

HANSARD

NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

**COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Tuesday, April 27, 2021

Video Conference

Agenda-Setting Meeting

Printed and Published by Nova Scotia Hansard Reporting Services

**NATURAL RESOURCES AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Hon. Gordon Wilson (Chair)
Rafah DiCostanzo (Vice-Chair)
Hon. Leo Glavine
Hon. Ben Jessome
Bill Horne
Hon. Pat Dunn
Tory Rushton
Claudia Chender
Lisa Roberts

[Hon. Patricia Arab replaced Hon. Gordon Wilson.]

In Attendance:

Heather Hoddinott
Legislative Committee Clerk

Gordon Hebb
Chief Legislative Counsel



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, TUESDAY, APRIL 27, 2021

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

1:00 P.M.

CHAIR
Gordon Wilson

VICE-CHAIR
Rafah DiCostanzo

THE CHAIR: This is the Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Economic Development. I am Rafah DiCostanzo, the MLA for Clayton Park West. Today will really be just an agenda setting, we don't have any witnesses.

We are preparing the topics for the next full year, I guess, for this year. This meeting will be a video conference. I'm just going through the usual - do we have anybody who wasn't there this morning, or not familiar? I will go through them.

The committee members, the clerk, and the Legislative Counsel should keep their video on during this meeting, with their microphone on mute, unless the Chair calls on them to speak. They should mute their own microphone before speaking and then put it back on mute afterwards.

All other staff should have their audio and video turned off. If you have other devices, like a cellphone, please check that they are on mute or vibrate, and please try not to leave your seat during this meeting unless it's absolutely necessary. If I need to confer with the clerk or the Legislative Counsel, or members wish to confer before a vote, I may call for a recess. If any members have technical problems, please reach out to Heather, not to me.

Now I can ask the committee members to introduce themselves.

[The committee members introduced themselves.]

THE CHAIR: The topic today is just agenda setting. Does everybody have the topics in front of them? We can start with the PC caucus. There are four topics and you get to choose two out of four, I believe. Who would like to speak for the PC caucus to choose the topics? Mr. Rushton.

TORY RUSHTON: In the absence of MLA Dunn, I'd like to request our first two topics, the first being the Beaches Act, and the second topic on our list is Sustainable Agriculture - Community Water Systems and Groundwater Contamination Protection.

THE CHAIR: Any discussion? Ms. Roberts.

LISA ROBERTS: The PC caucus has proposed the Department of Lands and Forestry related to beaches and coastal issues. I wonder if they [Inaudible]

THE CHAIR: Sorry Ms. Roberts, we lost you. We're losing connection.

LISA ROBERTS - across Nova Scotia, and I understand that is under [Inaudible] particularly I think John . . .

THE CHAIR: Ms. Roberts, you're going to have to repeat the whole thing. Your connection has been bad. We hardly heard what you said. I don't know if your connection is slow. Do you want to try it again? We missed 90 per cent of what you said. Do you hear me?

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I think she's trying. Just give her a second to make a better connection.

THE CHAIR: No problem.

LISA ROBERTS: Does this work better?

THE CHAIR: Yes, I believe so. Repeat everything because it wasn't clear.

LISA ROBERTS: I was wondering if the PC caucus would be open to adding the Department of Environment to the topic related to coastal and beach issues, because I understand the Coastal Protection Act is being developed by the Department of Environment. I understand that the person responsible is John Somers. I'm not sure at what level in the department, but I think that might add some additional value to that important topic, if the caucus is open to that proposal.

THE CHAIR: Mr. Rushton, go ahead please.

TORY RUSHTON: By all means. I don't see any reason why we shouldn't include the Department of Environment and Climate Change in this aspect. I know that some of the issues coming to our caucus office have actually been linked to contacts within the Department of Lands and Forestry, but with the development of the other aspects, I have no opposition to that, certainly.

THE CHAIR: Everybody is in agreement? Just put your hands up and we'll accept that. Thank you. Ms. Hoddinott, you got that, right? You'll include the Department of Environment and Climate Change. Thank you so much.

All right, we're done with the PC caucus. We now move on to the NDP caucus. Who would like to speak on the topics? On the one topic, I believe? Ms. Roberts or Ms. Chender.

