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Mardi
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 3 October 2023

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 3 octobre 2023

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Good morning. Let us pray.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

AFFORDABLE HOMES
AND GOOD JOBS ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 POUR DES LOGEMENTS
ABORDABLES ET DE BONS EMPLOIS

Mr. Calandra moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 134, An Act to amend the Development Charges Act, 1997 and the St. Thomas-Central Elgin Boundary Adjustment Act, 2023 / Projet de loi 134, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur les redevances d'aménagement et la Loi de 2023 sur la modification des limites territoriales entre St. Thomas et Central Elgin.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the minister to lead off the debate.

Hon. Paul Calandra: At the outset, let me just say that I will be sharing my time with the Associate Minister of Housing, the member for Elgin–Middlesex–London, and the parliamentary assistant, the member from Perth–Wellington.

Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak today on what has become a very, very important subject for all Ontarians—if not for all Canadians, frankly. We have seen, over the last number of years, a number of issues which have led us to a housing crisis not only in the province of Ontario, but very much across many parts of Canada. Since the outset of our government, back in 2018, we have talked about removing obstacles so that we could begin the process of unleashing the economy, but also of helping to ensure that as the economy began to grow and prosper, we could also ensure housing for the people of the province of Ontario.

So this bill here will, in part, help us. It is another step on the way. There have been a lot of steps, as I said. Each year that we have been in office, that we've had the honour of serving in office, we brought forward different proposals, housing supply action plans, which are meant to move and unleash that housing construction, but also very much to remove the obstacles which have become a fixture and have really blocked the construction of housing.

So this bill has a number of different parts to it—primarily, two really important parts, of course—which are an updated definition of affordable housing and some

changes to the St. Thomas-Central Elgin Boundary Adjustment Act, which I know the associate minister and parliamentary assistant will be talking about in more detail than I am. There are also a number of other additional elements which are meant to consult, to help make the process better. We'll be, of course, working with the Attorney General to look at how we can change the Ontario Land Tribunal to make it more responsive to both sides. It's also an opportunity for us to work with our municipal partners to see if there are opportunities and advantages for them working through Supply Ontario to help them reduce costs.

So I just want to give a bit of context, again—I referenced this a little bit in a question the other day—on why we are so focused on building homes across the province of Ontario. I talked about how my parents, when they came here—my dad in the late 1950s and my mom in the early 1960s—that one of the bargains that they did when they came to this country—Canada was growing. It was prospering like never before, frankly. And when they came here, one of the bargains for them to leave their home in Italy and to come here was that they could build a better life for themselves and, ultimately, for their children. But one of the bargains that that included was that, if they worked hard, they would have the opportunity to have their own piece of the Canadian dream. For them, that meant home ownership. That has been the dream of many, many people for generations.

So when my parents came to this country, they did like so many immigrants did. My dad came; he came into Halifax, took the train and got off in Toronto, where he had a job working in a barbershop—a barbershop which still exists on the Danforth. My uncle had come first. A couple of brothers followed and a sister afterward. They all lived in one home that was rented out by my uncle first. They were all in this one home. It was on Dentonia Park. I've driven by it a number of times, and it's hard to imagine all of them in this one home. But they did what so many immigrant families did; when one worked, the other would take the bed and sleep, and the other would go to work. They supported each other. They helped save money.

Each of them helped the other save money, and the first one to leave the home was my uncle. He settled on a home in Scarborough, on 26 Stevenwood. After that was my dad's turn; he moved to another home not far from there, on Lombardy Crescent, in the riding of Scarborough Southwest. But that was part of the bargain: One at a time they moved out, and one at a time, they were able to get their own little piece of the Canadian dream, which was home ownership. From there, they were able to continue to contribute to ensure that their kids had a better life than they did. But again, that was part of the dream.

Now, we all remember, and we've all talked about it—at least in the context of Toronto—about wartime housing. I'm sure that's the same description in many parts of the province of Ontario. As the troops were coming back, there was a huge demand for housing across Ontario, and we moved heaven and earth to make sure that there was a good supply of housing across the province. But they removed obstacles at that time in order to ensure that it could be done, Madam Speaker.

That, in essence, is what we're trying to do here today. Now, there are a number of constraints. I will say this: We have seen economic growth unlike any time, frankly, in decades. I know the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade has been extraordinarily successful in helping to turn around our economy, bringing back thousands of jobs to the province of Ontario, bringing back billions of dollars of economic activity.

With that comes the need to bring people from across Canada and across the world to live and work and help us grow our economy. We are seeing people from all over come to Ontario because they want to take part in what is the economic growth that has been ushered in by this government under the leadership of the Premier and the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade: \$25 billion in investment, just in the one sector alone. It is absolutely huge. I know the associate minister will talk about what that means to the people in his area, but the spin-offs are enormous.

As Minister of Long-Term Care, I was criss-crossing the province. We were opening up long-term-care homes. We were sod-turning in a number of different communities. One of the principles that the Premier said to us when we started this massive investment in long-term care was to make sure that we brought long-term care into small, rural communities across the province, so people could live and work in the communities that they helped build.

Very much what we're hearing from a lot of these long-term-care homes in a lot of different communities is that they also will need the housing because the increase to four hours of care means a dramatic increase in the staffing that they will need in order to support long-term care. The same goes with our redevelopment of the hospital sector. It is a very real need, not only in our largest cities but across the province of Ontario.

Frankly, as much as it is a challenging problem to have, it is also very much a good problem to have. It is a good problem to have because people want to come to Ontario to participate in what is, really, a reenergizing of the province, as I said, like we have never seen before.

0910

I just want to say one thing before I move on to another topic: We talk a lot about people coming from around the world to be here to participate. It's something that the Premier talked about a lot, that we have to make sure that we have housing for the people who want to come here to build a better life. We heard a question last week from a member of the opposition suggesting that perhaps we should ask the federal government to slow down immigra-

tion so that we could deal with the housing crisis, Madam Speaker. I absolutely flat-out reject that premise, as has the Premier, because to be clear, if we would have thought that back when my parents came, I wouldn't be here. Many of the members on this side of the House, and presumably on that side of the House, would not have been here. We cannot build a bigger, better, stronger province of Ontario without people coming from around the world to help us to do that. So it is also for them that we make these investments in building homes and untangling the burden that has gotten in the way of building homes across the province of Ontario.

I just want to also really briefly speak to some of the other challenges that we're seeing in the homes sector. I talked, again, about this really, really briefly in a question in question period. There is no doubt, there is absolutely no doubt—and I'm sure you'll agree, Madam Speaker—that the high-debt, high-tax, red-tape policies of the federal government have led to a challenging environment for people across this country. You will know, Madam Speaker and, as I said, I'm sure you'll agree, that we had said right from the beginning in 2018 that a carbon tax would be a challenge for the people of Canada and an extraordinary challenge for the people of the province of Ontario. We have fought that tax tooth and nail because we knew it would lead to poor outcomes for our province.

Now, under the great leadership of the Minister of Environment, we have seen Ontario's greenhouse gas emissions on the back of our nuclear program—we are continuing to be leaders. But the carbon tax has caused out-of-control inflation, high taxes and big spending, which is leading to higher interest rates and is putting thousands of people out on of the market for homes. We certainly can't allow that to continue. So I wanted to just suggest that we will continue to fight that as well, because it's not just about getting shovels in the ground. There's no point in getting shovels in the ground if people can't afford to buy the homes that you are building in communities.

And it is really one of the reasons why we updated the definition of affordable housing, because we want to do it not only as part of what the housing market is in a local community as the definition has been, really, since 2005; we wanted to go one step further. Recognizing the high-tax, high-interest-rate policies of the federal government were having a dramatic impact on people across the province of Ontario, we knew that we had to change that definition of affordable housing to also include income. This is something that we worked very closely with our partners on, and it will vary from community to community.

Median income in Toronto is certainly higher than it might be in Kawartha Lakes or in other parts of the province, so we're going on a community-to-community basis to see what that means and to ensure that people in every part of this province can participate, whether it's your first ownership of your first home or in the rental market. Because, let's not forget, it's not just about home ownership; for many people; it's about getting their first

apartment. More often than not, that is the first step that leads, eventually, to home ownership.

We saw that, again, the continued red tape and obstacles that were in the way created a rental housing crisis across the province of Ontario as well. And we are seeing, because of the changes that this government has made since 2018, people come back into the rental housing market like never before, and by that, I mean the builders. They're coming in and they are building purpose-built rental housing, and we have the highest starts that we've seen, I think, in over 15 years. That is really, really good news, and it is in all parts of the province.

But that is not to suggest that the work is done there, because there is still a lot of work to do on that front, Madam Speaker. But I have been very, very encouraged by what we're seeing on that side.

At same time, the changes that we've made so far with respect to the previous housing supply action plans have led to the highest housing starts that we have had, also, in 15 years. So it is no coincidence that when you remove red tape, when you remove regulations—out-of-date regulations, as the Minister of Red Tape Reduction has been doing—it brings people back into the market. It brings people back into the market. But it's also, again, about taxation, right? It's about taxation.

Now, I really was encouraged—I have to say this. I know, gosh, for years, we had been struggling with a federal government that just did not seem to understand we were in a housing crisis. I will say that I am optimistic with the new federal Minister of Housing, Minister Fraser. He seems to be prepared to help remove obstacles, even if the rest of his government is not. I am very much looking forward to working with him.

In fact, as you will recall, Madam Speaker, we brought forward, in our last year's budget, that we wanted to remove the HST from purpose-built rental. We knew that that would be an opportunity to unleash housing starts across the province of Ontario and another boost, really. Now, this was a promise, of course, that the federal Liberals had made in 2015 but that we could never get actioned. We could just never just get action. We needed them to remove the GST; we would remove the HST. We're moving on our own.

I will give Minister Fraser credit. Having coffee with him in Windsor, talking about how important this was to the province of Ontario and suggesting that we were prepared to move on our own, he was able to break the logjam that had been in front of him, his government since 2015, and was able to get that done so that more provinces could unleash this opportunity.

But what really was important, I think, on that, was the acknowledgement from the federal government that cutting taxes will help unleash the economy. That is as much as it is important—

Interjections.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Yes, it really is. Right? Think about that for a moment, Madam Speaker. There was resistance the entire time that they had been in office to eliminating a tax, which we believed, if we eliminated that

tax—because Progressive Conservative believe that. We believe that if you eliminate taxes, you help unleash the economy. And do you know what that brings in? That brings in more revenue so you can support the programs that are vital to the people of the province of Ontario.

But think about how important it was, that acknowledgement. I give Minister Fraser credit. Even if the rest of the federal government is not on side, I give him credit for recognizing that by reducing taxes in this instance, we could see more housing starts across the province of Ontario—purpose-built rental housing. And that is a huge acknowledgement.

Again, I will say very vocally and in a very public fashion that that same spirit of tax-cutting, I think, would benefit the entire country if we looked, for instance, at the carbon tax and some of the other taxes that are standing in the way of us really tackling this housing crisis not only across Ontario, but across the country. I am very heartened to see that in other parts of Canada, they are starting to follow some of the things that we have done.

We're starting to hear it more often, building houses around transit. We call it transit-oriented communities, but we're starting to hear about it more and more often, that other jurisdictions are doing that. We're hearing about British Columbia, how they have now set housing targets for their larger communities. Of course, we have done that, and that's something that we have championed for a long time, but there's no point in setting a housing target if you don't give your communities the opportunity to succeed. So that is a very real part of what this is.

Now, on top of that, you will recall we brought in the Building Faster Fund. The Building Faster Fund is another tool that is put on the table for our municipal partners who not only meet their housing targets, but if you exceed the housing targets—and we want everybody to participate. There should be no community across the province of Ontario that isn't willing to participate—and frankly, Madam Speaker, they are willing to participate. They are willing to participate. We're hearing this from our partners across the province who are reaching out to me, each and every day, saying, “We want a housing target. We want to be able to participate and help provide housing for the people in our community.” I'm hearing from a lot of communities that are saying, “Look, we're bringing jobs and economic development into our community for the first time.” Lower energy prices and the work that the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade is doing have helped unleash the economy, and people want to participate.

0920

For the first time, we're seeing people staying in communities that they would have otherwise left. I look at southwestern Ontario and the extraordinary work that our farmers are doing, the greenhouse growers in that community. They need housing to support what is an incredibly important part of our economy. The tourism industry, responsible for billions of dollars of economic activity—all very important and part of the reason why people want to come to the province of Ontario.

So at its heart, Madam Speaker, this is another step in the way of eliminating obstacles to building more homes across the province of Ontario. It's not the final step; let me be very, very clear on that. It is not the final step, just like none of the other bills that we've presented have been the final step. It is another step. There will be more to come.

But I can tell you this, Madam Speaker, that unlike the opposition, who were in government for 15 years, we will not let the people of the province of Ontario down. We will meet our goals, we will build 1.5 million homes and we will ensure that the next generations of Ontarians, those who are living in their parents' basements right now, have the opportunity to realize their Ontario and Canadian dream, like so many generations did before.

With that, I will yield the floor to the associate minister.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I recognize the Associate Minister of Housing.

Hon. Rob Flack: Thank you, Speaker. It truly is an honour to stand before you today, not only as the Associate Minister of Housing, but as a proud representative of Elgin–Middlesex–London, which I will speak about a little bit later on in my talk.

Let's not mince words, Speaker: Ontario is facing a housing crisis the likes of which we have never seen. It isn't just a headline. It's the talk at dinner tables. It's the talk at coffee shops, on soccer fields and in hockey arenas. It's real, and it's hitting our neighbours, our friends and our families very hard. But here's the thing: We're Ontarians and we face challenges head-on. We will face this one and win the day.

For too long, previous governments have been content with mere discussions, debates and deliberations. Under the steadfast leadership of Premier Ford and now Minister Calandra, we're not just talking, we're taking action. Our goal—yes, Speaker—1.5 million homes by 2031. We're cutting through bureaucracy and red tape—the minister below—to get the shovels in the ground and get homes built faster.

While others are content with endless consultations and studies, which we seem to do as governments, we've been on the ground. We've been listening to the real concerns of Ontarians. We've taken their feedback and turned it into actionable policies, proving that we're a government that acts and listens.

Everywhere I go, I hear the same story, and I think everyone here does as well: Families are priced out of their neighbourhoods, young couples delaying dreams because they can't afford a home, seniors worried about rising rents. In fact, in my own hometown of Dorchester, Ontario, I talked to a number of people, a number of friends, a number of seniors who own a home, who have lived there for many years, raised their family. They want to downsize, but they can't. Why? Because there isn't inventory in the community that they live, that they want to stay living in, that they can move into—a smaller, more price-sensitive home so they can take part of the equity of their home and live a comfortable retirement. We need to

change that. The problem here, Speaker, is supply, and we will change that supply.

And while some might wring their hands and offer platitudes, we've set an ambitious goal: 1.5 million homes. We've got to keep keeping the goal right in front of us, and we're going to hit it. Contrast this to previous governments who were content with mere discussions and debates—I keep saying it because that's what I've heard—leading to inaction as they've watched the crisis deepen, offering little more than band-aid solutions. We need more than that. We're different. We're here to build a stronger Ontario. We're going to get it done, and that's exactly what we're in the process of doing.

Our government recognizes that housing is more than just bricks and mortar; it's the foundation of our communities, of our families and of our future. While others may be content with inaction, we're committed to making real change. The opposition often speaks of the need for change, as do we. But it is our government that has been at the forefront, pioneering innovative solutions and driving real progress in the housing sector. At every step of the way, we hear, "No." We're going to fight that, and we're going to say, "Yes," and get these houses built.

Since 2019, we've rolled out four housing supply action plans. Guess what, Speaker? They're working. Don't take my word for it; let the results speak for themselves. Because it's results that count: nearly 100,000 homes in 2021 and another 100,000 in 2022. That's the most in almost 30 years. We're seeing results.

While other provinces are seeing a dip in housing starts this year, in 2023, Ontario is bucking the trend. Our starts this year are on the rise, but we're not resting on our laurels. There is obviously much more work to do. While previous governments saw challenges, we see opportunities, and every disadvantage creates an opportunity. While they were bogged down in bureaucracy, we've been laser-focused on solutions. Our track record speaks volumes about our commitment to addressing this housing crisis head-on. We've not only set ambitious targets, but we've consistently worked toward achieving each and every one of them.

We're launching the Building Faster Fund, as announced at AMO. This isn't just some fancy name; it's real money to help municipalities get their homes built. Think of it as a turbo boost to municipalities, giving them the resources they need to build homes faster, partnering with their community home builders.

The job is not done, Speaker. We're not stopping there. We're giving more power to the mayors: 21 more municipalities will get strong-mayor powers. They commit to our housing targets, and in return they get the tools to make things happen on the ground and in their backyards. This is about delivering more local solutions to achieve local challenges.

While the opposition often speaks of empowering municipalities, we're the ones actually doing it. We're not just providing funds; we're providing the tools to get the job done, resources and the autonomy to make the decisions locally. Big government doesn't always work.

We need to empower our municipalities to get the job done in their local areas.

Previous governments have approached housing with a one-size-fits-all mentality. We recognize the diversity of our great province and understand that each municipality has its unique challenges and opportunities. Our approach is tailored, it's flexible and, most importantly, it will be effective.

There are families in London, Ontario—I see the member from London West across—who, I think we all agree, have dreams of home ownership, but it's priced right out of their range. With prices nearly doubling in the last five years in that community, that dream seems distant for so many. I'll talk about my daughter, for instance. Many of her friends have that dream to buy a house in London; it just isn't affordable. We have to not allow that dream to die. We have to fight hard for everyone's daughters, for everyone's sons, for everyone's grandsons and granddaughters.

It's not just buying. Rents have shot up by 90%. When our daughter moved home from Toronto to London, the rent she paid was almost the same as it was in Toronto. Having lived here only once in my life, in the last year—it was something I wasn't sure I was going to do—but I couldn't believe that the rent was almost the same as she was paying in Toronto. It's supply. It's not working. We have to change it.

While members of the opposition might be content with pointing fingers and laying blame, we're really rolling up our sleeves and getting to work. The Affordable Homes and Good Jobs Act is our blueprint for change. It's our commitment to making housing affordable and accessible. That's important, Speaker.

For years, previous governments have been content with short-term solutions, and we're looking at the long game here. We need to be proactive. We're changing that narrative. We're putting forward comprehensive, long-term strategies that will address the root causes of this housing crisis—again, in my lifetime at least, the likes of which we've never seen.

Our approach is holistic, Speaker. We're not just looking at housing prices; we're looking at the entire housing ecosystem. From developers to renters, from urban centres to rural towns and villages, we're ensuring that every Ontarian has a fair shot at some point of owning their own home. We're going to roll up our sleeves, diving deep into the complexities of the housing market and crafting policies that make a tangible difference.

We're not just about building homes; we're about building communities because, really, that's what housing is all about: places where families can grow, where children can play safely and where seniors can live with dignity. This holistic approach sets us apart from previous administrations that often missed the forest for the trees. While I totally believe in infill—go in and go up; I totally believe in that where we can—I still believe we have to keep the dream of home ownership, where people can raise their family and have a dream of a backyard, a fence, a sandbox where their kids can play, because I think it's

wrong just to think everyone can live in towers in big large cities in this province. That dream has to stay alive.

0930

Our government understands that housing affordability isn't just about numbers on a spreadsheet. It's about the quality of life, the dreams of our youth and the security of our seniors. We've introduced the Affordable Homes and Good Jobs Act and, if passed, it will make it less expensive and easier to build affordable homes. This isn't just about numbers. It's about helping Ontarians find a home based on their household income, and this is an important part of this legislation.

We're proposing to redefine what “affordable” means. It's not just about market rates; it's about what people can genuinely afford on their income. This approach reflects the ability of local households to pay for housing and recognizes the diversity of housing markets in every municipality and every community across this province.

Now, let's talk for a minute about St. Thomas. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing cited me to talk about it, and that is what I will do. The city of St. Thomas is on the cusp of a transformative moment. We spoke here last year—or last spring and last winter—about PowerCo and the Volkswagen Group, which have chosen St. Thomas to build a large-scale electric-vehicle-battery-cell manufacturing facility. In fact, Speaker, it will be the largest in the world. We're incredibly supportive of this historic investment to build an EV-battery-cell manufacturing facility right in St. Thomas.

But this isn't just about batteries, Speaker. It's about jobs, and thousands of them. Think about it: 3,000 direct jobs are going to be employed right at that plant—3,000. But the best part of the story is that there are going to be 30,000 jobs outside in tertiary jobs supporting through the supply chain of this facility. And those aren't just going to be in St. Thomas and Elgin county. They're going to be spread out throughout this province. From the Ring of Fire right down to Windsor, we have a province that's on the cusp of great economic growth, and as the minister spoke earlier, what do we need to do to complement that growth? We need to make sure that people coming to our communities, coming to our province, coming to work and live and raise their families have a home over their head.

We are also looking at efficiencies at the municipal level. We're engaging with municipalities to ensure they can benefit from provincial supply chain programs and strategies led by Supply Ontario. And to further support housing, we're consulting on regulatory changes to streamline hearings and speed up decisions at the Ontario Land Tribunal.

We're not just thinking about the present, Speaker; we're planning for the future—a future where Ontario is a global leader in innovation and sustainable housing development. The More Homes Built Faster Act was a step in the right direction. We've listened to the people, and we're refining our approach. We're incorporating income factors into the definition of affordable residential units. This is about making sure homes are genuinely affordable for Ontarians. We've engaged with stake-

holders, received hundreds of comments and established a technical advisory table system. We've listened; we're acting. We've been listening. We've heard these stories, the struggles and the hopes. We're redefining "affordable." Again, it's not just about market prices; it's about real people and real incomes. "Affordable" shouldn't just be a buzzword. It should mean homes that real Ontarians can afford.

Again, I'll share an example. A couple of weeks ago. I was in Toronto with my wife. We were having dinner, and a bright young woman was serving us, doing a great job. We got speaking, and she told me about where she was living. She was renting a room in a two-bedroom apartment. As we talked about housing, she broke down and cried. It was an emotional moment. Her tears were really about not being able to ever afford to buy a home, and consequently—what I think bothered her the most, and my wife was crying along with her—was that she said, "I've given up the dream of having a family because I can't afford to raise them in a proper way." That's not only wrong, Speaker; it needs to be corrected, and this bill and our actions in this government is going to do our best to make sure that her dream can come true. We have a duty to change this around.

For those wondering about the 25-year affordability period, we've got it covered. Home builders will need to enter into an agreement with municipalities to ensure that these units remain affordable. This, again, is about long-term solutions, not about short-term fixes.

We're going to slash red tape. We've been doing that. We're proposing discounts and exemptions on development-related fees for homes, so they can become truly affordable. This is more about policy and about reigniting the dream of home ownership for everyone who lives in this province. We're not just redefining terms; we're reshaping the housing landscape in Ontario. We're making bold changes, informed by real feedback from the people of this province.

Last year, we took a bold step with the More Homes Built Faster Act. We introduced exemptions from municipal charges for affordable homes. We're building on that foundation, ensuring that "affordable," again, isn't just a buzzword—it's a reality. We promised exemptions on affordable homes, and this we will deliver.

Our approach is comprehensive. We're looking at every aspect of the housing sector, identifying bottlenecks and addressing them head-on. We're not just focused on the supply side, although it's important; we're also addressing demand, ensuring that every Ontarian can find a home that fits their budget. Again, whether you're renting a home or whether you're trying to buy a home or stay in your home, we have to cater to every segment in the market.

We've been on the ground, listening to Ontarians. We've consulted far and wide. Over 300 comments from the people of this great province have been delivered, and we're acting on them. We've heard from the experts, as well, from every corner of this industry, and the message is clear, Speaker: We need homes that are both affordable and attainable, and that's exactly what we're delivering.

We've been on the ground, listening to Ontarians. We've consulted far and wide. And we're adjusting our definition of affordable housing based on real feedback. And we're not just stopping at affordable: Beyond affordable, we're focused on "attainable." Every Ontarian, whether a teacher, a nurse, a farmer or a factory worker, should have a shot at owning their own property, owning their own home. We're in the early stages of an affordable housing program we're talking about here today and we're in the early stages of an attainable housing program. Speaker, I promise you this: It's going to be a game-changer when completed, and I'm excited about the potential that it holds.

Remember, this just isn't about bricks and mortar; it's about aspirations. It's about the promise of a dream come true. We're laying the foundation for a future where every Ontarian can dream to own a home. We have to make that dream come true, and I know I share with everyone in this House and our government that it has to come true for everyone. This is not a partisan event. This really is a pan-Ontario problem that we have to solve together.

So we've listened, we've heard the concerns, and let us be clear: We're going to keep cutting red tape, we're going to keep reducing costs and we're going to make it more affordable for our community home builders to build housing. So we're calling on everyone—governments, municipalities, and again, community home builders, our private sector—to step up and help get the job done.

Again, let's not be too partisan, but while the opposition may constantly raise doubts, we're raising roofs. We're raising roofs—not just for certain people, but for seniors. We're raising roofs for first-time homebuyers. We're going to raise roofs for the newcomers. We're going to raise roofs for students and those who need supportive housing. So, Speaker, we're not just talking, we're delivering, and we're doing it with a sense of urgency and commitment that was sorely lacking in previous administrations.

We're also thrilled about the federal government's decision to remove the GST from purpose-built rentals. The minister, earlier, spoke to this, the purpose-built rental housing. This is a game-changer, again, and we will work with Ottawa to ensure Ontario's portion of the HST is removed as soon as possible. We're not just addressing concerns; we're providing solutions—solutions that are grounded in reality, informed by experts and driven by the need of all the people in this province.

Serving as Associate Minister of Housing isn't just a role. I see it as a responsibility, as I know everyone does in this government. We're here to solve the housing crisis and ensure every Ontarian has a roof over their head. The Affordable Homes and Good Jobs Act is our roadmap. With it, we're one step closer to our ambitious goal of 1.5 million homes by 2031. With the support of this Legislature, we're going to make this vision a reality.

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We are committed to building a brighter and more prosperous Ontario for all, an Ontario where every family can have a place to call home, where every child can grow up in a safe and nurturing environment and where every senior can retire with dignity and security. Together, we

will build a brighter, more prosperous Ontario for all, an Ontario that leads by example, that sets the gold standard for housing policy and that puts the needs of its people first.

To conclude, again I want to emphasize, this is a great bill, a great piece of legislation coming forward. It complements the other pieces of legislation we brought forward last year, and I know that when the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing speaks, he will complement both the words and the policies that the minister and myself have said. To conclude, I believe this is bold, innovative legislation that will help build a pathway to housing stability and home ownership. Again, I'll repeat that: This is bold, innovative legislation that will help build a pathway to housing stability and home ownership. With that, Speaker, I am now honoured to hand it over to the member from Perth–Wellington, our dedicated parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. I recognize the member for Perth–Wellington.

