



House of Assembly  
Nova Scotia

## DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

**Speaker: Honourable Keith Bain**

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

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

**First Session**

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2022**

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS:</b>	
Gov't. (N.S.): ECE Wages - Increase Requested, Hon. A. MacMaster.....	3270
<b>GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION:</b>	
Res. 384, Queen Elizabeth II, Death of - Tribute, Hon. T. Houston (The Premier) .....	3271
Vote - Affirmative.....	3272
Res. 385, Dep. Spkr. Salary: Change Req'd. - Recog., Hon. J. Lohr .....	3272
Res. 386, Gender-Neutral Lang. in Leg.: Need - Recog., Hon. A. MacMaster.....	3273
Vote - Affirmative.....	3273
Res. 387, Virtual Attendance Rules: Amend - Recog., Hon. A. MacMaster.....	3273
<b>INTRODUCTION OF BILLS:</b>	
No. 196, An Act to Amend Chapter 22 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia Act, Hon. P. Dunn.....	3276

No. 197, An Act to Amend Chapter 203 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Homes for Special Care Act, Respecting Power Outages in Long-term Care, A. Simmonds.....	3276
No. 198, An Act to Amend Chapter 4 of the Acts of 1992, the Emergency “911” Act, and Chapter 8 of the Acts of 1990, the Emergency Management Act, Hon. J. Lohr .....	3276
No. 199, An Act to Create the Hurricane Fiona Salvage Assistance Program, C. Kerr.....	3276
No. 200, An Act to Amend Chapter 7 of the Acts of 2019, the Nova Scotia Museum Act, Hon. P. Dunn.....	3276
No. 201, An Act to Require Backup Power at Petrol Stations, L. Nicoll .....	3277
No. 202, An Act to Create a Registry of Vulnerable Persons, L. Nicoll .....	3277
<b>STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS:</b>	
Voluns.: Grady MacKinnon Rescue - Recog., The Premier.....	3277
Smith, Larry: Search Effort - Thanks, Hon. I. Rankin.....	3278
Dart. Com. Fridge: Com. Serv. - Thanks, C. Chender .....	3278
Truro Area Coms.: Hurr. Supp. - Recog., D. Ritcey .....	3279
Syd. Orgs.: Hurr. Supp. - Thanks, Hon. D. Mombourquette.....	3279
Hurr. Damage: Poor Infrastructure - Recog., K. Coombes.....	3280
Armed Forces: Hurr. Supp. - Thanks, E. Smith-McCrossin.....	3280
Mullins Rite Stop: Hurricane Supp. - Recog., Hon. B. Comer .....	3281
Nova Scotians: Hurr. Supp. - Thanks, Hon. Z. Churchill .....	3281
Voluns. & Employees: 14 <sup>th</sup> Annual Nocturne Fest. - Thanks, L. Lachance.....	3282
Voluns.: Hurr. Shelter Provision - Thanks, Hon. S. Craig.....	3282
Cosman, Francene: Book Published - Congrats., Hon. K. Regan.....	3282
Doelle, Dr. Meinhard: Death of - Tribute, G. Burrill .....	3283
Farrow, Paul: Hurr. Supp. - Recog., E. Smith-McCrossin.....	3283
Diab Family: Hurr. Supp. - Recog.,	

Hon. T. Halman.....	3284
Fels, Sabine: Prime Minister's Award Recip. - Congrats., Hon. B. Maguire .....	3284
Benjamin, Sobaz: Com. Serv. - Thanks, S. Hansen .....	3284
MacIsaac, Nick: Hurr. Supp. - Thanks, J.A. MacDonald .....	3285
Voluns. & Gov.: Preston Hurr. Supp. - Thanks, A. Simmonds.....	3285
Stepping Stone: New Bldg. - Congrats., S. Leblanc .....	3286
Gammon, Molly & Gordie: Comfort Ctr. Prov. - Recog., K. Smith .....	3286
Nova Scotians: Hurr. Supp. - Recog., A. Duale .....	3286
Workers: Hurr. Supp. - Thanks, K. Coombes.....	3287
Fletcher, Charlene: Hurr. Supp. - Recog., T. Taggart.....	3288
Nova Scotians: Hurr. Supp. - Thanks, Hon. B. Jessome.....	3288
Prismatic Arts Festival: New Art. Works - Thanks, L. Lachance.....	3288
Scarfe, Terri-Ann: Gen. Donation - Thanks, D. Barkhouse.....	3289
Emerg. Serv. Providers: Hurr. Supp. - Thanks, L. Nicoll .....	3289
Com. Orgs.: Pub. Mtgs. Hosted - Congrats., G. Burrill.....	3290
Beaver Bank Kinsac Com. Ctr.: Hurr. Supp. - Thanks, Hon. B. Wong .....	3290
Canada Games Ctr.: Hurr. Supp. - Recog., R. DiCostanzo .....	3291
EPUBC: 180 <sup>th</sup> Anniv. - Congrats., S. Hansen .....	3291
Guys. & Antig. Muns.: Hurr. Supp. - Congrats., Hon. G. Morrow.....	3292
Bond, Lisa: Hurr. Supp. - Congrats., F. Tilley.....	3292
<b>ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS:</b>	
No. 629, Prem.: Human Resources for Hurr. Supp. - Commit, Hon. Z. Churchill .....	3293
No. 630, Prem.: Health Care Inaccessible - Explain, C. Chender .....	3295
No. 631, MAH: Hurr. Supp. Timeline - Clarify, F. Tilley.....	3297

No. 632, SNSIS: More Hurr. Relief - Commit, Hon. Z. Churchill .....	3298
No. 633, EMO: Power Grid Updates Needed - Respond, Hon. K. Regan.....	3299
No. 634, NRR: Proposed Power Rate Hikes - Protect, S. Leblanc .....	3300
No. 635, NRR: Veg. Mgmt. Plan - Commit, L. Nicoll .....	3302
No. 636, EMO: Emerg. Mgmt. Plans - Consider, L. Nicoll .....	3303
No. 637, EMO: Relief Compensation Amt. - Reconsider, Hon. D. Mombourquette .....	3304
No. 638, MAH: MRHA Bldg. Failures - Explain, S. Hansen .....	3305
No. 639, DCS: Vulnerable Nova Scotians - Action, A. Simmonds.....	3306
No. 640, DCS: Housing Sols. - Action, Hon. B. Maguire .....	3307
No. 641, NRR: Help for Woodlot Owners - Commit, C. Kerr.....	3308
No. 642, LSI: Min. Wage Workers Struggling - Explain, K. Coombes.....	3309
No. 643, DFA: Hurr. Aid for Fishing Ind. - Inform, R. LeBlanc .....	3310
POINT OF ORDER .....	3311
ADJOURNMENT, House rose to meet again on Friday, Oct. 14 <sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. ....	3312



House of Assembly  
*Nova Scotia*

**HALIFAX, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2022**

**Sixty-fourth General Assembly**

**First Session**

**1:00 P.M.**

**SPEAKER**

Hon. Keith Bain

**DEPUTY SPEAKERS**

Angela Simmonds, Lisa Lachance

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. Before we begin the daily routine, I'd like to make a Speaker's Statement.

Honourable members, today marks the first sitting of the House since the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the Queen of Canada, on September 8<sup>th</sup>.

Before the passing of her late Majesty, we had been in the midst of the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations marking the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her ascension to the Throne on February 6, 2022. This Summer, an exhibit staged here at Province House highlighted the several royal tours undertaken by her late Majesty in this province, including two visits to Province House. In her visit in 1994, our late Queen unveiled a plaque designating Province House a National Historic Site.

The Crown plays an integral role in Nova Scotia's parliamentary democracy. The Legislature comprises this House of Assembly and the Lieutenant Governor, who acts as the representative as the Crown in this province. Before a bill is passed by this Assembly and becomes law, it must receive Royal Assent from the Lieutenant Governor.

For the last seven years, we've seen that process play out at the end of each sitting when the Lieutenant Governor would arrive and, on being presented with the bills, state: "In Her Majesty's name, I assent to these bills." Henceforth, His Honour will be granting Royal Assent in the name of His Majesty the King.

Last month I wrote to our new Sovereign, His Majesty King Charles III, to convey to him and the Royal Family the sincere condolences of the members of this House. Her Late Majesty will long be remembered in this province with respect and affection for her long life of dedicated service. May she rest in peace.

With that said, I ask that you rise for a moment of silence in honour of her late Majesty.

[A moment of silence was observed.]

THE SPEAKER: God save the King.

We'll begin the daily routine.

### **PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition with the operative clause reading as follows: "We respectfully request that the House of Assembly of Nova Scotia make the wage increase for Early Childhood Educators an immediate priority and backdate a wage increase for those already in the profession to January 2022, while also giving a date as to when this wage increase will happen."

Mr. Speaker, we know that that wage increase has been given and announced this week. There are 97 names on this petition, and I have affixed my signature as well.

THE SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

### **PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

### **TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS, AND OTHER PAPERS**

### **STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

### **GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

**RESOLUTION NO. 384**

HON. TIM HOUSTON (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. A humble address to His Majesty the King, in the following words, do pass:

TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY:

MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN:

We, Your Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the representatives of the people of Nova Scotia in General Assembly, respectfully express our deep sympathy and heartfelt sorrow for the great loss sustained by Your Majesty in the passing of your beloved mother, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada.

We mourn the loss of our Queen with you, with the members of the Royal family, and with the people of all Your Majesty's Realms. Her Late Majesty's dedication to her duties as Sovereign, her selfless commitment to public service, and her dignified manner have earned her the loyalty and respect of the people of Nova Scotia.

We warmly recall the tours of our province by Her Late Majesty, accompanied by His Late Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, in 1951, 1959, 1976, 1994, and 2010, including visits to the historic Province House legislative building in which this House of Assembly convenes. Her Late Majesty will be remembered by Nova Scotians with great affection and admiration.

