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**Official Report
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(Hansard)**

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des débats
(Hansard)**

HE-50

**Standing Committee
on Heritage, Infrastructure
and Cultural Policy**

Get It Done Act, 2024

**Comité permanent du
patrimoine, de l'infrastructure
et de la culture**

Loi de 2024
pour passer à l'action

1st Session
43rd Parliament

Thursday 11 April 2024

1^{re} session
43^e législature

Jeudi 11 avril 2024

Chair: Laurie Scott
Clerk: Isaiah Thorning

Présidente : Laurie Scott
Greffier : Isaiah Thorning

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON HERITAGE,
INFRASTRUCTURE
AND CULTURAL POLICY**

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DU PATRIMOINE,
DE L'INFRASTRUCTURE
ET DE LA CULTURE**

Thursday 11 April 2024

Jeudi 11 avril 2024

The committee met at 0900 in committee room 1.

GET IT DONE ACT, 2024

LOI DE 2024 POUR PASSER À L'ACTION

Consideration of the following bill:

Bill 162, An Act to enact the Protecting Against Carbon Taxes Act, 2024 and amend various Acts / Projet de loi 162, Loi édictant la Loi de 2024 sur la protection contre les taxes sur le carbone et modifiant diverses lois.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Good morning, everyone. The Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy will now come to order. We are here to conduct clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 162, An Act to enact the Protecting Against Carbon Taxes Act, 2024 and amend various Acts. We are joined by staff from legislative counsel, Hansard, the ministry, and broadcast and recording. Please wait until I recognize you before starting to speak, and as always, all comments should go through the Chair.

Are there any questions before we begin? Seeing none, the Clerk has distributed the amendment package to all members and staff electronically. Are there any comments or questions to any section or schedule of the bill, and if so, to which section? Seeing none, we will now begin clause-by-clause consideration of the bill.

Bill 162 is comprised of three sections, which enact six schedules. In order to deal with the bill in an orderly fashion, I suggest we postpone these three sections in order to dispose of the schedules first. Is there agreement on this? I see agreement.

Schedule 1: We're going to start with the Environmental Assessment Act. In schedule 1, section 1, we do have an amendment from MPP Clancy. If you would please read the amendment into the record.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I move that section 1 of schedule 1 to the bill be amended by striking out subsection 1(7) of the Environmental Assessment Act and substituting the following:

“Acquisition of property

“(7) Under this act, a reference to acquiring property or rights in property is a reference to acquiring the property or rights in property by purchase, lease or otherwise, but not by expropriation.”

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Is there any debate? MPP Clancy.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: Yes. Expropriation should be a last resort. By changing the legislation, it would fast-track expropriation and have assessments come after, which experts say would mean that not only would families be more negatively affected—we could expropriate land that isn't appropriate for building a highway, for example—but we could also take too much land, then, and that would cost the taxpayer.

There's a variety of reasons why expropriation isn't appropriate for this particular clause, and I think there's also some concern that we're now deeming highways as low risk. I don't know if any of you have stood beside a highway, but I think, especially if I was a salamander, a highway wouldn't be considered low risk by any stretch. There's lots of debris. There's noise. It's quite a heavy-impact type of reason to expropriate land.

That's why we feel the environmental assessment needs to be part, before the expropriation process, to make sure that we're not doing harm. I always say: Measure twice, cut once. So that's the rationale to not expropriate land in this type of clause.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Further debate?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I'll speak to this as well. I know that when we have heard from the farmers of Wilmot, they are completely in the dark as to why and who is looking to expropriate their property. There's suspicion that schedule 1 of this bill will expediate expropriation of farmland—they're talking about 770 acres of class 1 farmland. There are rumours—because everything is happening in secret—that it will be up to 1,200 acres.

So I think that whether or not the farmers in Wilmot are having their property unwillingly expropriated from them, whether it's to do with schedule 1, I think it's an important example of a scenario where farmers could lose their land or be forced to sell their land potentially to a developer who now has acquired land that is way more valuable than what the farmers were compensated for that.

So I think that the government already has extraordinary powers to expropriate, so to enhance that, to fast-track expropriation, particularly when we're talking about potential wetlands, green lands and farmland, I think that that's not appropriate, and I support the notion that it should not be by expropriation.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Further debate?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Good morning, everyone, and I wholeheartedly support this amendment. It's just

a little tweaking, so I don't see what the problem would be and vote against this. And in the last COP conference in Montreal, the UN conference, everyone signed on to the pledge to work on reversing and mitigating biodiversity loss by 2030, and that was us, too, right? Canadians signed on for that, so we want to walk the talk and we want to support this amendment.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Further debate?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I think I'd like to make comments on the fact that environmental assessment needs to happen before—the government does have all kinds of powers for expropriation. The environment right now is a major problem all over the globe, and for us not to take that into consideration before—the government has a right to expropriate; we all know that—I think is just putting the cart before the horse, and it's also making people feel, quite frankly, suspicious about why that specific step would be missed.

If the government has the right to expropriate, which—we're not arguing that part; it's been done historically in the past. But there is the right way to bring people in and give people confidence that the environment is being respected. So I think skipping that step is wrong, and there should be an environmental assessment before any expropriation happens in the province of Ontario.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Further debate?

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I just want to make one more comment, because I have had chats with the farmers in Wilmot, and it shows that, without a rigorous process, we are causing a lot of havoc in people's lives. The impact that this has had on intergenerational families and the future of farming in our region is dramatic. I don't know if folks over there have had a chance to talk to people whose land has been expropriated, but when it's done in this kind of way, without a fulsome data-driven rationale, we could be doing harm for no reason, right? Perhaps that we get the land and we find that it's gravel and we can't build what we wanted to build on it anyway.

That's why we have to show more caution, especially when it comes to wetlands, farmlands and prime agricultural lands. If we build on a flood plain, if we put the 413 through a flood plain, which an EA would identify, we've expropriated land that now we can't even use for the intended purpose. So it just seems prudent. And I know we have some rural MPPs in the area who would agree that there's a big concern. In fact, it's the number one concern of the OFA right now: land prices and land protection.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Any further debate? Seeing none, are the members ready to vote?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Armstrong, Clancy, McMahon, Shaw.

Nays

Bresee, Coe, Kanapathi, Pang, Rae, Sabawy.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I declare the amendment lost.

Shall schedule 1 of section 1 carry? Any debate? No debate? All those in favour, please raise your hands—

Interjection: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Bresee, Coe, Kanapathi, Pang, Rae, Sabawy.

Nays

Armstrong, Clancy, McMahon, Shaw.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I declare schedule 1, section 1 carried.

0910

Schedule 1, section 2: There are no amendments. Is there any debate on schedule 1, section 2? Seeing none, shall schedule 1, section 2 carry? All those in favour—

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Bresee, Coe, Kanapathi, Pang, Rae, Sabawy.

Nays

Armstrong, Clancy, McMahon, Shaw.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I declare schedule 1, section 2 carried.

Shall schedule 1 as a whole carry? Any debate?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Bresee, Coe, Kanapathi, Pang, Rae, Sabawy.

Nays

Armstrong, Clancy, McMahon, Shaw.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I declare schedule 1 as a whole carried.

Moving over to schedule 2, section 1: It's the Highway Traffic Act. There are no amendments to sections 1 to 14 of schedule 2. Does the committee agree to bundle them together? There's agreement.

I'm asking for any debate on sections 1 to 14 of schedule 2. Seeing none, are the members ready to vote?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Bresee, Coe, Kanapathi, Pang, Rae, Sabawy.

Nays

Armstrong, Clancy, McMahon, Shaw.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Sorry—
Interjection.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): It was all those in favour still. Yes, okay. Sorry about that. I'll be clearer next time.

Shall schedule 2 as a whole carry? Any debate? Seeing none, I declare schedule—

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Armstrong, Bresee, Clancy, Coe, Kanapathi, McMahon, Pang, Rae, Sabawy, Shaw.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I declare schedule 2 as a whole carried.

Moving to schedule 3, the Official Plan Adjustments Act: In section 1 of schedule 3, we have amendment 0.0.0.1. I'll ask MPP Rae, please.

Mr. Matthew Rae: I move that section 1 of schedule 3 to the bill be amended by striking out "17 and 18" in column 3 of item 3 of the table to section 1 of the Official Plan Adjustments Act, 2023 and substituting "and 17."

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Is there any debate? MPP Rae.

Mr. Matthew Rae: I recommend voting for this motion. It would respond to a request from the city of Guelph to remove the modification number 18 from the bill and would maintain the current employment designations—

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): MPP Rae, we have to get you to read the last line of the amendment into Hansard.

Mr. Matthew Rae: Sure. I'll start at "official plan amendments act, 2023 and substituting 'and 17.'"

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): You need the word "adjustments" there.

Mr. Matthew Rae: My apologies, Chair. I'll read it again.

I move that section 1 of schedule 3 to the bill be amended by striking out "13 to 15, 17 and 18" in column 3 of item 3 of the table to section 1 of the Official Plan Adjustments Act, 2023 and substituting "13 to 15 and 17."

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you very much. Any debate? MPP Rae.

Mr. Matthew Rae: The reason for voting—I would encourage my colleagues—stays the same.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Okay. Any further debate? Seeing none, are the members ready—

Mr. Matthew Rae: Chair?

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): MPP Rae.

Mr. Matthew Rae: I would like a 20-minute recess, please.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): We will have a 20-minute recess.

The committee recessed from 0915 to 0935.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): We will be resuming debate on the government amendment to schedule 3, section 1. I will ask for further debate. MPP Clancy.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: This is the amendment we're talking about?

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Amendment 0.0.0.1, yes.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: Yes. I have a concern: I was a city councillor, and I got advice from our planners. We went through a regional process to make decisions based on years and millions of dollars of expert data. These amendments are reflective of a much diluted, less thorough, rigorous, data-driven, timely process, so I have concerns. As a committee member, I could barely find any reference to what "18" means. I shouldn't have to go digging into maps. I shouldn't have to call around the people of Guelph to understand why these changes are made at the last minute.