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you, Speaker, and good morning. Thank you to the associate minister and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for their remarks on Bill 134. I particularly like the associate minister's terminology of raising the roof. I think we need to do that more across Ontario in getting homes built.

It's an honour to share the government's time today as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and speak to the Affordable Homes and Good Jobs Act. This is an important piece of legislation. If passed, it would complement other measures our government has put in place to help increase housing supply across the province—four housing supply bills already and I know we're moving forward with the next one as well in our ministry.

Today's proposed changes are meant to support building more affordable homes in Ontario, helping to make it easier for communities to build the housing that Ontario desperately needs, as the minister alluded to in his remarks, and the associate minister as well.

The proposed changes are also meant to support municipalities as they attract and create jobs. As my colleagues Minister Calandra and Associate Minister Flack have already spoken about this morning, the proposed measures demonstrate our government's strong commitment to working closely with our municipal partners. We're committed to making life better for everyone in Ontario, no matter where they live, whether it's in downtown Toronto, in downtown Listowel or up in Thunder Bay. We are supporting our municipalities with the tools they need to build at least 1.5 million homes by 2031—at least. I know our government has set that goal and I know all opposition parties in the last election agreed to meeting that goal of 1.5 million, but it's a minimum, in my view, that we need to meet. I know our government will strive to do more.

I'm proud to be part of this government that is taking historic action to tackle the housing supply crisis and build more homes Ontarians need. Our government understands the difficulties Ontarians are facing when it comes to

housing, and our housing supply action plans have made great progress. As the minister alluded to in his remarks, we're seeing historic highs with new homes built but also with purpose-built rentals—historic highs in 30 years, I believe.

Our government understands the difficulties Ontarians are facing when it comes to housing and our housing supply plans have made great progress in addressing these challenges. But obviously there is more that can be done. The challenges and measures proposed through the Affordable Homes and Good Jobs Act are forward-looking. They would help communities meet their housing needs today and well into the future.

Our government recognizes the growth demands being placed on large and fast-growing municipalities in Ontario. For example, the greater Toronto area alone is expected to grow by 2.9 million people by 2046. That is not all that far away in the grand scheme of things. This means that within the next 23 years, we'll need homes to accommodate an additional 2.9 million people just in the greater Toronto area, let alone any other growth down in Windsor or up in Ottawa. So there is a massive need, as demonstrated by the record number of people coming to our province. As the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing alluded to, it is great to see so many people across Canada and from around the world coming to Ontario because of our government's work in attracting good-paying jobs and retaining those jobs in Ontario.

Interjections.

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you.

It's more than just a housing issue; it's an economic problem that can affect the entire province and even the entire country, Speaker. Ontario is the economic engine, and because of our government, it's becoming an even stronger economic engine of Canada. To meet this growing demand and ensure we attract these companies and retain these companies, we need workers. Ontario requires workers. I hear this in my riding all the time. A company wants to come to Perth–Wellington, either expand or set up a new facility, and usually, their second question is, "Do you have workers?"

These workers obviously require a place to live. Our government is supporting our municipalities and helps make it easier to attract and create more jobs all across the province. However, we need to ensure that our communities have the housing they need to support the workforce of tomorrow.

Speaker, our government is a top-tier destination for investment and strategic business growth, and our government is committed to supporting and growing the province's workforce. Ontario is ready to help with the creation of good-paying jobs in our communities and help rebuild our economy, and we're taking concrete action to attract jobs and investment. The proposed changes in the Affordable Homes and Good Jobs Act are meant to further support municipalities as they work to attract and create good jobs.

A critical factor in securing new investment opportunities is having suitable industrial sites ready for companies to build on. In November 2019, Ontario launched the Job Site Challenge to create an inventory of invest-

ment-ready mega sites. It was designed to attract large-scale, advanced manufacturing investments that have the potential to create hundreds of new jobs across the province, Speaker. It's great to see a government that's finally focused on retaining and attracting these advanced manufacturing jobs in Ontario.

Unfortunately, under the former Liberal government, supported by the NDP, we lost 3,000 advanced manufacturing jobs, some from my own riding. So it's great to hear when we have attracted 70,000 new jobs since 2018, 40,000 of those jobs in the manufacturing sector alone. I know our Minister of Economic Development continues to work with our Premier to attract even more of those jobs to our province.

As part of this initiative, municipalities, economic development agencies and industry property owners have put forward large tracts of land, between 500 to 1,500 acres, that would support large-scale manufacturing operations. A site in St. Thomas and Central Elgin was identified early on—approximately 1,500 acres—as one of the most investment-ready mega sites in Ontario and, I would argue, Canada, at the time. However, with the land divided between two municipalities with different permitting requirements, we recognized that potential investors could face red tape and delays from unnecessary disruption. This is why our government took immediate action and decisive action and introduced legislation to adjust the municipal boundaries so the sites identified fully resided in the city of St. Thomas. This change was meant to help speed up the construction timelines and ensure the site was truly shovel-ready for potential investment. Speaker, this was a collaborative approach across government with our municipal partners to cut red tape and ensure the benefits of economic growth are enjoyed across the province. It was the right thing to do. Soon after we made this change, the Volkswagen Group, Europe's largest automaker, announced its subsidiary PowerCo SE would establish an electric vehicle battery cell manufacturing facility in St. Thomas, Ontario.

Selecting St. Thomas as the location to build the company's first overseas battery cell plant was a major vote of confidence in Canada and Ontario. I know we outbid a lot of American states, and they're still scratching their heads on how Ontario was able to attract and retain this investment, Speaker. It speaks—

Interjection: Fedeli factor.

Mr. Matthew Rae: The Fedeli factor, yes. They're going to copyright that.

It is our shared work with our federal colleagues and the province to ensure that we're a global leader in the electric vehicle supply chain. It's a testament to Ontario's competitive business environment, which our government has helped create, as alluded to by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, when we're cutting red tape, and we continue to cut red tape under the great leadership of our Premier and our Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

This investment was welcomed by many local business leaders for the dramatic and positive impact it will have on the community. As the associate minister alluded to, it will not only just benefit Elgin county and St. Thomas and

London; it will actually benefit all of Ontario. I know, in particular, when this site was announced—the weekend after, I remember, I was at a couple of community events in my riding, and I heard auto dealers saying, “This is great news, because we'll sell those cars at our auto dealerships.” So it's great to see the entire supply chain, as the Associate Minister of Housing alluded to, will benefit from this investment, not just in St. Thomas but across Ontario.

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Volkswagen Group and PowerCo SE's historic investment to build an electric vehicle battery cell manufacturing facility in St. Thomas will create thousands of jobs. This manufacturing facility will be the largest of its kind in Canada, and it has the potential to become one of the largest electric vehicle battery plants in the world. The plant will have six production lines and make enough batteries for one million cars every year. What's more, Volkswagen Group has plans to make 25 new electric vehicle models in the coming decades, and most of those batteries will come from St. Thomas.

The plant is expected, as the associate minister alluded to, to employ up to 3,000 people and create thousands of spin-off jobs across Ontario. It is estimated that it could be worth as much as \$200 billion to the Canadian economy over the coming decade—\$200 billion, Speaker. This investment represents the largest auto investment in our province's history, and it's a big win for the people of Ontario, the people of St. Thomas and all the surrounding communities.

Volkswagen Group's historic investment will strengthen Ontario's end-to-end electric vehicle supply chain and create more good-paying jobs for workers in St. Thomas and across the province. This is an example—one of many—of how our government continues to work to create the right conditions for businesses and workers to succeed now and into the future. We're revitalizing Ontario's auto sector and making Ontario a powerhouse in North America. The cars of the future will be made in Ontario from start to finish, from the minerals in northern Ontario to the battery cells in St. Thomas, and the auto dealers in my riding of Perth–Wellington will sell them.

Speaker, our government wants to help St. Thomas move forward with this investment which will significantly strengthen the local economy and Ontario's economy. Through the Affordable Homes and Good Jobs Act, Ontario is proposing changes to help support this investment. The agreement was negotiated in partnership with the city of St. Thomas and provides for the city to grant assistance as part of the PowerCo SE project. However, the current rules against municipalities providing financial assistance to any industrial or commercial enterprise limit the city of St. Thomas from providing some assistance outlined in the agreement.

The changes we're proposing through the Affordable Homes and Good Jobs Act would give the city of St. Thomas the authority to provide PowerCo SE municipal-based incentives that were negotiated in partnership with the municipality. This new authority would be restricted to St. Thomas only. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing would provide the regulation-making authority to

impose restrictions, limits and other conditions as needed on the new authority. In addition, the province will be consulting on the proposed changes through a public posting on the Regulatory Registry of Ontario for a 30-day period.

Creating and supporting more shovel-ready mega sites like St. Thomas will help Ontario remain competitive as the province competes for major global investments. I know our Minister of Economic Development continues to travel the world, selling the great story we have in Ontario and attract more investments to Ontario, and I know we will have more good news in the months and years ahead.

These proposed changes represent our government's efforts to attract new investments and create more good-paying jobs and strengthen the economy. To complement the legislative proposals in the Affordable Homes and Good Jobs Act, our government will also be consulting on other changes that can be made to help get more affordable housing built in Ontario and increase municipal efficiencies.

We're committed to working closely with our municipal partners to ensure that they have the right tools and processes in place so they can build at least 1.5 million new homes by 2031. Our government will be consulting on proposed regulatory changes as part of the ongoing strategy to streamline hearings and speed up decisions at the Ontario Land Tribunal.

The Ontario Land Tribunal may seem like some mysterious committee that is set up that most people wouldn't really understand the impact of. I have a great example from my riding in Perth-Wellington on the delays and inefficiencies—which we are consulting on how we can streamline and decrease—and how this prevented homes from being built. There was a proposed development in my community—the town I actually live in, in the riding, in Mitchell—for, as the associate minister mentioned, seniors looking to move out of their current homes into a smaller unit, usually two-bedroom, retirement-type living. One of the proposed developments was rather modest for Mitchell: four storeys tall—I know. Very small for Toronto standards, but very big for Mitchell standards. But someone took them to the Ontario Land Tribunal—NIMBYs. We'll just say what it is: It's NIMBYs. They took them to the Ontario Land Tribunal and they delayed the project for years.

The community builder now says this delay added an extra million dollars to the project, and the project hasn't broken ground. So those individuals want to stay in their community because their children and grandchildren live in the community, but they can't because they don't have anywhere they want to downsize to. They're over-housed, as it's sometimes referred to.

These delays prevented this apartment building from being built, which I live down the street from. I've been at many public events and tell people I'm 100% in favour of this, even though I know it will increase traffic a little, that there will be more people. But that's great to see: more homes being built in our rural communities. And these individuals, then, would leave their houses, and those houses would be available for families.

But that hasn't happened, Speaker, because of these delays at the Ontario Land Tribunal, so this government is taking action to streamline the processes and reduce those delays. Helping resolve land use planning difficulties and disputes faster will help municipalities build priority projects quicker, including housing, as I mentioned. Supply Ontario, as well, will also be engaging and working with municipalities to look at ways to increase procurement collaboration with municipalities to allow cost savings and efficiencies by both levels of government.

To support building more homes, our government will be asking for feedback on proposed regulatory changes aimed at streamlining hearings and expediting the OLT, the Ontario Land Tribunal, as I alluded to. It is an independent adjudicative tribunal and an important piece of the municipal planning and housing framework here in Ontario. However, when people are unable to resolve their differences on land use planning issues or have disputes with their municipal councils that can't be settled, the OLT provides a forum to resolve those disputes.

We need to improve the process, though, Speaker, which will help resolve land use disputes faster, will help minimize delays and will help get more homes built in communities across Ontario. Too many people in Ontario are struggling to find an affordable home and this proposal supports our government's efforts to provide more certainty for municipalities and make it cheaper and easier to build affordable homes across the province.

To further streamline hearings and speed up decisions at the OLT, Ontario is consulting on and developing proposed regulations to set service standards and to prioritize resolution of certain cases, including cases that would create more housing. Consultations, for those who are watching at home, will begin this fall. This contributes to the broader goal of supporting strong, healthy communities with the public interest at heart. It also expands the important work that is already under way to improve our processes.

Ontario has made investments to help the OLT to streamline processes, improve customer service and resolve land use planning disputes more quickly. Some of these investments were made to address key recommendations in the Housing Affordability Task Force report to increase resources to the OLT so homes can be built faster. We know that principled and timely resolutions play an important role in the province's housing supply. We will not let red tape, NIMBYs or long wait times delay critical projects in our communities, including much-needed housing.

We'll also be engaging and working with municipalities to ensure they can benefit from provincial supply chain programs and strategies, led by Supply Ontario. A classic example I've actually heard from my municipality, Speaker, is the province purchases so much paper in a year: Can we get on that to reduce the cost to municipalities? Bulk purchasing, whether it's paper, whether it's office supplies, whether it's—also construction material, potentially, as well.

We're going to consult on a variety of things that Supply Ontario oversees and how we can leverage that to support procurement across the Ontario public service and

the broader public sector. It works to bring cohesion to the public sector supply chain by embracing innovation and leveraging diverse partnerships and relationships with suppliers. This can help harness Ontario's buying power to enable economic development, province-wide resiliency and the value for Ontarians.

There is only one taxpayer at the end of the day, and I know our municipal partners always appreciate our provincial government is willing to work with them, seeing how we can help reduce costs and create more efficiencies within the way we do business at a provincial and municipal level. I know we will be consulting with them very heavily. And I know it really speaks to the theme that our government really focuses on a lot: local empowerment, as the Associate Minister of Housing mentioned.

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Unfortunately, under the former Liberal government—supported by the NDP, again—they didn't believe in local empowerment. They believed in imposing, for example, wind turbines on communities that didn't want them; they believed in not considering municipal feedback. This government, I'm proud to say, listens to our municipal partners, supports our municipal partners and will continue to do so as we aim for our goal of building 1.5 million new homes by 2031.

Speaker, as you can see, our proposed measure will help supporting more affordable homes in Ontario, while also supporting our municipalities as they work to attract and create good jobs all throughout Ontario. The proposed changes and measures my colleagues and I described this morning would also support earlier measures made through the government's housing supply action plans.

Speaker, I'm one of the younger members of this place currently. I know I hear often from my colleagues that they want to own a home. They want to be able to call a place their own. This government will continue to stand with those new Canadians, those young Canadians and those seniors looking to downsize, to ensure we get homes built in communities across Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We have time for questions.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity. A question for the government: You've talked about this bill; you've talked about your housing plans. Can you tell us what percentage of the homes you expect to be built will be targeted to those in the bottom half of income earners and what percentage of their after-tax income you expect they will be spending on these homes?

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The Associate Minister of Housing.

Hon. Rob Flack: In the fullness of debate, we will come up with key targets, but I can say that when we look at—

Mr. Peter Tabuns: You've got to be kidding.

Hon. Rob Flack: Speaker, 1.5 million homes is what we are targeted to build over the next 10 years. We're going to achieve that target. We're well on our way: record rentals in the last two years; more support for supportive housing. This job is getting done and we will take no lessons from the members opposite, because nothing—nothing—while they supported the Liberal government.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The member for Thornhill for the next question.

Ms. Laura Smith: Thank you for the very commented discussions we're about to have. I appreciate everyone's contribution in this, and I appreciate what just happened and transpired.

I think we can all agree that there is no silver bullet to address Ontario's critically low housing supply. I was really pleased to hear the minister talk about building long-term-care homes in small communities, so people can live and stay in the communities that they grew to love and their families can continue to see them.

But going back to the silver bullet, this question is addressed to the Associate Minister of Housing: We all have to work closely with our federal and municipal partners, as well as with the private sector, for not-for-profits across Ontario, to realize our shared goals, to making sure Ontarians find homes, and meet their needs and budget.

Can the member please expand on how this legislation, if passed, will encourage our not-for-profit sector and private sector partners to continue investing in Ontario, and building the affordable homes Ontario needs and deserves?

Hon. Rob Flack: To the member opposite's question: I am very pleased with the progress we've been making with supportive housing. Since I've been minister, I have literally made a number of announcements in support of communities that got new supportive housing: Kitchener, Waterloo, London, St. Thomas. Just last week, I was in St. Thomas, where we announced the Station, where we gave \$1.2 million in operational funding, thanks to the Ministry of Health—45 new units.

This legislation will complement the acts we've already put in place.

Again, I would point out that we've increased supportive housing funding and homelessness funding over the last year by \$700 million, up \$200 million compared to the year before. Actions speak louder than words. We're getting it done, and this act will help complement further pacing, further improvements, further results that count for the people of this province.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: I want to focus on schedule 2, regarding the new Volkswagen EV battery factory. Back on September 21, Caldwell First Nation had some issues with this government. I'm quoting this statement that they made—that Caldwell First Nation, along with the Chiefs of Ontario, have taken extraordinary steps in writing numerous letters to Premier Ford urging him to establish real business partnerships in southwestern Ontario, rather than treating us as "cardboard cut outs" at media events. These appeals reflect the growing concern and consensus among First Nations communities that a change in Ontario ministerial leadership is essential in restoring trust and advancing meaningful—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Question?

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: How are you going to work with First Nations in partnership, rather than divide and conquer?

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The member for Perth–Wellington.

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you to my colleague for the very important question. I know our Minister of Northern Development and Indigenous Affairs continues to consult with Indigenous peoples across Ontario on a variety of different issues and projects and I know we'll continue to do so. We attract, as I alluded to in my remarks, more and more economic growth and we want to ensure that all Ontarians, no matter where they live, or for how long they have called this place home, benefit from that.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. Robert Bailey: My question is to the member from Perth–Wellington. I enjoyed all the debate this morning, from both the minister and the associate minister as well.

To build this affordable housing and to help with immigration that's coming to Ontario, can you explain why we are moving so fast on this bill that we've introduced today?

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you to the great member from Sarnia–Lambton for the very important question. I know both of our communities are growing immensely, which is great to see.

As I mentioned in my remarks, when new jobs and new employers come to my community one of the first questions they ask is, do you have the workers? Whether it's in our oil and gas industry or whether it's in our agricultural industry, I know we're going to continue to table housing supply action plan bills because we know we need to get more homes built quickly across Ontario because it's for our future, it's for our future children, it's for our future grandchildren to ensure that everyone has the same opportunity that all of us in this place have had that dream of home ownership.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Associate Minister of Housing. Speaker, like all Ontarians, post-secondary students have been struggling in particular with the impact of the government's failure to tackle the housing crisis. We've heard of students paying thousands of dollars to rent a bed in a crowded rooming house. We've heard of students who have been encamped outside—a post-secondary student. We're also hearing that young people are more discouraged than ever about their prospects of being able to afford a home.

My question is, given that Ontario funds post-secondary education at the lowest across Canada, what is this government doing to enable post-secondary institutions to build the housing that students so desperately need?

Hon. Rob Flack: I think actions speak louder than words and if you take a look at 15,000 new purpose-built rentals, up 7.5% year over year, we are getting the job done. However, that does not mean there isn't more to do. We recognize the need for more rentals in this province. That is exactly why the Affordable Homes and Good Jobs Act is being tabled in this House. Home ownership, rentals

as well, are a key part of this legislation. I would say that, when you take a look at our students at the universities and colleges across this province, there are many opportunities to get shovels in the ground faster.

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Again, this legislation is going to accelerate, help complement and accelerate actions there. I can also say compassionately—and I know we share the same community in many respects—it's going to happen in London. There are opportunities there. We just need to get our municipal partners and community home builders getting it done.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. We'll have to move to the next question.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: You know, the Minister of Housing was talking about how his family emigrated here from Italy. My family emigrated here from Italy, and to be honest, our towns are next door to each other in Italy. But my family came here in 1950 and my father ended up buying a house in 1953 in Port Credit. We've been living there for 70 years; he paid \$14,000 back then. My two sons—one is becoming a CPA and the other is becoming an engineer. They want to live in the riding their great-grandfather, grandfather and father have lived in, and they cannot afford it. How will this bill help build more affordable housing for our future and our immigrants that are coming into this country?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Thank you very much to the member for the question. The answer is simple: It is another in a series of bills that we've put forward to eliminate red tape and remove obstacles. The member is absolutely correct; it was the bargain that people made when they came to this country: You work hard, play by the rules and you will have the opportunity to succeed. But after 15 years of Liberal and NDP mismanagement of the economy, they've forced us into a housing crisis. We are untangling that mess.

We have one more mess to untangle, and that's the federal government's refusal to eliminate the carbon tax and to help us remove obstacles federally so we can get not only this crisis resolved in Ontario, but across Canada.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. We don't have time for another question.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

WORLD FRIENDSHIP YEAR

Mr. Deepak Anand: Madam Speaker, friendship is the cornerstone of human connection. It brings the best of humans to society and helps to bring relationships we cherish.

The Jain Society of Toronto, a local community organization with many members from Mississauga–Malton, is serving the community with the Jain words “Maitri Bhavna,” which means to be a friend to everyone in the universe.

This morning, the members of JSOT organized the launch of World Friendship Year on the auspicious occa-

sion of the 2550th Nirvana Utsav of Bhagwan Mahavir at the Legislative Assembly under the leadership of His Holiness Acharya Dr. Lokesh Muni Ji, a versatile thinker, poet, social reformer, writer, world peace ambassador and founder of Ahimsa Vishwa Bharti.

His resounding spirit of friendship reminds us of the value of working together, supporting each other, ensuring no one is left behind.

Madam Speaker, Mahavir Swami once said, “In happiness and suffering, in joy and grief, we should regard all creatures as we regard our own self.”

Acharya Ji’s lifetime dedication to promoting religious tolerance and universal value is commendable. I would like to thank him for his tireless efforts, selfless service and unwavering dedication to the global community, inspiring everyone. My best wishes as you embark on your journey in promoting friendship. Let’s all work together and build a better world, including a stronger Ontario. Jai Jinendra.

HOUSING

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Housing is more than just a structure; it’s the very foundation for families. When we fail to provide it, it reverberates and disrupts our collective communities and ideals. While private development is vital, building houses remains a paramount public responsibility. It’s about championing purpose-built houses. A balanced approach is essential, yet our current provincial strategy leans heavily on private incentives, sidelining public housing investments.

This week, as we discuss housing affordability, we must remember, if Ontario’s strategy primarily incentivizes private developers to build affordable housing, leaving municipalities to shoulder the burden, we’re missing the mark. In Niagara alone, the wait-list for affordable housing spans two decades.

Municipalities still feel the weight of transferring social housing funding responsibilities by Mike Harris.

Premier Ford, the time has come to honor your commitment to make municipalities whole for the development charges. Ontario has the potential to do more. We need a comprehensive governance framework and provincial funding to address the housing crisis. It is critical we bolster the construction of non-market homes, particularly for young families and low-income households.

We must champion a grant-based approach for the non-profit and co-op sectors, support community land trusts and devise a robust rental housing strategy. If we are not building non-market housing, we risk not doing enough. Let’s refine Ontario’s approach and build a housing future that services all Ontarians.

MUSLIM COMMUNITY

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members’ statements? The member for—Brampton North.

Mr. Graham McGregor: Thank you, Speaker—as if you don’t know who I am.

Es salaam aleikum. It’s my honour to stand today and recognize as many as a hundred Muslim leaders representing major community organizations across the province, including in my riding of Brampton North. These organizations do fantastic work to promote the voice of every single Muslim-Canadian in Brampton and in Canada as a whole. I thank them immensely for the service they provide to our country.

The Muslim community is strong and proud. I see it every day in my riding of Brampton North. Over the last number of decades, Canada, specifically Ontario, has been so fortunate to have new generations of Muslims come to Ontario and call it home. With them, they bring a tradition of hard work, respect and commitment to standing up for their neighbours.

Canada is home to over 1.9 million Muslims, and, mashallah, there are about a million living right here in Ontario. I want to assure our entire Muslim community that whether your name is Jameel or John, Mark or Mohammed; whether you pray on Friday, Sunday or not at all; our government has your back. We will ensure that you can safely work, succeed, practise and live your faith.

I want to thank the leaders who took the time to be here today, and I encourage all members to join the reception later today at 5:30 p.m. in the dining room.

MUSLIM COMMUNITY

Ms. Peggy Sattler: As MPP for London West and on behalf of the official opposition, I am honoured to welcome the National Council of Canadian Muslims to Queen’s Park today, representing some of the largest, most active, and engaged Muslim organizations in Ontario.

London is home to Ontario’s first purpose-built mosque, built in 1964. Our city has benefited enormously from the contributions and commitment of Muslim communities. Across the province, Muslims have been pivotal to our economic growth, collective well-being, and cultural vibrancy.

In June 2021, Londoners were shaken to our core by the senseless, hate-motivated attack that tragically took the lives of four members of our London family and left a child orphaned. As we follow the case through the courts, we are reliving the pain and trauma of that terrible day, while recognizing in particular how difficult the trial must be for our Muslim neighbours.

London experienced directly the reality and devastating consequences of Islamophobia, but we know that it is a reality in all parts of our province. With October’s recognition as Islamic Heritage Month, Ontarians have an opportunity to celebrate, to learn about, to educate and to reflect on Islam’s rich history, its long-standing traditions and its wonderful cultural diversity. This diversity is present in this chamber, in our ridings and throughout the province.

Today, let us recommit to standing together against Islamophobia in unity, solidarity and strength, and in unwavering support of our shared values of kindness, diversity and mutual understanding.

RIDING OF MARKHAM–UNIONVILLE

Mr. Billy Pang: I rise today to share my summer experiences in the wonderful community of Markham–Unionville. Over the summer, I had the privilege of spending quality time in my riding. I connected with the incredible families that make up our vibrant constituency. I heard their diverse perspectives and listened to their stories. These conversations were invaluable in helping me better understand the unique needs and concerns of our community. We exchanged ideas. I am grateful for the openness and warmth with which I was received.

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In addition to these visits, my team and I embarked on a mission to identify and celebrate the outstanding efforts of our residents in beautifying their homes. We introduced the landscaping award to recognize those who went above and beyond to enhance their properties. They spread joy and vibrancy throughout their neighbourhoods and fostered a sense of belonging within our community.

I was glad to present over 1,400 awards to deserving homes. Each award serves as a shining example of generosity and community spirit. These awardees have contributed significantly to making Markham–Unionville an even more beautiful and tightly knit place to live.

I want to extend my heartfelt appreciation to all those who welcomed me to their homes. I also thank those who dedicated their time to nominating their neighbours for the landscaping award.