We respectfully welcome Your Majesty's accession to the throne as King of Canada and offer our loyalty and devotion. As Your Majesty undertakes the heavy responsibilities of a sovereign, we share with you our conviction that Your Majesty, with the support of Her Majesty The Queen Consort, will strive to promote the happiness of the people in all your realms and to advance the cause of peace and justice now and in the years to come.

2. That the above humble address to His Majesty The King be engrossed and presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor with the request that the Addresses so engrossed be transmitted through the proper channels to His Majesty.

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 Municipal Affairs and Housing.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 385**

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

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. In addition to the honourable member for Preston and the honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island, the honourable member for Chester-St. Margaret's, the honourable member for Eastern Shore, and the honourable member for Shelburne be the Chairs of Committees and Deputy Speakers of the House of Assembly;
2. That the honourable member for Eastern Shore be the Deputy Speaker within the meaning of Subsection 14 (3) of the House of Assembly Act and within the meaning of the House of Assembly Management Act; and
3. The annual salary of the Deputy Speaker, established pursuant to the House of Assembly Act, be divided equally between the five Chairs of Committees and Deputy Speakers.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?



I hear several noes. The motion is tabled.

The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

**RESOLUTION NO. 386**

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I am about to read a motion which pertains to gender-neutral language for the rule book for the Legislature.

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

Be it resolved that the *Rules and Forms of Procedure* of the House of Assembly are amended in accordance with the attached Schedule.

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 Finance and Treasury Board.

**RESOLUTION NO. 387**

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, this one is a bit longer, so I will ask the members for their patience on this one.

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

Be it resolved that the *Rules and Forms of Procedure* of the House of Assembly be amended as follows:

1. Paragraph (1) of Rule 6 is amended by adding “physical or virtual” immediately after “The.”
2. Rule 6 is further amended by adding immediately after paragraph (1) the following paragraph:

(1A) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), the physical presence of the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker or another Member presiding over the House shall be necessary to constitute a meeting of the House.

3. Paragraph (4) of Rule 6 is amended by striking out “come in” and substituting “join the proceedings.”
4. Paragraph (6) of Rule 6 is amended by adding “in person or virtually” immediately after “present” everywhere it appears.
5. Rule 6B is amended by adding immediately after paragraph (h) the following paragraph:

(hh) a Member shall be physically present in the House to vote;

6. The Rules are further amended by adding immediately after Rule 14 the following heading and Rule:

14A(1) A member may attend the services of the House, including the Committee of the Whole or the Subcommittee on Supply, virtually with leave of the Speaker if the member advises the Speaker that the member has good cause to prevent the member from appearing in person.

14(A)(2) Where a member attends the House virtually, the member (a) shall do so from a location within Nova Scotia using such video conference software or other medium as may be directed by the Speaker; and (b) may only participate and be counted as present for the purpose of establishing quorum if the member’s face is clearly visible on the video or other medium.

14(A)(3) Where a member attends the House virtually, (a) the member may indicate the member’s desire to be recognized in such manner as may be directed by the Speaker; (b) for the purpose of Rules 22, 47, 59, and 63, the member is deemed to have risen in the member’s place once the member is recognized by the Speaker; and (c) for the purpose of Paragraphs 7 and 8 of Rule No. 43, the member is not required to rise in the member’s place to be counted as supporting a motion for leave under that rule but may indicated the member’s support and be counted in such a manner as may be directed by the Speaker.

14(A)(4) Where a member attending the House virtually seeks or is required to table a document in the House, the member shall do so in such manner as the Speaker may direct or have another member physically present in the House table the document on behalf of the member attending virtually.

7. Rule 28 is amended by adding immediately after Paragraph 4 the following paragraph: (5) When a member attending the House virtually has been suspended pursuant to this rule from the service of the House, the Speaker shall direct the member to exit the virtual proceedings and if the member shall refuse to obey the direction of the Speaker, the

Speaker shall then order the member to be removed from the video conference or other medium of virtual participation.

[1:15 p.m.]

That may be more relevant to some members than others in here, Mr. Speaker, but of course I leave that to your judgement. (Laughter)

8. Paragraph 2 of Rule 38 is amended by striking out “voices” and substituting “votes.”

9. Rule 38 is further amended by adding immediately after Paragraph 2 the following paragraphs: “(2A) A member attending the House in person shall declare the member’s vote in the affirmative or in the negative verbally. (2B) A member attending the House virtually shall declare the member’s vote in the affirmative or in the negative by such manner as the Speaker may direct.

10: Rule 38 is further amended by adding, immediately after Paragraph 3, the following paragraph: (3A) A member in virtual attendance may make a demand pursuant to Paragraph 3 in such manner as the Speaker may direct.

11: Paragraph 1 of Rule 44 is amended by striking out “printed” and substituting “publish.”

12: Rule 45 is amended by (a) striking out “printed and distributed to the members,” and substituting “published on the Legislature’s website”; and (b) striking out “Printed” and substituting “Published”; and (c) striking out “(signifying that it has been printed and distributed).”

13: Rule 48 is amended by adding “, or the Clerk of the Committee,” immediately after “referred.”

14: Rule 49 is amended by a) striking out “reprinted” everywhere it appears and substituting “republished”; b) adding “publish” immediately after “print”; (c), striking out “Printed” and substituting “Published”; and d) striking out “and distributed” and substituting “on the Legislature’s website.”

15: Paragraph 1 of Rule 62DA is amended by striking out “Nine members constitute” and substituting “The physical or virtual presence of nine members constitutes.”

16: Paragraph 1 of Rule 62F is amended by striking out “Six members constitute” and substituting “The physical or virtual presence of six members constitutes.”

17: Paragraph 3 of Rule 62F is amended by a) striking out “voices” wherever it appears and substituting “votes”; and b) striking out “voice” and substituting “vote.”

18: Paragraph 4 of Rule 62F is amended by adding “, broadcast on television or streamed on the Internet” immediately after “public.”

19: Rule 62FB is amended by striking out “have one or two support staff” and substituting “appear either virtually or in person and be accompanied by one or two support staff who may be”; and finally,

20: Rule 77 is amended by a) adding “cause the Orders of the Day to be sent electronically to all members and” immediately after “shall” the first time it appears; and b), striking out “at each member’s place” and substituting “the place of each member in physical attendance.”

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

I hear several noes. The motion is tabled, and we should ask the minister to read it again in Gaelic. (Laughter)

#### **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill No. 196 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 22 of the Revised Statutes, 1989. The Art Gallery of Nova Scotia Act. (Hon. Pat Dunn)**

**Bill No. 197 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 203 of the Revised Statutes, 1989. The Homes for Special Care Act Respecting Power Outages in Long-term Care. (Angela Simmonds)**

**Bill No. 198 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 4 of the Acts of 1992, the Emergency 911 Act and Chapter 8 of the Acts of 1990, the Emergency Management Act. (Hon. John Lohr)**

**Bill No. 199 - Entitled an Act to Create the Hurricane Fiona Salvage Assistance Program. (Carman Kerr)**

**Bill No. 200 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 7 of the Acts of 2019, the Nova Scotia Museum Act. (Hon. Pat Dunn)**

**Bill No. 201 - Entitled an Act to Require Backup Power at Petrol Stations.  
(Lorelei Nicoll)**

**Bill No. 202 - Entitled an Act to Create a Registry of Vulnerable Persons.  
(Lorelei Nicoll)**

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

#### **NOTICES OF MOTION**

#### **STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

#### **VOLUNS.: GRADY MACKINNON RESCUE - RECOG.**

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a heartwarming instance of community action that recently took place in Springville.

It was 5:00 p.m. on September 24th when four-year-old Grady MacKinnon disappeared from his backyard. His parents, Gillian and Adam, and older sister Harper searched everywhere to no avail. It was the day after Hurricane Fiona hit our province, when so many people were in need, but the MacKinnon family was in desperate need of help.

The community showed up for Grady. Within an hour, over 150 people - including first responders, neighbours, friends and strangers - were searching the nearby woods, an environment that Gillian described as a pitch black jungle of tangled trunks and toppled hemlocks, with roots reaching nine feet into the air.

It was Grady's grandfather Gary and volunteer Mary Kenney who discovered and rescued Grady the following morning. After a two-hour trek into the woods, the two heard the sound of crying and found the boy shortly after. Upon seeing his grandfather, Grady ran to his arms. Aside from a few small scratches, Grady was unharmed.

Mr. Speaker, the way the community responded to Grady's disappearance was nothing short of extraordinary. People, many of whom were dealing with their own issues as a result of the hurricane, put their own needs aside to help the MacKinnon family. I ask all members of this House to join me in celebrating Grady's rescue and in honouring the volunteers who showed up to search for him.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

**SMITH, LARRY: SEARCH EFFORT - THANKS**

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge some heartbreaking news regarding what is believed to be a tragic ending for a family in Lower Prospect.

On Saturday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, we were hit by post-tropical storm Fiona. High winds, heavy rain, and torrential winds knocked down trees and power lines, washed out roads, and damaged shorelines. This storm left devastating destruction for many, as the Smith family lost a member of their family, Larry Smith. It appears that the storm has taken this beloved member from their family.

Larry Smith, at the age of 81, was likely swept out to sea. He was reported missing on Saturday at three o'clock, when a family member went to check on him and noticed the patio door being open. A helicopter from the Department of Natural Resources and Renewables searched by air while joint rescue searched the shoreline around Hennesseys Island, where Mr. Smith resided as the sole occupant on the island. Canadian Coast Guard vessels, boats, and sonar equipment also combed the shorelines, but were not successful in finding Mr. Smith.

I would like the members of the House of Assembly to join me in thanking members of the Canadian Coast Guard, and staff from the Department of Natural Resources and Renewables for their gallant efforts to head out in severe and dangerous conditions to search for a respected and loved long-time resident of Lower Prospect.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

**DART. COM. FRIDGE: COM. SERV. - THANKS**

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Dartmouth Community Fridge. The fridge and pantry are open to anyone needing food 24 hours a day, seven days a week, on the grounds of Christ Church in downtown Dartmouth. It's stocked with staples like dry goods, fresh fruit, and vegetables but also frozen meals, snacks, pet food, and hygiene products. Everyone's invited to leave what they can and take what they need, and they have been doing that.

