

MPP Jamie West: Yes, okay.

And then I'll go back to First Mining Gold, Mr. Lines—it's hard to balance like this; I preferred in the past when we had one person at a time, but in terms of sharing the time—one of the things you said that really caught my ear was that 51% of your employees were Indigenous. In the beginning, you said Indigenous relationships were a key priority, which for a lot of organizations sometimes feels like just a boilerplate thing that people say, and so it's good to see it in action. What advice would you have for government to have a better relationship with Indigenous communities?

Mr. Steve Lines: It's a very good question. I think in the time over the years that I've spent on various different projects, the one thing that always is truly helpful and meaningful is the time spent with the communities and the community members. It's really, at the end of the day, I think, a lot about building trust and relationships, sharing information and doing that on a sustained basis. Sometimes it happens from project to project when issues become difficult, when there are obstacles in the way, and then discussions take place. But it's sustaining that communication and relationship-building more evenly across time so that when things do happen and challenges arise and things need to be discussed, there's a basis and relationship there to do so. That's not to say the government isn't doing that; I think it's just always an important area that can always use more effort.

MPP Jamie West: Yes, I appreciate that. I didn't mean to imply—it's a decent success story. I like the idea of sustainability, because in the past—and I have a background with mining as well—it felt more transactional. It was more one-time or a check box, so I appreciate the advice.

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakabuski): You have one minute remaining.

MPP Jamie West: Thank you, Chair.

I lost where I was going with my train of thought.

With the closure plans, could you spell out how this changes—and I only have a minute, so just the change from having to cover the entire closure plan to having this phased-in approach and what that means. Sorry—Ms. Lines.

Ms. Linda Byron: Me?

MPP Jamie West: Ms. Byron, sorry.

Ms. Linda Byron: The phased-in approach, from my understanding, is that, right now, whether you're building something today or 10 years from now, you have to have the closure plan in place for that eventual construction. The phased-in approach allows you to put financial assurance and the closure plan in place just before you build it. I need a treatment pond today, but I don't need a full four-stage treatment pond until year six, so I would put together my closure plan and financial assurance for the first phase,

and then, before I build the next thing, I would finish that part—

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakabuski): Thank you. That concludes this round of questioning for the opposition.
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We now move to the independent members. MPP Hsu.

Mr. Ted Hsu: I wanted to just go back to this idea of qualified personnel for mine closures. I think it does have to be defined in regulations, so I just want to try something out on you. It seems like these qualified personnel should have something to lose if they make mistakes, a professional licence or designation or something about their reputation that is valuable, that they don't want to lose.

Would you agree that when it comes time for the government to define "qualified personnel" for mine closures in regulation, that they should put something like that in the definition?

Ms. Linda Byron: Yes, like any qualified professional who is signing off or an engineer who is stamping something, their licence should be on the line. Agreed. I'm not a QP, so it's easy for me to say that, but yes.

Mr. Ted Hsu: If I could go a little bit further, could we make sure that whoever is the qualified personnel working on the mine closure, if they're not working in separate firms, there could be some kind of wall to prevent communication between the qualified personnel who are evaluating the economic potential for SEC filings or whatever and people who are the different professionals who are evaluating the mine closure plan?

Ms. Linda Byron: Some objectivity requirements of some sort would make sense to me, yes.

Mr. Ted Hsu: To prevent a conflict of interest?

Ms. Linda Byron: Yes.

Mr. Ted Hsu: Thank you.

For First Mining: I wanted to ask about the phased financial assurances in the bill. Because you're junior, you have less financial resources than an established company. How can you assure the general public that the phased financial assurances will be sufficient to cover any closure costs, in case the commodity price goes south and you can't proceed with the mine?

Mr. Steve Lines: Thank you. It's a good question. In an earlier career path, I was a regulator up in the territories. One of the things that I did was work on closure planning and financial assurance. What's typically required is that as you move from an early phase of construction, for example, where you've planned to build a certain amount of infrastructure, before you actually go build it is when you would post a commensurate level of financial assurance to cover the reclamation costs associated with the activities that are going to take place in that year.

You wouldn't be able to move forward, even in a phased financial assurance approach, with the activities that you're proposing to do unless the financial assurance was still provided upfront. But it's just a difference in, say, for example, a reclamation cost for an overall mine; as you're just starting to build it, the fully built mine might cost \$60 million to \$100 million to reclaim.

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakabuski): One minute remaining.

Mr. Steve Lines: But you're only building that over the course of time. The idea is to provide the financial assurance in stages, prior to and commensurate with the phasing of the development process.

Mr. Ted Hsu: Okay.

Just a last question for Linda Byron: The qualified personnel for mine closure are being moved essentially from inside the ministry to outside, potentially into a private firm. Could you comment on why it is that the personnel inside the ministry are not good enough now?

Ms. Linda Byron: There are qualified-person requirements in the regulation right now for certain components for the closure measures. I don't know that it's that they're not good enough in the ministry; I just think that there's a duplication of effort. If a geotechnical engineer is signing off that the closure measures are sufficient, and that person is qualified—

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakabuski): Sorry, but time has expired. Thank you very much. That concludes round one of questioning.

We'll now return to the government side for seven and a half minutes. MPP Leardi.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Very quickly, to Mr. Lines: Section 6 of the existing act has something called a tribunal, which can settle differences between the ministry and a proponent or other parties. Has your organization ever had recourse to use section 6?

Mr. Steve Lines: No, I've not been part of or heard of a case that has gone down the tribunal group.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Thank you. Ms. Byron, same thing; same question to you: Section 6 of the existing act has a tribunal to settle disputes between a proponent and the ministry or other parties. Has your organization ever had recourse to section 6?

Ms. Linda Byron: I never have and I've never heard of anyone who has.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Thank you very much. Over to Mr. Flack.

Mr. Rob Flack: Thank you, sir. Ms. Byron, a couple of questions, please: What are the environmental benefits—or are there any—from leaving existing infrastructure rather than tearing it down?

Ms. Linda Byron: I'll use the same example I used in my discussion in that, from an endangered species perspective, sometimes we're creating habitat by putting up a waste rock pile or making an open pit, and so there is habitat created in that instance. I think I've seen in other closure plans where habitat was purposely created for wildlife. For example, they left culverts in place, but they covered them with soil and it made a cave for bears to den in. So there are closure measures that you can do to enhance habitat for wildlife, for example.

Mr. Rob Flack: Great. And secondly, how might allowing alternative plan closure land uses change what a closed-out site might look like?

Ms. Linda Byron: I think it can significantly change it because, at the outset, you would set out what your end

land use looks like, your objective of your closure plan, and then the input from the public and the Indigenous communities and all the stakeholders would form what that looks like at the end of the day. So it's not necessarily just a greenfield site that's got trees on it; maybe there's some kind of land use for the public to have recreational purposes for or other means. I think it would open it up for the end land users.

Mr. Rob Flack: Without a lot of investment.

Ms. Linda Byron: That's right: the same amount or less investment than currently being undertaken. It's not necessarily what the stakeholders want.

Mr. Rob Flack: Thank you. I'll turn it over to Mr. Bresee.

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakabuski): MPP Bresee.