Together, we are building a stronger and more connected community that we can all be proud to call home.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Good morning, Speaker. The Ford government's record on the environment and fighting climate change is abysmal. This government broke the law when it comes to Ontarians' environmental rights—and, of course, the greenbelt grab that threatened the destruction of thousands of acres of farmland and wetlands.

Ontario's recent climate change impact assessment report identified the very imminent risk climate change poses to Ontarians' health, livelihoods and property. This grim report was presented to the government in January but was quietly released seven months later with no announcement. Maybe they hoped we wouldn't notice that this government does not have a climate change plan.

Now we learn through investigative reports that many of Ontario's gas plants which were supposed to run only during peak periods are actually running almost 24 hours a day. And there are many more gas plants on the way.

While the entire world moves towards greener energy, this government is making things worse. Let's not forget the cancelled electricity conservation programs that would have saved carbon emissions and saved consumers money.

Ontario hasn't built any new wind or solar energy since Premier Doug Ford tore down wind farms and ripped EV chargers out of the ground.

The climate crisis is here. Instead of a government that is acting to protect us, we have Premier Doug Ford, who is focused on helping his friends get richer. This is a

government with their head in the sand and their hands in the cookie jar, but we on this side of the House will continue to push for real leadership on climate change and the climate crisis.

NORTHWAY WELLNESS CENTRE

Mr. Ross Romano: I'm proud to share the news that the Northway Wellness Centre has officially opened in Sault Ste. Marie.

On September 19 earlier this year, I joined the team from Sault Area Hospital and many community partners at Northway to share with the public that the 20-bed residential withdrawal management facility centre would begin accepting patients on September 25.

Northway Wellness Centre is the home to the residential withdrawal management and safe beds program and will be offering services such as comprehensive assessments, medical support, counselling. They will be able to refer patients and families to all of the related services and offerings within our community.

The new facility will provide treatment options to people in our community who are suffering and their families by complementing the significant investments that have been made to build out-of-hospital services and numerous community wraparound supports and services that support vulnerable persons in crisis before they end up in a hospital. These supports are all critical and will help people to heal and to thrive.

Northway will be staffed by a mental health and addictions team including doctors, nurses and social workers.

I want to say a special thank you to the Ministry of Health and to Sault Area Hospital and all of the various community organisations and leaders for making this a reality and for bringing this incredible new facility into our community. It is going to help so many.

HOUSING

MPP Andrea Hazell: Mr. Speaker, I rise today because we need to address the housing crisis, and we must do it urgently, with partnerships across all sectors.

My riding, Scarborough–Guildwood, is at the forefront of the housing crisis, where 45% of residents spend more than 30% of their income on housing. The only way out of this mess is by building more housing, but while we need quantity, we also need quality. We can't just keep sprawling outwards, and we shouldn't develop the greenbelt. We need dense, complete communities, communities that have frequent, fast transit access, neighbourhoods that have enough schools to support the student population.

We need our cities to have an abundance of housing that is affordable, with rent control, so that residents aren't driven away, so that they can spend their hard-earned money investing in their family's future, communities that have jobs within them, not an hour commute away, and that sustain local business and the entrepreneurial spirit that radiates in Scarborough.

As a female entrepreneur, Mr. Speaker, I saw first-hand how important local business is to the spirit of the com-

munity. There are good projects that take it upon themselves to provide for this. And we need a government that is willing to prioritize this modern way of housing, not by building new sprawl or paving the greenbelt.

DEMENTIA CARE

Mr. Lorne Coe: Dementia in its many forms is a critical health care issue that affects patients, families and caregivers in profound ways. In the region of Durham, there are over 4,000 residents with dementia. While there are many dementia care services and programs in place today, there's still a lot of work to do. Consequently, Ontario Tech University and Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences have launched the Advancement for Dementia Care Centre, a vital new community-based partnership aimed at uncovering solutions to improve the quality of life of patients and caregivers through innovation and research and deployment of new technologies.

Speaker, one ADCC example of accelerating care involves a "living lab" at Ontario Shores, where cutting-edge technologies can be adapted, implemented in real clinical settings and evaluated based on their practical application. This innovation will support patients' psychosocial needs and behavioural challenges.

Clearly, the partnership between Ontario Tech and Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences will positively impact the care of people living with dementia and their families living in Whitby and other parts of the region of Durham.

VANDALISM OF JEWISH HIGH HOLY DAYS BANNERS

Mrs. Robin Martin: Two weeks ago, members of the Jewish community in my riding of Eglinton–Lawrence and across Ontario observed Rosh Hashanah, the start of the new year according to Jewish teachings. I wish all who celebrated a blessed and pleasant new year.

Rosh Hashanah is the first of the High Holy Days. The following 10 days are days of repentance and culminate in Yom Kippur, also known as the day of atonement and considered the holiest day in Judaism. Through fasting, prayer and the repentance of sins, Jews make amends for sins committed against God or others.

Given the profound significance of these holidays, recent news that I've received is very concerning. Within my riding, banners advertising the High Holy Days for local shuls, including the Song Shul, Temple Sinai and Shaarei Shomayim, were vandalized or stolen from their Lawrence Plaza location. A fourth banner which did not mention the High Holy Days remained intact. They were replaced and then stolen again, but the fourth unrelated banner remained untouched again.

This vandalism targeting the Jewish community has no place in Ontario. Thankfully, B'nai Brith, who is always active, is aware of it and is taking action.

Our government, Mr. Speaker, remains committed to combatting anti-Semitism and all forms of hatred through initiatives such as the Anti-Hate Security and Prevention

Grant and mandatory Holocaust education in grade 6, starting this year.

We all need to do our part to promote tolerance, understanding and respect for all of our neighbours, no matter what their race or religion.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes our members' statements this morning. I'll remind all members—not wanting to single anyone out—that the members' statements are to be 90 seconds. That's one minute and 30 seconds.

1030

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Today in the Speaker's gallery, we have with us this year's cohort of the Ontario Legislative Internship Program, or OLIP, as we know it. They are Razan Akiba, Milena Basciano, Steffi Burgi, Evan Cameron, Bridget Carter-Whitney, Olivia Collver, Kaitlin Gallant, Astrid Krueger, Taylor Pizzirusso and Rhea Saini.

This non-partisan program allows interns to gain practical experience in the daily workings of the Legislature. They will each complete two placements over the course of their time at Queen's Park, one with a government member and one with an opposition member. I want to encourage all eligible members to participate in this exceptional program. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: It's a privilege to welcome Jennifer, Lucy, Holly, Laura and Jake from the Canadian Liver Foundation to Queen's Park today. They are hosting a reception this afternoon, at 12 in room 228. Everyone is welcome. I welcome you to Queen's Park.

MPP Jamie West: We have several members from the TVO branch of the Canadian Media Guild. A few of the executive are here: Meredith Martin, Cara Stern and Dan DiMillo.

Mr. Deepak Anand: Mr. Speaker, it is an absolute pleasure to introduce His Holiness Acharya Dr. Lokesh Muni Ji, Dr. Mahendra Jain, Anshul Rohil, Mahendra Bhandari, Prakash Kumar and Harshit Shah from the Jain Society of Toronto in Scarborough, and a resident of Mississauga–Malton, Tanvi Nagda.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: I'd like to welcome board members Pamela Baker and Stephen Harvey from RTOERO. Welcome. RTOERO is an association of retirees associated with education. Welcome to your House.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I want to introduce Brooke Timpson, a friend and a former staffer here at Queen's Park. Welcome.

Ms. Marit Stiles: It gives me great pleasure to welcome members of the National Council of Canadian Muslims who are here for their advocacy day. I look forward to seeing you later on at the reception. Welcome.

Mrs. Robin Martin: It's my privilege to take the opportunity to introduce my sister-in-law, Meredith Martin, who's in the gallery.

MPP Jill Andrew: It's a great honour to welcome the following TVO executives and workers to their House at Queen's Park: president of the TVO branch of the Canadian Media Guild Meredith Martin and VP Cara

Stern, along with Sameen Ahmad-Wing Quan, Aaron Bala, Nathaniel Basen, Chris Beaver, Preeti Bhuyan, Eric Bombicino, Jacquie Busby, Ryan Buskirk, Hilary Clark, Dan DiMillo, Natalie Drajewicz, Colin Ellis, Sean Foreman, Erica Giancola, Sandra Gionas, Ruth Hurst, Daniel Kitts, Namugenyi Kiwanuka, Liane Kotler, Tiffany Lam, Christine Lee, Harrison Lowman, Lisa Marinelli, John Michael McGrath, Matthew O'Mara, Sangeeta Patel, Aaron Reichert, Wodek Szemberg, Shajgev Umaharan, Jeanne d'Arc Umurungi, Cara Vaughan and Brittany Weaver.

Thank you to these education workers, journalists and producers from TVO workers.

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the people in the gallery to take their seats. Order.

There should be no political commentary during introduction of visitors.

The member for Kitchener–Conestoga.

Mr. Mike Harris: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On your behalf, I do believe I see your wife sitting up in the gallery. Lisa Arnott is here, and I think we should all give a round of applause for her putting up with the Speaker for many, many years.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): She asked me not to introduce her.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'd like to introduce Charlie the chaplain. He's in the public gallery today and he offers counselling services to MPPs, if you wish. And let's be honest, we need all the help we can get.

Hon. Todd Smith: The member can speak for herself.

We have some guests here from Alberta, fresh off a tour of the world's largest nuclear facility at Bruce Power: Minister Nathan Neudorf is the Minister of Affordability and Utilities and the vice-president of the Treasury Board in Alberta. They're in your Speaker's gallery this morning, Mr. Speaker. Also, a couple of staff members—Jon Dziadyk, the chief of staff, and Michael Smith—are joining us today, all the way from Alberta.

MPP Jill Andrew: I just want to also welcome Charlie the chaplain, who has been incredibly amazing over the years, and especially during my challenge with Mom.

I also want to give a great thank you to the Jain Society of Toronto, in Scarborough, that held an excellent morning ceremony today on the power of friendship.

Hon. Michael D. Ford: On behalf of the government and the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism, I too want to welcome the National Council of Canadian Muslims as well as community leaders from across the province on behalf of the Muslim community here. Welcome to your House.

M. Stéphane Sarrazin: J'aimerais souhaiter la bienvenue aux gens de TFO qui sont ici aujourd'hui avec nous. J'ai eu la chance de les rencontrer ce matin. J'ai eu la chance aussi de participer à leur évènement à Ottawa, la rentrée. Je dois les féliciter pour la programmation puis aussi pour leur implication dans l'éducation de nos francophones en Ontario. Donc, madame Godin, madame Séguin : bienvenue à Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes our introduction of visitors.

I understand the member for Ottawa–Vanier has a point of order.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: I am seeking unanimous consent that, notwithstanding standing order 45(b)(iv), eight minutes be apportioned to the independent members as a group for debate on opposition motion number 1 today.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Madame Collard is seeking unanimous consent of the House that, notwithstanding standing order 100(a)(iv), that five minutes be allotted to the independent members as a group to speak during private members' public business today. Agreed—what?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): It says five minutes here.

Agreed? I heard a no.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. The House has made its decision on this matter. We're going to move on.

QUESTION PERIOD

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: Good morning, Speaker. My question is to the Premier.

Every day, we find out new details about who and how this government's insiders were involved in the greenbelt grab. Public accounts revealed that this government paid the Premier's former principal secretary Amin Massoudi nearly a quarter of a million dollars to do the same job via his private company, Atlas.

My question to the Premier is, why did the Premier hire his good friend to provide the same services but at an exorbitant pay increase?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the government House leader and Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Paul Calandra: As you know and the Premier highlighted a couple of weeks ago, Mr. Massoudi is no longer employed by PC caucus services.

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The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Back to the Premier: We all remember Mr. Massoudi for his participation in the infamous Las Vegas boys' trip with greenbelt land speculator Shakir Rehmatullah. Last week, journalists asked the Premier's office about Mr. Massoudi's lucrative contract and a spokesperson for the Premier said that the contract has ended and he has no formal role.

When exactly did the contract with Mr. Massoudi's firm, Atlas strategies, end?

Hon. Paul Calandra: As I mentioned, the Premier highlighted a couple of weeks ago in Niagara Falls that that contract had ended and Mr. Massoudi is no longer working for PC caucus services.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The final supplementary.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Back to the Premier: The people of this province deserve to know the exact date this contract ended because Mr. Massoudi's firm was registered to lobby the government on November 3, 2022. If there was an overlap, it means that a company actively lobbying the government was also writing the Premier's speeches and drafting his communications strategy at the same time. At the very least, a close friend of the Premier got a pretty sweet gig: \$230,000 for just three months of work.

Back to the Premier: Which is it?

Hon. Paul Calandra: It's not surprising that the member opposite is wrong. Again, as the Premier said, that contract was terminated a couple of weeks ago, as highlighted by the Premier.

Mr. Massoudi himself, I'm told, has never been registered to lobby the government. If she has a complaint, I would suggest that she take that up with the Integrity Commissioner and I'm sure he will investigate that further. But as I said, he's no longer employed by PC caucus research services.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Again, the leader of the opposition.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you, Speaker. Sometimes it's what they won't say.

Back to the Premier: Government lawyers have now confirmed that the Premier routinely uses his personal devices to conduct government business. The Premier was warned by the Information and Privacy Commissioner that government business must be conducted on government devices and platforms. It's about basic transparency. This is not new.

Why has the Premier refused to follow the commissioner's guidance?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Paul Calandra: The honourable member will know that this Premier has been very open with respect to how people can contact him. As I said last week, he in fact gave his phone number out in the House, publicly, for everybody to call. I know I've been with him, and a number of our caucus members have been with him, when he's answering calls from constituents with respect to programs or services for people in his riding. He's not going to stop doing that because that's the type of person he is.

The slogan "for the people" isn't just a slogan for us; it is at the core of what we do. Everything that we do, since 2018, has been about advancing the people of the province of Ontario, unleashing the economy. Now we're going to tackle the housing affordability crisis that they helped

create with the Liberals. It's about doing what's right for the people of the province of Ontario. This Premier is not going to stop doing that. This caucus won't stop doing that. The only people getting in the way are the opposition and their partners in the Liberal Party.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Members will please take their seats.

Start the clock. Supplementary.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, if he's so open, why won't he release his records?

Back to the Premier: It's really important to remember that the commissioner's guidance came after staff in this Premier's office were caught using personal email accounts to arrange for the Premier's souped-up custom van.

The people of Ontario are not going to be played for fools. Did the Premier intentionally continue to use personal devices in order to avoid freedom-of-information requests?

Hon. Paul Calandra: This is a party that can't even get a standing ovation right, and they expect the people of the province of Ontario to ever put confidence in them to govern. Give me a break, Mr. Speaker.

I'll tell you what happened in the last election: We went to the people of the province of Ontario and we said that we're going to continue to unleash the power of the economy of Ontario. Do you know why? Because it's not only good for the people of Ontario; it's good for all of Canada when Ontario succeeds. That's why people from Alberta are here: because they want to see what we're doing, and it is good for all of Canada.

So I tell the member opposite, take a look behind you. There are so many fewer NDP members in that caucus. Do you know why? Because the people of the province Ontario put their faith in a Progressive Conservative government to continue to build the economy, to tackle the housing affordability crisis and to continue a bigger, better, bolder Ontario.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members will take their seats.

The final supplementary.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Global News has requested the Premier's personal phone logs after an FOI request found no evidence the Premier had used his government phone during a one-week period in November. Remember, this was when the government was planning for the greenbelt grab and various urban boundary expansions were being announced. The Auditor General and the Integrity Commissioner found that favoured land speculators received preferential treatment as a result of these decisions.

So to the Premier: Will his personal phone logs reveal conversations with the very land speculators who benefited from preferential treatment by this government?

Hon. Paul Calandra: What can you do about a leader of the opposition who doesn't understand that we have a Premier who actually takes calls from Ontarians? Imagine this, Mr. Speaker: He got up in the House and gave his personal phone number out in the House on the record for

everybody to call. That's what he did. That's probably why this caucus has grown. That's probably why we won a larger majority than we had in 2018. But you know what the real reason is? Because we continue to focus on the priorities of the people of the province of Ontario.

We said, in 2018, colleagues—remember when we said that a carbon tax would hurt the province of Ontario's economy? What did they say? No. We said federal policies of high taxes, red tape and the carbon tax would hurt the Ontario economy. They said no, and they doubled down to support the federal Liberals.

You know what we're going to do? We're going to fight it every step of the way. We're going to continue to cut taxes, continue to cut red tape, because we don't accept high interest rates that are what happens when you do all the things they want to us do. It takes too many people out of the economy and won't—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The next question.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Good morning, Speaker. My question is to the Premier.

Speaker, the details just don't add up on the former minister's trip to Vegas with a greenbelt speculator. The member for Mississauga East–Cooksville, Mr. Massoudi and Mr. Truesdell all suspiciously and consistently told the Integrity Commissioner that their trip was in 2019 when it actually occurred months later. The former minister said he only saw the developer in the lobby. Now it's reported that they got spa services at the same time.

Would the Premier agree, as a generally accepted practice, that members of the Ontario Legislature shall present only honest and true information to the Integrity Commissioner?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Obviously, Mr. Speaker, and that is up to that member to ensure that he does that with the Integrity Commissioner, and I'm certain that he will do just that. But that is a member that is no longer serving in this caucus. That is a member who has taken responsibility and resigned from cabinet, because the Premier expects only the highest standards from his cabinet and caucus.

At the same time, we are focused on what matters to the people of the province of Ontario, and that is growing the economy. There is no doubt—there is no doubt that we made a public policy decision that was not supported by the people of the province of Ontario when we suggested we would open up the greenbelt to expedite housing. We accept that responsibility, Mr. Speaker.

What we will not accept is the opposition's continued obstruction on building new homes for the people of the province of Ontario. You know what? People want out of their parents' basement. They want to have a home for themselves so that they can build bigger, better opportunities and futures for their families. We'll remain focused on that. We'll get the job done, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Speaker, on this side of the House we will always vote for integrity. Doing the right thing is always the right thing to do.

Back to the Premier: When we're elected to this Legislature, we all take an oath; we pledge that we will all perform our duties honestly. Key members of the Premier's staff and a former cabinet minister all mistakenly misremembered the date of a luxurious trip to Vegas consistently, can't recall exactly how they paid for the trip and don't mention the good-luck massage. What's worse, their story was only corrected when the media reported evidence to the contrary.

1050

How can we trust this Premier to hold members accountable for violating the Members' Integrity Act when he himself won't follow the recommendations of officers of the Legislature?

Hon. Paul Calandra: It's just the opposite, Mr. Speaker. Not only did we accept the 15 recommendations of the Auditor General; we are going even further by ensuring that the boundaries of the greenbelt are codified in law, something that has never happened before.

He talks about integrity in government. Look, we are building a bigger, better, stronger province of Ontario. But when he says about the oath that they signed, I wonder if the former member from Brampton would feel the same way. You remember Kevin Yarde, right? You remember Kevin Yarde. I wonder what the former member from York South–Weston might think about your integrity pledge over there, Mr. Speaker.

I'll tell you what we're going to do. We're going to continue to focus on what matters for the people of the province of Ontario, and that's building a bigger, better, stronger economy that brings everybody into that prosperity, Mr. Speaker, because you know what? We want kids out of their basements. We want them in a home of their own. We want them to help build a better Ontario for future generations. If that's not what our job is, then what else is it to do here, Mr. Speaker?

LIFE SCIENCES SECTOR

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. The previous Liberal government, with support from the NDP, watched as life sciences companies in Ontario backed up their operations and went to innovate in other jurisdictions. Thankfully, our government took immediate action to fix this, and our province's life sciences sector is now recognized as a global leader. However, in view of ongoing and emerging needs for life-saving medications and interventions, it is crucial that our government continue to prioritize investments in this critical sector.

Speaker, can the minister please explain what our government is doing to support the life science sector?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, Ontario is the largest life sciences jurisdiction in Canada. It's home to 19,000 firms

and 70,000 workers. In just three years, we have attracted \$3 billion in new investments in the life sciences sector. That is why our government launched a new life sciences strategy. This is the very first strategy in over a decade, and it will help us grow the number of jobs in the life sciences sector to 85,000 by 2030. It includes \$15 million in a Life Sciences Innovation Fund, which will help entrepreneurs take their innovative ideas to market. And it includes a Life Sciences Council, which we're working with right now to find opportunities to increase our companies' competitiveness and encourage the adoption of Ontario-made innovations.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Thank you to the minister for his response. It is great to hear that we have been able to attract over \$3 billion in life science investments in the past few years. Every year, we have over 65,000 students graduating from STEM programs at our globally recognized universities and colleges. With one of the most sought-after workforces in the world, it is no surprise that global life sciences companies are investing and expanding in Ontario.

Speaker, can the minister please elaborate on some of the investments our government has been able to secure in the life sciences sector?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, just think about this for a minute: Ontario is home to critical medical breakthroughs, including the discovery of insulin, developing the very first cardiac pacemaker and detecting the cystic fibrosis gene. That's what we've done here in Ontario, and it's why our life sciences ecosystem is so noticed around the world. We've attracted game-changing investments, like Moderna's multi-million-dollar partnership with Novocel Pharma to expand vaccine manufacturing right here in Ontario. This is in addition to the \$500-million investment from AstraZeneca earlier this year, which is creating 500 highly skilled jobs and boosting the capacity to develop innovative medicines.

Speaker, these investments are a vote of confidence in Ontario's thriving sector—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much.

The next question.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACT

Mr. Joel Harden: My question is to the Premier. Six years ago, the Scottish people found out Phil Verster, then CEO of ScotRail, was receiving a salary of \$430,000, a \$28,000 rent supplement, a \$16,000 car allowance and full private health care for himself and his family. Mr. Verster got these perks, Speaker, despite months of delays, malfunctions and fare hikes in Scotland's rail system. He resigned in disgrace in 2017, but the Liberals then hired him to run Metrolinx in 2017 and he has failed to deliver transit on-budget and on time ever since. But the government just renewed Mr. Verster's contract. Reports are

suggesting he could earn up to \$1 million a year with God knows how many perks.

My question to the Premier: Why are you rewarding failure?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The associate minister.

Hon. Vijay Thanigasalam: Mr. Speaker, our government is investing \$70.5 billion in the next 10 years into the largest transit expansion in the history of Canada. We have multi-billion-dollar projects like the GO rail expansion program and four priority subway programs.

Since 2018, the scope of Metrolinx has significantly expanded. We are focusing on building the Ontario Line and have more shovels in the ground for the Scarborough subway. After 30 years of inaction from the former Liberal government, supported by the NDP, we are getting shovels in the ground. Under the leadership of Premier Ford, we are making the largest investment across Ontario. We are making life more affordable.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Members will please take their seats.

Restart the clock. Supplementary question.

Mr. Joel Harden: Back to the Premier: To be clear, the government is rewarding an executive that failed the country of Scotland and that is failing the province of Ontario. We remember how these Conservatives in 2017 and 2018 railed against Mayo Schmidt, the \$6-million man who helped the Liberal government sell off Hydro One. But now they are the conductors, sadly, of Phil Verster's gravy train at Metrolinx. Commuters are suffering, transit workers are suffering, hundreds of small businesses have had to close because of Mr. Verster's failure, but his army of 59 vice-presidents at Metrolinx and 19 C-suite executives continues to rake in perks and massive paycheques.

Speaker, a simple question to the government and to the Premier: Will he stand up for transit riders and transit workers, demand accountability at Metrolinx and fire Phil Verster today?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members will please take their seats.

And to reply, the Associate Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Vijay Thanigasalam: Mr. Speaker, our government will not take lessons from the member opposite, who just wants to see Ontarians stuck in gridlock forever. The NDP claims to want more public transit, but on record, they have voted against every single measure our government has put forward to make that happen, whether it's the Scarborough subway or the Ontario Line. Even right now, our government is making life more affordable for transit riders from Durham region, York region, Mississauga and Brampton. For the public of Toronto, we are discounting the double fare, so moving forward for the city of Toronto and TTC riders, no more two fares or three fares; we are making one fare that will save \$1,600 every year.

They voted more than once against that. We are making life more affordable.

Interjections.

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The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock.

The House will come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to start calling out members individually if they don't come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader will come to order. The member for Kitchener–Conestoga will come to order.

Start the clock. Next question.

INDIGENOUS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Dave Smith: I'm not sure how I can follow up that answer.

My question is for the Minister of Indigenous Affairs and the Minister of Northern Development. The previous Liberal government, propped up by the NDP, drove jobs out of Ontario and failed to unlock our province's full economic potential. In contrast to the failed leadership of the previous Liberal government, we must recognize and respect that Indigenous businesses are valuable in supporting critical supply chains across many sectors. Our government must appreciate their unique perspectives and contributions in the business sector, which are essential in building a stronger Ontario. While our government has implemented positive measures to ensure that all Ontarians have the opportunity to participate in our growing economy, more needs to be done to support Indigenous communities.

Speaker, can the Minister please explain how our government is increasing economic prosperity for Indigenous people across Ontario?

Hon. Greg Rickford: I thank the member for his question. This is about engaging First Nations leadership and First Nations business leaders in their own forums, Mr. Speaker, talking about opportunities in legacy infrastructure projects, major energy corridor projects. Not less than a couple of weeks ago, we talked with a number of chiefs about some exciting hydroelectricity projects that won't just supply their communities but will also host anchor tenants in the resource sector. In southwestern Ontario, we've established table-specific, project-specific opportunities where First Nations business leaders and business leaders have an opportunity to get in the same room and talk about real opportunities and take action.

We are a participant at those tables. We're seeing real progress being made with Ontario's First Nations' economic development businesses.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question.

Mr. Dave Smith: From the minister's response, it's evident that the Indigenous Economic Development Fund is leading to positive outcomes for Indigenous communities and is helping to advance economic prosperity for Ontario as a whole. However, businesses are only one part of what makes up a vibrant economy. Prosperity is also amplified through relationships and investments that expand cultural and recreational opportunities that not only benefit communities in the north but also include people all across Ontario. Our government must continue to partner with Indigenous communities on initiatives that will lead to long-term economic growth.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how our government is supporting Indigenous communities in ways that will strengthen their economic prosperity?

Hon. Greg Rickford: Increasingly, we're seeing First Nations communities consolidating their resources when it comes to business activities, partnering with other First Nations communities and tapping into business expertise. Take, for example, the Ontario First Nations Economic Developers Association. This ministry supports them wholeheartedly. We promote economic development officers in communities throughout Ontario. We provide business capacity. We support recruitment and retention of qualified business people to support First Nations communities and/or their businesses in their efforts, and we work with them very closely on improving First Nations procurement not just in the private sector but also in the public sector.

