



House of Assembly  
Nova Scotia

**DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS**

**Speaker: Honourable Keith Bain**

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**First Session**

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2022**

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House of Assembly  
*Nova Scotia*

**HALIFAX, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27, 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.

We'll begin with the daily routine.

**PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: I beg leave to introduce a petition on behalf of Nova Scotians from Queens, Cumberland, Halifax, Annapolis, Kings, Cape Breton, Lunenburg, Digby, Yarmouth, Hants, and Inverness Counties. The operative clause being the following:

“WHEREAS our Government currently permits the aerial application of glyphosate-based herbicides on forests in our province, to the detriment of public health and the health of ecosystems we all depend on,

THEREFORE we, the undersigned residents of Nova Scotia, call upon the Premier to initiate a moratorium on aerial spraying of glyphosate-based herbicides on all forested lands in Nova Scotia. We ask that this moratorium come into effect by December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022.”

Mr. Speaker, there are 1,611 signatures on this petition, and I have affixed my own, as per the Rules of the House.

THE SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

### **PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

CHRIS PALMER: Mr. Speaker, as Chair of the Human Resources Committee, I am pleased to submit the annual report of the committee for the period from September 2021 to August 2022 of the Sixty-Fourth General Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

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

### **STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

### **GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 420**

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

Whereas the Small Business Big Growth Summit is taking place today, October 27<sup>th</sup>, at Pier 21 and providing the Safety Branch of the Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration the opportunity to connect with almost 300 Nova Scotia small businesses on the importance of workplace safety; and

Whereas the Safety Branch works closely with the small businesses on a broad variety of safety topics and issues and provides resources that best suit their needs; and

Whereas through the resources they provide, from their new safety manual, developed in collaboration with community partners, to their 24/7 phone line, 1-800-

9LABOUR, there is a great deal that this branch does to help ensure that everyone comes home to their families safely at the end of their workday;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature recognize the work of the Safety Branch with small businesses and their commitment to helping Nova Scotians work safely.

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 Premier.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 421**

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:

Whereas the month of October is Manufacturing Month in Canada, allowing for an opportunity to amplify and celebrate the vital role the sector plays in Nova Scotia's economy; and

Whereas Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters Nova Scotia continues to showcase exceptional leadership for the manufacturing industry in this province, representing 1,700 manufacturers across the province and a sector that employs over 31,000 Nova Scotians, and is responsible for \$4.5 billion in exported manufactured goods each year; and

Whereas CME Nova Scotia, under the direction of Vice President Michel Raymond, will soon be launching Nova Scotia Made, an extensive and free new promotional program to advance the marketing and awareness of the vast number of world-class products that are made across the province;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing CME Nova Scotia's leadership for the sector during Manufacturing Month, and congratulate them on the upcoming launch of Nova Scotia Made's web-based platform which will not only provide an opportunity to Nova Scotian customers, retailers and other

manufacturers to purchase local products, but allow customers from around the world to discover all the great products we have to offer, aligning very well with the existing provincial programs, such as Nova Scotia Loyal, Taste of Nova Scotia, and others.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice.

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 member for Preston.

ANGELA SIMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, do I have permission to make an introduction?

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

ANGELA SIMMONDS: In the gallery, we have Jane Lowe and Allan Snook of the Nova Scotia Senior Liberals' Commission, along with Bill VanGorder, Chief Operating Officer and Chief Policy Adviser for the Canadian Association of Retired Persons. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: We like to welcome all guests to the Legislature and hope you enjoy your visit.

#### **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill No. 235 - Entitled An Act to Amend Chapter 7 of the Acts of 2011, the Fair Drug Pricing Act, Respecting High-dose Flu Vaccine Coverage. (Angela Simmonds)**

**Bill No. 236 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 246 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Labour Standards Code, Respecting Hours of Work. (Kendra Coombes)**

**Bill No. 237 - An Act to Amend Chapter 246 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Labour Standards Code, Respecting Publication of Director's Orders. (Kendra Coombes)**

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

The honourable member for Eastern Passage on an introduction.

HON. BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction. In the West Gallery is Mr. Bill VanGorder, who has been on the Canadian Association of Retired Persons's Board of Directors for as long as I can remember, as well as on the national board and a good friend of mine. I'd ask Mr. VanGorder to rise and to accept the warm welcome of the Legislature. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Once again, we welcome all visitors to the Legislature.

#### **NOTICES OF MOTION**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 422**

ALI DUALE: Mr. Speaker, I ask for a waiver of requirement of Rule 32(2):

Whereas October is National Islamic Heritage Month and a great opportunity to learn about the deep history of Islam; and

Whereas this month is an opportunity to recognize the contribution that Muslim communities have made around the world and a time to reflect on the struggle and stereotype that Muslims have faced for decades; and

Whereas now more than ever we need to address the systemic challenges that the Muslim community faces and we need a commitment to ensure that all Nova Scotians live free from discrimination;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly join me in officially recognizing October as Islamic Heritage Month here in this province of Nova Scotia.

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

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. (Standing ovation)

**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

CHRIS PALMER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction if I could, please.

I'd like to draw all members' attention to the West Gallery. I have good friends here today: Peter and Marlee Dietert, with their children, Leela and Gideon. I'm very pleased to read a member's statement in a minute about Leela. She is an advocate for youth with diabetes. I'm going to let everybody know about the great work that she and her family are doing on behalf of families in our community and their advocacy around the province.

Please, I'd like to ask all members to welcome the Dieterts here to the gallery today. (Standing ovation)

THE SPEAKER: Once again, we welcome all visitors and thank you for coming to watch the proceedings in the House today.

The honourable member for Kings West.

**DIETERT, LEELA: DIABETES ADVOCACY - RECOG.**

CHRIS PALMER: Mr. Speaker, Type 1 diabetes is a challenging diagnosis for anyone to receive, but even more challenging for young children and their parents.

Leela Dietert was 10 years old when she was diagnosed. The early days of her diagnosis included many finger-pricks each day, including a couple of times through the night, logging everything in a book, and learning about different types of insulins and the glycemic index of foods.

Leela said she remembers feeling frustrated because every time she wanted something to eat, they had to determine how many carbohydrates it contained. It was a large learning curve for her and her parents. Her parents had many sleepless nights, concerned about her glucose levels.

Leela is now a very mature 13-year-old, who has accepted her diabetes diagnosis and is a strong advocate for those with diabetes like her. Leela has been selected as a delegate as part of the Kids for a Cure Lobby Day and will travel to Ottawa in November to share her story with some Members of Parliament and Senators via a slideshow presentation she made herself.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Leela's bravery and commend her on her advocacy for education and supports for others battling this condition.

One more time, please welcome Leela Dietert. (Applause)

[1:15 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

**N. SYD. FIRE DEPT.: HURR. SUPP. - RECOG.**

FRED TILLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Congratulations.

Today I would like to recognize the two organizations that ran the official comfort centres in my riding. The fire department in North Sydney goes above and beyond every day, but during Hurricane Fiona the work that they did to keep the centre open, feed people, give them a place to charge their devices, and just a place to gather was wonderful. I had the opportunity to visit with the Leader of the Official Opposition. We had a chance to visit and talk to the residents.

Also, the Canadian Coast Guard College, Mr. Speaker, opened their doors as a comfort centre providing wonderful accommodations, food, showers for those who were in need in the Westmount-Coxheath area.

Thank you to those two organizations for stepping up and making people more comfortable during the disaster.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

**OUT OF THE COLD COM. ASSOC.: SHELTER PROV. - THANKS**

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Out of the Cold Community Association. In the face of the rapidly expanding housing crisis in our province, Out of the Cold stepped up to serve by shifting their operations from a seasonal shelter in the basement of St. Matthew's Church in Halifax to provide permanent, dignified, supportive housing in Dartmouth and Halifax.

Out of the Cold serves individuals of all genders who experience a variety of barriers to housing through a harm reduction approach. The work is hard; it's not always supported, but it is more necessary than ever. Everyone deserves a safe place to sleep. It is essential for all Nova Scotians to thrive, and Out of the Cold offers shelter and true support for those left with very few options in our province.

I ask all members of this House to join me in thanking the team for their incredible work and commitment to vulnerable Nova Scotians.

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

**SANDERSON, ELIZABETH: COM. SERV. - THANKS**

HON. BRIAN WONG: Mr. Speaker, I would like to rise today to speak about and thank a local, very young, 83-year-old resident from Grand Lake, Elizabeth Sanderson.

Anyone who has been to Laurie Park for a walk has probably seen Elizabeth walking, picking up garbage, and even doing small maintenance duties that keep her heart happy. Mr. Speaker, our community is so thankful for Elizabeth, who prides herself on being the unofficial character of the park for almost 50 years. Elizabeth sees the preservation and upkeep of the park as her mission in life.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the members of the House to join me in thanking Elizabeth for everything she does for her community. I'm sure she will continue her passion for Laurie Park for many years to come.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare.

**BLINN, MARC: HOCKEY N.S. AWD. RECIP. - CONGRATS.**

RONNIE LEBLANC: Every year, Hockey Nova Scotia - the governing body for organized hockey in Nova Scotia - presents its Minor Council Award of Merit to an individual who has made a significant contribution. In 2022, Hockey Nova Scotia presented this award to Marc Blinn.

For the past seven years, Marc has been a member of Hockey Nova Scotia Minor Council, first as its regional director for the Nova Zone, and then as its South Conference Coordinator. Before his time at Hockey Nova Scotia, he was an enthusiastic supporter of the Clare-Digby Minor Hockey Association and its predecessors, having held many roles in these organizations.

I ask that all members join me in congratulating Marc Blinn on receiving this prestigious award and thanking him for his dedication to the game of hockey.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

**CUPE LOC. 3912 STRIKE: LOW WAGES - RECOG.**

GARY BURRILL Nova Scotia, Mr. Speaker, is a province of universities, but only one, Dalhousie, is a member of the prestigious U15 group of Canadian research universities



- a consortium of public research universities which, between them, undertakes 80 per cent of competitive university research in the country.

It is therefore a considerable black mark against Dalhousie's stature that today is Day 9 of the strike of CUPE Local 3912, representing Dalhousie's 1,500 teaching assistants, markers, demonstrators, and part-time teachers - a strike which they have been forced into in order to obtain reasonable living wages.

Dalhousie is a U15 university that pays U-minus-whatever wages, and its intransigence before Local 3912's measured demands is diminishing the university's reputation.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

### **DAY CARE CTR.: 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIV. - CONGRATS.**

HON. SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the Lunenburg Day Care Centre and offer my sincere congratulations on its golden anniversary.

For 50 years, the exceptional staff at the Lunenburg Day Care Centre have been providing excellent and educational care to the children in our community, including my own. This is accomplished in a fun, positive, and inclusive program with lots of time for play, and a very impressive menu, which regularly includes haddock chowder.

This past August, it was a true joy to attend a big, family-friendly block party complete with cotton candy, bouncy castles, games of chance, and even a dunk tank. A very special time for a very special place.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all the dedicated staff, past and present, and the volunteer boards, for contributing to 50 wonderful years at the Lunenburg Day Care Centre.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

### **LEG. CLERKS: IMPORTANCE OF WORK - THANKS**

BRAEDON CLARK: Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to recognize and thank two outstanding constituents of Bedford South who go above and beyond to help all members of this House: the Chief Clerk and the Assistant Clerk.

There must be something in the water in Bedford South to produce two individuals who do such a good job making sure that this Assembly works. Through long hours, endless debates, and the ceaseless ringing of bells, the Chief Clerk and the Assistant Clerk

are there for all members to provide non-partisan, fair, and expert advice. I know I speak for all members of the House when I say that our lives are made much easier by the work of the Clerks.

I'd like to ask all members of the House to thank two of Bedford South's finest, Chief Clerk and Assistant Clerk of our Legislature. (Standing ovation)

THE SPEAKER: You think they make this easier for you; you don't know what they do for me. (Laughter)

The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

### **HOUSING CRISIS: NEED FOR ACTION - RECOG.**

SUSAN LEBLANC: As we sit here, my constituency office in Dartmouth North is actively supporting at least nine people who are unhoused. Some are sleeping in tents in designated parks, some are sleeping rough wherever they can, some are staying in the emergency shelter in Halifax, some in their cars, and too few are in hotels. Over half are seniors, many have serious health concerns, and some have lost custody of their children.

All of them desperately want stable and safe, not to mention adequate, affordable, and healthy housing. We help them call the shelter diversion line; they tell them they're over capacity. We help them call shelters, put them in touch with housing support workers, help them apply for emergency housing. We help them find food and gift cards. Sometimes the best we can do is help them find a tent.

It is a sad state of affairs when MLA offices have to give out tents. It's simply not good enough. We owe it to everyone who is or is at risk of becoming unhoused to come together and take urgent and substantial action on affordable housing. We can and we must do better.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Uniacke.

### **ARTHRITIS AWAR. MO.: EDUC. EVENTS - RECOG.**

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, September was Arthritis Awareness Month. Most of us sitting here today either know someone or is someone who is affected by this disease.

Over six million Canadians of all ages are affected by arthritis, approximately 20 per cent of the population. Here in Nova Scotia, that number is approximately 23 per cent. This makes Nova Scotia home to the highest percentage of individuals who report having the illness in Canada.

Arthritis Awareness Month was launched by Arthritis Research Canada to create awareness about the chronic illness while also dispelling some of the stereotypes surrounding arthritis, by hosting a variety of educational events.

I encourage all Nova Scotians to show their support for our community members who live with this painful disease by taking the time to learn more about arthritis.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Annapolis.

**ST. GEORGES, VANESSA: SPORTS WALL OF FAME IND. - CONGRATS.**

CARMAN KERR: Last month, the Middleton Sports Heritage Wall of Fame held their 23<sup>rd</sup> annual induction ceremony. One of these very deserving inductees was volleyball player Vanessa Christine St. Georges.

While at Middleton Regional High School, Vanessa was a key member of the provincial championship winning teams in the 2004-05 and 2007-08 seasons. She also won Best Offensive Player of the Year in Grade 12 when she earned a spot on the provincial team.

Vanessa continued her stellar career at Cape Breton University, where she received several individual honours, including being named Atlantic University Sport First and Second Team All-Star, and was Canadian University Sport Second Team All-Star. She was also part of Team Nova Scotia at the Canada Games, and was invited to participate in the national team tryouts. After graduation from CBU, she joined the Canadian Armed Forces and played for the national military team, including at two Military World Games.

I invite all members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Vanessa on being inducted into the Middleton Sports Heritage Wall of Fame.

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

**FOXX, MYA: *CALL ME MOTHER* CASTING - CONGRATS.**

LISA LACHANCE: Mr. Speaker, I'm thrilled to announce that we have a Nova Scotian competitor joining the ranks of 14 other incredibly talented artists on a reality competition series. The second season of *Call Me Mother* premiered last night, where 15 drag artists from across Canada will compete for prizes and the chance to be the face of Wella hair products at Toronto Pride next year.

Mya Foxx is an Inuk drag artist based here in Halifax whose talent knows no bounds. From public speaking to podcasts to incredible choreography and high-energy dance numbers, she does it all. Mya also created Diva Work, an introductory dance class that lets 2SLGBTQ+ adults try out dancing in an inclusive and safe environment. She

strives to uplift and promote work and performance for queer and trans artists of colour in all that she does.

Mr. Speaker, I would like my colleagues in the House to join me in congratulating Mya Foxx for her casting on *Call Me Mother* and wishing her the best of luck.

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

**QUINN, MADDIE: CAN. GAMES MEDAL WIN - CONGRATS.**

DAVE RITCEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Maddie Quinn of Bible Hill on earning a bronze medal at the Canada Summer Games in August.

Maddie threw a personal best mark of 47.4 metres on her sixth and final throw of the women's javelin open championship, capturing a bronze medal. Maddie is a rising senior thrower on Belmont University's track and field team in Nashville, Tennessee. She has earned eight podium finishes in her university career, including gold at the 2021 Ohio Valley Conference Outdoor Championship and silver this past May. Maddie had a previous standard of 46.7 metres set in her victory at the 2021 Margaret Simmons Invitational, but was able to shatter her own personal record on the final throw of the championship at the Canada Summer Games.

Congratulations to you, Maddie, on this incredible and well-deserved achievement.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

**ADAMSON, LINDA: HFX. NW TRAILS ASSOC. WORK - RECOG.**

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Linda Adamson for her commitment to the community. Linda strives to share her love and appreciation of nature with others. It was only natural for Linda to step into the lead role for the trail monitor program at Halifax North West Trails Association. She is always happy to share her knowledge of proper trail etiquette and safety to new walkers, and she coordinates with new volunteers. The valuable work of Linda and others at the Trails Association keeps Halifax trails sustainable and beautiful.

I would ask that the House join me in recognizing Linda for her dedication and service for the upkeep of our beautiful trails.

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

**SCHOOL SUPP. STRIKES: HIGHER WAGES NEEDED - SOLIDARITY**

KENDRA COOMBES: Mr. Speaker, it is October 27<sup>th</sup>, time for a labour update. CUPE Local 3912, Dalhousie, is on Day 9 of their strike. NSGEU Local 73, school support staff at the AVRCE, are on Day 4 of their strike. NSGEU Local 70, school support staff at the SSRCE, are on Day 3 of their strike. Fair and collective bargaining must be respected. Higher wages and benefits are needed now.

Solidarity with all those on strike.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

**PETIT DE GRAT RED CAPS: TOURN. WIN - CONGRATS.**

TREVOR BOUDREAU: Mr. Speaker, today I would like to acknowledge the Petit de Grat Red Caps, who recently won the Over-57 division in the Canadian National Oldtimers Baseball Federation Tournament. They entered the playoff round with a 1-1-1 record, and in the final round, they faced the Port Alberni team from British Columbia and beat them by a score of 5-4.

I would like to give a quick mention to Allan Samson, Mike McNamara, Kevin Olsen, Richard Boudreau, Shaun Boudreau, Blair Savoury, Ronnie Savoury, Godfrey Sampson, Valma Boudreau, Clayton Samson, Billy Digout, Terry Williamson, and Peter Clow.

Congratulations to the Petit de Grat Red Caps on winning the nationals and on continuing the long-standing tradition of representing our region well.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

**LITTLE, JOHN: BLACKSMITHING WORK - RECOG.**

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize John Little of East Dover. John Little is a Nova Scotian blacksmith and sculptor. Since 1970, John has been a full-time blacksmith in East Dover and has exhibited locally, nationally, and internationally with works in private and public collections. For over 40 years, John has been forging iron and steel into decorative and sculptural forms. His commitment to exploration of form, technique, and innovation has consistently led him in new and exciting directions.

Inspired by his love of percussion, he recently discovered interesting acoustic possibilities with his sculptural creations. His sound sculptures have been used in a variety of new music genres from orchestral to dance to jazz.

I would like the members of the House of Assembly to join me in recognizing John's creative and imaginative approach to the design and manipulation of this ancient material into beauty and functional forms.

[1:30 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

**BOSCH, CATHY: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

SUZY HANSEN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember an amazing woman in our community who just recently passed away: Cathy Bosch, grandmother, mother, wife, sister, and friend. Cathy was an amazing volunteer in Halifax Needham. With her headstrong personality and unsurmountable love for her family, she will be dearly missed, most of all by her dear family, who have always been like family to me, literally.

I will miss the many talks and hard laughs we have shared over the many years that I have known you or you have known me, and I know that your memories will live on through your kids, siblings, partner, and all who you have touched.

I would like to express my condolences to the family at this hard time. I know that Cathy is now reunited with her lovely daughter, Jennifer. May you rest in power.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

**AMB. SERV. SHORTAGE: IMPACT - RECOG.**

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to bring awareness to the lack of consistently available ambulance services for my constituents. I am told that many times constituents have had to wait long hours for an available ambulance to arrive, and they are often coming from many miles away.

When someone is contacting 911, it is an emergency, and help should be on the way immediately. No one should have the additional worry about what will happen if the ambulance does not arrive. Lives are at stake.