Mr. Ric Bresee: My question is to Ms. Byron, as well. I know you've talked about qualified individuals, qualified persons, quite a bit, but I want to talk about the flexibility to set out an alternative rehabilitation measure. How would that change your work and how do you think that would change the effort as a whole?

Ms. Linda Byron: I think it would introduce some common sense. I'll use an example. We have some sites that have pipelines that have been in place 15, 20-plus years. These pipelines are buried; there's no environmental hazard with those pipelines; the trees have grown up around them. The current code requires us to tear down all the trees, rip up those pipes and put them in a landfill site. That makes no sense.

It would change the way we look at things and introduce some common sense to it.

Mr. Ric Bresee: Thank you. Following on that, in my own experience as a municipal leader, we dealt with several projects where there was infrastructure that, because there was a closure agreement, that infrastructure had to be removed. We lost some infrastructure that could have been very beneficial to the community. Do you have examples of that with regard to the mines that you've worked with?

Ms. Linda Byron: Absolutely. I'll use the road example again, where, whether it's an Indigenous community or some kind of group that's interested in having long-term access to a certain area, if we have to rip up the roads but the community wants to use that access, we can't because we have to rip up the road.

Mr. Ric Bresee: Thank you very much.

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakabuski): MPP Leardi.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Ms. Byron, thinking back on your 30 years of experience in this industry, 30 years ago was 1993, and here we are at 2023. My first question to you is—and I believe you've already answered it, but I just wanted to clarify something. You said that your best experience was a few months and now you have submissions that are over two years and they still haven't been approved. This long two-year time period: What, in your view, is causing that?

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Ms. Linda Byron: I think it's the duplication of the reviews. You've got qualified persons developing a closure plan, signing off on the closure plan and the closure

measures, you've got input from the community, everybody agrees, and then a whole second set of professionals at the ministry has to look at it and give their opinion, and there's turnover there. It's the duplication of effort, in my opinion.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: So comparing the process that took a few months with the process that's now taking over two years, in your view, are we doing better with the environmental process now than we did when we had a few months of process in place?

Ms. Linda Byron: Compared to what there was 30 years ago, we are doing better, but the expectations are greater as well. Even if it's just the proponent that's having qualified professionals sign off on it, the standard is higher than it was 30 years ago.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Thank you.

Back to you, Mr. Lines: We just talked about a two-year delay with regard to development versus a couple of months. Give the committee an idea: What does two years' worth of delay do with the financing of a project?

Mr. Steve Lines: In some cases, it's extremely challenging, if not a project killer. We're looking to attract strategic investors, investors in the company, investors in the project, and if there's a lack of regulatory certainty, it creates significant challenges—

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakabuski): You have one minute remaining.

Mr. Steve Lines: For a company like First Mining, we also have a project in Quebec, and, every year, we have to take a look at where we're going to allocate the budget spend. Looking at the regulatory system in both jurisdictions is something that we consider very closely, and if we know that we can advance a project in one jurisdiction a lot faster than another, then that is something that we fully take into account.

I think the proposed improvements to the Mining Act will continue to attract the investment in Ontario and the appeal for companies like First Mining to continue our work.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: When you talk about moving outside of Ontario to a different jurisdiction, how much money are you talking about moving? A couple hundred thousand dollars? Or how many millions?

Mr. Steve Lines: This is millions of dollars that we spend every year to advance projects in Ontario—

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakabuski): I'm sorry, that concludes the time for this round of questioning for the government.

We will move to 7.5 minutes for the official opposition. MPP West.

MPP Jamie West: I have a question for Ms. Byron as well. I'm going to take advantage of your expertise in closure plans. You were talking about leaving in water pipes and things like that, and I was wondering how we ensure, as government—all of us are trying to make good decisions—that there is neutrality when you're making decisions.

Today and tomorrow there are going to be several people deputizing and giving us advice, but only one represents Indigenous people, so it feels like there's a better opportunity for mining companies and the Ontario Mining Association to connect with government than Indigenous communities, no matter who's in power—I'm not pointing fingers.

How do we ensure that there's neutrality in making good decisions? If the mining company, for example, is saying, "We brought water in, so we want to keep it. Why would we remove these pipes?" and the Indigenous community is saying, "Well, they're almost at their failure, so we'll have to remove them to replace them anyways at a certain point," how can we ensure in this that both voices are heard equally?

Ms. Linda Byron: My example was of a pipeline that is no longer in use, so it's a closed pipeline, but I understand. I think that ongoing consultation with the communities to see what they want at the end of the day has to have a strong part in it, and it does. In a lot of these cases the Indigenous communities are agreeing with the mining company, "Yes, we think it's better to leave that pipe there," but the act does not allow us to, or the regs don't allow us to.

MPP Jamie West: Okay. I think my colleague is going to take over.

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakabuski): MPP Mamakwa.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch. Thank you to both of you. I know that this morning, Steven and Linda, we had a presentation from somebody from Attawapiskat as part of the Friends of the Attawapiskat River. One of the things that he talked about is some of the issues that they face with the boil-water advisory in this community. He spoke about the housing crisis that's happening in this community. He spoke about the suicide crisis that's happening in the community, and I know that he talked about the Victor mine run by De Beers at that time. At the same time, the government is talking to people about prosperity. Even though we had a diamond mine right next to a First Nation, they still live in these terms.

One of the things he talked about, as well: They cannot build on the reserve anymore, because they have run out of space. There's a process called ATR, addition to reserve, and the province hasn't been there. What happens is, because of the overcrowding, they cannot build any more homes. I think the message was that even though there are mines next to us, there is no prosperity. What will you do different compared to what Attawapiskat is going through, having the Victor mine right next door, as De Beers did?

Ms. Linda Byron: In my opinion, the changes in the bill will allow for more inclusive participation in how a mine is not necessarily operated, but closed. They would like to see something happen at the end of the day, and we can actually make that happen as a mining company—I'm not a mining company, but currently we cannot. If the community wants something left, a building or a road, we can't leave it now, whereas the changes will allow for that

kind of thing. My thought is that the participation from the communities can be more easily adhered to.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: So having participation in that process, the closure plans, will bring prosperity? Do you think that they'll bring prosperity?

Ms. Linda Byron: Well, I can't speak to prosperity specifically. I can speak in terms of closure measures. Specifically to that, if there's something the community would like to have at the end of the day, then the mining company is in a position to leave it to you; right now, they can't.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Yes. I only use "prosperity" because that's what the government members use when they talk to us. When I ask questions in the House, they always talk about prosperity.

I was in North Caribou Lake earlier in the year. This was on January 7. Since 1993, there is a mine that is in a nearby community, Musselwhite mine, which they've been mining for 30 years. In that community, they have a housing crisis. They have a water crisis. I met a young boy, four years old. He had skin conditions, just covered in scabs, and he had to be medevaced out.

When the government talks to me about prosperity, even after 30 years, these First Nations are still under boil-water advisories. I know they always talk about crown lands. Crown lands are these treaty territories. These are actually in Treaty 9. Ontario was a signatory to this treaty. It's only numbered treaties from 1 to 11 that have the province's signature on them, and this province is Ontario—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. John Yakabuski): You have one minute remaining.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: —and they do not respect and honour the treaties in that way. It's not about IBAs. Yes, I commend the 40 IBAs that are signed in Ontario, but they do not bring prosperity.