These are all examples of communities that are moving forward on key business projects that support their community and the surrounding area for a greater, more fulsome sense of prosperity that includes First Nations people, their communities and their businesses.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr. Jeff Burch: Speaker, through you to the Premier: The Premier has constantly claimed that there is no government spending on the greenbelt scandal. Yet just two days after the Auditor General released a damning report about the greenbelt grab, this government started flooding the airwaves with an ad campaign attempting to salvage their image.

So first, this government takes greenbelt lands to enrich their friends. Next, they take tax dollars to try to change the channel. Will the Premier tell us how much this vanity project is costing the people of Ontario?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Paul Calandra: In fact, what we're doing is highlighting for the people of the province of Ontario that this government is focused on their priorities. Housing is a priority not just for Progressive Conservative voters, but it's a priority for all Ontarians. Regardless of what side of the House you come on, you should be focused on that.

Mr. Speaker, we know that the NDP and the Liberals have voted against every single measure that we have put on the table to help unleash the housing sector in the

province of Ontario. In fact, it has literally taken us five years to undo the damage that was done by the Liberals, supported by the NDP. And it's going to take us still even more, because we're going to be bringing even more bills forward to help ensure that we can get homes built in communities across Ontario, who are calling us and saying that they want to participate.

I don't know why the NDP are against—well, I do know why the NDP are against building homes, because it's the same thing: They want people to be dependent on government. We want people to be able to flourish on their own with the support of the government when they need it. That's the difference between us and them.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary, the member for Niagara.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Well, we know, the public knows and this government knows that the green-belt grab was never about housing. Instead of building affordable and sustainable housing, this government is spending taxpayers' dollars on a PR campaign to distract from their scandal.

The people of Ontario deserve clear, decisive answers on how public dollars are being used. Will this government tell Ontarians how much this ad campaign is costing them?

Hon. Paul Calandra: That's what the estimates are for. Those will be tabled in the House, and the opposition has the opportunity review those estimates. In fact, it's our government that has given the opportunity to review the estimates of every single ministry; that never happened before. But do you know who voted against that transparency? They did, Mr. Speaker. The NDP and the Liberals voted against that transparency.

But here, it comes down to one thing: Over and over and over and again, tax, spend, doom and gloom. What we're going to focus on is building Ontario stronger than it was before. We're going to be working with those businesses that want to invest here, the people around this country who are looking at Ontario and saying, "We need you to continue to prosper," because it's not only for the people of the province of Ontario; it is good for all of Canada when Ontario prospers.

We will not be deterred in our mission to build more homes, to get kids out of their parents' basements so they can have all the same benefits that we have had. Only the NDP want to keep them in the basements, and of course the Liberals will help them do it.

MUNICIPAL PLANNING

Mr. Stephen Blais: My question is for the Premier. Last year, the former Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing overrode Ottawa's urban boundary expansion and added an additional 654 hectares for development after city council had already evaluated and added other lands. The former minister added lands that were so unsuitable for development because of their agricultural designation that they weren't even evaluated by experts. This includes a 37-hectare parcel on Watters Road in

Orléans that was designated an agricultural resource and is an active farm.

After the city confirmed this designation, the farm was purchased by a group that has donated significantly to the Conservative Party and stood to make millions from the development. After holding up the city's official plan for two years and after receiving tens of thousands of dollars in donations from the landowners, the former minister added these lands to Ottawa's urban boundary.

Mr. Speaker, can the Premier share with us the process used to evaluate the suitability of these lands for inclusion in the boundary, who was involved in that determination, and what influence, if any, did political contributions and personal relationships have on the decision?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Paul Calandra: The member knows full well that an addition to the urban boundary in itself does not mean that that parcel of land would be developed upon. The city remains control of when or if that additional space is developed.

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I was just in Ottawa, actually, last Thursday, speaking with Mayor Sutcliffe, and he is every bit as excited as we are to help build more homes in his community because he understands how important it is. Now, the one thing he did say to me is that federal government policies are hurting his city. There's not a return-to-work in a lot of instances, so it's really hurting the people of downtown Ottawa. So we're going to do our part to ensure that Ottawa prospers, that Ottawa grows. We have incredible members—the member for Nepean and the member for Carleton—who are helping every single day.

Despite the fact the member opposite does nothing to help us, we're building long-term care homes, we're building transit, we're building transportation, we're making incredible investments in Ottawa to help the city grow, Mr. Speaker. I hope he'll get on board and help us do the same.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question.

Mr. Stephen Blais: My supplementary is also for the Premier. Mr. Speaker, the mayor is so convinced of the government's process that he voted unanimously with city council to ask the minister to review that process from last year. Following the purchase of these ag lands but before their designation by the minister, it appears that the directors of the corporation collectively donated tens of thousands of dollars to the Conservative Party. Since that re-designation, the former minister unilaterally added these lands without the city having undertaken any scientific or consultative review of the quality of the lands for farming or their suitability for urbanization. The company who purchased the lands is referenced in the Integrity Commissioner's report about Minister Clark's behaviour as having lands on the infamous USB key.

Lands on the USB key, donations to the Conservative Party, connections to Conservative insiders: It's sounding awful familiar, Mr. Speaker. Maybe there's a Mr. X in Ottawa as well.

To the Premier: Was the delay in approving Ottawa's official plan designed—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member will take his seat.

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Paul Calandra: As I just said, look, the city of Ottawa remains in control of when or if those lands will be developed or serviced, for that matter. But here again is another question from the opposition, from the Liberals, who for 15 years put obstacle after obstacle after obstacle in the way and led us into a housing crisis.

But I know why they're having such trouble, right? Because this Minister of Finance cut taxes for purpose-built rentals. Do you remember when he did that? And what did we say? We said to the federal government, "You have to come on board. You have to help us by matching that with a GST cut." But we know Liberals hate to cut taxes, but thanks to one person in the Liberal government, Minister Fraser, they finally had to admit that cutting taxes means improving an economy. Now, they did it only once, and that's because of the leadership of this Minister of Finance.

We're going to work with Alberta and every other province to cut taxes for all Canadians to unleash the economy so that everybody can participate in the Canadian dream that they took away.

PROTECTION OF PRIVACY

Ms. Natalie Pierre: My question is for the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery. No jurisdiction wants to fall behind in implementing technological advancements that can make it more convenient and efficient for people and businesses to interact with government services. However, with new emerging technological advancements, the protection of personal information is rightfully a key concern for many individuals.

Ontarians need reassurance that our government is protecting the safety and security of their personal information in an ever-evolving digital world. Speaker, can the minister please explain how our government is approaching the integration of digital solutions that will help to improve the delivery of public services?

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: I thank the excellent member for Burlington for her question. The falling-behind that the member described is a very real concern for governments around the world. That is why our Ontario government is taking decisive action by making strategic investments to ensure that we remain a leader when it comes to technological security.

Recently, Ontario had the privilege of hosting members and deputy ministers from federal, provincial and territorial governments across Canada for the third ever Symposium on Digital Trust and Cybersecurity. That symposium was held in beautiful Niagara-on-the-Lake. This symposium focused on increasing people's confidence and participation in our ever-evolving digital world, because only by working as one united team can we further succeed in our work to build innovative digital

solutions and highlight new possibilities to streamline and improve the delivery of public services for all the people, businesses, organizations and institutions that call Ontario home.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question.

Ms. Natalie Pierre: While it's important that Ontario is working with the rest of Canada to understand changes in the technology sector, people are rightfully concerned about protecting themselves and their personal information. We regularly hear from individuals and families throughout Ontario who have brought forward concerns about the potential impacts advanced technologies could have on their day-to-day lives.

It's reasonable to say that confidence in the security of the digital world is critical to our province's success in the digital economy.

Ontarians are looking to our government for answers, and they expect our government to protect them and their personal information.

Can the minister please explain how our government is ensuring that Ontario is protected from any potential or perceived digital threats?

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: That's another thoughtful question from the great member for Burlington.

Cyber security is a top priority for the Premier and our Ontario government. We know that the cyber security landscape is changing exponentially, with cyber attacks growing in frequency and sophistication, while the public sector remains a top target.

Ontarians can rest assured that our government is working hard to develop the next iteration of the Cyber Security Strategy by leveraging the recent OPS cyber security maturity assessment and the BPS expert panel report.

This is October, and it's a great month for Blue Jays baseball—and today is the first day of the playoffs—but it's also Cyber Security Awareness Month. It's an important time for Ontarians not just to watch our Blue Jays but to learn about how they can continue to keep themselves safe online, while also learning about the work our government does to protect them and their personal information. So I encourage all members and viewers watching at home to stay tuned in the coming weeks—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you.

Next question.

LABOUR DISPUTE

MPP Jill Andrew: My question is to the Minister of Education.

TVO workers have entered their seventh week on strike, fighting for fair wage increases, after a decade of watching inflation erode their salaries. Now they're being asked to accept another three years of below-inflation increases while TVO management have set aside \$17 million for mysterious and unspecified "long-term investments." A small fraction of that \$17 million could end this strike tomorrow.

Will the minister direct TVO management to make a fair bargain with CMG workers?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Speaker, I'm disappointed, of course, to see that the two parties have not been able to resolve the negotiations to date.

Our goal is, and has always been, to negotiate collective agreements that are fair and equitable to Ontario's dedicated public servants but at the same time support the long-term fiscal sustainability for the people of Ontario.

There's no question that labour negotiations require some give-and-take and it's a lot of hard work, but the goal for both sides remains the same: a fair and equitable agreement.

So we encourage the two parties to continue working to find a resolution that supports the goal of protecting the sustainability and high quality of Ontario's public services while respecting the taxpayers who pay for them.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question.

MPP Jill Andrew: My question is back to the Minister of Education—and a reminder for everyone here: The minister appoints TVO's board, the minister appoints TVO's CEO, and TVO actually delivers on this government's priorities, like more remote learning, so the minister can't wash their hands of responsibility here.

These are education workers, they're journalists, they're producers, and they're buckling under the affordability crisis—whether it's rent, whether it's food.

So I will ask again: Will the minister, will the government of Ontario direct TVO to make a fair deal with its workers or agree to binding arbitration to end this strike promptly? Again, to the Minister of Education.

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The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the Minister of Education.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I do thank the member for the question. I want to reaffirm the message shared by the President of the Treasury Board that we want all parties to come together to put children first, as we just did last week with OSSTF, a large union in the province of Ontario, where we were able to sign a deal, a pathway that averts a strike and keeps kids in school. We want the spirit of unity to come together around the negotiating table where all parties come together to sign a deal that ensures the continuity of services.

We value the work of TVO employees, be it Mathify, digital learning, the high-quality online courses which, of course, members opposite have systematically opposed. The bottom line is, Speaker, we value their contributions—funding is at \$50 million for TVO specifically—and we reaffirm and urge all the parties to come together to sign a deal that allows the continuity of these critical services in Ontario.

HUNTING AND FISHING

Mr. Dave Smith: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. The time-honoured activities of hunting and fishing have been enjoyed and cherished by Ontarians over many generations. However, considerations regarding conservation of fish and wildlife across our province are equally important. That's why it's vital that our government has robust programs in place to manage fish and wildlife species, to help sustain their populations and to protect their habitat and ecosystems.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how our government is protecting and supporting wildlife and their environments while also ensuring that Ontarians are able to participate in hunting and fishing?

Hon. Graydon Smith: Thank you to the member for the question; it's an important one.

We understand the importance of protecting and supporting wildlife in Ontario. In fact, Speaker, 100% of the dollars spent on licensing by hunters and anglers goes back into those support programs, and that includes research and monitoring for black bear, moose, caribou populations; that includes stocking over 1,100 lakes with eight million fish so anglers can be ready for that next great catch; that includes over 720,000 rabies vaccines that are distributed to the wildlife population to help abate rabies. It also includes over 115,000 opportunities for our great conservation officers to work with members of the public every single year on education.

Mr. Speaker, we are committed to wildlife in this province, and we are committed to ensuring outdoor enthusiasts can stay on the lookout for the next great catch.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question?

Mr. Dave Smith: I'm a little disappointed there are eight million fish, because I can't even catch a cold.

This is important news for hunters and anglers as the fall season gets under way in Ontario.

Speaker, we welcome the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters to the Legislature today. They are headquartered in my riding. This organization brings a long history and reputation of advocacy for conserving Ontario's fish and wildlife resources while also enhancing hunting and fishing opportunities. OFAH proudly represents over 100,000 members, subscribers, supporters, with 725 member-clubs across our province.

Can the minister please elaborate on how our government continues to work in partnership with OFAH to improve hunting and fishing in Ontario, as well as conserving fish and wildlife resources?

Hon. Graydon Smith: Thank you to the member again for the question.

We have an absolutely fantastic relationship with OFAH, and I'd encourage anybody—if they haven't had the opportunity—to go to Peterborough and go to their visitors' centre and just see what a fantastic experience that is.

But, Mr. Speaker, we continue to do great work with this organization. The family fishing events that occur in

Ontario four times a year—OFAH gives us great help with that, and I was pleased to attend one in Brechin where they were helping us with the invasive species side of that conversation around bait fish, and we continue to do great work with them on other invasive species projects. The Community Hatchery Program that exists in many communities to support stocking efforts like I was talking about earlier and the great work that those community programs do—OFAH assists us with that.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to continue to work hand-in-hand with this great organization. I'm looking forward to speaking with them later today, and I want to thank them for making Ontario a world-class destination for outdoor enthusiasts, anglers and hunters.

SENIORS' HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Premier. Speaker, the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program has been a failure since it was created in 2019. The official poverty line for a single person in Ontario is estimated to be about \$27,000, yet the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program income cut-off for a single senior is \$22,000, much closer to what experts call the “deep income poverty threshold.”

Wait-lists continue to grow across this province and seniors in Kitchener-Waterloo want to know why this program for low-income seniors does not even meet the basic expectation of serving seniors who are living in poverty.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Health.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Ontario is leading the country as one of the few provinces to provide seniors access to the high-quality dental care that they deserve. I want to remind the member opposite that in 2021 we actually reduced the qualifying income by over 10%, making it easier for more seniors to access this program. In 2023 we had the highest total number of renewed clients, with over 81,000, up from 69,000 the year before. And we have some innovative public health units that are actually providing dental care directly to patients so that they don't have to travel.

We're making the changes and we're leading that innovation to ensure that people have access in their community, where they need it.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I've got some numbers that counter that narrative, Speaker. We have established already that the income-eligibility criteria for the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program is a disgrace. Currently, there are 1,281 seniors waiting for services just in the region of Waterloo. The average wait time to access services is two years. That's 24 months of seniors experiencing pain. That's nothing to be proud of.

In Kitchener-Waterloo my office continues to hear from seniors who are eligible and, after receiving the one-time inflation payment from the federal government, are now deemed ineligible after waiting for a whole year. In some cases, they're ineligible by 30 cents. The flawed

design is causing immense stress for seniors in the province of Ontario.

Is the government content—it sounds like they are—with a flawed dental program that leaves Ontario seniors stranded on a wait-list or bumped off, never receiving the care that seniors deserve in this province?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Well, I'm not going to pound on the desk, but I will add some additional context. In last year's fall economic statement, our government invested \$17 million over two years to expand dental services. Perhaps the member opposite should be sharing with her constituents that in fact she opposed voting for that extension. We're doing the work, we're funding these programs that we know are so important, and the NDP continue to vote against those investments.

HOUSING

Mr. Will Bouma: My question is for the Associate Minister of Housing. For nearly two decades under the previous Liberal government, propped up by the NDP, housing construction suffered in our province. Because of the indifference and inaction demonstrated under their watch, building homes in Ontario was not a priority, creating the crisis that continues to pose challenges for many of the individuals and families in my riding of Brantford—Brant.

The seriousness of this housing crisis is not just felt in southwest Ontario. Communities across our province are facing similar challenges. While our government has made major progress by passing new housing legislation, the people of Ontario are looking to our government to produce even more results and continue to show bold and decisive leadership.

Can the associate minister please explain what actions our government is taking to increase housing construction in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Rob Flack: I thank the member from Brantford—Brant for his question. Yes, Speaker, the member is spot on. We have a housing crisis in this province like we've never seen, and we have to fix it. But it's results that count, and this government has delivered four housing supply action plans. We've delivered \$700 million this year—up \$200 million year over year—for the Homelessness Prevention Program, \$1.2 billion for the Building Faster Fund to support our municipalities, and we've cut red tape to get shovels in the ground faster. It's results that count: more homes built, more rental starts in the last two years than in over 30 years.

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We also know that there is more to do. But while the opposition raises doubts, we're busy raising roofs over the people of this province. There's more to do, and more will be—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you.

The supplementary question.

Mr. Will Bouma: Individuals and families across Ontario should be able to find a home that fits their needs. From the associate minister's response, it is clear that our

government is making progress in boosting housing starts. However, there needs to be a significant increase in the overall housing supply across Ontario, especially rental housing. More needs to be done to boost rental housing starts and to reduce barriers in their construction so that more Ontarians have more choice and access to affordable housing.

Speaker, can the associate minister please explain what measures our government is implementing to increase rental housing supply throughout Ontario?

Hon. Rob Flack: Thank you, again, to the member from Brantford–Brant. Creating the environment for success is what leadership is about; that is what this Premier and this government have done. In fact, 15,000 purpose-built rentals, up 7.5% year over year—this is success.

I would also add that we need to, humbly submitted, pass the Affordable Homes and Good Jobs Act legislation before this Legislature. It's going to lower costs. It's going to cut red tape. It's going to work with our municipal partners. It's bold, it's innovative and it's results-oriented.

Speaker, we have a mandate to act and, I would conclude, we have a duty to succeed. We will get the job done.

SERVICES DE SANTÉ DANS LE NORD

NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le premier ministre.

L'École de médecine du Nord de l'Ontario est un succès pour augmenter le nombre de médecins dans le nord de l'Ontario : 50 % de leurs diplômés choisissent la médecine familiale et plus de 90 % des apprenants et apprenantes demeurent dans le nord de l'Ontario. Aujourd'hui, plus de 400 000 résidents et résidentes du Nord reçoivent des soins primaires et aigus d'une médecin ou d'un médecin formés à l'EMNO.

Lorsque le gouvernement a créé la première école de médecine autonome au Canada, il savait que ça coûterait plus cher—4 millions de dollars de plus, pour être exacte. Parry Sound, Muskoka et de nombreuses autres communautés de circonscriptions du Nord ont écrit au premier ministre pour appuyer la demande de l'EMNO d'augmenter de façon permanente son financement de base.

Quand est-ce que le gouvernement va accorder à l'université de l'EMNO le financement annualisé de 4 millions de dollars dont elle a besoin pour rester à flot?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: [*Inaudible*] that the NDP ironically voted against and now try to take credit for. One of the great things that we've been doing since we got to government—again, after 15 years of destructive Liberal government where they refused to build long-term care. They didn't add to our medical schools, Mr. Speaker—

Interjection.

Hon. Paul Calandra: The member for Ottawa South is all up in arms about it, but we had crumbling hospitals. We had 1,000 ICU beds for the entire province, one of the lowest amounts in all of the Western world. But do you know what we did? We're building new medical schools, one for the north; the NDP and Liberals voted against it. We're building one in Scarborough; the NDP and Liberals voted against it. We're building one in Brampton; the NDP and Liberals voted against it. Fifty billion dollars to expand our hospitals: They voted against it. Fourteen billion dollars for long-term care—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa South, come to order.

The supplementary, the member for Sudbury.

MPP Jamie West: Let me tell you about Tim, Speaker. Tim is an insulin-dependant diabetic with long-term disabilities. When his family doctor passed away, Tim was left without a family practitioner. He contacted Health Connect Ontario to no avail. He visited numerous family practices and nurse practitioner clinics—had no success. Tim eventually had to go to the waiting room of the emergency room for hours just to get his prescriptions filled.

Tim is not alone, Speaker. One out of eight northern residents don't have access to a family doctor. This is why NOSM needs this money.

So to help people like Tim, will the Premier commit today to a permanent \$4-million increase in the base funding for the Northern Ontario School of Medicine?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Health.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: The Northern Ontario School of Medicine—including every other medical school in the province of Ontario—has 20 additional residency positions under this government. We have made those expansions—at least 20.

To sit and hear the NDP talk about the investments that need to happen—where were you when we were doing as-of-right in the province of Ontario, legislatively saying, "If you have a licence and can practise in any part of Canada, you can come to Ontario and immediately start working while your licence is getting passed." Where were the NDP? Respectfully, they were saying, "No, not appropriate." Where were the NDP when we were writing the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario and saying, "Please, you must—I direct you to make sure individuals who are waiting on those lists to get assessed and ultimately licensed to practise in"—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. The next question.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND HOUSING

Ms. Laura Smith: My question is for the Minister of Infrastructure.

After years of neglect by the previous Liberal government, the housing crisis is affecting thousands of individuals and families across our province. Many Ontarians are facing challenges in finding housing that suits their

needs, and the lack of transit infrastructure is also creating barriers to accessing convenient transit services. That is why our government must implement solutions to address these important concerns in order to unlock our province's full economic potential.

There are many economic, social and environmental benefits that can be achieved by increasing the housing supply and bringing housing closer to transit stations—like the Yonge North subway extension.

Can the minister please explain how our government is addressing Ontario's housing and transit needs in order to build a stronger Ontario?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Brampton West.

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: Thank you to the hard-working member from Thornhill for that great question.

Mr. Speaker, yes, our government is currently making an unprecedented investment in housing. As we see before our eyes, the population within our province is growing at an outstanding rate, and these people need somewhere to live and ways to get around. Our government is aware of these challenges—and if left unchecked, will lead to more issues in the future.

That is why we have introduced the Transportation for the Future Act, which aims to help build more GO Transit stations, which in turn will help to generate more housing and mixed-used communities around transit infrastructure. This will result in a more convenient commute across the greater Golden Horseshoe while also helping us to meet the goal of getting 1.5 million homes built by 2031. It is one of the ways we're building up Ontario for families in the years ahead.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question.

Ms. Laura Smith: Thank you to the parliamentary assistant for his response.

While the opposition parties continue to say no, our government knows and understands that housing and transportation are amongst the most important issues facing our communities. Communities that are built around transit infrastructure create an environment that will bring about more options for housing as well as opportunities for businesses and community services. It is vital that our government continues to pursue all options that will support solutions for housing and job creation.

Can the parliamentary assistant please explain further what actions our government is taking to help improve the lives of Ontarians for generations to come?

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: Thank you to the member from Thornhill, once again.

Mr. Speaker, our proposed legislation would create a station contribution fee as a new tool to allow municipalities to stimulate the construction of new GO Transit stations. This will bring a return of investment that will include accelerated transit expansion as well as vibrant mixed-use communities that will contain much-needed housing. This legislation also seeks to give permission to municipalities to recover costs from funding new GO Transit stations. The station contribution fee would be

collected until the full station costs are recovered. This will result in a reduction in other development costs.

Mr. Speaker, building these transit-oriented communities will lead to more housing, local businesses, investment opportunities, reduced travel times and will create better connections between regions. And to add to that, our subway Transit-Oriented Communities Program has already led to 13 new sites, creating 48,000 new housing units.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr. John Vanthof: My question is to the Premier. Believe it or not, they are calling for snow in northern Ontario this week and we all know what happens when we get snow in northern Ontario. Highway 11 and Highway 17 once again become even more dangerous than they are now. They're closed a lot now in the summertime, but with the first snow, we can almost guarantee it.

My question to the government is: What progress is the government actually making with driving schools to ensure that every driver that's trained and licensed in Ontario is actually equipped to face the conditions that they will face when they go over Thibeault Hill?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Associate Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Vijay Thanigasalam: Our priority is to ensure we have a safe and efficient highway network across our province, particularly in northern Ontario, where the winter months pose significant challenges for drivers. Previously in my role as a parliamentary assistant to transportation, Mr. Speaker, I have done four-day driving tours throughout Ontario, starting from Thunder Bay all the way to North Bay, to see the work that's been going on.

I want to highlight one thing: Ontario has nation-leading standards in place when it comes to winter maintenance, and we intend to keep it that way. Also, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to northern Ontario, under the leadership of Premier Doug Ford, we are bringing the Northlander back.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes our question period for this morning.

MEMBERS FOR HALIBURTON– KAWARTHA LAKES–BROCK AND RENFREW–NIPISSING–PEMBROKE

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader has a point of order.

Hon. Paul Calandra: It is not lost on me and our Progressive Conservative caucus, and I assume all members of the House, that the member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock and the member for Barry's Bay, or otherwise Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, are celebrating 20 years as extraordinary members of provincial Parliament.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Technically it's not a point of order, but good news nonetheless.

MEMBER FOR
RENFREW–NIPISSING–PEMBROKE

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I think the member for Ottawa South has indicated he may have a point of order. And if he returns to his seat, he can—

Mr. John Fraser: Point of order, Speaker. I would just like to congratulate the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke on his 20th anniversary, as well.

Interjection: We did that: Barry’s Bay.

Mr. John Fraser: Oh, I thought you said “Barrie.” Sorry.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Technically it’s not a point of order.

There being no further business at this time, this House stands in recess until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1143 to 1500.

PETITIONS

GO TRANSIT

Ms. Catherine Fife: This petition is entitled “All-Day, Two-Way (Including Weekends) GO Trains for Waterloo Region.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the government of Ontario is responsible for investing in building, maintaining and upgrading GO Transit trains and rail routes throughout the province; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario has repeatedly made commitments to invest in and improve GO Transit trains for the purposes of improving connectivity, increasing transit ridership, decreasing traffic congestion, connecting people to jobs, and improving the economy; and

“Whereas a lack of reliable transit options impedes quality of life and growth opportunities for commuters and businesses, including the tech sector, in Waterloo region;

“Whereas Waterloo region is home to three post-secondary institutions, the University of Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University, and Conestoga College, whose students and staff require weekday and weekend train options; and

“Whereas dependable, efficient public transit seven days of the week is critical to the growth of our region;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to provide a firm funding commitment and a clear timeline for the delivery of frequent, all-day, two-way GO rail service along the full length of the vital Kitchener GO corridor.”

It is my pleasure and privilege to introduce this petition for the first time. And thanks to the students at University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier for collecting the signatures.

DENTAL CARE

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It is my honour to present the following petition entitled “Expand Ontario Seniors Dental Plan.” It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas seniors have to access the Ontario seniors dental plan through local public health units;

“Whereas the number of dentists registered with public health units to be covered under the Ontario seniors dental plan is low in northern Ontario;

“Whereas the small number of dentists registered with the Ontario seniors dental plan limits the capacity of public health units to serve their patients...; and

“Whereas the income threshold for seniors to be eligible for the Ontario seniors dental plan is unreasonably low—an annual net income of \$22,200 or less for a single senior; a combined annual net income of \$37,100 or less for a couple—thus creating a huge barrier for low-income seniors to access dental care;

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

“—to invest in community health centres, aboriginal health access centres, and public health units to build and expand dental suites and to hire more dentists; and

“—to facilitate the implementation of the federal dental health care plan, which covers all seniors with income lower than \$75,000, when it becomes law.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature and deliver it, through page Sophia, to the Clerks.