When I made decisions as city councillor, I had thorough data, a staff report, to understand why we did what we did. This feels very last minute—haphazard, I might say. I understand and I'm glad—the difference between Bill 23 to this bill is that there has been some consultation with some members of the municipalities, which is great. But I do have concerns that, because we do things so quickly, with very little data, very little expert staff process—I know my mayor. I love him dearly. He's not a planner. Don't get me wrong; I know he consults. But that's my concern, that by going around anyone who voted against land expansions and making decisions so quickly—I take my job very seriously. I do as best at homework as I can. And if I can't figure out what you're talking about, to me that's a problem, that I have to make a decision today based on something that's done at the side of a desk with a quick phone call in a hallway, rather than what I'm used to as a city councillor, which is very thorough staff reports with rationale as to why, with the time to prepare and understand what the changes being made are talking about. So for the following amendments, I'll reiterate my concerns with the quick planning process and the lack of due diligence to consult industry experts, stakeholders and do data-driven decision-making.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Any further debate? Seeing none, are the members ready to vote on amendment 0.0.0.1?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Bresee, Coe, Kanapathi, Pang, Rae, Sabawy.

Nays

Armstrong, Clancy, McMahon, Shaw.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I declare the amendment carried.

Moving on to government amendment 0.0.1, I'll look to MPP Rae.

Mr. Matthew Rae: I move that section 1 of schedule 3 to the bill be amended by striking out "Bylaw 2f1-105" in column 1 of item 10 of the table to section 1 of the Official Plan Adjustments Act, 2023 and substituting "Bylaw 21-105."

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Debate? MPP Rae.

Mr. Matthew Rae: It is a typo, Chair. Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Any further debate? Seeing none, are the members ready to vote?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Bresee, Coe, Kanapathi, Pang, Rae, Sabawy.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Seeing none opposed, I declare the government motion carried.

Moving on to government amendment 0.0.2, please, MPP Rae.

Mr. Matthew Rae: I move that section 1 of schedule 3 to the bill be amended by striking out “50 to 55” in column 3 of item 10 of the table to section 1 of the Official Plan Adjustments Act, 2023 and substituting “50 to 56.”

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Any debate?

0940

Mr. Matthew Rae: This is a request from the city of Peterborough. It would correct a reference in the city’s bylaws.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Further debate? Seeing none, are the members ready to vote?

All those in favour of government amendment 0.0.2, please raise your hands.

All those opposed, please raise your hands.

I declare the amendment carried.

Shall schedule 3, section 1, as amended, carry? Any debate?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I would just like to say that this schedule makes significant changes to planning in communities across the province. I will say that when this bill was first tabled, we sought a ministerial briefing and asked very specifically, “Who asked for these changes? Where did these changes come from?” There was no evidence provided to say who required these changes. So we’re left to assume that perhaps a lower-tier mayor phoned the Premier or wrote the Premier, emailed the Premier, to say that we want these changes in.

This is not how planning should happen in the province. This government has made a complete muddle of planning in the province and has fallen so far behind in building the homes that we need in this province with their meddling and ham-fisted approach to planning in the province. People spend years and years to do this right for the people of the province to make sure that we are respecting our wetlands, our greenbelt, our farmlands and that we’re building the right homes in the right places. But by this piecemeal meddling there’s no confidence, there’s no predictability in the province for builders and for home-buyers alike.

So what I would like to say is if the government would like to try to restore a modicum of the trust that they have lost with their greenbelt grab, they would make this type of change more transparent and more accessible to people. I would say that, as MPPs, it is intentionally obtuse and very difficult to understand what’s being changed here. There’s no rationale. There is no evidence that this was asked for or by whom. And I would suggest that the government

has not learned a lesson from their greenbelt and urban boundary scandal and, in fact, they’re still trying to take land on behalf of developers, but they’re just doing it in these—I would call—underhanded and not very democratic processes.

This schedule, to me, is further evidence that this government will do whatever they can to further the interests of their insiders, their developers, their donors and are not doing this in the best interest of people of the province of Ontario. If that were the case and if they were proud of what they’re doing here, there would be evidence as to who requested these changes.

The government is not prepared to answer. Either they don’t know or won’t tell. My guess is that they certainly know and that they won’t tell. This is just a further deterioration in this province of any semblance of good, rational planning and a good, transparent and accountable government.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Further debate?

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I do share the same concerns about process. There’s not unlimited farmland. There’s not unlimited cement. There’s not unlimited labour. I was always taught as a city councillor that if you have a good process, no matter what the decision is, you can defend that to your voters, you could defend that to future generations.

What I’m looking at here feels to me—because I have no other data to base this on—like we’re trading playing cards, to be frank, from someone who wasn’t involved in the decisions on how these lands were chosen and not being able to find data about how these lands were chosen, that we’re overriding government decision-makers at different levels of government. We’re accelerating hand-picked projects, which is troubling when somebody is a fierce defender of democracy. As a city councillor what I experienced since Bill 23 was that our planners are always working like their pants are on fire. We’re trying to hire planners. You can’t even hire good planners nowadays, which is maybe why process is lacking, because it’s hard to scale in these departments in a matter of months.

So when we take the way we’ve done planning, we rip it up, and we do it a completely different way that is unprecedented, we’re really undermining the expertise that exists in our municipalities. It puts them in a vulnerable position where they might be making decisions without proper staffing and timelines to act on those things. Or we’re putting major pressure on the planners that exist to work overtime, double-time, and that’s also a financial cost to cities. I know cities are already struggling financially to pay the bills to hire staff, especially in their planning departments.

That’s my concern about schedule 1: this feeling that we really haven’t had the good process that we’ve always had that protected our spaces, protected democracy and ensured that the lands that we put forward for expansion were reasonable, thoughtful and didn’t have any commercial interests that were overriding democratic, data-driven decision-making.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Further debate?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I'd just like to add, further to what MPP Clancy has shared: How did we end up here? Let's go back to see how we ended up with this schedule in this bill.

Let us not forget that the government, through their urban boundary expansion and greenbelt grab, made these changes—unilateral changes—that the Integrity Commissioner and the Auditor General showed gave preferential treatment to individual developers and donors. Let's not forget that some of these developers that got preferential treatment were donors and guests of Doug Ford at his daughter's stag and doe.

This change—the greenbelt grab and that way of doing planning, that someone had the ear of the Premier, that the minister at the stroke of a pen was meddling in people's official plans—caused outrage, as we all know, across the province. The Premier was forced to roll back those changes. We spent how much time debating the bill in the first place, then, we had to debate the rollback of those changes. People of the province had to rally and spend time and show that they were outraged by this. So then we debated the bill that put those things back in.

I cannot help but mention that this is why this government is the subject of an RCMP investigation. Preferential treatment has standing in the law, and it essentially speaks to insider trading and insider dealing. So it's a serious, serious position that we are—and now, we're putting these back in again. Help me; it's mind-boggling.

Without any public consultation, with interference by the minister and by developers and unidentified third parties, official plans all across the province were torn up, essentially, and these changes were put in. People threw up their arms in outrage, as they should. I went to demonstrations all across the province; people young and old were so upset with this. Now, the government had to put these back in because of this outrage—pardon me, take them out. It's hard to keep track. And now, they're putting them back in with the same MO, the same lack of clarity, the same lack of consultation and the same lack of, I would say, democratic process.

It is no wonder that no one trusts this government, and it is no wonder this government is falling behind on the homes that we need to build in this province. You're building fewer homes than you were last year. The stats are falling, and no wonder. We're spending all of our time and resources and emotional energy on this government's continued meddling.

Just as in the case of Wilmot, we can only guess that there is something afoot behind this, because nothing is transparent. The farmers from Wilmot came to my office two days ago seeking answers from the Minister of Agriculture. Why are they being left in the dark? Why have they not been included in the process? They have developers knocking on their doors saying, "We want to buy your land," and the farmers are saying, "What do you mean? It's not for sale." Because they know, the developers know, somebody knows, that expropriation is afoot—the farmers don't know. These are farmers, some of them—they don't want to sell their land. They have farmed this land, some of them, from 1860.

0950

Yet again—has the government learned a lesson? Are we doing the same insider-driven process to take 770 acres of class 1 farmland? Is that what's happening now? Is that what's happening here? We can only speculate based on how you've behaved before, and also the fact that everything seems to be happening behind closed doors and in secrecy.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Any further debate?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: It's hard to stop.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: No, no. I just wanted to—as a first-time committee clause-by-clause, each of these modifications is a farm or a land somewhere. We're looking at—I don't have access, I don't think, to, in number 2, modifications 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 11, 17, 19 and 24, so you can appreciate my discomfort, to say the least.

Another observation, as someone who has moved from city council to MPP, is that our official plan took us years, took us millions of dollars, and it was approved and finalized in August 2022. When I talk to the Ontario Home Builders' Association, they tell me time is money. So, if this is, let's say, even passed by 2024, we've lost two years of progress in terms of our housing. By not trusting the process that was there, and with all the back and forth, we've also moved away from some of the goals that we state we have, which is being fiscally responsible, putting shovels in the ground quickly. These delays are problematic—so just one more point.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Further debate? Seeing none, are the members ready to vote?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): A recorded vote on schedule 3, section 1, as amended.

Ayes

Bresee, Coe, Kanapathi, Pang, Sabawy.

Nays

Armstrong, Clancy, McMahon, Shaw.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I declare schedule 3, section 1, as amended, carried.

Moving on to schedule 3, section 2, I believe we have amendment 0.0.3. MPP Clancy.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I move that section 2 of schedule 3 to the bill be amended by striking out paragraph 4 of section 2 of the Official Plan Adjustments Act, 2023.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Debate?

