



## DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

**Speaker: Honourable Keith Bain**

Published by Order of the Legislature by Hansard Reporting Services and printed by the Queen's Printer.

Available on INTERNET at <http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/proceedings/hansard/>

### First Session

**FRIDAY, MARCH 25, 2022**

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS:</b>	
Annual Accountability Report on Emerg. Depts., Hon. M. Thompson .....	1465
<b>GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION:</b>	
Res. 176, World Water Day: Raising Awareness of Importance of Safe Water - Recog., Hon. T. Halman .....	1466
Res. 177, 24 <sup>th</sup> Ann. Min. of Fish. and Aquac. Conf.: Fostering Ind. Collab. - Recog., Hon. S. Craig .....	1466
Res. 178, Cdn. Agric. Safety Week: Raising Awareness of Safety on Cdn. Farms - Recog., Hon. G. Morrow .....	1467
<b>INTRODUCTION OF BILLS:</b>	
No. 106, An Act to Amend Chapter 85 of the Revised Statues, 1989, the Condominium Act, Hon. T. Rushton .....	1468
No. 107, An Act to Repeal Chapter 17 of the Acts of 2003, the Crosbie Memorial Trust Fund Act, Hon. B. Comer .....	1468
No. 108, An Act to Amend Chapter 34 of the Acts of 2001, the Lobbyists Registration Act, S. Hansen .....	1468
<b>STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS:</b>	
Dominion Royal Cdn. Legion Br. 78: 65 <sup>th</sup> Anniv. - Congrats.,	

J. White .....	1468
Omicron Variant: N.S. Deaths - Recog., Hon. K. Regan.....	1469
McDonough, Alexa: Death of - Tribute, C. Chender .....	1469
Schnare, Barry: 50 Yrs. of Serv. with Chester Volun. Fire Dept. - Recog., D. Barkhouse.....	1470
Megan, Cassidy: Epilepsy Awareness - Thanks, R. DiCostanzo.....	1470
McDonough, Alexa: Death of - Tribute, K. Coombes.....	1470
Digby Area Tourism Assoc.: Tourism Prom. - Recog., Hon. J. Balsler .....	1471
Old Orchard Inn: 50-Yr. Anniv. - Congrats., Hon. K. Irving.....	1471
McDonough, Alexa: Death of - Tribute, L. Lachance.....	1472
Matthews, Doris: St. Georges Channel Com. Hall Work - Recog., T. Boudreau.....	1472
Hart, Jeremy: Death of - Tribute, Hon. B. Maguire .....	1473
McDonough, Alexa: Death of - Tribute, S. Leblanc .....	1473
Palladium Family Restaurant: 40 <sup>th</sup> Anniv. - Congrats., Hon. T. Ince .....	1474
Charlton, James & Penelope: Daughter - Birth Congrats., G. Burrill.....	1474
Johnston, Dr. Celeste: Recip. of Order of Canada - Recog., Hon. K. Masland.....	1474
Impact Fitness: Community Impact - Thanks, A. Duale.....	1475
Blumenthal, Jerry: Death of - Tribute, S. Hansen .....	1475
New Germany Vol. Fire Dept.: Smoke Detectors Campaign - Recog., Hon. S. Corkum-Greek .....	1476
Mohammed Ali, Samar: New Business - Congrats., B. Clark.....	1476
N.S. Disabled Community: Premier's Commitment - Reflect, G. Burrill.....	1476
Wadden, Mable: Death of - Tribute, Hon. B. Comer .....	1477
Horgan, Jo-Ann: Constituency Assistant Work - Recog., F. Tilley.....	1477
Renovictions: Need to Safeguard Housing - Recog., C. Chender .....	1478
Baxter, Jayson: Recip. of O'Brien Media Excel. Awd. - Congrats.,	

Hon. S. Craig.....	1478
El-Darahali, Saeed: Recip. of Order of N.S. - Congrats., L. Nicoll .....	1479
N.S. Ukrainian Coms.: Solidarity - Recog. K. Coombes.....	1479
Salt Springs 4-H Club: Com. Serv. - Thanks, Hon. K. MacFarlane.....	1480
Vydykhan, Talia: Success in AUS Volleyball Ch'ships - Recog., Hon. B. Jessome.....	1480
Blumenthal, Jerrold Searl: Death of - Tribute, S. Hansen .....	1480
Africentric Her. Park: Value to Black Com. - Recog., Hon. P. Dunn.....	1481
Cain, Lee'Marion: Death of - Tribute, A. Simmonds.....	1481
Epilepsy Awareness Day: Supp. For Those With Epilepsy - Recog., L. Lachance.....	1482
Higgins, Brittany: Festive Families Pgm. Contrib. - Recog., Hon. T. Halman.....	1482
Brokovskiy, Lex: Ukraine Relief Work - Recog., R. LeBlanc .....	1483
N.S. Gov.: Energy Poverty - Recog., S. Leblanc .....	1483
Hilden Fire Brigade: Recog. Awards - Congrats., L. Harrison .....	1484
Wartime Heritage Assoc.: Ongoing Work - Recog., Hon. Z. Churchill .....	1484
Chrysalis House: Com. Serv. - Recog., Hon. J. Lohr .....	1485
Fairn, Evan: Constituency Assistant Work - Thanks, C. Kerr.....	1485
Kidney, Riley: Success in Quebec Major Jr. Hockey League - Best Wishes, J.A. MacDonald .....	1486
Proctor, Erika Dawn, Death of - Tribute, Hon. K. Regan.....	1486
Silver Slayter, Rebecca: Release of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Novel - Congrats., Hon. A. MacMaster.....	1487
Adam, Avi: Hockey Canada Under-18 Team Placement - Recog., Hon. K. Irving.....	1487
d'Entremont, Tessa: Huntlie Rose Hats Creation - Recog., Hon. C. Leblanc .....	1488
<b>ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS:</b>	
No. 281, ECC: Otter Lake Landfill Change - Explain, Hon. I. Rankin.....	1489
No. 282, Prem.: Renoviction Ban Removal - Wrong Thing, G. Burrill .....	1491

No. 283, ECC: Otter Lake Landfill Change - Adverse Impact, A. Duale .....	1493
No. 284, ECC - Otter Lake Landfill: Waste Promise - Confirm, Hon. T. Ince .....	1494
No. 285, Prem. - Atlantic Loop: Funding Progress - Update, Hon. I. Rankin.....	1496
No. 286, NRR - N.S. Power: Performance Standards - Support, C. Chender .....	1497
No. 287, NRR: Secure Federal Funding - Plan, Hon. K. Irving.....	1498
No. 288, NRR - N.S. Power: Affordability - Options for Support, Hon. B. Jessome.....	1499
No. 289, NRR - Fossil Fuel Transition: Federal Help - Confirm, R. LeBlanc .....	1500
No. 290, ECC - End to New Oil & Gas Bids - Support, S. Leblanc .....	1501
No. 291, NRR - Atlantic Loop Plans - Confirm, F. Tilley.....	1502
No. 292, NRR - Atlantic Loop: Alternate Plans - Discuss, B. Clark.....	1503
No. 293, FTB: Surplus Use Priorities - Discuss, L. Lachance.....	1503
No. 294, NRR: Renewables Plan - Discuss, Hon. P. Arab .....	1504
No. 295, NRR - Atlantic Loop: Plan B - Details Hon. B. Maguire .....	1505
<b>GOVERNMENT BUSINESS:</b>	
<b>PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING:</b>	
No. 96, Dismantling Racism and Hate Act Hon. P. Dunn.....	1507
Hon. T. Ince .....	1509
S. Hansen .....	1510
Hon. C. LeBlanc .....	1511
A. Duale .....	1512
L. Lachance.....	1513
Hon. P. Dunn.....	1516
Vote - Affirmative.....	1516
No. 99, Quality-improvement Information Protection Act (amended) Hon. M. Thompson.....	1517
Hon. P. Arab .....	1518
S. Leblanc .....	1519
Hon. M. Thompson.....	1519
Vote - Affirmative.....	1519
No. 101, Marine Renewable-energy Act (amended) Hon. T. Rushton.....	1519
C. Kerr.....	1520

C. Chender .....	1521
Hon. T. Rushton.....	1522
Vote - Affirmative.....	1522
No. 102, Wildlife Act (amended)	
Hon. T. Rushton.....	1522
C. Kerr.....	1525
C. Chender .....	1526
Hon. T. Rushton.....	1526
Vote - Affirmative.....	1527
No. 104, Interjurisdictional Support Orders Act	
Hon. B. Johns.....	1527
A. Simmonds.....	1528
C. Chender .....	1529
Hon. B. Johns.....	1530
Vote - Affirmative.....	1530
SPEAKER'S RULING:	
Attempt to table document during Member Statements is out of order (Tabled by G. Burrill on March 25, 2022) .....	1530
ADJOURNMENT, House rose to meet again on Tue., March 29 <sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. ....	1531
NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3):	
Res. 179, Piekney, Michaela/MacDougall, Caylon: Son - Birth Congrats., Hon. K. Masland .....	1532
Res. 180, Whynot-MacLeod, Martina/Hamm, Jesse: Son - Birth Congrats., Hon. K. Masland .....	1532
Res. 181, Long, John/Veinot, Laura: Wedding - Congrats., Hon. K. Masland .....	1533



**HALIFAX, FRIDAY, MARCH 25, 2022**

**Sixty-fourth General Assembly**

**First Session**

**9:00 A.M.**

**SPEAKER**

Hon. Keith Bain

**DEPUTY SPEAKERS**

Angela Simmonds, Lisa Lachance

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. We'll begin the daily routine.

**PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS**

**PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

**TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table the Annual Accountability Report on Emergency Departments.

THE SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

**STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

**GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

**RESOLUTION NO. 176**

HON. TIMOTHY HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas March 22<sup>nd</sup> was World Water Day, an annual United Nations observance to celebrate water and raise awareness of the importance of safe water for our health, livelihoods, environment, and to support our industries and economy; and

Whereas the focus of World Water Day was groundwater, a precious resource that we rarely see but that provides drinking water for 52 per cent of Nova Scotians. It helps to grow our food, supports our industries and ecosystems, and supplies water to our lakes and rivers; and

Whereas the call to action for World Water Day this year was sustainability to ensure our planet's groundwater benefits us and our environment now and into the future;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House and Nova Scotians join me in recognizing the importance of groundwater and commit to working together to protect our groundwater from contamination and to manage this precious resource in a sustainable way.

Mr. Speaker, I ask for waiver of notice and passage with debate.

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

**RESOLUTION NO. 177**

HON. STEVE CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas due to evolving COVID-19 health protocols, the 24<sup>th</sup> Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture Conference, partnered with the Aquaculture Association of Nova Scotia's Seafarmers Conference, originally scheduled for February 22, 2022, has been postponed until October 12-13, 2022; and

Whereas, as a prelude to the conference in the Fall, several free webinars have been offered to the Nova Scotia seafood sector and its industry partners in February and March, including an international panel discussion on the importance of the blue economy and the potential it holds for our province here in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the conference, entitled Navigating the Future: Quality and Reliability Through Innovation, coordinated in partnership with the Aquaculture Association of Nova Scotia and produced in association with Perennia Food and Agriculture Inc., will be offered both as an in-person and live simulcast event and will take place at the Halifax Convention Centre;

Therefore be it resolved that all Members of the Legislative Assembly thank the many dedicated people who make up the Nova Scotia seafood sector for their ongoing support and contributions to the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture and Seafarmers conferences, which foster industry collaboration on key issues that impact our rural and coastal communities.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice and passage without debate.

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 178**

HON. GREG MORROW: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas for more than a decade, the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association has been raising awareness of safety on Canadian farms for the Canadian Agricultural Safety Week campaign; and



Whereas this year, Canadian Agricultural Safety Week took place from March 13<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> under the theme of Safety is Our Standard; and

Whereas the aim of this year's campaign was to inspire farmers, farm families, and farm communities to value farm safety every day;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize the work of Farm Safety Nova Scotia and the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association for bringing the significance of farm safety to the attention of all Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice and passage without debate.

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

#### **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill No. 106 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 85 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Condominium Act. (Hon. Colton LeBlanc)**

**Bill No. 107 - Entitled an Act to Repeal Chapter 17 of the Acts of 2003, the Crosbie Memorial Trust Fund Act. (Hon. Brian Comer)**

**Bill No. 108 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 34 of the Acts of 2001, the Lobbyists' Registration Act. (Suzy Hansen)**

THE SPEAKER: Ordered that these bills be read a second time on a future day.

#### **STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay.

#### **DOMINION ROYAL CDN. LEGION BR. 78: 65TH ANNIV. - CONGRATS.**

JOHN WHITE: Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to recognize the Dominion Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 78. On May 14<sup>th</sup>, Branch 78 will celebrate its 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This is an active Legion and very much a community centre. They regularly host activities

such as suppers, youth movie nights, bingos, dart leagues, and youth Christmas parties. These important socializing experiences are in addition to the supports carried out for veterans, as well as very impactful Remembrance Day services.

Branch 78 provides a safe place for veterans where peer-to-peer support is made possible, and the social activities have proven to be places for family members to connect with a supportive environment. The Legion is involved in everything that is Dominion. Congratulations to Branch 78 Legion on your 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

THE CHAIR: The honourable member for Bedford Basin.

### **OMICRON VARIANT: N.S. DEATHS - RECOG.**

HON. KELLY REGAN: Today I want to recognize all the Nova Scotians who have died of COVID-19 since the last time this House met. Most of these folks died with the Omicron variant, 133 as of yesterday; more deaths than all the other waves of COVID-19 put together.

I want to extend my condolences and those of my caucus colleagues to the families of those Nova Scotians. Most of those who died were above the age of 65, but not all. The people who died loved and were loved, they were special to their families, to their friends, to their colleagues. Many of them thought they would have many more years together.

A lot of people thought COVID-19 was over last Fall. Some even minimized the risk of Omicron, ignoring evidence emerging elsewhere, and saying its effects were mild, but death is not mild, Mr. Speaker, and victims of COVID-19 do not go gently into that good night. We must be mindful of those 133 deaths, lest history repeat itself.

THE CHAIR: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

### **MCDONOUGH, ALEXA: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

CLAUDIA CHENDER: As I listened to the three party leaders in this Chamber rise to mark the passing of Alexa McDonough yesterday on the occasion of her passing, it occurred to me that in the spirit of honouring her legacy, a few different voices might also be welcome.

So much is known or has been shared about Alexa, but I will share with this Chamber what I was fortunate enough to share with Alexa and her family and friends recently. For me, Alexa was an icon because she was fearless, she was trusted, and she was loved. There are few politicians about whom this can unreservedly be said. I ask all members of this House to join me in aspiring to these same high ideals of public service.

THE CHAIR: The honourable member for Chester-St. Margaret's.

[9:15 a.m.]

**CHESTER PLAYHOUSE: REBUILDING AFTER FIRE - RECOG.**

DANIELLE BARKHOUSE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Barry Schnare for his 50 years of dedicated service as a member of the Chester Volunteer Fire Department, where he has worked and mentored with humility, honour, and professionalism. Barry has been a firefighter and officer, including Deputy Chief, and is the caretaker of the department's pride and joy: Pumper 2, the 1953 GMC pumper, affectionately known as "The Antique."

Barry's father and two sons were also firefighters, and his wife, Wendy, was a member of the Auxiliary. The Schnares remind us of what keeps rural communities thriving: Engagement, participation, and commitment. Well done, Barry, well done, Schnare family, and thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

**MEGAN, CASSIDY: EPILEPSY AWARENESS - THANKS**

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the hard work of the Epilepsy Association of the Maritimes and Purple Day founder, Cassidy Megan, for raising awareness about epilepsy. Recently, the association held their annual Purple Day Gala, which my office was very happy to support. Epilepsy affects more people than we truly are aware of and I am so thankful for the hard work that Cassidy and the association is doing to support people across my riding, across the province and worldwide.