HOUSING

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I would like to thank Kevin Lomack for signing the petition Housing for All.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas all Ontarians have the right to adequate housing;

“Whereas to ensure an adequate supply of housing, Ontario must build 1.5 million new market and non-market homes over the next decade; and

“Whereas the for-profit private market by itself will not, and cannot, deliver enough homes that are affordable and meet the needs of Ontarians for all incomes, ages, family sizes, abilities and cultures;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to implement a comprehensive housing plan that ensures the right of all Ontarians to adequate housing, including:

“—ending exclusionary zoning and enabling access to affordable and adequate housing options in all neighbourhoods;

“—stabilizing housing markets and stopping harmful speculation; establishing a strong public role in the funding, delivery, acquisition and protection of an adequate supply of affordable and non-market homes;

“—protecting tenants from rent gouging and displacement, and ensuring the inclusivity of growing neighbourhoods; and

“—focusing growth efficiently and sustainably within existing urban boundaries, while protecting irreplaceable farmland, wetlands, the greenbelt and other natural heritage from costly and unsustainable urban sprawl.”

I fully support this petition, sign it and give it to page Isabella to give to the table.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Ms. Laura Smith: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Alzheimer's disease affects over 250,000 people in the province of Ontario;

“Whereas it is estimated that approximately 400,000 individuals will be diagnosed with dementia by” the year “2030;

“Whereas by the year 2050, more than” 1.5 “million Canadians are expected to be living with dementia, with an average of 685 individuals diagnosed each day;

“Whereas Alzheimer's disease is not a normal part of aging and is irreversible;

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

“To urge the government to work on improving dementia care, support, and equitable access to service for those living with Alzheimer's disease through the passage of Bill 121, the Improving Dementia Care Act in Ontario, 2023.”

I support this petition wholeheartedly. I will affix my name and give it to page Vera-Claire.

TENANT PROTECTION

MPP Jill Andrew: This petition is entitled “Stop the Demolition of Rent-Controlled Buildings.” I'd like to say thank you to the members of No Demovictions from Toronto–St. Paul's and across the GTA for the work they've been doing in this regard.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas demolition evictions” of purpose-built, rent-controlled buildings in fine, livable condition “are becoming commonplace across Ontario in the middle of an affordability crisis, this practice displaces tenants from their communities, diminishes the supply of affordable housing, causes environmental waste, contributes to the growing number of people experiencing homelessness, and disrupts the lives of fixed-income seniors, young families, and low- to middle-income tenants;

Whereas displacing tenants from their homes will have a negative impact on their livelihood, social supports, sense of community, and mental health, which makes the protection of their housing vital to ensuring their quality of life;

“Whereas development is important to building more homes, the practice of demolishing existing housing is counterintuitive and does not consider the long-term ramifications for existing tenants, Ontario residents, or the broader community;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop the demolition of rent-controlled buildings across Ontario, to ensure that people are housed in the middle of an affordability crisis, and that the government is growing the stock of” real “affordable housing, not diminishing it.”

I couldn't agree more. Thank you again to No Demovictions of Toronto–St. Paul's and those across the GTA. I'm handing it over to Bella.

OPPOSITION DAY

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: I move that, whereas the Auditor General and the Integrity Commissioner have found significant irregularities in the processes leading to this government's removal of lands from the greenbelt; and

Whereas the investigations by these independent officers have raised serious questions that demand further inquiry; and

Whereas the witnesses who refused to co-operate with the Auditor General's investigation must be compelled to provide their evidence; and

Whereas members of this government have previously advocated for the use of select committees to investigate misconduct, including the Liberal government's gas plant cancellations;

Therefore, the Legislative Assembly calls on the government to form a select committee on changes to the greenbelt to ensure full transparency and accountability.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to point out that the motion has to be consistent with the wording that appears on the order paper.

I'll go back to the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Sorry, Speaker.

I move that, whereas the Auditor General and the Integrity Commissioner found that the government's decision to remove lands from the greenbelt gave preferential treatment to certain private interests; and

Whereas the reports of these independent officers call into question this government's decision-making on other ongoing transactions, including Highway 413, urban boundary expansions, Ontario Place, health care privatization and stalled transit projects; and

Whereas the witnesses who refused to co-operate with the Auditor General's investigation must be compelled to provide their evidence; and

Whereas members of this government have previously advocated for the use of select committees to investigate misconduct, including the gas plant cancellations;

Therefore, the Legislative Assembly calls on the government to appoint a select committee on changes to the greenbelt to ensure full transparency and accountability.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Ms. Stiles has moved opposition day number 1. Further debate?

1510

Ms. Marit Stiles: I would like to bring this government's attention to what is happening outside the silo of Queen's Park. Outside these doors, Ontarians are really struggling, more than we've seen in, I think, generations. They're struggling with the steep increase in rent, mortgage, groceries, gas. Basic necessities are feeling like a burden. People even with two, three jobs are lining up at food banks. Ontarians are worried that homelessness is around the corner for them—and many more are experiencing that first-hand. Wages aren't going as far as they used to. Mental health supports aren't keeping up with demand.

These are the stories that I've heard, whether I was meeting Ontarians right here in Toronto or in Peterborough or Sudbury or Kitchener or Kapuskasing. I've seen and felt the same stress and helplessness all across the province.

But instead of offering hope that things can be better, instead of taking action to change things, this government has been busy lurching from scandal to scandal. They've been busy helping their friends instead of helping the people who need it most. We're talking about a massive land transfer—a land transfer scheme that would make their friends and donors of their party billions of dollars richer. And the people of this province, of any political stripe, cannot swallow this.

Mr. Speaker, what's worse is that this government essentially used the housing crisis as a scapegoat to cover up their greenbelt grab. It's shameful. They had the audacity to tell weary Ontarians that they needed to carve up the greenbelt and give it to their friends so that they could build housing—never mind that the land was already being flipped for a profit before a single foundation was laid, never mind that the proposed developments wouldn't even be affordable to most working people. But the fact that they used the housing crisis like this, as a pretense to help themselves, is unforgivable.

Even the Premier's own hand-picked housing task force recommended the absolute opposite of what this government did. Every single expert voice—the government's own housing task force; housing experts; municipalities, mayors, councillors, reeves; environmental advocates; First Nations—said that we do not need to sacrifice the greenbelt to build housing, that we have enough land within existing boundaries.

According to Environmental Defence, "Even before the 2022 boundary expansions and greenbelt removals, there was more than 35,000 hectares ... of unused land already designated for suburban development in the GTHA. That is more than three times the size of Paris, France."

The Premier may have promised to reverse this decision, he may have apologized, but Ontarians still want to know why—despite pushback from all sides, why did the Premier and his government chase the greenbelt? Who tipped off the developers? Why was a cabinet minister getting massages in Las Vegas with a land speculator who stood to benefit from the greenbelt swap?

Speaker, we in the official opposition, NDP, New Democrats, want to make life better for people. It's what drives us. But you cannot do what needs to be done without first restoring trust, accountability and transparency back here at Queen's Park. And unfortunately, that is something that this government has completely destroyed.

This is why, today, the official opposition is calling on the government to form a select committee on changes to the greenbelt, to ensure Ontarians are able to get the answers that they so deeply deserve.

Unfortunately, the Premier and the Conservatives are not in this to help Ontarians. This is a party that has a single-minded vision to only benefit their select few friends at the expense of everybody else and, frankly, at the expense of the well-being of this province.

Sadly, this is a government that has made it clear again and again that they cannot be trusted. Just a week ago, when the Legislature returned, the housing minister stood up in the House and said, no, they won't be passing the greenbelt restoration act. That was the NDP's legislation that would have reversed the Conservatives' changes and restored those land protections. In fact, the Conservatives voted it down before it even got to first reading. That is almost unforeseen. They said they're introducing their own legislation, but it's nowhere to be seen—and here we are, another week gone by, and we're still waiting.

This government has made it so very hard to trust their words and their promises. The official opposition's requests to the Auditor General and the Integrity Commissioner revealed significant evidence that this government did not follow due processes and, in fact, that they gave favourable, preferential treatment to a select few developers over the interest of Ontarians. Before they got caught, they were ready to put billions—billions—in the pockets of their insider land speculators at the expense of essential agricultural lands and ecosystems.

The Auditor General's report, though, left no doubt—there is no way that a single staff member acted alone to rig the system. This starts at the top.

The NDP's initial letter to the Auditor General raised concerns about the shift of wealth to land speculators who were not building any homes, including concerns about Mr. Silvio DeGasperis and his ongoing efforts to remove 1,300 acres of DRAP lands.

Let's review this. Mr. DeGasperis is the president of TACC Construction Ltd. and TACC Developments. The DeGasperis family are prominent donors to the Conservative Party and have donated at least \$163,362 since 2014. That's a pretty penny. The DeGasperis family began purchasing parcels of cheap farmland in north Pickering as early as 2003 with the hopes of building new subdivisions. This land was totally undevelopable until the Ford Conservatives, the members opposite, changed government policy. We know that the DeGasperis family acquired more of this land as recently as 2020.

We also know that Silvio DeGasperis asked a court to block the Auditor General from interviewing him in response to a summons as a part of the greenbelt investi-

gation. It makes you wonder what they're hiding. What else is there to uncover? What revelations are still to come?

Similarly, Ontarians would also like to understand the suspicious timing of land purchases by Michael Rice, his donation ties to this government and to speculators. Michael Rice is the CEO of Rice Group, and he is also listed as the president of Green Lane Bathurst GP, a company that bought \$80 million worth of land which was, at the time, five undevelopable parcels in the greenbelt, two months prior to the government's November 2022 announcement. Michael Rice has also donated significantly to the Progressive Conservative Party.

In July 2023, Mr. Rice went to court to avoid answering questions regarding his company's dealings in the greenbelt after—yes, again—he was summoned by the Auditor General. Again, this just begs the question of what else is not being shared?

Speaker, we're clearly just scratching the surface here, and that is why we in the official opposition NDP are proposing a select committee. A select committee would be able to summon these two developers, who are witnesses but yet refused to co-operate with the Auditor General's investigation, and they would be compelled to provide their evidence. This is how democracy functions, and Ontarians deserve answers and accountability.

I'm going to offer a few more details about the shady backroom dealings that this government has been engaging in since day one, because I think it helps to lend some colour, let's just say, to why we might want to actually hold a select committee and why it might be in the best interest of this government to shine a little light on those dark corners.

We know that several individuals who attended the Premier's family wedding were developers who received favourable ministerial zoning orders and at least one individual who benefited from the now-reversed greenbelt land swap.

1520

But the backroom dealings go further back than November 2022. The Conservatives—the Conservative government—have had their eyes on the greenbelt for their donor-speculator friends since 2018. Here's a timeline of events that took place prior to November 2022, when the Conservative government decided to remove thousands of acres of land from the greenbelt.

Let's just start—and this isn't even going that far back. We know, of course, that the Premier did promise developers in 2018 that he was going to carve up the greenbelt and serve it up to speculators. We have that on record. But let's go back to April 2022. Luca Bucci was Minister Clark's chief of staff from January 2021 until April 2022. He joined as CEO of the Ontario Home Builders' Association in July 2022, just a few months later. But on May 30, 2022, Mr. Bucci registered to lobby the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing on behalf of the Ontario Home Builders' Association, despite guidelines in the Members' Integrity Act and the Lobbyists Registration Act that actually prevent a public servant

from lobbying their former employer for at least one year. That's the rule here in Ontario—at least one year—and that's, of course, to prevent any real or perceived conflict of interest.

Here's another date: June 2022. Andrew Sidnell, a senior aide in Premier Ford's office, circulated the Premier's feedback on a 47-page slide deck in an email sent after midnight on June 28, 2022; that's according to documents that were released through freedom of information. The email chain, which was obtained by the Narwhal, is the first set of records that have been released by the government that suggest the Premier may have been privy to policy discussions about the greenbelt as early as June 2022. That's just weeks after, let's remember, the people of Ontario elected this government expecting, believing that they would act with trust and integrity.

September 15, 2022: Green Lane Bathurst GP Inc. purchased five parcels of greenbelt protected land in a group sale for a total of \$80 million. The sale listing described the property as a “prime land banking opportunity.” The company lists, as I mentioned earlier, Rice Group CEO Michael Rice as its president.

Then, this summer, the walls start to close in on the Conservative government's apparent breach of Ontarians' trust. On June 29, 2023, the Auditor General issued a summons to Silvio DeGasperis, president of TACC Group of companies, to ask him to provide information related to properties owned by his companies that were removed from the greenbelt. Mr. DeGasperis filed a letter with the courts asking to block the summons.

July 5, 2023: Michael Rice, CEO of the Rice Group, filed a notice of application with the Ontario Superior Court of Justice seeking to block or delay a summons from Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk that he be interviewed and provide records related to land he owns in the area that, as we know, was now cleared for development.

August 1, 2023—follow along here—Luca Bucci, former chief of staff to the then Ontario housing minister, suddenly leaves his position as CEO of the Ontario Home Builders' Association, days before the Auditor General announces their office is about to release that special report on changes to the greenbelt, which we in the official opposition, along with leaders of the two other parties, had requested.

Why not clear the air, with all of that? What is this government hiding?

The Integrity Commissioner's first report found that the member for Leeds–Grenville–Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes had breached sections 2, conflict of interest, and 3.2, insider information, of the Members' Integrity Act. But those are just a little glimpse into how deep this scandal goes, and the people of Ontario deserve to know the actual full extent of the biggest scandal in Ontario's political history.

How can we begin to trust a government that has tied itself up so neatly in this web? How can we trust a government when one of their own former cabinet ministers didn't tell the full story to the Integrity Commissioner under oath about taking a trip to Las Vegas with a

developer and making policy on the massage table with them?

According to the Integrity Commissioner, the parties involved—Mr. Rasheed and then-principal secretary to the Premier, Amin Massoudi—said they took the trip in December 2019 and “exchanged pleasantries” with developer Shakir Rehmatullah in the lobby of a hotel. That was the extent of it, apparently. Mr. Rasheed told the Integrity Commissioner that he is friends with Mr. Rehmatullah but didn’t know he was going to be in Las Vegas—what a coincidence. Mr. Rehmatullah is the founder of Flato Development, a company listed as the owner of two of the sites removed from the greenbelt. However, records show that former-Minister Rasheed actually went on the trip—guess what—in February 2020, and the three men also—what a coincidence—got massages at the same time.

Speaker, is this how a government that apparently is concerned about the housing crisis acts? This scandal has cost this government three cabinet ministers, and they’ve set the province back at least five years in meeting our housing targets. Because of this government, according to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp., Ontario has the biggest housing unit supply gap in the entire country. The Premier and his government have destroyed any confidence at all in the system. We need them to move forward with a select committee so we can get to the bottom of it all—because the fact of the matter is, you can solve a housing crisis without a corruption crisis.

We knew when we rang the alarm bells that none of this was ever about housing. In fact, the Conservatives’ corruption scandal only further fuels land speculation and worsens the accountability crisis and the affordability crisis that Ontarians are struggling with every single day. It further encourages greedy speculators to play unethical real estate games to rake in even bigger profits without delivering the homes that we know people actually need. It creates expensive sprawl, which the Auditor General’s report indicates will cost Ontarians billions for roads, sewers, water and other services.

Madam Speaker, if the government actually cared about addressing the housing crisis, there are many, many tools at the Premier’s disposal, if they wanted to take just a minute away from thinking about the interests of their developer friends—those land speculators who are their donors, who they have committed to making richer and richer each day. I can give them a few of those tools right now, if the housing minister would like to take notes.

For starters, this government could bring back real rent control. That would stop the housing affordability crisis from getting worse. They could end exclusionary zoning—a recommendation of their very own housing task force. They could pass the official opposition’s housing critic’s motion to set up a short-term rental registry and restrict short-term and mid-term rentals to a person’s primary residence in those areas where we have low vacancy rates.

I want to quote the member for University–Rosedale here. She said, “Our province has a housing affordability

crisis, and we must take every practical measure to make housing affordable for Ontarians again. Cracking down on short-term rentals in investment properties is one way we can make renting more affordable and stable.” I’ll say. Yes, indeed.

Those are just a few of the solutions that we in the official opposition NDP have recommended to help people today—not 10 years from now, but today.

Let’s be clear: This government didn’t walk into a housing crisis on June 3, 2022. This is a crisis that has been years in the making. The Premier has claimed many times that his party didn’t run on the greenbelt land swap because there wasn’t a housing crisis at the time. Oh, please. Come on. The Integrity Commissioner’s report notes many times that staff had discussed greenbelt removals prior to the election. In fact, according to the commissioner’s report, just 27 days after his re-election, the Premier was giving the former Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs explicit instructions to start carving up the greenbelt. The Premier claims that that all happened as of June 2. Come on. In fact, Andrew Sidnell, the Premier’s former deputy chief of staff, told the Integrity Commissioner that he understood that the housing crisis was a priority this government was just elected to solve, which is completely contradictory to the Premier’s comments.

1530

Mr. Speaker, there is so much more left to be uncovered. If the Premier has nothing to hide, then why are they not co-operating? If they have nothing to hide, why did this government say no to the official opposition’s request for a Speaker’s warrant? Let’s do this—if the government has nothing to hide. Even at the height of the Liberal government’s absolutely disastrous gas plant scandal, that government, those MPPs, co-operated in forming a select committee to investigate what happened.

The Auditor General’s report also revealed that the Premier was using his personal device—this is something I raised in question period this morning, and I didn’t get any answers, interestingly. The Premier was using his personal device for government business; even the former housing minister’s staff were found to be using personal email accounts to conduct government business—by the way, I think they then deleted some emails. This is not how government is supposed to be run.

MPP Jamie West: It’s shady.

Ms. Marit Stiles: It’s shady.

The NDP believes that these facts constitute a troubling pattern of behaviour by this government and a pervasive disregard for record-keeping and transparency, and possibly attempts to avoid public scrutiny.

That’s why, in the official opposition’s continued efforts to restore order, trust and accountability, we have also written to the Information and Privacy Commissioner, as well as to the secretary of cabinet, the head of Ontario Public Service, asking both offices to recover and retain all records pertaining to this government’s changes to the greenbelt. I will note that that secretary of the cabinet, the head of the Ontario Public Service—that person’s priority

seems to be to trace who actually spilled the beans on the mandate letter; not securing the servers, which I think is shameful, actually.

Today, I want to make one thing very, very clear: The NDP—we on this side of the House—will continue to use every single legislative tool to get to the bottom of what happened with the greenbelt. We will not stop. We will not stop because an apology from the Premier is not enough. For nearly one year, this government was busy cutting their close friends—those land speculators—backroom deals, and since getting caught, they've been so busy with damage control from these never-ending scandals that they've lost total sight of their responsibility to Ontarians.

Let's get it straight; as I mentioned at the start of this, Ontarians are going through a very, very hard time. They are lining up at food banks in record numbers. They are struggling to stretch their paycheques until the end of the month. They are worried that homelessness is around the corner. And right now, during so much financial hardship and uncertainty—and let's remember, as well, things are not better after five years of this government; they are far more difficult today for people in this province. Maybe not for the land speculators who donate to the Conservative Party, but for real Ontarians, things are tougher today. The last thing that the people of this province need is a government that is unstable, a government that is refusing to be transparent with them and that is refusing to be truly accountable to them and to be responsive to them.

A select committee will help Ontarians get the answers and the transparency that they are looking for. I want to remind the government again: A prior select committee helped uncover misconduct in the former Liberal government's gas plant scandal. That led to the former Premier's chief of staff being sentenced to four months in jail. The creation of that select committee was supported by MPPs of all parties. Why not now? I heard the member opposite, the member from Nepean, say, "But that was a minority government—special circumstances." I just want to point out that I think these are special circumstances. We have the worst political scandal in this province's history, I would argue—unprecedented. Now is the time. A select committee is another tool that we, in the Ontario official opposition, NDP, are going to use to bring trust and accountability to government.

I would deeply urge and strongly suggest to the government that they co-operate today and pass this motion.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I appreciate this opportunity to address the motion.

I had the opportunity, 10 years ago, to sit on the committee that carried out the inquiry into the gas plant scandal. All of us should be grateful to the Auditor General and the Integrity Commissioner for the work they did, shedding light on what has happened with the greenbelt scandal. But I know from experience, sitting on that committee of inquiry, that more can be done in finding out what happens when a government goes wrong.

For those who may not remember, in the 2000s the Liberal government commissioned two power plants to be built in Oakville and Mississauga, respectively, to deal with local electricity demand. In the run-up to the 2011 elections, the government faced growing problems with voters in the ridings hosting the plants and those who were neighbouring those plants—so much opposition that, in an attempt to secure government, the McGuinty government cancelled both plants, one before and one during the 2011 election. Of course, those cancellations triggered legal actions by the builders, and ultimately the Auditor General found that they resulted in losses to the ratepayers of approximately a billion dollars.

By the way, the Auditor General was much lauded by the Conservative Party at the time, and rightly so. The same Auditor General dug into the shenanigans around the removal of parcels of land from the greenbelt, for which she received much less goodwill from the same party, and she found that benefits to friends of the Premier came in at over \$8 billion. No one has ever said that the Premier was not ambitious and generous with his friends, and he proved it with this.

Again, as a refresher, Premier McGuinty did not win the majority in 2011, and in the minority Legislature that followed that election, an inquiry into the gas plant scandal was forced into existence. After an attempt at stalling by the Premier, who prorogued the Legislature for a number of months, the committee was allowed to resume its work, calling civil servants, ministers and participants in the whole process before the committee to answer questions. There were 400,000 pages of documents provided to the committee of inquiry. We did a lot of reading.

There were a few things that became clear from the introduction of the emails and from the testimony of the many who appeared before the committee. The first thing that became clear was that the absence of emails, of records of activity were substantial—and the vital role of access to records in establishing what happened, even with the destruction of records. You should know, by law, government records were to be preserved and archived, and many weren't. In fact, almost nothing came out of the office of the Minister of Energy and his staff. That led to a secondary examination by the privacy commissioner, who found large-scale destruction of records. Ultimately, the large-scale destruction of records led, as my leader has said, to criminal prosecution of senior members of the Premier McGuinty staff, with the conviction and jailing of chief of staff David Livingston. And, man, did that ever give us the sense of the moral compass of that government; did that ever clarify to the people of Ontario who they were dealing with.

In his report, the Integrity Commissioner noted that the calendar for the minister's chief of staff, Ryan Amato, had times blocked off for meetings in the relevant period that were critical to the transfer of those lands but no participants noted, or purposes of meetings noted. The man must be incredible in terms of memory. I don't know about other people in this room, but I can't remember every item on every calendar day. I'm impressed.

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There was a notable absence of emails and use of personal phones and personal email, apparently to get around the laws on preservation of archival material. An inquiry would give us a much better sense if there was an evasion of the Archives and Recordkeeping Act and the potential scale of that evasion.

I have to say to all of you that access to the actual records was critical to reconstructing what happened in the gas plants scandal. Something we discovered when we were questioning Liberal political staff and politicians in the committee was the staggering rate of early-onset memory loss. These were people in the prime of their lives, and they had the memory of people in their nineties. It was astounding to watch. I felt sorry for them, being struck down so young with that kind of malady. The records that didn't get deleted did actually give us a chance to understand what happened.

Speaker, I think it's going to be critical for a committee of inquiry to get records, because I have a sense that under pressure of testifying under oath, there may be some Conservative staffers and politicians who also suffer early-onset memory loss, and so in order to establish what's going on, or what went on, access to records, even if they've been disturbed, will be critical. We need to ask: What did they forget, and when did they forget it?

The second thing that became clear from the records that did survive was what led to the decision to cancel the plants—I'm talking now about the gas plants scandal. The government and its ministers, who had seats directly affected by the plants, were distraught—you had to read the emails to understand it, to appreciate it—at the level of anger they were dealing with in their ridings. They were besieged. What we saw in their internal emails was raw political fear—raw political fear that translated into decisions for cancellation of plants and incurring of huge losses for the people of this province.

It's hard for me to believe that a similar examination of emails and texts from current government MPPs wouldn't show the same kind of fear in the lead-up to the reversal. You don't snatch \$8 billion worth of profits out of the hands of your friends, people who show up for your daughter's wedding, unless there is, on the other side, a powerful political motivator, like a career-ending event at the hands of your angry voters. If fear motivated the reversal, it would be interesting to delve into the records to see what motivated the savaging of the greenbelt in the first place.

I accept that the buck stops with the Premier. He said it himself.

No one buys the fairy tale that this had anything to do with the housing crisis. We need to find out, what did the Premier order, and why did he order it?

The third thing that became clear in the course of that inquiry—and that could be made clear in the course of another inquiry—was that the Liberal government knew very early on the scale of the cost to ratepayers of Ontario. The chief of staff to the Minister of Energy made inquiries when this whole thing was about to go forward, when the

whole idea of cancelling the plants was first promoted, and some prescient bureaucrat suggested the cost was in about a \$1-billion range. I don't know who that bureaucrat was, but whoever they are, man, they knew energy costs.

It's hard for me to believe that with this greenbelt scandal, there were not senior political and bureaucratic staff who didn't do the rough math themselves—maybe the developers did it for them—to see what kind of staggering gift of public value was being made to those who had the chance to get a piece of wedding cake served by the Premier. The public deserves to know. Cake and billions—what an amazing combination; what a wedding gift. What did the government know about the value they were giving away, and when did they know it?

The fourth piece of clarity that came out of that gas plants scandal inquiry—and, I think, would come out here—was a look into the operations of government itself, which was something that few people ever get a chance to do. At one point, we were given access to the interviews of senior bureaucrats and political staff by the OPP. In one interview, a senior bureaucrat talked about his concern that the top political staff in the Premier's office didn't keep records of their daily meetings. The chief of staff's senior people would meet every day. They had one sheet of paper with headings like "Shutting Down Hamilton" or "Making St. Catharines a Free-Enterprise Zone"—I don't know. There were no records kept of any decisions or discussion. That was it. That's how the province was being run. I have to say, this was so noteworthy that in the final report on the inquiry, the Conservatives put in their own dissenting opinion. They quoted from the OPP interviews. They went out of their way to quote the cabinet secretary talking about the lack of Liberal records. Here is the text: Cabinet secretary Peter Wallace told investigators that he warned David Livingston, McGuinty's chief of staff, that "the only organizations that did not maintain records were criminal organizations" and that "a practice of no record-keeping would be embarrassing"—the second one, yes, it would be amazingly embarrassing; the other would have a greater punch, I thought. I have to ask myself, with the way that the Integrity Commissioner describes the avoiding of government phones and emails to communicate about these parcels of land, with missing calendar entries, with the use of envelopes full of plans given out at events, what would that civil servant say today? What would a legislative committee find with regard to the Premier, his ministers and his operatives with the questions—what did they delete, and when did they delete it?