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: One thing that I think we forget when we're trying to pick lands—people always say, "Oh, we need all kinds of housing. We need more land for housing," even if a lot of the data from these regional official plans states that we can—I know in our plan, we can meet our targets without these added lands, so the cost of that, of adding the lands that we don't need, is that we make a financial hardship on property tax owners in municipalities. Sprawl development into greenfield costs two and a half times more for a municipality to service than

infill development. So, if we build within the countryside line, if we build where we have amenities and infrastructure already, we save two and a half times more money.

What I've noticed in I think every municipality across the province is struggling with double-digit property tax increases. That's a result of this sprawl-style development. I haven't even gotten to the climate issues related to that, but one quote from a former mayor of Toronto and former cabinet member, Mayor Crombie: The last thing we need in a housing crisis—and this is someone who has been around—is to build the wrong kinds of houses in the wrong places.

At a time, when—I think if you talk to home builders, there's a massive shortage of labour, there's a massive cost to cement and not to mention the delays. So if we build into the countryside—if you talk to a builder, they'll say it takes seven to 10 years. If you build infill, you get that housing faster. Every time we have to add roads and sewers and hookups and hydro, we are delaying our housing by many, many years.

So here we are, strapping our own municipalities with a very expensive way of growing our cities. We are doing it in a way that will take far longer than building within countryside lines. We're taking up good farmland and wetlands, and we're also creating a car-centric future that has caused us to harm future generations.

I'll get to that later, but the climate crisis is real, and the reason we're here is because the one way we are growing carbon emissions—the number one source of growing carbon emissions is transportation. So if we keep building farther away from where people live, farther away from transit, farther away from wherever they're going, we're adding more and more carbon emissions, which really affects our future generations.

There are a lot of reasons why sprawl development isn't in the best interests of all of us, so that's my concern about these added lands.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Any further debate? Seeing none, are the members ready to vote on amendment 0.0.3? Yes?

All those in favour of the amendment, please raise your hands. All those opposed, please raise your hands. I declare the amendment lost.

Moving on to amendment 0.0.4: MPP Clancy, I believe you're up again.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I move that section 2 of schedule 3 to the bill be amended by striking out paragraph 7 of section 2 of the Official Plan Adjustments Act, 2023.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Debate?

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: This is Halton land. I think the problem I have, again, with some of this is, when I look at the way we did our regional official plans, we consulted hydrogeologists. Why would we talk to a hydrogeologist? Why do hydrogeologists even exist? Because, in our area, we rely on groundwater. If our region doesn't recharge our groundwater, if our groundwater becomes saltier than it already is—it's water; that is the essential resource of life.

By making the changes to the official plans, we've taken—yes, we've consulted with the mayors, but the

regional level is where we have all our hydrogeologists. That's my concern about changing what regional governments have done. There's a whole level of professionals that make these calculated decisions and that's why this is a concern for me.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Any further debate? Seeing none, are the members ready to vote? All those in favour of amendment 0.0.4, please raise your hands.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Armstrong, Clancy, McMahon, Shaw.

Nays

Bresee, Coe, Kanapathi, Pang, Sabawy.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I declare the amendment lost.

Moving on to amendment 0.1: MPP Shaw.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I move that section 2 of schedule 3 to the bill be amended by striking out subparagraph 7ii of section 2 of the Official Plan Adjustments Act, 2023.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Debate?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Very similar to what MPP Clancy has said, but in a different way: I again want to highlight that this area that is being affected is really redesignating environmentally sensitive lands in Burlington.

There's an area; it's in north Aldershot. It's called the North Aldershot Policy Area, and the lands in question are part of the Eagle Heights properties that are owned by Penta Properties. They're also known as the Alinea Group Holdings. These properties include greenbelt lands and are, as I said, very environmentally sensitive. So that's why Halton region has established special policies for north Aldershot, including these lands, and reaffirmed these policies when it adopted its regional plan.

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I've mentioned it before. This is another example. The Integrity Commissioner's report was clear. This is clear; it's in the report that described how Penta actually hired Ford's friend and lobbyist to lobby the government to have these properties removed from the greenbelt and opened up for development.

So what I want to say again is what I have said earlier: We're seeing the same behaviour, but this time I'm assuming that the government is hoping no one will notice, because they're making it as difficult as possible to align these changes to official plans with their real intentions and who they are benefiting. Who asked for these? Who asked for this change?

Again, we can only draw our own conclusions given the government's secrecy, refusal to be forthcoming as to why this needs to happen, what the rationales are for allowing development on, as I said, environmentally sensitive land, greenbelt lands. Again, we learned these lessons. We should have learned these lessons from the Integrity Commissioner's report on the previous minister's, Steve Clark, behaviour.

We're also making very, very clear that no one—who asked for this? That's the absolute question that I want to say.

Unfortunately, I think the government knows that people won't be able to follow this. They're taking advantage of people who cannot follow this thread. But what is consistent in all of this is that the government is meddling in official plans. The government is taking away environmentally sensitive designations for wetlands, for the greenbelt, on behalf of developers. That is clear, and none of that has changed. And while what we're talking about here, the amendment I'm proposing, will seem like a small amendment, it really speaks to a huge, huge problem in this province, that these changes to official plans seem to be developer-captured. That's all I can say. Because without the government defending these and explaining why, we can only look into what the RCMP is looking into.

So I really have to say, the more I look into this, the more disappointed I am that the government continues to behave in this way, continues to not work in the public interest, continues to give preferential treatment to favoured landowners. I think that if people understood that you were forced to roll back from the greenbelt grab and the urban boundary expansion—but you're not done; you're just doing this with little, I would call them, guerrilla tactics, in sneaky ways that you can get what you want without it being really clearly in the public square, or the public realm. I think that that is really, really dishonourable.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Further debate?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I just want to add my comments onto this amendment brought by the NDP. What it really does: It gives Bill 162—it makes changes to subparagraph 7ii of section 2. This particular section in this bill is not about public interest, Chair. As we've talked about, it's giving favours to people who the government has connections with. They're favouring landowners—preferential treatment for them to purchase land or expropriate land under the guise of this bill.

There is evidence and information that we can point to as to why this amendment is necessary. The Integrity Commissioner did describe that Penta had hired a Ford friend and lobbyist. Again, this is in the report; this is not made up. It was a Ford wedding guest, Nico Fidani-Diker, to lobby the government to have these properties removed from the greenbelt and opened up for development.

What has really happened is eventually the government has decided to give Penta what they wanted without requiring changes to the greenbelt. It's a workaround, and that's why we're so opposed to this piece of legislation. We have to make sure that when we have these land processes, they are—we've talked about being transparent, right? It's transparency to the people that we're affecting. Taking greenbelt land, taking farmland, expropriating land from people without them understanding why and going through the environmental assessment, being open and—I'm going to use the word honest about why that land is being expropriated. This is really egregious, if we don't operate that way as a public office, as public servants, as government. We do ourselves a disservice and it really casts a dark cloud over the work that we want to do. I know

members have good intentions, but we have to have good legislation to back up our actions.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Further debate? Seeing none, are the members ready to vote on amendment 0.1?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Armstrong, Clancy, McMahan, Shaw.

Nays

Bresee, Coe, Kanapathi, Pang, Rae, Sabawy.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I declare amendment 0.1 lost.

Moving on to amendment 0.2, I will look to MPP Shaw.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I move that section 2 of schedule 3 to the bill be amended by striking out paragraph 8 of section 2 of the Official Plan Adjustments Act, 2023.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Debate?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Again, what we're looking at here is—when we're looking at this and speaking to the region—we're talking about Waterloo region now. What we're doing here is forcing the region to vastly expand their urban boundaries. We've been here before. We've talked about it before. I want to make it clear that the government's own affordability task force said that the housing crisis was not caused by a lack of land—it's been said so many times it's not a shortage of land; your own task force said that—and that farmland should be protected. I can't even imagine how this government is not fighting to save farmland. We know that we're losing something like 320 acres of farmland a day. We have again talked about the farmers of Wilmot, who are looking to have their family farms really snatched out from under them, and they don't know why.

We know that this government—you ignored this recommendation in your own task force, and actually, the vast majority of the recommendations, you've ignored. In fact, I would add that BC is killing it when it comes to housing starts. You should just look to BC and see the kind of progress that they're making on building homes for people. And guess what their plan is inspired by? Their plan is inspired by the Housing Affordability Task Force that this government put forward, which you are twisting yourself in knots to ignore so that you can make sure that you are building in a way that benefits—we've said it before—developers.

Forcing Waterloo region to expand their urban boundaries—who is it going to make happy? Land speculators. They're going to be happy, but it won't build housing, because, as has been said so many times before, it means higher infrastructure costs and higher housing costs. And it will make it harder and more expensive to build housing.

Waterloo region has been reaching and working towards housing sustainability, and Bill 162 is actually going to get in the way. It's going to be an obstacle to what this region has already been doing. Your meddling yet again is going

to be an obstacle in the good work, in the rational, logical, sustainable progress that Waterloo region is making.

1010

So I have to ask the question, because evidence begs me to ask the question: Does this government actually care about building housing, or are they really in the business of enriching well-connected speculators? Because if that was the case, if you were really interested in just building housing, you would support the plan adopted by the region, and support this amendment, because anything other than that, by my mind, draws the conclusion that housing is not what you're all about. What you are all about is serving the private pecuniary interests of your donors, connected developers and speculators. I imagine that you won't support this amendment, but it's shameful that you do not, because it speaks volumes.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Further debate?

Mr. Matthew Rae: I look forward to MPP Shaw voting for our most recent red reduction tape bill and helping getting homes built faster, because the government is serious about building homes of all types across Ontario.

I will state, for the record, we're not forcing our municipal partners to expand their boundaries. This comes as a request from the lower-tier municipalities in Waterloo, who are elected every four years, Chair. And so, we're continuing to work with them, our municipal partners, to build more homes, Chair.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Further debate?