Tomorrow, March 26<sup>th</sup>, is Purple Day. In echoing Cassidy's words at the gala, I would encourage everyone to help break the stigma and stereotypes that people with epilepsy face every day. I would ask the members of the House to join me in thanking the Epilepsy Association of the Maritimes and Purple Day founder Cassidy Megan for their continued work to support epilepsy awareness.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier.

**MCDONOUGH, ALEXA: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

KENDRA COOMBES: Mr. Speaker, the words that are synonymous with Alexa McDonough - trailblazer, crusader, social justice leader, role model, relationship builder, activist and so much more. To put it simply: she was and always will be "Alexa."

Alexa once said in this Chamber that she may be the only woman in the Nova Scotia Legislature, in the 1980s, but she would not be the last. She believed a woman's place was in the Legislature and set out to make it happen. I would argue that she was successful

because I never questioned if I could go into politics and be a public servant along with being a mom because Alexa and the women who followed showed me I could. So the question was never: Could I? The question was: When would I?

Alexa's dedication and commitment to diversity, inclusion, and social justice paved the way for many people. It is up to us to keep the doors open, to open new doors and to encourage others along the way. My deepest condolences to her family and friends.

SPEAKER: The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis.

**DIGBY AREA TOURISM ASSOC.: TOURISM PROM. - RECOG.**

HON. JILL BALSER: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the Digby Area Tourism Association, also known as DATA, a non-profit organization that supports the promotion of the Digby area as a tourism destination and facilitates authentic and memorable experiences for visitors. Like many communities across Nova Scotia, Digby has been significantly impacted by the pandemic. Tourism is one of the most popular industries in the area and is vital to the majority of local businesses. Even throughout the pandemic, DATA continued to promote the area to the best of their ability despite any barriers.

I'd like to take the opportunity to recognize this group and every single one of their volunteer board members. The work they do is fantastic and much needed for this rural part of the province.

SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

**OLD ORCHARD INN & SPA: 50TH ANNIV. - CONGRATS.**

HON. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, any Nova Scotian who has attended a sports competition or a conference in the Annapolis Valley over the past half century likely knows the great hospitality provided by the Old Orchard Inn, owned and managed by Bill Wallace and Sally Swanburg. Bill's father, Don Wallace, opened the hotel in 1972 with 66 guest rooms and it has since grown to include 100 guest rooms, 30 cottages, a dining room, a heated pool, a hot tub, a sauna and a full-service spa - all overlooking the awe-inspiring Cape Blomidon and the Valley.

The addition of the Conference Centre in 2000 created new opportunities for the facility to hold weddings, conferences, and other events and by partnering with local wineries, cideries and distilleries, they offer a truly authentic and unique Valley experience. I ask all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Bill Wallace, Sally Swanburg, and the staff of the Old Orchard Inn and Spa on 50 years in business and wishing them all the best for the next 50.

SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

**MCDONOUGH, ALEXA: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

LISA LACHANCE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my reflections on the life and legacy of Alexa McDonough. Many will speak about how because Alexa ran, they felt they could get into politics too. But I also want to acknowledge that Alexa's legacy lies with the many women and other folks who, while not entering politics, were buoyed by Alexa's courage of raising critical issues of inclusion and fairness. I know that my mom was thrilled to hear public officials speak of the daily experiences of sexism and exclusion that she, Alexa, and their peers faced.

Alexa met with me as I was considering entering public life and that conversation on a warm day in the Halifax Public Gardens will always stay with me. On the day before the election last year, I visited Alexa. She was thrilled to be part of a discussion in her home, with her peers, about NDP ideas. Her support helped carry me through the last day of the campaign.

Mr. Speaker, I offer my condolences to Alexa's family and friends and honour her legacy for all Nova Scotians. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

**MATTHEWS, DORIS: ST. GEORGES CHANNEL COM. HALL WORK - RECOG.**

TREVOR BOUDREAU: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the president of the St. Georges Channel Community Hall, Doris Matthews. Doris has been the heart and soul of the hall as president for over 22 years.

She is an excellent leader and has promoted the monthly breakfasts at the hall so well, they are recognized throughout Cape Breton. It's one of my family's favourite community breakfasts. Card plays and coffee clubs are also a part of the success of the hall, and because of Doris's dedication they are slowly working their way back to popularity after the pandemic.

I ask members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in thanking Doris Matthews for many years of outstanding work at the St. Georges Channel Community Hall.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

**HART, JEREMY: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, fishing is an incredibly Nova Scotian job and is taxing both physically and mentally. The brave men and women risk their lives daily to put food on our plates and support our communities.

This past season, we saw another tragic fishing accident. The family and friends of Jeremy Hart mourn his passing. His family described him as living every day to its fullest. As someone who lived my entire life around fishermen and women, I thank them and appreciate them for all they do.

To Mr. Hart's family, you are in our prayers. To all the families, especially those in the Sambro area, know you are loved and appreciated and be safe.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

**MCDONOUGH, ALEXA: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I would like to add some thoughts about Alexa McDonough.

During the 1981 provincial election, the Gay Alliance for Equality invited provincial candidates to celebrate the first-ever Pink Triangle Day. Alexa was the only one who accepted the invitation.

In her book *Before the Parade*, Rebecca Rose writes about LGBTQ activist Deborah Trask's memory of the night. She said, "Everyone was so astounded that she came that they were reaching out to touch her, to thank her, and I really felt that her presence validated our community."

As politicians, as community leaders, every decision we make about how we choose to show up has ripple effects that we may never know. Alexa going to that event was important at the time for the people there, but it also demonstrated to our party that the NDP could be a party of justice and equality and equity.

Alexa McDonough is a name I've known for as long as I can remember. Since the age of seven, I have known that women are in politics, that they can debate men about ideas, that they can debate other women about ideas, and they can go to big gay parties before it was a cool thing to do.

This has been profoundly important to me, and I've always thought of Alexa and the women she's influenced as a special kind of superhero. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cole Harbour.

**PALLADIUM FAMILY RESTAURANT.: 14<sup>TH</sup> ANNIV. - CONGRATS.**

HON. TONY INCE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Palladium Family Restaurant on their 14<sup>th</sup> anniversary of being a staple restaurant in Cole Harbour.

Owner Fernando Lucas and his staff have rolled with the punches COVID-19 threw at them with the style and grace they always have in putting their customers' safety first.

The Palladium has a diverse Greek cuisine and fresh seafood which customers say is never served without a smile. Fernando is an important player in our community, committing to and being involved in various charities, events, and being the host of some at his restaurant.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the members of this House to help me in congratulating Fernando and the Palladium Family Restaurant on their 14<sup>th</sup> year of dedication and business to the Cole Harbour community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the New Democratic Party.

**CHARLTON, JAMES & PENELOPE: DAUGHTER - BIRTH CONGRATS.**

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, there is no joy so great as that of a new life coming into the world. I would like us all to take a moment to be present to this joy and offer together our heartfelt congratulations to our House's Chief Clerk, James Charlton, and his partner, Penelope, on the birth of Ashley Isabelle Charlton on February 12, 2022.

May our friend and his family know every happiness as they set out on this road.  
(Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens.

**JOHNSTON, DR. CELESTE: RECIP. OF ORDER OF CANADA - RECOG.**

HON. KIM MASLAND: I rise today to recognize Dr. Celeste Johnston of Hunts Point, and to congratulate her on recently being named to the Order of Canada, one of our country's highest civilian honours, which recognizes outstanding achievement, dedication to the community, and service to the nation.

Dr. Johnston studied at the Royal Victoria Hospital School of Nursing in Montréal and completed her master's degree at Boston University before attending McGill University to achieve her doctorate in 1979. She then worked at the Montréal Children's Hospital, where she became the director of nursing research and went on to teach at McGill from 1989 to 2011. Dr. Johnston retired to Hunts Point, Queens County, and is now a professor emeritus at McGill. She is known as a trailblazer in neonatal pain research.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in applauding Dr. Johnston on receiving this prestigious and well-deserved honour.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armadale.

### **IMPACT FITNESS: COMMUNITY IMPACT - THANKS**

ALI DUALE: Today I would like to recognize an independent gym operating from within the Halifax Armdale riding. Impact Fitness is a wonderful institution with personal training, staff who are truly dedicated to give clients a unique and maintainable fitness experience.

Being active is an essential part of health and lifestyle. Impact Fitness helps Halifax Armdale constituents find what works for them in this regard, both inside and outside the gym. I want to thank Impact Fitness for the impact they are having on the community's health. I wish them all the best in the years to come.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

### **BLUMENTHAL, JERRY: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

SUZY HANSEN: I rise today to announce with great sadness that Jerry Blumenthal, a Halifax Needham community member, has passed on to glory February 3, 2022, the day after his 82<sup>nd</sup> birthday.

“Mr. B.,” a retired municipal councillor for North End Halifax, was a former school board administrator and a teacher. Mr. B. played a huge role in my journey to this stage in my life, and I'm grateful for his long talks and words of encouragement to myself and my family throughout my life in the north end. He will be truly missed by many.

Mr. B. was a community-minded person who advocated for disabled and seniors in our community, and he supported anyone whom he felt needed a voice. Among other things, Mr. Blumenthal was instrumental in 2012 in getting Halifax City Hall to launch a pilot project offering free rides on public transit on Tuesday for senior citizens. It was said that Jerry was always larger than life. He was all about the people, and he was a huge baseball fan.

Mr. B. created a legacy, whether it was in the classroom, in council chambers, or later in life, and I'd like to ask all members to join me in remembering Mr. B. in the House today.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.



**NEW GERMANY VOL. FIRE DEPT.:  
SMOKE DETECTORS CAMPAIGN - RECOG.**

HON. SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: On February 19th, an unimaginable tragedy occurred in the community of Auburndale, taking the lives of a young mother and three children. As Nova Scotians, we all wept for the horrific loss to the Savory, Stewart, and St. Hilaire families, and closer to home in the communities of Lunenburg and Queens, we longed for ways we could support and comfort those whose grief was so immense.

It was the members of the New Germany Volunteer Fire Department who came up with the idea of a campaign to provide free smoke detectors to every child in their protection areas. To date, another 19 departments have joined this effort in memory of Kaylea, Harley, Hendrix, and Kinsley.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to commend Chief Blair Lantz, firefighter and municipal councillor Michelle Greek, and all others involved in this deeply meaningful initiative.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

**MOHAMMED ALI, SAMAR: NEW BUSINESS - CONGRATS.**

BRAEDON CLARK: I'd like to recognize a remarkable constituent of my riding whom I had the pleasure of meeting just this week. Samar Mohammed Ali is a settlement counsellor with ISANS, but also has recently started her own small business. Samar's Wreath Boutique, where she makes beautiful homemade wreaths and flower arrangements. She told me that working with flowers is a way for her to meditate and bring some joy to her family and friends, which is a lovely thought - so Samar is a great person.

She also has a remarkable personal story. She was born in Baghdad, moved to Syria, and was forced to leave Syria as a refugee. She arrived here in Halifax in 2014, and achieved her Canadian citizenship in 2018. She is a wonderful person starting a great new small business and I would like the House to wish her all the best of luck on this venture.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable leader of the New Democratic Party.

**N.S. DISABLED COMMUNITY:  
PREMIER'S COMMITMENT - REFLECT**

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a historic day for our province, October 6, 2021, a day when Nova Scotia's top court ruled that the human rights of the disabled community were being violated when they were deprived of the right to decide where and how they live in their community. I would like to table the following article published in the *Chronicle Herald* October 8<sup>th</sup> entitled "Houston commits not to fight disabled rights ruling."

I quote: “The provincial government will not attempt to justify what a court ruling said appears to be systemic discrimination against low-income people with disabilities. ‘I just don’t think anybody should have to take their government to court to get their government to do the right thing,’ the Premier told a news conference on Thursday.”

I asked the House to reflect on the historic significance of the Premier’s October commitment to the disabled community of Nova Scotia.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton East.

### **WADDEN, MABEL: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

HON. BRIAN COMER: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay respects to the family of the late Mabel Wadden of Catalone, who passed away mid-January at the age of 86. Not many events took place in Catalone or surrounding communities that she wasn’t involved in, as she was known for putting the community and family first.

Mabel was awarded a Senate 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Medal, which is awarded to Canadians actively involved in their communities through hard work, dedication, and volunteerism, making their communities and hometowns better places to visit and live.

She was one in a million, Mr. Speaker, with a heart of gold. I stand here today to remember Mabel and applaud her for living life to the fullest.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

### **HORGAN, JO-ANN: CONSTITUENCY ASSISTANT WORK - RECOG.**

FRED TILLEY: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate, recognize, and thank my Constituency Assistant Jo-Ann Horgan. Jo-Ann has worked so hard making our constituency office accessible and open for business during the pandemic.

She has helped so many seniors and so many people with forms, with the ability to obtain grants, and I just cannot thank her enough. We all know that our constituency work is the most important piece that we can do for our constituents, and a great constituency assistant is key to that work. Jo-Ann exemplifies excellence in everything that she does.

I would like to stand here and recognize her today for the hard work that she has done in helping me be successful.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

**RENOVICTIONS: NEED TO SAFEGUARD HOUSING - RECOG.**

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I rise today with the fate of eight Dartmouth South households on my heart and mind. Within 24 hours of lifting the ban on so-called renovictions, these people were given notice to leave their homes in Dartmouth South for just this reason.

Some of them have lived in their units for over 35 years. Some are seniors, some are parents, and at least one is patiently waiting for a long-term care bed. There are ways to stay this eviction for a few months, but in the end, they will be forced to leave.

With the affordable housing stock at an all-time low, I don't know what will happen to them nor can I offer them more than direction towards meager rent subsidies, a five-year long waiting list for public housing, or a move far outside the city and away from their community, schools, and resources.

I ask my colleagues to join me in starting this session with this stark reminder that housing is a human right, and that right is ours to safeguard.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

**BAXTER, JAYSON: RECIPIENT OF O'BRIEN MEDIA EXCELLENCE AWARD - CONGRATS.**

HON. STEVE CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Jayson Baxter of Lower Sackville.

Jayson, co-host & producer of CTV News at 5, created and produced a five-part miniseries entitled *Saving Sammy*, which took us along the journey that Jayson and his dad, Dennis Baxter, endured to save their beloved family horse, Sammy, a former racehorse, from an American kill pen.

This story touched many hearts and, as a result, Jayson was awarded the 2021 O'Brien Media Excellence Award in the category of Outstanding Broadcast. The O'Brien Awards are the highest honour the harness racing sport bestows upon its heroes here in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask that all members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Jayson Baxter for *Saving Sammy*, winning this prestigious award, and thank him for bringing this feel-good story into our homes and hearts, reminding us of the remarkable love between humans and animals.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Dartmouth.

**EL-DARAHALI, SAEED - RECIP. OF ORDER OF N.S. - CONGRATS.**

LORELEI NICOLL: Mr. Speaker, today I stand to recognize a long-time Dartmouth resident and recent recipient of the Order of Nova Scotia, Mr. Saeed El-Darahali.

As you are aware, the Order of Nova Scotia is the highest honour in our province, recognizing those who have distinguished themselves in many fields of endeavour and have made lasting contributions. Mr. El-Darahali is the first Muslim ever to receive this decorated distinction.

Saeed and his family moved to Nova Scotia from the Middle East at the age of 13. A graduate of St. Mary's University, Saeed also served in our Armed Forces. A former board member of the Ummah Masjid and Community Centre, Saeed identifies himself first and foremost as a family man.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in offering our most sincere congratulations to Mr. El-Darahali and his family, and our hope that he will continue to serve his community and Nova Scotia for years to come.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier.