Patients awaiting transfer to another hospital often face a similar circumstance. They wait hours in long hallways in emergency departments only to have their transfer cancelled at the last minute. These waits have also resulted in cancellations of specialist appointments, procedures, diagnostic tests, and even surgeries in neighbouring hospitals. This is unacceptable. Taxpayers deserve better, and private companies contracted by this government should be held accountable for the services that they are paid to provide.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Eastern Passage.

**HWY. OF HEROES TRIBUTE RIDE: REMEM. OF THOSE LOST - RECOG.**

HON. BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia dedicates various parts of our highways in honour of our veterans. I would like to bring recognition to an event near and dear to so many: the Highway of Heroes Tribute Ride. Saturday, August 20, 2022, marked the 5<sup>th</sup> annual event.

The ride is a tribute to military, police, fire, emergency medical service workers, and many others who have lost their lives, and for those who are present but struggling physically, mentally, or emotionally. This ride ensures they are not forgotten. The Tribute Ride begins in Woodside and ends in Millbrook, Colchester County. Local police escort the ride in and out of our communities.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to join me in recognizing all of the volunteers and organizers of the Highway of Heroes for keeping the spirit and value present in our hearts today.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

**ZWICKER, MITCH: RETIREMENT - BEST WISHES**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, the Yarmouth Fire Department recently held its annual banquet and awards night. After a long career with the fire department, Mitch Zwicker was presented with an award after retiring as a volunteer. The department said this was a small token to thank Mitch for the many years of service he gave to the community.

I'd like to ask this House to join me in thanking Mitch Zwicker for his many years of dedication to the safety of his community and in congratulating him on his retirement and wishing him a safe and healthy future.

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

**PROW GALLERY: OPENING - CONGRATS.**

LISA LACHANCE: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia and my constituency would not be the same without fine arts. That's why today I am recognizing the opening of a new venue on the Halifax waterfront. The Prow Gallery on Lower Water Street is a sister site to 14 Bells Fine Art Gallery and is home to incredible creations by the likes of Alan Syliboy, Marilyn McAvoy, Jenn Grant, and many more I wish I had time to name.

The Prow Gallery's mandate is simple: to support working Canadian artists. The fine arts took a disproportionate hit during the COVID-19 pandemic, but nevertheless,

owner Cheryl Bell and manager Kim Farmer's extraordinary efforts have added one more vibrant location to my constituency.

Mr. Speaker, may I ask that my fellow members join me in congratulating Cheryl and Kim for the opening of the Prow Gallery and giving Nova Scotian artists another space to showcase their talents.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

**DUNCAN, BRIAN: RCMP PIPES & DRUMS VOL. - RECOG.**

HON. TIMOTHY HALMAN: I rise today to recognize Brian Duncan, a volunteer with the RCMP Pipes and Drums of Nova Scotia.

Brian has been with the organization for over a decade, and during that time, he has played the side drum and has been appointed as a musical leader for the group. In addition to his own musical talents, he is also a volunteer instructor for new and existing members of the band.

Brian is a pillar of the RCMP Pipes and Drums of Nova Scotia, and he also sits as a volunteer on the Nova Scotia and national executive committees, which respectively govern all RCMP pipe bands across the country.

During COVID-19, Brian undertook a project to write musical drum scores to provide consistency across Canada for all RCMP pipe bands.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank Brian for all his volunteer efforts with the RCMP Pipes and Drums.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

**FATHER & MOTHER-IN-LAW: RESILIENCE - RECOG.**

ANGELA SIMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the resilience, history, and contributions of African Nova Scotians, who are a distinct people in this province. Last night I had an opportunity to listen to Angela Davis and Fania Davis and Margaret Burnham at Transformative Journeys for Racial Justice, conversations around transformative racial justice, which made me reflect on my own upbringing.

I wanted to rise and pay tribute and remember my dad, the late Junior Clyde Sparks, and my mother-in-law, the late Pauletta Simmonds, who paved the way for me and my family. They showed us pure resilience and what that looked like, with a smile on your face and happiness in your heart, all in the midst of challenging racism and continued oppression.



My father taught me to be proud of my voice, not to lose who I was or change myself for anyone because you can't please everybody. My mother-in-law, Pauletta, taught me to always put God first and to expect nothing less than good and loving relationships because when something doesn't feel right, it doesn't hurt, and also gave me the courage to follow my instincts. It is because of them that I will never forget where I come from. My children will know their history and they will love themselves, and the legacy will continue.

I ask this House to acknowledge the history of African Nova Scotians in this province as a distinct people. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

**SMITH, LINDELL: COM. SERV. - RECOG.**

SUZY HANSEN: I rise today to recognize a lifelong resident of the North End, Councillor Lindell Smith. He is a proud father of a beautiful daughter who is a successful entrepreneur and owner of Taya Ties. He has proven his commitment to working within his community and he has dedicated himself to serving it.

Lindell is a co-founder of Centreline Studios and can be found wherever youth are. I am greatly encouraged by his dedication and quiet work that he does within our community.

Lindell has been my councillor for two terms, and I know that he has made a huge impact in our community. He is a huge inspiration to many, including myself, as he has given us hope that we all can have a seat at the table.

I would like all members to join me in recognizing Lindell Smith for his inspirational work for Halifax Needham.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay-Dominion.

**GLACE BAY VOL. FIRE DEPT.: HURR. SUPP. - THANKS**

JOHN WHITE: Mr. Speaker, like many fire departments across Nova Scotia, the Glace Bay Volunteer Fire Department answered the call in the aftermath of Hurricane Fiona. Throughout the night of the storm, the volunteer fire department answered close to 30 alarms, evacuating several families.

To give you a sense of what it was like near the shoreline, one pumper was damaged by gravel that was picked up from a close parking lot, while roof systems and debris were flying overhead. Clearly it was an extremely hazardous situation.

The following day offered no rest. The department answered another 60 alarms, ranging from structure fires, electrical panels, medical first responder calls, and water rescue calls.

Mr. Speaker, Hurricane Fiona was a long, drawn-out ordeal for the first responders. I am extremely proud of the professionalism and dedication of our members, my brothers. When the people of Glace Bay experienced structural damage and fear for their own lives, they dialed 911. When the alarm sounded, the members of the Glace Bay Volunteer Fire Department left their homes and families behind to answer the call. Thank you to the Glace Bay Volunteer Fire Department.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

**YOUSRI, ABDALLAH: IMAM OF UMMAH MASJID MOSQUE - RECOG.**

ALI DUALE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity today to recognize somebody who sits in my heart. I was a member of the board of directors of the Ummah Mosque. We built the biggest mosque east of Montreal, right here in Halifax. After we built that mosque, we looked for a leader who represents the next generation of this Muslim community in this city. It took us two years to find one. Finally, by the grace of God, we found Abdallah Yousri, who is doing his Ph.D. in Cairo. He has been in Halifax for the last five years. It is my testimony that the Ummah Mosque has become the centre of Halifax and Haligonians where people gather, people share a life, and also it is a place of worship.

The resolution that was passed in this House today was his idea.

I'm grateful for the members of this House accepting and allowing me to stand here today. You all have members of the Muslim community in your constituencies. I can say that it has been the vision of Nova Scotia to attract newcomers, so I urge the members of this House to please reach out to the members of the Muslim community.

I'm grateful for what happened here today. (Applause)

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

**WADDEN, MOLLY: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

KENDRA COOMBES: I rise to pay tribute to Molly Wadden. Although she was only given 12 years of life, Molly had many talents and left behind a beautiful legacy.

She was a musician and a member of the Whitney Pier Memorial volleyball team, now renamed Molly's Mustangs. Molly, while battling Ewing sarcoma, a form of bone cancer, spent her final months raising money for other children and their families dealing with serious and life-threatening illnesses through her charity, Molly's Mission.

Mr. Speaker, my sincere condolences to her family, her friends, her classmates, and her teachers. Through Molly's Mission, her legacy will live on.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

**PARAMEDICS: HIGH STRESS - RECOG.**

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, I rise in my place today to bring awareness to the stress that primary care paramedics and advanced paramedics are under. These highly trained and qualified health care professionals are often working understaffed. This is affecting their ability to meet the emergency needs of Nova Scotians when they call 911.

They work under the purview of a private company, Medavie Blue Cross, that is under the government organization of EHS or Emergency Health Services, which falls under the responsibility of the Department and Minister of Health and Wellness, which falls under the responsibility of the Premier.

Lots of layers of bureaucracy and it seems over the last few years maybe that is what is contributing to why there have not been effective measures taken to improve the safe emergency wait times for people who call 911 in times of emergency.

Today I stand here in the People's House to thank these paramedics and call upon the minister and the Premier to take immediate action to bring EHS back to being one of the highest-quality services in the country.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

**MOLLOY, ETHAN: RESCUE EFFORT - RECOG.**

JOHN A. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about another member of the Lantz Volunteer Fire Department.

Ethan Molloy joined the Lantz Volunteer Fire Department at 16 as a junior member. The junior member program allows members to join a fire department as early as 14, and at the age of 18, they become a full member.

When this 17-year-old man was on vacation in B.C. with his dad last week, they came across a crash on Highway 5 which was covered with black ice. Two pick-up trucks, one of which was hauling a horse trailer, had a head-on collision. This young man drew on his training and jumped into action.

While others were helping to round up the horses that had escaped, Ethan decided to check on the vehicles to see if anyone needed his help. Ethan crawled into the cab of a

truck and found a man pinned inside with very serious injuries. The man was unconscious, had erratic breathing, and had a weak pulse.

A nurse stopped and they both did what they could to keep the man stabilized until paramedics arrived. When they did arrive, Ethan then helped peel back the glass and part of the frame to improve access for the paramedics and to create more room. The injured man was eventually extricated and transported to the hospital in critical condition.

I'd like all the members to join me in thanking Ethan for his quick action.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

**METZGER-SILVER, CATHERINE: WP AWD. RECIP. - CONGRATS**

HON. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize Catherine Metzger-Silver, a successful financial advisor with Edward Jones and a strong woman leader in the Annapolis Valley.

Catherine was recently awarded the prestigious National 2022 Female Trailblazer of the Year at the Wealth Professional Awards in Toronto. The awards recognize wealth professionals for their outstanding achievements, best practices in leadership, and wealth management.

Catherine has been working in community and in her practice to promote leadership, entrepreneurship, and mentorship through the equity lens. She leads an empowerHER mentorship network for businesswomen in the community. In 2019, Catherine launched the Women of Excellence Award program in the Valley. This program recognizes women in the Annapolis Valley who pursue excellence in their respective fields and in the community.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Catherine Metzger-Silver on winning the WP 2022 Female Trailblazer of the Year Award and thank her for her leadership and the creation of the Women of Excellence Award celebrating and inspiring women leaders in the Annapolis Valley.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

**FAMILY MILESTONES: CELEB. - RECOG.**

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, inspired by the member for Northside-Westmount, I wanted to take a moment to mark some notable family moments that took place in October. It's a big month for the Leblancs of Prospect Bay.

[1:45 p.m.]

October 4<sup>th</sup> was my big brother David's birthday; October 5<sup>th</sup> was our Auntie Gerry's birthday, our mother's sister in Hamilton. She turned 84; October 6<sup>th</sup> was my birthday; October 7<sup>th</sup> was our brother-in-law Dan Pokotylo's birthday; October 11<sup>th</sup> was our cherished sister-in-law Tanya Sangster-Leblanc's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, a milestone to be sure; October 14<sup>th</sup> was our brother-in-law Billy McGrath's birthday; and October 4<sup>th</sup>, my brother Doug and sister-in-law Tanya celebrated their 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

We are a big, loud, fiercely-protective-of-each-other family. We take forever to say goodbye at the door. Family comes in all shapes and sizes, and I am very grateful for the shape and size of mine.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

**MACKAY, PETER: PUBLIC SERV. - RECOG.**

HON. PAT DUNN: I rise in my place today to speak about an individual that we all have heard of: the Honourable Peter MacKay. We are proud to say that Peter MacKay and his wife Nazanin have chosen Pictou County as the place where they will live and raise their beautiful children.

Peter Gordon MacKay has held some of the highest portfolios in this country while in service to Canadians. After an incredible career in public service, Peter has returned to the private sector and is enjoying being a member of the community in his home of Pictou County.

Now as you can imagine, he is and always will be quite a popular person in our county, and of course across the entire country. There is never a trip to the grocery store, rink, or ball field that Mr. MacKay attends that he is not surrounded by what can only be referred to as his admirers and supporters.

We certainly can attest to the fact that constituents still go to him to bring their issues or problems for resolution. We have the pleasure of talking to Peter on a regular basis and we appreciate the continued involvement the former MP has in our community.

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

**SMITH, CADET FLT. SGT. MEAGAN: COVID EFFORTS - RECOG.**

LORELEI NICOLL: I rise today to speak about an exceptional youth in my community. Cadet Flight Sergeant Meagan Smith, at age 16, is to be commended for her selflessness and consideration for others during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

During a time when masks were scarce, Cadet Smith learned to sew non-medical masks through an online tutorial and donated all proceeds from the mask sales to Feed Nova Scotia. Cadet Smith is an active young person in Cadets, school, and local organizations. Her vibrant and positive attitude is infectious, and she's an asset to her unit and to her community. For her efforts, she was recognized by the Cadet program with a commendation.

Cadet Smith exemplifies the attributes of the Cadet program, good citizenship and leadership. She is a mentor and role model for Cadet peers. I'm sure there will be a bright future ahead for Cadet Meagan Smith.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Eastern Shore.

**PORTERS LAKE COM. CTR.: TENNIS COURT RESTOR. - CONGRATS.**

KENT SMITH: I rise today to bring attention to the Porters Lake Community Centre. The centre has been an important part of Porters Lake and surrounding communities for 40 years. It is run by the Porters Lake Community Service Association, which is comprised of volunteer members of all ages who are committed to improving the quality of life on the Eastern Shore.

The association has taken on an ambitious project to restore the current tennis courts. Volunteers are raising funds to resurface the asphalt, repaint the lines, and rejuvenate the space for residents to enjoy tennis. They're also incorporating pickleball into the renovations.

I ask all members of this Assembly to join me in congratulating the Porters Lake Community Centre volunteers for their efforts to revitalize the courts and to wish them great success on their campaign.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

**GAVAS, KATRINA: SPORTS ACHIEVEMENTS - RECOG.**

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: I rise today to recognize Katrina Gavas for her sports involvement. Katrina Gavas has put an incredible amount of hard work and dedication into the Halifax Dunbrack Girls U-17 Soccer Team.

This team's cohesiveness is because many of the girls have played soccer together since they were 10 years old. The pandemic has impacted all of us, and the return to youth sport is important for good mental health, physical activity, as well as teamwork. I was pleased to support the team with advertising for their participation in the Umbro Cup tournament this May in Ontario.

I would ask that the House join me in recognizing Katrina for her volunteerism and dedication to the U-17 soccer team.

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

**RIEVAG, DIANNA: COM. SERV. - RECOG.**

DANIELLE BARKHOUSE: Thousands of Nova Scotians came together in various ways to support and welcome the resettlement of Ukrainian refugees.

In the Spring, Chester-St. Margaret's resident Dianna Rievaj learned that the facility that was warehousing donated supplies was no longer able to be used. Dianna leapt into action, contacting government officials, businesses, and community members, and was successful in securing a new location. Dianna's volunteer efforts in the community have been acknowledged before, and we are so appreciative of her continued commitment to the community and in solving this serious issue.

I would like the members to join me in thanking Dianna for her community spirit, big heart, and positive actions.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

**CONST. OFFICE TEAM: HELP FOR RESIDENTS - THANKS**

FRED TILLEY: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to thank, immensely, the team that is in my constituency office back home in Northside-Westmount. It has been extremely busy in our office with lineups and so many phone calls. Joanne and the team have just been going above and beyond.

Thank you so much, Joanne, for all you do for the residents of Northside-Westmount. Sammy is a student who works with us, and I have mentioned him in here before. He continues to help the residents and do a great job. We recently added a new addition to our office on a casual basis to help us through these difficult times. That's Soleil Blinkhorn. Welcome, Soleil, and thank you all for doing such an amazing job and allowing me to be here to do this work. Thank you and congratulations.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens.

**QUEENS CO. FAIR: RETURN IN 2022 - CONGRATS.**

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, the Queens County Fair dates back to 1886, and to this day, it remains a genuine agriculture fair held after Fall harvest.

After two years of operating under a modified format due to COVID-19, organizers were ready to return to tradition, planning a five-day event from September 20<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup>.

I was pleased to be able to attend the popular parade and I along with others in attendance were impressed with the exciting new additions and renovations to the fairgrounds. Unfortunately, Tropical Storm Fiona meant that the fair had to be cut short, but from all reports, it was a hugely successful event.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating the Queens County Fair Association on the return of their event and in thanking them for their ongoing commitment to keeping this much-loved tradition alive and thriving in North Queens.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

#### **MACDONALD, BURTON: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

BRAEDON CLARK: Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to recognize the life and legacy of Burton MacDonald, who passed away on October 20<sup>th</sup>, at the age of 82.

Burton's life was inextricably linked to St. Francis Xavier University, from which he graduated in 1960. He spent over 40 years teaching at St. F.X. and made an impact on generations of students.

Burton also spent over 40 years doing archaeological field work in Jordan, Cyprus, Egypt, and Israel. He directed five major survey projects in Jordan and published 12 books and over 100 articles on the subject.

On a more personal note, Burton was one of the first people to give me the time of day when I was running for the Liberal nomination in Bedford South. As he always did, Burton listened to me, encouraged me to keep going, and gave me a much-needed dose of confidence.

I would ask all members of the House to join me in recognizing Burton MacDonald and to extend our sympathies to Rosemarie, his wife of 42 years.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

#### **CANNING VILLAGE MEAT MKT.: 20TH ANNIV. - CONGRATS.**

HON. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Huntley family of Canning on the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and new expansion of the Canning Village Meat Market.



Oscar Huntley left the construction industry in 2001 to become the owner-operator of the Canning Village Meat Market. This local business has grown and thrived to become a tradition in the Annapolis Valley.

Please join me today to congratulate the Canning Village Meat Market on their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Annapolis.

**CDN. LAWN BOWLING CH'SHIPS: MEDAL WINNERS - CONGRATS.**

CARMAN KERR: Mr. Speaker, this August, five members of the Bridgetown Lawn Bowling Club earned medals at the 2022 Canadian Lawn Bowling Championships in Burlington, Ontario.

Tammy Foster-Veinot, Jackie Foster, and Debbie Foster won the gold medal in the women's fours alongside their Halifax-based teammate in a win over Saskatchewan. Their team, featuring Mother Debbie and daughters Jackie and Tammy, has been to more than 10 national championships in the fours in different versions and won their first national championship this season together.

Club members Braeden Campbell and Liam Campbell won the silver medal in the men's fours alongside their Dartmouth-based teammates in a loss to Alberta in the gold-medal game.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Debbie, Jackie, Tammy, Braeden, and Liam on their tremendous success at the 2022 Canadian Lawn Bowling Championship.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton East.

**BIG POND VOL. FIRE DEPT.: HURR. SUPP. - THANKS**

HON. BRIAN COMER: I rise today to thank the Big Pond Volunteer Fire Department and the community of Big Pond for their tremendous support during the recent hurricane. Hurricane Fiona created havoc in our province and these wonderful people spent countless hours of their own time to make sure that everyone had all their essentials.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this time to commend those community members and the volunteers from the fire hall for coming together to helping those in need.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

**VOLUNS.: ANTIG. COM. FRIDGE PROJECT - CONGRATS.**

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Antigonish Coalition to End Poverty and the Antigonish Farmers' Market on the opening of the Antigonish Community Fridge this Summer. This included a fridge and pantry for food and personal hygiene products.

The Antigonish Community Fridge is located at the Farmers' Market building, is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and is barrier-free and accessible for residents. Community members have made donations to keep their fridge and pantry well-stocked. This is a valuable resource for those in our community who need assistance.

Thanks to the generous donation of a fridge by DeCoste Interiors and the dedication of many volunteers, this project, which took nearly a year to complete, has come to fruition.