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I think it's important to remember the difference between lower-tier and upper-tier municipalities. In Kitchener, because we have a really big population, we have extra regional councillors added so that we can make decisions that represent the vast majority of people in Waterloo region. So when you don't get the answer you want from the region and you kind of go around and you go to the lower-tier municipalities to ask that way, I think, again, it goes to the bad process.

The thing I want to reiterate is, in my region, the thing that we have at the regional level is hydrogeologists. What do I know? I don't know a lot about Barrie and Guelph. These things are numbers on a page, and that's the part that really troubles me, we're making really quick decisions about numbers on a page. We're so far removed. It's like the way we treat food and animals and land, and it's what got us into this disaster: by disconnecting ourselves from the reality on the ground of what the lived experiences are of the people who live there.

So, for example, Waterloo region is one of the few municipalities in Ontario that relies solely on groundwater. We don't have access to lakes. We don't have a pipeline to any lake; it is all groundwater or nothing. The thing that is problematic about the additional lands that have been added—that I know because I live there; this is the water I drink, that my kids will drink, that my grandkids will drink—is that it's on sand and gravel. We know that sand and gravel is part of our recharge area. I'm learning this on the fly, because I'm here at this seat, but the recharge areas and regions are essential to replenishing the water that comes from the sky. So when we get rain, we need

that water to be reabsorbed into our groundwater so that that groundwater doesn't go dry. That's all we have. So we know sand and gravel is 50% to 80% more absorbent than other kinds of land. So you could build stuff on the shield and it won't affect groundwater, but by building on sand and gravel you're negatively impacting the way our water table gets replenished.

And the land, again—there's a lot of really rich people who are already really rich that own those lands, and they happen to have bought them on sand and gravel. Maybe they're upset about that and they want to build on it anyway without consulting with the hydrogeologists that were participating in our regional official plan.

The other thing that's problematic about our—

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): You only have about 60 seconds left before we have to recess.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy:—water where I live is that it has a high salt level. We have no solution. I ask again and again. There is no answer to the salt in our water that we have to dilute from other sources. We know that by adding roads all across this area, the salt will only increase. So not only am I worried about the quantity of water that my kids can drink when they grow up, I'm worried about the quality of the water that they can drink when they grow up.

I know I'm just referencing what I know in my region and the water that I hope to drink in years to come, but I know that if we look across all these tables with all these numbers and all these modifications, the same can be said for why these lands weren't chosen for expansion.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I'm afraid we're going to have to recess. We will rejoin the debate and the amendments at 1 p.m. today.

The committee recessed from 1015 to 1300.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Good afternoon, everyone. The Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy will now come to order.

We will now resume clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 162, An Act to enact the Protecting Against Carbon Taxes Act, 2024 and amend various Acts. Are there any questions before we resume?

Seeing none, we will now resume debate on amendment 0.2, and I'll ask for further debate. Seeing none, are the members ready to vote?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Armstrong, McMahon, Shaw.

Nays

Bresee, Coe, Pang, Rae.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I consider the amendment lost.

We will now move on to amendment 0.2.1.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I move that section 2 of schedule 3 to the bill be amended by striking out paragraph 8 of section 2 of the Official Plan Adjustments Act, 2023.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I inform the committee, on the independent motion 0.2.1: Committee members, this amendment is out of order, as the committee's decision concerning the bill must be consistent with earlier decisions. The previous amendment was the same. Yes, so that's the ruling on that. It's out of order.

We will now consider schedule 3, section 2, and ask the members if that shall carry and if there's any debate.

Interjection: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Bresee, Coe, Kanapathi, Pang, Rae, Sabawy.

Nays

Armstrong, Clancy, McMahon, Shaw.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I declare schedule 3, section 2 carried.

We're going to consider schedule 3, section 3. There are no amendments. Is there any debate on schedule 3, section 3? MPP McMahon.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Well, I would like to speak on schedule 3 as a whole. Is now the time?

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): You can, yes.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Okay, great. I have a notice—which, I'm now learning the difference between a notice and an amendment, a couple of years in. I have a notice to recommend voting against schedule 3 of the bill. I would do that because—this is just baffling to me. This committee, actually, is doing the regional governance reviews, right? Where have we been? We've been to beautiful Burlington, super St. Catharines, bubbly Barrie, awesome Ajax—

Interjection: Wonderful Waterloo.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: —yes—cool Kitchener, vibrant Vaughan. We've been to six different municipalities, which regionally represent other municipalities. We have spent time, money and energy to go there—taxpayers' dollars—to go to those places, and we have asked people to come to speak to us at those committees. We have gotten people all keyed up and stressed out—undue stress, obviously. For what? If we're just going to pass this schedule, it's just like a bulldozer going through and clear-cutting the boreal forest and then, "Oops," coming back, reversing back: "We better put some saplings in and hope that everything is okay."

We've gone out to those places in the winter, and now we're going out again in the spring apparently—I don't know when, because you guys know before us and we'll be informed at the 11th hour. But I just don't know why we would adopt this schedule 3 at all when we're in the heat of the regional governance review. That, to me, tells me—and I'm sure it tells the rest of Ontario—that we don't care what they're thinking, what they have to say, if

we're already putting the cart before the horse and making these decisions. Why are we not waiting on this, at least—this schedule—until we're done the regional governance review?

Unless you know something I don't know, that we're not going to do the second part and it was all for naught like the Peel divorce reversal—they're now getting back together, or they're separated or whatever; I can't even keep it straight. It just makes no sense. That's why I would urge voting against this schedule. Let's be clear to people that we want to hear their voices, that we respect their communities and their residents and all Ontarians. Let's listen to them for the final regional governance review, and then look at doing whatever you're proposing to do. All right? Thank you in advance for your support, as always.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Any further debate on schedule 3, section 3?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I'll add mine now—

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): MPP Clancy, and then I'll go to you. She had her hand up first.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Oh, sorry.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: That's okay.

I do want to caution my colleagues. Again, just in our region, just in Waterloo region, we're adding 7,000 acres to the regional official plan. And I know that these lands are owned by developers that have—I just want to caution us by repeating some of this action.

I also want to think about Walkerton. My water is at risk. It's going to cost us \$2 billion for the region of Waterloo to build a pipeline—\$2 billion at today's market rate, so we know that that's under-calculation for when we actually have to build this pipeline to a lake, which is unbelievable. We're already, because we polluted our water—in Elmira, they polluted their water, because industry contaminated it. Now we have pipelines going all over the place. It's an infrastructure nightmare. It's a good way to throw good money away.

But I do want to caution you with respect to water that it's getting saltier and we have less of it. We know that this is actually going to slow housing down, because it is an inefficient way to build housing away from infrastructure. It will take over seven years, instead of two or three.

And then, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture—so some of those in rural ridings, these are your people. These farmers are worried about 320 acres of farm loss a day. They've already picked the number—I can't remember the number; I think it was 2055 that we are out of farmland—zero. That's our food. And we're accelerating the amount of farm loss. It's 320 a day right now, but it has already gone up in recent years of farmland loss.

I call it a conservative government because I want you to be conservative with how we use farmland and how we consider fiscal responsibility, because I do think that with the plan—at least for Waterloo region, which I know well, participating in it—it's a fiscally irresponsible overriding of good planning and good process. We know it costs two and a half times more for municipalities to service this land. We know we can build more homes when we build it close to the infrastructure we already have, and we know

that by having good process, nobody across the table has to worry about another greenbelt scandal.

So, please, stop building the wrong kinds of houses in the wrong places. Stop putting more delays. Again, my plan is going to be two years old soon, so I urge you to respect the good work that went into that, respect farmland, respect water and vote to remove schedule 3.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Any further debate?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I would also just like to read into the record the notice from the official opposition NDP that we are recommending voting against schedule 3 to this bill.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Any further debate on schedule 3, section 3? Seeing none, are the members ready to vote?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Coe, Kanapathi, Pang, Rae, Sabawy.

Nays

Armstrong, Clancy, McMahon, Shaw.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I declare schedule 3, section 3 carried.

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I will now ask: Shall schedule 3, as amended, carry? I will ask for debate on that, which we might have covered already.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Coe, Kanapathi, Pang, Rae, Sabawy.

Nays

Armstrong, Clancy, Shaw, McMahon.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Schedule 3, as amended, is carried.

Moving now to schedule 4: It's the Photo Card Act, 2008. There are no amendments to sections 1 and 2 of schedule 4. Does the committee agree to bundle them together? Bundle sections 1 and 2 of schedule 4. There are no amendments.

Considering sections 1 and 2, is there any debate? Seeing none, are the members ready to vote on schedule 4, sections 1 and 2?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Armstrong, Clancy, Coe, Kanapathi, McMahon, Pang, Rae, Shaw, Sabawy.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I declare schedule 4, sections 1 and 2 carried.

Shall schedule 4 as a whole carry? Any debate? Are members ready to vote? All those in favour? All those opposed? Schedule 4 as a whole is carried.

Moving to schedule 5, Protecting Against Carbon Taxes Act, 2024: There are no amendments to sections 1 to 24 of schedule 5. Does the committee agree to bundle them? Okay, is there any debate on schedule 5, sections 1 to 24? Any debate?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Protecting against carbon taxes—let me be clear that certainly we in the official opposition NDP understand that people in this province are struggling to pay the bills, and any way that we can provide those folks relief, I think that's important.

I will take note that this government is overturning an Ontario Energy Board ruling that said that ratepayers—homeowners, basically—shouldn't be forced to pay the billions of dollars of infrastructure costs on behalf of Enbridge. The argument is: Enbridge and their shareholders don't want to pay for this infrastructure that they will own. Home builders, apparently, don't want to pay for this infrastructure. But this government, in their wisdom, has said, "You know what? We're going to let individuals that have to pay their gas bill—we think it's okay and reasonable for them to pay this bill." That is going to amount to about \$600 on average home heating bills for the people of the province of Ontario. While the government likes to bluster around saving people money, if you really look at it, they have no compunction about spending money on behalf of—or interfering in instances where an independent regulator was trying to protect the consumers.