This truly grassroots project was brought to life by the community with support from Christ Church and the Public Good Society of Dartmouth along with various restaurants and organizations that pitch in their time and effort. It's a completely volunteer-run effort and allows people from all walks of life who need a little support the opportunity to access nourishment on their own schedule.

While we work to make food banks redundant in Nova Scotia, please join me in thanking the people of Dartmouth for creating and maintaining this valuable resource in our community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River.

**TRURO AREA COMS.: HURR. SUPP. - RECOG.**

DAVE RITCEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the incredible efforts of communities across Nova Scotia in the wake of Hurricane Fiona's destruction on September 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>.

Weeks after the storm hit the region, clean-up efforts continue throughout my constituency of Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River. Trees were uprooted from the ground, power poles were torn in half, and areas experienced extensive flooding. In Truro's treasured Victoria Park, many of the stately, old-growth eastern hemlock trees have been uprooted or broken, and the cleanup will continue as we move forward.

Our community is so thankful to the dedicated crews from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario and the U.S. who worked tirelessly to ensure residents receive safe and reliable power. I'm also proud of the all-hands-on-deck coordinated effort of the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing responsible for the Emergency Management Office, the Department of Natural Resources and Renewables, local municipal leaders, staff, fire departments/first responders, Canadian military, volunteers who supported the comfort centres, as well as local businesses, organizations, and the community as a whole for stepping up to support one another in this time of need. That's truly the Nova Scotian way.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

**SYD. ORGS.: HURR. SUPP. - THANKS**

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I rise in my place to thank everyone at home, and many members will be providing member statements about the support they received in their communities during and after Hurricane Fiona. Sydney is no different: We saw severe damage within our communities. We saw a lot of people trapped in their own homes at points in the storm.

I rise in my place to thank everybody involved, whether it was the Canadian Red Cross, whether it was the Salvation Army, who delivered thousands of meals to people who couldn't access food - our utility workers, our first responders, everybody on the ground with the municipality. It was a community effort. I've seen it a few times now in our community during weather events and everybody just really rallies together to support everyone.

I rise in my place as the member for Sydney-Membertou to congratulate and thank everyone for working tirelessly to make sure that our communities all recover, following

what has been one of the most devastating, if not the most devastating, weather event in our community.

[1:30 p.m.]

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

**HURR. DAMAGE: POOR INFRASTRUCTURE - RECOG.**

KENDRA COOMBES: Mr. Speaker, this week will mark 21 days since Fiona made landfall in Nova Scotia. Before the storm made landfall, some residents of Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier had to evacuate their homes. These residents had windows smashed, trees had come down on the houses, roofs have come off. One resident reported that the roof was now in their backyard.

So many of us watched as the sun rose to reveal the utter devastation Fiona left. I had residents trapped in their homes due to trees, smashed cars, roofs ripped off, downed power poles, and roads blocked for emergency vehicles.

The damage was extensive and so much damage remains. This cleanup is ongoing. There are still people without power and internet. Residents are struggling to clean up their properties, and the municipality of CBRM is struggling to clean up their properties as well.

These storms are becoming more frequent. Nova Scotia Power's CEO and this government must take responsibility for the inadequate and out-of-date infrastructure so that this does not happen again.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

**ARMED FORCES: HURR. SUPP. - THANKS**

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: I rise today to recognize the Canadian Armed Forces under the responsibility of Brigadier-General Stéphane Masson. Stéphane, as well as their troops, helped many of our constituents during the aftermath of the storm by helping to clear trees for those who could not get out of their homes, as well as wellness checks for our most vulnerable constituents without power and running water.

I am very thankful to the Canadian Armed Forces for their help which likely helped speed up power restoration for those without, as well as checking on the safety and well-being of the constituents. Having the Canadian Armed Forces in my community was a big encouragement to the people and I am very thankful to have Stéphane's troops to assist during this time.



Mr. Speaker, today I ask for everyone to join me in thanking our Canadian Armed Forces for their service to our area after Hurricane Fiona, and in service to our country.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton East.

**MULLINS RITE STOP: HURRICANE SUPP. - RECOG.**

HON. BRIAN COMER: I rise today to commend Mullins Rite Stop in Albert Bridge, Cape Breton for the outstanding support they provided to their community's surrounding areas during Hurricane Fiona. The owners and staff worked tirelessly to meet the needs of their customers, even when they had no power themselves. They kept their customers and community members aware of when supplies were coming in, including gas, which you know is a significant issue in Cape Breton following the storm. Their dedication and compassion are continuously evident in the community.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this time to applaud the owners and staff of Mullins Rite Stop for their continued dedication for their community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

**NOVA SCOTIANS: HURR. SUPP. - THANKS**

ZACH CHURCHILL: I'd like to take a moment to speak to the resiliency, compassion and kindness that we have all witnessed in the wake of Hurricane Fiona in the hardest-hit parts of our province. In Cape Breton, Guysborough, Cumberland, Antigonish, the Pictou, Eastern Shore, affected areas of the HRM, and other areas that were impacted, we saw first-hand the generosity, strength and determination of neighbours, community halls, service organizations, and, of course, first responders - people who were sharing everything they could with one another, including generators, meals, and a place to rest.

Cape Breton University international students set up a makeshift kitchen feeding hot meals to hundreds, saying it's simply part of their Sikh culture to share food and comfort with anyone who may need both. From teenagers filling up cans of gas and delivering them to seniors, to the local YMCA allowing people to use its showers, the list goes on and on, Mr. Speaker, the acts of kindness that we saw.

I'd like to ask this House to join me in thanking and applauding Nova Scotians during such a disastrous time in their lives. They may have lost their electricity, but their human spirit could not have shone brighter.

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

**VOLUNS. & EMPLOYEES: 14<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL NOCTURNE FEST. - THANKS**

LISA LACHANCE: I rise today to celebrate the 14<sup>th</sup> annual Nocturne festival happening now in Halifax. This festival brings art and energy to the streets of HRM with the perspective that art can be found anywhere.

There are so many highlights for this year. At the Nova Scotia Archives gallery, *I Am What I Am* is a group show based on constructs of identity. At the Halifax Central Library, *Little Children Our Beings They Found You*, or *Mijua 'ji 'jk Ntininaq Weji 'skesnik*, led by Michelle Sylliboy and Sarah Prosper, includes 18 light boxes that project Mi'kmaw hieroglyphic messages. By approaching each light box, exhibition visitors will light up the ceiling with community messages of grief, sorrow, love, and care.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to share my gratitude to Nocturne volunteers and employees. It's an opportunity for everyone to experience the art of Kqipuktuk in a whole new light.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

**VOLUNS.: HURR. SHELTER PROVISION - THANKS**

HON. STEVE CRAIG: Rachel Smith, Cheryl Newcombe, Bob Price, and many others graciously and selflessly volunteered their time by making arrangements to provide an emergency shelter from Hurricane Fiona at the Sackville Area Warming Centre in Lower Sackville.

The volunteers planned and coordinated and took shifts to ensure the Centre was able to stay open and available all night to those who were homeless. Food was donated in abundance by local organizations, which in turn was made available, of course, to all the guests throughout the night.

I would like to ask that all members of the House of Assembly join me in thanking Rachel, Cheryl, Bob, and all the volunteers with the Sackville Area Warming Centre for working together to provide a warm and welcoming safe haven from the storm.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford Basin.

**COSMAN, FRANCENE: BOOK PUBLISHED - CONGRATS.**

HON. KELLY REGAN: I would like to congratulate one our own, a former member of this House, Francene Cosman. Francene was the MLA for Bedford-Fall River for several terms here. She was also a Deputy Speaker and Minister of Community Services, and Francene has just gone on to write a book entitled *Nurse! Sorry, Mr. Speaker*. No props. She has written a book. My copy has just arrived, so I was very excited.

It's about her career as a nurse and how that actually prepared her for all the roles that she went on to take after that time, including president of the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women. I'd like to congratulate my constituent, the Honourable Francene Cosman, and I don't think we're allowed to encourage our colleagues to go out and buy that book on Amazon, so I won't do that, but I do want to congratulate her.

THE SPEAKER: I would assume there must be royalties to that advertisement.

The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

### **DOELLE, DR. MEINHARD: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

GARY BURRILL: I mark, together with all the House, our sorrow at the tragic passing on September 17<sup>th</sup> of Dr. Meinhard Doelle. Dr. Doelle, who was 58, was a highly respected and much-beloved professor of environmental law at the Schulich School of Law.

His research and writing focused on public participation in environmental decision-making, on environmental assessments, and climate change. He was drafter of the Nova Scotia Environment Act and policy advisor in the development of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

In 2014, Dr. Doelle co-authored a new regulatory framework for low-impact, high-volume aquaculture in Nova Scotia widely known as the Doelle-Lahey Report, a definitive and masterful synthesis of scientific and policy complexities into a clear and cogent path for aquaculture in Nova Scotia. It was one of his many signature contributions to public policy in our province, and his passing is indeed marked with great sorrow.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

### **FARROW, PAUL: HURR. SUPP. - RECOG.**

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Today I rise to recognize Mr. Paul Farrow of Amherst. During the aftermath of Hurricane Fiona, Paul had been having dreams of feeding the seniors. He woke up and organized, with the help of local businesses and volunteers, to gather hot meals, sandwiches, as well as tea and coffee for seniors in our neighbouring constituency of Cumberland South, which is where Mr. Farrow grew up. He helped seniors in the communities of River Hebert and Joggins who had no power or running water.

The love Paul Farrow has for his community during this time is a great example of how our communities come together to help those in need. I am so very proud of the work done by Paul to help our seniors and the care he has for them.

Today, please join me in thanking Paul Farrow for bringing hot food to our seniors and vulnerable people of Cumberland County.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

**DIAB FAMILY: HURR. SUPP. - RECOG.**

HON. TIMOTHY HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Diab family and their store Express-Way.