**N.S. UKRAINIAN COMS.: SOLIDARITY - RECOG.**

KENDRA COOMBES: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my solidarity with the Ukrainian people and Ukrainian communities in Cape Breton, across Nova Scotia, Canada, and the world, as Vladimir Putin wages war.

My riding is hurting, having one of the highest Ukrainian populations in Nova Scotia. It is home to the Holy Ghost Ukrainian Church, the only Ukrainian church east of Montreal, and it is led by Father Roman. Many residents in my community are in pain and fear, especially for their families in Ukraine. There are no words to provide comfort while we watch people flee from their homes, listen to reports of deaths, and witness the human cost of war that again flash across our screens.

I had the privilege of attending a mass at the Ukrainian Hall officiated by Father Roman. The service was emotional, honest, and vulnerable. Father Roman gave space for the community to feel the pain, the fears and the anger together. The community continues to support one another by helping to fundraise for relief, open their homes to refugees, and the simple act of flying the Ukrainian flag. Although no words can express the emotions people are feeling, small acts such as these provide comfort.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

**SALT SPRINGS 4-H CLUB: COM. SERV. - THANKS**

HON. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, in November 2021, the Salt Springs 4-H Club members were recognized by Divert Nova Scotia for the hard work they do picking up litter along a portion of Route 4 between Salt Springs and Mount Thom.

At one time, the Salt Springs chapter of the Women's Institute did the work, but due to the declining membership had to pass the baton on to another group. Divert Nova Scotia recognized the 4-H members for stepping up to the task and praised them for their dedication and environmental stewardship.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in thanking the Salt Springs 4-H Club for their hard work, dedication and stewardship to not only this area but to the entire community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hammonds Plains-Lucasville.

**VYDYKHAN, TALIA: SUCCESS IN AUS VOLLEYBALL CH'SHIPS - RECOG.**

HON. BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to recognize Talia Vydykhan and the Dalhousie Women's Volleyball Team on their recent success at the AUS championships. In particular, Talia is a hometown favourite in Hammonds Plains-Lucasville. She is a student majoring in therapeutic recreation. She is no stranger to provincial and national volleyball camps and, as many athletes at that level would have experienced this year and in the past couple of years, COVID-19 placed a little bit of a different feel on training. That was something she took in stride, as did many athletes.

I'd like to acknowledge the fact that that dedication, regardless of the change in scenery, paid off as the Dal Tigers won their 9<sup>th</sup> straight AUS championship with a 3-0 win over the St. Mary's Huskies. The team is now off to the nationals in Calgary this weekend.

Mr. Speaker, I'd ask everybody to join me in congratulating the Dal Women's team and wish them luck this weekend.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

**BLUMENTHAL, JERROLD SEARL: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

SUZY HANSEN: I rise today to acknowledge Jerrold Searl Blumenthal, who leaves behind his wife Nancy, daughters Sheryl and Andrea, son Darren, stepdaughter Jennifer, brother Bob, 10 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

"Mr. B." earned his education and science degrees from Dalhousie University. He retired as an educator in 1994, after 32 years in the field. Later that year, he was elected

alderman for the city's north end in the former City of Halifax. When HRM was formed in 1996, Blumenthal was a member of Regional Council until retiring in 2004. During Blumenthal's time on Halifax council, he served as deputy mayor, a one-year term that the post allows, and was president of the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, now the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities. He was also one of Halifax City Hall's relatively few Jewish municipal politicians over the years.

Mrs. Blumenthal, Mr. B will be greatly missed, and I will always make sure that I will live by his example and continue to listen to the voices of our community. I'd like to send my condolences to Mrs. Blumenthal and their lovely family.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

**AFRICENTRIC HERITAGE PARK:  
VALUE TO BLACK COM. - RECOG.**

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, residents of the African Nova Scotian community hold in high regard the Africentric Heritage Park, situated on the Vale Road in the south end of New Glasgow. The park opened in 2000 and bears the inscription "To Our Children." It was created to commemorate the past, focus on the present, and provide a foundation for the cultural future of the African Nova Scotian community.

The 10-metre-tall, glass-peaked pyramid is composed of stones gathered from Africa, Europe, the United States, and Canada, representing the origins of the northeastern Nova Scotian Black community. Each side of the building represents a portion of the history and migration story of the Black community in Nova Scotia. The park remains a place of peace and quiet, a place of tranquility where a person can rest and contemplate.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

**CAIN, LEE'MARION: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

ANGELA SIMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to honour and pay tribute to Lee'Marion Cain from North Preston, who was eight years old when his life was taken way too soon on December 21, 2021. Lee'Marion was better known to all of those who loved him in his community as "Mar Mar" and has touched many hearts. Mar Mar had a courageous mind, and always asked questions, said his teachers. He was a ray of sunshine and had an infectious smile with a distinctive voice. When asked the question "What does peace mean to you?," he responded, "Peace and love go together."

Although he was taken from us way too soon, he left a mark that will be forever remembered by his family, friends, community, and the people around this province. To support the family and community, on December 23, 2021, a prayer vigil to celebrate his

life was held with faith leaders, community leaders, and prayers for the family and by the family for peace and justice.

Lee'Marion led with peace and love for the eight years he lived on this Earth, and if there's one thing that we can learn from him and do the same for the remainder of ours, it's to be guided by peace and love.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

**EPILEPSY AWARENESS DAY: SUPP. FOR THOSE WITH EPILEPSY - RECOG.**

LISA LACHANCE: I would like to recognize that tomorrow, March 26<sup>th</sup>, is Epilepsy Awareness Day. Epilepsy is a disorder of the brain marked by repeated seizures or periods of unusual behaviour, sensations, and sometimes loss of awareness. Between 0.5 and 1 per cent of the population has epilepsy. In Nova Scotia, this means between 5,000 to 10,000 people are affected.

On Saturday, Nova Scotians could help raise epilepsy awareness by wearing purple. This tradition, now recognized internationally, was started here in Nova Scotia nearly 15 years ago by eight-year-old Cassidy Megan. The Epilepsy Association of the Maritimes does crucial work, Mr. Speaker, to provide education, support, and advocacy for those living with epilepsy and their families. The organization recently held its Purple Day Gala, a night filled with fun and entertainment while supporting epilepsy awareness.

I ask that all members join me tomorrow by wearing purple to raise awareness for this important issue.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

**HIGGINS, BRITTANY: FESTIVE FAMILIES PGM. CONTRIB. - RECOG.**

HON. TIMOTHY HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize Brittany Higgins and the amazing staff on Unit 5 East at the Dartmouth General Hospital.

In September 2021, Brittany contacted the Dartmouth East office because she was looking to start a fundraiser amongst her nursing colleagues to help support a local family during the holiday season. The Dartmouth East office explained our Festive Families initiative, and we found a strong partnership with Brittany and the 5 East staff.

Throughout the Fall, we coordinated gift ideas for the Festive Family recipients. Nothing could have prepared us, though, for the donations from Brittany and her colleagues. By December, the Dartmouth East office was overwhelmed to receive a box

full of toys for children, as well as a financial contribution that was used to provide families with gift cards to local businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to sincerely thank Brittany Higgins and the staff on Unit 5 East at the Dartmouth General Hospital for their contribution in making Dartmouth East's Festive Families program as successful as it was. (Applause)

[9:45 a.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare.

**BRUKOVSKIY, LEX: UKRAINE RELIEF WORK - RECOG.**

RONNIE LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, with the start of the invasion of Ukraine, there are people like Lex Brukovskiy who made the difficult decision to return home to help. Lex, an immigrant who settled in Clare, brought with him to Ukraine the \$20,000 he raised in his community to help refugees and the people of Ukraine.

Lex has arrived safely in Lviv, the city where his mother now helps to feed the soldiers and civilians protecting the city. There, he is helping at a distribution centre, as he joined a convoy bringing supplies to the east and bringing out people to the relative safety of the west.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to join me in honouring Lex and all those people who felt compelled to go to Ukraine to try to make a difference in the lives of the Ukrainians. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

**N.S. GOV.: ENERGY POVERTY - RECOG.**

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, following Nova Scotia Power's rate hike application, I received many emails and phone calls protesting the proposed hike in my office. Many people shared with me the impact that these changes would have on their ability to pay their power and heat. Even without the increase, many folks in Dartmouth North are struggling to pay their power bills.

Mr. Speaker, energy poverty is defined as a household spending more than 6 per cent of their income on heat and other power. My constituency office often hears from residents whose power is about to be cut off, or has been cut off, because they can't pay their bills.

One of the common services we offer is to help folks apply for the various heat and power rebates and emergency fund applications, but these programs are meant to be



emergency programs when you have an outstanding bill or there's some reason why you're about to be disconnected. For people living on chronically low incomes, that emergency can happen year after year. The situation also forces families to choose between paying for their energy and paying for food, rent, or medications.

As we move through this session, I urge the government to make changes necessary that will ensure that all Nova Scotians will be able to afford their energy bills and be able to live in comfort throughout the cold Winters and the hot Summers.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley.

### **HILDEN FIRE BRIGADE: RECOG. AWARDS - CONGRATS**

LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, recently the Hilden Fire Brigade presented their members with their recognition awards. The banquet, unfortunately, could not be held in person again this year, but members were still honoured with their awards.

Officer of the Year went to Alan Johnson, while Firefighter of the Year was awarded to Brett Henley. The Frank Arseneau Dedication Award was presented to Chantal Hamilton. Many service awards were presented as well, including Marvin Richardson for 25 years, Ralph Reade for 30 years, Michael Arseneau for 35 years, Lee Emanuel for 40 years, and Frank Arseneau for an incredible 45 years.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all of the members for their service and offer my congratulations to the award winners. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

### **WARTIME HERITAGE ASSOC.: ONGOING WORK - RECOG.**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, Canadians and Nova Scotians remember the sacrifice of those who serve and those who gave their lives in the service of Canada in military conflicts.

I would like to acknowledge the ongoing work of the Wartime Heritage Association, based in Yarmouth, which makes remembrance a year-round endeavour. Their research documents, through personalized remembrance pages, stories and photos: WWI casualties, and those who served with ties to Yarmouth County; the WWI casualties of Digby and Shelburne Counties; WWII and Korean War casualties from all of Nova Scotia; the Telegraphist Air Gunners of the Fleet Air Arm Royal Navy who trained in Yarmouth and England in WWII; and Canadian RCAF WWII casualties aged 16 to 18.

Thanks to sources available today, their curated list of Nova Scotia World War II casualties now includes over 50 Armed Forces members who died while serving who are

not yet included in Canada's Book of Remembrance in Ottawa. The association maintains an extensive website of their research at [www.wartimeheritage.com](http://www.wartimeheritage.com), viewed monthly by thousands of people from around the world.

I ask this House to join me in acknowledging the work of George Egan, Glen Gaudet, and Gary Gaudet of the Wartime Heritage Association and thanking them for their many years of commitment to remembering our wartime history and that of individual men and women who have served in our Armed Forces.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

**CHRYSALIS HOUSE: COM. SERV. - RECOG.**

HON. JOHN LOHR: I rise today to bring recognition to the Chrysalis House board of directors, the Project Renew committee, and the frontline staff, who collaboratively provide services to families in the town of Kentville and surrounding communities.

Chrysalis House provides crisis shelter, counselling, advocacy, and transitional support for abused women and their children who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing violence and abuse.

The Chrysalis House board of directors, the Project Renew committee, and the frontline staff empower women to make their own choice to live violence-free. They bring valuable skills, knowledge, and hands-on support by giving of their own services to benefit the community.

Please join me today to recognize their hard work and dedication.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Annapolis.

**FAIRN, EVAN: CONSTITUENCY ASSISTANT WORK - THANKS**

CARMAN KERR: As MLAs, we wouldn't be able to be here today and continue to serve thousands of constituents without the support and hard work of our constituency assistants. I'm very fortunate to work alongside one of the most talented CAs in the province, Evan Fairn.

Evan has excelled in this role for years, serving and supporting Keith Irving, Scott Bryson, and Stephen McNeil prior to working with me these last seven months. His position is mentally and emotionally challenging and demands long hours. Our assistants are under constant pressure to navigate difficult issues and situations and provide solutions and information to those who reach out for assistance.

Evan welcomes this challenge. He thrives in this environment, and he continues to serve Annapolis with the highest level of integrity and professionalism. I invite all members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Evan Fairn for his excellent work as constituency assistant for Annapolis.

THE SPEAKER: Just one note of correction. One of the names you mentioned is a member of the House. You should refer to him as the member for Kings South. That is the proper name.

The honourable member for Hants East.

### **KIDNEY, RILEY: SUCCESS IN QUEBEC MAJOR JR. HOCKEY LEAGUE - BEST WISHES**

JOHN A. MACDONALD: For those who follow hockey, like me, Riley Kidney's name is becoming familiar in many homes in Nova Scotia. Drafted 63<sup>rd</sup> in the 2021 NHL draft by the Montréal Canadiens, Kidney has been playing this season with the Acadie-Bathurst Titan of the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League.

He had a solid 2020-2021 season with 38 points in 33 games. He's had a stellar playoff with 17 points in only nine games, bringing him to the attention of the scouts. The 2021 season is under way, and Riley is making a mark in the season with 72 points in 48 games. His hockey IQ and skills were on display at one game in particular this year when he scored the overtime winning goal and assisted on the other in a 2-1 win over Cape Breton.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like the members of the House to join me in wishing Riley a successful 2021 season, and I look forward to him someday soon playing in the NHL.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford Basin.

### **PROCTOR, ERIKA DAWN: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

HON. KELLY REGAN: I want to share some sad news with this House. One of Bedford's most active volunteers passed away in January at the age of 51 after a short illness.

Erika Dawn Proctor was a loving mother and cherished wife, a valued volunteer and community member. She always made any organization she was involved with better. Everywhere she worked, Erika gathered lifelong friends. She volunteered at schools, sports programs, and community events. She chaired Bedford Days and was involved in the Bedford Business Association. She was a lifelong artist and had numerous shows and has artwork at the Teichert Gallery and the Dart Gallery.

Most of all, Erika was full of life and loved to be active, often with her family and her dogs by her side. She loved to travel and have new experiences. My condolences go out to her family: her husband David; children Jacob and Hannah; her father Bruce Hogue; her brothers and sisters; as well as her extended family, many friends, and admirers.

Erika was a spectacular person, and I will miss her calm, kind, friendly, creative presence in our life in Bedford.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

**SILVER SLAYTER, REBECCA: RELEASE OF 2ND NOVEL - CONGRATS.**

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I would acknowledge a local author who last August released her second novel with Penguin Random House Canada.

Rebecca Silver Slayter, who lives in St. Joseph du Moine, released *The Second History* to critical acclaim. Michael Redhill, who was short-listed for the Giller Prize, had high praise for Rebecca's book, saying, "Gorgeously written and packed with unforgettable scenes, *The Second History* is a towering achievement."

Giving back to the literary world is also one of Rebecca's passions, as she serves as the director of the Cabot Trail Writers Festival and editor of *Brick, A Literary Journal*.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Rebecca for her literary achievements as we wish her continued success.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

**ADAM, AVI: HOCKEY CANADA UNDER-18 TEAM PLACEMENT - RECOG.**

HON. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, it is inspiring to watch young athletes excel and reach for their dreams.

At just 14 years old, Avi Adam was the youngest player on the Nova Scotia 2019 Canada Winter Games female hockey team. Avi hails from Wolfville and is currently playing forward at Etobicoke in the Ontario Women's Hockey Association U22 Elite League.