LISA ROBERTS: Thank you. The topic we would like to put forward at this time is COVID-19 economic recovery, with a number of witnesses: CCPA Atlantic - that's the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, and for them, Dr. Karen Foster; Helping Nature Heal, Rosmarie Lohnes; Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources; El Jones; QUEST - that's related to deep energy retrofits; and CUPE.

THE CHAIR: If I may, this seems to be a large number of witnesses. We know that if we have a large number - are they all presenting and having - it's just a large number. There would be very little time for questioning if we have that many people. Maybe we could limit it to two or three, and the others, will they be presenting opening remarks and closing remarks and all that as well? I'm worried about the time that would take.

Ms. Chender, go ahead.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Well, Madam Chair, I think we've seen this number of presenters in the past a number of times. I think it would be fair that we could limit the introductory remarks to a certain amount of time, but I also think that as it's with one topic, it's a good opportunity to have a number of different folks to ask about the economic recovery. I think often we're in kind of a very narrow band, talking to business or talking to one sector or another, so we felt it was important to have this broader sector.

Taking into account what you're saying, I think on the front end, in terms of opening remarks, we can certainly do our best to make sure everyone has time to ask questions.

THE CHAIR: Maybe Ms. Hoddinott can tell them 10 minutes total, and they have to share it somehow between them. That's the normal time, approximately.

I see the hand from Mr. Jessome. Go ahead, Mr. Jessome.

HON. BEN JESSOME: Madam Chair, I guess in the spirit of that subject, I would suggest that we add the Department of Inclusive Economic Growth to that list of stakeholders related to the subject of COVID-19 economic recovery.

THE CHAIR: The government is not included in your list, Ms. Roberts.

LISA ROBERTS: I think we would be open to that, but with maybe 20 minutes in total for opening remarks, which I think is fairly typical for committees in a two-hour meeting. I think 20 minutes of opening remarks is fine. We'll communicate with our witnesses to ensure that they understand the importance of keeping their opening remarks tight.

THE CHAIR: So we are in agreement: a total of 20 minutes and we're including the government as well, correct? Perfect.

A show of hands that everybody is in agreement. Wonderful. Thank you.

I'll take this opportunity to ask Mr. Dunn to introduce himself before I move on to the Liberal caucus. I just want to make sure we can hear you, Mr. Dunn. We see you, but we don't hear you. Mr. Dunn is with us.

Next we are going to the Liberal caucus. Who would like to speak on behalf of the Liberal caucus for the topics? Mr. Jessome.

BEN JESSOME: Sorry, my internet is being a little spotty too, folks. I apologize. Just bear with me. We're doing these as a slate or are we doing it one to one?

THE CHAIR: You can choose all three. It's up to you. Would you like me to go one by one?

BEN JESSOME: No, I can do them in a slate. We're looking to contribute one, two, and four on your list: How Nova Scotia is Preparing for Climate Change with Jason Hollett, Kyla Milne, and Satya Ramen; the Lobster Quality Research and Innovation Centre with Michelle Theriault and Geordie MacLachlan; and Get Your Hands on Local with Emily Haynes and Scott Hosing.

THE CHAIR: Any discussion? I see none. We are in agreement if everybody put up their hands. That's three topics for the Liberal caucus.

BEN JESSOME: Sorry, Madam Chair, did I miss the second PC subject?

THE CHAIR: They did the first two.

BEN JESSOME: I missed that.

THE CHAIR: Next is the committee business. We had a letter from the Department of Infrastructure and Housing in response to the request for information made the meeting for February 25, 2021. The correspondence was sent twice, I believe.

Has everybody received it and is there any discussion? I see none. Thank you.

Our next meeting is tentatively on May 25th from 1:00 p.m. until 3:00 p.m. The Clerk will be checking with the witnesses to see who we will have. We will be reaching out to the witnesses for that meeting. Correct, Ms. Hoddinott?

HEATHER HODDINOTT (Legislative Committee Clerk): Yes, that is correct.

THE CHAIR: Any other issues or discussion? As I see none, we will adjourn the meeting. I thank you all. This was fast and easy. I hope, Mr. Dunn, you're able to fix your technology, but it's lovely to see you here. Thank you all.

The meeting is adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 1:18 p.m.]