Located in Woodlawn, the Diab family stepped up to provide assistance to residents of Dartmouth after Hurricane Fiona. They had coffee machines and hot water available to anyone without power. They also offered to get supplies to anyone in the community who may have been unable to get out on their own. At a time when people needed a helping hand from their neighbour, the Diab family and Express-Way were there to help.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that members of the provincial Legislature join me in acknowledging the Nova Scotians who stepped up for their communities in the aftermath of Hurricane Fiona.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

**FELS, SABINE: PRIME MINISTER'S AWARD RECIP. - CONGRATS**

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to acknowledge an amazing educator from my community - more specifically, a teacher from J.L. Ilsley High School, Sabine Fels. Sabine has worked with thousands of students and opened their eyes and hearts to art and culture. She has used art to teach our youth about poverty, racism, and social issues. Because of her hard work and dedication, she has been awarded the Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence - a much-deserved recognition, I will say.

Thank you to Sabine for your lifelong dedication to the arts, youth, and making the world a better place. You are truly loved and appreciated.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

**BENJAMIN, SOBAZ: COM. SERV. - THANKS**

SUZY HANSEN: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize a community worker and advocate: Sobaz Benjamin, founder and executive director of In My Own Voice (iMOVE) Arts Association. Sobaz is a film director as well as a mentor, program facilitator, and educator. In 2009, he partnered with the Nova Scotia Justice Department to deliver his Life Story course the (Kintsugi Monologues: KM) at the Nova Scotia Youth Facility, the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility, and the Nova Scotia Community College.

Sobaz was honoured in 2014 by the provincial Justice Department with a Minister's Award for Individual Leadership in Crime Prevention. Sobaz has also received a Humans Rights Award for his work with youth and directing awards from the National Film Board of Canada and the Canadian Academy of Cinema and Television.

I would like all members of the House today to help me thank Sobaz Benjamin for all the work he continues to do in our community and beyond.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

**MACISAAC, NICK: HURR. SUPP. - THANKS**

JOHN A. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Nick MacIsaac and his landscaping company, MacIsaac's Landscaping.

As people were preparing for Hurricane Fiona to arrive, Nick wanted to ensure everyone was prepared and offered to help seniors properly secure their belongings free of charge.

I would like to thank Nick for his generosity. Being a part of a community that comes together in times of need is truly amazing to see.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

**VOLUNS. & GOV.: PRESTON HURR. SUPP. - THANKS**

ANGELA SIMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to acknowledge those in the Preston constituency who went above and beyond during Hurricane Fiona.

First, I want to acknowledge the North Preston Community Centre Mobilization Team, who offered showers, water, their kitchen, and electronics for days and evenings when we waited for power.

I also want to thank the Porters Lake Park and the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources and Renewables facilities ready-to-use constituent members' washrooms and showers. And further, I would like to say thank you to Ms. Erica Fleck, who heard many concerns regarding the disaster response and understanding of the constituency needs, in particular in the Preston Township and the seven days of waiting for the power to be turned on.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

[1:45 p.m.]

**STEPPING STONE: NEW BLDG. PURCHASE - CONGRATS.**

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, Stepping Stone is an organization that supports current and former sex workers, people at risk of entering the sex trade, and people who have been sex-trafficked. Though I have long admired their work, I recently got to know the folks at Stepping Stone a little better, because they started holding programs across the hall from my former constituency office. My office colleagues and I loved the laughter, camaraderie, and energy that Stepping Stone brought to our building.

I rise today to congratulate everyone at Stepping Stone on their recent purchase of a building in Dartmouth North. The new-to-them building will be renovated to include space for client drop-in programming, donations, outreach, court support staff, and computers for their clients to use. Excitingly, the upstairs will be turned into an apartment for transitional housing for clients who face barriers to finding and keeping housing.

I am thrilled that Stepping Stone is putting down roots in Dartmouth North and I ask the whole House to join me in celebrating this big move for this vital organization.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Eastern Shore.

**GAMMON, MOLLY & GORDIE: COMFORT CTR. PROV. - RECOG.**

KENT SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring recognition to Eastern Shore residents Molly and Gordie Gammon for their exceptional effort in opening and maintaining a community comfort centre in Moser River in the aftermath of Hurricane Fiona.

The Gammons provided refreshments, charging stations, and general support to community members impacted by the hurricane at the Moser River Community Hall. A warm, safe location with good food and hot drinks can lift the spirits for residents during times of stress and uncertainty.

I ask that all members of the Assembly join me in acknowledging Molly and Gordie for their continued community-oriented volunteerism and for bringing true Nova Scotian hospitality to those negatively affected by the recent storm.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

**NOVA SCOTIANS: HURR. SUPP. - RECOG.**

ALI DUALE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity today to recognize the members of the Halifax Armdale Constituency.

During the hurricane, I had the opportunity to go around to the neighbours and the constituents and I truly saw the true colours of Halifax Armdale constituents: neighbours helping neighbours, strangers assisting strangers, and people coming together.

This is one of the testaments to us as a community. When something happens, we stand with each other. We help each other. That's what makes us as a people and as a province.

I would like to recognize all Nova Scotians who, during this difficult time, stood up and helped their neighbours and their colleagues. Quite honestly, this is when we do the best - when we get together, not necessarily to wait for somebody else or the government.

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

### **WORKERS: HURR. SUPP. - THANKS**

KENDRA COOMBES: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to all the amazing Fiona volunteers and workers.

First, I want to thank every worker who had to work before, during, and after the storm. These workers didn't go to work because they wanted to but because they had to. They need to put food on the table and pay bills. They had to work when they didn't have power or phone service. They had damage to their homes and property.

I want to thank power line technicians, forestry technicians, damage assessors, field support workers, and the Canadian Armed Forces for all their hard work. So many workers came from across the country and from Maine. My thanks to everyone.

Every day I travelled the constituency of Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier. This allowed me the privilege of witnessing the community coming together. The volunteers of the New Waterford and Reserve Mines comfort centres did yeoman's work. They worked extremely hard.

Community organizations like the Business Development Corporation of Cape Breton, Undercurrent Youth Centre, and the Salvation Army stepped up to feed people. Other community organizations and businesses donated food and other products, including access to washrooms and showers.

The generosity was heartwarming. I can't thank them enough or express my appreciation.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

**FLETCHER, CHARLENE: HURR. SUPP. - RECOG.**

TOM TAGGART: Mr. Speaker, from the moment Hurricane Fiona touched down and wreaked havoc on Nova Scotia, including Colchester North, Charlene Fletcher went into action.

Charlene worked extra hours with Public Works, helping with traffic control for Nova Scotia Power as well as debris removal, putting in many long hours and days without a break. During her little bit of spare time, she made an effort to check in with her neighbours. Asking nothing in return, Charlene offered her barns and fields to a farmer for his horses after he lost a barn due to the hurricane.

She has been actively helping seniors and those with extended power outages while she herself was without power for 12 days. Charlene volunteered to help residents in the community fill out hurricane relief rebates for food and tree removal and also answered fire calls for the Bass River and District Volunteer Fire Brigade.

In a time of crisis, we ask that we be kind and help our neighbours. Charlene never needs to be asked to lend a hand. She is always the first to step up and offer her assistance.

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

**NOVA SCOTIANS: HURR. SUPP. RESPONSE - THANKS**

HON. BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't get up and join my colleagues in thanking the people of Nova Scotia for stepping up during what was a difficult weekend, and I know that some people continue to face challenges as a result of Hurricane Fiona. Hammonds Plains-Lucasville was no different.

How fortunate are we all to live in a province and in communities where, no questions asked, people are willing to put the hardship of others before their own. I'm grateful for that. I know that we all are, and I know that we'll never be able to truly express how thankful we actually are for the efforts that the crews, the first responders, the volunteers, and the average Nova Scotian put in over the last several weeks.

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

**PRISMATIC ARTS FESTIVAL: NEW ART. WORKS - THANKS**

LISA LACHANCE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share my appreciation for the vibrant Prismatic Arts Festival. It's an annual multi-disciplinary arts festival that celebrates work by Indigenous artists and artists of colour from across Canada. Prismatic has been bringing audiences vibrant boundary-pushing new works in theatre, dance, music, film, visual arts, media arts, and spoken word since 2008. This year, highlights included the



staging of Cliff Cardinal's *huff*, as well as a unique collaboration amongst the Upstream Music Collective, Breaking Circus, and Sarah Prosper.

In the community, Prismatic supported artists at the 2022 International Indigenous Music Summit and Contact East Conference, both held in Halifax in September, and through master classes in collaboration with the Fountain School of Performing Arts at Dalhousie.

I ask all members to join me in thanking the Prismatic team for another amazing year.

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

**SCARFE, TERRI-ANN: GEN. DONATION - THANKS**

DANIELLE BARKHOUSE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank everyone who stepped up in Nova Scotia to help after Hurricane Fiona, but I want to tell the story of how a wonderful New Ross resident spent the day after Hurricane Fiona.

Ms. Terri-Ann Scarfe is an employee at the Home Hardware in Chester. She received a call from a frantic father in Alberta looking for a generator for his daughter, a single mother who was without power, alone with her children in Cape Breton. Home Hardware had already sold all of their inventory, but Terri-Ann got into her vehicle and drove her own generator towards Cape Breton. No money was exchanged, only hugs and tears. Terri-Ann said she was just doing what any Nova Scotian would do.

I want to thank Terri-Ann Scarfe for her incredible act of Nova Scotian kindness.

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

**EMERG. SERV. PROVIDERS: HURR. SUPP. - THANKS**

LORELEI NICOLL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge and thank all of our emergency management professionals and volunteers for their skill and dedication responding to the challenges brought to our province by Tropical Storm Fiona.

Without their commitment, preparation, and practice, the results of this extreme weather event could have been much worse. It is gratifying to see the collaboration among our various emergency service providers, and perhaps even more so to hear the lengths to which some individuals went to ensure our citizens had access to the critical services that they require, such as the following story I would like to share with you from the Dartmouth General Hospital Foundation.