As one of Canada's elite female hockey players, Avi was recently recognized by Hockey Canada as a member of the Canadian National Women's Under-18 team. The team was to compete at the 2022 International Ice Hockey Federation's Under-18 Women's Championship in Sweden, but unfortunately due to the pandemic, the tournament was cancelled.

I ask all members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Avi Adam on being recognized by Hockey Canada to our Under-18 National Team and wish her continued success as she pursues her dream of playing in the Olympics.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

**D'ENTREMONT, TESSA: HUNTILIE ROSE HATS CREATION - RECOG.**

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Tessa d'Entremont of Lower Wedgeport, who found a way to grieve and heal through the creation of her business, Huntlie Rose Hats.

Tessa's story began a few years ago when she and her husband Chad decided to have a baby. After two years of trying, the couple was very excited when they conceived. Due to complications, Tessa went into early labour and on November 9, 2020, she delivered their baby girl. Huntlie Rose was born, but only spent a very short time with her parents.

Looking for a hobby to help keep her mind occupied, Tessa decided to make hats with a knitting machine. Initially hoping to make enough for her family and friends, she received over 100 orders in the first week. That was the start of her Huntlie Rose hat business. Since officially launching her Facebook page in January 2021, she has sold over 600 hats and headbands.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this Legislature to join me thanking Tessa and Chad for sharing their story and showing how love and grief can be put together into an inspirational project.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

IAIN RANKIN: In the gallery opposite, we have with us John Cascadden, former vice-chair of the Otter Lake Community Monitoring Committee. We have councillor Iona Stoddard for the Beechville-Timberlea-Clayton Park-Wedgewood area, former councillor Reg Rankin - related - for Beechville-Lakeside-Timberlea, and Prospect and Hammonds Plains at one time.

We also have members of the Beechville community with us as well. We have Alfred Jarvis and Patsy Crawford. We have the vice president of the Brunello development, Andrew Giles, and the Chair of the Community Monitoring Committee, Scott Guthrie.

If you could all rise and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much. We welcome all visitors to the Chamber.

Before we get into Question Period, I just wanted to stress that today there were numerous member statements that exceeded the time, so I'm going to ask once again - I've let it go this time because this is the first day, but from now on, please try to keep your member statements to 45 seconds. If I say 45 seconds, you might finish in a minute. (Laughter)

[10:00 a.m.]

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

### **ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS**

THE SPEAKER: The time is 10:00 o'clock. We will stop at 11:00 a.m. - 10:50 a.m., sorry. Thank goodness it's Friday. (Laughter)

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

### **ECC: OTTER LAKE LANDFILL CHANGE - EXPLAIN**

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, in April of 2013, the PC party, then in opposition, tabled a resolution in this House confirming all-party support to ensure the front-end processor and waste stabilization would remain at Otter Lake landfill in my riding of Timberlea-Prospect.

There are members in the House who were there - the now Deputy Premier and yourself, Mr. Speaker. That resolution passed unanimously and was so important to the party at the time that they had a press release go out. That party has now broken that promise and effectively made resolutions in this House useless.

At the time, Minister Belliveau, Premier Darrell Dexter, and Bill Estabrooks stood by the community. Successive ministers and premiers all supported the community until this week. HRM and the facility's operator have gotten their way. Why? With the change of government and a cold, political calculation.

My question to the Premier: Why do the voices of the people in Beechville, Lakeside, Timberlea, Prospect, Hubley, and Upper Tantallon no longer matter?

HON. TIM HOUSTON (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the important question. I would just say that all voices always matter to this government, that's for sure. I'd ask the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to give a more fulsome answer specifically about the resolution.

HON. TIMOTHY HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. As the regulator, it is my job to ensure process is played out. This decision was made by the local administrator based on the most up-to-date information, based on the most up-to-date science through that application.

There's another phase to this process, Mr. Speaker. If the community so chooses to appeal, as the regulator, I will ensure that that process continues. The community has 30 days from the time of the application to submit an appeal. From there, following those 30 days, the regulator has 60 days to render a decision.

IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, he has an obligation under Section 52 of the Environment Act to ensure that any decisions made in his department have no adverse impacts on the community. I'm sure that if he has the courage to prove that there will not be any adverse impacts, an environmental assessment can be called in this area - which hadn't happened before.

An environmental assessment was a requirement and that was waived on the condition of public consultation, which resulted in a citizens' stakeholder committee. The 1999 agreement between HRM Council and the community incorporated these environmental protections in place and only "acceptable waste" could enter the landfill. Hence, the requirement for the front-end process.

Will the minister call for an environmental assessment, given these protections derived from consultation are about to be eliminated under his watch?

TIMOTHY HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, first of all, the commitment to the circular economy, the commitment to expanded extended producer responsibility, the commitment to reducing waste to 300 kilograms per person by 2030 - that is all outlined in the Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, what we have here is a decision rendered by a local administrator that has placed very strict terms and conditions before that front-end loader and waste order can be deactivated. No doubt the member for Timberlea-Prospect is aware of those terms and conditions.

As I previously indicated, Mr. Speaker, if the community wishes to appeal that decision, as the regulator I will ensure strong stewardship of that process.

IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the 300 kilogram target - it was set in 2007 and just reiterated recently.

Again, the resolution said that all members of the House of Assembly direct the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to reject any requested changes to the Otter

Lake Waste Management Facility operating permit that would remove the front-end processor.

A legal review of the 1999 agreement, which I'll table, found that the change to the standard of acceptable waste can only be achieved through mutual negotiations and the consent of HRM and the community. The term "acceptable waste" refers to stable materials, substantially free of traceable elements after bio-stabilization. I'm talking about organics. The review stated that equivalent results would be required. That's the legal opinion.

I would like to ask the minister to tell this House and the residents of Timberlea-Prospect exactly how the operator and HRM will achieve the same level of acceptable waste achieved now by the front-end processor and waste stabilization, which he has removed.

TIMOTHY HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, as the member for Timberlea-Prospect is aware, as a former Environment Minister and as a former Premier of this province, decisions must always be based on the best updated information that we have using the most updated science. That's what has transpired here: a decision by the local administrator to make a decision based on science. That is why - along with that decision of the local administrator - very strict terms and conditions have been put into place that HRM has to comply with prior to any deactivation of that front-end loader.

I will reiterate that as the regulator - the process still is unfolding. If the community wishes to have an appeal, I will ensure strong stewardship of an appeal as any regulator would.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the New Democratic Party.

### **PREM.: RENOVICTION BAN REMOVAL - WRONG THING**

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, the people of Nova Scotia are facing combined housing and cost-of-living crises, and they have every right to expect that their government is not going to make things worse. But this is exactly what the government did this past Monday when they lifted the ban on renovictions. The very minute that the renovictions ban was lifted, our constituency offices began to hear from a flood of tenants who were facing immediate processes towards renoviction.

Does the Premier not see that, in a time of intensifying cost-of-living and housing crises on the people of the province, lifting the ban on renovictions is exactly the wrong thing for the government to do?

THE PREMIER: Obviously, we understand and feel and sympathize with the pressures that that are on Nova Scotians on the cost of living - on Canadians with the cost



of living. This is not a Nova Scotia issue. This is a Canadian thing, it's a North American thing, it's a worldwide thing.

Specifically to the housing file, there's a lot of good work happening on the housing file. I'm so happy with the work that Minister Lohr and the commission are doing on housing. We are moving forward on a number of housing initiatives that have been ignored by previous governments. We're picking the ball up. We're going to run with it.

In terms of renovictions, we're troubled when we hear about those situations. There's a specific process in place. If the member wants some more information on that process to use to protect his constituents, we'll be happy to inform him of the actual process.

THE SPEAKER: I'd like to just remind the Premier: he referred to the individual as the minister. There was a proper name mentioned there.

The honourable Leader of the New Democratic Party on his first supplementary.

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, the moment of intensifying cost-of-living pressures in Nova Scotia is not the moment to conclude programs that are providing support to people on this front.

The government did a very good thing in January, from this point of view, when they implemented paid sick days. But that program, too, is about to be lifted - in fact, next week. With the cost of living going up at a rate that we haven't seen in 30 years, there are many, many people in our province who simply can't afford to miss out on a day's pay because they stayed home because they weren't feeling well.

Does the Premier not see that at this moment of escalating, intensifying cost-of-living pressures, ending paid sick days is actually going to make things worse?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the member opposite and all Nova Scotians that we understand the pressures that Nova Scotians are under. We're taking a number of steps to support Nova Scotians. We're doing as much as we can and will continue to do more. There's always more to do.

I do find it ironic that the member in this Chamber is so concerned about the cost of living, yet this morning issued a press release condemning this government for investing in Nova Scotians.

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, there's nothing ironic about the government ending the ban on evictions. It is simply wrong. There's nothing ironic about the government proposing now to end paid sick leave next week. That's simply wrong.

Because of this, many people are now afraid that another essential program, which has been providing great cost-of-living support through this present intensifying period - that's rent control - is also slated to be allowed to end and allowed to lapse. I want to ask the Premier if he will assure us that he's not going to deepen the cost-of-living and housing crisis by allowing rent control, too, to lapse.

THE PREMIER: I can't stress enough the concern we have for the cost-of-living increases. I can't stress enough the number of initiatives that we have taken to support Nova Scotia, specifically around the housing file but in so many other areas. I would be happy to talk about the number of initiatives we have made to invest in Nova Scotians and support Nova Scotians. I think it's a little bit premature for the member to talk about the rent cap, which is in place for at least another year and a half.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

### **ECC: OTTER LAKE LANDFILL CHANGE - ADVERSE IMPACT**

ALI DUALE: Mr. Speaker, we have taken a giant step backwards, considering what was a world-leading landfill once. I remember visitors coming from all over the world to see the environmental protection of this landfill. Unfortunately, this government is choosing saving costs over the human livelihood and environment.

Is the Premier aware that Beechville/Lakeside/Timberlea was not even on the list of the potential sites when the disastrous operation in Sackville had to close? Are they aware that the conditions on accepting a landfill will be that it have modern facilities to prevent the adverse impact from happening in Sackville and in locations like Africville before it?

HON. TIMOTHY HALMAN: In point of fact, what we have seen here with Otter Lake is that the application brought to the Department of Environment and Climate Change underwent a rigorous analysis at the administrator level - based on science, based on the utmost data that we have with respect to that facility.

Certainly, what the honourable member is talking about with respect to environmental racism, this province has a history of that. We acknowledge it. We have seen the work done in the past few months by the committee, by the work done by the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Initiatives.

I want to assure the honourable member that the decision made within my department was based on science, data, and best practice. If the community wishes to appeal, they have that option.

ALI DUALE: Mr. Speaker, a 1992 Human Rights Commission recommendation states no more landfill sites within a certain radius of African and native communities. A

Dalhousie study conducted in 1996 found that over 10 per cent of African Nova Scotians live within a 5-kilometre radius of a waste dump. I will table that.

Beechville, a historic Black community, is within 5 kilometres of Otter Lake. Mr. Speaker, I served on the monitoring committee to ensure that this promise will be upheld for the Beechville community. I'm very disappointed that the department needed public engagement, but completely ignored the wishes of those who were consulted.

My question is: Premier, it's stated right here - respected the wish of the people. Why bother asking for the public input if it was just going to be ignored?

TIMOTHY HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge we all must do better to ensure a more inclusive, equitable Nova Scotia. I do reiterate, however, what has transpired here is process, and that process allowed for decisions to be made on the most up-to-date science. Conditions have changed since 1999. That being said, the next phase of the process is an appeal, if the community so chooses to do that.

Along with that, I also want to make the honourable member aware, and no doubt he is aware: by the end of this year, through the Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act - the EGCRA - we are committed to establishing a panel on environmental racism to get moving, to get working in 2023 at the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Initiatives.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cole Harbour.

### **ECC - OTTER LAKE LANDFILL: WASTE PROMISE - CONFIRM**

HON. TONY INCE: Dr. Ingrid Waldron studied environmental racism in Nova Scotia. She found that 30 out of 65 waste sites were located near communities where African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaw communities were higher in number than the provincial average.

Beechville is one of those identified communities within five kilometres of Otter Lake Landfill. The original contract of 25 years of Otter Lake Landfill is coming to a close in 2024. The community of Beechville has had to accept an undetermined, extended lifespan. All the commercial waste is not sorted and is sent to other landfills.

I would like to ask the Minister of Environment and Climate Change: Can he state that because he approved the elimination of the FEP and the WSF that commercial waste will never come back to Otter Lake?

HON. TIMOTHY HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for their question. With respect to what has transpired, this was a decision within the

department at the local administrator level. That decision was based on the most up-to-date information and science.

The decision rendered by the local administrators has very strict terms and conditions. Even before the front-end processor and the sorter is deactivated, HRM has to present very strict terms and conditions that they show clearly how they are going to be meeting the targets that have been established. Even then, the technology needs to stay on-site. However, that being said, the community has the opportunity through the appeals process, if they so choose.

TONY INCE: Well, I guess, Mr. Speaker, after some contaminants are hitting the community, then they can complain. Is that it? Okay.

Councillor Stoddard has said in her letter to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change that Beechville in particular is especially sensitive about deviations from present operational practices at the landfill. Historically, Beechville is a Black community, and we all know that in the past, landfills have been allowed to be put near Black and Indigenous communities. They are forced to accommodate those landfills with all the ill effects that come with them.

The old Halifax city dump was one near . . .

THE SPEAKER: Question, please.

TONY INCE: Okay. Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, Beechville residents have rallied . . .

THE SPEAKER: Question, please.

TONY INCE: Since 1999 - I will table . . .

THE SPEAKER: Is there a question?

TONY INCE: The question is: Will the Minister of Environment and Climate Change ensure this promise is kept?

TIMOTHY HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, this is such an important conversation we are having. That is not lost on me. I want to thank my honourable colleagues for raising this. That is why this government is committed through the Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act.

I want to thank the honourable member for Halifax Needham for bringing forward that amendment in the Fall to get working on that panel to discuss, analyze, and come up with solutions to environmental racism. In this particular case, Mr. Speaker, there is still a

process to be played out. That is my role as the regulator within a regulatory department: to ensure fairness in a process.

To answer the honourable member's question, I will continue to be a strong steward of that process within my department.

THE SPEAKER: Before we go any further, I just want to make a remark that so far there has been only one question that has stayed within the time limit. I will be cutting people off if it goes too long. I will allow a few seconds for a completion, and I'll call for a question. It's not only the questions. It's the responses, too. Please be conscious of the 45-second time limit.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

### **PREM. - ATLANTIC LOOP: FUNDING PROGRESS - UPDATE**

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, the Premier seemed quite optimistic about his meetings yesterday on the Atlantic Loop with Nova Scotia Power and Emera. He referenced a meeting we had that I was present for on October 8<sup>th</sup> with the MPs to discuss the Atlantic Loop. It was said at that meeting that federal funding would be needed by the end of the Fall, yet half a year later Nova Scotians are still seeing no progress on securing the \$2 billion required to complete this project. Why should Nova Scotians share the Premier's optimism that he will be able to secure \$2 billion for the Atlantic Loop?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I think Nova Scotians should share in the optimism that we'll meet the goals that have been set out. Looking at where we're at right now in terms of our renewables, we're almost at 30 per cent. When Muskrat Falls - cross your fingers - gets going, that will give us another 30 per cent. It'll be almost 60 per cent. If you look at some of the wind tenders that are out there now and some of the other initiatives that the department is taking, we can get to 80 per cent by 2030. If that's with the Loop, with federal government support, that's fantastic, but we're starting to look at Plan Bs.