I ask all members of the House to congratulate those who worked tirelessly on the Antigonish Community Fridge Project.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

**CHIASSON, HEATHER: BIRTH OF GRANDDAUGHTER - CONGRATS.**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: I rise in the House to congratulate a great friend and mentor of mine who also served as my leadership campaign manager, Heather Chiasson, on becoming a grandmother recently - or as she is going to be referred to, Yaya.

Heather's daughter Sophie and son-in-law Jesse welcomed a beautiful baby boy named Rowan Alexander to the world. As many of the members of this House know, becoming a parent is extremely exciting and rewarding, but I've heard that becoming a grandparent is even better, Mr. Speaker. I have no doubt that Rowan Alexander will be well-loved and cared for by everybody in his family.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating Heather, her husband Edmond, Sophie and Jesse and the rest of the family on the birth of Rowan Alexander and wish them the very best as they all enjoy the many special moments that new life brings.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

**BURKE, CHRISTINE: BASEBALL AWD. RECIP. - CONGRATS.**

HON. STEVE CRAIG: I rise today to congratulate Christine Burke of Lower Sackville. If you or any of your children have ever played baseball in Lower Sackville, chances are you've had the pleasure of meeting Christine Burke.

Christine has provided the opportunity for children and youth to participate and learn more about the sport of baseball during her 25 years of being involved with Baseball Nova Scotia and Sackville Minor Baseball at Les Mayo Ball Field.

Christine was recently presented with the 2020 Baseball Nova Scotia Volunteer of the Year in recognition of her dedication to the baseball community.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Christine Burke for sharing her love of, and commitment to, the sport of baseball in Lower Sackville.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

**KOCHANOFF, STAN: COM. SERV. - THANKS**

MELISSA SHEEHY-RICHARD: Mr. Speaker, I rise today and bring recognition to Falmouth resident Stan Kochanoff.

Stan owns and operates Environova Planning Group Inc. and Maritime Landscape Services Ltd. He is a registered consulting and ISA Certified Arborist, a Certified Red Seal Landscape Horticulturalist, and a licensed professional planner. He can boast that he has over 48 years of hard work and experience and is the only registered consulting arborist earned through ASCA in our region, and only one of 10 in all Canada.

Volunteering is also important to Stan, and he has proven this over the years. He worked on projects for Communities in Bloom and the Windsor tree canopy committee and is responsible for planting and maintenance of the Palliative Care Memorial Garden at our very own Hants Community Hospital, just to name a few.

Recently he stepped up to help with trees when they were vandalized this past August at the Halifax Public Gardens. Stan played a key role in preserving the history by lending a hand and repairing the trees, and he seems optimistic that his efforts will be successful.

Stan jokes that he is on a “Freedom 95 Program” and community members like Stan Kochanoff make our home a more beautiful place to live and I would like to thank him for all he has done.

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

[2:00 p.m.]

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

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

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

#### **PREM: DOCTOR WAIT-LIST - ACTION**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, we are well into this government's second year of their mandate to fix health care, and yet every single day, by every metric that we look at, the health care system is getting worse. The doctor wait-list is at an all-time new high at over 116,000 people. Hospitals are over capacity in every corner of the province. Timely access to mental health care and primary care services is increasingly difficult. People who are critically ill are being turned away from our ERs, and in many communities, our ERs are closed. Our ambulatory and paramedic system is getting more strained.

Yet the Premier has said that the progress they're making on health care is remarkable. I'd like to know by which metrics the Premier is looking at to determine that the progress this government's making on health care is remarkable.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for this important question. Obviously, access to health care is top of the mind, certainly for our government but for all Nova Scotians. There is a lot of work to be done in fixing the health care system, but I assure you, under the minister's guidance and the incredible health leadership team, we are making progress.

The way I'm gauging that is from the starting point that we inherited from the former Minister of Health and Wellness. Based on that metric, we have made remarkable progress.

ZACH CHURCHILL: Well, let's talk about what the government did inherit. They inherited a need-a-doctor wait-list that was at 70,000 Nova Scotians. When that wait-list was at that level, the Premier said that wasn't bad luck, it was poor judgment and weak leadership. I'll table that, Mr. Speaker.

Yet now that we've had over 45,000 more people added to that wait-list, we have a very different tone and tune coming from the government opposite. How would he describe the current leadership when it comes to the need-a-doctor wait-list?

THE PREMIER: I would use the same word, Mr. Speaker - remarkable.

The reality is that we want every Nova Scotian to have access to a family doctor. We want every Canadian to have access to a family doctor. I was very clear with Nova Scotians that fixing health care would take time and it would take money, and it is taking time, and it will take money.

There was a lot of negative momentum in the health care system. When you look at what had happened for the prior eight years - including the five months in particular when the member was the Minister of Health and Wellness - there was a lot that wasn't done. We were facing a lot of retirements, facing a lot of issues, but the first thing we did was we sat down with the health care professionals, and we asked them: How can we help? They responded and, in turn, we responded.

I am optimistic that we can get the job done, but it will take time.

ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I know the Premier is fixated on the five months that I served as Health and Wellness Minister. I do find it a bit galling that the Premier will say that nothing happened, and yet he and the minister stand up and take credit for the numerous initiatives that were actually started during those five months, from virtual care to the Fitch report to the CAR T and cancer care expansion to the immunization program to protecting our hospitals from COVID-19 during that period.

At the end of the day, Nova Scotians will be able to compare records as we head into the next election, which is only three years away. But until then, we do want this government to make progress on health care, because it affects every single one of us and our loved ones.

When will we actually start seeing less banter on health care and more action from this Premier?

THE PREMIER: I'm happy to go through the list of the action that is taking place. There is a lot of action that's taking place. A lot of seeds have been planted, if I can use that analogy again, and many of those seeds are starting to sprout.

It will take time. Nova Scotians have spoken loud and clear one time on the Liberals' record on health care, their eight years there, including five months of inaction under the former minister. I will welcome the opportunity for them to get a second and third time to speak on that same question, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **PREM.: COST OF LIVING CRISIS - ACTION**

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Nova Scotian families are struggling through a cost of living crisis, and this government has turned a

blind eye. With record-breaking inflation this year, neither paycheques nor government supports have kept up.

A family making \$45,000 a year is not eligible for the Nova Scotia Child Benefit. A family would have to make an annual income of under \$34,000 a year - a family - to obtain this modest relief.

The Premier has repeatedly expressed concern about the rising cost of living. Increasing access to this benefit would offer needed support to families. Will the Premier commit to raising the income threshold and indexing the Child Benefit?

THE PREMIER: I do thank the member for this important question. Of course, I believe all members in here and certainly Nova Scotians know it would be unfair and inaccurate to say we've turned a blind eye.

Is there more to be done? Of course, there is more to be done. We'll continue to look for ways, but we have stepped up where we can help families. We've done that and we did that in quick order in a number of cases. We will continue to put Nova Scotians before politics. That's what matters to us.

We will look for sustainable ways to help Nova Scotians. We will never stop looking for ways to help Nova Scotians. We will never stop taking action where we can.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Families are falling through the cracks. We're offering solutions - and not answering the question is playing politics.

A mother from Halifax lamented that she can no longer afford a healthy diet for her son. Ben from Bayview says that he and his wife have to cut back on their own meals to make sure that their daughter won't go hungry. On top of this, the cost of medications means that many families are at a breaking point. A family making \$45,000 a year with one dependant would have to pay \$1,890 each year in deductibles under Family Pharmacare.

Mr. Speaker, these families are facing real intense pressure to put food on the table and to pay for medications. Will the Premier commit to freezing deductibles under Family Pharmacare so that kids in this province can eat and take their medication?

THE PREMIER: These are incredibly important questions, for sure. I just want to be clear with the member that not getting an answer is not the same as getting an answer you just don't like.

The reality is that as a government, we're taking action. We've taken action on the Child Tax Benefit. We're certainly working with the federal government on making sure that everyone has affordable child care. We will continue to look for ways to support Nova

Scotians. We will never stop doing that. There will always be more to be done. There will never be a day when everything is done. We'll continue to look at it.

On the very specific question on Pharmacare, as we've indicated before in this Chamber, that's a program that is currently under review. We'll look for a way to see if we can make that better.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, the cost of groceries has gone up 11.4 per cent in the past 12 months. I'll table that. A universal school lunch program would offset grocery bills and ensure that children aren't going hungry at school. A recent report from the Auditor General found that some students would not eat for the entire day if the school did not provide them with food. I know that's true in my constituency and right across this province.

The same report recommended that government implement a universal lunch program. Although the government has agreed with this recommendation, we still don't know when or how this will happen.

My final question for the Premier is: Will he ensure that all children have access to healthy food by committing to funding implementation of a universal school lunch program in the next fiscal year?

THE PREMIER: Again, these are important issues, for sure. They're important to our government. They're important to Nova Scotians. There are a number of initiatives around the province to support children and provide food to children. Certainly, in specific cases, we'll try to do more.

The question on the universal lunch program is certainly one that we're very focused on. We're looking at what's possible there. We're looking at what we can do as a government to support those families and make sure that every child in this province has healthy food options; make sure that every child in this province has the opportunity for a good education. Those are our goals. We share those goals in this Chamber. We'll continue to look for ways to do that.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

### **DHW: HEALTH CARE WAIT TIME METRICS - EXPLAIN**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: As a lover of the English language, I do appreciate a good analogy. I want the Premier to know that. But to use this vague gardening analogy when it comes to what this government is doing on health care when we have very specific metrics that we can look at to judge the success of the government's policies - when this government has actually made very specific commitments, including meeting the national standard benchmark for surgical wait times within 18 months of being elected.

We are now four months away from this deadline and surgical wait times have actually increased. Not only are surgical wait times higher than pre-pandemic levels, it has been reported that surgeries are taking longer and are more complex to complete. I'll table that.

Let's get specific. This particular promise that the Premier made, will it be met to meet these national surgical benchmark times within the first 18 months of his office?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: We are very focused on surgical wait times and have been working very hard. We do know that there have been some disruptions over the past number of years related to COVID-19. It's certainly interrupted on both sides of the House.

This year, 59 per cent of hip replacements and 51 per cent of knee replacements were done within the recommended time frame, which is up from 47 per cent and 31 per cent when the member opposite was in government.

ZACH CHURCHILL: I'd just like to get a second question in on the Premier, Mr. Speaker. Just two. We'll all have more fun in here if we . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. Move on with your question.

ZACH CHURCHILL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll do that. The minister has said that every single day under this government the health care system is going to get better. I'll ask the minister: When you look at the critical metrics that one would look at to assess that - Need a Family Practice Registry wait-list, surgical wait times, long-term care wait times, access to primary care, emergency room availability, emergency room wait times - all of these indicators are suggesting the situation is getting much worse.

I'll ask the minister the same question I asked the Premier: By which metrics is this government assessing the fact that their progress . . .

MICHELLE THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud of the fact that this government is very accountable to Nova Scotians. On the Action for Health website, we not only have an action plan - the first one in a dozen years in this province - it's also accompanied by a website that will allow us to track not only daily and weekly progress, but we are working towards a dashboard.

We're very committed to talking to Nova Scotians, responding and telling them what the state of health care is, and where we're making improvements. This is an example of the accountability that we've shown as a government.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Annapolis.



**DHW: ER WAIT TIMES - EXPLAIN**

CARMAN KERR: The Premier has said, “Shame on anyone who suggests that good care isn’t available in Nova Scotia.” I can table that. We know and have seen that despite the best efforts and hard work of our health care professionals, failures of this government have caused a crisis in our health care system.

This is especially evident in our emergency rooms. In the last year alone, 43,000 Nova Scotians walked away from an ER without being treated. That’s up 60 per cent from last year. I will table that as well.

My question for the Premier is: Does he believe that these 43,000 Nova Scotians had access to care, or are we shameful for suggesting otherwise?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: Certainly, the biggest issue that I would say is facing us in this province is our health and human resources in health care, and we have been very diligent around that. Wherever we can, we’re present in communities, and we talk to them about the resources we have and how we can provide care.

In order to provide access to care, we have looked at things like nurse practitioner and pharmacy pilots across this province. One opened in New Minas as recently as last week. We’ve also looked at Virtual Care Nova Scotia and how we can support people. We have virtual care in the emergency rooms. We’ve looked at a number of different ways in which we can expand scope of practice for our health care workers to ensure that Nova Scotians have access to care in a variety of different ways.

CARMAN KERR: Thank you to the minister for answering that. We were denied in Annapolis that nurse practitioner-pharmacy pilot, but we’ll try again. Just over a year ago, this government ran an election campaign questioning the care that Nova Scotians were receiving. Fourteen months later, things are worse. Nova Scotians are facing unprecedented wait times when they enter emergency rooms. We’ve heard stories across the province from people sent away from emergency rooms with broken bones and other serious issues. I’ll table that as well.

My question for the Premier is: Does he believe that Nova Scotians being turned away from emergency rooms are able to access the emergency care they deserve in this province?

MICHELLE THOMPSON: We continue to look at access. Emergency rooms in this province are not able to turn people away, which is why in some areas we’ve had to move to other ways to offer urgent treatment centres to make sure episodic care is received.

We continue to look at different models of care. We’re looking at how we can best support emergency situations in rural communities by working with our EHS partners,

looking at doctor in a box, and recently hiring a nurse in a box in order to support emergency care to make sure Nova Scotians receive the care they need in their communities.

[2:15 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford Basin.

### **DHW: 24/7 OPERATING ROOMS - UPDATE**

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, let's be clear. The Premier's failures have real impact on the lives of Nova Scotians. His failure to meet the benchmark standards for wait times for surgeries means that Nova Scotians are left to live in pain longer and in some tragic cases they die waiting for surgeries. It's being reported that surgeries are far more complex and invasive due to the wait times, which I will table.

The Premier promised Nova Scotians 24/7 operating rooms to get through the backlog and meet the benchmark, but operating rooms still are not operating 24/7. Instead, health care workers continue to be overwhelmed and overworked.

I will ask the Premier: When will he follow through on his promise to Nova Scotians for 24/7 operating rooms in this province?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: We do continue to develop a surgical strategy in this province to perform 2,500 additional surgeries in this fiscal year. I do want to let the member know that for the first time in this province, in September, we had a full day of elective surgeries, held on a Saturday, which allowed us to be able to take people off the list. We'll continue to do more.

KELLY REGAN: The current wait for brain surgery consultation is 227 days, with an additional 199-day wait for surgery. The current wait for cardiac valve replacement surgery is 169 days. I think we would all agree that these are important surgeries, oftentimes life-saving surgeries, that cannot be delayed. This government ran on a promise to clear the surgical backlog and reduce wait times, but one year into the government's mandate, the backlog is now worse - worse - than pre-pandemic wait times.

My question for the Premier is: When will Nova Scotians see any reduction in surgical wait times under this government?

MICHELLE THOMPSON: There has been a tremendous amount of work done with the surgical strategy, so we are looking at a centralized intake and referral process so that patients can be adequately triaged, and we can work with health care providers across this province to make sure that people have the surgery they need. We're doing a pilot with a hip and knee clinic in Pictou County around how we can use allied health care

professionals to support people waiting for hip and knee surgeries in order to potentially strengthen the joint that needs to be operated on and potentially delay or actually in some cases have them not require surgery at all. There are a number of things that are happening. It's not just one lever that we need to pull. We're also looking at recruitment and retention. We have a significant shortage of registered nurses and anaesthetists in this province, and we continue to recruit through the Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment.

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

**EMO: C.B. WAITING FOR HURR. SUPP. - COMMENT**

KENDRA COOMBES: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister Responsible for the Office of Emergency Management. On October 2<sup>nd</sup>, the member for Cape Breton East posted to social media that EMO would provide, "removal of tree debris from Fiona on private property", and I'll table that. Despite this, Cape Bretoners have been expressing frustration that no help was coming. A New Waterford woman was placed in a precarious situation when Hurricane Fiona knocked a tree onto her roof but was met with denials and roadblocks when seeking help from EMO. After weeks of waiting, the tree was removed, but only due to the generosity of local businesses.

My question is: Does the minister find it acceptable that Cape Bretoners have been waiting weeks without help from this government that was promised on October 2<sup>nd</sup>?

HON. JOHN LOHR: I do want to acknowledge that Hurricane Fiona has been an incredibly difficult storm for us as a province. As the member knows, we engaged the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements program with the federal government within days of the event, unlike Hurricane Dorian, which was four months afterwards.

That DFAA program provides the opportunity for tree removal, which is something that we had to negotiate with them. Fundamentally, the DFAA program was a flood program, but we have negotiated that with the federal government. There is that opportunity, with certain requirements, that that can be done.

KENDRA COOMBES: I believe that actually does allow for debris.

Mr. Speaker, I want to relay another Cape Bretoner's story from the aftermath of Hurricane Fiona. Clarence, a 77-year-old veteran from Sydney Mines, went without power for almost a month due to large, downed trees on his home and property. He too went through the proper channels to receive help from this government only to receive none. Eventually, a crew of local volunteers showed up with chainsaws and trucks to remove the debris, along with local businesses.

While it is always heartwarming that Cape Bretoners will take care of their own, I want to ask the minister: Where was this government in Cape Bretoners' times of need and why weren't they helping people like Clarence?

HON. BRIAN COMER: I think it's important that I take this question. It is an issue that I've been working on with the Premier and my caucus for weeks, actually working day and night with the minister responsible for the Office of Emergency Management, the Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables.

I had the opportunity to meet the Premier in Coxheath as soon as it was safe to come to Cape Breton to come and look at the community. I spoke with Cape Bretoners on the ground, and we actually offered unprecedented forms of assistance to Cape Bretoners, which we continue to do, as you would have seen in this morning's press release.

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

#### **DHW: LUN. PALL. CARE UNIT DELAY - EXPLAIN**

LORELEI NICOLL: We recently took part in visiting various health stakeholders in the South Shore area, including the hard-working health care workers at the palliative care unit at Fishermen's Memorial Hospital in Lunenburg. The new palliative care unit was set to open in the Fall of 2021. A year later, Mr. Speaker, the unit is still not open. This palliative care unit is important as it will serve Nova Scotia's oldest per capita population. My question to the minister is: When will this unit open? A date would be appreciated.

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: I thank the member opposite for the question. I would have to check with the Nova Scotia Health Authority in regard to the delays and to understand what the issues are related to that unit, and whether or not it is a staffing issue. I can get back to the member about that.

LORELEI NICOLL: I'll ask the question, but I am sure I know the answer. This unit will serve a vital role to the aging population in Lunenburg and was committed to the community to open a year ago. My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is: What has happened to the funds that were committed for this new unit?

MICHELLE THOMPSON: Again, I will have to follow up with the member. I would like to commend the members opposite that after eight years of never talking to a single health worker, they actually got into their cars and went out and talked to a few. (Interruption)

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

**DHW: NO IMPROVEMENT IN PATIENT OUTCOMES - EXPLAIN**

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, actions speak louder than words and while the government spends a lot of time on communications and how they are working hard to fix health care, we haven't seen any actual improvement in patient outcomes. People are getting turned away from emergency rooms and surgeries are getting more and more delayed. The people of this province have a right to good health care. My question to the minister is simple: Why aren't Nova Scotians seeing results?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: We are currently going out and talking to communities about the health care in their communities to better understand their needs. There have been a number of things happening across this province; we are increasing access to care, we are working with paramedics, we are working with health care providers, we opened the Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment. There are a number of actions happening, Mr. Speaker, and I'm confident in our ability to deliver for Nova Scotians.

DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, this government has been in power for over a year and has yet to provide a single significant piece of legislation to improve health care in the province. We have also not seen any significant health care legislation in this Fall session. We continue to hear a lot of words from the Premier about how he is working hard, but we haven't seen the results that Nova Scotians were promised last August. They have sat in the Legislature this session and have not tabled a single piece of legislation targeted to improve the state of health care in this province.

The people of this province have a right to good health care. My question to the Premier is: If health care is this government's Number 1 priority, why haven't we seen the government table a single piece of legislation?

MICHELLE THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, laws and regulations and legislation are not the key to fixing health care. The key to fixing health care is investment. The key to fixing health care is recruitment and retention. The key to fixing health care is being present in communities and understanding how best to meet people's needs. We don't need legislation to do that.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

**DHW: FUNDING FOR CGM - ACTION**

BRAEDON CLARK: Mr. Speaker, two moms, Dena Keating and Samantha Publicover, who started the Finger Prick Challenge that many of us participated in over the last election, spoke to the now-Premier about their cause. They have been advocating, as we know, for coverage of continuous glucose monitors.