Our patient flow manager was driving to work and came across someone holding up a tree across Pleasant Street so that the cars could pass. When this manager arrived at work, she learned it was actually a nurse from the Dartmouth General Hospital who was holding up that tree. So in addition to our emergency response teams, I would also like to thank everyone at the Dartmouth General Hospital for their continued hard work and dedication. We see how much you care for your patients and community, for which we are immensely grateful.

Thank you to all Nova Scotians, as we have said here in the House, for the small and big ways that you played in your respective neighbourhoods in the recovery.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

### **COM. ORGS.: PUB. MTGS. HOSTED - CONGRATS.**

GARY BURRILL: Congratulations to the Twin Bays Coalition, the Association for the Preservation of the Eastern Shore, Protect Liverpool Bay, and the St. Mary's Bay Protectors who together will continue their successful joint community event series tonight with a reception at the Brewery Market in Halifax launching Catherine Collins' and Doug Frantz's new book, *Salmon Wars: The Dark Underbelly of our Favorite Fish*, published by McMillan.

Together with partners the Ecology Action Centre, the Atlantic Salmon Federation, the Nova Scotia Salmon Association, the Council of Canadians, St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association, and Friends of Nature, the community organizations have hosted a series of well-attended public meetings in Sandy Cove, Lake Charlotte, Mahone Bay, Upper Tantallon, and now Halifax, featuring Collins's and Francis's investigative exposé of environmental degradation and community marginalization by multinational open net-pen aquaculture corporations. The series is a real model for investigative research and community organizing can intersect for social change and common purpose, and this evening's reception promises to continue in this strong vein.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Waverley-Fall River-Beaver Bank.

### **BEAVER BANK KINSAC COM. CTR.: HURR. SUPP. - THANKS**

HON. BRIAN WONG: Please join me in thanking the board members of the Beaver Bank Kinsac Community Centre and the many volunteers who provided warmth, food, and support during and after Hurricane Fiona.

Along with the standard supports offered by the many hard-working volunteers at these centres, local community members pulled together to help. Volunteers brought food and cooked a pot of soup and even a turkey dinner for those who were without power.

People's safety is most important during any crisis and the extra care provided from strangers is heartwarming and appreciated by those who are in need.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in thanking the Beaver Bank Kinsac Community Centre for everything they do and for providing a safe space for our community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

**CANADA GAMES CTR.: HURR. SUPP. - RECOG.**

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: I rise today to recognize the Canada Games Centre in my community during Hurricane Fiona. The Canada Games Centre was set up as an evacuation shelter during Hurricane Fiona.

I had the opportunity to visit the centre and saw first-hand the hard work of volunteers and members from four organizations: The Salvation Army Maritime Division, the Canadian Red Cross, St. John Ambulance, and the Disaster Animal Response Team of Nova Scotia. All worked together to help the evacuees. Clayton Park West constituents were also welcome to use the site to charge their phones.

I would ask that the House join me in recognizing the Canada Games Centre and many volunteer organizations for supporting all Nova Scotians during Hurricane Fiona.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

**EPUBC: 180<sup>TH</sup> ANNIV. - CONGRATS.**

SUZY HANSEN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the East Preston United Baptist Church for its 180<sup>th</sup> year of serving the Lord through its great works.

EPUBC was founded on September 12, 1842, through the gallant efforts of Father Richard Preston, the founding father of the African United Baptist Association of Nova Scotia. Our ancestors had faith in God, and as strong believers, they recognized the church as being central to their existence. The ancestors knew that a place of worship was a haven to some, a rock for others, and an anchor for many.

September 9<sup>th</sup> I was honoured to be a part of EPUBC's 180<sup>th</sup> celebration, and it was a wonderful time. The spirit truly moved me, and I was glad to be in the house of the Lord.

I would like the House to help me congratulate East Preston United Baptist Church on their 180<sup>th</sup> anniversary as they march forward with efforts to be the motivating force in the lives of many people who look to it for direction and guidance.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Guysborough-Tracadie.

**GUYS. & ANTIG. MUNS.: HURR. SUPP. - CONGRATS.**

HON. GREG MORROW: I rise today to recognize the Municipality of the District of Guysborough and the Municipality of the County of Antigonish for their efforts leading up to, during, and after Hurricane Fiona. As the constituency of Guysborough-Tracadie expands into both of these municipal units, I was able to be a part of storm preparation meetings and was in constant contact with both municipalities during the storm and after.

All weather reports and tracking showed the coast of Guysborough County as a direct hit, and the Municipality of the District of Guysborough was ready should there need to be evacuations in these areas. Although there were trees down and power losses, some for more than two weeks, our coastal communities were not lost, nor did they suffer major damage. Antigonish County suffered more of the storm than expected, but their EMO team was in place and worked together to get help to those who needed it and continue to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that the House join me in congratulating the Municipality of the District of Guysborough and the Municipality of the County of Antigonish on their commitment to the safety of their residents during Hurricane Fiona.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

**BOND, LISA: HURR. SUPP. - CONGRATS.**

FRED TILLEY: Over the coming days, I will recognize people in my community who stepped up during the crisis in Cape Breton with regard to Hurricane Fiona. In this particular case, a resident recognized the need for more comfort centres in the community, and her community did not have such a centre for people to go. Lisa Bond stepped forward and created an atmosphere in Florence.

In conjunction with the fire hall, she sourced food, she sourced a generator, she sourced people, and she fed people for over a week. It's people like Lisa Bond who step forward and make our community what it is.

I'd like the House to congratulate Lisa on her hard work during Hurricane Fiona.

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The time for Statements by Members has expired.

Before we move into Oral Questions Put to Ministers by Members, I would just like to remind everybody about the one-minute time limit. I let it go today because it was recognizing the contribution of community towards Fiona and the disasters each community faced. From now on, it's going to be one minute.

[2:00 p.m.]

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

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

THE SPEAKER: The time is now two o'clock. We'll continue until 2:50 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

### **PREM.: HUMAN RESOURCES FOR HURR. SUPP. - COMMIT**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, thank you for your rulings that have always been fair to this Chamber and to all MLAs in the House, no matter which party.

The Speaker's Office acts independent of the Premier, the Premier's Office, and government. These are important words for our democracy, especially when you take into consideration what is happening in democracies around the world.

I do have to admit that these wise words are not my own - they are the words of the Premier. I'd like to table those.

I would like to ask the Premier if he stands behind these words and, if so, why has he applied pressure on the Speaker to resign the seat?

THE SPEAKER: I'm going to rule that line of questioning out of order at this point because this is an internal House issue and questions should be addressed to the minister regarding any portfolio they might have. I hope you understand that, but I'm going to rule it out of order for now.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition on another question.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: I may have spoken too soon earlier. I do believe that this is a matter of the utmost importance for our democracy, for this Chamber. We do have a standing convention in this House that's very important that there is not executive or Premier pressure that is put on the Speaker, so the Speaker can act fairly and discerningly on behalf of all members.

I do want to ask the Premier, because I do think this is a matter of the Chamber, why these actions have happened and what provision is the Premier going to make to ensure that this House and its members are protected?

THE SPEAKER: Before we move on, I am going to read a rule here. This is Section 31(1) of the *Rules and Forms of Procedure* of the House of Assembly: "On the order of

the day ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS being read on a Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, oral questions asking for information or action may be put without notice to Ministers of the Crown for not more than fifty minutes; and any such questions shall be concisely put and shall relate only to the matters for which a Minister is officially responsible.” (Interruption)

I’m going to make one more ruling and this is something that the Clerk and I had spoken about before. It’s not the Premier’s responsibility about the Speaker. It is the House of Assembly’s responsibility as to what governs Speakers.

ZACH CHURCHILL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My point exactly. I will accept your ruling on the matter.

Nova Scotians have rallied together during this difficult time and pulled together through Hurricane Fiona, but after spending multiple days in Cape Breton and hearing from individuals affected in other parts of the province, we can say that we are hearing from affected individuals that more needs to be done, particularly on the human resources side, for removal of debris but also for processing of applications and supporting people with those applications.

My question to the Premier is: Can he commit today to ensure there are more boots on the ground in affected areas of the province to help individuals access the supports that are being made available to them?

HON. TIM HOUSTON (The Premier): This is an important question. The damage, the devastation across many parts of this province is really kind of heartbreaking. I had a chance to see a lot of it first-hand. The cleanup will take a long time.

This is precisely the reason why I was after the federal government to support us with military help. There are many times in the world of partisan politics when we can be at each other’s throats, but there are times when we should bind together, and the Opposition missed a beautiful opportunity to get behind the government in support of Nova Scotians in calling on the federal government for additional military support, for boots on the ground.

Mr. Speaker, they decided to politicize the recovery. We on this side of the House are focused on Nova Scotians and supporting Nova Scotians.

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

**PREM.: HEALTH CARE INACCESSIBLE - EXPLAIN**

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. This government promised to fix health care. By every measure so far, that promise has not been kept and Nova Scotians are experiencing the painful consequences.

Yesterday, the Nova Scotia Health Authority issued a blanket warning about overcrowding in emergency rooms in all zones. Things have gotten so bad that the government's legislative committee members have begun to hide the Nova Scotia Health Authority interim CEO from the public, and this month's doctor wait-list numbers are mysteriously late.

My question is, will the Premier explain what has gone so terribly wrong?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, what I would say is that this government - look, there are real issues in health care. There's no question about that. Issues around access to care are decades-standing, for sure. They're going to take time to fix, and they're going to take money to fix. But I will assure Nova Scotians that we are committed to making sure that they can access the health care they need when they need it and where they need it. Under the leadership of the minister and the senior health leadership team and everyone working in health care, we are making changes that will have an impact over the course of time.

They will take time, Mr. Speaker, but this government, in terms of what is really happening in the health care system, is the most transparent. We have a whole website where we give out every statistic of what's going on. We want Nova Scotians to know what's happening in their health care system, and we are very forthright about it.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, the sad fact is that most Nova Scotians can't access any health care any time they need it anywhere in the province.

The Premier says that the real work is happening, but Nova Scotians aren't so sure. A Narrative Research poll released recently showed that 83 per cent of Nova Scotians rated the quality of health care available in the province as fair or poor. This is worse than before this government was elected on a single promise.