When we look at this schedule, let's be really clear that the Ford government has a carbon tax. While they don't like to talk about it and they don't want the people of the province of Ontario to know that, this government has a carbon tax. It's called emissions performance standards.

We do believe that there should be a cost for carbon. We also believe that that cost shouldn't be borne by individuals, that large corporations, polluters should foot that bill. But while this government is saying we're going to have a referendum on a carbon tax, sure, we believe the people should have a say in any new taxes that are being levied against them. I also think people should have a say on any services that are being cut. I think people should have a referendum on the fact that this government has the lowest per-capita spending on health care in the province.

Mr. Matthew Rae: Point of order.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: You're pulling up the rear when it comes to health care spending.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): MPP Shaw, MPP Rae has a point of order, please.

Mr. Matthew Rae: I would encourage the Chair to direct my colleague across the way to focus on the bill in front of us and not a variety of other issues she keeps addressing.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I heard the point of order, and I will encourage all members to keep to the bill that's in front of them.

MPP Shaw.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Certainly. Thank you.

What I am looking at is a schedule that is calling for a referendum, that the government is encouraging us to have a referendum. What I am suggesting is that if the government is interested in having a referendum and consulting with the people of the province of Ontario, there are a lot of things that they are doing to the people of the province that they don't consult on. We just heard about all the green-belt changes, and there was no consultation or referendum.

Maybe you can correct me, but I don't recall there being a referendum when this government cancelled cap-and-trade and cost this province millions, if not hundreds of millions in lost revenues—yes, billions actually in lost revenues—and the cost of fighting this in court?

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: \$30 million.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Yes, exactly.

I don't remember the government saying, "Oh, we should have a referendum on this giant change to a policy that was implemented." I don't remember the government saying we need to have a referendum on the emissions performance standard that this government continues to collect. Again, hundreds of millions of dollars will be collected by this government—their carbon tax, if you will; the Ford carbon tax. I suggest that they have a referendum to consult the people on how they think they should spend this money that they're collecting that is a big and ballooning line item on the consolidated finances of this government.

While we support the notion that people should be consulted and a referendum, in principle, is an important concept of representative democracy, we're really not in favour of what would appear to be a gimmick and a tag line and not a genuine, good-faith effort on the part of the government to consult with the people of the province of Ontario.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Any further debate on sections 1 to 24 of schedule 5?

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: This is near and dear to my heart. I became involved in politics because I learned how to lobby for carbon pricing, so I've done a lot of homework on this, and I've been waiting to share some nuggets of wisdom with all my colleagues for a while now.

I would like to set the record straight. The Parliamentary Budget Officer said that 80% of families were further ahead because of carbon pricing. Four hundred of our economists just penned a letter. These are not environmentalists; they have a background in crunching numbers, so fiscal responsibility. They say that this is the lowest-cost way to take climate action. Yes, we could get rid of carbon pricing, but we will be trading it in for something that's more expensive.

They also say it's really fast. We're already seeing the proof in the pudding: 30% of our reductions by 2030 will be attributed to carbon pricing.

I just saw the EV plant in Oakville delay their EV plant by two years. It was conveniently timed after a federal election. They build cars where people buy cars. We are undermining our economic development plan by jeopardizing carbon pricing, by disincentivizing electric vehicle purchasing. So we are disincentivizing the very industry that we are begging to have come to Ontario.

We just saw the proof in the pudding. Right now, the folks in Oakville are suffering because of this two-year

delay until after our federal election to see if they have any future in Canada in the electric vehicle industry. That is heartbreaking for the people in Oakville, and it says a lot about our commitment to the electric vehicle future here.

I've seen so much misinformation when it comes to carbon pricing that worries me. I know that that's fuelling a lot of public opinion.

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For example, when it comes to affordability of food, who should we talk to when it comes to the affordability of food? I looked up the association of food banks. I looked through their pre-budget submission federally and provincially to see what they recommended in terms of reducing food bank use in our communities. In my community, for the past year, food bank use for first-time users in my region has doubled. It used to be one in 20 families using the food bank; it's now one in 10.

I looked at their stuff to see what they recommended would help families struggling to put food on the table. Nowhere does it talk about carbon pricing. In fact, they say stop the clawbacks. We need an increase in the Canada disability support benefit. We need an increase in ODSP and OW. For every dollar that a person on OW makes beyond \$900, which is not even enough for rent, they pay a 50% clawback rate. So if we truly want to address affordability, especially when it comes to food on the table, we should be listening to the folks who are dealing with this reality day in and day out. They do say "good jobs" as well.

The other thing I wanted to clarify is that I know folks talk about "this many cents a litre" and "that percentage increase." So even though 80% of that goes back to families, the bottom 80% of Canadian families—not the 20%—which is maybe why some feel it more than others. And I do acknowledge that we need to do more for wheat farmers and corn farmers. We need to do more for truckers to support people with their transition.

But doing nothing is not the answer, because the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report compared it to absolutely nothing. It didn't talk about the effect of COVID on our economy or about the effect of natural gas prices because of the Russian war in Ukraine. We are comparing it to nothing. That is basically misleading. I understand that our economy suffers more because of carbon pricing. If you look at it in this tiny vacuum—and I think it's 0.05% of inflation, so it's one twentieth of the inflation we see actually relates to carbon pricing, the others relate to COVID.

Interjection.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: One in 20; one twentieth of a percent is related to carbon pricing. But again, we're comparing that to nothing.

We're not talking about the war in Russia that is basically driven because of our need for oil. We could reduce inflation by not needing so much oil and gas.

And who benefits from all of this? Who benefits from our rhetoric? The oil and gas sector. Not once do I see my colleagues talk about the unaffordability and the gouging of our oil and gas sector. Did you know that even though our carbon price went up three cents to 18 cents a litre, of

which you get 80% back, the oil and gas sector gets 18 cents—up to 42 cents—in just profits? These are folks who are making billions and billions of dollars. I would love their paycheque and I would hope to use it for something good instead of a new yacht or a new island.

We are sinking our own ships. Our economy is so embedded with oil and gas that we are staring at an iceberg and we are going to crash. Our whole stranded assets, our pension plans—it's shocking. When this oil and gas thing sinks, we are all going down because we have no plan B. We've done nothing to rein it in.

I have a business degree. I believe in some form of capitalism, but it needs a leash. It's our job as government to intervene when companies—if not to say monopolies; I think there are five that own most of our oil and gas—are gouging. They are gouging. And through Pathways Alliance, who is in court right now, they are misleading the public on everything—that they could go net zero.

Our federal government is spending \$5.7 billion on carbon capture, which, I'm sorry, is decades and decades away from being a reality, instead of doing what we could do now.

I call on this government to stop using all of our time to talk about a federal policy. Please, let's use our time to talk about our planet. We have no planet B. We don't have another planet. We can't go to Mars. Our kids are facing an unlivable future—unlivable. They will have a worse life than we have—guaranteed already. Us doing nothing is only going to make that even worse.

So I beg of you, please: If you care about the affordability of food, please read the pre-budget submissions of our food bank associations. If you care about affordability, please stop the gouging at the pumps from our oil and gas sector. If you really want to make a transition, please do more homework around how carbon pricing works, because we give people money back and it makes things that cause harm less affordable than the things that do well.

Do you know who doesn't pay carbon tax on their commute? I have a privilege. I acknowledge my privilege. I have an electric vehicle. I did it because I wanted to reduce emissions. I pay \$12 a month in my electricity bill. I charge at night when energy is clean, and I get my rebate, and now I have more money to decarbonize my home and buy a heat pump, which also helps me make a good decision.

We know that you don't need to buy a furnace and an air conditioner, which I know with our new building code is probably going to be the reality. We're saddling people with this reality for decades to come, an expensive reality, when they could have a two-for-one: a heat pump heats your home and it cools your home and it's four times more efficient than other forms of electric heating. So we could be doing really good stuff right now that would bring affordability to families.

I had a gentleman—he's on ODSP. He was coming back from our Tiny Home Takeout with his food that he got for free. He eats there so he could get an air conditioner for his home because he has COPD. He's a senior; he's living in an apartment building that doesn't have AC, so he goes and he eats for free at our Tiny Home Takeout. I asked him about that and he said, "You know, I'm on

ODSP, so I can eat at the food bank and have enough to get cool."

We look at Vancouver: 600 people died. Extreme heat is the number one cause of death that's climate-related. I would like to see this government start collecting real data so we understand the issue that we're staring down the barrel of. We will face heat-related deaths this summer. We will face heat-related consequence of forest fires. And so, I beg that we look at ways to get heat pumps to our low-income earners so they can stay cool and be prevented from avoidable deaths. I hope you'll talk to your economist friends, not just those who are heavily invested in the oil and gas—because I think three of our banks are in the top 10 for investments in oil and gas. My pension—RBC—are they number one?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I think so.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I think they're number one, RBC. So if you're talking to RBC about fiscal responsibility, they're never going to tell you to put a leash on oil and gas gouging. They're never going to tell you to invest in a plan B. They have no plan B.

I hope that we'll think ahead at the reality our economy faces if we only bet on the one horse, which we know is sick and dying, and we've learned from 30 years ahead that this has to change.

This isn't a fringe thing; 46 countries have carbon pricing. We had it, and it is—thank you for sharing—we spent \$30 million. If my community had \$30 million we could spend on housing, we would have a parade in the streets. Instead, we went to court to fight the federal government on something that's for the common good for our country and future generations—\$30 million that was like toilet paper. It was a total waste of money that could have been spent on housing. I disagree with this use of our money. We spent more on lawyers and on advertising than we have on climate change.