I have a great relationship with the federal government. I am honoured for the discussions we have, but we can't continue just to wait for their support on that. I think they'll be there, but we're also looking at Plan B and Plan C for this province, because we want to meet those goals. We'll make sure we do. (Applause)

IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I'm well aware of the renewable-energy trajectory and I know that Muskrat Falls will get us to 60 per cent, but this is about the Atlantic Loop because we need that baseload to get off coal. He was very optimistic, going to Ottawa to secure that funding.

In the CBC article entitled “Feds tap brakes on Atlantic Loop expectations,” which I’ll table, Minister LeBlanc said that the federal government “. . . is not on the verge of sending a \$5 billion cheque to utilities in Nova Scotia or New Brunswick.”

My question for the Premier is: Why should Nova Scotians believe that the Premier is going to be able to get the funding required to ensure we can get off coal by 2030?

**THE PREMIER:** Look, obviously the federal government will make their decisions. We’ll continue to work with them on behalf of Nova Scotians on this important file and many others. The federal government is an important partner for Nova Scotia, and it will continue to be so. We’ll work with them on a number of issues.

I think Nova Scotians should share the optimism in the potential that is available for this province in things like green hydrogen. We can do a lot in this province towards energy security and food security. The potential for this province is absolutely incredible. I’ve never been more excited about the future of this province. We have the team to unleash that potential and Nova Scotians know it.

**THE SPEAKER:** The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

#### **NRR - N.S. POWER: PERFORMANCE STANDARDS - SUPPORT**

**CLAUDIA CHENDER:** Mr. Speaker, in this House in 2015, Premier Houston said the concept of holding Nova Scotia Power “. . . to performance standards is a good concept. It’s certainly one that I support.” I’ll table that. That year, the Premier also introduced a Private Member’s Bill that would have tied the utility’s rate of return to reliability standards. I’ll table that.

My question is for the Premier: Is he still committed to ensuring that Nova Scotia Power’s profits are limited when the utility isn’t providing the level of reliability that Nova Scotians need?

**HON. TORY RUSHTON:** Mr. Speaker, I’m very encouraged and excited to hear the optimism of what this government shares about concerns with the rate impacts that could be imposed on the ratepayers of Nova Scotia. We, as a government, are very well aware of what was just brought up and what was tabled. I look forward to the support that we have from the member opposite in the days to come in this legislation on that.

**CLAUDIA CHENDER:** If that means the Premier is going to reintroduce that bill, then he may well have our support. We’ll see. Mr. Speaker, times have changed. Regulatory frameworks written in the past rewarded power companies and their shareholders for building large power plants - large coal plants - and selling more and more power. These are not the frameworks we need in order to shut down coal plants and encourage efficiency.

Will the Premier agree to transform this system and tie Nova Scotia Power's profits to the things that actually matter to people like reliable service, green energy, and lower power bills? (Applause)

TORY RUSHTON: This gives me a great opportunity to recognize the hard work that the staff at the Department of Natural Resources and Renewables have been committed to ever since Nova Scotia Power applied to the UARB in the last few months. There's been a lot of dedication to look into what that application has to do.

There was a firm commitment from our Premier and from my department the day that came out. We're not going to sit by. We are going to have options. We're going to have levers and we do intend to have action just as we promised when we were elected in August.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

### **NRR: SECURE FEDERAL FUNDING - PLAN**

HON. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, we are in a climate crisis. Urgent action is required. We know that in order to achieve the government's legislated climate target to be off coal by 2030, it is imperative that work begin now to get off coal. What is the Premier's plan if he fails to secure the \$2 billion from the federal government?

HON. TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. It gives a chance for us to highlight the fact that because of successive governments, there's already a huge amount of renewable energy put onto our system. We have ample opportunity in this province.

We're not just looking at Plan A. We're looking at Plan B and staff are even looking at Plan C. We need many, many options if we're going to be able to be the province that comes off coal that's been so reliable to the grid. We have green hydrogen options. We have more wind RFPs. We have battery options. The world is at our hands and we're ready to serve it.

KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, we already know that Nova Scotia Power is planning to charge ratepayers \$370 million for writing off coal plants. If the Premier fails to secure this \$2 billion of funding from the federal government, his Plan B or his Plan C, what are the implications to Nova Scotian ratepayers already faced with a cost-of-living crisis?

TORY RUSHTON: Our 100 per cent plan is to protect the ratepayers of Nova Scotia, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hammonds Plains-Lucasville.

**NRR - N.S. POWER: AFFORDABILITY - OPTIONS FOR SUPPORT**

HON. BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, for the first time in some time, Nova Scotia reversed the situation where young Nova Scotians were leaving this province. Part of this scenario had to do with looking at Nova Scotia and what possibilities were here for young families and young professionals, and the affordability that Nova Scotia provided.

[10:30 a.m.]

At a Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee meeting on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, the CEO and President of Nova Scotia Power stated that the Atlantic Loop is the most affordable solution for Nova Scotians. I will table that.

In the event that the Atlantic Loop does not happen, how will the Premier make the commitment to continue affordability here in Nova Scotia for young people and young professionals?

HON. TORY RUSHTON: Quite frankly, I can't speculate on the statements that Nova Scotia Power has made and go further. I've articulated today - and the Premier has articulated - that we do have plans in place. We've talked about these plans.

Look, we're excited about what's happening in the Province of Nova Scotia. We're excited about what we can hand out to the rest of the country. We're excited how we can help the issues that are going on overseas right now. The world is at our hands, as I said, and we're ready to serve it. Mr. Speaker, we're going to do it with renewables.

BEN JESSOME: Young professionals and young families are looking to Nova Scotia with awe as a place where they can set up and establish themselves and build their livelihoods here. That is quickly slipping away, Mr. Speaker. If we don't do something to act, the cost of housing is going to push people away from Nova Scotia. The minister is referencing, not speculating, but I'm wondering if he can add some context to the alternatives that they are considering as options to support the Nova Scotians if the Atlantic Loop doesn't come through.

TORY RUSHTON: I've reiterated what some of those options are already here today, but I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, I was a tradesperson. I went to school with 20 individuals. I was the only one who was able to stay in this province of Nova Scotia. Many of my friends have returned because of the opportunities in this province, and they've returned since August 2021.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare.



**NRR - FOSSIL FUEL TRANSITION: FEDERAL HELP - CONFIRM**

RONNIE LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, the CEO and President of Nova Scotia Power has said, “What it comes down to, to keep this an affordable transition for Nova Scotians - we need help. We need funding support from the federal government . . .” and I’ll table that.

Nova Scotia Power CEO has all but said that power rates will become increasingly unaffordable if this government fails to secure this help. My question for the Premier is: Do you agree with CEO Peter Gregg’s statement?

HON. TORY RUSHTON: I can safely probably say that there is an agreement there on that statement, that our government has with that CEO. It has to be affordable for Nova Scotians. It doesn’t necessarily have to be affordable or in the lines of agreeable with what’s Nova Scotia Power. We’ve been very clear ever since that rate was applied for with UARB. We are interested in protecting the ratepayers of Nova Scotia. We’re interested in how we are going to get green energy onto the grid. We’re interested in how we’re going to maintain a reliable grid here in Nova Scotia.

There are going to be many factors that take place, and I am so encouraged by the excitement of the members opposite the last couple of days with the interest in the ratepayers of Nova Scotia. We’re all going to be in agreement here as the budget’s tabled, and as we table the other legislation to protect the ratepayers in Nova Scotia.

RONNIE LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, we have already seen this government fail to stop Nova Scotia Power’s 10 per cent increase request to power rates, and CEO Gregg has essentially said that power rates will only increase if the Premier fails to secure help from the federal government. If the Premier fails to secure the \$2 billion from the feds, can Nova Scotia trust this premier to keep power rates low?

TORY RUSHTON: There’s a rate application going through the UARB process right now. This is our first opportunity in the last couple days to sit in the legislative power the government has. There’s a lot of speculation in that question.

I’m going to reiterate it again and again and again - as many questions as they want to ask, Mr. Speaker: Ratepayers are the highest importance to this government, and we will do everything we have, pull every lever that we have, to protect those Nova Scotians that need that protection.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

**ECC: END TO NEW OIL & GAS BIDS - SUPPORT**

SUSAN LEBLANC: My question is for the Premier. The 2021 Production Gap Report found that governments around the world are planning to produce more than double the amount of fossil fuels that would hold us to 1.5 degrees warming, and I can table that. Our planet cannot accommodate these plans, let alone new oil and gas projects.

Mr. Speaker, given that the biggest opportunities for oil and gas in Nova Scotia also risk our billion-dollar fishing industry, will the Premier commit to ending all new calls for bids for offshore exploration?

HON. TIMOTHY HALMAN: I want to reiterate to this House the protection of the environment, sustainable development, climate change adaptation and mitigation is a top priority to this government. That's why we passed the Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act in the Fall, with 28 goals legislated for us to focus on over the next decade. Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia is a leader on climate change policy.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, in 2021 the International Energy Agency also made this statement - that if governments are serious about the climate crisis, there can be no new investment in oil, gas, and coal from now, from this year. I can table that.

All current investments in fossil fuels must be diverted to the massive challenge of the equitable transition to renewable energy.

My question is for the Premier: We recognize that recent investments have been made in renewables in Nova Scotia, but will he commit to ending all fossil fuel subsidies by the end of this year?

TIMOTHY HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, this government fully acknowledges how important those investments in renewables are. That's why in this fiscal year alone, this government invested \$44 million in climate change initiatives. Things like affordable housing retrofits, like home energy assessment programs. (Interruptions)

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change has the floor.

TIMOTHY HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, \$8 million this year for solar. This is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of the initiatives we are going to be taking. Stay tuned to the climate change plan. Thank you. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

**NRR: ATLANTIC LOOP PLANS - CONFIRM**

FRED TILLEY: Mr. Speaker, the information that the minister refers to - all of that money came from the Green Fund that was implemented by the Liberal Party in the past and voted against by the then-Opposition. At a press conference, the Premier stated that it is way too early to start speculating on Plan B, Plan C, or Plan D right now, we are very focused on Plan A, which is the Atlantic Loop project. I will table that.

Nova Scotians deserve a proactive government, not merely a reactive one. My question is to the Premier. (Interruptions)

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The member for Northside-Westmount has the floor.

FRED TILLEY: My question is to the Premier, who has no problem chirping across the aisle, but won't answer a question other than from a leader: If he fails to obtain the \$2 billion from the federal government, what is your Plan B? (Applause)

THE PREMIER: I'll tell you this, Mr. Speaker. We agree absolutely with the member that Nova Scotians deserve a proactive government and not a reactive government. On August 17<sup>th</sup>, they said just that. (Applause)

FRED TILLEY: Mr. Speaker, time will tell how that works out for Nova Scotians.

During the Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee meeting on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, the CEO of Nova Scotia Power explained that although the Atlantic Loop is Plan A, there are other ways of getting to 2030 if needed. I will table that as well.

Could the Premier - again, if he will answer a backbencher question - share with the House what these other ways are?

HON. TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, I just want to remind the House that it's the prerogative of government to respond to questions. Many times I asked a question of the Premier and it was never responded to by the Premier. I respect the fact that there's a lot of trust and confidence that the Premier instills in every minister. It doesn't matter what government, there's a trust installment in the minister.

I will answer the question very quickly to the member opposite. This is the progressive part of our Progressive Conservative party. We're being progressive. You don't just need to rely on a Plan A - you need a Plan B and you need a Plan C. You need to be proactive and progressive to ensure that we're going to get to our goals. Just because we talk as a government - and the previous governments have done that before - just because we talk about one item does not mean there aren't more in the list.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

**NRR - ATLANTIC LOOP: ALTERNATE PLANS - DISCUSS**

BRAEDON CLARK: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. We're hearing a lot today about Plan B and Plan C and absolutely nothing about what Plan B and Plan C are. There is a \$2-billion hole in the Atlantic Loop project, and the Premier can go hat in hand to Ottawa and ask for the money, but we don't have the money yet. So, I would ask the Premier: What is Plan B? What is Plan C?

TORY RUSHTON: Again, I'll reiterate: green hydrogen, tidal, battery, wind. Many options here that are doing it worldwide. We're not just backbenchers in the progression of green energy. We're leaders in the world. They can sit over there on the opposite side of the House and take credit, because credit is due. Part of that is because of previous governments. We're picking up where we need to as the new government that was elected to do the job. We're picking up where it was left off and we're carrying the torch, and we're very proud of it.

BRAEDON CLARK: Earlier, the minister said that the 100 per cent plan is to protect ratepayers, which is a bit rich when ratepayers are facing a 10 per cent increase in power rates right now. Again, they can talk about all of these priorities - wind, tidal, solar, all of these things - but there is a huge hole in the Atlantic Loop project. Let's be clear, the Atlantic Loop project is the keystone of achieving 80 per cent of renewable targets by 2030. You can't wish it away if it doesn't happen.

Again, I'll ask the minister: Can he give any clarity, any detail on what Plan B might be, Plan C? Can he table anything, a shred of paper in this House to give Nova Scotians a sense of what those plans are?

TORY RUSHTON: If I have to write down green hydrogen, and if I have to write down wind, if I have to write down batteries, I'll be glad to write it down and table it.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

**FTB: SURPLUS USE PRIORITIES - DISCUSS**

LISA LACHANCE: My question is for the Premier. In the last six weeks or so, this government has spent more than \$150 million in one-off, unbudgeted, unplanned announcements. Last Summer they told us they had a plan, and we'd like to see how this plan would roll out in the spending. For example, instead of helping students by permanently lowering tuition fees, they announced a one-time grant months after tuition payments were already due.

Can the Premier admit that there was no real plan for this \$150 million, just a scattershot rush to spend an unexpected surplus?

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: The NDP is complaining about the government spending money. It's almost as if some malevolent presence has taken root in that corner of the House. It sends chills down my spine. I'm almost speechless, but not quite.

We could have waited when we were elected, but we chose not to wait. We chose to respond. I think about investments we made in roads three weeks after being sworn in. I think about investments we made in firefighters just recently for presumptive cancer coverage. I think about a 23 per cent raise given to CCAs to help our health care system.

LISA LACHANCE: It's hard to believe that during this spending spree, in the midst of a housing crisis, there was not a single announcement about building affordable housing. There was also no new money for housing in the capital plan announced earlier this week. Certainly, the government announced money for some worthy items, but it's hard to imagine that any plan could neglect to include money for housing.

If this March madness spending was in Nova Scotia's best interest, why was there nothing for housing?

ALLAN MACMASTER: There was money for housing: \$35 million invested last Fall. I will say something else for the member. To clarify, for the capital plan, that isn't the only place where government can invest in housing. (Interruption)

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The Minister of Finance and Treasury Board has the floor.

ALLAN MACMASTER: I think about rent supplements as an example. It takes time to get housing. We've invested significant amounts in spurring investment in housing in this province. We want to solve that problem. The member calls it madness. It's not madness. It's compassion from a government that's listening.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Fairview-Clayton Park.

### **NRR: RENEWABLES PLAN - DISCUSS**

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: On Tuesday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, two months ago, federal Minister LeBlanc met with the Premier, and following the meeting, he stated that the cost of electricity and electricity generation is not a federal responsibility - it's a provincial responsibility. Two days later at a press conference, the Premier stated that it was way too early to start speculating on Plan B, Plan C or Plan D.

Can the Premier now explain how it was possibly too early two months ago to have a reliable Plan B and what that thought-out plan is?

[10:45 a.m.]

HON. TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. I mean, any responsible government - and I would expect the previous governments would have done the same. They're going to have a Plan A, they're going to back it up with a Plan B if things don't go right. That's just human nature, it's good business, it's good governance. Thank you.