Does the Premier know something that patients and their families don't?

THE PREMIER: The question around access to health care is something that we're very focused on, because that's where Nova Scotians asked us to focus. We continue to focus there.

We know there are issues. The issues are national for sure. The same survey, if you read into the fine print, asked people how they feel when they have an interaction with the

health care system, and it's pretty positive. You know why that is, Mr. Speaker? Because we have the best health care professionals working very hard to provide health care every single day.

The member opposite would have you believe that nobody is accessing health care in the province. That is absolutely wrong. We have a long way to go, but people can get tremendous care in this health care system in Nova Scotia.

We'll continue to work to fix it. We know there's work to be done.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Just to clear up the record, I spent yesterday at the Dartmouth General Hospital personally thanking all of the health care workers in my community. I am not saying anything about the health care workers. I am talking about this government and their efforts to fix health care.

One wrinkle faced by many people is the fact that they can't afford the cost of their prescriptions. A survey by Feed Nova Scotia found that 50 per cent of respondents - 50 per cent - didn't fill or collect a prescription for their medication or had skipped a dose in the last 12 months because they didn't have enough money. When people are forced to scrimp or save and not take important medication, they end up sick, and they often end up looking for health care that isn't there.

This Summer, when I asked the Premier if he would waive Pharmacare fees, he said that I had raised an important question and that he could certainly take that away and look at it. I'll table that.

Mr. Speaker, I'll ask the Premier again: Will he do this one straightforward specific thing to make sure that people are able to afford their drugs and eliminate Pharmacare fees for at least one year?

THE PREMIER: It is an important - of course we want everyone to take the prescriptions that have been issued to them by health care professionals. Of course, every Nova Scotian wants that.

I will say that we did a tour last Fall talking to health care professionals. I know the minister and the senior leadership team are going to do that tour again coming up. There's a lot that's going on. There's a lot of interaction with health care professionals. There's a lot of listening to health care professionals. That's something that they're still pleased to have happen. They're not used to it in this province. We respect health care professionals and we will listen to health care professionals because we know that getting care for Nova Scotians is the only thing that matters to Nova Scotians and it's a high priority for us.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.



**MAH: HURR. SUPP. TIMELINE - CLARIFY**

FRED TILLEY: Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Premier, and it's in regard to a situation. I'm just looking for some information.

Last week, the Premier's Office confirmed that they were looking to make a move in this Legislature. It was confirmed by another member from the government side, the member for Eastern Shore. It was confirmed by the Speaker himself. Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the Premier was blaming media for fabricating stories . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. I have made my ruling concerning those questions, and I ask that people please stand by that ruling. If the member for Northside-Westmount has another question, we'll entertain that.

FRED TILLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I will stand by your ruling, although I think it's not right because this information - Nova Scotians deserve it.

My question is for the Premier - I support you 100 per cent, Mr. Speaker . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. Can we please drop this subject and move on to the business we're here to do at this point?

The honourable member for Northside-Westmount has the floor.

FRED TILLEY: My question to the Premier is regarding supports in Cape Breton with regard to disaster cleanup. The municipality has been calling on this Premier to help and provide more supports. My question is: When will those supports arrive?

HON. JOHN LOHR: I do want to recognize that Hurricane Fiona has cut a swath across the province, not only in Cape Breton but counties across the eastern mainland were severely hit. We're very concerned about that. We have been very proactive in reacting to that, as the member would know.

There are a number of supports in place already. I will point to one called the Disaster Financial Assistance Program and I'm very proud of how quickly we have come out with that. That is one option among many that are available to people across the province.

FRED TILLEY: With regard to the disaster relief fund, yes, that's a wonderful program, but my question was specifically about boots on the ground. There are people with trees on their homes, people unable to get in and out of their homes. When will we see more boots on the ground to help the municipality deal with the significant - over 800 to 1,000 trees still sitting on properties?

JOHN LOHR: Again, Mr. Speaker, I do want to recognize great concerns among many, many homeowners across the province, including in Cape Breton. The member, I believe, is asking about boots on the ground. I think that if I'm not mistaken that's a direct reference to military assistance. We have put in five requests for military assistance. As the member knows, this is something that we put in the request, and the military and the federal government look at what they can supply. They supply that.

As the member also knows, the Prime Minister offered a \$300 million fund administered through ACOA. We don't have the details on that yet either. We look forward to them for that. As far as our part, we have announced the DFA. I will point out - in fact, I will table - some of you may remember Hurricane Dorian. That happened in September of 2019 . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The time to answer that question has long since expired.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

### **SNSIS: MORE HURR. RELIEF - COMMIT**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I will say, if the Premier or anybody reviews the public record on the hurricane, they'll see positive comments made by myself and members of the caucus. I think if you review the record of today's Hansard, you'll see that it is not myself who has politicized this issue.

We do have a role as MLAs to voice concerns and express those concerns in the House. What we are hearing right now is the need for help for folks to apply for the supports that have been granted for them. We do support the government's intention and effort to get more military boots on the ground, but we also need more clerical people who can help assist individuals with the applications themselves and, of course, on the processing front.

My question to the Premier is: Can we expect more provincial human resources to assist on that front?

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: This government got to work immediately. Within days after the hurricane, we announced the programs. Within days after that, we launched them online and followed through with paper applications and got those into the hands of the MLA offices.

Mr. Speaker, the folks in the department worked around the clock to get these applications going. Frankly, they also stood up opening up the access centres in a number of locations. Today, we have received upwards of 107,000 applications, and 5,000 cheques are going out the door today. We're continuously looking at how we can improve access to these programs.

ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, in terms of helping people prepare for these events, we know that we are going to see more extreme weather events here in Nova Scotia as we have lost that protective shield of cold water around our peninsular province. I do think it's important that individuals have guidelines on preparedness and on what to do in the event that these things happen.

[2:15 p.m.]

Can the government commit today - and I will ask the Premier - to ensuring that we do prepare emergency guidelines for individuals to know what to do in advance of an extreme weather event, what they can expect for supports, and how to apply for those supports post a weather event?

HON. JOHN LOHR: In my role as minister responsible for the EMO, I can tell you that this is a concern of ours as well. You may know that we opened up the provincial coordination centre on Friday morning at 8:00 o'clock. We were pre-emptive in opening up that centre, realizing the magnitude of this storm.

We had a fair bit of messaging going out from our department, from the EMO, on preparedness for this storm. Obviously, after the fact, we will be doing what you could call a post-mortem on the storm and on our response and on all the different ways that this happened and how we can improve that. We will certainly be doing that too.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford Basin.

### **EMO: POWER GRID UPDATES NEEDED - RESPOND**

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to commend the Nova Scotia Power crews who were out 24/7 responding to Hurricane Fiona and thank all of those crews who came in from out of province to assist with the relief effort as well.

Despite the Herculean effort of these folks on the front line, huge swaths of our province were without power during the storm, and it took weeks for some of them to have it restored. We have a growing province but an aging power grid.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister responsible for the EMO please tell us what his office is doing to ensure that we are updating our power grid to be more resilient for the future?

HON. JOHN LOHR: I will reiterate the member's comments on the response by Nova Scotia Power. The line crews that we saw on the ground from New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, Quebec, Ontario, and New Brunswick - and also our own Nova Scotia Power line crews - really did more than a year's worth of work in two weeks. It is an incredible amount of work that they did to renew the line.

I think that the question of the strength of our electric system and how that functioned in the storm is something that, again, will be subject to a post-mortem. We will look at it as a government. I know that Nova Scotia Power looks at it and how we take steps going forward to strengthen it. I think that's something that we need to consider.

I know that Nova Scotians love trees and love the trees in their own yards, but some of these trees are our enemies in these storms. That's up to the individuals to look at and certainly is one factor in the whole thing. We're very concerned about that question, and we will be looking at it going forward.

KELLY REGAN: There's no quarrel about the fantastic work that was done by the linespersons from the Nova Scotia and all across the country who came to our rescue. What we're talking about here is prevention. We have a lot of development currently under way in the downtowns and in the suburban areas surrounding our towns and cities. Vast majorities of these areas are still serviced by above-ground power poles, which are susceptible to the environment. We've all dealt with salty fog over the years and lost power for surprising reasons.

Burying lines might be more expensive up front, but it can prevent repeat outages and the resulting maintenance. My question to the minister: Will this government review the Nova Scotia Power strategy concerning where new power lines are buried?

HON. TORY RUSHTON: I thank the member opposite for the question. It gives me an opportunity to recognize the more than 200 members from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Quebec forestry crews that actually were activated to come in and put boots on the ground and help Nova Scotia Power throughout that.

I want to assure the member opposite and everyone in this House, and the residents of Nova Scotia that as the minister, I spoke to Nova Scotia Power sometimes four, five, six times a day in the first two weeks of the hurricane response. There's something that was assured to me from EMO staff and from Nova Scotia Power. There are still issues that are going on that they're fixing, but rest assured there is going to be a response and a post-briefing afterwards and action taken.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

### **NRR: PROPOSED POWER RATE HIKES - PROTECT**

SUSAN LEBLANC: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables.

Nova Scotia Power is currently in the middle of an application process to increase power rates for Nova Scotians by at least 13 per cent. In March, the minister said that

ratepayers are of the highest importance and we will do everything we can, pull every lever we have, to protect those Nova Scotians who need protection. I am going to table that.

We saw the Premier take action against the application's proposed solar panel fees in February of this year long before the hearing began. The Premier's actions against the solar fees show a clear ability to alter Nova Scotia Power's demands. Will the minister explain what he is doing to protect Nova Scotians from dramatic rate hikes?

HON. TORY RUSHTON: We're still pulling levers. It's not over yet. The hearing speech has just finished. We haven't had the wrap-up from opposition. We did something that was asked of us that the previous government ignored for eight years: We allowed the hearing to go through. We didn't make backroom deals with Nova Scotia Power.