Samantha said she spoke to the Premier on the phone twice and that he seemed interested and wanted to help the cause. After the calls, the parents had “such a good feeling about this” - and I will table that. After the election, spokespersons from government stated that they were committed to reviewing the device but nothing more. Samantha said she was disappointed by the response and said to the media, referring to the Premier, that “He said everything we wanted to hear when he was trying to get in because he wanted our vote.”

I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Wellness: Why won't this government commit to doing more than just reviewing this proven technology and actually commit to funding continuous glucose monitors?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: I, too, have talked to a number of families about the technology and the enabling way that it can help people feel safe and also manage their illness. We know that there are a number of demands on our publicly funded health care system and our publicly funded Pharmacare programs. We do continue to look at this, Mr. Speaker. We know that it's important and as a caucus, we speak about it on a regular basis.

BRAEDON CLARK: I asked the minister last week about CGM. She stated, as she says, that they're “committed to reviewing the cost and benefit of CGM”, and I'll table that exchange.

I think all of us are hearing from people across this province that this technology should be funded by the government, just like many other provinces are doing. I mentioned P.E.I. There are many others that are doing the same recently. We understand this equipment is expensive, but no one understands the burden of the costs more than families who currently do not receive funding for CGMs in this province.

I think that there's a good argument to be made that the cost upfront of the technology will be more than covered by the lack of trips to the ER that these families are experiencing.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is: Since the government at this time will commit to reviewing the technology, will the minister give a time frame of when this might be completed and if that review will be made public?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: I can't commit to a timeline today, but I can assure the member opposite that it is top of mind for this government.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

**DHW: OUT-OF-PROV. HEALTH CARE NEED - EXPLAIN**

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier.

Amanda Rafuse lives with Crohn's disease. She recently went to the ER with severe gastrointestinal issues after not being able to access care through her family doctor's office. At the ER, she was told that the wait for a colonoscopy could be up to a year. Instead, fed up and in pain, she decided to cover the cost of a colonoscopy at a private clinic in Montreal, plus travel and hotel costs. I'll table that.

Mr. Speaker, does the Premier find it acceptable that people are being forced to fly to other provinces to get the health care that they need?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: I certainly am not able to speak about individual cases on the floor of the Legislature. What I do know is that when people go to the emergency room to seek care, they are triaged and receive the care that they require in that environment. Also, when we look at referrals to specialist physicians, they look at a triage system as well.

I can't speak to the details of that case. I can say that there are systems in place for us to make sure that those folks who need urgent and emergency care receive it.

SUSAN LEBLANC: I'd like to share the story of another person who had to leave the province to get essential health care.

A Dartmouth woman in her 30s recently went to her doctor with a tremor in her hand that was impacting her ability to work. She was told it could be as long as five years to see a neurologist. She was lucky enough to be able to afford to fly to Ontario where she saw a neurologist and was then diagnosed with early-onset Parkinson's disease. She may need brain surgery soon.

For the people who can't afford to fly to another province and get private care, what does the Premier suggest that they do?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: Wherever possible, we obviously want to provide the care that Nova Scotians need within this province. There are times that people do need to fly to other places and go to places like Montreal or Ontario in order to receive care.

Again, I can't speak to the particular subspecialty of the person that that person needed to see. Wherever possible, and the key to getting more timely care, is to focus on recruitment and retention of our current health care professionals.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

[2:30 p.m.]

### **LSI: DOCTOR SHORTAGE - ADDRESS**

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: This government has committed itself to doubling the population by 2060, yet there are no actual plans for how our infrastructure will be able to address a large population increase. We welcome population growth in Nova Scotia; however, there needs to be a sufficient plan to address how doubling the population will affect our health care system.

In presentations to the Public Accounts Committee, Karen Oldfield, the Premier's partisan, hand-picked CEO of the Nova Scotia Health Authority stated that planned expansion of the Infirmity campus does not provide for population growth.

My question to the Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration: Does this government actually have a plan, and specifically, is the minister collecting data of how many new immigrants are accessing emergency departments?

HON. JILL BALSER: Yes, we are committed to a very ambitious goal to grow our population to two million people by 2060. In Nova Scotia right now, we know there is an energy in this province that is creating this welcoming experience for newcomers, but we're also launching a marketing campaign, as I said before, to bring other Nova Scotians home.

We are working very closely with all departments to make sure that our population growth is strategic, it's planned, and we do have actions in place, but again, the narrative in the province you used to always have to leave, but now we're calling you back home.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: The minister never answered my question. How many new immigrants are accessing emergency departments because they have no family doctor? That was the question. I would love to hear the answer.

The Premier said regarding the ever-growing doctor wait-list: "We know the population is growing, that's a factor as well, people are moving to Nova Scotia and they're not actually bringing a doctor with them." I will table that. This is a quote from the Premier.

My question to the minister: If the Premier knows that people, including newcomers to Nova Scotia, aren't bringing a doctor with them, what is their plan to address how this lofty goal of doubling population will impact the need for doctors?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: There are a couple of things I'd like to comment on in regard to that fulsome question. First of all, I want to let you know that we invested in the newcomer clinic. That will help us identify and support newcomers who come to



this province, and once they've been stabilized in that newcomer clinic, we can then attach them and take them out to a primary care provider in community.

The other thing that I would like to let the member know is that we have just this month started race-based data collection, and that's going to help us understand how best to identify populations and ensure we're meeting their health needs.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

### **DHW: DOCTORS RETIRING - UPDATE**

BRAEDON CLARK: The physician shortage in this province continues to affect Nova Scotians' ability to access primary care. Our province is experiencing a demographic shift, and this impacts our physicians too. A large portion of our doctors are over 65 and presumably will be retiring soon.

We are hearing from concerned doctors about the upcoming shortages that are bound to happen over the next few years. Many of these doctors have hundreds and, in some cases, thousands of patients. Without someone to fill their place, these patients will be without a family doctor and added to the growing doctor wait-list.

My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is: Does this government have the numbers on how many of our doctors will be retiring over the next 24 months?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: Through the Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment and with the Nova Scotia Health Authority, we are looking at a resource plan across the province not only for physicians, but also for our nursing staff, as well as some of the other allied health care professionals. We do need to understand what the future needs are.

While we develop that, we've done a number of things. We are working with our colleagues in Labour, Skills and Immigration to immigrate and support new physicians coming to this province. We're working with the colleges, both nursing and physician colleges, to streamline the process.

We have worked with CaRMS as an example, and we've identified that we can increase the number of residency seats to make sure that there are incoming physicians able to practice in Nova Scotia.

BRAEDON CLARK: We need to have a long-term view of our health care system in order to not just resolve the crisis of today but to ensure our system is able to deliver care to our rapidly growing province. We need that on-staffing in order to do that, just like we need the data to see how many Nova Scotians are on the doctor wait-list.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Wellness: Will this government commit to tabling, in this House or in some other public forum, the number of doctors that will be retiring in the next 24 months?

MICHELLE THOMPSON: A long-term plan would have been very helpful about five or six years ago, Mr. Speaker, but I can assure you that we are looking at our health care deficits. We have known about this situation for at least 15 years. We have known that we're going to have a shortage of health care workers.

We are working diligently to increase seats. We are looking to make sure that the people who are living in this province who are health care workers from outside are licensed and able to work. We are working with colleges; we are looking at how we can increase residency seats so that people from Nova Scotia who have trained outside of here can come home to live and work in their home communities.

There're a number of things that are happening, and I can assure the members opposite we are very focused on a health and human resource plan in health care.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

#### **DHW: BADDECK ER REOPENING - COMMIT**

FRED TILLEY: As you well know, the people of Baddeck and Victoria County are gravely concerned about their emergency department. Victoria County Memorial Hospital was facing extensive emergency room closures due to staffing issues. We know that just a few weeks ago, the emergency room was shut down and replaced with a short-term care clinic. Provincial officials have said they will immediately begin work to ensure the new clinic is only temporary - I'll table that.

When in Baddeck earlier this month, the Minister of Health and Wellness committed to the emergency room reopening eventually. I will table that.

I will ask the Minister of Health and Wellness: In spite of the inconsistent messages on the reopening of the emergency department in Baddeck, will the minister commit today to reopening the Baddeck emergency department?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: I was happy to attend the meeting in Baddeck with the Speaker three or four weeks ago. I want to be very respectful and thank the health care workers in that environment. They are seeing a high volume of patients in that emergency room, and through working with the health care workers, particularly the physicians in that community, we have settled on a temporary urgent treatment care centre.

We have committed - there is recruitment that is happening. We know that there is a physician who is likely to come within the next 12 months, and we have committed to

that community that at our earliest possible moment, we will reopen the emergency room in Baddeck.

FRED TILLEY: Earliest possible moment doesn't help the people of Victoria County. Ambulances have to drive past Baddeck 45 additional minutes to Sydney in order for people to get that emergency care.

Being able to access primary care is of great concern to people on Cape Breton Island. As Dr. Margaret Fraser has said, "We've all seen that temporary can last for years." I'll table that. The people of Cape Breton have reason to be concerned.

My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is: Can she tell the residents of Baddeck and Victoria County exactly when this emergency room will reopen?

MICHELLE THOMPSON: Certainly, there are a couple of things. When we have the ability to reopen that emergency department, of course we will. I want to bring just to a point the fact that sometimes it's really important that when people need emergency care, they do pass their local hospital, and we get them to life-saving care.

I'll give you the example of a stroke. It's essential that someone who's experiencing symptoms of a stroke bypass their local hospital and get to a CT scanner within a window of time. It isn't always important for them to stop there. What's important is that they have access and ability to get to the care they need when and where they need it in this province.

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

### **FTB: COST OF LIVING ASSISTANCE - PROVIDE**

LISA LACHANCE: My question is for the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board. When asked about the rising cost of living in the Spring, the minister said, "The reality is nobody likes inflation. Nobody likes interest rate increases . . . What I hope is that in the long run we get back to a more reasonable level of inflation so that consumers and everyone in society is protected." I'll table that.

The Bank of Canada hiked interest rates four times since then, including just yesterday to 3.75 per cent. This will squeeze people again who are already falling behind on mortgage payments and credit card bills.

The minister doesn't seem to think it's his government's job to help working people weather a cost of living crisis. I would like to ask him: Whose job is it?

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: Speaker, the member is correct. We saw another raise in the interest rate yesterday by the central bank. It is a non-political entity. Their goal is to try to bring the squeeze of inflation back off of people.

We know people are suffering with the cost of inflation, and we know - hopefully in the short-term - interest payments on mortgages are going up. We hope that is a short-term problem so that in the longer time, the squeeze of inflation and how it's hurting people right now will go away.

LISA LACHANCE: Mr. Speaker, people need help with the cost of food. Someone from Bible Hill recently shared this with us: We've had to switch to using a credit card to buy groceries because there's never enough in the bank at once. That only lasted for about three months and now the credit card is within \$50 of being maxed-out after every grocery run and I am going hungry for half a week at a time just to try to help balance grocery costs.

Meanwhile, the minister is giving a \$24 million tax cut to corporations but no relief to middle income people. Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is: How bad will it have to get before this government steps in to help Nova Scotians?

ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I can see what the member is trying to do in suggesting that a tax cut is coming at someone else's expense, but that tax could bring good things to this province. We've seen companies come here, make significant capital investments, create jobs that have lasted many years and those are jobs that can protect people from times like we're in because they can often bring with them very good wages and benefit packages.

I would ask the member to not be disparaging something that could bring something that's good to the province and try to connect it to something else.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

### **DHW: OVER-CAPACITY ISSUE - ADDRESS**

ANGELA SIMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, health care workers are the backbone of our health system and across the province they are being forced into long overtime hours to handle the high occupancy rates in our hospitals.

Emergency rooms are over capacity because people cannot access primary care and many end up in the emergency room. They can't access virtual care or walk-in clinics, so they're forced to go to the emergency room. This is leading to the burnout of our health care workers.

My question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness: What is being done to address the over-capacity issues in our hospitals and give our health care workers some relief?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: We've been very clear. We are very concerned about health care workers. They've been under strain for a number of years, and we know

that the pandemic particularly has really strained the system and the health care workers even further. We do work locally. Not every solution is the same for every facility. Larger facilities have more capacity, sometimes, in order to support people moving around, whereas smaller facilities can really be affected by simply having one or two vacancies, so we need to look at local solutions.

In regard to our paramedics, we are working with the paramedic working group and we are looking at ways that we can look at shift overruns, as an example, and getting ideas that are generated from the front line in terms of how we can support them in creating a better work-life balance, and we continue to do that.

ANGELA SIMMONDS: I appreciate the minister's response and the work that is being done. The fact is, though, that this government came into office and the health care system is worse than it has ever been before. With occupancy rates at over 100 per cent in many of our hospitals, our health care workers deserve action and not more words or political acclaim from government.

My question for the Minister of Health and Wellness is: How long will health care workers have to work under these conditions before they see results?

MICHELLE THOMPSON: To the member's point, we do know that there are a number of people who are working under considerable strain. We were fortunate enough recently that we did find and identify over 300 health care workers who have been in this province for a number of years who hadn't been able to license. As one example, we are bridging 300 of these nurses who are here from other countries in order to address some of the health care issues.

It is going to take time and we've been very clear with that. We're looking at our retirees and asking them to come back and work in a mentorship role or shifts in order to support their colleagues. Recruitment and retention, increasing the number of seats: All these things, Mr. Speaker, will contribute to stabilizing the workforce.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

#### **OAMH: MENTAL HEALTH BUDGET AMOUNT - CLARIFY**

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, in the Progressive Conservative mental health plan that they released last year during the election, they said: For nearly \$5 billion dedicated in the Nova Scotia provincial budget for health spending, only 7 per cent allocated to mental health care. I will table that.

In the most recent budget, the government is spending only \$268.8 million on mental health, which is 4.7 per cent of the health budget.

[2:45 p.m.]

My question to the Minister responsible for the Office of Addictions and Mental Health is: If he believes that 7 per cent is not enough, why is there only \$4.7 million in his budget?

HON. BRIAN COMER: In the last budget there was an over-\$20 million increase for the Office of Addictions and Mental Health. There are new enhanced services that are available that weren't available before we took over government: the acute Mental Health and Addictions Day Hospital, the peer support recovery line across the province. In terms of the budget allocation specifically, there is some significant work right now under way in the department to implement universal mental health care, and the best is yet to come.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: I thank the minister for the answer, but I did not hear the answer to my question. Again, why is it only 4.7 per cent when 7 per cent wasn't enough? I did not hear the answer.

Anyway, mental health care is a critical piece of our health care system with impacts across our society. We continue to hear stories about people across Nova Scotia who are having significant trouble accessing proper mental health support. More money would really help.

My question to the minister is: With the province now posting a \$350 million surplus, when will this government spend more money on this service critical to Nova Scotia Health?

BRIAN COMER: I thank the member for the important question. I think mental health is a bit unique when you compare it to primary health care or seniors care in that it's not necessarily the amount of money, but it's the quality and the efficiency of the evidence-based care that's delivered. That being said, there's some significant work under way in the department right now that's going to bring some first-of-their-kind interventions to Nova Scotians which are desperately needed.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford Basin.

### **DHW: IUD FUNDING - COMMIT**

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, improving access to IUDs has been raised in this House. When we look south of the border, we see what happens when you restrict women's access to contraception, so it's important to continue to improve and support women's health care in our province. Dr. Lianne Yoshida has said, "IUDs and implants are the best, most effective method for most patients to control their fertility and plan for their futures. But they're expensive, especially for patients who are working low-wage jobs and do not have private insurance." I have tabled that.

Mr. Speaker, I know the minister has previously alluded to reviewing support for IUDs. Can the Minister of Health and Wellness please update us on whether a review has happened and whether there will be any commitment for funding IUDs?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: I will say I think it's very important that people have a choice over what type of birth control that they use in this province. I appreciate that there is benefit to IUDs, but I do think it's important that people have the right to choose. We know that under Pharmacare, there are a variety of options, and we continue to look. Part of my mandate letter is to review the formulary in Pharmacare, and we will continue to look at what options are available.

KELLY REGAN: That particular issue of IUDs came up when we discovered that, in fact, we had health care workers who were (Interruption) Yes, by my colleague from the NDP. We had health care workers who were actually raising money so women could get IUDs after they had undergone abortions. That's why we're talking about IUDs.

But the minister is right - we want to ensure that women have access to good contraception - so I urge the minister. My question to the minister is: Will we then cover funding for birth control for women in this province?

MICHELLE THOMPSON: Again, we are reviewing the formulary to better understand how best to support Nova Scotians across a number of different areas in terms of their health care - birth control being one of them. I also know that my colleague, Minister MacFarlane, has some options also available to folks in regard to accessing Pharmacare as well.

We continue to look at this. There are a number of demands on our public system. We look at the cases, we try to understand how we can best impact health, and these conversations are ongoing in the department.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

### **FTB: INFLATION SUPP. INACTION - EXPLAIN**

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board why he considers it acceptable that in Newfoundland and Labrador people are going to receive \$500 from the provincial government by Christmas, and in Quebec they're going to receive \$600 from their government by Christmas. Yet in terms of direct inflationary compensating spending from the government, the people of Nova Scotia are going to receive rather zip, nothing, zero.

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, zip, nothing, zero? The member is misleading the House. We have done many things in this province . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. I'm going to ask the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board to retract that statement using the word "misleading." It's unparliamentary.

ALLAN MACMASTER: I will retract that statement. I will rephrase it, Mr. Speaker . . .

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

### **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

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

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 208.

### **Bill No. 208 - The Environment Act (amended).**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

FRED TILLEY: Mr. Speaker, I believe I have about 40 minutes remaining. Are we still on the dilatory motion?

THE SPEAKER: I'll tell you in just a second. We'll just take a brief recess for a few minutes until we get the times.

[2:51 p.m. The House recessed.]

[2:53 p.m. The House reconvened.]

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. We'll go back to the order of business, Public Bills for Second Reading. The bill that we're going to be discussing is Bill No. 208 - The Environment Act (amended).

The honourable member for Northside-Westmount with 41 minutes left.

FRED TILLEY: Again, Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to get up and speak about this bill with regard to the motion that was on the floor to have a three-month pause.



We've asked for a three-month delay in this legislation to give the government time to go back and renegotiate a proper deal.

The residents of Nova Scotia deserve that this government do their homework and put the necessary work into a negotiation process where Nova Scotians will not see a 10 per cent hike in their gas prices, their home fuel, all of these types of things.

This is a leadership issue. It's a leadership issue because we've had 14 months to negotiate, build upon cap and trade, renegotiate that with the federal government, but we didn't do that. Instead, we waited, waited, waited. We submitted a proposal at the 11-and-a-half hour that doesn't meet the requirements, and it's not going to protect Nova Scotians from this increase in tax, the carbon tax.

Essentially, what they've done is indicated that that's what they want. They want that hybrid system with the carbon tax. I contrast that with the leadership of a person that I admire, and that was Stephen McNeil. I watched a podcast - I think it was the Herle Burly, where they interviewed Premier McNeil about his time in office. A quote that he said during that interview really stuck with me. He said: I didn't govern to get elected, I got elected because I governed. Mx. Speaker, to me, that is the sign of true leadership. It's not a self-serving way to gather favour with the voters or to call down the other parties that are involved.

At the time, then-Premier McNeil said to the Minister of Energy, the member for Timberlea-Prospect, there will be no carbon tax in Nova Scotia. Go figure it out. Go negotiate, make it happen. Guess what? The member did. The member went, negotiated a proper deal, came back, and saved Nova Scotians considerable money at the pumps compared to the other provinces in this country. It was a great deal of work, but it was done.

Contrast it to the leadership that we're seeing now. Don't do the work, blame everyone else. It's all about public persona. It's all about marketing and not about compassion for the people of Nova Scotia who are going to pay more.