Climate change: two paragraphs—two—in the whole budget. So, our budget, let's say, is 200 pages. Two paragraphs were on climate change, the number one crisis facing humanity. This isn't just a thing that affects 1,000 people; we're talking about the existence of human beings, and they made the cut with two paragraphs. So if I'm going to do the math, if it made one page of the 200, it would be 0.5%. It was a tenth of 0.5%, so it's 0.1% of our budget to talk about the climate crisis.

I talked to young people today over my lunch break—I didn't even eat lunch—and do you know what they said? "We want to feel like we have a voice. What do we do? Because we feel like the government is misleading the public, there's no political will to do something about this, and we want to make a difference." I asked them, I said, "Please, start delegating. Shore up." We talked a lot about the different actions they could take to empower themselves, but I also feel like that's unfair. Why should young people, who have had the least influence over climate change, be now feeling saddled with the burden of doing everything about it? To me, there is an injustice about that.

I am here today because I made a commitment to my children and my community that I would ensure people have a place to live and a livable planet, and I think today,

the decisions we're making are going in the opposite direction. So if you care about affordability, do your homework about oil and gas gouging and the way we have doubled down on really misguided economic policy. If you care about food affordability, please look at the food bank recommendations for the pre-budget submissions. If you doubt that carbon pricing is a reality, please talk to these 400 economists that say it's the lowest-cost way forward. If you're going to do something, this is costing us the least. And please help people know that our federal government has done a crap job of sharing information about that. I was lobbying them to send us a cheque. People don't even realize they're getting the money back.

1330

Luckily, my aunts, who are well into their seventies, are like, "Oh, yes. I looked at my bank statement last week and I got"—they don't sound like that. They'll probably be mad at me. Don't tell them I talked about them this way.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: In a loving way.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: In a loving way.

One day I'm going to invite my aunt Nancy, who is a farmer, and I'm going to ask her to share with me how she knows she got her carbon rebate. She will show you her bank statements. It's called some gobbledygook name, which is just a tragedy. But I hope our government gets the memo and starts sending people a cheque.

I also know that if our government is serious about electric vehicle investments—I know I could go on and on, but this is a—

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): You just have a few minutes left.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: That's okay. I'm wrapping up.

If you really care about red tape, like MPP Shaw shared—if you really care about red tape, why are you putting more red tape in the face of climate action? To me, we're wasting our time, when we could be focusing on real solutions for future generations.

I urge people to vote against this because I think it's misguided. I think, if you care about fiscal responsibility and future generations, you'll see the value of climate action.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Is there any further debate on schedule 5, sections 1 to 24?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: That's a hard act to follow, and boy, oh boy, if I lived in Kitchener Centre, I'd be voting for that member beside me, for sure. Come on.

Mr. Matthew Rae: I'm going to quote that.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Yes, quote me, honestly. That's inspirational and authentic.

I just want to say, we've got to get our semantics right. Because you talk about carbon tax, carbon tax, carbon tax—that's all we hear in the chamber, when really the true name is pollution pricing. It is a price on pollution, so call it really what it is and stop misleading the public.

And you are the reason we have a carbon tax in Ontario because you guys killed cap-and-trade. So that's not very genuine, in not explaining it to everyone.

You've mentioned the words "carbon tax" over 300 times recently in the chamber, which is quite boring, and I

would urge you to be more creative and clever about ideas and actual things you could do at a provincial level. We are provincial government and you're always, always worrying about the feds instead of the task at hand, which is helping Ontarians.

You've mentioned this verbiage "carbon tax" so much, comparative to how many times you've mentioned health care—just a handful; or education—just a handful; or climate change: The only time I saw "sustainable" in the budget was "sustainable debt," and the only time I see "environment" in the budget is maybe "built environment," but it's not the climate emergency we're all in.

And certainly, go ahead—the referendum. If we're doing that, why stop at just a referendum on this? Do a referendum on people who believe that we're in a climate emergency.

And stop cherry-picking your consultations, because what about consulting with the mayors and councillors before you rob them of their development charges? Or the planning departments before you wreaked havoc with every type of planning, rule and regulation in the province? Or before you axed the powers of the conservation authorities—which we need to prevent massive floodings, which will affect your residents in the future in this climate emergency.

We're wasting time. You're wasting time. I like to say, "Tick-tock, get a clock," but we don't have time to waste with this climate emergency. You killed 750 renewable energy projects when you first got in, which could actually be—we could see them through to fruition right now. We could be using those and not be in the energy crisis we are in because of that. You wasted time in court and money in court.

So I urge you to get some new material for the chamber. It's getting really stale. And just remember that we are the provincial government, so let's deal with provincial matters.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Any further debate on schedule 5, sections 1 to 24? Seeing none, are the members ready to vote?

Mr. Matthew Rae: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Bresee, Coe, Kanapathi, Pang, Rae, Sabawy.

Nays

Clancy.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I declare sections 1 to 24 of schedule 5 carried.

Now, moving to schedule 5, as a whole, to vote on that, is there any debate prior to the vote?

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: Yes, I just wanted to make one more comment. I just wanted to say, I think it was—was it \$500 million that we lost because we tore up all those energy contracts?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: It was \$700 million.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: So \$700 million that we lost in energy projects that would have existed today—just garbage.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Further debate? Seeing none, are the members ready to vote on schedule 5 as a whole?

Mr. Matthew Rae: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Bresee, Coe, Kanapathi, Pang, Rae, Sabawy.

Nays

Clancy.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I declare schedule 5, as a whole, carried.

We're now going to go to schedule 6, the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act section. In schedule 6, section 1, we have some amendments. I'll call for amendment 0.2.2. MPP Clancy.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I move that section 1 of schedule 6 to the bill be amended by striking out subsection 100(1) of the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act and substituting the following:

"No toll for commercial transport

"100(1) No toll may be charged for the commercial transport of goods on a highway where the road authority is the crown, unless the toll is authorized by an act."

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Debate?

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: While tolls can serve a purpose, we don't believe that this should impact our economy negatively. So, just like we're seeing now, that tolls not be considered for transport trucks, we think that that's the policy we should take going forward. Rather than banning tolls altogether, we should ensure that tolls aren't charged to our transport truck drivers, adding to the cost of food and so on.

At this moment, we have no plan to pay for roads. It used to be the gas tax that I know you guys have waived, but there's a real concern. As a city councillor, I remember my first budget, and I saw one road out of many—hundreds of roads—that was going to cost \$16 million.

Electric vehicles are twice as heavy, generally speaking, than our average vehicle right now. So not only are we looking at an accelerated wear and tear on roads because of our transition to EVs, minus really small cars, but that being said, we're looking at a dwindling amount of resources that we're bringing in to fix roads, and we're also looking at an accelerated deterioration of our roads. So we are creating a perfect storm for a new crisis.

My concern—tolls tend to be a very equitable way of generating income. I am trying to encourage with these amendments that we remove tolls at the tune of \$260 million a year for our truck drivers, which is far less than the over \$2 billion that we'll pay to create new highways.

I hope that that makes sense on why tolls make sense and how we could take commercial transport out of the

equation to prevent any further escalation of costs and harm to transport truck drivers.

1340

I'm just going to read one quote, or maybe two: "Emissions from transportation are the largest and fastest-growing source of" greenhouse gases "in Ontario.... A new 400-series highway—which will incentivize car use—will make the climate crisis worse." We'll be doing that on the backs of people who don't drive, so all of us who don't drive will pay for these highways—that's to our environment minister.

"When you build new highway infrastructure, more people simply decide to drive and fill up the road space." We are creating a scenario of "induced demand" or "induced traffic."

I talked to folks who commute to Toronto, and we've done a lot to expand our highways in recent years—the roads are great—but he said that the traffic has never been worse in his decades of commuting from Kitchener to Toronto. If you build it, they will come.

Just like we put a price on pollution, we still need to pay the bills. When I bought my home, I didn't think that, all of a sudden, I could walk away and not pay the bills. We have to look at the operating costs of these roads, and that's why I'm speaking up a little bit when it comes to this policy.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Is there further debate on amendment 0.2.2?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I understand this amendment came in quite late to the committee, and when we reviewed this amendment, we feel that it really weakens the prohibition on tolls not authorized by an act by limiting the prohibition to apply only to trucks. This amendment would allow for new tolls on regular vehicles, so that's why the NDP will not be supporting the amendment.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Further debate?

Mr. Matthew Rae: Just one comment for the record: Our government, obviously, as everyone knows in this place, cut the gas tax, but we maintained that funding pot for our municipalities. The provincial government maintained the same amount before there was a cut in gas tax, so that funding is still there for our municipal partners.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Any further debate?

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: As a city councillor, we had some really frank talks, and that was last year. Our consumer price index has gone down to 3% and our construction price index still remains very high at about 7% or 8%. While maintaining funding for roads is appreciated by municipalities, I'm sure—because we're seeing this massive inflation on construction—it doesn't cut it. Oil and gas purchasing—that tax is used to pay for roads. So while you maintain funding, I don't know how sustainable that is with a \$9-billion deficit.

I think, if you use it, you pay for it in a lot of ways. We need to incentivize people to find other ways of getting around, but we don't want to do that at the expense of our economy, our food, our goods and our jobs.

How you get to work is your own business, but I think there is such a good argument to be made to not rule out

tolls. I'm not asking for tolls, I'm just asking that they not be ruled out for future consideration, given this circumstance I've said about reducing funds and increasing costs.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Further debate? Seeing none, are the members ready to vote on amendment 0.2.2?

All those in favour, please raise your hand. All those opposed, please raise your hand. I declare amendment 0.2.2 lost.

Going to amendment 0.3, I'll call on MPP Shaw.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I move that section 1 of schedule 6 to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection to section 100 of the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act:

"No tolls Highway 35/115, Highway 407 East

"(1.1) Despite any other act, regulation, policy, or order or other agreement, no toll may be charged for travel on Highway 35/115 or Highway 407 East and any existing tolls on those highways shall be removed."