The people of Nova Scotia wanted that hearing to go through because they haven't had a chance to state their case against Nova Scotia Power. We are not going to presuppose what's going to take place with the hearing. We're here for the ratepayers of Nova Scotia, and this government will stand behind the ratepayers of Nova Scotia.

SUSAN LEBLANC: The proposed changes from Nova Scotia Power will see the company able to drastically increase its profits, and this comes after its parent company, Emera, reported record-breaking profits for last year. Yesterday at a Public Accounts Committee meeting, this government voted unanimously to protect Nova Scotia Power from appearing before the committee to be held accountable to the questions of Nova Scotians.

Meanwhile, many Nova Scotians already struggling with the current cost of living crisis are unsure how they will be able to heat their homes this Winter. If ratepayers are of the highest importance to this government, as the minister has stated, can the minister explain why their government's approach has been to protect corporate profits over the interests of Nova Scotians?

TORY RUSHTON: Look, this is an important issue for all Nova Scotians. We know affordability is the high conversation at everybody's supper table around Nova Scotia. Our government is acting. We have the home heating program. We have other programs that we've initiated through the Fiona response. We put additions into programs as a government - long-term seniors care. We put some money back in for Nova Scotians who need it as we move into this section. (Interruption)

THE SPEAKER: Order, please.

TORY RUSHTON: We're not going to presuppose what's going to come out. We have actions that we've already taken, and we have more actions and levers that we can pull as we move forward.

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

**NRR: VEG. MGMT. PLAN - COMMIT**

LORELEI NICOLL: Mr. Speaker, also on the subject of power lines, our Leader and I had the opportunity to meet with some of these service providers following the storm to review the response. The number one recommendation from Nova Scotia Power was clear: We need to be much more proactive with vegetation management in order to prevent future outages and reduce the extent of post-storm cleanup.

My question is: Will the Minister of Emergency Management update Nova Scotians on how they plan to improve vegetation management throughout the province?

HON. TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that I have already brought to Nova Scotia Power at the post-debriefing. That's a topic I do want to discuss as minister.

LORELEI NICOLL: Government has an important role to play, and we know we see that they are operating as so, but they have to facilitate a proactive storm preparedness. Right now, the only way to manage the issue is to deal with every single tree, shrub, and bush on a case-by-case, piecemeal basis. It not only hurts storm preparedness, it also means potentially unsafe issues are going unaddressed.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister responsible for emergency management commit to working with the critical infrastructure utilities - that means all of them - and bringing them to the House in a planned form, for vegetation management, as part of their aforementioned post-mortem?

TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, we're talking about pre-planning for any event that would take place, whether it's a hurricane, storm, or a wind event as such. That's what this government did last Spring. We introduced legislation that is going to create the performance standard table that will give a report back to the NSUARB.

Out of those performance standard tables we developed the regulations. That's exactly the conversations that that performance table is going to be expected to have - to make recommendations to the NSUARB, to be ready for storms, to have reliability on the grid.

These are recommendations that we've heard from Nova Scotians that they want to see that they haven't seen from previous governments.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Dartmouth on a new question.

**EMO: EMERG. MGMT. PLANS - CONSIDER**

LORELEI NICOLL: Mr. Speaker, one of the major issues caused by the storm was access to fuel. With power being out, many people were trying to refill their generators so they could cook a meal or power their devices. This caused a higher demand for fuel at the same time that many gas stations were out of power or running out of fuel to sell, leading to big lines at a few gas stations that were open.

It seems there was a lack of planning from the government to make sure that people had access to fuel in case of a power outage.

My question to the Minister responsible for Emergency Management is: What will the government and Emergency Management do in future storms to make sure people have access to necessary fuels in times of extended outages?

HON. JOHN LOHR: One of the things we did in the days prior to Fiona, once it became clear what we were going to be dealing with is we put out the message to fill up your fuel tanks, get fuel, get that on hand.

We put that message out as best we could. Clearly in the aftermath, one of the things we saw in the provincial coordination centre was that communities that were hard-hit and did not have power had trouble getting gasoline. There might be gasoline in the tank, but there was no power to get it out or the one station that did have electricity was empty.

Clearly, this is something that in the aftermath there will be discussion about on our part as government, on how we deal with that. That aftermath discussion, as I am sure the member can appreciate, hasn't happened yet, but we're well aware of this. It is a major concern to us and just highlights how important fuel is to us.

LORELEI NICOLL: Sometimes it takes an unprecedented situation to highlight what is not being done - that those in our province can be left behind - and we want to highlight some areas where we think the government could do better going forward.

We've heard from some of our disabled constituents who have specific needs different from the rest of the population what happens when they are struck without power or service. Advocates like Anne Camozzi are calling for a voluntary registry to be created so that our emergency responders are aware of Nova Scotians with specific needs. I can table that.

Will the Minister responsible for Emergency Management consider these advocates' proposals?

HON. KARLA MACFARLANE: Thank you for the question. It's a great one. Certainly, we will want to look at how we can create a database of individuals who are

most vulnerable in our communities. It will have to be driven by themselves wanting to identify, so that we don't cross any privacy issues.

[2:30 p.m.]

We're certainly discussing and looking at how we can improve something like that and be better prepared for those who are in vulnerable situations. We want to be there for them, so that discussion is happening now.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

**EMO: RELIEF COMPENSATION AMT. - RECONSIDER**

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, the average family of four spends about \$1,230 a month on food, and I'll table that. We're glad to see the government take some action on support, but only providing \$100 to people who lost power and have to throw away their food isn't covering the bill.

As we all know, the storm happened about two days after most income assistance recipients would have received their payments, and at that point would have been filling their fridges with food, so they lost a month's worth of food. My question to the Minister Responsible for the Office of Emergency Management is: Will this government consider raising the relief amount for working Nova Scotian families who have lost entire fridges' and freezers' worth of food?

HON. JOHN LOHR: I do want to recognize the hardship this has caused many Nova Scotians. We have stepped forward with really an unprecedented suite of - which has never happened before in the province of Nova Scotia - in response to Hurricane Fiona. I will just remind the member - and I will table it - during Hurricane Dorian, four months later the DFA was announced. The disaster financial relief for Hurricane Dorian was four months later when your government did it.

Yes, we have offered \$100. We have offered \$250 for tree clearing. There are other things. We continue to look at what we're doing. We know that the federal government is offering support too. That \$300 million that's being offered by the federal government, we don't have the details on that yet. We look forward to what that will be. We know there's more to do. We know there's more work to do, and we're looking at what we're doing. We have already done more than any other government has ever done in response.

DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: I'm not going to play politics with the minister about timelines. We released the DFA 24 hours after the flood in 2016. We offered more food during that package. We're happy the government's doing what they're doing, but families are asking these questions not only in Sydney but all over Nova Scotia. The \$100 is an issue for people. (Interruption) It's a legit question to ask the minister.



Also with that is around the time - the 48 hours of the outage. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency says an unopened refrigerator will keep food cold for about four hours, and I'll table that as well, Mr. Speaker. The provincial government's own guidelines agree that after four hours without power, it's not safe to keep food in the fridge and it should be thrown out. I'll table those guidelines. However, the government will only provide relief for food if you lost power for 48 hours. My question to the minister is: Will he expand the criteria beyond the 48 hours?

JOHN LOHR: The reality is that \$100 is one of the single largest line items in our disaster response. We know there are approximately 200,000 Nova Scotia households that would be eligible. It's a \$20 million line item. It's a very massive commitment on our part. I believe the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services has already indicated that we have close to that -106,000 have applied. I couldn't apply myself. I won't. I was out of power also.

We realize that there's always more that needs to be done. We're very sympathetic to Nova Scotians. There are other programs through the Canadian Red Cross and other things that Nova Scotians can access. We would encourage them to go see the Canadian Red Cross. There has been an enormous amount of fundraising done across the nation, and we're very grateful for the generosity.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

#### **MAH: MRHA BLDG. FAILURES - EXPLAIN**

SUZY HANSEN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Residents of a Metropolitan Regional Housing Authority building in Dartmouth wrote to our caucus in the wake of Hurricane Fiona. They pointed out a long list of failures. The building's generator had only a quarter tank of fuel before the storm hit. The common areas with power were not large enough to heat kettles for food, recharge mobility chairs or hospital beds. People did not have power for medical devices in their rooms. Keys for the main door and the side door did not work. The life and safety book that paramedics use in the lobby was out of date. I'll table that.

Mr. Speaker, the minister has a responsibility to keep residents safe. How was this allowed to happen?

HON. JOHN LOHR: I would like to acknowledge that yes, there were challenges, definitely, not only in that building but we had a number of generators that failed in certain circumstances for one reason or another. I don't have the number offhand, but I can provide the number certainly by tomorrow. They're machines, and sometimes there are problems with fuel or whatever. There are always reasons these things fail. It's something that we're very concerned about. We're looking at and we're reviewing our procedures. I appreciate the member bringing it to our attention. It is an area of concern for us, yes.

SUZY HANSEN: I would like to say that it wasn't just the generator. It was a number of failures that were noted as well.

I want to share another story about the serious lack of emergency support at Housing. A resident fell during the storm. He had no telephone service and lay in his apartment until Saturday afternoon. A neighbour who did have service called MRHA's emergency line, which refused to have the on-call property manager come with the master key to open the door for paramedics. The police had to come and break into the building so that he could be taken to hospital, where he passed away shortly after.

Mr. Speaker, in the words of the person who brought this to our attention, by not addressing this issue in a logical manner, they have endangered the vulnerable. Extreme storms are not going away. Will the minister assure Nova Scotians that this will not be allowed to happen again?

JOHN LOHR: I'll say to the member that I'm not aware of that particular situation, but I offer my sympathies to the family of that individual and the residents who live around them. This is something that, again, in the aftermath of the storm, we are very interested in having that type of feedback. We will try to look at the underlying causes and address those issues.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

### **DCS: VULNERABLE NOVA SCOTIANS - ACTION**

ANGELA SIMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, we will commend the government for rolling out a \$150 payment for some of the most vulnerable, including individuals on income assistance, as well as providing some funding to food banks.