As I go door to door in my riding talking to my constituents, the questions come up constantly: What really happened with the greenbelt? Who did this? They know, generally, the Premier was running things, but through what persons did he do it? Who benefited? Why wasn't this stopped? Why wasn't it stopped internally when people realized, "This is bad news"—aside from the fact that there were other considerations, not just bad news.

A public inquiry with the power to compel evidence could give us answers to many of these questions—maybe not all, but to many of these questions. We need to get

those answers. Let's get going with this committee of inquiry.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I want to talk a little bit about committee work that had brought great, great value to the people of Ontario and that was started by a Conservative member. I'm talking about the work we did about Ornge air ambulance.

I want to bring you back to January 2012, when the whistle-blowers were coming from everywhere, telling us that things were really, really, bad at Ornge. The Auditor General—it was Jim McCarter at the time—issued a special report on Ornge on March 21, 2012. At the time, Frank Klees, who was a member of the PC caucus, was on public accounts, and so was I. We agreed, as a group, to put all of the work that we were doing on public accounts aside and focus on the special report of Ornge. It was a decision that really—it was Frank Klees at the time; the member from Oxford who is still there; the member from Nepean who is still there; as well as Julia Munro, who were on public accounts. I would say they worked at it really hard, but they were able to convince the entire group at public accounts that we should look at this special report right away, and we did. We worked for—I went back. We heard 85 witnesses during 40 hearing days, and altogether we spent 147 hours at that work.

Why am I putting that out there? Because it changed things for the better for the people of Ontario. And I give the credit to the PC caucus and Frank Klees—because they pushed really hard that we should look at what had happened at Ornge, we were able to help a lot of people turn the page and regain confidence in Ornge.

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For those of you who were not there at the time, let me show you a really, really sad story of Ornge, our air ambulance here in Ontario. Air ambulance had been there for—as long as there has been ambulance, we've had air ambulance in northern Ontario. It had worked under the name of Ornge—without the A—for a few decades. We started to have whistle-blowers. I had them coming to me and to everybody else telling us about Dr. Mazza, who was the CEO of Ornge at the time. He was supposed to be a public servant, covered by the mandatory disclosure of salary, but we could not find his salary anywhere; whistle-blowers were telling us that it was in the realm of \$1 million—it was actually \$1.4 million, but it had not been on the sunshine list.

We also found a lot of wrongdoing had happened at Ornge. The first one that came to us, aside from the CEO of Ornge being paid \$1.4 million a year—there was also all of the members of his board. This is a board of governance of a not-for-profit charitable organization in Ontario, funded 100% by the Ministry of Health, and the chair, Rainer Beltzner, received \$232,757. All of the board members received, on average, \$238,000 for sitting on a not-for-profit board of directors. None of this was available in the information that they were willing to share with us.

But it got way worse. When we started to look and, again, invited people to do testimony in front of the committee—and I have to say, the good work of Frank Klees; he was always ready, always had a ton of questions, always read all of the documents, and we're talking, like, that thick of documents that were coming to us every week. He would ask questions.

Dr. Mazza had bought helicopters from Agusta-Westland. They paid \$144 million to buy those new helicopters—12 of them—when, really, Ontario only needed nine. The business case to buy new helicopters was for nine, but Dr. Mazza decided to buy 12. Not only did he decide to buy 12 helicopters, but he decided to pay an extra \$600,000 for each and every one of those helicopters, and this money came back to him—\$4.7 million went from AgustaWestland back to Dr. Mazza. The \$2.9 million went to Ornge's charitable foundation. Ornge also bought 11 used helicopters for \$28 million, and the fleet was resold for \$8 million. Anybody who's strong in math—you all know that we had, as taxpayers, just paid \$20 million more for the used helicopters than what they were worth.

So of the 12 helicopters that were bought by Mazza, we only needed nine. Two of them were not equipped at all for patient transport. This is what Ornge does—it does patient transport. If you get hurt in northern Ontario, Ornge picks you up and brings you to the closest hospital that has an emergency department open. But two of the 12 helicopters were not set up for patient transport at all, and what made it even worse is that, of the 10 that were set up—the AgustaWestland helicopters were not made for medical transport. They are really low-ceilinged, which means that if you are a paramedic caring for somebody who codes while you're transporting them from the scene of the accident to the emergency room, there is not enough room for you to do CPR. So we had just spent—“we,” because we paid for this—\$144 million to buy 12 helicopters when we only needed nine. We paid an extra \$600,000 per helicopter and bought helicopters that did not meet our needs. We didn't do that—Ornge did that for us. It gets worse. They also bought 10 Pilatus PC-12 airplanes when we only needed six, and they had to be resold.

But what really got me when I was sitting there listening to the testimonies was the operating issues at Ornge. Those are the issues that a lot of the paramedics had come to talk to me about. I used to fly down to Queen's Park every Monday morning. I was there at 4:30 in the morning—at the airport, waiting for my flight. The paramedics sit very close to the rest of the airport, and they would come and talk to me about operational issues. The main operational issue was that Dr. Mazza had put in place these operational guidelines that said that the dispatch operators were pressured to cut costs—because he had just made a whole bunch of purchases that made no sense—by reducing helicopter launches. So the policy was that the helicopter would not be dispatched until a land ambulance had confirmed the need. Think about that, Speaker. You dial 911; there is somebody who's just had a major accident in a mine way out in northern Ontario; and you

would have to wait for a land ambulance to leave from Timmins or Sudbury and make the four-hour drive through the brush to say, “Yes, we need to dispatch an air ambulance,” or the air ambulance would not get dispatched because Dr. Mazza was trying to save costs.

This led to an inquiry by the coroner of Ontario, who showed us that eight patients had died who would have had good chances of survival if that policy had not been in place. One of those patients was one of my constituents, a nice lady from the east end of my riding whose family only gained closure as to what happened to their mom, to his wife, after the coroner released his report. All of that was only discovered because we agreed, as parliamentarians, to focus on this report; we agreed to work together so that we would get to the bottom of this. Was it pleasant? No. Did it make the government look bad? Absolutely. It was a Liberal government at the time. Deb Matthews was the Minister of Health, and we had a lot of testimony that showed that a lot of the decision-making was all written up and sent to the Premier at the time, Mr. McGuinty; sent to the Minister of Health, Deb Matthews; sent to five or six other ministers; and none of them clued in that they had to step in, that they had to have a look as to what was going on. How can you sign off on a policy that says we won’t dispatch a helicopter until a wheeled ambulance makes it out there? But it did not trigger anything from the government.

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I must say that at the time, the chair of the board of Ornge was also the chair of the Liberal political party, and he would be the one who would come out with the letters outlining everything that Ornge was about to do to the minister, to the Premier, and they all thought that that was really good, that everything was just hunky-dory; it was not.

Then, we have to talk about the webs of companies. The desire to privatize was always there with Ornge. They shared that with the minister. They shared that with the Premier. They wanted to privatize. They wanted to use some of the assets—those are public assets that were going to be used by companies that were associated with Ornge but not part of Ornge.

There was a web of companies: J Smarts, Ornge Peel—Ornge Peel; who dreams that up? Anyway, it was there. It became Ornge Global Real Estate, Ornge Global Holdings, Ornge Issuer Trust, Ornge Global Air, Ornge Global Management—and the list goes on. The Auditor General had identified, I think, 40 of them. Through our work as a committee, we identified 20 private companies that were directly linked to Ornge and making money using the assets of Ornge, whether it be the building where they were, whether it be the helicopter, whether it be the planes, the ambulance—to make money for a whole bunch of private companies that were all linked to Ornge. For some reason, they all belonged to friends of the government or members of the board of directors—or Dr. Mazza himself—and they were all making a ton of money.

Meanwhile, air ambulances were not being dispatched when people in northern Ontario were needing them, to save money.

I could go on and on as to everything that went wrong, but the point I want to make is that a lot was learned from this. A lot of people who were hurt—and we’re talking mayors of small communities; we’re talking families of people who died or had severe health impacts; we’re talking the hundreds of people who worked for Ornge, especially the dispatchers, who were told they had to follow those policies. They had all lost faith in the system. They had lost all confidence in Ornge.

Ornge needs some really, really specialized workers. We don’t have, in Ontario, very many specialized care paramedics. We have specialized care paramedics for pediatrics who work for Ornge; those are very few. All of those people were either leaving Ornge or trying to find a job somewhere else. And when you have that level of training, let me tell you, it’s not hard to find a job someplace else.

The work that we did as parliamentarians to take the time to work together, to hear dispatch and all of this, helped us regain the trust of the people who worked for Ornge, regain the trust of the people like me in northern Ontario who depend on Ornge, and helped the families who were hurt turn the page.

I hope that, this afternoon, everybody will vote in favour of a select committee. We can learn from the mistakes of the past and make it better for everyone in Ontario by showing them that this will never happen again, that we have learned from it, and that we want to do better.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Further debate?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I’ve been listening intently to the comments made by the members opposite, and I appreciate them, really, because I had actually forgotten about the—not forgotten; I shouldn’t say that. It had been out of my memory—about the scandals that were predominant in the previous Liberal government with respect to Ornge, and the gas plant scandal. I appreciate the members opposite for refreshing this House on that.

The members opposite talked a lot about, what was the motivation and why did we do this, but I wanted to say this first and foremost: I obviously have committed to and will be bringing forward legislation that will protect the greenbelt through legislation. What does that mean? Obviously, currently, the greenbelt can be changed through regulation and not through legislation, meaning that since its inception governments are able to bypass the House in order to make changes to the greenbelt. We will be making changes and ensuring that legislation is brought forward to codify the boundaries of the greenbelt, and I will be doing that as soon as possible.

I will go a step further by ensuring that we add the 9,400 additional acres to the greenbelt that we had previously talked about, including the Paris-Galt moraine, which I know is something that many people had talked about pre-

servicing and protecting for a long period of time, but it had never been done in the province. We will be doing that.

A lot of time has been spent by the opposition explaining to us the need to have a select committee, and I certainly appreciate hearing from the members opposite why they believe a select committee should be brought forward. Let me just say this: In their own comments here today, they show why a select committee is actually not needed and why we will be voting against that.

The members opposite talk about what happened during the Liberal time in office with respect to Ornge, and they talked about the gas plant scandal. You will remember, Madam Speaker, the members themselves have talked about the cost to taxpayers. They talked about the loss of faith and trust in the then Liberal government. The members opposite talked about how that impacted their communities, and the extraordinary work done by Progressive Conservatives to extract that level of accountability from them. But one of the hallmarks of that and one of the reasons why a select committee was so important is because the government of the day refused to acknowledge that it had made a mistake.

Madam Speaker, the Auditor General reported, and the government has accepted all of the Auditor General's recommendations, full stop. Every single one of those recommendations, the government has acknowledged, and we are acting on all of those.

We are going a step further, and we are ensuring that we codify the boundaries into legislation.

The Premier said it on behalf of all of us, frankly—we made a mistake. We acknowledge that mistake. We thought that there would be broad public support in order to build housing as quickly as possible by accessing the greenbelt. That was a mistake for which we apologize.

But make no mistake that we are completely focused on ensuring that we can build 1.5 million homes across the province of Ontario. We will not be deterred in that. Whilst we acknowledge that it was a mistake to consider the greenbelt lands, we do not for one moment believe it a mistake to continue to focus on building homes for the people in the province of Ontario, and I'll get to a little bit more on that.

Specific to the request for a select committee, Madam Speaker, and again, the member for Toronto–Danforth and the member for—forgive me; Algoma–Manitoulin?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Nickel Belt.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Nickel Belt; sorry.

A vast majority of their speech highlighted the challenges of those two scandals in the Liberal government. But in the final analysis, the government of the day refused to acknowledge that it had made a mistake—we did. But the opposition NDP, at the time, did nothing. In their speeches, both of these two members talked about how horrific those two scandals were to Ontarians. They talked about their communities. They talked about the billions of dollars that were actually spent and wasted on the gas plants. They talked about the impact it had during an election. They talked about the fact that it drove a Premier out of office. But when Progressive Conservatives went to

act on those two reports—not once but twice tabling motions of non-confidence in the government—how did the NDP vote? They voted to keep that government, which they say is one of the most corrupt governments in the history of this province, which they have been talking about now for about 40 minutes. They voted to maintain that government in office.

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Progressive Conservatives, at that time, were clear. They wanted that government out of office and defeated because of those two scandals, which the government refused to acknowledge were actually even a problem—those two scandals which directly cost taxpayers billions of dollars.

The member for Nickel Belt and the member for Toronto–Danforth talk about the success of those two select committees, but what they fail to talk about is their failure to hold the Liberals accountable for those two scandals.

So specifically on the creation of a select committee, I say to the honourable members, in this instance, it is not required because the government has acknowledged it made a mistake. The government has heard from the Auditor General. The government has accepted all of the Auditor General's recommendations, and the government will move one step further to ensure that the greenbelt is protected. We will go even further. We will add additional lands to the greenbelt because we know how important it is that we do it.

In her message, the Leader of the Opposition talked about how important affordability is to the people of the province of Ontario. We've seen this a million times from the opposition, haven't we, colleagues—it's say one thing, but do something else.

The member opposite talks about the motivation for doing this, and I think it really speaks to the affordability question that the Leader of the Opposition talks about. The motivation was to build homes for people who can't otherwise afford them. Do you know why they can't afford them? Because we're not building enough homes. Why are we not building enough homes? Because of the obstacles and the red tape that was put in the way by the Liberals and NDP over 15 years—full stop. It goes further than that. It's not only red tape and obstacles that they put in the way. Not only did they have the opportunity, between 2011 and 2014, to vote the Liberals out of office so that we could address some of these problems—in their own words, two horrific scandals—in select committees to review those scandals. And what action? Nothing. But they continue to vote for policies which take money out of the pockets of the people of the province of Ontario.

We've talked about this a lot. One of the first things we talked about was a carbon tax. And they lost their minds.

The member for Toronto–Danforth talks about affordability. This is a member who supported a policy that saw our electricity rates skyrocket. This is a gentleman who is singularly unconcerned with the fact that millions of Ontarians had to choose between heating and eating because of the policies that he supported then and that he

continues to support now—policies that we are fighting against. That is the record of the NDP, in co-operation with Liberals.

When we said we had to get rid of a carbon tax, what did they say? No. They said it would have a huge impact on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Do you know what has impact on reducing greenhouse gas emissions? Our nuclear fleet. Do you know who is restoring our nuclear fleet? It is this government. Who is against that? It is the opposition who is against that.

Think of what the carbon tax costs us. Do you want to talk about—

Interjections.

Hon. Paul Calandra: The members opposite are screaming and hollering. Thankfully, the mikes don't pick up what the opposition are screaming and hollering about—their support for additional taxes for people. But that is no surprise. That is at the core of what the NDP are—it is, in their estimation, that government can do a better job than individuals on deciding how to manage their own wealth and resources.

I talked about when I was at Walmart last week, and I ran into Carol, who is a local—

Interjection.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Well, no, it was actually Walmart, but Giant Tiger is a great store in my riding as well. A lot of people shop at Giant Tiger—but the same thing, when you shop at Walmart and Giant Tiger, is that you have to pay a tax on everything you buy.

What Carol was saying—and the reason I remember Carol is because she is from a local farming family, and she was highlighting for me the high costs of produce. Do you know what she said? The costs were directly associated with the fact that there was a carbon tax. Fuel has gone up. The fuel in the tractor to plant the crop has gone up. Harvesting the crop has gone up. Fertilizer costs have gone up. Transportation of her crop to the store has gone up. People driving to the store to buy goods has gone up. Do you know what that creates? That creates hardships for the people of the province of Ontario.

So when the Leader of the Opposition talks about affordability for Ontarians, I say you cannot even begin to talk about affordability until you address the one tax that is costing all Canadians—forget about just Ontarians—on every single thing that they buy. That is what a carbon tax does.

When we brought forward tax reductions for the people of the province of Ontario, to put more money in their pocket, they voted against those measures. So when you talk about putting more money in the pockets of people, they vote against it. But when the Liberals brought forward more spending programs that took money out of people's pockets, they were supportive of it. In fact, despite the fact that we had two horrific scandals under the Liberals, in a minority government in which they held the balance of power, they voted to keep the Liberals in office, despite the fact that our economy was sinking. We saw our—

Interjection.

Hon. Paul Calandra: The member for Hamilton, of all people to be hollering out her support for the Liberals—the Liberals, with the support of the NDP, brought our steelmaking, which employs thousands of people, to its knees. Do you know why? Because nobody wanted to build anything in the province of Ontario anymore because of what they were doing to the economy, in co-operation with the Liberals.

That is the legacy that they're screaming and hollering their support for, and somehow, they expect people to believe that they are the guardians of affordability. It gets even worse than that. It's not even just that.

When we've brought forward measures to help build jobs and the economy—like the mining sector. We have talked about mining for how long in this province? We've talked about the Ring of Fire, we've talked about northern Ontario for how long in this province?

Mr. Will Bouma: Decades now.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Decades.

The Liberals called the north a wasteland—

Mr. Will Bouma: No, a “no man's land.”

Hon. Paul Calandra: A “no man's land” that nobody should invest in—the NDP never found fault with that and voted to keep them in office despite that.

But when we brought forward measures to help unlock the vast potential of northern Ontario, to make our mines work better, to provide additional investments—the member for Sudbury, who sits here and claps for his leader, who talks about affordability, voted against those measures that would clearly help the people in his own riding. Thousands of jobs and opportunities—the member for Sudbury gleefully sat on his hands, hoping that nobody would pay attention or notice that he was voting against the workers in his own riding. But he's paying attention now, because you see how uncomfortable he is.

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It's not even just me who suggested that the NDP are constantly on the wrong path. The people of the province of Ontario have reduced the Liberals to non-party status in two elections. In the last election, we heard from the NDP—you remember this, colleagues, before the election, when they formed government. The results of the last election actually were just the opposite.

Interjection.

Hon. Paul Calandra: The member says I'm reaching. I'm reaching because there are Conservatives over there; there are far fewer NDP. But that's not the point. Do you know why there are far fewer NDP? Because they have never voted for measures that help build housing. They have never voted for measures that help put money back to the people of Ontario. They vote against measures that would get people moving around more. They vote against transit. The member for Toronto–Danforth talks about building transit but votes against it.

The members opposite talk about building where land is available, but some of the members opposite have already told me that they feel their community has already played enough of a role in building. Well, I say to them very clearly that, no, nobody has played enough of a role

in building homes for people. It is an absolute that we must build more homes for the next generation of Ontarians. Every community will play a role in helping us do that, and every community across this province, frankly, is excited at the prospect of having the ability to participate in doing that.

I have heard from small communities in northern Ontario who have said to me, “We can build five or six homes, and we want to be a part of it”; I’ve heard from larger communities that have said that they can do even more.

I’ve heard from communities that say, “We need more long-term care in our riding,” and we’re going to deliver.

At the same time, we have been very clear—they have voted against it—we are going to build homes around the transit infrastructure that we’re building. This is one of the recommendations of the Housing Affordability Task Force that they talk about and that many of them are so terrified of now. They’re very afraid of that because we will come through; we will build housing across our transit systems.

It is a much larger transit system, you will know, Madam Speaker, because we are making significant investments that have brought two-way, all-day GO trains, for instance, to different parts of the province that never had them before. I’m proud of that. I think it’s very good news for the people of the province of Ontario that we’re doing that. But it also gives an opportunity for people in those communities to live by transit corridors, so they don’t have to drive cars. They can get to where they have to work without getting in a car and driving. The NDP is opposed to that.

The NDP, actually, is even opposed to measures that would see the cost of transit and transportation cost less. Let’s unpack that just for a second, because it’s important when you talk about housing affordability and why we are voting against this motion. Somebody in my riding—frankly, I don’t know if the NDP have ever held a seat in the 905, so I’m going to help explain to them some of the realities of 905, up in York region, because I know the member for Oshawa is about to say it’s 905 there. In York region, you can get on a bus or you can get on a GO train and you’ve got to pay; you get on the TTC and you’ve got to pay; or you could go to Mississauga transit, and you’ve got to pay for the GO train in Mississauga and Brampton; you might go to Durham region. The NDP think that that is a good use of taxpayers’ money. Do you know what we say? We say, no, it’s not. There should be one fare.

We have talked about this in this province for a very long time. We brought in a unified fare system. How have the NDP voted? This is a common-sense measure that will save the average transit user in our area about \$1,600 a year—\$1,600 right back in the pockets of those people who need it the most. The NDP voted against that measure. So let’s see—\$1,600 out of your pocket if the NDP were elected for transit and transportation, because they don’t believe in a unified fare. Who knows what the cost of a carbon tax is? Take that right out of your pocket.

The NDP that set the record for spending in the history of the province of Ontario—in the short time that they actually held office—want to bring those same types of

policies back to the province of Ontario. It is the same type of policies that we’re seeing in Ottawa. We talked about this right from the beginning. From the time that we took office here, we said when you increase red tape, when you increase costs, when you have out-of-control debt and deficits, that is not good for the economy and, ultimately, it’s not good for people. They disagree, and they continue to vote for those types of policies, which now have led to interest rates increasing faster than at any other time in this country’s history—it’s not just them here, because this very same crew that held the balance of power here and could have made a change here in 2012 or 2011 now holds the balance of power in Ottawa.

Interjection: Do you miss Ottawa?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Yes, I miss Ottawa, absolutely. It’s a beautiful, beautiful city. I miss Ottawa, but I was glad to be there. I thank the member opposite for screaming out about Ottawa.

I met with the mayor of Ottawa on Thursday—very supportive of the things that we are trying to do to build housing; very supportive of the things that we’re doing on transit and transportation; very supportive of cutting red tape and taxes for the people of the province of Ontario. But not to distract from what they’re doing in Ottawa, the NDP—it’s no surprise that the leader of the NDP in Ottawa was amongst that crew here that kept the Liberals in office here in the province of Ontario. In Ottawa, we’ve had SNC-Lavalin, we’ve had that justice minister who had issues, and just on and on and on, but they keep them in power—

Interjection.

Hon. Paul Calandra: See, they go personal over there, because when they’re caught, that’s what they do. But people have no time or patience for personal attacks of the NDP, because people are working hard every single day to make ends meet, because of policies, supported by the Liberals and the NDP, which have brought families to their knees.

When you talk about increasing interest rates, Madam Speaker, do you know what that means? That means a family who is about to start out and go buy their first home all of a sudden can’t afford to buy their first home. That means that families who are about to renew their mortgages can’t afford to renew their mortgages and continue to pay for the home that they have. That’s what that means. That’s what high interest rates and the policies that the NDP support mean for the people of this country.

I would challenge the members opposite to give their friends in Ottawa a call and say, “Reverse course”—don’t do like they did when they were here, and put the people of Canada first. When they had the opportunity, they didn’t put the people of Ontario first, and we are still trying to dig out of the mess that was 15 years of Liberal and NDP government in this province. We will continue to focus on that.

This morning, I talked about the bargain that was Canada for so many years—if you come to this country and work hard and play by the rules, you should have the opportunity to do better. It’s the one thing that we do—you leave your country, your province, in a better spot than

what you found it in. Because of how disastrous the Liberals were, it was a low bar for the province of Ontario. It was a low bar, but we exceeded that so much—700,000 people have the dignity of a job, who didn't when we took office. They're working hard. But the bargain for them, the bargain for generations who have come to this country, was that if you do that, you work hard, you play by the rules, then your kids would do better than you do.

That's why my parents came to this country. That's why they left Italy to come here. My mom was 18; my dad—I don't know; 26. They came here. My dad got off a train and started working almost immediately. The entire family lived in a home. They shared beds. When one was working, the other would leave. But they knew that one day, they would be able to have their own piece of the Canadian dream if they worked hard. And they did, right? They did. They moved out. One bought a home—I've talked about this—in the member for Scarborough Southwest's riding. A wartime bungalow, a small, little 1,200-square-foot bungalow is where my family started its journey of home ownership. But they could do that.

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One of the reasons I actually got into politics in the first place is because I remember—I was 10 years old when the first Liberal government, in my lifetime, anyway, brought the country to its knees with interest rates at 18% or 19%. Again, similar: out-of-control spending, higher taxes, the inability for the country to compete and to build a growing economy. I have never forgotten the stress. My parents were really good at it, Madam Speaker; they were really good at pretending like nothing was wrong, but you knew something was wrong. You knew something was wrong, and that is partially what drove me into office.

I will not be here in government and leave that as the legacy for the next generation. I just simply will not do it. So we will get 1.5 million homes built for the people in the province of Ontario. Do you know why, Madam Speaker? Because that is the bargain. That's the bargain that we have here. As I said, work hard and you have the ability to get out of your parents' basement. Think of all of these kids right now. When my 17-year-old daughter says to me that she might never be able to buy a home, that's not the Ontario we grew up in. That's not the Canada that we grew up in.

So when the opposition label, "What did you do? Why did you do it?"—look, I talked about this in my first news conference. My family was one of the first families in the province of Ontario to put a conservation easement across our farmland. I'll never forget that work—it was done by Don Prince and the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust. We took 60 acres of our land back in 2004 and we put a conservation easement on top of that in favour of the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust.

Why would a guy who has done that and a family who has done that be so willing to move so quickly to build homes? Because we are in a crisis. I acknowledge the fact, Madam Speaker, as I said earlier, that we made a mistake in where we chose to build those homes. We're stepping back from that and we're doing what is right because that's

what the people have asked us to do, but it doesn't mean that we will stop on our motivation to build homes.

It goes further than that, right? Because not everybody just wants or can immediately start out building a home. Like my parents when they came here, there were many of them renting a home in a riding. That was the start of their dream: renting a home in a community. For many, that is the start, and the policies that we have brought in have helped us see purpose-built rental housing at its highest level in over 15 years. Imagine that: its highest level in over 15 years. We have people getting back into building rental housing in this province like never before, and they're doing that because they know they have a government who's a partner, a government who's focused on building affordability for all types of people.