If you think about adding an additional 10 cents to 14 cents every time you fill up - and the government will tell you that - blame Ottawa, and if that doesn't stick, they'll blame the NDP. If that doesn't stick, they'll blame the Liberal Opposition. It's blame, blame, blame, but they're not in the game, game, game. They need to get in this game, and they need to negotiate a better deal for Nova Scotians.

Because cap and trade and carbon pricing is kind of a complex subject - which is why I believe that we need to have this pause for three months to allow the government to go back and renegotiate - I'd like to read from this document from NovaScotia.ca. It explains Nova Scotia's cap and trade program. I know prior to doing my research on this

file and becoming elected, I really didn't understand what cap and trade meant. It's a technical term, but what does this mean and what was said about it?

[3:00 p.m.]

“Nova Scotia’s new cap and trade program will reduce greenhouse gas emissions right here at home. It will also help keep the cost of carbon pricing low for all Nova Scotians. With this program and other actions, Nova Scotia will continue to be a national leader in the fight against climate change,” and “What is carbon pricing? Carbon pricing is simply a way to make polluters pay for the greenhouse gas emissions that they’re responsible for. It encourages industry and consumers to lower emissions over time.”

“In 2016, the federal government announced that all provinces and territories must put a price on carbon pollution. They can use” - this is key - “they can use a carbon tax, a cap and trade program, or a blend of the two approaches. At the time, it was agreed that a cap and trade program would be the most appropriate use for Nova Scotia. So how does cap and trade work? Under the cap and trade . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order. I would like to ask the member to speak directly to the motion to hoist the bill.

FRED TILLEY: What I am attempting to do here is to explain what the system is, how it works, which ties indirectly to the reason we are asking for a three-month pause, so I'll continue.

Cap and trade basically means there are annual caps on how many tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions are allowed from certain activities in the province. The cap equals the amount of emissions that are available in a year. That's putting it kind of basically. Some companies will have to participate and they will be mandatory and they will get some free emissions that they will not have to pay for. But then companies can buy or trade these allowances. As an example, if a company emits more than is covered by its allowances, it can buy more allowances from another company that hasn't met their cap. Then each year the cap would be reduced.

By pausing and hoisting this motion off the floor of the Legislature for three months, this gives the government the time they need to actually do those negotiations.

I know we've heard repeatedly that you need to stand with us against this tax, you need to - well again, it's smoke and mirrors and it's marketing, it's blame - this isn't us, you're going to pay more, even though they wanted it all along and voted against it when they were in Opposition, they want Nova Scotians to pay more.

However, what we're suggesting by means of this hoist motion is that it's a sober second thought, it's another look at what really is in the best interests of Nova Scotians at this particular moment in time.

I think upon review, and I think upon some reflection, this government will realize that negotiation versus blame is going to be the way to go. Govern to get elected, I can't say that enough - sorry, don't govern to get elected. What you are doing is governing to get elected.

What does cap and trade mean to households? Well based on the previous cap and trade system . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order. I would ask the member to speak directly to the motion to hoist Bill No. 208.

FRED TILLEY: If we don't hoist this bill, Nova Scotians will pay more, immediately, without negotiation. If this bill doesn't get hoisted or paused, which is what we're hoping to do, then unfortunately the carbon tax is coming, and it is going to add 10 cents to 14 cents per litre of gasoline if you compare that to what is currently in place with 1 cent. I'll table this document. I won't quote from it anymore, so this document is being tabled.

The other reason that we want to pause or hoist this motion for three months is because by generating a carbon tax and eliminating the cap and trade program, we're essentially taking over \$100 million out of the system for Nova Scotians because under cap and trade, the Green Fund was created. The Green Fund, Mx. Speaker, had so many benefits for Nova Scotians.

To bring us back to why we're asking for a hoist: We're asking for a hoist because we want to protect Nova Scotians in their pocketbooks. We want to protect the Green Fund that has provided so many wonderful programs such as \$5.5 million for SolarHomes; \$6.7 million for an Affordable Multifamily Housing Program; the Small Business and Not-For-Profit Energy Solutions program; and \$2 million for the Clean Leadership program which allowed youth to learn about carbon, learn about the environment, and to help create environmental leaders of the future.

By not hoisting this motion and not trying to renegotiate, we're really putting all of these programs at risk.

I'd just like to make a couple of quotes of some folks who were supportive. Scott Skinner, president and CEO of the Clean Foundation said, "We are excited to expand our Clean Leadership program. This means we'll be able to offer more internship opportunities for students and help develop the next generation of Nova Scotian leaders passionate about fighting climate change and transitioning to a low-carbon economy."

Stephen MacDonald, president and CEO of EfficiencyOne said, “This investment in energy efficiency comes at a time when Nova Scotians are looking for ways to save money and reduce their energy use and climate impact. Energy efficiency is the fastest and most cost-effective way for Nova Scotia to meet its climate change mitigation goals.”

Some very, very important partners in climate control and climate energy have said how important the cap and trade program is, was, and will be for the future of Nova Scotia.

Again, I bring it back to why we would consider hoisting a motion on the floor of this Legislature. That’s a rare occurrence, but our caucus felt it was that important to Nova Scotians that we employ every tactic at our disposal to try to help this government understand the impact that they are going to have on Nova Scotians.

At the end of the day, we can only play the blame game for so long and then Nova Scotians will start to wonder: Okay, that’s great. The previous government didn’t do what you wanted them to do. But what are you going to do? What are you going to do as a government to change things?

It’s time to take action. The way that this government can show Nova Scotians that they are taking action is to take a good hard look at this hoist motion - you don’t even have to say that the Opposition is right. You can blame the Opposition for holding up the bill, blame the feds, and blame everybody but if you don’t take this pause, if you don’t take this three-month hoist of the bill, it’s unfortunate. If it’s not hoisted, the bill will go as written and Nova Scotians will see that tax. They’ll see it come out of their pocketbooks and they’ll see it in their bank accounts.

It’s not an embarrassing thing. It’s not admitting defeat when you admit that maybe you were too hasty in making a decision. Nova Scotians, I believe, would look at that and say, that’s good governance. That’s good government, when parties can work together to do the right thing for Nova Scotia. In this particular case, the right thing for Nova Scotia is re-looking at this bill, reassessing, and putting it on hold until our next session. We’ll be back in the House in no time.

I would offer that I’m sure there’s some really - maybe I’m offering on their behalf - but really intelligent people in this Legislature on both sides who know this file inside and out and I’m sure would be happy to give some advice, guidance, and assistance on how we could renegotiate this cap and trade program and take it to the next level.

I’ll table this document that I quoted from, Mx. Speaker. I said quite a bit during that 20 minutes or so, but, in closing, I think I would want Nova Scotians and this government to know that from our perspective we’re doing everything we can to save money at the pumps and to help this government renegotiate a cap and trade, and not a hybrid, that’s not going to add that tax to our bills. It is doable. It’s possible, it just takes

some work and some time. I implore this government to support this motion to take a pause on this bill for three months and then re-submit to the Legislature.

THE SPEAKER: I believe the House is ready for the question on the hoist motion. The motion is to hoist or delay consideration of Bill No. 208 for three months.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is defeated.

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

The honourable Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

HON. TIMOTHY HALMAN: Mx. Speaker, I'm going to be plain and practical. In practical terms, we simply cannot delay the passage of Bill No. 208. This bill needs to move forward because on January 1, 2023, the Liberal carbon tax on the industry side will be imposed if we don't. What this bill does is it is going to prevent that. It is going to prevent an 8 per cent increase in rates to Nova Scotians.

On this side of the House, we are determined to ensure not only the protection of the environment and continuing to reduce greenhouse gas emission targets, strong targets. We also want to ensure the protection of the environment.

We have spent a lot of time talking about power rates in this Chamber. What I'm hearing from the Liberals on this thus far in the Opposition to this is that they would be okay with an 8 per cent increase to ratepayers. They would be okay with a 14 per cent increase at the pumps on the consumer side.

We have a lot of work to do, and Bill No. 208 fulfills our obligations on the industrial side when it comes to federal carbon pricing.

I've heard a lot of commentary over the past of number of days on this, commentary that I believe requires some correction. It is a fact that the federal government is increasing the carbon price and has specifically changed the rules for cap and trade for the 2023-2030 period. They have eliminated the province's ability to keep the price low at the pumps.

Fact: The price is low under cap and trade today because fuel distributors are receiving free emission allowances from the government. This is specifically not permitted under the new federal rules. The fuel distributors must not receive free allowances. I will table that.

Fact: The cap and trade system will no longer keep the price low at the pumps.

[3:15 p.m.]

Fact: The federal government would have required unrealistic low caps for the province, which would force the province to link with California and Quebec to make cap and trade work. Under this scenario, Nova Scotia Power, industrial fuel distributors, and so forth could be paying Quebec and California companies for their emissions reductions. This means that some of the revenue for climate change would be leaving the province to pay for emission reductions in other jurisdictions, and that makes no sense whatsoever.

Fact: Cap and trade in a small jurisdiction will not work under these strict new federal requirements and it could inevitably cause price spikes.

Fact: We're seeing an example of this right now. The delay of green energy from Muskrat Falls meant that our government had to provide greenhouse gas relief to Nova Scotia Power in order to protect ratepayers from unfair new costs.

Fact: Our market in Nova Scotia is so small that one of the main mechanisms, trading, isn't being used. We have only registered one trade so far over the life of the cap and trade program.

Fact: One province in Canada has chosen that system. No other province has gone that route.

Fact: In contrast, the system we are proposing is a system that operates in almost every other province - New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Ontario, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. It provides more flexibility and lower costs to ratepayers while reducing emissions in electricity and industry.

Fact: We know that our proposal only covers about half of the GHG emissions in the province. Under the federal system, these emissions will be subjected to federal carbon tax, as members highlighted.

Fact: If the federal government chooses to apply the tax here in the province, it means that prices for gasoline and home heating fuel will go up.

Fact: On this side of the House we continue to say that now is not the time for a Liberal federal carbon tax at the pumps. Nova Scotia doesn't need it.

Fact: A better approach would be one that helps Nova Scotians lower their energy bills. One that invests in energy efficiency and renewable energy programs, helps get people into electric vehicles and hybrids, and one that creates more sustainable transportation options.

Fact: That's the approach that the government is taking. We certainly hope that the federal government will support us.

Mx. Speaker, we have an opportunity here to make meaningful change in our province. We can reduce greenhouse gas emissions, make life more affordable, and create good jobs in a clean economy. That's where this government is focused. We have the most ambitious 23 greenhouse gas reduction targets in the country and a plan to meet and potentially exceed that.

Our plan invests here in Nova Scotia. It makes homes warmer and more energy-efficient. It grows the amount of renewable energy through projects big and small. It focuses on emergency clean energy opportunities like hydrogen. It creates a climate change fund that will support that work.

Bill No. 208 allows Nova Scotia to continue the fight against climate change, reduce emissions, and price pollution from large emitters at a much lower cost than the federal system.

Mx. Speaker, with that I close debate on second reading of Bill No. 208.

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for a recorded vote.

Ring the bells. Call in the members.

[3:19 p.m.]

[The Division bells were rung.]

THE SPEAKER: Order.

The Clerk will conduct the recorded vote.

[The Clerk calls the roll.]

[3:25 p.m.]

**YEAS**

Hon. Brad Johns  
Hon. Tory Rushton  
Hon. Barbara Adams  
Hon. Kim Masland  
Hon. Allan MacMaster  
Hon. Karla MacFarlane

**NAYS**

Hon. Kelly Regan  
Hon. Derek Mombourquette  
Hon. Iain Rankin  
Rafah DiCostanzo  
Hon. Tony Ince  
Lorelei Nicoll

Hon. Michelle Thompson  
Hon. John Lohr  
Hon. Pat Dunn  
Hon. Timothy Halman  
Hon. Steve Craig  
Dave Ritcey  
Hon. Brian Wong  
Hon. Susan Corkum-Greek  
Hon. Brian Comer  
Hon. Colton LeBlanc  
Hon. Jill Balser  
Trevor Boudreau  
Hon. Greg Morrow  
Hon. Becky Druhan  
Chris Palmer  
John A. MacDonald  
Melissa Sheehy-Richard  
John White  
Danielle Barkhouse  
Nolan Young  
Kent Smith  
Susan Leblanc  
Claudia Chender  
Suzy Hansen  
Gary Burrill  
Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin

Hon. Ben Jessome  
Hon. Keith Irving  
Ali Duale  
Carman Kerr  
Braedon Clark  
Ronnie LeBlanc  
Fred Tilley

THE CLERK: For, 32. Against, 13.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mx. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 212.

**Bill No. 212 - Public Utilities Act (amended).**

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

HON. TORY RUSHTON: Mx Speaker, I move that Bill No. 212, the Public Utilities Act (amended) now be read a second time.



[3:30 p.m.]

At its heart this bill is about affordability for Nova Scotians. Everyone in this Chamber is acutely aware that we are facing a cost of living crisis like none other that any of us have ever seen. We hear it from constituents, we see it in all aspects of life. We know Nova Scotians are struggling.

High fuel costs are a key driver of this crisis. We're all paying more at the pumps. Most of us are paying more to heat our homes.

I look forward to the day when Nova Scotians live no longer at the mercy of global fuel costs, when our electricity is supplied through renewable energy alone, when our homes are heated with renewables. That's why we set some of the most ambitious climate change goals. We're doing the work that everyday Nova Scotians want us to do, to a bright, cleaner, sustainable future, but this enormous transformation takes time. We can't flick the switch. While we continue to advance our climate change goals, we have to deal with today's reality of high fuel costs and Nova Scotians who are struggling to make ends meet.

The cost of fuel is unavoidable for us. We've already helped reduce the fuel costs to Nova Scotia Power by giving them relief from greenhouse gas requirements. Nova Scotia Power has valued that at \$165 million in savings that they don't have to pass on to ratepayers. We will continue to look for more solutions, but at the end of the day, fuel is one of the unavoidable costs. If Nova Scotia Power doesn't cover the cost of fuel, the lights don't go on.

The NSUARB may decide that power rates need to go up to cover these costs. That is the fuel side of the equation. This bill addresses the non-fuel side of the equation. The non-fuel side is mostly what Nova Scotia Power's general rate application is about. Their first ask was for an increase of 10.2 per cent on non-fuel costs, like operations and maintenance. This bill brings it down to 1.8 per cent over the two years and limits it to improving the reliability of the grid. If the NSUARB decides to increase rates on the non-fuel side of the equation, it can only be to a maximum of 1.8 per cent and that revenue must be spent on improving the grid.

I want to be clear: We're not telling the NSUARB to increase the rates. We're saying that if they do, they must work within these parameters. I also want to be clear that an increase on the non-fuel side of the equation must benefit all Nova Scotia ratepayers. It's not going to profits. It's not going to pockets. It's to improve reliable distribution of electricity to all Nova Scotians.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Fiona, I was disappointed to hear from constituents and many Nova Scotians that Nova Scotia Power hadn't kept up with the vegetation management. We know that 90 per cent of the power outages are caused by trees on lines. By keeping on top of the trimming, there would have been fewer outages and restoration

times would have been faster. This is an excellent example of the kind of cost that could be incurred to improve reliability that the NSUARB could consider for the benefit of all Nova Scotians.

Now I know you've heard Nova Scotia Power respond to this bill. Honestly, I don't know how they can claim that they'll have to cut reliability work when we are specifically directing any non-fuel increase to be directed to the reliability work. If the NSUARB were to decide on a 1.8 per cent increase, that's \$25 million to \$30 million more that Nova Scotia Power can invest in reliability work. Also, we haven't prevented them from coming up to the NSUARB with proposed capital expenditures.

We expect Nova Scotia Power to control what they can control to ensure the delivery of clean, reliable, and affordable electricity to Nova Scotia. We expect them to trim trees so that Nova Scotians have fewer and shorter outages in storms. We expect them to continue their work to get off coal so that Nova Scotians can have a sustainable future. We expect them to look for every possible cost savings without sacrificing service. They've made unprecedented profits in recent years. They can invest some of the money in clean, reliable, and affordable power services for ratepayers.

Speaking of profits, we are also touching on profits in this bill. We understand that any private business is aiming to make a profit, but now is not the time for a power utility to be looking for more. In the general rate application, Nova Scotia Power asked to keep half the profits above the amount approved by the NSUARB. We are saying no. These excess profits will continue to be returned to all ratepayers of Nova Scotia in full. They asked to increase the rate of return on equity to 9.5 per cent. We are directing the NSUARB to keep it at 9.25 percent or lower. They asked to increase their equity ratio to 45 per cent. We are directing the NSUARB to keep it at 40 per cent or lower.

We are also requiring that financing for any deferred cost is limited to the current Bank of Canada policy rate, plus 1.75 per cent. This means the utility cannot earn profits by financing itself at a higher rate, and we're directing the NSUARB to set the rate of return on equity for each class of assets, rather than setting one rate for all assets as a whole. This is because the risk and cost for one class, like power generation, are not the same for another class, like distribution lines. The rate of return on equity should reflect each class's risks and costs.

The voice of Nova Scotians is important on the delivery of electricity in this province. That's why we saw value in allowing the NSUARB process to unfold for a general rate application. Nova Scotians haven't had their say on power rates in 10 years. We let them have their say at the hearing on this application because it's important to the NSUARB to hear all statements and voices. It's important for Nova Scotia Power to hear it as well, and it's important for us as a government to be a part and here in consultation.

It's also the reason why we're creating the Performance Partnership Advisory Table, as we indicated in the Spring legislation. Members of this House may recall that, and those amendments and regulations are being worked out now. It will bring Nova Scotia voices together to provide advice on performance standards and penalties. Through this bill, we are requiring the NSUARB to respond to any recommendations from this group within 90 days. We're working through regulations now to put that table into place. I look forward to engaging with Nova Scotians in these important conversations.

My colleagues across the floor have been calling for action on power rates. Well, here it is, Mr. Speaker. For the next two years, we're controlling what we can control. The cost of fuel has gone up by 200 to 700 per cent. It's an unavoidable cost. What this bill does is cushion the impact for all ratepayers. If they have to pay more at the fuel side, we're making sure that we don't pay much more on the non-fuel side. Any increase on the non-fuel side will directly benefit the ratepayers by giving them more reliable services. This is what we can control.

There is still plenty that Nova Scotia Power can do to control and keep costs down. The NSUARB has lots of feedback from interveners about where the utility could cut costs, including information from experts that my department retained for the hearing. We hope they consider that in their decision, and we expect Nova Scotia Power to make these efforts as well.

We will continue to look for solutions on the fuel, work with other counterparts in other jurisdictions, and we will continue to explore further action that may be needed to support all ratepayers in Nova Scotia. We will continue to advocate for an advanced, made-in-Nova Scotia carbon pricing plan that doesn't hike gas and heating fuel prices by 14 cents at the pump. I invite my colleagues opposite to do the right thing for Nova Scotians and show their federal counterparts the support for our plan, and, as well, show the support for this important piece of legislation during this session.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to say a few words on this bill and thank the government for responding to concerted efforts on behalf of our caucus to do something about the application that Nova Scotia Power brought forward many months ago. We brought forward bills, and within one of the bills that I tabled was to restrict the return on equity to the existing 9.25 per cent. I acknowledge that is in this bill. I think that's important.

I don't know why it took so long for the government to wait until this process began and the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board began their analysis of that application. I don't understand why it took that time and wasted a lot of people's time to bring forward something like that, but it is positive.

We brought forward other bills. When we're opening up the Public Utilities Act, I think a sustainability mandate is long overdue in this province. The government should be looking at that if they're looking at the parameters by which the review board looks at increases and regulating a utility.

The so-called unavoidable cost, I just want to comment on that in terms of fuel. The cost of power still potentially going up by close to 20 per cent under their mandate highlights the importance to go back to the plan that we had for the just transition to get off these types of fossil fuels that are so susceptible to market forces, especially with coal still being such a huge part of our energy mix here. Still having eight coal plants operating right now is a liability to this province. We see now that coal, which was once some of the cheapest type of energy, is now the most expensive. Wind is now the cheapest energy in our province.

I also thank the government for continuing with part of our plan with the tender for 10 per cent of the energy mix coming from the wind tender that has gone out.