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Debate?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I just have to talk about—this government just begs to be mocked with their titles of their bills. I mean, honestly, not only are the names so tongue-in-cheek, like "Get It Done"—I would have to say the question remains "Get it done for who?" in this government, but I think we've answered that question. We know who they want to get it done for, and it's certainly not for the average people in the province of Ontario.

The very fact that people are struggling to pay their bills—people can't afford to drive on the 407, the 407 East. They can't afford these tolls. The government provides faint hope by announcing that we're removing tolls on highways, and everyone said, "That's great." Oh, we're removing tolls on highways that actually don't have tolls, but are we removing the tolls on Highway 407, some of the highest tolls in the universe, I'm sure? No, so don't get your hopes up. If you thought for a second this government was going to do something to benefit you, you were wrong.

And we know, evidence shows, your track record shows, your lobbyist registries show—the dining room, who you sit and have lunch with shows—that you are working for corporate interests.

We know that Highway 407, a huge corporation, has a contract with the province, and they didn't meet the obligations of that contract, and they owe the people of the province of Ontario—how much do they owe them?

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: A billion dollars.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: A billion dollars.

There's an incredible opportunity for this government to say, "Hey, 407. You did not meet the obligation of this contract." Setting aside the fact that a Conservative government sold the 407, which was owned by taxpayers, after taxpayers spent hard-earned money paying for it—setting that aside, this was an opportunity for the government to come to the table. Doug Ford, who purports to be this tough negotiator—here was your opening. Go to the table and say, "407, don't whine about this. Do you know what? You owe us a billion dollars. And while we're at it, let's open the contract and let's see what we can do to provide relief for people who can't afford to drive on the 407."

People can't afford it, and it's so underutilized because people can't afford to drive on the 407 that a plane landed in the middle of the day, an emergency landing, because there are so few cars on Highway 407. It's a huge piece of infrastructure that the taxpayers of this province bought and paid for and was sold from under them by a Conservative government.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: No referendum there.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Yes, exactly. Where was the referendum for that? Exactly. And now that it's owned by a for-profit corporation and it's an underutilized, huge piece of infrastructure in the province, you've done nothing with it, sat on your hands, turned a blind eye.

We have Highway 413, which runs essentially—oh, pardon me. The QEW runs essentially—I said "413"—it rolls off my tongue, I have to say. We don't have it, but that's purported to run parallel to this highway. We have Highway 401, which is jam-packed and possibly unsafe. There are truckers on that all the time. The cost of delivering goods, the time delay, the accidents—the 401 is jam-packed. Here's a perfect opportunity.

We propose—our official opposition NDP moved forward with a great solution. Actually, people still talk about, "Keep going." Take the tolls, at least for truckers, off the 407 to provide relief on the highways, relief for truckers. Take the tolls away. And the government says, "Well, we can't. That's a private corporation. How could we ever deal with a private corporation?" Oh, my goodness.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: Expropriate.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Exactly. Why don't you expropriate it? That's a really good suggestion from MPP Clancy. We're both going to get our Irish up in a minute, and that'll be something for this committee.

So the fact that now you have put this piece of basically—what would I even call this? This is just some sort of billboard, or not even a billboard, to say, "Oh, we're going to remove tolls," when the real work, you're not prepared to do. You're prepared to put out these flashy slogans that mean nothing, that really essentially trick people, give them false hope, but you are not prepared to do actually anything.

1350

My actual—I'm trying to think of a better word than "disgust"—disappointment with this government just continues to grow. Because I suppose if you're beholden to corporations and you don't want to work on behalf of drivers or taxpayers, really that's your prerogative. But to come up with this essentially false hope, this misleading schedule that says to people, "We're going to take the tolls off that Highway 407" when you're not really doing it.

You're not only not doing it dealing with the corporation that owns this. You own a portion of this—

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): MPP Shaw, I'll just ask you: Some of the language you used is not—

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Which word? I was trying to be judicious.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): "Misleading."

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Oh. I thought it was "disgusted."

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): That too. I could say that too.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: But I was trying. I was going to my thesaurus in the brain.

I apologize. I apologize, Chair.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I encourage all members: Just use parliamentary language, please.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Yes. I apologize.

Let's not even talk about this government knuckling under or rolling over when it comes to the corporations around the part that is owned by a corporation. This government owns the 407 East. You have the ability. You could do it like that to take the tolls off of it. Why aren't you doing that? It's a very legitimate question. Why do we have this schedule when you're not doing anything about it?

People are so cynical about politicians and governments, and you cannot blame them.

Interjection: This doesn't help.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: This doesn't help. This kind of chicanery that this government is proof positive—further evidence that this government is playing not only with their pocketbooks, but they're playing with their emotions and doesn't really truly understand what the people of the province of Ontario are going through, that you would taunt them like this with a promise to remove the highest tolls on the Highway 407. But if they didn't read the fine print, they're going to be disappointed. Now this is the fine print. This does nothing but wastes time.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Further debate?

Seeing none, are the members ready to vote on amendment 0.3?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Armstrong, Shaw.

Nays

Bresee, Clancy, Coe, Kanapathi, Pang, Rae, Sabawy.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I declare amendment 0.3 lost.

Moving to amendment 0.3.1: When we're ready, the MPP that's introducing amendment 0.3.1—MPP Clancy, I believe that's you.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I move that section 1 of schedule 6 to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection to section 100 of the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act:

“Plan to remove tolls

“(1.1) The minister shall consult with affected stakeholders and prepare and publish a plan to remove tolls that apply to the commercial transport of goods on Highway 407 and Highway 407 East.”

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Debate?

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: We know that there's a lot of support for the 413 in communities that are affected by gridlock on the 401. We know that if trucks were to move to the 407—we do hear a lot about how there's a lot of costs for truckers. This is something that is possible to do,

to remove tolls for commercial transportation on the 407. This would help truckers.

I think folks in the Brampton area and beyond—my dad ran a trucking company—would very much appreciate being able to use the 407. We know time is money, and the time that they spend in gridlock on the 401 costs us all. If we want to talk about food pricing, perhaps that time spent in transportation, the emissions from transportation all add to the climate crisis, they add to food affordability and they negatively impact our economy.

I urge you to consider passing this amendment, which would take away tolls for the transportation of goods off of the 407 and 407 East. We think that this would go far, and it would prevent the need for a 413. We know right now that there needs to be a 413 because we have an empty highway that's not used to its full potential, so we have a good highway that's already built that we could make better use of.

We know that the councils of Toronto, Mississauga, Oakville and Halton Hills have all passed motions voicing their opposition to the 413. While I understand some would benefit from it, because the 407 is empty and the 401 is a mess, we know that if this amendment were passed, it would make the 401 a possible route to get to work and we wouldn't need the 413 at all. I don't have the acreage with me, but we know it's paving through green lands. It's paving through wealthy developers' lands that will get expropriated at a very dear cost.

We know that it's very expensive. We'll be spending \$260 million by getting rid of these tolls for transport truck drivers, but we will save the more than \$10 billion we would have spent on the 413, which is unnecessary. I've already talked about how much that road costs to maintain. So not only do we not have to build it, but we could save ourselves a lot of money down the road by having to maintain it.

This is a practical solution that would, I think, be in the best interests of your supporters and be a goodwill gesture to our transport truck drivers. We are shoving people into cars by just expanding more highways.

I'm going to stop there. Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Further debate? Seeing none, are the members ready to vote on amendment 0.3.1? The members are.

All those in favour, please raise your hands. All those opposed, please raise your hands. I declare the amendment lost.

On to the next amendment 0.4 by the NDP.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I move that section 1 of schedule 6 to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection to section 100 of the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act:

“Transition, regulations

“(1.2) The minister may make regulations providing for transitional matters as the minister considers necessary or advisable to facilitate subsection (1.1).”

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): The NDP motion 0.4 is out of order as it is dependent on an amendment which has already been not passed.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Voted down.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Yes, voted down. So that is out of order.

We're now going to move to amendment 0.5 by the NDP. I'll ask MPP Shaw to read that in.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I move that section 1 of schedule 6 to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection to section 100 of the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act:

"Discounts and exemptions

"(2.1) The minister shall provide for discounts and exemptions from tolls on Highway 407 and Highway 407 East for prescribed classes of persons in the prescribed circumstances."

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Debate?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: This amendment I think is really important to acknowledge that removing tolls from Highway 407 is really an important gesture on the part of this government. It has been said before that with future highway infrastructure, we really need to reconsider how we are planning for future infrastructure in the province. I think supporting this motion—it's really important that we look at ways that we help reduce costs for drivers, significant and tangible ways to find cost savings for drivers.

With that, I move the amendment.

1400

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Further debate?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I think, essentially, what this motion is speaking to is, basically, that the minister should provide discounts and exemptions from tolls on highways—Highway 407 has a huge toll, as well as what the government owns, the 407 East—because it's very important that we make sure that our highways don't have congestion. Everybody's talking about future infrastructure projects etc. But there are ways we can actually accomplish less congestion on our 400-series right now by providing discounts or exemptions to tolls on the 407 or 407 East.

So I hope the members of committee will look at putting this amendment inside this bill to strengthen the intent of the government when it talks about not having tolls on highways, the amendment we just talked about earlier, where, really, that amendment doesn't actually do anything, because there are no tolls on the highways that they're proposing, which is true of the 407. I think this is a correction to the government's intent to discount and give exemptions to drivers and commercial vehicles on the 407 and the 407 East.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Is there any further debate on amendment 0.5? Seeing none, are the members ready to vote?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Can we get a recorded vote?

Ayes

Armstrong, Clancy, McMahan, Shaw.

Nays

Bresee, Coe, Kanapathi, Pang, Rae, Sabawy.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I declare amendment 0.5 lost.