What does prosperity mean to you?

Ms. Linda Byron: To me? I mean, not necessarily as a professional writing closure plans, but generally what prosperity would mean to me would be that the community would be able to deal with those issues that you're talking about on a financial perspective. But that's just a personal opinion.

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Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Yes, and that's exactly what they cannot address in here even though they talk like that.

I'm just wondering, Stephen, if you have any quick comments—I don't how much time is there.

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakabuski): Ten seconds.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: No, never mind.

Laughter.

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakabuski): Thank you very much. The time for questioning on the part of the opposition has concluded.

We'll now move to the independent members for four and a half minutes. MPP Schreiner.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I appreciate both presenters for being here today.

I'm going to start with asking a question to you, Linda, if that's okay. I want to get to this issue of how we can speed up the approval of these closure plans in a way that addresses a concern that had been raised. Some people have expressed concerns that the changes proposed in Bill 71 would mean that we could have a conflict of interest because a proponent could have qualified persons sign off on plans—anyone else signing off on it. Is there conflict there?

But you've also indicated—and, I think, very rightfully so—that 30 years ago it took 45 to 90 days. Now, it takes two years or longer because of all the duplication that exists in the current system. So I'm trying to think, is there any way that we can maintain the separation so we don't have the conflict and get back to actually making decisions in 45 to 90 days so the public has confidence in those decisions and we address the legitimate and valid concerns about delays and the cost of delays? You're an expert in this. Do you have any thoughts that you could provide us on that?

Ms. Linda Byron: My first thought is around the idea of conflict. I'm not a QP, but I am a professional in what I do. If a mining company is asking me to sign off on something that I'm not comfortable signing off on, it's my licence on the line. I have many other clients; I don't have just the one client. So I won't do it, and most qualified professionals and people who are stamping things have ethics; they wouldn't sign off on something that they weren't comfortable with. That's their licence, and that's their liability insurance. So I think we have to rely on that.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: So one way possibly to address this issue is to make sure we've clarified in the legislation or the regulations what the consequences are from a professional standpoint of inappropriately signing off on closure plans or at least their component of a closure plan.

Ms. Linda Byron: It's similar to what a P.Eng. would face if they would sign off on something, yes.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Right. Is something like that in place right now that you see?

Ms. Linda Byron: I'm not aware of it, but again, I'm not a QP; I'm not a P.Eng. I know that they have to write ethics exams and some exams that they have to write and some responsibility. So maybe Steve is—

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I don't know; Steve, do you want to comment on that? Go ahead.

Mr. Steve Lines: I appreciate that a P.Eng. is held to a high standard of professional practice. Ultimately, a lot of it comes back to ethics, which is a big part of being a registered professional.

For myself, I'm registered as a professional biologist in the province of Alberta. I'm not aware that Ontario has a similar professional designation for a biologist. But I carry that practice with me in what I do across the country. I'm still accountable to the code of ethics that I signed as a professional biologist in Alberta. It's something, when you receive a professional stamp, whether it's in Ontario or outside the province, that you take very, very seriously.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Great. I appreciate that. It's interesting that Alberta has that designation and Ontario doesn't, so I may get to some of your points later.

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakubski): You have one minute remaining.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: In my final minute here, what has changed that it used to take 45 to 90 days and now it takes more than two years, beyond the duplication? I understand that, but what else has changed?

Ms. Linda Byron: Originally, when O. Reg. 240/00 came out in 2000, the concept was what we're looking at now. It was that professionals were stamping closure plans. So all the government did was take the closure plan as stamped, as certified, and filed it. That's why it's called "filing" a closure plan and not "approving" a closure plan.

Over time I think that there were gaps. Absolutely, there were gaps, and some, whether it was because they didn't have the capacity to police the implementation of closure plans, they were not maintained—some closure plans were over 20 years old and were never inspected. So things fell apart, and I think that the government ended up getting some liabilities—

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakubski): Thank you very much. That concludes the time for questioning of these witnesses. We thank you for your presentation and appreciate you joining us today.

We have a few minutes before the next presentation is due, so we'll take a five-minute recess.

The committee recessed from 1355 to 1400.

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakubski): Thank you, members of the committee. Committee is back in session.

CANADA NICKEL CO. INC.

CAMBRIAN COLLEGE

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakubski): I will now call on Canada Nickel Co. Inc. and Cambrian College. I see we have both here virtually. Each of you will have seven minutes for your presentation. Please state your names for Hansard. We will begin with Canada Nickel Co. Inc.

Mr. Pierre-Philippe Dupont: Hello. Sorry not to be there in person. The weather did not allow me to travel that far today. I'm really happy to be here. I'm Pierre-Phillippe Dupont, vice-president of sustainability for Canada Nickel Co.

Canada Nickel is an exploration company pursuing the development of a net-zero carbon critical minerals hub to supply nickel, iron, chrome and cobalt to the electric vehicle and stainless steel markets, from the heart of the Timmins-Cochrane mining camp. Led by our 100%-owned Crawford nickel project, we, in just over three years, filed a preliminary economic assessment and initiated the federal permitting process, and we're now preparing to release our feasibility study for this project.

What Crawford is: It's a project with a life-of-mine of over 40 years that would be the highest-value mine in Ontario. By producing over \$1.5 billion of zero-carbon metals annually and increasing Ontario's overall mineral production value by 15%, and also by injecting over \$2 billion in initial investment and a total of \$6 billion over

the life of mine, it will bring over 900 jobs and more than \$3.4 billion and \$3.5 billion in provincial and federal tax revenue, respectively.

The potential of our company, of our project, was recently validated by Anglo American, a top-five global mining company, who took a participation of 10% in our company.

What makes Crawford also an incredibly interesting and appealing project is that we are mining a type of rock that absorbs CO₂ once exposed to atmospheric conditions. Taking advantage of this, we are now developing the first large-scale CO₂ capture and storage facility in Ontario, and we have the potential to capture and store over one million tonnes of CO₂ per year while producing critical minerals.

We also acquired 20 exploration properties; some of them have the potential to be as large as Crawford and as prolific as Crawford. With our recent acquisition of the Texmont mine near Timmins, we could increase the nickel production in Ontario by 5% by 2025.

Relating to Bill 71: We recognize the efforts being made by the province of Ontario to expedite critical minerals production, in particular those items that eliminate redundancies and account for the rising time-sensitive demand for domestic critical minerals.

But I want to be clear on something: We are not looking for permitting bypass, but mainly for increased efficiency. Where before, technical reviews of closure plans were being completed by both proponents and the ministry, the introduction of qualified persons as sign-offs for technical literacy maintains the assurance of some technical review and public safety while reinforcing proponents' responsibility and reducing the province's review workload.

The formal introduction of phased financial assurance meets the objectives of guaranteeing adequate finances for closure, ensuring that the financial burden of closure never falls to the province, while also allowing relief to the proponent in that only the funds necessary for realized impacts are set aside.