However, at the same time, \$150 does not go far enough, and food banks are seeing a huge spike in usage. Now food banks are worried they won't be able to feed the many Nova Scotians who rely on them and who are hungry. Crisis exposes those who are most vulnerable. Low-income Nova Scotians have been saying they are scared to death. I'll table that.

My question is for the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board: Is this government prepared to undertake further action to help vulnerable low-income Nova Scotians make it through the Fall?

HON. KARLA MACFARLANE: Our department has invested hundreds of thousands of dollars during Hurricane Fiona. We want to remind people that anyone can apply for the \$100 for food, but our income assistance clients also get the \$150.

The other thing I want to remind everyone is that this government has invested over \$40 million. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have gone to the Canadian Red Cross, the United Way, and the Salvation Army. Again, we have invested in a number of food banks. The SchoolsPlus programs have received money as well. If you are aware of a specific food bank or somewhere that needs assistance, I would be happy to discuss that with you.

ANGELA SIMMONDS: We need to make sure that we are protecting our most vulnerable populations in this province when it comes to emergency preparedness, including those Nova Scotians living in long-term care facilities. We have heard from long-term care facilities that they were without power for extended periods following Hurricane Fiona, and that facilities with generators had failures.

The Deputy Minister for the Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care has said they will review the situation, and I'll table this quote. Can the Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care commit to the House that this review will make certain that long-term care facilities going forward will have full functioning backup generators?

HON. BARBARA ADAMS: I can assure the member that all of our long-term care facilities have fully functioning generators. There was one facility that had a temporary interference with the power, and it was restored very quickly.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

### **DCS: HOUSING SOLS. - ACTION**

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, people in Spryfield have been severely affected by Hurricane Fiona. An apartment on Foxwood Terrace in Spryfield lost its roof and was flooded, displacing many people and families who were then put into hotels. Affordable housing is hard enough to find in this province - some say impossible. Now we are trying to find urgent housing solutions for those displaced due to Hurricane Fiona.

I would like to ask the minister: Are they aware of the situation, and what actions are they taking to address the situation now?

HON. KARLA MACFARLANE: To the member, we are very well aware of this situation. For those who are on income assistance and anyone who has signed up with the Canadian Red Cross and is placed now in hotels, there will be extensions for those as long as they need it, until we find them permanent housing.

We know that everyone does much better when they're in an environment where it's safe and warm. Please know that we are looking after these individuals and are working day and night to find them a permanent solution to housing.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: While I appreciate the Minister of Community Services answering the question, it isn't just people on income assistance. It's seniors who are getting CPP. It's low-income families. There's a working family of five that's in a hotel.

While I appreciate the minister also saying that they're extending it, I spoke to a family today who gets income assistance who were told that they had to be out by Friday. If the minister disagrees with that, I would advise her to have her people reach out to them.

The other thing we've been told is that no housing navigators have had the conversation with those individuals. I've spoken to them several times. My constituency assistant has spoken to them several times. We've not seen a housing navigator there.

I'd like to ask: Will this government find permanent housing for those individuals? Not just those on income assistance but those seniors on CPP, those with disabilities, and those working-class families. When can they expect it, and can we get a firm commitment here today that nobody, no matter their financial situation, will be removed from a hotel without permanent housing?

KARLA MACFARLANE: First of all, our navigators have been in touch. Just before I entered this Chamber, I was speaking to one of my executive directors to get the latest update, which assured me that there is an issue happening where people think they have to be out this Sunday. They do not have to be out this Sunday. We will extend that.

We will continue to make sure that they are housed, regardless of if they are on income assistance or not. We will ensure that - as long as they're signed up with the Canadian Red Cross, we will ensure that they will have a warm place to stay. We will continue working with the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing to find a more permanent solution.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Annapolis.

### **NRR: HELP FOR WOODLOT OWNERS - COMMIT**

CARMAN KERR: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia's forestry sector has also been hit by Fiona. Our caucus has met with representatives from the forestry industry. They're looking for ways for post-storm cleanup and to return those woodlots to productive use. Aid packages could be deployed to compensate for lost productive value of lots if owners undertake the cleanup. This serves both purposes.

Will the Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables commit to help woodlot owners affected by the hurricane?

HON. TORY RUSHTON: The hurricane certainly did impact the forestry sector widely throughout Nova Scotia. It took a wide swath. On Day 1, we had staff out observing

Crown land. We had staff out observing private lands. We continue to do that, as much investigation as we can do into that. That investigation is still ongoing.

We've had talks with stakeholders several times a day in different areas of the province. We are working on a plan that will both see assistance on private land as well as Crown land. This is merchantable wood that's lying on the ground right now.

This is important to Nova Scotians. It's important to those property owners. It's important to this government as well.

CARMAN KERR: We know that farms have also been hit by the hurricane. Coming at this time of year, crops and harvests have been affected. Farms that were already struggling through everything else have had this thrown at them and are now dealing with devastating losses - so much damage that Haveracres Farms in Antigonish said that they are facing generational loss. I'll table that.

Mr. Speaker, will this government commit to specific financial aid for Nova Scotia's agriculture sector?

HON. GREG MORROW: I've visited these farms. I visited farms in Antigonish, Guysborough, throughout Cape Breton, Pictou, Cumberland - I've heard those concerns directly. My direction to staff: Find ways to help our agricultural sector. Do it quickly and do it simply.

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

### **LSI: MIN. WAGE WORKERS STRUGGLING - EXPLAIN**

KENDRA COOMBES: My question is for the Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration. Earlier this year, inflation hit a 40-year record high of 8.1 per cent, and Nova Scotians are feeling the impact as the cost of living continues to rise and paycheques struggle to keep up. The 2024 plan for a minimum wage increase to \$15 is too far off for it to help families who are struggling today.

Despite knowing this, the Premier stated in June that the government would not look into expediting the increase to a \$15-an-hour minimum wage. I'll table that. Can the minister explain how she expects the province's 31,000 minimum wage workers to make ends meet?

HON. JILL BALSER: We know that this is a very challenging time for many Nova Scotians, and it is a complex situation that everyone finds themselves in, but we also know that the minimum wage is part of that solution. We are on a pathway for \$15 an hour, and I know that everyone in the House will also know that that committee also had a vacancy.

We have been very clear. We want to be able to hear from employers and businesses because this impacts everyone.

[2:45 p.m.]

That balanced approach to be able to say we've got a recommendation coming forward, we accepted that one. The report will be brought forward by the end of the year, and we look forward to the work that the committee is going to bring forward.

KENDRA COOMBES: Mr. Speaker, again I will say \$15 is too far away. Nova Scotia now has the lowest minimum wage among the Maritime provinces, and the eventual goal of \$15 an hour is no longer adequate to help Nova Scotians keep up with the rising costs. Current calculations of a living wage are at a high of \$23.50 per hour in the Halifax region.

Following this week's announcement, the government has acknowledged that the early childhood educators deserve to make more. Absolutely. We saw similar wage increases for continuing care assistants earlier this year. Can the minister explain why she believes that other hard-working Nova Scotians should be making almost \$10 an hour less than a living wage right now?

JILL BALSER: Again, the Minimum Wage Review Committee has a really important role, and we've heard from those committee members that they have the challenging, difficult conversations, bringing forward the perspectives and ideas from businesses and employees. Again, we know that this impacts all Nova Scotians, but we also have to thank businesses who have gone above and beyond in providing competitive wages for their workers. We thank those businesses for doing what they've done.

The Minimum Wage Review Committee will be meeting. They have already met once, they're going to be meeting again, and we look forward to the recommendations that they bring forward to bring that balanced approach for us to be advised by.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare.

#### **DFA: HURR. AID FOR FISHING IND. - INFORM**

RONNIE LEBLANC: The Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture said in a statement that they were considering what funding packages would be available in order to provide some support to the fishing industry. I will table that.

We know how important this industry is to our economy and how limited the fishing season currently is. Can the minister provide an update to the House on what specific Fiona aid is coming for the industry, and when can we expect to hear more?

HON. STEVE CRAIG: Certainly, we are continuing to work with ACOA. We mentioned \$300 million, and that is for Atlantic Canadians. We need to be able to focus more on that. I have my departmental staff working with the vice-president of ACOA here. They met - last Friday they were meeting.

During the storm, what happened was it hit Nova Scotia at 3:00 a.m. I was up and texting with my Atlantic Canadian minister counterparts shortly after that to look at what the damage was and what we needed to do. Shortly after that, we met with the parliamentary secretary of DFO and the Canadian Coast Guard, as well as the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Joyce Murray, to see what we could do.

RONNIE LEBLANC: Hurricane Fiona unleashed an unprecedented storm surge on parts of Nova Scotia. I'll just ask the question. The federal government aid package mentions that small craft harbours are eligible for funding. Can the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture detail the mechanisms by which these wharves can receive help for repairs?

STEVE CRAIG: I would be happy to answer that in more detail either with my next question, or outside . . .

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

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a Point of Order.

I want to bring to the attention of yourself and the Clerks two statements that were issued from the Premier's Office in relation to the Chair position: one that stated that the Premier's Office was considering the Speaker's position in its succession planning and another one that was released today stating that there are a number of changes happening, including the resignation of yourself in April and the appointment of three additional Deputy Speakers to the Chamber.

Considering that these statements came from the Premier's Office, two things seem clear to me. One is that it does overtly seem that there is Premier influence over legislative decisions. Considering your ruling, it seems that ironically the Premier is trying to use the fact that he's not supposed to do that to evade questions on the matter.

I would like you to consider this as a Point of Order: the fact that we are seeing statements come from the Premier's Office on this issue. I do believe that we should be able to ask questions in relation to this matter in the Chamber. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: We will take that under advisement and report back to the meeting later.

The honourable Acting Government House Leader

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now rise to meet again tomorrow, Friday, October 14th between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

Government business includes second reading of bills introduced today - Bill No. 196, Bill No.198, and Bill No. 200.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is that the House rise to meet again on October 14th between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The House stands adjourned to meet again tomorrow at 9:00 a.m.

[The House rose at 2:52 p.m.]