We're now going to go to amendment 0.6. I'll ask the NDP, MPP Armstrong.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I move that section 1 of schedule 6 to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection to section 100 of the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act:

"Regulations

"(2.2) The minister may make regulations prescribing anything that is referred to as being prescribed in subsection (2.1)."

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Committee members, the amendment is out of order as it was dependent on an amendment which has already been negated. So that amendment is out of order.

I'll now ask, shall schedule 6, section 1 carry? Any debate? Members are ready to vote? All those in favour, please raise your hands. That's schedule 6, section 1: I declare schedule 6, section 1 carried.

We're going to go to schedule 6, section 2. Shall schedule 6, section 2 carry? Is there any debate? Seeing none, are the members able to vote? All those in favour, please raise your hands. All those opposed, please raise your hands. I declare schedule 6, section 2 carried.

Shall schedule 6 as a whole carry? Any debate? Is there any debate on schedule 6 as a whole? Debate? MPP Clancy?

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I just want to reiterate my point that we don't need new highways; we can optimize what we have. But we could get traffic down now if we had electric buses in high-occupancy lanes, if we got rid of tolls for truckers—this would solve it.

It's a nightmare, driving to Toronto. I don't anymore; I take the GO train. If we could make the GO train faster and easier by having two-way, all-day GO, that would be a better use of our money than building a new highway that we know is not even going to be—it's going to be 10 years in the making and then we're back in the same position we are in instead of getting ahead of the ball.

We've got to look to where the puck is going. Once that land gets turned into a highway, the impacts are pretty incredible, and I hope that we don't find that this land belongs to people who could benefit from having the highway move this way or the highway move that way. I'm worried that the optics and the process of the 413 are problematic. We do have solutions we could take today to deal with gridlock on the 401.

Don't get me wrong: I appreciate that you aren't going to vote for our amendments, but I hope to one day see an amendment—that you guys could do right now, that folks across the table could do right now. We know they exist; there's answers right now. We don't have to spend billions and billions and billions of dollars on a brand new highway when we have a perfectly good one staying there. I talk to my kids about that all the time: "Let's use what we have first and then we can go shopping and get new things."

I hope you'll consider the negative impact of building a new highway. I think it saves 30 to 60 seconds for drivers

and we can only serve a smaller amount. If we invested in transit instead of highways, we could serve a greater population and save them more time.

If you really want to get bang for your buck, I discourage you from building the 413—not just on climate sense. If you want to talk fiscally, it's a better fiscal decision to invest in a—just like the Kitchener GO. I use the Kitchener GO every day; that thing is packed. Think of what we could do by having a Bolton line: transit—a GO train—that went through Bolton, where you project the need is. We can pack far more people onto transit. We could serve a greater audience in a more affordable way than building new highways and not using the ones we already have. So if you want to invest money, my vote is for transit.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Further debate?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: In summary, I just want to say that the irony of us debating a schedule which prohibits tolls on every provincial highway except the one that has tolls is not lost on me and it's not lost on the province. The government can make a lot about this, but really, this is simply a performative gesture to make it look like they're working on behalf of the people, but it does nothing.

I support the notion that drivers and the people of the province of Ontario can't afford the tolls that currently exist and probably can't afford future tolls, but let's get serious. This is not a serious government, with schedules like this that are empty promises. What is that campaign? "Where's the beef?" Like, it's just all bun, no beef. I think that people are tired of this kind of thing, and I wish that the government would really do something serious to help people.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Further debate? Seeing none, are the members ready to vote on schedule 6 as a whole?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Armstrong, Bresee, Coe, Kanapathi, Pang, Rae, Sabawy, Shaw.

Nays

Clancy.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I declare schedule 6 as a whole carried.

We'll now return to the first page to vote on sections 1 to 3—if you can turn there.

Section 1 of the bill: Is there any debate on section 1? This is section 1. There are no amendments. It's just section 1 of Bill 162.

Any debate? Seeing none, are the members ready to vote on section 1? All those in favour of section 1, please raise your hands. All those opposed to section 1, please raise your hands. I declare section 1 carried.

Shall section 2 carry? Any debate? Seeing none, are the members ready to vote? All those in favour of section 2,

please raise your hands. All those opposed, please raise your hands. Carried.

1410

We'll now go to section 3 of the bill, the short title: Any debate on section 3? MPP Clancy, nothing? You're good? Section 3, short title? We're all good? No debate?

MPP Shaw?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: The short title of the bill, the Get It Done Act—

Interjections.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Just a second. If MPP Shaw is okay—

Interjections.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): MPP Shaw, keep going.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: So the Get It Done Act: Get it done for who, is my question? Or, can't get it done, because what we also see is a province that's maintaining the status quo. We haven't built housing that we need. We have this government currently that has the largest subnational debt in North America. When they came to power, I remember them saying, "Oh, the Liberals had this huge debt and how much was owed by every man, woman and child." You've doubled that, so this government currently spends the least in Canada, pulling up the rear on social spending, on spending for health care, education, the things that matter to people—the environment, colleges. But at the same time, you have accumulated a massive debt. You have almost a 40% debt-to-GDP. You're right up there with the Liberals when they left office. And for all that spending, how is it you are spending this much money, but at the same time, you are underfunding, underspending and shortchanging education and health care?

Again, get it done for who? Where is this money going? My point is that this government is spending big. You are big spenders, but you're not spending it on the people and the things that matter in this province. All you're doing is working, as we have said so many times, for insiders, for connected people and really just maintaining—I wish you were maintaining the status quo when it comes to health care, but in fact, we are falling so far behind. We have a health care sector that is in crisis all across Ontario.

So you named your bill Get It Done—get it done, honestly, for all the kids that have to go to food banks in this province. Get it done for people like my family, where my grandson had to wait almost 18 hours in emerg. Get it done for them. Get it done for all the public health workers under Bill 124 that you now owe \$6 billion to. Get it done for them.

Get it done for people that are struggling in this province, but don't just get it done for your insiders and your connected donors and land speculators. That's not how we are going to build a province that we can once again be proud of.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Further debate?

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I'd just like to ask for a 10-minute recess—

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): No, no. MPP Clancy, we're almost ready for, I believe, an amendment that you are wanting to bring forward? So if you could just give us

a few minutes? The Clerk is just going to distribute it. We don't need a recess.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: Okay. Maybe I'll just debate while we—and then you can let me know when I can recess.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I think that we have to share the amendment first.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: Oh, yes, fair enough.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Hold on; it's coming.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I'd just like to debate this—

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): You can just read your amendment and then we'll do the debate.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: Oh, okay. I'll read the amendment and then I'll do debate about why I'm proposing this. I know it's a bit cheeky, but that's okay.

I'll share this around. I am proposing an additional amendment. I move that section 3 of the bill be struck out and the following substituted: The short title that I propose for this act is the Get It Done Wrong Act, 2024—I've got to have some fun.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): You just have to read the amendment in full. I don't think we've got that captured totally yet.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I move that section 3 of the bill be struck out and the following substituted:

“Short title

“3. The short title of this act is the Get It Done Wrong Act, 2024.”

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Committee members, I'll have to rule the independent amendment brought forward, number 0.7, out of order. The amendment is moved at the wrong place in the bill—so if it is tendered in a spirit—

Interjection.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Yes. Just to clarify, it's ruled out of order if it is tendered in a spirit of mockery.

Is there any further debate on section 3, the short title?

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I just want to debate as a whole, if there's an opportunity to debate the overall Bill 162—when that opportunity arises.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): We can do that when I go back to the last part, okay?

Are the members ready to vote on section 3? All right. All those in favour of section 3 carrying, please raise your hands. All those opposed to section 3, please raise your hands. Carried.

Shall the preamble of the bill carry? Debate? Okay. Are members ready to vote? All those in favour, please raise your hands. All those opposed, please raise your hands. The preamble is carried.

Shall the title of the bill carry? Any debate? Seeing none, are the members ready to vote? All those in favour? All those opposed? I declare the title of the bill carried.

Shall Bill 162, as amended, carry? Any debate? MPP Clancy, you wanted to debate?

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: Yes. I was reflecting on this process—this is my first clause-by-clause, as many of you

might know—and my worry, by overriding the decisions made by regional governments, whether it be about the 413, about boundary changes, about expropriation of land, is that we are removed already from the lived experience of people who are on that land and who need those resources and need that land for their life. Luckily, because I live in the Waterloo region and I was part of the regional official plan process, I was able to share a little bit about water, a little bit about the farmland economy. Our biggest economy in our region is our farming community.

I urge you that when we look at these tables—I think there were 100 modifications. I didn't count them one by one; maybe 50—that these numbers mean something to someone; that every modification is a parcel of land. It's a farm. It's a wetland. It's a place people go to walk their dogs. It's a place where water is cleaned. It means so much to people who are in those spaces. So I am discouraged a little bit by the process, because I know that just by looking at modifications of land on paper, by looking at some of these proposals that really do very little to change, we're not using our time well, and we really should be connecting well with the impact of the bill on the people who live in these spaces.

I always believe in good process, and that's why I will be voting against this bill, because I do believe that we're acting like a bull in a China shop here, that we're trying to do too much too quickly and we're overriding the good process that already exists in many places.

I hope we can slow things down a little bit but also speed things up. My regional official plan, again, was two years ago. It was made two years ago. This delays housing. So I hope that we will look beyond the paper and consider what's been said today and the new ideas you'll bring forward in the coming months and years.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Any further debate on Bill 162, as amended?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Recorded vote, please.

Ayes

Bresee, Coe, Kanapathi, Pang, Rae, Sabawy.

Nays

Clancy, McMahon.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): I declare Bill 162, as amended, carried.

Shall I report the bill to the House? No further debate on that? All those in favour, please raise your hands. Any opposed? Seeing none, I shall report Bill 162 to the House, as amended.

There being no further business, this committee now stands adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1421.

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