Where before permitting, and therefore development, could be delayed by requirements for multi-year baseline studies, conditional filing will provide room for proponents to complete baseline studies and closure plans in parallel, expediting permitting timelines without sacrificing the important collection of meaningful, representative data.

We could not be more supportive of Minister Pirie's vision of connecting critical minerals producers in the north with the manufacturing might in the south. We believe that what is good for the north is good for all Ontario.

I have a few suggestions to facilitate mining project development, first of all regarding First Nations engagement. In Canada and Ontario, the crown's duty to consult is delegated to mining proponents. In the case of Crawford, the federal and provincial lists of communities to engage with are different and exceptionally broad. This may result in increased tension between communities, sinking employment and business opportunities, and can

delay permitting progression while significantly increasing the financial burden and workload on both the First Nations and mining proponents.

We recommend to improve and focus the screening of First Nation communities to be engaged with for specific projects and ensure assessment is completed in early stages of project development to maximize time for relationship building and opportunities for partnership and participation.

We recommend increasing the Aboriginal Participation Fund, and we recommend you support joint mining and First Nations initiatives, including those for training, education and business upscaling.

Regarding the length of the advanced exploration permitting process, we recognize the effort of the Ministry of Mines, but there are different ministries involved in permitting for advanced exploration, so we recommend that you streamline the process by making sure that all the ministries involved have streamlined processes as well.

One thing I wanted to mention regarding the federal permitting: Note that while the efforts being made by the province in expediting critical minerals projects are evident and appreciated, it is often not the provincial permitting process that controls the timelines for larger mining projects. The new federal impact assessment process has a lengthy and uncertain timeline, and for any upcoming mining projects over 5,000-tonnes-per-day production—

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakabuski): You have one minute remaining.

Mr. Pierre-Philippe Dupont: —of which three are under way in Ontario, this process is a deciding factor of when operations can enter production. No mining operation in Ontario has yet completed the new federal process. We encourage you to speak with your federal counterpart regarding alignment of these objectives and timelines, because this is the main thing for us to get a project into production.

We would also like to bring your attention to the federal budget, which proposed an investment tax credit for carbon capture. This credit is not available for Ontario, but mainly for projects located in BC, Alberta and Saskatchewan. We encourage you to look at this.

To finalize, we believe that Bill 71 is a great opportunity for us to realize in time to meet the rapidly increasing demand for critical minerals.

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakabuski): You are right on time. That's zero. Thank you very much for your presentation.

I will now call on Cambrian College to make their presentation. You will have seven minutes. Please state your name for Hansard, and you may begin.

Mr. Shawn Poland: Thank you very much. My name is Shawn Poland. I'm the interim president of Cambrian College. Members of the committee, thank you so much for doing this very important work and for accommodating us here today. Minister Pirie, I can't quite see you, but I believe you are there; it's always good to share the room with you.

Folks, it's certainly a small world that we live in. Just yesterday, we had one of your legislative colleagues, Minister Greg Rickford, on campus to announce some funding for the official opening of our new chemical analysis and scientific services chemistry research lab. It's a very big name, but this is a state-of-the-art lab that we're very proud of and is a key part of our support system for the mining sector. So a short note of thanks and appreciation, as we begin, for the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp. for continuing to support economic development and mining in northern Ontario.

Folks, as you know, the team in front of you is from Cambrian College, where we have been supplying the mining industry with talent, training and research in our own backyard and around the world for over 50 years. I think it's safe to say that we are Canada's mining college; I know Audrey at Northern might have some thoughts there, but I'll make it up to her at some point in the future.

Before I get too far down the road, as mentioned earlier, we've got some colleagues here from the college. It's baseball season, so I brought the top of the lineup, and I'd like to quickly introduce them to you here. Renee Scott is our director of marketing, recruitment and student success. She oversees all of our employer relationships through our career centre as well as our student recruitment activities, including Indigenous student recruitment. Brian Lobban is our dean of skills training and engineering technology in environmental studies. Dr. Mike Committo is our director of applied research and innovation. Stephen Gravel is our manager for our Centre for Smart Mining. I'm very appreciative of having them join us today, and I think you will understand how their roles can contribute to answering some of the questions that you may have a little bit later on, so let's dive into things now.

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It's going to come as no surprise to this group that the expansion of mining operations in Ontario is a very good thing for the social and economic well-being of the north. We at Cambrian expect it to support population growth or, in some areas, population stabilization. It will contribute to the growth of the tax base. It will create jobs. It will drive in-migration of talent. It may slow out-migration of talent. And most importantly, it's going to create business opportunities both underneath and beyond the headframe. In short, we believe Bill 71 is a good thing for colleges and the communities that we serve across the north.

Let me share with you a little bit about Cambrian to give you a little bit more context. We have about 5,000 students, 2,000 of which are international students who come to us from about 70 different countries around the world; that will be salient a little bit later on. Over the last three years, between 600 and 750 of our students self-identify as Indigenous. This may come as a surprise, but at Cambrian we are a year-round college with six intakes: traditional intakes of September, January and May and off-peak intakes in November, March and July. As you know, business operates 12 months of the year, and so do we. We've moved in this direction to ensure that we can continually meet employer demands year-round. As part

of meeting those demands, we offer over 90 programs, including a number of our stand-alone degree programs. As we like to say at Cambrian College, we're doing okay.

We're also very, very proud of how we support the mining industry. We've been a perennial top-50 research college in Canada. Out of about somewhere around 180 or 190 colleges, we've been as high as 18. That's pretty darn good. We're punching well above our weight. Our research team serves as the R&D department for about 30-plus companies per year, providing access to technical experts, engineers, students and government funding to help find real solutions to real problems to help our partners grow their business. Our Centre for Smart Mining is the first of its kind in Canada and is a hub for the adoption of new tech in the sector, from underground comms, mechatronics engineering and data analysis to, importantly, battery electric vehicle research, training and testing in our new 5,000-square-foot BEV lab slated to open later this fall. We produce approximately 650 graduates in the skilled trades and engineering each year and are a major part of the recruitment plans for companies across the country. In fact, very recently, we hosted about 120 partners in our sold-out career fair. That's over 2,500 prospective employees talking to employers in about four hours.

And we're not alone in our support. I can assure you and very confidently tell you that the team at Cambrian as well as the teams at Northern, Confederation College, Canadore, Sault College and our partners across the city at Boréal are ready, willing and able to continue to work hard to meet the skilled trades demands that this new bill is going to require.

There are a few things, however, I'd like to leave you with. First, as you know and as you will hear over the next number of days, we already have a skilled trades shortage, and we know how hard it is for employers to attract and retain talent. We at Cambrian believe that it's going to take government across multiple ministries, including industry, First Nations and post-secondary, to work more creatively together to ensure that our employers, like Pierre-Philippe, get the employees and talent that they need—no real surprise there.

Secondly, and I'm going to wear my northern heart on my sleeve with this one, Sudbury has over 300 mining supply and services companies and OEMs working in our area, with over 14,000 employees. Nearly two thirds of those—

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakabuski): You have one minute remaining.

Mr. Shawn Poland: —are working in the innovation space. We've got a lot of expertise here. Let's make a commitment to keeping the processing and other elements of the value chain here in Sudbury and in the north, especially as we think about battery electric.