PATRICIA ARAB: I thank the minister for that answer. But it's today that Nova Scotians are being told there is a Plan B when prior we were told Plan A was the focus. What are the other alternatives to reach our climate targets? If the Premier fails to secure the \$2 billion from the federal government, what is the plan to do that? Or is it simply that it will be on the backs of Nova Scotia taxpayers?

TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what news release the member is referencing, but there are many other news interviews that I did as the minister responsible that do speak about having to look at Plan B and Plan C and down the future. We're not having tunnel vision. We don't have tunnel vision as this new government, we never did. The province knew that when they were looking at the ballot box.

At the end of the day, I am very encouraged that the members opposite also want to have a responsible representation to ensure the ratepayers of Nova Scotia are protected. That's our job as government and, by golly Mr. Speaker, we're going to do it.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

### **NRR - ATLANTIC LOOP: PLAN B - DETAILS**

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for Premier Rushton. Both the Premier and the CEO . . . (Interruption)

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, both the Premier and the CEO of Nova Scotia Power have stated on multiple occasions that their energy is being focussed on Plan A, the Atlantic Loop. Federal minister LeBlanc stated that more information on the business case is needed before Ottawa can justify the federal investment in the Atlantic Loop.

My question is to the Premier: He and his staff are working on a Plan B, as we heard here today. Will they table that Plan B and will they table the price tag associated with Plan B?

HON. TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for the question. It also gives me an opportunity to highlight the fact that our government has had many meetings with our federal counterparts, not just Minister LeBlanc, as the member opposite pointed out, but many other ministers. These conversations are taking place. It's not just conversations about the Loop. If the Loop is not going to work out, what are the other conversations that other sectors are doing in this country? What are other sectors doing in jurisdictions around the world?

We can lead. We have done it before, we're going to do it again and, by golly, we're proud to be part of that.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: I'm not going to lie, Mr. Speaker, I love the "by golly." Following the federal government's April 1<sup>st</sup> increase, Nova Scotians will be saving almost 11 cents per litre compared to provinces with the carbon tax. That accounts for hundreds of dollars a year in our cost-of-living crisis. My question is for the Premier: Considering it is a made-in-Nova Scotia solution, will the Premier fight for our cap-and-trade program when it expires at the end of the year?

HON. TIMOTHY HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, no decisions have been made with respect to the next phase of cap-and-trade. There's still a lot of internal discussion taking place within the government and discussions taking place between our province and Ottawa.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic on a new question.

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, we do know that that government, formerly of the Opposition, voted against the cap-and-trade, which amounts to one cent per litre on fuel prices in Nova Scotia. While other jurisdictions are seeing skyrocketing fuel prices, we've been able to stabilize and only add one cent. It's very alarming that the minister will not commit to fighting for the cap-and-trade system and has taken an easy approach . . .

SPEAKER: Order, please. The time allotted for Oral Questions Put by Members to Ministers has expired.

## **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, will you please call the order of business, Public Bills for Second Reading.

### **PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 96.

#### **Bill No. 96 - Dismantling Racism and Hate Act.**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister responsible for the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Initiatives.

HON. PAT DUNN: I move that Bill No. 96, the Dismantling Racism and Hate Act, now be read a second time.

Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate how pleased I am that this bill was developed with the support of all parties in this Legislature. That's a unique accomplishment, not just in this House of Assembly but in any legislature across this country. I believe it speaks to how important it is that we all commit ourselves to eliminating systemic racism, hate, and inequity in this province.

In my brief time today, I want to share more of what we heard from the many Nova Scotians who engaged on this legislation and why this bill is so important to them. As I mentioned when I introduced this bill, more than 2,000 people took part in the engagement process in January and February. Clearly, Nova Scotians wanted to be heard. They told us how important it is for government to listen and to act.

One thing we heard repeatedly from marginalized and racialized communities is that past governments of all stripes have held consultations and commissioned reports, but in many cases communities are still waiting to see the fruits of that work. Communities also told us they want to be engaged in important policy-making work much earlier, not told about it or asked to endorse it when it's almost finished. I want community members to know that we have heard them and we are committed to action.

This legislation commits us to developing a network across the province and working with the communities most affected as we create the provincial strategy to address systemic racism, hate, and inequity. There are many incredible people in organizations doing equity and anti-racism work across this province. We want to help connect those groups to support their work, share best practices, and improve two-way communication between government and community.



We heard how important it is to acknowledge the heritage of Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian communities and the contributions they make to this province. We are in Mi'kma'ki, and we are all treaty people.

Mr. Speaker, we also heard how important it is to acknowledge that systemic racism and inequity exist in our systems and society. That may seem like a simple thing, but it's important that we name the issue, that we define it, that we talk about it. Discrimination and hate can thrive when we are silent or when we downplay their role in our society.

Again, I want to thank my colleagues across the floor for their expertise and input in shaping the language of this bill. Because of that, it's better and stronger, because we did that work together.

We heard people say that they need to feel safe in their workplaces and online and in all areas of their lives. This bill commits us to working with communities and also enables government to require other public bodies - such as municipalities, villages, colleges, and universities - to develop strategies so people are supported where they live and work, where they go to school, and where they seek health care.

The provincial strategy will include a health equity framework. I know the members opposite wanted to see gender-affirming care addressed in this legislation. Through a health equity framework, we certainly want to make health care safer and more accessible for the 2SLGBTQ+ community and also for racialized groups that have spoken about the difficulties they sometimes encounter when they seek care. The approach we are taking will be holistic, and I know my colleague, the honourable minister, and the staff at the Department of Health and Wellness are keen to engage even further in that work.

I want to emphasize that we know legislation is one step on the journey toward eliminating racism, hate, and inequity, but it is not the destination. Across government, we are committed to taking action beyond this bill. At the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Initiatives, we continue to advance the Land Titles Initiative to ensure more residents in historic African Nova Scotian communities have clear title to their land. We have made great progress clearing more titles over the Fall and Winter, and we keep working to address barriers so more people can benefit from this program.

In the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage, staff have been working closely with museums, libraries, and many community organizations. We serve to facilitate equity, diversity, and inclusion training. It's a priority to ensure that these important community spaces are safe and welcoming for all Nova Scotians of any race, culture, ability, gender, identity, or gender expression.

The department also recently supported Sport Nova Scotia with \$2.5 million for accessible equipment and programs to make our sport and recreation opportunities more equitable for people with disabilities. The Province has invested \$2 million to support the

new health and wellness organization Tajikeimik toward the development of a Mi'kmaw mental health and addictions strategy.

Those are just some of the initiatives under way, and I know my colleagues could speak to other great work happening in their departments. We are committed to a whole-of-government approach to address systemic racism and hate and to make Nova Scotia more equitable for everyone. We know we can't do it alone. We know that Nova Scotians will continue to make their voices heard on these important issues, and we value and welcome their input every step of the way as we develop a strategy that will build on this legislation and take us even further together. With those words, I'll take my seat, and I look forward to further discussion on this ground-breaking legislation.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cole Harbour.

HON. TONY INCE: I stand in my place to speak in support of Bill No. 96. It has taken a very long time to get to this point. However, every journey begins with a single step. Over the past number of weeks and months, members of this House, department staff, caucus staff, and others have come together unlike anything we've seen before. I'm proud that we here in Nova Scotia have taken that step.

We had some honest and raw conversations. I'll give you an example, Mr. Speaker. One of the conversations that we had, when the all-party committee first sat down and came together, we as a group shared our discontent with the fact that the Premier and some of the senior staff weren't there. It got a little heated, but it was okay, and everything worked out, as you can see. The bill before this House reflects some of those difficult conversations and a desire to build a piece of legislation that will serve those who have been absent or voiceless in those rooms where these decisions are being made.

I have to say that those of us from the African Nova Scotian community are very proud because we stand here in this House on the shoulders of people like Dr. Richard Preston, Dr. Oliver, Senator Oliver, Dr. Best. We talk about Mr. Buddy Daye. We look at Rocky Jones. There are a number of those folks for generations who have fought to allow us to get to where we are today.

Over the past number of years, steps have been taken to address some of these challenges that we've had: Count Us In, the Home for Colored Children, the Land Titles Initiative, treaty education, and the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Initiatives.

This bill will empower the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Initiatives. It will chart the next steps in our journey of equity, inclusion, and reconciliation. It will create meaningful engagement between government and community. It will hold government accountable to community.

It will also ensure that people have the data that they need to not only identify the barriers, but also provide evidence and backup to the stories and the experiences that we have been sharing for far too long.

We know that what comes next will take time and healing. We support this bill, and we will continue to support the work set out in this legislation. I thank all for allowing us to go on this journey. (Applause)

[11:00 a.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

SUZY HANSEN: Mr. Speaker, I'm looking at the time; I'm going to be very mindful of that. I have a whole lot of notes, but I'm going to just say a little something that just came to me a couple of minutes ago as the Honourable Tony Ince was speaking.

Initially, I'm going to say that this is a great idea. We as a caucus support this type of work. We have done so, being a part of this particular all-party committee. Is this the final product? No, absolutely not. Do we have a lot of work to do? Yes, 100 per cent.

I want to start off in the beginning as to what sparked this movement to this particular piece of legislation. I need you to understand why I'm saying what I'm saying. Think about this: would this be a piece of legislation put forward by the government sitting right now if there hadn't been a scenario where MLAs had a situation of racism encountered within our realm?

I think about it in that sense. I think it's great that we're driving forward to put forward a piece of legislation that's unprecedented. It's monumental. It's all of those pieces, but I need you to think about this. We are in 2022. I've existed for over 40 years. I know a number of us here have been here for a long, long time. (Laughter) Not in that sense. I'm talking about community sense.

I'm saying this because I need you to understand the reality of why we speak the things that we speak and why I will continue to say that we need to review our policy and our Legislature under a lens that is reflective of all Nova Scotians. (Applause)

I say this because, 100 per cent, this is an important step for this particular bill. This is a important step for Nova Scotia. We do wholeheartedly feel like this is a necessary thing for this province, 100 per cent. It was raised by the House yesterday and we're glad to participate.

I was glad to participate in this particular all-party committee, but I will tell you this. When I was approached to be a part of this all-party committee, I stated specifically: I hope it's not going to be just all Black people sitting around the table telling you our

thoughts and our concerns, and then you take that information and you just kind of create something out of that.

I think we need to think about the intergenerational trauma and the systemic racism and the oppression that people in our communities and people in this province have experienced through generations. I apologize if some of the things that I may be saying may be critical to the work that is in front of us.

I also want you to know why I say the things that I say and why I bring it up. I don't speak for myself. I in no way, shape, or form say this is what I think I need. I need this. It's community-driven. There are communities and people who are not here who have been fighting. As the member for Cole Harbour has spoken to, there are some who are not here who have been fighting for this type of work for many years, people who are continuing to do that. So I commend that we are on the right step.

We, as a caucus, have put forward a number of pieces that were spoken to by communities, specifically through consultation, through our own feedback given by communities. I will be looking forward to what the Law Amendments Committee has to bring, and implementing a lot of those pieces from the Law Amendments Committee as well as from the community as a part of the amendments that I will be bringing forward and our caucus will be bringing forward to boost this piece of legislation to be the monumental number one standing piece of legislation for this country because if you don't know, we have the oldest Black communities in this country.

We have communities that have educators, doctors, health care workers, you name it. There is a facet of people who have a wealth of knowledge and they have come to us to ask for certain things and I think they deserve to have that put into a bill. So I look forward to the Law Amendments Committee process. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to add my voice to the collective voices in support of this bill to dismantle racism and hate. Racism and hate have no place in our province, our communities, institutions, workplaces, or here in the People's House. Unfortunately, events from recent years - globally, nationally, even here at home - remind us that systemic racism and discrimination are still very present in our daily lives.

As Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission, I can assure the members of this House that meaningful action on equity, diversity, and inclusion is a priority within our public service - a public service that represents at all levels the voices, the talents, and the unique perspectives of Nova Scotia's diverse communities will make better decisions and develop more responsive programs and services for all Nova Scotians. This is even more important as our province experiences new levels of population growth and our demographics are increasingly more diverse.

I want to thank and congratulate the members of the all-party committee and the staff who worked tirelessly together to make this legislation a reality. It is a first for Nova Scotia and Canada and we can all be very proud of that. Within the public service we have been working on equity, diversity, and inclusion for many years. My honourable colleague the member for Cole Harbour, who helped to develop this bill, was also very instrumental in the work within the public service over the years and I want to thank and acknowledge him for his contributions. (Applause)

The All Together Action Plan focuses on building diversity at every level of the public service with a specific focus on leadership. The work is achieved through a wide array of activity across government and within departments, including policies and programs, education, awareness and celebration, mandatory training, and other learning and developmental opportunities, conferences, employee networks, round tables, committees, and much more.

That work does also include some firsts. For example, Nova Scotia was the first provincial government to adopt the psychological health and safety standard from the Mental Health Commission of Canada. The Office of Workplace Health, now in its fourth year, was also a first in Canada and other jurisdictions are looking at its success. This work is key to creating safe, healthy, and inclusive workplaces.

As part of our All Together plan, we are also doing a complete review of our employment process to identify barriers and challenges faced by employees from equity-seeking groups. Systemic barriers can be invisible to those they do not affect. This process will allow us to better identify and understand barriers shared by employees who experience this first-hand.

These are just a couple of examples of the work that is happening within government in collaboration with many internal partners including the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Initiatives. We look forward to continuing to work with them and to supporting their success in every way possible, all of us together bringing this legislation to life. We know that the important work of equity diversity inclusion is never done and this bill is an important step and we look forward to continuing the journey together.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

ALI DUALE: Mr. Speaker, Bill No. 96, the Dismantling Racism and Hate Act, is one of a kind. I am pleased to be a member of the all-party committee that was trusted and given the privilege to bring forward this bill in Nova Scotia. That journey is one of my wishes of this Legislature: to see teamwork, to see without party lines, to see a unified Legislature. I am proud of that team and to say that it was not a piece of cake. From time to time, we challenged each other, we took our time. But at the end of the day, we finished on time with the meeting and we shook hands. I am proud of that team.

I support this bill, but as the minister has said, this is not the end but a journey. I will advise my colleagues it is not a destination, but a journey. Let's keep that journey, let's be willing to accept each other, let's be mindful also for Nova Scotians - especially the community that spoke. That we ask from time after time, but we direct things also. So let's not keep dragging this bill but also, let's believe that this is not the end.

I'd also like to make my personal testimony on the public servants who worked with this bill day in and day out. As a member of this Legislature, I took this bill seriously and observed how the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Initiatives dealt with this bill. I remember they had a public schedule that was up and anybody at any time could participate. I never put my name, just observed the implementing of this public engagement.

I can tell you it was one of the most productive, respected, public engagements that I've ever seen in the eyes of government. I would like to see that continue. The questions that were coming from the minority communities, the frustration, the sincerity - their professionalism, their respect and their willingness to listen was phenomenal and it's great to see our public service act that way.

Because of that reason, I would like to say to the sitting government to invest the office the tools that they need in order to do their job - that it will not be lip service. I'm eager to watch this sitting of the House, the upcoming budget, and the investment that the office will be making. I will be more than happy to see what I'm hoping for. Otherwise, we're still having lip service.

I'm glad, as I stated yesterday, to be part of this House, which has the will to produce a one-of-a-kind bill in this country. I really believe there are so many other issues that we can take the lead on. If I'm not making a mistake, Nova Scotia, the city of Halifax, is one of the places where the life of Canada flourishes. We should uphold that and continue that leadership.