In my riding, we have the very first affordable housing apartment building being built—97 units of affordable housing that had never been built in our community, halfway through the construction phase right now. When I was there turning the sod on that, I can't tell you how happy I was. I was there with the mayor of Stouffville, and we knew that it would make a difference. Because in a community like mine, we have seniors who want to go to different-style housing. They might be in a large house, and they want to downsize and move into a smaller home, thereby making their home available, but they have nowhere to go. They have nowhere to go, Madam Speaker.

The changes that we are making have seen more homes being built than ever before, but we still have a long way to go. Purpose-built rentals: at their highest level in 15 years. Housing starts: at their highest levels in 15 years. But it's not enough. It is not enough, because if we're to hit our target of 1.5 million homes, we are going to have to do even more, and it's not just for them.

You look at long-term care. Long-term care is a home for someone. It is a home for someone, and when you bring 30,000 new long-term-care beds, it is 30,000 additional people who have a home who didn't have it before. And we are going to go even further.

I was in Windsor a couple of weeks ago. We were at Meadowbrook Place, another investment that's being made in social housing in Windsor—the first one, if I'm not mistaken, in over 30 years in that community. This is a really, really great place. It will support a couple of hundred families.

Again, it took them over 30 years to be able to build something like this. That is unacceptable. But those investments are happening, right? Those investments are happening in the province of Ontario again. You're seeing there's this energy around what's happening in Ontario. There's an energy about what's happening around the province of Ontario.

Despite the fact that we have challenges, people can see that we are moving in a positive direction. Yes, high interest rates caused by federal policies are causing challenges for the people of Ontario. I talked about a young family, an individual who—frankly, it was his grandparents who had called me. I spoke about them in question period once. They had made 21 offers on

homes—21 offers on homes and were not even in the game; not even in the game, ostensibly because there aren't enough homes for them to buy.

This is an individual I talk about who did everything right. He bought a small bachelor apartment when he could, when he started working, with a goal of moving forward. He recently brought home—he and his wife had their first child, and they brought that child home to that bachelor apartment, but that's not where they wanted to be, right? Now, he's grateful that he was in the market, but that's not where he wants to be, and that's not where I want him and people like him to be. I want them to be in a home they are comfortable in, in a home where they can flourish, because that is what the promise of Ontario is for people.

We've gone a step further, Madam Speaker. We've gone a step further, right? In order to encourage the building of homes across the province of Ontario, working with our municipal partners, we said, "Look, you're going to have to do more within your boundary. We're going to build more homes around transit and transportation corridors because that makes sense. There's going to be higher density in those areas." You can build up to three units right now. Whether it's a basement apartment, a garden suite, we've brought that in, and we will start to see the benefits of doing that.

But we're going a step further, right? We've brought in a program that will incentivize our municipal partners to help us get shovels in the ground faster, because they want to work with us, right? They are just as frustrated by the years of Liberal and NDP stepping on their toes and getting in the way. So we brought in the Building Faster Fund, and that is geared specifically to helping reward those communities that help us get shovels in the ground to build more homes faster across the province of Ontario.

The reaction to that has been spectacular. It is a fund that is also available in smaller communities across the province because they told us they want to participate in that fund. We have a bill in front of this House right now which I challenge the opposition to vote in favour of. I challenge the opposition to vote in favour because, in a very real sense, the bill that is in front of the House right now is a referendum on building homes. It is a referendum on buildings homes.

In that bill, we have redefined what affordable housing is. We've redefined it not just based on market conditions in an area; we've redefined it based on income across the province of Ontario in different communities because we know that what is affordable in Hamilton is different than what's affordable in Toronto. It's different than what's affordable in Stouffville. So we will work from community to community to ensure that everybody can participate in that.

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And make no mistake about it: This is a referendum on everything. It gives the opposition NDP the opportunity to say—and it's not only that. I know the associate minister will talk about the extraordinary work that's being done in St. Thomas, where thousands of jobs are coming back. We need to build housing there. But this bill is a referendum

on building homes. This bill is a referendum on our policies to reduce taxes for people. This bill is a referendum on economic development. It's a referendum on whether you believe to support our automotive sector. It is a referendum on whether you believe we should build homes in communities across the province of Ontario. The NDP have the opportunity, in this bill, to vote in favour of the bill and to say that everything that they had voted against in the past was wrong and they actually now agree with the direction that the government has taken in order to build homes across the province of Ontario.

So, I say very clearly to the opposition—and it is a deliberately focused bill so that the opposition can focus on what matters to the people of the province of Ontario. It encapsulates everything that we have done to spur on development, to bring affordable homes to the people of the province of Ontario, and the NDP can stand in their place when we bring this to a vote and they can vote in favour of that, or they can say, "We still don't agree with building homes. We don't agree with the definition of affordability that includes all parts of the province and at all income levels." But they have the opportunity to do the right thing, despite the fact that they have voted literally against every single measure that we have brought in. They actually even voted against the increase in funding that we brought in for the homeless.

We spend, I think—about \$700 million each year, I think, is the total that we spend and I think we increased that by over \$200 million this year, and the opposition NDP voted against that. They voted against that increase in funding. I'm not sure why, but I suspect the reason why is because what that money is intended to do is to lift people out. It's intended to lift people out and the NDP constantly want to hold people back. I've talked about this a lot. For the NDP, what is important is not what you do with your wealth, not what you do with your resources, it's what they can do for you. I think Ronald Reagan said it—what did he say? Beware of anybody who comes and says, "I'm from the government and I'm here to help." That is the mantra by which the NDP live by. They are happiest when people exclusively rely on government.

Now, the same thing with the Liberals, right? They just get the NDP to do their bidding for them. So the Liberals feel the same way, but they know they have the NDP to support them and to keep them in power, so they blame the NDP for that. They are one and the same.

To sum up, Madam Speaker, let me say this: We will be voting against this measure because we have acknowledged and accepted each of the recommendations of the Auditor General. She laid on the table 15 recommendations; we have accepted all of those recommendations and we're going further. But we will not—this is not about—because they've shown it, in their speeches. They've shown that a select committee does not mean accountability for them; it just means delaying. Delay, delay, delay and stopping us from doing what is important: building homes for the people of the province of Ontario.

Because of that, we will be voting against this motion, and we will remain singularly focused on building more

homes for the people of the province of Ontario, reducing taxes, fighting the carbon tax, fighting the policies that stop young Canadians from purchasing their first home or renting their first home. We will vote against all of the policies that they brought in with the Liberals that held our economy back. We will continue to focus on building a bigger, better, stronger province of Ontario and we will not let the obstacles that the NDP and Liberals like to put in the way, standing in our way of doing just that for all Ontarians.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We're going to go to further debate.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Having listened to that, I've just speed-dialed my therapist so we're all set up.

I do want to say, directly to the House leader, that he's very, very sorry. The government is very sorry. They really feel badly, Madam Speaker, and I just want to point out that in order to apologize for something, that apology is usually made after you've made an accident, you've made a mistake. This entire greenbelt scandal was intentional. The Premier's fingers are all over this mess. In fact, he was directly involved in the hiring of Ryan Amato. He overrode his own Minister of Municipal Affairs and put that player into the game, because that is how this Premier views environmental protections, this whole housing crisis that he says this is the solution—their own government's Housing Affordability Task Force told them, “You don't have to have to build on the greenbelt, you don't have to carve out all those urban boundaries. You have all the tools in the tool box you need; you just have to pay attention to your own government task force.”

So, to hear the House leader say, “We've accepted 14 of the”—there were 14 and then they said “all of them”, but it's actually, Madam Speaker, they were just really, really sorry that they got caught. They got caught—and that's when the 15th recommendation to put all of that greenbelt land back into the greenbelt, where it should never have been tampered with.

So that's what were dealing with. We're also dealing with—I mean the government has already said, “We're not going to support your select committee.” This government is embroiled in a lack of transparency and undermining the democracy of this province.

It's not altogether surprising. Our leader has brought forward a motion to get a special permit to pull the witnesses into this place; they shot her down. At public accounts, I asked the public accounts committee to prioritize the select report from the Auditor General. It's our core business, our core mandate, as a committee to review this; it got shut down.

At every turn, this government says, “No, we're not digging any deeper. We know we got caught, we're really sorry, but we still don't have the legislation.” Let me tell you, if you as government members are going out into the public and saying, “Just trust us,” this is an absurd statement. Nobody in this province trusts this government and for good reason.

Now, I want to say, it is true, the greenbelt grab underpins this government's attitude towards our democracy. This Premier, I feel sometimes, thinks that he's running his sticker business, where you can just make a

little deal here and make a little deal there. That is not how democracy operates.

And I want to thank the media, actually, because the media has done a very good job in really chasing the money, and when you follow the money, you follow the handshakes, you can get so far. But mostly it's been through FOI, and the government has also tried to deny the media their ability to FOI documents, Madam Speaker.

Paul Webster, from the Toronto Star, published a piece which actually resonates really well in this very moment as we are trying to get some transparency with this government.

“Opening up thousands of acres of protected greenbelt lands will be an \$8 billion win for a small group of land developers close to the government officials”—this is from the Auditor General's report. But he goes on to say:

“But the greenbelt land carve-out isn't the only mega land deal the Ford government is cooking up.

“At the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO), officials are in overdrive to kick-start building the 60-kilometre Highway 413 through much of the GTA's last remaining nearby open countryside.” This is another carve-out, Madam Speaker. “And that means hefty cheques would soon be issued to the owners of well over 2,000 hectares of prime farmland along that highway's path.”

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Now, we know, and we raised this when Highway 413 was first raised, this is a pet project, really, for this Premier. Along that highway, you have the same cast of characters who have benefited from the greenbelt grab. So there's money to be made by this highway, and it will only save two minutes for those commuters. If you put the same amount of money, the same \$6.9 billion, towards public transit, you move 27,000 people. I mean, it is common sense where you invest to actually benefit the people that we're elected to serve.

I will also say it's a little surprising that they came out so hard against this select committee, because Conservatives in the past have supported select committees. They have supported transparency, finding solutions and trying to learn from mistakes—not that this is a mistake—but in the past there have been.

Even Mike Harris, the former Premier of this province, brought in a special commission, an independent commission, to look into the Walkerton deaths, which were seven people who died and 2,000 people were sick. That was a majority government, because earlier we heard: “Well, you know, the gas plant scandal—the only reason we got that select committee was because it was a minority government.” Well, it was a majority PC government. They brought in the Walkerton commission. We found out what happened. Hopefully, governments in the future will learn from that.

On the other side of the coin, this Ford government—I mean, just look at the media that you're reading. This is not going away. We're going to keep trying. We will be relentless to get answers on this issue, because it speaks to a bigger issue of how this government does business.

This is the headline from the Hamilton Spectator and the Waterloo Record today: Ford government's expansion of urban boundaries driving speculation boom. You're driving up the cost of land. That's what you're doing. This is a direct quote from the article: "There are three themes here: real estate speculation, death by a thousand cuts to natural heritage and agriculture, and top-down ministerial behaviour bordering on corruption." This is what's in the media today. It's not dying down, people.

There was one article that I read—you know, I came in during the gas plant scandal, and I won the seat in Waterloo, which kept the government at a minority level. For me, it was a pretty good day. I like to think it was a good day for the people of this province, because that led to greater transparency. Eleven days later, then-Premier Dalton McGuinty prorogued the Parliament to shut down the debate on the gas plant scandal. He shut it down.

I don't know if this Premier was paying attention during that time, but this Premier is definitely experiencing that Dalton McGuinty effect in that he doesn't see the writing on the wall.

But the people of this province care deeply about this issue. They truly do, because they see that it's connected to the urban boundary expansion. They see that it's connected to Highway 413 and the Bradford Bypass, and Ontario Place. For the love of humanity, who signs a 95-year lease in business?

Interjection.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Is it 99? Ninety-nine.

I have to say—and moving the Science Centre so a developer can build on that site. You couldn't make it up, Madam Speaker. You really can't.

But my friend Paul Webster, here, goes on to say that the government's own records show that many of those cheques along the 413, and I'm connecting it to the 413, because that's why the select committee is so important. It's to prevent further mistakes, further waste of money. He goes on to say that a "select group of land speculators and property developers" have "been buying up these lands in recent years, spurring a huge increase in the land values." And the MTO—we're trying to get answers from the MTO about Highway 413. These are not state secrets. They're building a highway. We're trying to get the costing of that highway. We want to figure out how much it's going to cost to appropriate the land, to buy the land. You would think that this is a secret cabinet, Hogwarts style, Madam Speaker.

The ministry has said, "But just how much the MTO estimates these purchases will cost taxpayers and just which land speculators and property developers will get them, is something government lawyers are keeping a secret." So this government has literally lawyered up.

I will also note that at estimates, because I was trying to get some answers, as a finance critic will try to do, the House leader showed up, on behalf of the Premier, and two lawyers—two lawyers, just to have a finance critic ask some questions about projected expenses. And he had to turn to those lawyers a couple of times.

So I just want to say that, on the Highway 413, the ways that these decisions around major infrastructure projects

and major capital projects are being made lack transparency. They lack authenticity. They lack basic financial due diligence. It's the people of this province that suffer, because while the government is busy making all these deals with all of these people who are going to make a ton of money, while they're distracted with this, they're ignoring their own Housing Affordability Task Force, which says, "This is how you build housing." Housing is so key. It is the key. It is the anchor to the economy, to education, to the environment—it is everything. And yet this government is so distracted with their deals.

I do want to say that, in addition to Highway 413 and the Bradford Bypass and Ontario Place and the "MZOs are us" by Mr. X—honestly, this reads like a House of Cards episode that nobody would even believe. It's so far-fetched. It is so embarrassing. Other people from other provinces are looking at Ontario and saying, "What the actual heck is going on there?" Especially when you follow the cast of characters.

I think that the mandate letters also were a fairly strong indicator of why this government is hiding from transparency. Who doesn't want to tell the people that you're elected to serve, "These are my goals. These are my aspirations as the Minister of Health, as the Minister of Transportation, as the Minister of Long-Term Care. This is what I want to get done for the people of this province." Why is that such a secret? It defies all logic.

But there's one thing for sure: This greenbelt scandal has destabilized and compromised trust in our democracy. And understanding how this even happened and how it was even possible that a staffer was able to move files in brown envelopes or little zip files—

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Thumb drives.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thumb drives, deleted emails. Our leader quite rightly pointed out that this resulted in jail time. I do know, of course, that the OPP has had to defer this case to the RCMP. I really want to say, I really hope that the RCMP has enough material—we certainly are doing our bit to help them out with that material, but there is certainly enough information out there which would cause one to do some more investigation.

This Auditor General's report is unprecedented, absolutely unprecedented. She has actually called it "indefensible" from this government. These are just a few of the headlines from her report:

"Government-Imposed Greenbelt Removals Proceeded Without Evidence They Were Needed to Meet Housing Goals"—no evidence.

"The Selection of Land Sites for Removal from the Greenbelt was Biased and Lacked Transparency".

"The 2022 Greenbelt Boundary Changes Were Inconsistent with the Greenbelt Plan's Vision and Goals..."

"The Proposal to Cabinet Did Not Clearly Explain How Land Sites Were Identified, Assessed and Selected..."

She also noted in 4.5 that "Most of the Land Removed from the Greenbelt May Not Be Ready for Housing Development in Time to Meet Government Goals."

And finally, the "Government's Exercise to Alter the Greenbelt Did Not Factor in Financial Impacts or Costs, or Clarify Fiscal Responsibilities."

So this was essentially: “Off the side of the Premier’s desk, we’re going to arrange for these carve-outs.” How else can you explain a staffer driving around Ontario, picking up the ice cream selection of greenbelt land plots that they want, and then all of a sudden it’s done? It’s done.

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The fact there are so many questions left unanswered, and the fact that the government is shutting down all attempts at greater transparency and accountability, is deeply concerning—not just for us as the opposition but for the people of this province.

There is this narrative that the Premier said last week. Right here in this House, he said this did not cost anybody a dime, not one public cent. Well, this clearly is a statement that has not been fully thought out, Madam Speaker, because the Ontario public service was working on this special project under the leadership of Ryan Amato, who the Premier hired, who I also want to point out was completely unqualified and not trained for the job and who now has resigned.

So in this instance—and if you walk it back a little bit, we’ve seen the Premier in that backroom promising to carve out some of the greenbelt. Then, in April 2021, he said, “I’m not touching the greenbelt,” and then in May 2021, it was alleged that then Silvio DeGasperi paid \$50 million for 100 acres of farmland in Vaughan that was never supposed to be touched. And get this—this is why there’s so many questions: It was alleged that to cover their purchase, they borrowed \$100 million from CIBC at an interest rate of 21% annually. It’s almost like they knew something would change to benefit them greatly. It’s outrageous. You can only take out a loan at that percentage when you know the payback is right around the corner. Borrowing at these rates reeks.

There’s so much material, it’s shocking. I mean, the financial impacts are real. There is no way in humanity that these developers who bought this land and then turned it over and are making hundreds of millions of dollars are just going to walk away. So the lawyers are going to be doing okay in the province of Ontario, but we still have a housing crisis.

I would urge the government to restore trust back in our democracy. Look at your own task force recommendations and invest in housing so that people have shelter. And I would urge you to open up this House to the people who were elected to serve, create this select committee and do the right thing—and for the people. Throw out those little banners that you have on all your desks if you’re not going to do this, because nobody is buying what you’re selling.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Further debate?

Hon. Rob Flack: I’ll use my time today to continue to speak about the dream of housing stability and home ownership for all Ontarians in this great province. I rise out of a sense of duty, purpose and urgency as I address this assembly in response to the opposition motion, not merely as a representative of this government, but as a voice echoing the hopes, dreams and frustrations of countless Ontarians who feel the weight of the housing crisis.

Let me be clear: While the opposition may be content with crafting and bringing motions, this government is

committed to forging solutions. Mr. Speaker, we bring action. We are the architects of action, the bearers of change—not change for the sake of change but as champions of the people’s will.

Let me take a moment to reflect on the past. For the last decade, the previous Liberal government, supported by the opposition today, had a front row seat and watched the housing crisis unfold, and what did they do? Respectfully, not much. What’s left? To use an agricultural term, the fields were fallow; the crop wasn’t planted, and we did not have a housing harvest that could benefit the people of this province.

But under this Premier and this government, we’ve chosen a different path. We don’t just identify problems, we roll up our sleeves and tackle them head on. While they watched, we worked; while they deliberated, we delivered; and while they hesitated, we’ve hustled and we’re getting it done because that’s the Ontario spirit, and that’s how we’re going to get houses built in this province.

I’d like to take this opportunity to reflect on what my ministry and our government have done to address the housing supply crisis since 2018. It’s been a journey of commitment, of relentless pursuits of solutions and an unwavering dedication to the people of this province.

Since 2018, we’ve been on the ground listening to the real stories of Ontarians. We’ve seen the struggles of families priced out of their dreams, young couples delaying life’s milestones and seniors grappling with skyrocketing rents. But there’s been a difference. We didn’t just listen, Speaker; we’ve acted. We’ve taken these stories, we’ve taken these pleas for help and turned them into policies and actionable steps that will really make a difference. And we will continue to act.

In 2021, we didn’t just set records, we shattered them. Record housing starts in 2021 and in 2022: That’s 100,000 families in each year with a new beginning, a new chapter. It’s 100,000 testimonies to our commitment to the people of Ontario. And in 2022, we kept that momentum going. Why? Because for us, every housing start isn’t just a statistic, it’s a story, Speaker. It’s a story of a child’s first steps, of a family’s gatherings, of dreams realized. It’s a testament to our government’s dedication to ensuring that every Ontarian has a place they can call home.

Mr. Speaker, make no mistake: There is still much work to do and, as associate minister, I’ll work around the clock with Premier Ford, Minister Calandra, our municipal partners and our community homebuilders to get shovels in the ground through every means necessary, through every means possible. We’re here to deliver results, and while the opposition may question our methods, they cannot question our commitment to get the job done.

As the Associate Minister of Housing, part of my new mandate is modular and attainable housing. This isn’t just a new direction; it’s a revolutionary approach to addressing the housing crisis. I’m excited to tackle this challenge, not only because it’s a new avenue, but it’s a tool in the tool box to help get shovels in the ground and people living in homes.

Innovation: Our goal is to construct modular and innovative housing at attainable prices, addressing the pressing need for affordable homes right across Ontario.

This is not just thinking outside the box, Speaker; we're redesigning the box altogether. Modular housing isn't just a buzzword for us, it's a game-changer, and again, it's a tool in the tool box to get the job done. By harnessing the power of off-site construction, we can speed up the building process, making homes more affordable and showcasing Ontario's manufacturing sector.

Let me tell you, this isn't just about building homes; it's about building communities, fostering economic growth and ensuring that Ontario leads the way in housing innovation. I think about the modular and attainable housing market along with job creation and economic growth, improving our labour opportunities, creating good-paying jobs, not only in the big cities but where all these modular manufacturers live throughout this province, where we can get good local jobs and get them fast. To achieve this vision, we will work closely with Infrastructure Ontario and the Ministry of Infrastructure. With the manufacturing might of Ontario—as it always has been and has continued to grow under this government—and the knowledge of industry experts, we will embark on a journey that encompasses both short-term and long-term objectives, supporting the development of modular attainable housing. We will do everything in our power create new provincial housing supply by leveraging the assets we have on hand. This collaborative effort will help us address the housing crisis as well as foster economic growth.

Our government's plan to develop an attainable housing program, as publicly committed in the fall of 2022 as part of More Homes Built Faster, serves as the foundation of this initiative. We are also committed to further exploring modular housing and other innovative construction options, as announced in the Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act. Building these successes will scale up to develop an attainable housing program, encompassing both public and private land across all regions of Ontario. By working together, we can reshape the housing landscape in Ontario, making home ownership attainable for all and positioning our province as a leader in this important sector.

Speaker, we recognize that we must build housing that meets the needs and budgets of all Ontarians. We recognize that housing isn't a one-size-fits-all solution; that's why we're investing in supportive housing, ensuring that every Ontarian, regardless of their circumstances, has a roof over their head. We're streamlining processes, cutting through the bureaucratic maze and ensuring that those who need support get it and get it fast. I would again point out my visit last week to St. Thomas and the Indwell announcement—45 spaces, with \$1.2 million in funding given. Previous to that, \$3 million in capital support—a great initiative and I think one that is going to be replicated throughout the province for the days, months and years to come.

1710

We heard the calls for help from those battling mental health issues; from our seniors, who have given so much to our province; and from those that need a helping hand just to get back on their feet. Navigating this complex network can be challenging, especially for individuals with diverse needs and their families. That is why my

ministry is diligently collaborating with the Ministries of Health and Children, Community and Social Services to enhance and streamline the supportive housing system—again, a big part of our plan and important as part of the Affordable Homes and Good Jobs Act we presented this morning.

Together, we have embarked on several initiatives aimed at improving Ontario's supportive housing system. These include developing a common pre-screening approach to ensure individuals are directed towards appropriate housing and supports. We're also working towards establishing local integrated supportive housing planning requirements, promoting coordination between the housing, health and community service sectors to provide client services with complex needs.

Additionally, we have conducted a cost avoidance review in supportive housing, which will provide valuable insights into how supportive housing can help us reduce the reliance on high-cost provincial systems such as hospitals. In line with our commitment to action, we have made significant investments in supportive housing through the Ontario Social Services Relief Fund. Service managers and Indigenous program administrators have utilized this funding to create approximately 1,200 units of supportive housing, a remarkable achievement that is already making a tangible difference.

Speaker, all of this is to say that while the opposition raises doubts, we're raising roofs, and we're raising them for seniors, newcomers, students, first-time homebuyers and those who need supportive housing.

We have actively sought input from key stakeholders and partners across the province by hosting supportive housing round tables. Since being appointed to my new role, I have already met with supportive housing partners like Indwell, the Learning Enrichment Foundation and the House of Friendship to build strong partnerships across these sectors.

Again, I give a shout-out to our friends at Indwell doing a wonderful job. I believe they've now got 24 buildings, facilities, throughout the province, and growing, with 1,200 tenants in these spaces. I know if everyone has had a chance to meet Mr. Jeff Neven, the CEO, he's worth talking to. I have talked to all communities, and any community in this province, if you have a need for supportive housing and to work with someone like Indwell, it certainly is worth the time to speak with that group—it's very, very impressive—along with many others, but in particular, I was with him last week and two weeks before. He's a very impressive individual indeed.

We've also stepped up to ensure that Ontarians at risk of experiencing homelessness have access to safe and stable housing. When we talk about homelessness, we're talking about our neighbours, our friends and our fellow Ontarians. And we're not just talking; we are investing. As I said this morning, Speaker, over \$700 million will be invested this year to ensure that no Ontarian has to spend a night without shelter. That's up \$200 million, a little over—a great percentage increase and a great commitment to our community folks who need to fight this crisis day in and day out. This substantial increase in funding will enable us to provide caring assistance and resources to

many more individuals and families who are at risk of experiencing homelessness.

But we're not stopping there, Speaker; we're also investing in programs and initiatives that address the root causes of homelessness, from mental health supports to job training programs. Projects are already under way across the province to expand supportive housing options for those experiencing homelessness, mental health challenges, addiction, violence or poverty. This program is a result of true innovation. It is an amalgamation of the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative, Homes for Good and the Strong Communities Rent Supplement Program, all great programs and working well.

We did this so Ontarians are not just seen as numbers but as people in need of assistance, to whom we can provide tangible support through initiatives such as supportive housing and rent supplements or by connecting with services like Ontario Works or health care providers.

We are leveraging every asset, every piece of crown land, every opportunity to ensure that homelessness becomes a thing of the past. We will continue to implore the federal government to fulfill its responsibility in supporting municipalities and asylum claimants.

We recognize our efforts cannot be alone as we address this magnitude. I think everybody knows that Ontario is underfunded by \$480 million for housing and homelessness under the federal National Housing Strategy. We need to get that funding coming our way, and that is why we continue to advocate to the federal government for our fair share of homelessness funding. We acknowledge that there is still much more work to be done. We will continue to advocate for increased federal funding and explore innovative solutions to ensure that every person in Ontario has a place to call home.

Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of speaking about Bill 134, the Affordable Homes and Good Jobs Act, this morning, but let me reiterate: This isn't just legislation; it's a commitment—a commitment to families like the ones across my great riding of Elgin–Middlesex–London, to newcomers across Ontario that we're on their side. We're cutting red tape, boosting construction and ensuring that the dream of home ownership is within the reach of every Ontarian.

Let me give you an example, Speaker. The folks I'm working with in my ministry now, young people, all have a dream to own their own home, and not one of them is able to do it. I think back to when I bought my first house in the early 1980s, I thought it was pretty daunting; it was crazy. Interest rates were 19%. I heard the minister here talk about when his parents bought their home. When I bought my first home, I was a young guy, and it was 19%. It was daunting, but I could still make the down payment. I could still make the monthly payment work, pay my taxes, pay my insurance and live decently. It was scary, but fortunately, I took out an open mortgage and, within a year, interest rates had dropped to 12%. I thought I had manna from heaven. I was living the dream.