Finally, our population base in the north isn't growing; we all know that. So we're going to need to look elsewhere for that talent, whether it's from other parts of the province, out of the province or internationally. And I can tell you, international is going to be a great source of the future workforce.

Finally—and I do want to underscore this one especially—as we move ahead, and Pierre-Phillipe mentioned it, I truly believe that it's critical that we as government, as colleges, as industry all engage in meaningful and appropriate dialogue and consultations with First Nation communities. We know that building true relationships that last takes time.

I've been thinking about a recent announcement locally that involved a number of our local Indigenous First Nations and Technica Mining, who is a great partner to Cambrian College—

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakabuski): Thank you very much for your presentation. That concludes your time for the presentation.

We'll now move into the first round of questioning. We'll begin this round with the members of the opposition: MPP West.

MPP Jamie West: Thank you, Chair, and thank you as well for both the presentations.

Shawn, you got cut off near the end there—Mr. Poland—so if you'd like to finish what you were saying.

Mr. Shawn Poland: Thank you very much, Jamie. I truly appreciate that, and good to see you as well.

Listen, a great announcement and a great partnership coming out from some local First Nations and Technica Mining, one of our partners. Their president and CEO, and friend of Cambrian and friend of mine, Mario Grossi, I think concluded—and I may not be 100% accurate with this, folks, but he reminded us that when it comes to our work with First Nations communities, we can't change the past, but it is our responsibility to create a new and positive future.

Thank you, Mr. West, for giving me the opportunity.

MPP Jamie West: It actually worked to my benefit. So I don't know if I'm declaring a conflict of interest or just bragging: I'm a Cambrian grad.

I had a question that I wanted to ask, and I don't want it to feel partisan or anything. All day we've been hearing from people talking about this bill and how it is good for mining, how it's good for critical minerals, how it's good for extraction and prosperity, but I haven't heard a lot about how it's good for Indigenous communities. Whenever as opposition you say something, it always feels like I'm poking someone in the eye, but honestly, our shared history is that, traditionally, it hasn't been, and we know that. We know that there are problems with housing and water and medical and basic needs.

Mr. Poland, is there a way—and I think the partnership with Technica Mining might be a good example—that this helps towards shared prosperity for Indigenous communities where we haven't in the past? The quote you said by Mr. Grossi is I think a good quote: We can't change the past, but we can change the future, and that's the opportunity we have today. Any thoughts on that?

Mr. Shawn Poland: Yes, thank you very much for the question, Mr. West. That's a tough question for me to handle as interim president of Cambrian. I'm going to do my best, and I'm going to reflect again and refer back to the work that Technica Mining has done with the

community's three First Nations. They've developed a model that they feel confident will bring prosperity to those communities through collaboration, through good consultation.

We all know that relationships take time to develop. They take meaningful conversation. We feel very comfortable—and I've had the opportunity to speak to representatives of at least two of those First Nations, and I know how important they believe in the development of a trusted relationship that can move forward and bring prosperity on all sides of that equation. I think they've done that.

Another great example I'll refer to, Mr. West, is Asiniikaa Mining, who has spent the last couple of years consulting extensively in the communities that they plan to operate in across northern Ontario, spending a lot of time in northwestern Ontario. Again, a similar lesson there is that it is possible, provided that we spend enough time in consultation.

One of my mentors at one point in time a little bit earlier in my career said that sometimes we have to slow down in order to move quicker down the road, and I think that might be one of those lessons that we just tuck into this conversation here.

I do know that you are going to hear from Gimaa Craig Nootchtaï from Atikameksheng tomorrow, if I recall correctly, and I would truly, as a committee, look forward to his perspective on that.

MPP Jamie West: Okay, thank you. I think as well it might be interesting for the committee to hear more about the EV lab and innovation space and the partnership that Cambrian College has with other organizations that help them be successful.

Mr. Shawn Poland: Thank you very much for that question, Jamie.

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Steve, this is your time to shine. I introduced Steve earlier as our manager for the Centre for Smart Mining, the first technology access centre of its kind in Canada. Folks, he is our resident expert on BEVs. Steve, take it away, please.

Mr. Steve Gravel: Thank you for that introduction, Shawn, and thanks for allowing me to speak before you. Just quickly about the BEV lab that we have planned: Over the last decade, we've been seeing a lot more demand for electric vehicles in the mining space. The thesis that we have at the Centre for Smart Mining is to facilitate the adoption of new technology. So whenever we see new technologies that become prevalent or start to become prevalent in the mining sector, we always look at how we can be more useful with the resources we have to facilitate that adoption.

One of the things that kept coming up when we were talking to not only the manufacturers of the equipment that goes underground but also those that are adopting it, the mining companies themselves, is that we need to have a really good idea, before we actually get vehicles underground, of what the performance of those vehicles is going to be from a runtime perspective. You can't have a vehicle stalled out on a ramp and then ask for a tow every shift, so we need to make sure that those pieces of equipment are

adequately designed and that the modelling that they do in the battery runtime matches reality.

So what we have proposed in this new battery electric vehicle lab is a tool to do just that. We're thankful to the Ontario Research Fund, because they provided half of the capital to make this space a reality. But what's going to be happening in there is that we'll be doing battery electric vehicle powertrain testing, and the cool thing is that we're going to be graduating probably about 25 to 30 students, who are going to be the most well-versed students you can imagine in powertrain technology, who will then be going to work in the mining sector. So we're trying to have a grassroots effort to really facilitate more data to the mines themselves and more applied research capacity for those OEMs. That's what we're going to be doing at the battery electric vehicle test labs.

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakubuski): You have one minute remaining.

MPP Jamie West: I guess that's the tail end of it. With the one minute: You had mentioned Boréal, and I don't want you to use your time to brag about another college, but I think it's an interesting partnership in Sudbury, how Cambrian and Boréal work together and don't eat each other's lunch.

Mr. Shawn Poland: Thank you very much for that comment, MPP West. I think it's also important to not only acknowledge the strong working relationship that the two colleges have in Sudbury, but also bring in the university as well, and also suggest that moving forward, there are opportunities for us to continue to partner across the north. We are stronger together.

MPP Jamie West: That's the time?

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakubuski): No, you have 10 seconds.

MPP Jamie West: I miss you guys.

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakubuski): That concludes this round of the opposition's questions.

We now go to the government side for seven and a half minutes—

Interjection.

Mr. Stéphane Sarrazin: Not our turn yet.

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakubuski): Oops. We now go to the independent side for four and a half minutes. My apologies. MPP Schreiner.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Thank you, Chair. I really appreciate that.

I appreciated both presentations. I want to pick up a little bit on one of the questions MPP West asked around Indigenous consultation. One of the comments that has been said around Bill 71 is that it doesn't change anything around duty to consult, but I would say that maybe—and this isn't political; this is all parties—we haven't done a very good job of consulting in the past. I'm trying to think if there are ways that we can improve the consultation process moving forward.

Mr. Dupont, in your presentation, you started to talk about ways in which Canadian Nickel engages in consultation. You talked about maybe increasing the Aboriginal Participation Fund. As a proponent, can you maybe talk

about and give us advice about how we can improve the consultation process, so we have true free, informed, prior consent and have true partnership with shared prosperity.