There is a lot more work to do in this area to ensure that we are able to bring in more non-emitting baseload energy in this province - more than just wind and solar, more than hydrogen - to start to really look at why Nova Scotians are strapped to this system that we have here by choices.

It's not the fault of this government. Back in the 1970s, there was a lot of work to prop up the coal industry for jobs in this province. I'm not blaming the government for where we are today, although they have had over a year to start making the key investments that we need in our energy system, start to upgrade our system to connect with New Brunswick to allow hydro to come into this province - whether it's the Atlantic Loop or whatever you want to call it. We are reading that that project is now at risk, and that will be a challenge. The more information that the government can provide the public on what the next plan is, the better for them and for all Nova Scotians.

At this juncture, in second reading, I just wanted to thank the government for restricting their return on equity in this bill. We look forward to what Nova Scotians have to say in the Law Amendments Committee.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to rise and speak for a few minutes on this bill in second reading. I'm glad to see the amendments coming, which finally address the outpouring of concerns we have heard from Nova Scotians since Nova Scotia Power filed its rate increase application in January. Like my colleague for Timberlea-Prospect, I wonder why it has taken so long, but we are glad to see this happening.

Of course, as we all know that there are a lot of other ways to help ratepayers - many ideas that we have brought forward in the NDP caucus. We just can't wait to see those taking place as well.

I'm glad to hear that steps are being taken to control Nova Scotia Power's profits and offer some relief to Nova Scotians, but I'm worried about the temporary nature of these amendments. By limiting these changes to this rate hearing only, we're concerned that it's just setting up Nova Scotians for more hardship in 2025.

The changes are significant though temporary. It's our hope that the government will take this time afforded and institute real long-term regulatory changes to our province's electric utility. We look forward to hearing from stakeholders at the Law Amendments Committee.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Annapolis.

CARMAN KERR: As the minister mentioned in his opening remarks, we have been requesting action for some time, and it is nice that some action has been taken.

On July 26, 2022, during the emergency sitting, I introduced Bill No. 187, an amendment to the Public Utilities Act, on behalf of my Liberal team. In Bill No. 187, our team required that Nova Scotia Power excess annual earnings be returned and credited to our customers. I'm pleased to see that the minister has listened to me and our team, and has introduced this legislation that sees overearnings be returned to Nova Scotians, as it was with our past Liberal government versus the 50 per cent return to shareholders.

Clause 2 of Bill No. 187, which we introduced in July, suggests that Nova Scotia Power's general rate increase be capped at 2 per cent per year. I'm again pleased to see that the minister has taken suggestions. In their Clause 3 of Bill No. 212, it restricts the net rate increase to 1.8 per cent over those three years. That's covered in the general rate increase application.

It's important to note that this doesn't prevent the fuel adjustment mechanism, and these costs are still passed to Nova Scotians, which will be unbearable for many. In the past, the member for Timberlea-Prospect - as he mentioned - has introduced legislative amendments to cap return on equity at 9.25 per cent and a maximum equity ration of 37.5, down from the current 40.

I'm happy to also see in this bill under Clause 4(a) that the Nova Scotia Power return on equity is capped at 9.25 per cent yet in Clause 4(b) this government has decided to maintain a maximum equity ration of 40 per cent, versus our proposed 37.5.

[3:45 p.m.]

I know that speaking about debt-to-equity ratios may cause everyone on the government side to perk up. It may see viewership on Legislative Television spike from 50 viewers to 50,000 or it may not, but it is important to note.

Nova Scotia Power has proposed change in how the company would finance capital projects and this would shift millions of dollars in costs to Nova Scotians while increasing revenue to Nova Scotia Power shareholders. There's certainly a balance to be struck here. According to new legal requirements, Nova Scotia Power has been tasked to deliver 80 per cent renewable energy by 2030, which demands hundreds of millions in investment.

My colleague for Timberlea-Prospect has also in the past introduced amendments that would cap this debt-to-equity ratio, saving Nova Scotians millions of dollars. His proposed legislation, which is important to point out, was voted down by this government and is not addressed in this new bill.

The amendments that myself and my team suggested are to offer government real solutions to help make life more affordable to Nova Scotians. The cost of living is becoming unbearable for many. I hope that the intended consequences of this legislation help Nova Scotians from Yarmouth to Sydney.

I'm looking forward to hearing from Nova Scotians at Law Amendments and to speak more at Third Reading.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: I will just add a couple of comments to this bill in Second Reading. I look forward to hearing more at the Law Amendments Committee.

Certainly, vegetation management has been a significant problem in Cumberland North. It was very noticeable after Hurricane Dorian. I had several meetings with Nova Scotia Power to discuss the lack of vegetation management and the need for more.

I bring this up because the minister speaks of it in this bill and how the money will be used to ensure that there is vegetation management.

I would like to see fines put in place that, if vegetation management is not done, the company is fined. I also, in sharing some of the feedback from constituents, that 10 feet is not enough. Even if vegetation management is done based on the current guidelines of 10 feet - trees that are 30 feet tall - the lines are still going to be taken out when there are high wind storms or hurricanes.

With those few comments, I will take my seat. I look forward to hearing more in Law Amendments Committee.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I'd like to say a few words to this bill. Like my colleagues who have spoken, it is more than clear that Nova Scotians can't afford to pay the amount requested in the general rate application from Nova Scotia Power. To that end, we are of course, happy that some relief will be given.

I would be remiss if I didn't say - as long as we're bragging about our bills - that we introduced a bill on performance-based regulation. I want to be really clear that this path is the only one that will lead us to a power scheme that actually works for Nova Scotians.

We've been saying for over a year now that we need power that is clean, we need power that is affordable, and we need power that is reliable. I was glad to hear the minister use those same words today, but the reality is that we don't have a regulatory system that can deliver that to us.

As a short-term solution, this is certainly better than nothing. Certainly, it does address some of the issues that were raised by many members of this House and of the public around the profit that was represented in that general rate application and the rates that were simply unaffordable for so many. But it doesn't actually address the root of how we got here.

I want to point people to an editorial that was published in *allNovaScotia* - and I will table this, I just have to get it - that asserted that this is the end of independent regulation in Nova Scotia because when the Liberals wanted to do this, they capped the rates before the regulatory process began - also not ideal, but it didn't interfere with an independent process.

Not surprising, given what I think will become a theme as we go through these second readings in the government's legislative agenda, this is about wresting control of decision-making from an independent body and vesting it in the hands of the minister. Sometimes that leads to good decisions, and sometimes that leads to bad decisions.

I think it's very important that our caucus believes that we still ought to have an independent regulatory body that can make decisions in the best interests of Nova Scotians, and where we come in as legislators is that we create the mechanism that the regulator considers. That's why our legislative agenda has really focused on creating a regulatory system that works for the people of this province.

I think that, in fact, it would do many of the things that this bill is doing, but in a more sustainable way, in a way that preserves the independence of the regulatory body and that keeps important things like the essential service of power provision out of political hands and in an independent expert body. We have that body right now, but they don't have the tools they need to regulate our power system in the way that we need it to be regulated.

The last point I'll make is that one of the main things we need is to ensure that lower-income Nova Scotians can keep heat and power in their homes. To that end, we have been pushing for a long time for a universal service plan so there is the ability - and again, this is a regulatory issue - for the NSUARB to distinguish between rate classes, or within a rate class, so that some customers could pay a different amount than others.

We do this - there are means-tested programs. This government has a number of means-tested programs that they are applying right now. We also think that the NSUARB should be providing that.

This bill protects ratepayers, it ensures that people will have a little bit of an easier time paying for power, but it doesn't address the root of the issue. My sincere hope is that it will buy the government and the minister time to do the important regulatory reform work that is required.

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

DANIELLE BARKHOUSE: I asked to speak on this bill because it's one of the excellent things we are doing here in government. Amendments to the Public Utilities Act will help protect ratepayers from power rate increases related to Nova Scotia Power's general rate application now before the NSUARB. About half of Nova Scotia Power's costs are for fuel and about half for non-fuel costs, like operations and maintenance.

Our amendments focused on the non-fuel costs. Any power rate increases will be to cover the unavoidable costs of fuel and make the power grid more dependable. Under the amendments, the NSUARB will not be allowed to approve an increase based on the utility's costs, except those of fuel and improving reliability of the grid. Nova Scotia Power cannot pass on any other increase in operations and maintenance costs to Nova Scotians.

Any increase related to reliability cannot be more than 1.8 per cent over two years. The amendments also prevent the NSUARB from increasing Nova Scotia Power's rate of return or equity and equity rations for current levels and ensure that excess profits above the amount set by the NSUARB are returned in full to taxpayers - to ratepayers, sorry. Well, I guess it's both, wouldn't it be?

The high cost of fuel is a reality across the globe. We have done this to help with the cost of living. We have already helped reduce the fuel costs for generating electricity



by giving some relief from greenhouse gas requirements. Nova Scotia Power calculates that this is \$165.6 million in savings that they do not have to pass on to ratepayers.

We have programs in place to assist or help offset rising costs such as the Seniors Care Grant, the Heating Assistance Rebate Program, and efficiency programs. Though the cost of fuel is high, the amendments cushion the impact for Nova Scotia ratepayers by not allowing the utilities to also pass along most cost increases for operations and maintenance.

We understand that a private business is aiming to make a profit, but now is not the time for the power utility to be looking for more. We are giving the NSUARB the tools they need to ensure that Nova Scotians pay the lowest possible for electricity.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I will sit down and put on my proper glasses.

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

The honourable Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables.

HON. TORY RUSHTON: Just a couple of quick comments. I appreciate the comments from the members opposite and my colleagues on this side as well.

Very quickly, some of the numbers we talked about. We didn't say that the NSUARB had to use that 40 per cent or the 9.25; we're saying that's the maximum they can use. They can decide that it could be a lower number. The 0 to 1.8, they can play within that framework. Vegetation is a part of what we expect Nova Scotia Power to put this money into, for reliability and such.

There was a comment - I forget who it was - but there was a comment about maybe not enough with the fuel. Mr. Speaker, we've given the greenhouse tax credits to them. Nova Scotia Power was very appreciative of my colleague at Environment and Climate Change to be able to put that through for \$165 million worth of savings that they don't have to pass through to the ratepayers. At the end of the day, there was no government that actually stopped any fuel pass-through to the ratepayers. I want to be very clear on this.

Another fact, just the timing and the questions - I've had that question ever since everything started here, about why not initially when the rate went through. We were very clear as a government - that stakeholders came to us. They wanted to make sure that they got their voice at the rate hearings. We promised and committed to some of those stakeholders that we'd allow the hearing to take place and make our decision at that.

At the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, it was 10 years without a rate hearing. By capping the rates even before the process, I would argue that we're here because the previous government punted the football a little bit further ahead. There does have to be a normal, regular regime that does allow us to do a proper review.

With those comments, Mr. Speaker, I'll move the close of this debate.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 212.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 228.

**Bill No. 228 - Public Utilities Act (amended).**

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

HON. TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 228 - an Act to Amend Chapter 380 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Public Utilities Act, Respecting Efficiency Nova Scotia - now be read a second time.

Our government has spoken at length about our ambitious climate goals. We will get off coal-fired electricity by 2030. We will have 80 per cent of our electricity from renewables by 2030. We will cut greenhouse gas emissions by 53 per cent below the 2005 levels by 2030. We will reach net zero by 2050.

We've spoken about how it will take everyone working together to meet these goals. Efficiency Nova Scotia is a key partner in helping us to make those goals reality. With this bill, we're strengthening Efficiency Nova Scotia's ability to do that.

Efficiency Nova Scotia delivers programs that help fight climate change and save Nova Scotians money on their energy bills. They are the main player in the residential and commercial energy efficiency retrofit market. They're who homeowners and businesses go to when they want to get off oil with products like heat pumps and solar panels. They're who people turn to for help with insulation, smart thermostats, LED lighting, and other things that help use less energy.

Since 2008, Efficiency Nova Scotia has saved Nova Scotians \$100 million annually in energy savings. They've avoided 100 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions annually. They've helped Nova Scotians complete 400,000 energy efficiency projects. Those are impressive accomplishments.

[4:00 p.m.]

These changes we're making will help Efficiency Nova Scotia do these things even better. They clarify the Efficiency Nova Scotia role to help Nova Scotians move off oil. This is already their role, but we're making it clearer. We're removing the end date of their agreement with the Province. This gives them more stability so they can make longer-term decisions and plans. They will no longer need Nova Scotia Power as a co-applicant when they submit a demand-side management plan to the UARB. This reduces red tape they need to go through to put plans in place for their energy-efficiency programs.

We're directing the UARB to allow Efficiency Nova Scotia to deliver more programs for low-income houses. They have already helped more than 21,000 low-income households get free home energy assessments and efficiency upgrades, but we know there's a lot more work to be done to help these households lower their energy bills and keep more money in their pocket. These amendments will make it possible for Efficiency Nova Scotia to do more.

I want to note that we're setting up a performance partnership advisory table that will bring Nova Scotia voices together to advance to the UARB on performance standards and penalties. I expect one of those things they will consider is how we as a government and province can best support our low-income households. I look forward to their insights.

Mr. Speaker, these amendments will make a good organization even better at saving Nova Scotians money to keep their energy bills low and more money in their pocket, and at growing our green economy with jobs across the province, especially in rural areas. It will also help them in fighting the climate change goals that we have set out as a Nova Scotia government, as the Province of Nova Scotia, and will help get us a clean, brighter, sustainable future here in our province.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Annapolis.

CARMAN KERR: I'm happy to say a few words on Bill No. 228. DSM, or demand-side management, refers to the activities and programs designed to reduce overall consumer demand for power or to shift this demand off peak times, such as nights and weekends. It's intended to reduce the amount spent on building new power networks, green hydrogen facilities, and wind farms as we attempt to satisfy Nova Scotians' peak demands for power.

Efficiency Nova Scotia is our provincial demand-side management organization. This bill will make Efficiency Nova Scotia a permanent organization. It will disentangle it from Nova Scotia Power as it stands alone. This is a move our team clearly supports, as it will reduce the regulatory burden.

These plans will be implemented by January 2023, with a doubling of investment. The DSM plan duration will be extended from three years to five years. According to department staff, this will save time, money, and resources. We're certainly in favour of those positive benefits.

Certain requirements of NSP will be removed. For example, NSP will no longer be a co-applicant in a DSM plan. The requirement that a DSM contract be negotiated with NSP will be removed. The cost-effectiveness test - and I believe it's applied by the UARB - will be measured at a portfolio level instead of at the program level. When I asked department staff for clarification on this, they commented that this will enable enhanced low-income programs and allow for more equity and accessibility within the portfolio.

There are a few franchise expiry amendments. The expiry date of Efficiency Nova Scotia franchise will be removed as they will become a permanent organization. This aligns with other utilities without expiry dates, gas and water being two of them.

Efficiency Nova Scotia does great work. We're pleased to see it become a permanent organization. All in all, we're supportive of this legislation brought forward. I look forward to hearing from Nova Scotians at the Law Amendments Committee.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: I'm happy to stand and speak to this bill. Efficiency Nova Scotia blossomed under the NDP government, Mr. Speaker, and we're very proud of the work that our party did on it. Also, I wanted to shout out to Dr. Brendan Haley, who is a great friend and scholar of many things, but certainly energy efficiency. He is now with Efficiency Canada, but he was instrumental in the development of Efficiency Nova Scotia and has done excellent work in this regard.

We are cautiously optimistic about this bill's goals to work toward clean energy and provide energy efficiency programming to low-income Nova Scotians. I have talked about energy efficiency many times in this House, Mr. Speaker. I am a big fan, I have a heat pump, and that's the best \$17,000 I ever spent. It's expensive - well, I had to get an upgrade on my panel, too, but my family is off home heating oil. Thank goodness for that, as prices continue to rise. I continually am grateful that we did that upgrade.

Now we took out a loan with the credit union, Mr. Speaker, to do it. We spend \$207 every month for that heat pump, but it is still cheaper than home heating oil and obviously, eventually, once we get off coal, will be better for the environment.

This is the kind of thing that every home in Nova Scotia should have access to, not just people who can afford to pay out of pocket or who have good credit so they can easily access a loan. We're really lucky in our family that we were able to do that. So yes, energy efficiency for all Nova Scotians, especially low-income Nova Scotians.

As we saw at the Nova Scotia Power rate hearing, rising fuel costs and power rates are top of mind for people in this province and efficiency programs actually lower bills. So no matter what the rates are, we can lower bills, Mr. Speaker.

Basically, that's all I'm going to say. I'm happy about this, I think, and we want to hear from stakeholders at Law Amendments Committee.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: I stand to speak on second reading on Bill No. 212. I have just a couple of questions that I look forward to learning the answers about. One is: How will this be funded?

I have had a lot of great experiences with Efficiency Nova Scotia; they have done incredible work in our area. If anything, one of the things that our MLA office tried to do is to try to educate more people about what was available, because a lot of people were not aware, and probably still are not aware of all the programs.

I did sometimes get feedback from constituents about not being happy about having an extra fee on their power bills for this. My question would be: How will Efficiency Nova Scotia be funded, and will it be out of general revenues? If not, how will it be funded?

With those few words I will look forward to Law Amendments Committee.

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

The honourable Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables.

HON. TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, I thank the members opposite for the questions. Just a quick comment about the fee structure: We are not changing anything with that right now. We're just taking out the red tape where Nova Scotia Power has to be part of it.

I will comment on the NDP's comment about how it blossomed under the NDP program. Efficiency Nova Scotia is a fantastic organization, and I would argue that if it blossomed under the NDP program then we planted the seed in 2008, Mr. Speaker - I had to get that in there.

In all honesty, it's nice to have a bill that we can sit in the House and agree on. I want to take an opportunity to give a shout-out to the people at Efficiency Nova Scotia. (Interruption) I know that some of the loudest applause was from a colleague who was a previous minister under the department. They do a fantastic job, Mr. Speaker. Since 2008, \$180 million they have invested back into Nova Scotia, nearly \$12 million a year and as

we expand this we are looking for more avenues, more opportunities with Efficiency Nova Scotia, to target those low-income homes, to get Nova Scotians off oil.

We're doing great feats, but as any government would argue, we wouldn't be able to do that without Efficiency Nova Scotia. It's my pleasure to move closing of second reading, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 228.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 214.

**Bill No. 214 - Invest Nova Scotia Act**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Economic Development.

HON. SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 214, an Act to Establish Invest Nova Scotia, be now read a second time.

I'm pleased to stand here today to talk about this bill and to share the bold vision our government has for our province. It's a vision that's focused on modernizing the way we approach economic development in Nova Scotia so we can make the absolute most of a number of transformational opportunities for our province and all Nova Scotians.

Last Winter, we launched a review of 20 government agencies, boards, and Crown corporations with the goal of looking at how we might do things better. This review brought forward some areas that needed to be addressed, like overlapping mandates, outdated legislation, and arms-length boards making decisions for millions of dollars in taxpayers' money. That is why we are following through on our commitment in addressing these areas head-on.

The Invest Nova Scotia Act will establish a new Crown corporation to work with businesses at all stages and attract new investment to expand our economy. Invest Nova Scotia will combine the expertise of Nova Scotia Business Inc. and Innovacorp to provide a full range of services aimed at supporting businesses from concept to commercialization and well into growth. In this way, we will streamline the entry points for businesses and

support them through their growth and development. We can also leverage all parts of our economy when attracting new investments.

Under the prior structure, companies that began as start-ups working with Innovacorp would have had to go elsewhere, to NSBI, if they needed support to increase exports or production capacity as they grew. The new Invest Nova Scotia will have a clear and focused mandate providing a full range of services to businesses of all stages and sizes.

For this reason, it might have been nice to speak to this particular item - certainly, we introduced the bill during Small Business Week because small business success is economic success. Also, community economic development is economic development and is surely as important as an expansion of a large employer, a new industry, a new investment.

As you can see, the changes we are making are meaningful and will lead to accelerated economic growth, and a more effective and accountable government for Nova Scotians. The interests of businesses wanting to invest and grow here continue to be top of mind for us, and we want to make it easier than ever for them to work with government. As part of this work, Invest Nova Scotia will also have an advisory board to ensure we hear the voices of the people and the sectors it serves. Transition planning is under way now, including work to recruit a CEO, and Invest Nova Scotia will be operational by December 1<sup>st</sup> of this year.