I can stand here and use my one-hour privilege and talk about this bill and what needs to be done and the issue of hate and racism and discrimination, but I have said enough on this bill. I'm glad we're here today following the procedures that allow us to create legislation. I ask all the members of this House to support this bill.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

LISA LACHANCE: I was, I think, perhaps the last MLA to be invited to join the committee, and I was pleased to do so for a number of reasons. One, as a former bureaucrat - perhaps a recovering bureaucrat - I can certainly appreciate the importance of bringing together an all-party committee to consider a whole-of-government approach. I'm really pleased with the bill, that it actually has a requirement for policy-making in the provincial government to now take into account issues of anti-racism and equity.

[11:15 a.m.]

It was also really important to me to become involved because I have not yet been able to find a place on the other side of this House to talk about the issues of the 2SLGBTQ+ community. The current government was silent in the platform of last Summer's election. My community was not mentioned in the Speech from the Throne. There is no minister assigned. No one has it in a mandate letter. There has been no policy or funding announcements to my knowledge that target the 2SLGBTQ+ community.

In a sense, this is one of the first times that I was able to come to the table and speak about the issues that affect my community, which encompasses thousands of Nova Scotians from Yarmouth to Sydney and everywhere, in all walks of life - not unlike what my colleague described as well.

I think I have shared my experience here before about starting as a young family, as a young person starting my life. I had to move from Nova Scotia because the rights and privileges afforded my community were not equal to those in Ontario. I had to leave Nova Scotia to take a job with the federal government so that my partner and I could have access to each other's benefits. I had to leave Nova Scotia because it was illegal for me to adopt children. I could not adopt children. We went to Ontario, where we could do that. We also had earlier access to a civil union and to legal marriage. In Ontario we were able to legally marry in 2003 instead of waiting until 2005 here in Nova Scotia. For all of those reasons, I also know what it's like when a voice is absent from a discussion.

We do support this bill. I do think it's an important step along the way. As you have heard and will probably continue to hear from us, we had some concerns around both the process and content. I think it will be really good to hear from the Law Amendments Committee process. In particular, communities were engaged, that's true, but we felt the consultation process was quite rushed, and also was quite one-way. I was pleased to hear the minister talk about opening up a two-way conversation. What I'm hoping we can learn from the Law Amendments Committee in going forward with this bill is also the multiplicity of conversations that can happen.

In the case of the consultations that were led by the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Initiatives, they were community by community. There were some open sessions, but there was a lot of work in community and youth engagement, and some of the best conversations happen when you support communities to come together and compare cross experiences of inclusion and oppression to really see what's happening in their communities. We look forward to hearing from the Law Amendments Committee

I also wanted to raise the topic of voices that weren't at the table, I actually do think that the committee missed some opportunities to have some other voices at the table. There was no one there speaking for the Acadian communities, for instance. There was no one there from L'nu Affairs, there was no one there from the Accessibility Directorate. We

actually have the resources within government to have brought those voices forward. We did ask for those, and unfortunately that was not accomplished.

In terms of the other process issues, I was greatly concerned that the process was not accountable and transparent, as we have established for this Legislature. In this Legislature we have Hansard, Legislative Television, we have all sorts of rules and procedures that both govern our behaviour, but also are about how we communicate with Nova Scotians about what's going on. So for all intents and purposes, all of those meetings, and all of those sessions that we had that were vibrant, are lost to the history of this House.

Going forward, I'm very happy that we'll be in the Law Amendments Committee, where the views of community will be recorded and can be shared. I'd really like to encourage folks to take an active role and encourage community members to look at this bill, and to think about this bill, and to engage with it in the ways that they can, and not to take a passive approach to this. That's certainly something that I'm taking on.

The Minister of the Public Service Commission spoke earlier, talking about the ways in which the public service of Nova Scotia supports diversity, equity, inclusion. And I reflected on my own experience. In 2008 we moved back to Nova Scotia, having had access to benefits and adopted children, gotten married, and while working for the Nova Scotia public service, actually, I was surprised - but just hopped in with two feet - that there actually wasn't an employee network at that time. So I co-founded the employee network with another new employee to the Nova Scotia public service. We worked hard to do a number of things. We actually had a designated manager of 2SLGBTQ+ issues within what was then the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

We had a designated person with the Department of Health at the time, and all those designated positions have actually disappeared. Again, this is why we really can't have these discussions that aren't transparent and accountable of all these processes because then the work slides away. I left the public service to do other things, and slowly, slowly those positions were taken back and reabsorbed.

Again, I think this bill still will offer the possibility for ongoing, sustainable change. We'd really like to see an ongoing mandate established in this Legislature to look at issues of anti-racism and equity. Because we can't go back and look or listen to the discussions that we had, I just wanted to assure you that we did bring forward these concerns in writing to the committee and tabled those. We were able to discuss most of those at the committee, but I just want to make sure that people know that while we had our concerns, we remained highly engaged in the process.

I would like to echo my colleague for Halifax Armdale that the funding of this strategy, and the funding of this work, the funding of this across government will be really important to see.



THE SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 96.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? (Interruption)

I apologize, folks. I'll blame it on Friday afternoon and my stupidity. I'm pushing it. (Laughter)

The honourable Minister responsible for the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Initiatives.

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I think we're probably all looking forward to the afternoon. However prior to that, I want to thank the honourable members on both sides of the House for their valuable comments.

One member had mentioned something about hoping that this doesn't end up being lip service or that it's a process that will end up on the shelf like legislation has happened sometimes over the years. I can certainly commit not only to the all-party committee, but on behalf of the government, that we certainly are going to make sure that we are listening and learning and that this will not be sitting on any shelf, anywhere.

Also, I'd like to mention the fact that as we go through the process, a lot of issues that were being discussed today will end up being taken care of in the process, in the strategies, and in the recommendations, and so on. Once again, as the other members mentioned, I'm looking forward to Law Amendments and seeing this bill work its way through the Legislature.

With that, I move that we close debate on second reading.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 96.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill be referred to the Committee on Law Amendments.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 99.

**Bill No. 99 - Quality-improvement Information Protection Act (amended)**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 99, an Act to Amend Chapter 8 of the Acts of 2015, the Quality-improvement Information Protection Act, be now read a second time.

I believe all members of this Legislature would agree that we want health care providers to report patient safety incidents. We want them to feel safe and comfortable coming forward and have confidence and trust in the reporting process. Government has committed to reduce barriers for health care providers in our province to report incidents where safety is compromised.

When a patient safety incident is reported, it affords us the opportunity to review what happened and what can be done to prevent it in the future. However, as I just mentioned, we can only seize these opportunities if people feel safe and comfortable coming forward. The amendment before you will do just that.

It will build on the culture of reporting we have in our health care system and further reduce barriers for health care providers to report. The amendment will continue to support a positive culture of reporting patient safety incidents because it will ensure personal or identifiable information will be protected from disclosure. It will ensure that if there is a conflict between the Quality-improvement Information Protection Act and any other legislation, that the Quality-improvement Information Protection Act and its regulations will prevail.

Let me provide you with a brief overview of the process and explain what this amendment means and what it doesn't. Any health care provider or patient can report a patient safety incident. When one is reported, a review is initiated, and action is taken. In some cases, this may include an investigation called a quality improvement review. It is through this quality improvement review process that information about the incident is collected. This may include personal information, such as medical records or a testimony from the patient or the provider, the person who reported the incident, or anyone else who may have been present at the time or who has information about the incident.

It is through this investigation that recommendations or outcomes are developed to address what happened. These recommendations are what helps to improve the health care system, the provision of health services, and patient outcomes.

Through the whole process, there is an expectation that personal and identifiable information will be protected from disclosure. Certainly, the Quality-improvement Information Protection Act contains provisions that prevent the disclosure of personal or identifiable information, unless the Act is compelled to disclose quality improvement review information by another piece of legislation, which may contain personal or identifiable information about a patient or provider.

[11:30 a.m.]

This is the loophole that the amendment will close. It will ensure that the Quality-improvement Information Protection Act and its regulations will prevail if it comes into conflict with another piece of legislation as it pertains to the disclosure of quality improvement review information containing personal or identifiable information. This is what the amendment means and what it will do.

Closing this loophole will give health care providers the assurance they need to feel safe and comfortable coming forward to report patient-safety incidents. It will give them the assurance they need to have confidence and trust in the reporting process. They will no longer have to worry about being identified or the fear of potentially suffering repercussions because they choose to do the right thing and come forward.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to be clear about what this amendment will not do. This amendment will not prohibit the disclosure of quality improvement review information, such as recommendations or outcomes. It will simply remove the personal or identifiable information before it is disclosed. Also, it will not impact the disclosure of information that was collected or created and subject to other legislation. Those records would be disclosed based on the criteria of the legislation they were originally collected under but without quality improvement information.

We have a strong culture of reporting in our province, and it is important that we continue to foster a strong culture of reporting. This amendment will continue to support the protection of personal or identifiable information of patients and providers.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Fairview-Clayton Park.

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise here in support of Bill No. 99. I will speak just very briefly.

The minister clearly articulated what the purpose of the original Act was in 2015. It was to encourage and support a positive experience when reporting patient-safety incidents. This may seem small, like closing a loophole, but it's actually integral in promoting and strengthening our health care system. The more knowledge we have and the more data we have, the better we can facilitate whether we can roll out programs and keeping patients' privacy intact.

There was an inadvertent loophole that would have allowed other pieces of legislation to possibly compel this information. Closing this now really makes the Act fulsome and allows it to deliver the full intent of it.

With those few words, I am in support of Bill No. 99.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I am also glad to rise and speak to Bill No. 99 very briefly.

The Quality-improvement Information Protection Act is an important piece of legislation that protects health care workers and patients on the road to ensuring that we are continually learning from and improving our health care system. Any move that further protects people's privacy in this process is important.

I look forward to hearing from stakeholders at the Law Amendments Committee and may have more to say after that.

THE SPEAKER: If I recognize the minister, it will be to close the debate.

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues opposite for their support and speaking about the bill. I rise to close debate on Bill No. 99.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 99.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill be referred to the Committee on Law Amendments.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 101.

**Bill No. 101 - Marine Renewable-energy Act.**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables.

HON. TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 101 be now read a second time.

It is my pleasure to introduce amendments to the Marine Renewable-energy Act, the piece of legislation that will improve the regulatory framework for the industry of tidal energy. Nova Scotia continues to be a leader in the development of tidal energy technology and research. The amendments we are introducing today will help keep us leading that pack.

The amendments are a response to feedback the department received from the tidal industry and four years of experience in administering the demonstration permit program. The amendments will include improvements to the demonstration permit program and changes to language to allow for greater clarity around the Act's licensing system. In addition, the bill outlines regulation-making authority that will help improve the Act's administration.

The feedback the department has received over a number of years from developers at the Fundy Ocean Research Centre for Energy, or FORCE, is for greater clarity around what rights a licence provides to them and the geographical area for that licence. The amendments to the demonstration permit program addressed this feedback by allowing multiple projects to share subsea infrastructure like moorings or anchors. This can lower the project costs and risk to the general footprint.

Other improvements to the permit program will implement a competitive evaluation process, ensuring the projects that offer the best value to Nova Scotians are approved. The department will extend the cap of the program from 10 megawatts to 15 megawatts as a contingency plan in the unlikely event that BigMoon Power is unable to remove the abandoned Cape Sharp tidal turbine. This provides another private sector pathway to remove the turbine so the expense is not on the backs of taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, since this amendment is solely for a contingency purpose, this cap that I speak of will not be put in force with other amendments to this Act. It will only come into force if needed and has to be approved by Executive Council. While it is unlikely the contingency will be needed, introducing this will allow government the flexibility to find another private sector solution to remove the abandoned Cape Sharp tidal turbine in the Bay of Fundy in the event that the current BigMoon Power project does not work out. I am pleased to say that these amendments do not propose any additional impacts to the ratepayers of Nova Scotia.

The tidal industry has enormous potential for our province as a clean source of energy, as a job creator in rural Nova Scotia, and as an opportunity to build expertise and export green technology. We expect that these amendments will help support growth of the industry in Nova Scotia and position us to maintain our status as leaders in green technology worldwide.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Annapolis.

CARMAN KERR: Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me to respond to the amendments proposed to the Marine Renewable-energy Act. We are in support of these proposed amendments and the positive impact it will have on the marine renewable energy industry in this province.

From offshore wind to tidal energy, there is an opportunity in Nova Scotia to support this sector in our journey to get off coal by 2030. While shifting to a greener, more sustainable future, it is necessary for Nova Scotia to look at ways in which we reach our energy targets to the abundant resources that we have all around us. There is a saying in Nova Scotia that you are never further than 50 kilometres from the ocean. As a province that is surrounded by water, it is time to make the marine renewable sector more appealing and welcoming to those who want to join it.

We recognize that Nova Scotia is the only jurisdiction in Canada with legislation pertaining to marine renewable energy, and we're one of the few in the world. Because of this, marine renewable energy producers know that our door is open for business and there is a place for them in this province.

Although these amendments are largely administrative, these changes will allow the department to evaluate applications to be processed no longer on a first-come, first-served basis, but on the basis of which projects align most with our goals and will get us closer to our renewable energy targets. It's important that all applications submitted to the department have equal opportunity to be reviewed regardless of how quickly they were submitted. This will allow the marine renewable industry to further grow in this province and tap into the resources that Nova Scotia has to offer.

I hope that this legislation allows for the marine renewable sector to grow and become prosperous in the future of Nova Scotia's green economy.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I'll save most of my comments on this bill for third reading. I will say that it looks good on the face of it. It seems administrative. We were convinced during the briefing that, as this is a new and emerging industry, and this is the only act of its kind in the country, I believe, it does require fairly constant updating to keep up with the emerging science and practice as we try to explore marine renewable energy.

As my colleague just mentioned, one of the changes is to shift the application process for the development permits to be evaluated on the merits versus first-come, first-served. While that sounds good, we definitely look forward to seeing what those merits are - to seeing a framework developed so that we understand how those applications are considered. We were told the spirit of the law is that it will, in fact, allow us to see how those projects are consistent with our environmental goals, with our energy goals, et cetera. All of it sounds great, but we really do look forward to - the devil is in the details, as they say. We will be watching for what that framework looks like.

With those few words, I'll look forward to presentations at the Law Amendments Committee. I'm sure there are a lot of people who know a lot about this - more than most of us in this Chamber. Hopefully, some of them will come and share their insights.

THE SPEAKER: If I recognize the minister it will be to close the debate.

The honourable Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables.

HON. TORY RUSHTON: I appreciate the comments from the members opposite and the support to date. I agree 100 per cent. I guess the other comment I would make is that as we ensure these projects do meet our climate goals and our green energy goals, we also have similar abilities within this structure to ensure that the ratepayers are not going to be penalized as well because of the projects that we set out.

This is basically a housekeeping item. It's items that I know the previous Minister of Energy and Mines and I have had many conversations about. I certainly respect and am grateful for the conversations. This is an item that not a lot of people in our country have a full understanding of what is taking place. There's certainly not too much expertise sitting in this room. Sometimes we do have to look outside our government walls to have the expertise with aspects.

I appreciate the comments, and I rise to close debate on Bill No. 101.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 101.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill be referred to the Committee on Law Amendments.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, will you please call Bill No. 102.

**Bill No. 102 - Wildlife Act.**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables.

HON. TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 102 be now read a second time.

We are very fortunate in Nova Scotia to be close to nature and all the benefits our natural world provides. We are also very fortunate to share our environment with an abundance of wildlife. You don't have to travel very far in our province to marvel at the animals in the wild. That's a special thing we have here in our province. That's why we as a government take our commitment to protecting wildlife seriously.

[11:45 a.m.]

Nova Scotians care deeply about issues facing wildlife. The people in my department care about these issues too and are dedicated to excellence in wildlife management. Teams of biologists and technicians are part of the on-the-ground work that has been done to help manage wildlife and issues every day throughout our province.