Mr. Pierre-Philippe Dupont: Thanks, MPP. I'd like to mention first that the communities that are mainly impacted by the mining industry are significantly—they have a lot of mining projects to deal with, so they don't have the internal capacity to manage all of that. So obviously everything that we can do to support them, to increase their capacity to actually analyze projects, to be involved in projects, and really early on, is a meaningful way to get them involved in the projects.

As I mentioned in my presentation, one of the things is that it's not always easy for the proponent to identify the communities that they need to work with. What is being done by the government of Ontario is that at some point in the process, they provide us with a pre-determined list of communities to deal with, and this comes pretty late, so if the government could make this process much faster—like, as soon as there's a project in the pipeline, government should be aware, should make sure they have already consulted their experts and say, "Okay, these are the communities that you need to work with."

Right now, just for you to know, because we work both on the federal and the provincial side, at first, when we had the first list of communities to engage with, we had 16 communities to engage with, and most of them were in Quebec, which didn't make sense for us. We're in Timmins; we're not that close to Quebec, and it didn't make sense. So obviously, trying to have a more focused screening of the communities to work with would make a lot of sense, and then we can engage way more efficiently with those few communities that are really impacted by the projects. That's the one thing.

If the government could provide a bit more funding to the communities for them build that capacity to deal with the industry—right now, it's the mining proponents that finance the communities—

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakubuski): You have one minute remaining.

Mr. Pierre-Philippe Dupont: —for them to be able to deal with the industry, which kind of doesn't make sense to some extent. Obviously this would be something that would make a lot of sense—

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I'm sorry to interrupt you right now—

Mr. Pierre-Philippe Dupont: It's okay.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I just wanted to know, really quick, because I'm down to probably 40 seconds: Could you address the shared-prosperity angle from a proponent's perspective, as well, really quick, in our last 30 seconds?

Mr. Pierre-Philippe Dupont: What do you mean by "shared-prosperity angle"?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Oh, I'm just saying that we've had Indigenous nations come—not only today, but to Queen's Park—and say, "We're not sharing in the prosperity of all of these projects." So I'm just curious,

from a proponent's perspective, how prosperity can be better shared with Indigenous nations.

Mr. Pierre-Philippe Dupont: I'm going to be cut in five seconds, but one of the things I'd like to say is that we have a partnership with Taykwa Tagamou Nation, and they're going to build a power line that's going to feed the project. It's a \$100-million project, and they took that on at first, so it was—

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakabuski): Thank you very much. That concludes the time for questioning.

We will now go to the government side for seven and a half minutes. MPP Sarrazin.

Mr. Stéphane Sarrazin: My question will be for Pierre-Philippe, de Canada Nickel.

La modernisation du Mining Act est essentielle pour supporter la transition à une économie verte. Est-ce que les changements proposés offriront une meilleure opportunité à Canada Nickel, votre compagnie, ou à d'autres entreprises d'atteindre leur but de produire les minéraux—le nickel, le cobalt, le fer—en maintenant des normes de zéro carbone?

Mr. Pierre-Philippe Dupont: Should I answer in French?

Mr. Stéphane Sarrazin: You can answer in English; whatever. In French would be nice.

Mr. Pierre-Philippe Dupont: So, yes, obviously everything that helps streamline the permitting process helps us, because when you look at a mining project's evolution, permitting is always the main bottleneck, and right now, as I mentioned in my presentation, the main bottleneck is not even the province; it's the federal.

I would say, of course, everything that relates to closure makes a lot of sense, because the financial burden on the proponent is less than it was before. Remember that before, we needed to put the financial guarantee. For example, if we have a 40-year life-of-mine project, which is a huge project, I would have to put 100% of the guarantee at year zero, which doesn't make sense, because not 100% of the impacts are made.

So the approach that is taken right now for closure makes a lot of sense. I've had this discussion with a lot of provinces in the last 15 years, and this is what I was pushing for, and this is now what's appearing in this thing, so it makes a lot of sense. But if I was government, I would seriously consider initiating discussion with the federal government to make sure that all the work that you're doing right now to streamline the critical mineral projects are aligned with the federal, because the trigger to go into a federal impact assessment is 5,000 tonnes per day. There aren't a lot of projects in Ontario right now that are below that threshold. Our project is 120,000 tonnes per day, just for you to know. So we really need to have this discussion going between the province and the feds to align those distinct processes that are not aligned right now.

1430

Mr. Stéphane Sarrazin: Thank you very much for this answer. I'll let my colleague MPP Bresee—

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakabuski): MPP Bresee.

Mr. Ric Bresee: My question is for Mr. Dupont as well. I really appreciate you being here. During your presentation, you made the comment of what's good for

the north is good for the south. You know that this government has been doing some just absolutely game-changing electric vehicle, battery etc. In my own riding, we're getting the Umicore plant. Several of my colleagues here at the table and on all sides of the table are having large industry, specifically around the electric vehicle industry, coming into the province. It's certainly wonderful.

Now, when we look at the potential changes to the Mining Act that this act will bring forward, the goal is to build a made-in-Ontario supply chain. Do you see that having that be successful and having the whole permitting process sped up will actually help to build more mines and advance specifically the Canada Nickel Crawford project?

Mr. Pierre-Philippe Dupont: Short answer: Yes, specifically the exemption of battery processing facilities. For example, our project right now, we're looking at downstream processing. We're talking to multiple investors right now. As you mentioned, when you talk about the link between the north and the south, sometimes people kind of forget about that. But what we're trying to do here is create that supply chain.

In the last two weeks, we had four Korean groups visiting our site; the ones that are actually sort of investing more down south. They need to secure that supply so, obviously, everything we do to streamline that process is going to trigger the interest of these guys. These guys look at every project everywhere and they want to make sure that they get the best conditions overall. I think right now, Ontario and Canada have a great shot at being one of the main producers of those critical minerals and have the whole supply chain. So I would say everything that we do to streamline the process is a plus.

From my past experience—I've been in the mining industry for 20 years—the more scary thing is when people say, "Oh, we're going to streamline the processes." Usually, that ends up not being streamlined, so I would be really careful about that. The federal process—it was the Conservatives with Bill 69 that actually pushed forward, and it was for the oil sands project. Their objective at the time was to streamline the permitting process of large projects, and I can tell you that the timeline that we require for permitting a project went from two to two and a half years to three to five years. This is how this was streamlined. So I'm always kind of careful when I hear people talk about streamlining. It needs to be efficient, it needs to be relevant, and you need to keep the discussion open with the proponents for them to tell you, "Okay, this works. This does not work."

I'm sorry I'm taking your time, but I mentioned previously, we talked about advanced exploration. For example, if I want to do a bog sample right now, the Ministry of Mines really facilitated all the paths to get to do a bog sample, the permitting path. But the main permits that we need to get are from the Ministry of the Environment, and these were not changed, so my permitting timeline did not change. It's still 18 months, although mines change their own path. So it needs to be a bit more integrated, I would say.

Mr. Ric Bresee: Thank you for that better understanding. I'll pass my time to Mr. Flack.

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakabuski): MPP Flack.