As we transition, we'll ensure these organizations are fully supported so they continue the important work already under way. This is an exciting new direction for our province, and I look forward to hearing from my colleagues opposite.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to get up and say a few words in regard to this bill, and the next couple of bills that are coming through here have a similar theme.

I appreciate the comments from the minister. This is the first time the minister and I have talked about a similar topic. As the new critic for Economic Development, I look forward to the conversations with the minister and her staff, many of them who I have worked with in the past.

One of the comments that the minister said is that this was meaningful change. We disagree. We had very highly qualified CEOs at these organizations who have done amazing work in this province at a time when there was a lot of momentum within Nova Scotia. There has been for years when it comes to the economic opportunities. These CEOs were responsible for the expansion of internet capability. They were responsible for making strategic investments that had large returns. There's a list of CEOs that this government

has fired in business, health care, education and the environment - all very well and loyal civil servants who worked very hard for Nova Scotians each and every day. They were all let go. When I hear the minister use the term that the change was meaningful - the change was political. That's what it was.

[4:15 p.m.]

I say that - because it has nothing to do with the comments from the minister. She's making decisions - rightfully so as the minister. The challenge for the minister is that the Premier came out and said he was hiring his personal friends. That's really when the red flags went off, not only for this caucus but for Nova Scotians, really. We have organizations that were successful. I know governments look at streamlining work at times, but in this case, they let go of three very competent, successful, award-winning CEOs who were tasked with doing very important work on behalf of Nova Scotians - non-political work.

Investments were made by previous governments that this government continued around the expansion of internet. I could use the same example in health care. It was talked in debate today about seven years of waste and nothing happened. But it was actually very competent CEOs in those departments who built all of the infrastructure that looked at the programs that support our paramedics and other things, and they were all fired.

For us, when we see bills like this come forward - Invest Nova Scotia is one example - there are multitudes where we as a caucus believe that this was the wrong move. Again, the debate should totally be about the structure of why they're doing this. But it's not because as I said, the minister - in her defence - is trying to make decisions, but the Premier came out and said he's hiring his personal friends. It became very political very quickly. That's the reality of why we're so concerned.

Any time you have this independence and transparency - you had these organizations that were in place that supported Nova Scotians, similar to the last bill talking about Efficiency Nova Scotia. That's an arm's-length organization that does great work on behalf of the government and receives funding from the government. They do excellent work. Invest Nova Scotia was no different with their CEO, with their structure. That person was fired, and the comment was that my personal friends are going to transition these organizations for an extremely high amount of money per day.

I'll leave my comments there because I believe we're going to be into this conversation in the next couple of bills. Ultimately, this is about transparency and accountability. As a caucus, we believe that independence is important, the oversight of these organizations is important, and that the consolidation of power - whether it's within the Minister of Economic Development or any other minister's office - is problematic for us.

I'll leave my comments there. I look forward to the comments from my colleagues.



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

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I want to rise and say a few words about this bill.

I will start with the part that I don't think is terrible, which is maybe combining Innovacorp and NSBI. I think there's some logic to why, after undertaking a review, it may make sense for those two Crown corporations. I don't know for sure, but I will take the government and the minister at her word that that was what that investigation yielded, that there may be overlap. There may be reasons that it's a better environment for business and investment to combine those two. That's sort of where it stops.

I think it goes without saying that we are deeply concerned about this bill. In comments on the Public Utilities Act changes, I mentioned that we saw in that bill the kind of beginning of what will become a pattern as we move through this legislation, which is the government riding roughshod over dismantling, erasing, or firing anyone independent who may get in the way of what they think is the right idea right now. Some of that might lead to good decisions, some of it might lead to terrible decisions, but it is incontrovertible that that is de facto politicizing the Public Service.

When the minister spoke, she talked about modernizing this process and getting rid of arm's-length boards - like that's a bad thing. I think we need to pause and just think about that - arm's-length boards, independent regulation. This is a hallmark of how we think about our Public Service.

I had a conversation with a former deputy minister recently who sort of lamented - and they weren't talking about this government - that the hardest part of their job is when there is a change in government, because any new government coming in doesn't realize that we exist as public servants. We don't exist to fulfill a political agenda. We are genuinely just trying to advise our ministers, and whoever the government of the day is, about the best way to do things.

I think this bill, and many of the other bills on the order paper, stand to deeply compromise the public service's ability to do their job properly, because it creates a chill. If you want to do something that is not in the political agenda of the government, you may - and likely will, based on what we've seen so far - find yourself out of a job. It's hard to be out of a job in this climate and that's a very individual thing. That goes down to all of the many hard-working people who step forward in the public service.

We are concerned that this government has decided that arm's-length independent boards are somehow an anathema to accomplishing good public policy, and we feel quite differently about that.

I think that the Premier's own words, as has been mentioned, cause us some concern when we think about this. In her opening comments, the minister spoke about supporting businesses - we want businesses incubating, we want to move them through, we want to support them. Of course, the question will become, which businesses? How do we decide?

We had an independent board of experts who would advise the minister about who those were. We know that when it came time to pick a CEO for this particular Crown corporation - not just this one but another one - the Premier said he picked a personal friend. When he was asked why he picked a personal friend he said, I have lots of friends, I looked around and I picked the person I thought was right for the job.

We can only assume that the minister may follow the lead of her boss and take the same approach. When we think about what businesses we want to fund, what industry we want to come here, which incubating start-ups get funding or don't, the government might just look around in their pool of friends and pick from that pool. That is a truly chilling prospect, because what the minister said is that this an exciting new direction.

I want to suggest that this isn't a new direction at all. This is a direction as old as time, particularly in Nova Scotia politics. It is old-fashioned, backroom Tory politicking. We thought we were done with it and here we go again.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: I do want to thank the members who have voiced their concern and opposition to the bill. I will also register mine very succinctly. I do think there is issue to pause and be concerned about this bill and other ones that are very similar to it.

We have seen what I believe is a troubling trend, one that we have seen before with previous Progressive Conservative governments here in Nova Scotia, bringing us back to the 1980s, where patronage and political slush funds may be rejuvenated here in the province.

The why for this piece of legislation has also not really been answered. We have not seen the report that was done, the analysis that was done, the recommendations that were put forward to push this piece of legislation. We were told there was a report. That has not been made public. We have not seen that. That must cause all of us to pause and wonder why, particularly from a government that has in the past emphasized the importance of transparency. Why hasn't that report been tabled in this House or shared with the public? I would ask the minister or the Premier again to table that today.

We don't know what the agenda of these new organizations are going to be. We are collapsing five arm's-length organizations that have done everything from venture capital to export and trade work to innovation. We have not been told what the mandates of these new organizations are going to be or what the agendas of these organizations are going to

be or what they're going to do. We're actually hearing it's a very dysfunctional time right now within all these organizations. Nobody knows what's going on, nobody has direction on anything. People are worried. That has not been articulated in this House either.

I do want to reference the fact again that there are hundreds of millions of dollars that are distributed through these Crown corporations. They're meant to be for venture capital, for business development, export development and trade initiatives, for rural broadband, and a number of things. What is the new political agenda for all of these things? What are these organizations going to do? Why weren't the other Crown corporations functioning, and what's the plan for these ones? These are questions that have not been answered.

When you look at the lack of fair hiring process - I referenced this the other day in Question Period. There is a clear, fair hiring process. It's a policy that governments have followed to ensure that we get the best of the best, and that there is an objective process to ensure we're getting the best of the best. The Premier has said publicly, shockingly as well, that the individuals selected for these top positions - where they're earning \$1,500 a day - are his personal friends. That does not fit the fair hiring process as defined by the policy.

I am very concerned about the intent of this piece of legislation. We do worry that we are getting back to 1980s Tory slush fund and patronage politics. Of course, time will tell, and we'll see how successful these organizations are. I will note, though, there is a lot happening in our economy. We are surfing through very troubled waters right now. I do not believe it's the right time to create dysfunction or disarray in all these organizations which have actually been key to the management and growth of our economy, and the success of our people.

Time will tell if this change of direction has worked. Time will also tell if it hasn't. With those few short words, I'll take my seat.

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

The honourable Minister of Economic Development.

HON. SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: Mr. Speaker, I do thank my colleagues for their input, particularly the generosity of the Leader of the NDP that maybe there is something redeeming in combining two business organizations into one, that it might be helpful.

I had a meeting recently that brought home to me some of the thoughts that informed that particular folding in of the services and supports offered by NSBI and Innovacorp. It was actually a meeting with the Japanese Consul General. He was very interested in a couple of sectors, specifically in start-ups and accelerators in businesses in

those sectors. He was asking, where do you best call? In answering the question, it was brought home to me again, there's a call here and there's a call there.

[4:30 p.m.]

For the benefit of this House, we have excellent people working in these agencies. They communicate and they do their best, but if structurally we do not address gaps when we identify them, we know we can do better.

One of the particular objectives of this process is that there will be one place to call. Whether you have a business idea, whether you are an existing business that is looking to expand, explore a new market, what have you, there will be one place to call. That includes - and I consider it a personal challenge - our small business community. Too often in my travels I hear from small businesses that will say of these organizations, for whatever reason: NSBI, oh, that seems for the other guys. Or an agribusiness that says: Well, I talked to my ag rep, but I didn't realize there were services there for me. At a minimum, as government, we can do better than that to serve our business community.

In terms of the comments about meaningful change, I am mindful of this. I am mindful of what can to the public appear to be the whim of a new government to make changes. I do remember walking into my office in the CIBC building a few days into this fantastic opportunity and privilege I find myself in, and one of the words in the department's name, which had changed from the former government, was being painted over. It struck me. Sometimes we change the name, but in the past, there have been substantive changes to Economic Development.

What I noticed in my earliest weeks as minister, Mr. Speaker, was that there were some vacancies in some fairly senior positions, and Economic Development, as an actual department, is quite small. I wondered about why there would be these vacancies. I started asking questions and the answers I received made clear to me that over the years, the changes with successive governments have caused really good people with a passion in their belly for economic development to decide, this is maybe not the department to advance my career. There are a little bit too many tremors and occasional earthquakes.

It is not likely that I participate as the minister in these changes. I have personally avoided the word "efficiency" in describing the meaning for these changes because we know too often that that can be a code word for job cuts.

On the matter of the removal of the CEOs - again, good people, but when five organizations become two, there are changes. On the matter of the continued reference to the Premier's comment about friends on the day of the announcement - and to bring a little bit of levity, it might have been the only time I've ever felt compelled - I was sitting next to the Premier and thought briefly about kicking him, because I realize, unfortunately, the complication of using a word like "friends" when we're in government.

And yet, any of us in this House, I would suggest, have friends outside of this House who may share various political viewpoints. But when we have a Premier reference somebody as a friend, he or she or that person is characterized as, there's a quid pro quo here, there's an exchange.

It bothers me because those two individuals who initially came forward - and one of them has since had to step out, but who agreed when approached to be considered - and there was a consideration for these interim positions - they are fine people, and very talented businesspeople. Furthermore I would suggest particularly to the Official Opposition that they might want to check their donor records, as you may find that both individuals have, in fact, shown support. I did not check all three parties' records, but they have shown support, in the way that I think is not uncommon for many business people particularly. They are not married to a particular partisan affiliation - their affiliation may change according to what they recognize as the leadership of the day.

Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to go further down that rabbit hole, only to assure. Change can lead to concern and anxiety, all of which we have taken into account, but I would absolutely say that the reference to their being upset at these Crowns in this current time as we continue to pass through this transition - they continue to do excellent work. That the senior leadership in particular have moved up and continued to offer the excellent services that we are so very lucky to have in those agencies.

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

The honourable Minister of Economic Development.

HON. SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: I rise to close debate on Bill No. 214.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 214.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 215.

**Bill No. 215 - Invest Nova Scotia Board Act (amended)**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Economic Development.

HON. SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: I move that Bill No. 215 - An Act to Amend Chapter 9 of the Acts of 2014, the Invest Nova Scotia Board Act - now be read a second time.

Our government is focused on modernizing the way we approach economic development in Nova Scotia. We have a growing population, an expanding knowledge-based economy, a highly skilled workforce, and new international market opportunities. There has never been a better time to transform our economy, but in order to transform the economy and seize these opportunities, we need to ensure that all areas of government are working in lockstep to best serve Nova Scotians.

Last Winter, we launched a review of 20 government agencies, boards, and Crown corporations, and this review brought forward some areas that needed to be addressed. The amendments to the Invest Nova Scotia Board Act will change the name of the Act and the associated fund to the Community Economic Development Fund and move its functions within the Department of Economic Development. These amendments follow through on our commitment to modernize our approach to economic development, but most importantly, they place the decisions relating to programs and investments in the interest of economic development where they should rightfully be, the elected government.

The newly named fund will continue to support projects that focus on sustainability, drive innovation, and prioritize the needs of our communities. At the end of the day, we want to create a more prosperous Nova Scotia, a province that offers opportunities for all, and we need to ensure our investments align with our vision. Again, I'll say it's an exciting direction for our province, and one that will help ensure we have more effective and accountable government for Nova Scotians.

With that, I conclude my remarks.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments from the minister and I look forward to the comments from my colleagues.

There are two really important aspects that come out of the minister's comments. The first one is that she actually references the report that was done that we would all love to see. We would again encourage that to be tabled so we can see it. The comment that you're bringing the decisions back into the elected government just summarizes everything for me around the transparency. That decision tells me that the government thinks they're going to be here forever, and you're not going to be here forever.

When you say, "we're bringing the decisions back into the elected government," that just summarizes the whole thing for me. It's not about transparency or accountability. It's about controlling all of the decisions and controlling everybody who makes those

decisions. That is a dangerous comment to put in your comments as an elected government. After everything that's been said about transparency and doing the report and the changes that they want to make in this exciting time, that's all eliminated for me. That's all gone because the minister just said it.

The decisions are being brought back to the politicians, who can decide which way they want to make decisions. It's not the officials. It's not the civil service. It's the elected government. That's where the decisions are going. That is a dangerous, dangerous practice. That is one I would never encourage our own government to do during the day because as we have said, the transparency is key.

Governments make decisions when they come in. The minister is absolutely right. They'll set their own priorities, like the NDP did and like we did. It's no different, but the whole conversation around transparency is gone because the minister just said it. We're bringing the decisions back into the elected government - which is the elected politicians. They're going to control the money. They're going to control the transparency. They're going to control the accountability.

That's why we have seen people fired. Honestly, they made decisions around people who were fired in these boards. They're gone - as I said, highly respected, supported within the civil service and within Nova Scotia - these CEOs, who all landed on their feet immediately because of their talent and what they have been able to accomplish in their positions before they were let go. As I said before, it's no different than the health care system - fired everybody who did all the work.

Again, that one phrase summed it up for me. That really sums up not only that department but where the decisions are being made centrally to the Premier's Office. I don't hold the minister to account for that comment, but that is what I have seen personally within most of the departments. Ministers are trying to make decisions, but ultimately, everything's flowing from the centre. That is probably one of the most dangerous comments I have heard yet from this government, that phrase that we're bring the decisions back into the elected government. This is all politics all the time. That's what we're seeing. What's the best political move instead of governing.

This is really key. When you govern, in my experience, you see people get re-elected. When you govern, you make the right decisions. It may not be popular all of the time, but they're decisions that are made in the collective. They're decisions that are made in the best interests of everyone, regardless of whether it's business, health care, or whatever.

That comment was just made - the decisions are being brought back into the elected government. The politicians are going to control it. For me, and I believe I speak for my caucus, it just reinforces why we're against this. Now we know for sure, based on that comment, that it's not about transparency. It's not about accountability. It's not about the

civil service. It's not about the leadership there. It's about the elected government having the ability to make those decisions.

I look forward to the comments from my other colleagues, but, wow, that comment summed it up for me.

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

LISA LACHANCE: I want to offer a few comments at this time for second reading. Those of us who were around for some of my comments on the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia proposals will recognize a certain theme.

I think, first of all, it's really important that we recognize that government establishes itself, its structure and its organizations, the names of its departments, in ways that are really important. These are significant changes.

Government chooses to use arm's-length organizations, like it has been in terms of private sector development, for a number of reasons. One is to enable access to a diversity of perspective and experience that you may not find within government. Another is to be able to respond to emergent issues that are often outside of the perspective of government. Another is to actually limit the liability of government but to act in the public interest.

I think here it is really important to think about this because there are other changes that are being proposed that are continuing this trend of centralizing power and putting things under the purview of the minister.

In this case, actually, the public good is a private benefit. The public good is actually the profit and capacity of organizations to establish themselves and grow in this province.

Now I have worked in government, and I started my business here. I have grown my business here in Nova Scotia. I am a great believer in the power of the private sector to do amazing, good things, so do not think that I don't believe in private sector development, because that is absolutely not the case.

My concern is that I don't think a minister of the Crown should be wearing the liability - should be determining at the end of the day what private sector organizations receive funding. This is why we have Crown corporations; this is why we have arm's-length organizations.

I really think this is greatly concerning. We need to build the capacity - it's kind of like no better way to build the capacity of different sectors than to engage folks from within the sector in the thinking about what to do, where things are going. We need people in private sector areas where we want to focus.



[4:45 p.m.]

I really think we have to be very concerned about having the minister involved in decisions that bring private benefit to folks for probably very worthy projects but in the end, it's about profit.

I also think the minister referred to the fact that this wasn't on a whim. Unfortunately, until the government tells us more about the process of review, it's hard for us to know that. We can't read your minds. I've asked for notes on various government decisions that no one has ever provided.

I went through the other night, and I will go into greater detail at third reading. The ongoing review of arm's-length organizations and Crown corporations is a good governance practice; that is absolutely what we should be doing as government. But in most jurisdictions that I could find, there is actually a transparent, defensible process that engaged a range of ministers, that published the criteria by which they were evaluating different agencies, that published interim reports, that published final reports. What this government gave us was two pages of a table that told us what they were going to do. It is hard to know the rationale.

The other area that's lacking, particularly in this sector, is that we don't have an economic development plan. So we actually - I have no idea - I don't know what this is supporting because I don't know what the analysis is of where we need to go.

The lack of that plan bleeds across a lot of the programs that we hear them talk about. Like the More Opportunity for Skilled Trades program, which people keep bringing up - a great program. How does that align with economic development? So are we welcoming the right skills and trades into areas that we expect to grow and prosper and contribute to the economy of this province?

I need to review what the minister was talking about in terms of private sector and public sector and hiring friends. I will tell you that that is the difference. That is actually a huge difference. In the public sector - that's around the world, particularly in Canada and Nova Scotia - there is a move to develop a non-partisan, professional, capable, public service. That has been a movement over the past number of decades.

We don't hire people on a whim. We don't hire people who are friends. We don't say, hey, you'd be really good at this, I'd love to welcome you into the department, come on in. You might say there's going to be an opportunity, there's going to be a process - but you can't do that. We do that because we want to protect the public interests.

I would argue that by whimsically issuing a two-page table, somehow summarizing a process that no one knows what happened, we don't know the rationale without an

economic development strategy and then putting the minister in charge of everything, that that is not in the public interest.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

HON. KEITH IRVING: I just wanted to make a few comments here. I wasn't intending to speak to this bill, but I think the revelations by the minister that have been so accurately replayed by the member, my colleague for Sydney-Membertou, and the comments from Halifax Citadel-Sable Island as well, really are crystallizing in my mind how this government is turning backwards after all the work that we've done.

Let's just think a little bit about 2013-14, when the Ivany report was released. It challenged Nova Scotians and the government to begin to do things differently. We were in a downward economic spiral. Things were not good. We had an aging demographic. We had a shrinking population, or a very slow-growth population. We needed to do things differently.

Remember, this came after a period of the NDP government where money was going out the door of the Premier's Office to large corporations, and these were not good, sound decisions. There were hundreds of millions of dollars in which the politicians were picking winners and losers, and what our government said was, this has to stop. Government doesn't create the jobs. Businesses do. It is businesspeople with business expertise who must guide decisions on where investments are going to be made in the private sector. It's when political interference - when the ministers are pulling those strings, being influenced by a friend, someone walking into their office with the greatest idea of shipping rocks to the other side of the world.