Unfortunately, today, we think interest rates are high at 6%, 7%. Relatively speaking, what we've seen, at least in my life, throughout business and mortgages, they're not that high, but they are high with respect to the debt people

are carrying or the debt they have to carry to at least own a home and make the payments. So it's not fair. We have to do better, and this government is focusing on making sure we do better and we get everybody in a home that they deserve. Because while it was tough back 40 years ago, it's even tougher today. I know there's a few in the Legislature that have experienced those times, but today, it is even tougher.

Through our proposed legislation, we're paving the pathway to affordable and attainable home ownership for everyone. We're not just setting targets; we're hitting them, and while others prefer to dwell on the past, we're focused on the future. For too long, Speaker, decades of inaction and red tape have made housing unaffordable for far too many people. That's why, since taking office, our government has taken bold steps to cut red tape and increase the housing supply. From our housing action plans to cutting development fees, we're building the most homes we have in over 30 years. Again, two years in a row, we've had record starts. We had more starts this year in terms of percentage increase in numbers built than any other province in the country.

But again, we know that more needs to be done. Too many families are stuck renting month to month, with no hope of ownership. That's why, through the Affordable Homes and Good Jobs Act, we're proposing changes to boost affordable construction while supporting job creation. And both of those complement each other.

We're also proposing changes to attract investments like Volkswagen's electric vehicle plant coming to St. Thomas, creating thousands of jobs. This will strengthen communities as we build infrastructure and homes for the future.

Again, last week, in and around London and surrounding communities, I had a chance to meet with many individuals. We talked about the jobs coming to southwestern Ontario, not only through London, St. Thomas and Windsor with Stellantis—we certainly have great economic prospects ahead of us. Shovels are in the ground. The dirt is being moved in St. Thomas. It's fascinating to see, but it's also daunting because when you think 3,000 people are coming to work directly there, 1,000 at least to build the plant over the next three years, we've got to get shovels in the ground and houses built. So we're looking at every opportunity there is throughout the province, throughout southwestern Ontario, and directly around the St. Thomas plant to find available land, available builders and available opportunities, be it single family homes, small, tiny homes or modular homes to get shovels in the ground to get these homes built so people can afford to have a place to stay and live.

1720

And it is not only the 3,000 jobs. There are 30,000 tertiary jobs coming along with this investment. It's fantastic. And it is not just going to be in southwestern Ontario; it's going to be in your communities. It's everywhere, so we need to get shovels in the ground—1.5 million homes by 2031. That's our commitment. It remains.

Complementing these changes, our government is consulting on streamlining processes at the Ontario Land

Tribunal to resolve disputes faster. That's going to help as well. We are also working with municipalities to increase procurement collaboration for savings. I talked to the mayor of Woodstock today about setting targets on things that we need to do to get shovels in the ground faster in Oxford county and we're confident that will work.

Through these coordinated proposals, we are eliminating further cost to build while enabling job growth. Combined with our past successes that have seen record housing starts, we're getting closer to hitting that target—or being on speed, at least, to hit 1.5 million homes by 2031. Most importantly, it means more hard-working Ontario families will have an affordable place to call home—and, again, the key there is “affordable.” I come back to when I brought my home. Yes, it was always difficult, but nothing like the daunting challenge today.

In closing, let me be clear: We acknowledge that much more is required to accomplish our housing targets, absolutely. And while others may raise doubts, we are still going to focus on raising roofs for the people of this province. Every decision we make, every policy we implement, is driven by a singular goal: to improve the lives of Ontarians. That includes letting them have the opportunity to housing stability and owning their own home.

We're not just setting targets, Speaker; we're hitting them. We're not just making policy; we're delivering results. I come from a world where you got measured monthly, quarterly, yearly, and I am used to that. I am used to that accountability, and I know this government reflects that as well, too, and will remain accountable to hitting 1.5 million homes by 2031. We won't stop until every Ontarian has a place to call home.

And I say this to those that say no: Join us in collaboration. Join us on this mission and let's work together to build a brighter, more prosperous Ontario for all, because, at the end of the day, it really isn't about politics. It's about building houses. It's about getting people into their own homes. The people of Ontario deserve nothing but the best, so support the Affordable Homes and Good Jobs Act. It's a great step towards getting this done. Let's work together to build a brighter and more prosperous future. And, Speaker, we will be bold, we will be innovative, and we'll get it done for everyone to have a positive journey on their pathway to housing stability and home ownership.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Further debate?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: It really is a sad afternoon when we are talking about the many scandals that have happened in this province of Ontario—the gas plant scandal, air Ornge—but what we saw with those scandals was an appropriate legislative response.

I want to add to this the Airbus affair, which refers to allegations of secret commissions paid to Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and other members of his ministry in exchange for then-crown corporation Air Canada's purchase of a large number of Airbus jets. This resulted in a RCMP investigation. It resulted in much media coverage. There was an ethics committee struck, and there was also the Oliphant commission inquiry.

This is the kind of response that we need when there is such suspect behaviour on the part of governments, Liberal and Conservative alike.

The Premier was asked recently, “What's the worst scandal in the province of Ontario?” and he was trying to say that the greenbelt scandal wasn't quite as bad as the gas plant scandal. It was a terrible spectacle to watch the Premier decide which was the worse scandal in Ontario. But I would say, perhaps he forgot his outrage at Kathleen Wynne when she had the Fair Hydro Plan, because, at the time, the Premier said that this was the biggest political cover-up in Ontario's history.

And this government—in October 2018, one of the first things they did when they came to power was, they struck a Select Committee on Financial Transparency. They did this. Members of that committee now—the Chair was the member for Brampton South, who's now the Minister of Transportation. The Vice-Chair was Ontario's Attorney General, the current Attorney General. The members from this government included the chief government whip; the member for Sault Ste. Marie, who is in the House; Roman Baber—remember?—the previous member for York Centre; we had the member for Eglinton–Lawrence. These were the current government members who thought that it was important to strike a select committee, and I agreed. The purpose of this committee was “to investigate and report on the accounting practices, decision-making and policy objectives of the previous government or any other aspect of the report that the select committee deems relevant. The public has a right to know the true state of the province's finances and demand accountability from the government.” Sound familiar?

“The committee hopes that the current government will adopt the recommendations and commit to ensuring and maintaining transparency....” This is what we're asking for today.

This committee—we got tens of thousands of emails. We subpoenaed the secretary of the cabinet, the Deputy Minister of the Environment. We subpoenaed Kathleen Wynne herself, who testified for two and a half hours, and the former Minister of Energy Glenn Thibeault. I spent the better part of four months in this committee getting to the bottom of this—all these members did this. And these are the kinds of legislative responses that we expect that your government would undertake. But despite this, despite this government's outrage, we have a government here that has clearly signalled that they're going to vote against our suggestion that they strike a select committee on the restoration of the greenbelt; they said that they're going to vote against it, quite clearly.

At the time, Doug Ford said in a speech, “We will demand answers about where the money went. A lot of the Liberals got rich, really, really rich, under Kathleen Wynne and off the backs of the taxpayers of Ontario.”

“The purpose of our committee was to ask a lot of the questions the people of Ontario wanted answers to, and I'm confident we asked those questions,” said Ross Romano, the senior Progressive Conservative MPP, about the committee.

So this government has a record. You've done this, just five years ago, when you were outraged by the scandal of the Ontario Liberals. But suddenly you've fallen silent when it comes to your own dodgy dealings.

Despite all of this, despite all the province's outrage, despite the fact that this is the right thing to do, we've heard that the government House leader is going to vote against this. And you can bet, if the House leader says that he's going to vote against this, all these PC members are going to tuck in beside him and not support what is the right thing.

So I will say, you've done it before—you sat on a committee, you tried to get to the bottom of what is important to the people of the province of Ontario. My question to you now is, what changed? Why are you not committed to transparency and accountability now that you are in the hot seat?

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Further debate?

Mr. Matthew Rae: Speaker, I am proud to rise in this chamber, as a member of the government caucus, under the leadership of Premier Ford. Our government has taken historic measures to strengthen the path to home ownership for each and every Ontarian, no matter whether they were born in Ontario or they came to our great province. And frankly, I think we need to recognize that this government has done all of this without any support from the Liberals or NDP. After all, this is the same NDP that propped up, as mentioned earlier, the previous Liberal government—and they outlined their scandals ad nauseam today; I appreciated the history lesson on Ornge. I was in university at the time.

We are taking action on the housing supply crisis, to begin with. For me, this is personal. As a younger MPP, I know all too well the struggles that the younger generations of Ontarians face in trying to get into the home market. I hear about it right across this province, no matter where I go—in my own community, as well as other communities that I travel to. The housing crisis is not just a Toronto issue; it's impacting thousands of people across Ontario, from the coast of Lake Erie to the coast of the Hudson Bay. That's why our government ran on a promise to build 1.5 million new homes by 2031, and we were given an overwhelming mandate last June to get that job done. We also received a massive mandate in the region of Peel, where we're going to build Highway 413. We haven't stopped, and we won't stop, getting things done for the people of Ontario.

1730

The last two years, as the Associate Minister of Housing referenced in his remarks, we have seen record housing starts in Ontario, including in the region of Waterloo.

Interjection.

Mr. Matthew Rae: The member for Waterloo is heckling me right now—addressing recognizing gaps in middle-income housing, supportive housing and modular housing. We're taking every opportunity and implementing every tool to ensure that Ontarians have a place to call home that meets their price point. This is so important. Last year alone, we had over half a million new immigrants come to

Ontario—and that doesn't include the hundreds of thousands more who will move here from other provinces, or international students who come here to study at our world-class colleges and universities.

The Premier said it before—and I'll remind everyone in the chamber today: We need a wartime effort to build as many homes as possible. As our province grows and as people come here seeking a better life, we as a community need to fight to ensure that the dream of home ownership is protected for the next generation and for all those who come to Ontario.

While this side of the House and the middle over there will fight for people's path to home ownership, the opposition continues to drag their feet on helping to house Ontarians. The members opposite said we held our housing supply action plans back five years—I find it very rich, from the members opposite who voted no on the four housing supply action plans we've brought to this House so far; I hope they vote for the next one we bring in. I really do hope they vote for the greenbelt bill we're going to bring in to codify the boundaries of the greenbelt and add to the greenbelt. Time will tell.

Speaker, we've made it easier for homeowners to create additional residential units above garages, basements or in laneways; again, the opposition voted against it. We streamlined modular unit residential building approvals; they voted against it. It seems to be a pattern, everyone.

We took steps to bolster consumer protection around purchasing new homes—it's a big life decision; they voted against it.

Every time we take steps to build homes, to protect tenants and streamline services, the NDP and Liberals stand against it. In doing so, they stand against a younger person just wanting to move out of their parents' basement; they stand against the aging couple looking to downsize but who can't afford to stay in their community where they raised their children and where their children and grandchildren live now; they stand against the next generation of Ontarians just wanting a chance at a normal life. This government will stand with those Ontarians—will stand with those young people, will stand with those seniors who want to downsize. We proudly stand with everyone looking for a path to home ownership, and we'll continue to do so.

As I alluded to, we have tabled multiple housing supply action bills, and we'll continue to do so and consult with our municipal partners, homebuilders and other stakeholders across the riding. Our government has already delivered on four of these bills since 2018, and we committed in an election to introduce one in each year of our four-year mandate. We will do that, demonstrating our commitment and resolve to get 1.5 million homes, at least, built by 2031.

As was referred to, I believe, earlier today in debate on Bill 134, there's no silver bullet to the housing supply crisis. We're doing the hard work that is necessary and working with our partners to fill our housing mandate. As circumstances and pressures change, we're also committed to working with our municipal partners, with community builders, with—

Ms. Catherine Fife: Bill 23.

Mr. Matthew Rae: She talks about Bill 23.

In fact, this new Minister of Housing—when he came in, the first thing he did with our municipal partners was, he went back out to them and said, “We have 75 recommendations from our housing task force—we’re on 23 partly or almost completed. Please tell us how we reach those goals moving forward.” I know my municipal partners appreciated that opportunity to submit that feedback. They are submitting that feedback because we are listening to our municipal partners and we’re working with our municipal partners.

Interjection.

Mr. Matthew Rae: Even Waterloo.

And as we do so, our government is always looking for better ways to ease the pressures on some of our most vulnerable communities.

Through our reinforcement of our supportive housing initiatives, an extra \$200 million a year in the Homelessness Prevention Program, \$700 million total—historic investments, which, again, our municipal partners asked for, and we listened to them.

We are confident we can build homes that meet the broad range of needs at every price point that works for residents.

We recognize that 1.5 million homes is not just a number, but it’s an offer of stability and opportunity for those families who will come to occupy them. A home is a place to start a family, to make memories, to see your children take their first steps, to clean up after your pet, to learn and grow within a community. Every Ontarian deserves that opportunity, and our government is here to make that happen.

This past summer, I had an opportunity, on behalf of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, to make a few announcements across Ontario, where we’re putting real investments into supportive housing through the government of Ontario Social Services Relief Fund. I was in Paris, Ontario—not Paris, France, unfortunately, but Paris, Ontario is great, as well—with MPP Bouma and mayors Kevin Davis and David Bailey to announce \$340,000 to help create 15 affordable housing units, to support individuals and families with a variety of accessible needs, those who have experienced domestic violence, and people of Indigenous ancestries. This is very important to ensuring, again, that all Ontarians have a place to call their own.

Just a few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to announce a similar investment in my own riding, in Stratford, in one of the communities that I have the great honour of representing in this place. The governments of Ontario and Canada are providing more than \$3 million to build 33 affordable housing units in Stratford, and our government is providing an additional \$1 million through the social services relief fund to create six additional affordable units. I know the chattering classes on Twitter like to say, “Oh, it’s the federal government,” but in this case, the province is actually contributing more to these projects than our federal partners. Speaker, I don’t have to tell you what it means for these communities. While they are going to be able to welcome more individuals and families to their communities, they are also being given the tools to

ensure their most vulnerable residents are looked after in a way that is comfortable and affordable.

We know we have to build homes, and that’s why we’re also here to stand up for the little guy and girl, the members of our communities who have been priced out of the housing and real estate markets because of the decades of Liberal and NDP mismanagement and carelessness. The Liberals added mountains of red tape to the community building process during their time in government, and the only problem the NDP had with this is that they didn’t add more.

We’ve talked a lot about red tape here in this chamber, and all too often it may lose its meaning to the members of the opposition, but that red tape is exactly what stands in the way of young families purchasing a starter home or a family of a new Canadian getting into their first apartment or home. The red tape has real consequences, and under the current circumstances of a generational housing crisis, we just can’t afford these consequences. It’s not going to be easy. Since 2018, this government has worked day in and day out to jump-start our economy from the grinding halt the Liberals and the NDP brought it to. We’ve brought in record investments and job creation to the province of Ontario. We’ve got job offers, but we need the people for those jobs.

We’re thrilled to welcome hundreds of thousands of new Ontarians each and every year—including more than 500,000 last year, as I alluded to earlier. We need them to come to Ontario to join our workforce because that means our small businesses are growing, our tech and innovation sectors are growing—the great innovation happening in the region of Waterloo is growing—and we’re going to be able to better compete on a global stage, and that will be able to generate more wealth for our communities. But that doesn’t happen without new homes.

This past summer, many Torontonians saw the unfortunate reality many immigrants and asylum seekers face upon arriving to Canada. Many of them had nowhere to go but the streets of downtown Toronto.

Last month, our government announced an additional \$42 million through the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit program to support the city of Toronto and other impacted municipalities in ensuring newcomers to Ontario have the supports they need to build a new life here in communities that are safe, welcoming and full of opportunities. Mayor Chow came to the table in good faith, and two levels of government were able to work together to address a pressing issue in Toronto. I wish the NDP would show the same commitment in helping newcomers find a home.

About a month and a half ago, I had the opportunity to meet many municipal partners at the Association of Municipalities Ontario annual conference. I know members of the opposition were also there, but obviously many government colleagues were there as well. I met communities—from St. Catharines to Sioux Lookout, the region of Waterloo and Kirkland Lake. Municipalities across the province are ready to build, and our government is constantly ready to hear feedback and advice from our municipal partners to ensure that we are all on the same page and on the right track towards meeting our commitments.

1740

Municipalities large and small, right across Ontario, are fully on board with our government's plan to build at least 1.5 million new homes by 2031. There is no way around it—for our communities to grow and prosper, we need to make room for more people, and that's a good thing.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Transportation and Ministry of Infrastructure, we're unlocking new opportunities to build our communities. Through the Transit-Oriented Communities Program, our government is ensuring residents are served conveniently and comfortably within their communities, reinforcing communities alongside major transit corridors, including subway and LRT lines. By building communities along these corridors, we are working to increase transit ridership, stimulate local economic development, and most importantly, we are increasing housing supply. When we build communities around convenient transit corridors, we're providing a sense of stability and belonging for residents; we're building a place where people can work, play and raise a family. These priorities are so important for the people of Ontario. Far too often, when parents are stuck in gridlock trying to get home to their families after work, they are missing out on time spent with their families—and that's what a community is supposed to be all about. But we also know that not everyone can or wants to live in an urban core.

I was born and raised in Harriston, Ontario. You probably don't know where that is. It's a very small town in Wellington county.

I can say—I live in Mitchell now—that growing up and building a life in any of our vibrant rural communities in Ontario is truly an exceptional experience. We are truly blessed to live in Ontario.

The rural way of life is something that we must protect and cherish for our next generation, but it is also something that we must preserve for new Canadians to join and be a part of. The housing crisis is not just something experienced in the greater Toronto area; it extends to every community and every small town in this province.

I speak to young people regularly in my community, and I hear them saying they want to stay and raise a family in the communities where they grew up, but it's becoming harder and harder to find a home that they can provide at a price point that they can afford.

We provide incentives to large municipalities across the province through a variety of programs—but most recently through the Building Faster Fund, which is \$1.2 billion devoted to rewarding municipalities for reaching and exceeding their annual housing targets. Along with these incentives, we've also allocated 10% of that program, or roughly \$120 million, to smaller municipalities that have not been allocated housing targets. I know our rural and smaller municipalities appreciate this because, unfortunately, under the federal Rapid Housing Initiative, they do not qualify and would not be able to compete with the larger urban centres in Canada. So we're really trying to address the missing middle with the funding gaps through that by providing these funds in a percentage of the Building Faster Fund, and I know we'll continue to consult with our rural and northern municipalities on how

to best utilize this for themselves. This will allow small towns in Perth and Wellington counties as well as other small municipalities right across the province to increase their capacity to service new homes and build new communities.

Every time I get to rise in this House, as a young person from rural Ontario, to speak about our growing needs of the next generation, it's an incredible honour. The great thing about Ontario, whether your family has been here for generations or if you immigrated here last week, is that the opportunities are endless; if you work hard, you can achieve anything. Under the leadership of Premier Ford and his Minister of Economic Development, we have worked hard to ensure that that dream is still alive and well in Ontario. By attracting the good manufacturing jobs back to Ontario, the 300,000 that left under the former Liberal and NDP-propped-up government—attracting 700,000 new jobs since 2018, good-paying jobs. And people having a job to provide for their families is so important. We will continue to do that, moving forward, in everything we can do—but we had to bring it back, as I alluded to earlier in my remarks, from what was left when former Premier Wynne left office in 2018. We had to bring it back from the brink.

They have talked about the scandals under the former Liberal government as well today, but we can go back in time a little more, when there was a Rae government—not me, but a Bob Rae government. I was only zero at the time when he came into office, so I don't remember much—but I read it in the history books. I find it ironic that they refer to this—that we're not building up housing, but they vote against every housing supply action bill we bring to this place. When they held government—not the balance of power—three things happened: We lost jobs in Ontario, we lost businesses in Ontario, and we lost homes in Ontario.

We are not going to return to the Rae days of Bob Rae. We're going to continue to build 1.5 million homes to ensure that my colleagues can find a place to live, new Canadians can find a place to live—young people like Brampton North over there can find a place to live and own a property. We're going to continue to get it done for the people of Ontario.

They talk about taking time away from when they could bring forward legislation to make housing more affordable, to get more homes built—and they don't do that.

They already highlighted—at a committee before this House, we'll hear and study the Auditor General's report, at the public accounts committee. This committee will hear that report. That is in their mandate, and they will discuss this report at that committee.

I also find it very rich, from the opposition—when they want to regulate Airbnb, essentially. I will let the opposition know that municipalities can actually bring in a bylaw already that can regulate Airbnb, and some have. So it's not the province's mandate to regulate Airbnb. But maybe under an NDP government, they'll want to regulate Airbnb.

Mr. Graham McGregor: They never met a regulation they didn't like.

Mr. Matthew Rae: I know—they like a regulation they didn't like; they like a tax they didn't like.

Speaker, I'll conclude by saying that we're facing a generational housing crisis. Our government is up for the challenge and won't back down. The NDP members can stand in this chamber every day and make excuses for why they don't want to build, but our government will gladly do what is right and continue to get it done for Ontarians—Ontarians in Harriston, Stratford, downtown Toronto, Brampton, Mississauga and Thunder Bay. We will continue to get it done for the people of Ontario. We'll continue to build homes, to ensure that we build transit, to ensure that we build Ontario for this generation and all future generations.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I'll now turn the floor back to the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Well, what are we debating here? We've asked the government to vote to support our motion to strike a select committee, to create an open and transparent process, because we know that this government's preferential treatment of their insider, speculator friends has cast a shadow over everything, including the government's own plans: things like the building of the 413, the other urban boundary expansions that they have planned, the dreaded Ontario Place, which is a 95-year lease and \$650-million subsidization of an Austrian luxury spa company—go figure—health care privatization, and of course the stalled P3 transit plans that are under way.

A select committee would allow the people of this province to hear from key members, from other witnesses, many of whom have, up to this point, refused and lawyered up. It would allow us to compel documents being recovered. It would again clear the air over this massive scandal.

I want to thank the member from Waterloo for her reference to the House of Cards, because you might possibly say that I couldn't possibly comment. I know that people out there across the province, they want to know what, they want to know when, they want to know how—how did multiple developers know to get in touch with Mr. Amato at the BILD dinner? Why did Minister Clark step away from his responsibilities? What gave him the impression he needed to keep arm's length from this?

People had high hopes for this government, I think, when they were originally elected—really. They were hoping for change. People voted for change; that's fair. And now we know, and we all hear across this province, how deeply disappointed Ontarians are in the conduct of this government. Trust is at an all-time low. The RCMP is considering an investigation. Two ministers have resigned in shame, and one hightailed it to the exit. Trust needs to be restored. This government has an opportunity to clear the air. That work is not going to happen in the dark.

I urge the members opposite once again: Join us. Let's do this work together. Let's restore some integrity to government and to our democracy.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): MPP Stiles has moved opposition day motion number 1.

It is the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members, there will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1751 to 1801.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): If the members could please take their seats.

MPP Stiles moved opposition day number 1. All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Andrew, Jill	Hazell, Andrea	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Jama, Sarah	Stiles, Marit
Burch, Jeff	Kernaghan, Terence	Tabuns, Peter
Fife, Catherine	Mamakwa, Sol	Taylor, Monique
Fraser, John	Mantha, Michael	Vanthof, John
French, Jennifer K.	Rakocevic, Tom	Vaugeois, Lise
Gélinas, France	Sattler, Peggy	West, Jamie
Harden, Joel	Shaw, Sandy	Wong-Tam, Kristyn

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Anand, Deepak	Hardeman, Ernie	Quinn, Nolan
Bailey, Robert	Harris, Mike	Rae, Matthew
Barnes, Patrice	Holland, Kevin	Riddell, Brian
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Jones, Sylvia	Romano, Ross
Bouma, Will	Jones, Trevor	Sabawy, Sheref
Bresee, Ric	Jordan, John	Sandhu, Amarjot
Byers, Rick	Kanapathi, Logan	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Calandra, Paul	Kerzner, Michael S.	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Khanjin, Andrea	Saunderson, Brian
Cho, Stan	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Smith, Dave
Coe, Lorne	Learidi, Anthony	Smith, David
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Graydon
Dixon, Jess	Lumsden, Neil	Smith, Laura
Dowie, Andrew	MacLeod, Lisa	Surma, Kinga
Downey, Doug	Martin, Robin	Tangri, Nina
Dunlop, Jill	McCarthy, Todd J.	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Fedeli, Victor	McGregor, Graham	Tibollo, Michael A.
Flack, Rob	Mulroney, Caroline	Williams, Charmaine A.
Ford, Michael D.	Parsa, Michael	Yakubski, John
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Piccini, David	
Gill, Parm	Pierre, Natalie	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 24; the nays are 61.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I declare the motion lost.

Motion negatived.

Report continues in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative: Hon. / L'hon. Ted Arnott

Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Deputy Clerk / Sous-Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Meghan Stenson, Christopher Tyrell, Wai Lam (William) Wong

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Tim McGough

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Barnes, Patrice (PC)	Ajax	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Bowman, Stephanie (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Brady, Bobbi Ann (IND)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Bresee, Ric (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Byers, Rick (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement Minister of Legislative Affairs / Ministre des Affaires législatives
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough- Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)	Willowdale	Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds— Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Dixon, Jess (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Dowie, Andrew (PC)	Windsor—Tecumseh	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Flack, Hon. / L'hon. Rob (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associé du Logement

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario Premier / Premier ministre Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Michael D. (PC)	York South—Weston / York-Sud—Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiques et du Multiculturalisme
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Hon. / L'hon. Parm (PC)	Milton	Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Grewal, Hardeep Singh (PC)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hazell, Andrea (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Holland, Kevin (PC)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Hsu, Ted (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Jama, Sarah (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre
Jones, Trevor (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Jordan, John (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Ke, Vincent (IND)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
Khanjin, Hon. / L'hon Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	
Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean	
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Mantha, Michael (IND)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
McCarthy, Hon. / L'hon. Todd J. (PC)	Durham	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises
McCrimmon, Karen (LIB)	Kanata—Carleton	
McGregor, Graham (PC)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York	
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)	Timmins	Minister of Mines / Ministre des Mines
Quinn, Nolan (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Kaleed (IND)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Northern Development / Ministre du Développement du Nord Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Saunderson, Brian (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shamji, Adil (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	Deputy Speaker / Vice-Présidente Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Small Business / Ministre associée déléguée aux Petites Entreprises
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Hon. / L'hon Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	Associate Minister of Transportation / Ministre associé des Transports
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Vaugeois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity / Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes
Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Vacant	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	