Mr. Rob Flack: Thank you, Chair. I think we've all talked about this.

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakabuski): You have one minute remaining.

Mr. Rob Flack: If we're going to be the number one mining jurisdiction globally, we can't take 15 years to get it done. Do you believe the Building More Mines Act, 2023, will provide a better chance to make future progress and advance the Reid nickel project compared to previous processes?

Mr. Pierre-Philippe Dupont: Yes.

Mr. Rob Flack: Thank you. Why, quickly?

Mr. Pierre-Philippe Dupont: Well, it depends where you stand. If you're a junior mining exploration company like we are, basically the way we work is we raise financing and we spend it. Our spend rate right now is \$30 million to \$50 million a year to push this project forward, which is kind of significant money.

When you talk about financial insurance for closure, if at year zero I need to put—for example, a project like ours probably would be \$100 million in liability. If we need to put that up front for a project like ours, it's a tough sell, and it's tough to get that money up front—

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakabuski): Thank you very much. Sorry, but that does conclude the time for questioning on the part of the government side.

We now go back for round two to the official opposition. MPP West, seven and a half minutes.

MPP Jamie West: I'll go back to Monsieur Dupont to let him finish his thoughts. You were talking about the closure planning and having to—

Mr. Pierre-Philippe Dupont: Yes, the closure. For example, what always kind of made sense to me—what you want to make sure with closure is that the government in power, the authorities, always have the required amount of money to close a site efficiently. But what was previously done is that you would put 100% of the costs of the closure of a mine—that's a 40-year life-of-mine; obviously you don't have 100% of the impact up front—and you needed to put that money up front in legal guarantees.

But right now, what you're proposing is that you have a staged approach where you always have the money in the bank to close a site, but you don't necessarily have 100% of the money required to close a site at the end of its life, which makes a lot of sense and reduces the pressure on proponents like us. I'm sure major miners will be happy as well, but they have more means, obviously, to do that kind of stuff.

I would say everything that relates to closure plans—so the fact that a QP, a qualified person, can sign off on a closure plan—reduces a lot of the bureaucracy involved in that, so this will most probably—I would see that as a game-changer in terms of project approval, because it's going to shorten the delays in approval without impacting the quality of the work that's going to be performed. So this is another major thing.

MPP Jamie West: Okay. Thank you for that. It kind of leads to my next question—I apologize; I'm looking at the screen over here, so I'm not turning away from the camera and looking away from you.

In terms of balancing being profitable and the environment—because the environment is always important, but it's more and more in the forefront for a lot of people—in this bill, the feedback I get is about weakening the environmental protections. One of the things is that it has gone from when you close down your plant, it had to be improved from before; now it has to be comparable, which makes it a little bit wishy-washy, so lawyers can get involved and argue if it's comparable or not. How do we ensure that we can get the critical minerals out of the ground, but also ensure that we have a decent environment at the end of the day in this bill, so that I have a decent response to tell people who are concerned about it, “I spoke with an expert who said this”?

Mr. Pierre-Philippe Dupont: I would say nowadays the mining industry has made a significant progression in terms of its environmental impact and its control of the environmental aspects. When you look at the environmental assessment of projects and the permitting process, it has really moved from being a really technical environmental impact assessment to a socio-economic assessment.

Right now, most of the environmental impacts of the mining industry are well known, well controlled. The mitigation measures are well known. The treatment—like you know, the main impact of a mine site would be on water and air quality, for example. These impacts are well known, the mitigation measures are well known, so what we're seeing in the permitting process right now is that we are switching more towards a socio-economic analysis: What's the impact on communities? To go back to your first question, what's the impact on municipalities? What's the impact of a mining project on housing, on poverty, on the opioid crisis?

I've been in permitting for the last 20 years, and I've switched from having a lot of technical questions on the environment to a lot more difficult questions to answer on the social impact of mining projects. Because the environmental impacts are well known and well covered. We know what to do. Closure insurance is there.

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From my perspective right now we're moving to an era where we're looking at mining proponents being more and more involved in the social impacts of the mining projects than in the more technical and more easily resolvable environmental issues.

MPP Jamie West: And then the staged approach to the mining closure plan: I had a decent understanding this morning from a previous conversation that you kind of have the money up front for the next five years or three years, whatever the stage of the project is. Once it's fully running, is there a stage where you have the financial surety in place or the plan is in place so that if something were to happen, investors were to disappear—I don't know what would happen—you'd be able to clean up the tailings pond, you'd be able to clean up the entire mine site?

Or, with the switchover, is there a chance that the public could be on the hook for the final closure or part of the closure funding if, say, there was a bankruptcy or something?

Mr. Pierre-Philippe Dupont: It wouldn't, because the analysis of your closure plan would be analyzing the next five years, for example, of impact. So you would put the finance guarantees for what is there. Instead of it being 100% of what's not even there yet, you would have the exact amount of money, probably with a contingency, to make sure that nobody is stuck with potential environmental issues that would come from a project closure or an unexpected bankruptcy, for example.

As long as the process is well done, technically, what I would foresee is that you should have the money in place, plus a contingency, to cover for the impacts that you plan on doing for the next five years and redo that on a five-year basis. You restart that process every five years to make sure that you always have the amount of money in the bank and none of the public is actually exposed to a failure from a mining company.

But it's different from having 100% from the start, which is a heavy burden, especially for bigger projects.

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakabuski): You have one minute remaining.

MPP Jamie West: That's it, Chair.

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakabuski): We will now move to the independent side for four and a half minutes. MPP Hsu.

Mr. Ted Hsu: I'd like to talk about young people choosing mining as a career and how we can help with the labour shortage. I'd like to ask the representatives from Cambrian College, to what extent does the reputation of the mining industry affect young people choosing mining as a career? What have you seen?

Mr. Shawn Poland: Thank you very much for that question. Certainly, the mining industry—and Renee, just be prepared to jump in, as well as Steve and Mike as you see fit, and Brian. The mining industry that we're currently experiencing now is not the mining industry of yesteryear, or our grandfather's mining industry. There has been a substantive transformation where the digital mine is the norm. There is exciting technology involved and there are opportunities, as I mentioned earlier, both underneath but well beyond the headframe in some of those non-traditional elements.

Nonetheless, to your point, mining the north still has a difficult reputation to overcome. We do know that students choose colleges or universities for programs that are going to get them the jobs that they want. It is a challenge, because there may be jobs available, but it is always difficult to convince students who may be looking elsewhere or who are intrigued elsewhere to take a job that they haven't been exposed to or don't have much understanding of.

I invite my colleagues to come in and share any of their experiences that may help clarify your question for you.

Ms. Renee Scott: If I could just jump in here. I think it's not just changing the minds of the youth within our

northern communities, but also the mindset of their parents and those older generations of people that the mining industry has changed. One thing that I have seen our schools—certainly in our own backyard—do a great job of is partnering with Cambrian and partnering with industry to expose our students to different types of trades, different types of mining and what it's going to look like both today and in the future.