As minister, I am tasked with addressing wildlife matters at the policy and regulation level. It's not enough to have care and concern for wildlife. We also need to have effective management practices and decision-making tools to support these concerns.

I want to highlight some of my department's recent work in this area. As we implement ecological forestry, the protection of ecosystems and conservation of our province's biodiversity will be at the forefront when making these decisions on how Crown forests are managed. We are also committed to putting recovery plans in place for species at risk and responding to emerging issues affecting wildlife, such as avian flu. But there are many more things that we can do.

It's time for our government to take another step and address a growing problem: feeding wildlife. I've introduced amendments to the Wildlife Act and will add regulation-making authority around inappropriate feeding. The ability to develop regulations will allow the government to respond to this growing problem by addressing problematic or chronic situations without affecting traditional or low-risk activities that people enjoy in our province every day.

Mr. Speaker, feeding wildlife is driven by good intentions. Many people love seeing wildlife in their yards or think feeding is necessary for survival, particularly in the Winter months. Simple acts can have unintended consequences. When accustomed to being fed, wild animals can lose their natural fear of humans or exhibit bold or threatening behaviours.

Feeding also draws wildlife into populated areas, where the risk of injury or death is greater. This heightens risk to public safety and human health, increased potential for disease spread, and results in unmanageable wildlife populations. It also increases the risk of wildlife becoming dependent on humans for food, which is a key driver in human-wildlife conflict. New regulations will help us address these concerns and prevent adverse interactions between wildlife and humans.

I want to be clear about one thing: People will still be able to hunt, fish, trap, and feed birds in their backyards. These are considered traditional methods or low-risk activities. The regulation will help address situations where humans or wildlife are at high risk without affecting activities like the ones that I have just mentioned. This will be a key consideration as we move forward into regulation development.



Mr. Speaker, feeding wildlife is presenting mounting challenges for my department. My department responds to thousands of calls from the public each year facing conflict situations. I'm sincerely concerned about this. Feeding is often the root cause of these interactions. Public safety and humane treatment of wildlife are the department's top priority when responding to these incidents where people and wildlife have come into conflict.

Department employees are trained in human/wildlife conflict response procedures. Challenging or unusual situations are overseen by professional wildlife biologists. The department proactively educates the public about what steps to take to prevent these conflicts or potentially dangerous situations. However, education alone has proven to not always be enough in reducing all these conflicts.

Municipalities are facing the same issue. They're looking to the province for leadership in this area. Wildlife management falls under the provincial legislation and my department has the expertise and established procedures to handle these situations. Yet we are limited to the extent we can support municipalities, owing to the absence of a clear authority and associated regulations. To that end, we will consult with municipalities and many other stakeholders that want information on how the development of the regulations will be coming.

New regulations will also help reduce the incidents of orphaned or injured bears. Nova Scotians were very clear when they said they wanted us to provide options to rehabilitate bears or orphaned bear cubs, which is part of my ministerial mandate letter. We have committed to doing this and my department is currently looking at ways for this to be done successfully in Nova Scotia.

Nova Scotia's bear population is healthy, but bears are not immune to the human interface. The annual trends of human conflict with bears are steadily increasing. Homeowners can help by not feeding bears or by eliminating food sources that may attract them. When fed, bears lose their natural fear for humans. They will keep returning to the areas where they know that the food will be. Bears showing habituated and aggressive behaviours are considered a high risk to this public safety initiative.

We want to work with homeowners to address wildlife situations before they become a problem so we can reduce the number of encounters and keep people and bears and other animals safe. New regulations will give us another tool to address situations on top of the education aspects and achieve a better result for all Nova Scotians and all our wildlife.

In closing, when the honourable Premier appointed me as Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables, he instilled in me the need to provide solutions to the commitments we've made to Nova Scotians. The Wildlife Act protects the diversity of

wildlife species in our province. The current regulations do not include provisions for us to regulate feeding. Amendments will help us to respond to the growing problem.

I want to reiterate, Mr. Speaker, that the traditional methods of hunting, fishing, trapping, or backyard feeding is not the intent to attack on this bill. Future regulation development will target problematic situations that impact the safety of people and wildlife. In doing so, we will also be addressing the risks to human and wildlife health and safety that come with inappropriate feeding. This is the measure we need to achieve our goals, which is to enable human and wildlife to coexist in our province without conflict.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Annapolis.

CARMAN KERR: I want to thank the minister for that and thank you for allowing me to respond to these proposed amendments to the Wildlife Act. The proposed amendment reads as follows: “prohibiting or regulating the feeding of wildlife in all or any part of the Province.”

The intent of this amendment is to keep wildlife wild. It will strive to protect wildlife and Nova Scotians from unnecessary and unsafe encounters with each other that can otherwise be avoidable. Since the amendment offers little detail, or is light on detail, my initial concern is that there may be unintended consequences that the department may not have considered.

I do appreciate the minister stepping aside just now and confirming there will be a fulsome consultation process, yet my concern would be when. Prior to passing of these amendments, or post?

Chicken farmers in the valley and throughout the province, they leave deceased birds to eagles in the area. This benefits both the farmer and the eagles. Will this practice be allowed to continue? Will this group be consulted prior to amendments?

Deer hunters use apples from our farm and many farms throughout the province, and I wonder how this will be handled. This is, again, a common practice in rural Nova Scotia that needs to be clarified. I hope this group is consulted with prior to legislation being passed.

Tourism operators in rural Annapolis Valley communities build programming around eagle watching and feeding. The annual Sheffield Mills Eagle Watch in Kings North welcomes thousands of spectators each year. These people eat in our restaurants, they stay in our accommodations. Does this amendment allow for these communities to continue with this annual tradition? Will they be consulted prior to this legislation being passed?

Does this amendment, or these amendments, include all wildlife or offer exceptions? There are still a lot of questions and details to work out, and I look forward to hearing from Nova Scotians during the Law Amendments process.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I'm happy to rise and speak to this bill. I would echo many of the comments of my colleague. We are interested in hearing some of the details, and in hearing from people at the Law Amendments Committee process, but I do want to take a moment and just note that protecting wildlife, which the minister bordered on talking about a little bit, is also about ensuring that their habitat is protected.

Just a day ago, we learned that the harvest for Beals Brook has been revised and approved. It's our position that in that biodiverse area, harvests should not go ahead until they've been studied and evaluated for the conservation leg of the triad. Of course, that refers to the Lahey report, which has yet to be implemented. We're seeing similar issues with the proposed harvest in Lunenburg County, where there's been some progress in reviving a population of the endangered Atlantic whitefish, and I'll table that.

The amendment is a positive step, and potentially a useful step, but we're also looking for the transformational changes in environment, and in forestry specifically, that will protect and restore biodiversity.

I look forward to hearing more about this bill at Law Amendments Committee and I look forward to the implementation of the Lahey report.

THE SPEAKER: If I recognize the minister it will be to close the debate.

The honourable Minister of Resources and Renewables.

HON. TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, I thank the members opposite for their comments on this bill. I have just a couple of quick comments.

This legislation framework will enable us to do the regulations and actually have full consultation with many of the people we've had conversations with. Mainly right now, it's with different municipalities, but we know there are many other people who will possibly have concerns or may even be able to strengthen what the intent of this legislation will be.

Consultation is top priority, but we need to get this lever moved so we can move on to the next steps. As going forward with the ecological forestry process, the harvest plan had actually been reviewed before I took office and approved. When some issues came up within my office, Mr. Speaker, I ensured that we did the second review and actually made sure that it would fit within the SGEM and the Lahey review process. It came back with

the second approval and it actually does meet within the Lahey review process 100 per cent.

It is not lost on me that there are many comments out in the sector that we see many wildlife interactions. I spoke about black bears, the true demographic of the black bears and what's going on in the province. Black bears are actually having more cubs on an annual basis now. The population is actually a lot stronger than what it has been.

I certainly look forward to hearing from the public, I look forward to the legislation passing and being able to have boots on the ground to have the full consultation process done.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move that we close debate on Bill No. 102.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 102. All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill be referred to the Committee on Law Amendments.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 104.

**Bill No. 104 - Interjurisdictional Support Orders Act.**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 104, amendments to the Interjurisdictional Support Orders Act, be read a second time.

The legislation we are debating here today will make it easier for Nova Scotian families living in different parts of the country to fix and collect court-ordered child support or spousal support payments from their ex-partners. The amendments we're proposing will simplify the administration process for establishing, varying, and enforcing child and spousal support orders when one party lives in Nova Scotia and the other party lives in another province, territory or outside of the country.

I think every one of us here in the Chamber understands how hard it could be on parents and their children who rely on these payments and have to be held up because of interprovincial red tape. That is why it's crucial that we streamline and put simple processes in place to help make sure that children and families get the court-ordered support payments they are entitled to in a timely fashion.

The time and cost for recipients to prepare and submit documents required in the Interjurisdictional Support Orders Act can be substantial and may also lead to the back payments of support arrears in the recipients' new province or territory. Where you live in Canada should not limit your ability to receive maintenance payments or make changes to orders or affect the enforcement of those orders.

[12:00 p.m.]

This legislation will help families get support they need faster. It will also mean that a support order made outside Canada and previously registered in a province or territory outside Nova Scotia will be treated the same way as an order made in any other Canadian province or territory.

The changes will reduce the administrative burden on the courts and help minimize delays. The amendments will include eliminating the requirements for certified copies of court orders and that need for documents to be sworn. The legislation also improves the process for hearing evidence and permits the use of electronic documents, removing the requirement for paper copies, which has contributed significantly to slowing down the process in the past.

Nova Scotia has been a leader in Canada in improving maintenance enforcement. This Nova Scotia Maintenance Enforcement Program has been working across jurisdictions for a number of years to improve the enforcement of support orders to those who have moved out of the province. There are about 2,200 interjurisdictional support orders administered by the program, so the number of families who will be impacted by this legislation is significant.

The improvements contained in Bill No. 104 form another example of our continuous work to support these families. The Maintenance Enforcement Program supports more than 12,000 children and collects and pays out nearly \$230,000 in child support and spousal support to recipients each and every day.

Over 13,500 cases are enrolled in the program, representing almost 28,000 clients. That includes recipients and payers. Women represent about 96 per cent of all support order recipients, so this legislation - indeed much of the work that we will do through this program - has a direct positive impact on women with children throughout Nova Scotia. With those brief remarks, I look forward to hearing from my colleagues across the floor.

**THE SPEAKER:** The honourable member for Preston.

**ANGELA SIMMONDS:** I rise today in support of Bill No. 104. Parents have a responsibility to their children - to love them, provide for them, and ensure they are safe and set up to lead successful lives. Of course, we know that families change, relationships

end, sometimes parents don't get along, but the responsibility and commitment to the child should never waver, no matter where you live.

As I reflect on the many families whom I've spoken with and assisted during my time at Nova Scotia Legal Aid, or Dalhousie Legal Aid Service, or while I was working within the Halifax Regional School Board, I would like to say we support this legislation, as it builds on the many years of advocacy and hard work of the previous Liberal government to modernize the Maintenance Enforcement Program to ensure that spouses and children receive the support they deserve.

We know that information-sharing arrangements exist nationally, but it can be challenging to locate someone who moves to another province or territory. Cases are more likely to be in arrears when the parent ordered to provide child support lives in a different province or territory than the parent caring for the child.

Premier McNeil made it a priority to work with his colleagues across Canada to improve collaboration between provinces in collecting child support payments. He raised the issue during the First Ministers' Meeting held in Newfoundland in July 2015. At that time, 65 per cent of those who owed money lived outside of Nova Scotia. Through his collaboration and advocacy, Nova Scotia, British Columbia, and Newfoundland and Labrador worked together to explore ways to strengthen the enforcement system, with a focus on tracing and locating parents who are not paying support and are living in another province.

This legislation builds and honours that work. This legislation will help the many - over 2,200 - families who have interjurisdictional support orders to collect child and spousal support payments from their ex-partners and spouses. This legislation alone will not be enough. It will require strong leadership and advocacy from the Premier. It will require collaboration and provincial and territorial partners. Families are depending on it.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I'm pleased to rise and speak to this bill. Changes in the Act that facilitate the process of obtaining child or spousal support across jurisdictions are, of course, welcome. In 2018, the Auditor General found that recipients of court-ordered spousal and child support payments in Nova Scotia were owed \$60 million in unpaid amounts over the lifetime of the province's program. There have been some improvements in the Department of Justice since that report, but Nova Scotia still has the highest child support arrears rate in Atlantic Canada, \$52.7 million owing in arrears.

As we look at changes to this legislation and what more needs to be done, we must keep in mind that barriers to obtaining child or spousal support are also a significant contributor to the feminization of poverty and the reason why so many women and families persist in poverty-like conditions. We look forward to learning more about this bill at the

Law Amendments Committee, and we are happy to have the opportunity to speak more at third reading.

THE SPEAKER: If I am to recognize the minister, it will be to close debate.

The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. BRAD JOHNS: I rise to close debate on Bill No. 104.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 104.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill be referred to the Committee on Law Amendments.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, that concludes government business for the day. I move that the House do now rise to meet again on Tuesday, March 29<sup>th</sup>, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Government business will include second reading of Bills No. 106 and 107. The Law Amendments Committee will meet on Monday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Have a great weekend everyone and drive safely.

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. Before the House adjourns today, I have a Speaker's Ruling to deliver.

### **SPEAKER'S RULING**

During Statements by Members this morning, the honourable Leader of the NDP attempted to table a document that unfortunately is out of order.

According to the previous Speaker's rulings from 2015 and 2018, there is no tabling of documents during members' statements. However, the honourable Leader of the NDP may instead attempt to table the document under the appropriate item of business in the daily routine.

For the benefit of everyone, I wish to clarify that any member can make documents part of the Legislative record under the third item of business in the daily routine, which is not just for tabling reports and regulations but also for other papers. Tabling under this item of business should simply identify the document being tabled in no more than one sentence.

This item of business in the daily routine can also be used for tabling documents that ministers undertake to disclose during other House proceedings including Question Period.

Again, before we adjourn, we have a birthday, and it's not one of the MLAs. I'm sorry. It's one of our pages. Jack Creaser is 25 today. (Applause)

Once again, the motion is that the House rise to meet again on Tuesday, March 29<sup>th</sup>, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

We stand adjourned until Tuesday, March 29<sup>th</sup>, at 1:00 p.m. Have a good weekend, everyone.

[The House rose at 12:06 p.m.]



**RESOLUTION NO. 179**

By: Hon. Kim Masland (Queens)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the birth of a child is a momentous event and marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas a new baby is like the beginning of all things - wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities, author Edna J. Leshan wrote; and

Whereas on February 15th, 2022 parents Michaela Piekney and Caylon MacDougall welcomed their son Easton Cash MacDougall into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly all members join me in congratulating Michaela and Caylon on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them many more happy years as parents.

**RESOLUTION NO. 180**

By: Hon. Kim Masland (Queens)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the birth of a child is a momentous event and marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas a new baby is like the beginning of all things - wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities, author Edna J. Leshan wrote; and

Whereas on March 14th 2022, parents Martina Whynot-MacLeod and Jesse Hamm welcomed their son Damion Leo Douglas Hamm into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly all members congratulate Martina and Jesse on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them many more years as parents.

---

**RESOLUTION NO. 181**

By: Hon. Kim Masland (Queens)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas marriages are an occasion for family and friends to gather together to celebrate the life of two individuals united as one; and

Whereas it was once said that a marriage is the celebration of love, trust and partnership; and

Whereas on March 12th, 2022 a very special occasion took place when John Long and Laura Lee Veinot of Queens celebrated their wedding;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate John and Laura Lee on their marriage and wish them a lifetime of health and happiness.