An example of that would be Cambrian's partnership with over 40 partners and sponsors as we launched our Jill of All Trades program, which is an initiative to expose the trades and choices to young women in our community. Someone was talking earlier about that social impact in communities, and I think bringing women into the trades and into mining not only helps the industry as a whole, but back in those hometowns, be them Indigenous or not, it certainly gives them meaningful employment, and they can have a great impact. We're seeing although Ontario's women in trades—it's around that 5% in trades being women—

Mr. Ted Hsu: Thanks very much. In the committee today, one of the things we've been discussing is the lack of consultation with Indigenous communities before this bill, Bill 71, was tabled. I'm wondering, how much does that affect the reputation of the mining industry in the eyes of young people considering a career, and their parents?

Mr. Shawn Poland: That's an interesting question. I don't have any data to back up what I'm going to say, so I'm going to speak anecdotally.

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakabuski): You have one minute remaining.

Mr. Shawn Poland: We've got a generation of young people who are coming out of a pandemic. I'm not necessarily sure they are paying acute attention to the issues and news of the day. I think for those particular students who are passionate and aware, it does have an impact. However, there is a large body of young people who are still coming of age and still need to have their horizons broadened a little bit to become more aware of current issues of the day.

Mr. Ted Hsu: Would any of the other representatives of Cambrian College care to add anything?

Mr. Brian Lobban: I'd just like to add, and then I'll save some time for Stephen. I'll be really quick, for once.

We're working with modern mining and technology in Sudbury. It's a group of people—we are Laurentian University, Cambrian College—

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakabuski): Thank you very much. I'm sorry, but your time has expired.

We'll now return to the government side. MPP Bresee.

Mr. Ric Bresee: Thank you to the folks from Cambrian for your thoughts on this. By the way, similar to MPP West, I am also a former student of yours, from a number of years ago, so thank you for your efforts then.

We have been talking a lot about the Indigenous communities and the engagement. So I'd like to know more about Cambrian College's engagement with the Indigenous communities, specifically around mining, but I'll say, secondarily, around all of the ancillary businesses—and a

focus on the Indigenous businesses—for training and work opportunities for your students and that expanding prosperity that comes from that.

Mr. Shawn Poland: Well, congratulations, and thank you for letting us know that you're a Cambrian graduate. It's wonderful that you had a great experience.

I think when it comes to engaging Indigenous communities, I will invite Renee—the opportunity we have—as I mentioned earlier, we've been doing this since inception, and we have continued dialogue. We have not, in large part, been part of economic development within some of those communities. We do support training. We have provided mobile training across northern Ontario in partnership with Indigenous communities. We have constant dialogue with community around recruiting Indigenous students, to train them on campus. Many of those students will go back home and play viable roles within their communities, whether it's from a social services perspective or an economic development perspective.

Where we have been focusing some of our attention at this juncture is on providing some tools for our partners within the mining industry that are looking to engage with community. We have established a series of workshops that we're currently beta testing with our partners that speak to things like Indigenous awareness and sensitivity training, cultural safety and humility, calls to action as companies consider their roles in reconciliation and also around engaging Indigenous communities. So we have some tools that we can provide to our partners as they're looking to engage better in a more meaningful, authentic—and in the right way with Indigenous community.

Mr. Ric Bresee: Excellent. That's very good to hear. Thank you very much.

I'll pass my time to my colleague.

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakabuski): MPP Flack.

Mr. Rob Flack: As I said earlier, I'm excited because of the announcement Volkswagen made to choose Canada, to choose Ontario, and in fact, in my riding, to choose St. Thomas in as their location. The EV revolution is alive and well in this province, and billions upon billions of dollars are being invested.

To Mr. Dupont, what do you think the changes proposed in the Building More Mines Act will mean for Canada Nickel's goal to deliver the metals needed to power the electric vehicle revolution, and specifically, what will these changes do to support your strategic plan, your business plan and grow your business successfully while employing lots and lots of Ontarians?

Mr. Pierre-Philippe Dupont: Well, obviously, I think everything that we do to streamline the projects and make sure—so right now, I think you started mentioning that it takes 10 to 15 years, that's the evaluation, people would say, to bring a project from a first drill hole to being a mine—when there's a mine, because it's not often the case. Obviously, everything that we can do to shorten these delays makes a lot of sense.

The one thing that's important, from what you're doing right now and what the government is doing, is you're sending a strong signal to the international community that Ontario and Canada are places to invest. Obviously, when

we sit down with these investors—and you mentioned Volkswagen. In the nickel industry, we used to talk to the stainless guys; it was Japan, it was China. Now, the world is changing, so we're having conversations with all of these guys: Hyundai, Daimler, Mercedes, Volkswagen. They want a secure supply. They need to invest in grass-roots projects to make sure that they're going to have the material to build their batteries. That's the switch that we're seeing right now, and this has been happening for the last six months.

So all the signals that you can send to the international community and international investors that Ontario is a place for business and is a place to work with a stable political climate and a foreseeable timeline for developing projects is going to help us push these projects forward.

Mr. Rob Flack: Just maybe as a quick follow-up, in terms of increased employment, which is—we always say the best social program in the world is a good, sustainable job. How many more jobs do you see this impacting, your company?

Mr. Pierre-Philippe Dupont: So this project that we're pushing forward—I was surprised, because I've worked on similar projects before, and it was more around 400 to 500 qualified workers. This project has 900, so it's going to be challenging to get these workers in northeastern Ontario. It's going to get really challenging. So we set up these committees right now, the training—

Mr. Rob Flack: My next question is—

Mr. Pierre-Philippe Dupont: Go ahead.

Mr. Rob Flack: Where are you going to get the workers? That's key.

Mr. Pierre-Philippe Dupont: We always relied on the fact that there's movement in between mining, so we know, for example, that the Kidd mine has not much—it's supposed to go to an end. That's one of the sources. We're working a lot right now with First Nations communities. We're trying to plan a large-scale program with them to make sure that they're ready to go when the project is ready to go. So I'd say our first—

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakabuski): You have one minute remaining.

Mr. Pierre-Philippe Dupont: —source would be the First Nations communities. We do believe that there's a lot of potential with First Nations to get involved in the project. But they follow the same trend; we had discussion with one of the communities lately and they say, "We don't need jobs. Everybody's working." So, obviously, it's going to be a big challenge, and one of the ways to answer that is by technology: autonomous trucks, reducing the number of employees with technology. That's one of the pathways—First Nations would be, and then local communities and then international. As Shawn mentioned before, we'll need to look everywhere.

Mr. Rob Flack: Great news. Thank you.

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakabuski): MPP Leardi, you have 10 seconds.

M. Anthony Leardi: Monsieur Dupont, très vite : est-ce que vous voudriez que le gouvernement fédéral fasse la même chose que le gouvernement provincial?

Mr. Pierre-Philippe Dupont: Yes.

The Acting Chair (Mr. John Yakabuski): Thank you very much. That's right on time again. That concludes this round of questions and concludes this presentation.

In fact, that concludes our business for today. I want to thank all the presenters who appeared today, both live and virtually, for their time and their efforts to make this committee

successful, and I want to thank all members of the committee for joining us as well.

As a reminder, the deadline to send a written submission will be 7 p.m. on Thursday, April 6, 2023.

The committee is now adjourned until 10 a.m. on Thursday, April 6, 2023, in Sudbury.

The committee adjourned at 1455.

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