What happened over the preceding eight years showed that these organizations were working well. The economy turned around. We were growing as an economy. Business was booming. Halifax was growing. Rural Nova Scotia was growing. Things were working exceptionally well. It was a remarkable turnaround.

The challenge was laid out in Ivany, and eight years later, significant process was being made, pointing to the success of those organizations that are now being dismantled.

As my colleagues have pointed out, this government has not provided any reasons. They have a mysterious review that they will not release. We don't know how they evaluated these organizations, what they were looking at - I spoke to that earlier on the Art Gallery bill. Were they looking at operations? Were they looking at governance? Were they looking at financial management?

We don't know what that study looked at, and the only thing we've been given insight into what the government is doing with that report is that they want to pull the decisions into the minister's office, the elected government, so that they can pick the

winners and losers and risk huge wastes of money and actually begin to hinder the development of this province.

There are studies, as I pointed out earlier, on governance of Crown corporations. I'll talk further about this at a different reading, but it is very clear on the importance of how the governance structure is for Crown corporations. There's academic study. Again, the 2005 report, the review of the governance framework for Canada's Crown corporations, *Meeting the Expectations of Canadians*, by the Treasury Board of Canada in 2005, crystallizes why we did what we did in 2013-14 and why it worked. We're going down a very dangerous path. This government is going down a very dangerous path to again pull all this power into the Premier's Office and perhaps a few ministers' offices.

Advisory boards are very limited in terms of their power, in terms of making wise and good decisions. There's a significant problem where this government is going. I ask you to reconsider this philosophy.

THE SPEAKER: If I'm to recognize the minister, it's to close debate on the bill.

HON. SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: Would it surprise you if I began by saying that there's something that was said that I deeply agree with my honourable colleague on? That is that only business can create jobs, and that business and businesspeople in their various sectors and their various types of business endeavour, they are the people who know those industries and those sectors.

It's a philosophy that I have held for a long time in working in the general sector of community economic development and coming into business, how essential it is that government work with those players. Whether we call it an advisory board, I would assure all those present that the opinions of those from the business community will always be held in the highest esteem and consideration, but at the end of the day a government is responsible for the accountability and for all spending of taxpayer dollars. That may be an area where we disagree.

There was a reference to wearing the liability. We all know whether there was an issue in any of the Crowns. There are none I can think of recently and, again, that speaks to how well these agencies and those working within them undertake their duties. If something goes sideways, it will always be the relevant minister who is called to account on that issue.

As regards a comment made about our government's economic plan, I believe that we have been very forthcoming in the basic tenets of that plan, which relate to population growth, to raising local consumption levels of goods and services here made in Nova Scotia, and to recruit and support green, sustainable, and innovative businesses. As part of that group of activities, I would further say in response to a question about more opportunities for skilled trades, in 14-plus months in this role, consistently and time and

time again, the number one concern of businesses across this province is access to labour and talent. So that makes the More Opportunity for Skilled Trades program of huge interest and value.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will end my remarks and ask to close debate on Bill No. 215.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 215.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 216.

**Bill No. 216 - Build Nova Scotia Act.**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Public Works.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 216, the Build Nova Scotia Act, be read a second time.

It is my privilege to rise today to talk about this bill. Mr. Speaker, our government did an extensive review on the role and effectiveness of 20 provincial agencies, offices, and Crown corporations. The review included the roles and responsibilities of the organizations' accountability, governance, and efficiency in achieving mandates.

The review brought forward some areas that needed to be addressed, such as overlapping mandates and duplicate operations. We are moving forward with a new approach to economic growth for Nova Scotia. The province's five economic development and infrastructure organizations will become two new Crown corporations - Build Nova Scotia and Invest Nova Scotia. I will be responsible for Build Nova Scotia, which will be an agile Crown corporation.

Build Nova Scotia will be responsible to build, enhance, and leverage strategic assets during a time of unprecedented population, economic growth and investment. The new Crown will focus on the province's strategic infrastructure, including health care redevelopment, waterfront and industrial park development, land bank asset management, Nova Scotia's high-speed internet initiative, and environmental remediation. It brings together Develop Nova Scotia and Nova Scotia Lands to find solutions that build and

develop economically vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive communities right across Nova Scotia.

[5:00 p.m.]

My colleague the minister for health care redevelopment projects, the member for Argyle, will oversee the new QEII New Generation project and the Cape Breton Regional Municipality Health Care Redevelopment Project.

Mr. Speaker, staff and programs within Nova Scotia Lands and Develop Nova Scotia will remain in place. During the transition, we will ensure these organizations are fully supported so they can continue the very important work that is already under way.

Build Nova Scotia is about streamlining operations, refocusing mandates, and improving accountability. For example, Nova Scotia Lands and Develop Nova Scotia are both in the business of engaging communities and building important infrastructure. Bringing these organizations and expertise together under one leadership will improve focus and coordination. It will also reduce duplication and overlap.

Build Nova Scotia will provide a clear and focused mandate that will drive our economic growth. This is an exciting new direction that will make it easier for businesses to start, grow, and thrive here.

I look forward to hearing from my colleagues across the aisle.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: I appreciate the comments from my colleague. Just of interest, as she was giving that, we're hearing that the project here in Halifax has delayed the bids, so I'll be curious to see what happens in the coming days on that.

Just a couple of comments because, again, we're still on the same theme. The minister referenced the report again where they reviewed all the boards and agencies, and they won't release the report. So your government is celebrating that they've done this work, but they don't want to show anybody or tell anybody what is in the report. I can only come to assume that - again, it's my assumption - there are things in that report that the government doesn't want the public to see. Maybe some of the recommendations they made were not recommendations within that report.

It all kind of ties together for me, because you had two ministers make a reference to that report. They don't want to release the report. Then I go back to that comment that the decisions belong with the elected government and, again, it just reinforces for me that there's a report - they cite it. Nobody can see it. They don't want to table it.

For me, it's the consolidation of power within the elected government - not the government, the elected government, the politicians. We saw that path before 2013. That was before my time, where we saw investments that were made, which ultimately resulted in hundreds of millions of dollars of debt because decisions were being made at a political level to spend this kind of money on economic development.

Again, I don't disagree with deficiencies. I don't disagree that, at times, government will make some of these decisions. All of that to me is negated when the comment comes from the Minister of Economic Development that it's being brought back to the elected government.

The politicians, ultimately, are going to make the call. I would argue that the Premier's Office more than anywhere is going to make the call on where investments are going to be made, period. It's not going to be a process of transparency, and an advisory board coming in and making recommendations to the government or the minister, regardless of department. They are going to be political decisions.

Maybe I'm wrong. I've been wrong more times than I've been right. But if I can't see the report, if I can't see the recommendations, and if the government doesn't want to table it - they don't want to show the public the report - what else am I to assume? They're going to make the decisions themselves because they politically want to control everything. They want to consolidate power.

We've had three bills with a similar theme come up. These are all bills that are necessary for them to consolidate all of this. Again, the decisions are being brought to the elected government. That is dangerous. That is hundreds of millions of dollars in taxpayers' money that, without seeing the report - correct me if I'm wrong. Tell me I'm wrong. I want to see the report, so that I can get up here again and say that I was wrong in my comments.

I can't, because, for whatever reason, they don't want to release it. They're making some decisions. Some of them could be right. A lot of them, I think, are not right. When you look at the umbrella of accountability and transparency, I think that they're wrong. We don't know, because they won't release the report.

I'll leave it there for now. This has been the third bill in a row where we've had this theme. I look forward to the comments from my colleagues. The big takeaway for me today is that one comment: Decisions brought back to the elected government.

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

KENDRA COOMBES: There have been several bills introduced - and I will go off of what my colleague said - that have done away with boards: Bill Nos. 214, 215, 196, 222, and now Bill No. 216. This is a disturbing trend of this power structure that's now occurring

within this government and having everything going back to ministers rather than government itself, rather than the boards that report to government as a whole.

It's my understanding that these decisions were made from a two-page review. Mr. Speaker, I've had citation pages and bibliographies that were longer than two pages. The citation pages to my papers that I wrote were longer than this review. That is disturbing. I think anyone should be concerned about these moves that we're seeing of getting rid of boards, and now having everything report right back to ministers.

This is nothing against the ministers. This is not personal. This is about where the power is all going. That concerns me greatly.

The other part of what this amalgamation does is that it does away with a top woman public official. The new Crown corporation will be less accountable without an independent review and with the CEO only reporting to the minister. These are concerning changes from a government that has, in my opinion, serious transparency issues, especially as of late.

It is also not clear if there will be job losses during this amalgamation. During most amalgamations, job losses do occur.

The work of maintaining the strategic infrastructure of the province, e.g., cleaning up Boat Harbour and ensuring telecommunication networks are available, is absolutely critical work. It deserves to have as much transparency, independence, accountability and rigour as possible. The independence, accountability and transparency must go hand in hand. If the CEO is only reporting to the minister - whoever that may be at any point in time - how are we going to ensure transparency? How are we going to ensure independence? How are we going to ensure accountability?

We have had these arguments during the 20 hours when the gallery was debated. We had these issues back when school boards were done away with. We had this conversation when the district health authorities were amalgamated. We have had these constant discussions around the loss of boards, the centralization of power and what it does, and the negative effects that it can have on our province.

I wanted to register those concerns right now in second reading because I do look forward to hearing from people in the Law Amendments Committee.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will take my seat.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: It's my pleasure to rise in my place this afternoon and speak very briefly on Bill No. 216, the Build Nova Scotia Act, and lend my support to

my friend and honourable colleague the Minister of Public Works, whom I'll have the privilege of sharing this file with, particularly when we're looking at the health care redevelopment projects in our province.

To clarify a statement made earlier, this change that our government announced back in July - and the legislative formalities that we are going through now - does not impact in any way the projects that fall under my purview.

What we're doing here today - Nova Scotians expect government to deliver in an effective and efficient way, and to be accountable for our decisions. That's what these changes are ultimately about.

Bringing Nova Scotia Lands and Development Nova Scotia to create Build Nova Scotia will focus our province's strategic expertise and bring together the technical expertise under one shot so that as a government we can focus on delivering on our priorities - whether it be the health care redevelopment infrastructure, the waterfront and industrial park infrastructure, land bank asset management, environmental remediation, and, of course, high-speed internet.

This is going to help launch a new direction for our province to support meaningful change that we want to deliver within our government. We're provided an opportunity of unprecedented economic growth. With that, we have numerous possibilities on the horizon. We want to take full advantage of those possibilities and offer to Nova Scotians - and to the world - the best that we have at our disposal.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to sharing this file with the honourable Minister of Public Works. With those few words, I'll take my place.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

BRAEDON CLARK: I'll be brief here on Bill No. 216. I just wanted to speak for a couple of moments because I think, relative to many other members in the House, I actually have a good amount of hands-on, practical experience with both of the organizations that are being merged here into Build Nova Scotia.

When I worked for Minister Hines at what was then called the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, I got to know the folks at Nova Scotia Lands very well. As other members have mentioned, they have a significant mandate, including most notably the ongoing remediation of Boat Harbour, which is a project that's going to take years and will cost hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars. That in and of itself is a massive responsibility.

With Develop Nova Scotia - actually, in a different career before I was elected, I was seconded there for six months. I actually spent six months basically working at



Develop Nova Scotia on a daily basis, relative to their Internet for Nova Scotia Initiative, which - I know lots of members will agree - is a transformative initiative.

[5:15 p.m.]

I know the member for Annapolis actually was just posting something this morning, I think, talking about high-speed internet being installed in his area. This work that was being done at Develop Nova Scotia was something that literally changed lives for thousands and thousands of Nova Scotians, particularly in rural areas, and hundreds and hundreds of businesses, as well. I don't want that work to be lost or neglected under some kind of new, centralized structure.

As other members have said, sometimes when you change governance, when you change process, it can be a wait and see, a little bit, but what concerns me about it is we have, apparently - not apparently, we do - a report that lays out the justifications, we think, for the changes that are being made. If that report says something else or if it does say what government purports it to say, great. Show your work, prove it to us here in the Chamber, and prove it to Nova Scotians that this is the advice that has been given to government and is being followed by government rather than just saying, trust us, take us at our word. We have no other options, really, in terms of getting this information, as we've discussed in this session. We could FOIPOP it, but what's the point? We know that that report will come back black as night, and we won't get it.

As the minister mentioned, and as the member for Sydney-Membertou mentioned, we're getting news hot off the presses here in the last couple of hours that the bid for the QEII redevelopment is delayed indefinitely. The work that this new entity is going to take on is absolutely massive across the board. It's really important work. We don't know the justification for it. We should know the justification for it, and we would ask the government to prove that it's necessary.

With those words, I'll take my seat.

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

The honourable Minister of Public Works.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues across the aisle for their comments. I will say that I'm excited about Build Nova Scotia, very excited about Build Nova Scotia. For me, I see Build Nova Scotia as bringing together the technical experience and expertise of Nova Scotia Lands, whom I've had the opportunity to work with the past year as minister. Just absolutely, I am always amazed by the folks who work at Nova Scotia Lands. What they do for remediation in this province, what they do for development, it's incredible the expertise that is within that department.

Then, you bring together Develop Nova Scotia, who know how to project-manage, who have this incredible vision. I don't understand how bringing these two people together is not something to be excited about, because I am. I've always said that when you can build on strengths and you can work together, when you can collaborate, it's success, but I get that collaboration is tough for some people.

I am excited, really excited to see where Build Nova Scotia is going to go. I'm excited about the fostering of the collaborative relationships with communities and multiple levels of government.

I feel really great about knowing that we are going to be developing very vibrant and inclusive communities right across our province. In my own community, I think about the former Bowater Mersey Paper Company site that was remediated by Nova Scotia Lands. It's an incredible project. We have businesses into Port Mersey now. I can't wait until we have the incredible people from Develop Nova Scotia, who have that amazing vision that I talked about, to take that project even further.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I'm excited about Build Nova Scotia and I look forward to working with everyone who has worked with both entities. With those few comments, I rise to close debate on Bill No. 216.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 216.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 219.

**Bill No. 219 - Gaming Control Act (amended).**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 219 now be read a second time.

These amendments come out of the results of a review of Crown corporations. We know that the results of that review were announced back in July and they included the decision to integrate the operations and staff of the Nova Scotia Gaming Corporation into the Department of Finance and Treasury Board.

We take the responsibility of the gaming file seriously. We know that gaming is an important topic to Nova Scotians who expect the industry to be well-managed, safe, socially responsible, and governed appropriately. Our goals with this change are to reduce duplication of roles, improve efficiency, and bring Nova Scotia in line with other Atlantic provinces. I should note that all the other Atlantic provinces have the staff to conduct and manage gaming as part their own government department that is relevant to gaming.

I also know that the social responsibility programs and services that are offered through gaming and for people who may be affected with problem gambling are also important to Nova Scotians and they will continue as a division of the department. I also want to highlight that we want to work with the Office of Addictions and Mental Health, because that is where the expertise lies in supporting people and families who do have experiences with problem gambling.

With that, I look forward to hearing what members opposite have to say about these amendments.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

FRED TILLEY: I'm happy to get up and speak to this bill.

Here we go again. Another example of bringing power to the centre and giving the minister responsibility. I think I just heard that other provinces are doing this. Well, I know that I can remember my mother saying to me just because everybody else is doing it doesn't mean it's right. I took great wisdom from that and I might have done it anyway, but I learned my lessons.

I would suggest that this government is definitely putting itself into a difficult position, especially in this file. I'd just like to read a few quotes from April 19, 2016 when there was a debate around VLT machines and a tax increase. The current Premier, former Opposition member stated:

“If you make no change in investing in helping people gamble responsibly, then you should expect revenue to go up. My question is, why is the minister okay with taking millions more from vulnerable Nova Scotians but not providing support for problem gamblers?”

November 4, 2016, with regard to Bill No. 36 and the Gaming Control Act, the current Finance and Treasury Board Minister said:

“Mr. Speaker, I think about who is playing those machines and can they afford it, and for the casual gamer who sees it as entertainment, that's fine. I don't have a problem with the province

collecting revenue from that source, because it's entertainment and it doesn't matter who is in government but the reality is some of the people that are using VLTs are not playing it for entertainment but are instead using it for a payday and that is very unfortunate. It's not just affecting them - it's affecting their families. I think about those people and I think about what ways - I guess if we got rid of VLTs completely that would be one way of protecting those people from using gambling as means to make a payday; maybe they would go somewhere else.”

October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021, with regard to online casino safeguards, the Finance and Treasury Minister said:

“I'd like to thank the member for the question. The fact that we have not jumped forward with this, I think, is an indication that our mandate was to fix health care and housing. We've seen announcements on that. That has been the focus.

Online gaming is an issue. We're seeing more and more people moving to online gaming. At this point in our mandate, it has not been something I have been focused on as minister responsible because our government has been focused elsewhere.”

I'll table that document.

The government has been focused elsewhere. So, now we're consolidating inside the elected government. Where's that focus going to be? The focus, as has already been mentioned, is on health care and other files. How is this finance minister, who is super busy - absolutely, super busy - now going to manage the gaming corporation? It's absolutely ridiculous. What this does, Mr. Speaker, it creates a conflict, perceived or otherwise. Whether that conflict be actual, perceived, or in this case, I think it's more of a moral conflict.

The Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, who is responsible for the revenues of the province, and increasing those revenues, is now fully responsible for the Gaming Control Act, and I heard the minister speak about working with the Office of Addictions and Mental Health and others. Gambling addiction is a real, real problem - a health problem - in our community, and the fact that the minister is now going to have this dual role of managing gaming, which affects mental health, and managing the revenues of this province, is an issue.

Gaming should always be arm's-length from the government. There needs to be that accountability. You know, I don't want to give this government any ideas, but what's next, the Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation? Are we going to consolidate the Nova Scotia Liquor

Corporation into the Minister of Finance and Treasury? I see some smiles, so maybe they already took my advice. Maybe that's going to be the next bill. (Interruption) I missed that, sorry. I think I'm glad I missed it.

[5:30 p.m.]

What are the safeguards that are going to be put in place to protect those who decide that they want to partake in gambling? What are the safeguards that are going to be put in place to protect those vulnerable people who now have a minister responsible for mental health overall, but also responsible for the revenues of the province and increasing those revenues through gaming? To me, that's not a position I would want for myself because it's just too risky, so I'm surprised that the minister is moving this one forward.

Again, when they were in Opposition, the current government ran heavily against VLTs and advocated for their limited use. Last year, VLTs gained \$64 million in revenue for the government - a 9.5 per cent increase. So now that the minister has responsibility for the Gaming Corporation, will that mean that he's going to try to grow that revenue, or is he going to scale it back, based on their previous commitments? Thirty-three per cent of government revenue was from VLTs, Mr. Speaker.

I think for me to summarize my comments on this particular bill, it's more of the same. We're bringing the control to the elected government members. We're creating an issue of a conflict between revenue generation and problem gambling, and at the end of the day, we're creating more work within the Department of Finance and Treasury Board for the people who are working very hard in that bureaucratic department.

With that, I'll take my seat and suggest that we do not pass this bill.

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

LISA LACHANCE: Mr. Speaker, I also want to rise and offer a few comments on this proposed bill. I think it clearly follows the trend that we're seeing, where there has been a lack of a transparent review, there's been no reporting back, there's been a lack of rationale in terms of a policy framework about why this centralization, and we're seeing the proposal, again, that this minister inherits a corporation under their control.

I will acknowledge that that is the structure that exists in other Maritime provinces, but without knowing the rationale for Nova Scotia, we can't know if this is the right idea for Nova Scotia. I can only echo my colleague the member for Northside-Westmount's concerns around that balance between revenue generation and also thinking about the public health and mental health implications of gambling.

Again, that's a role that other provinces have managed within their Departments of Finance. It would be great to hear from the minister what he's learned about how they've done that and what frameworks and safeguards they actually have in place.

At a recent Public Accounts Committee, there was a discussion around the structure and also a good discussion around mental health and addictions. I think it was disturbing to learn that despite record profits - including off the new online casino - despite record profits, the defunding of Gambling Awareness Nova Scotia, that \$600,000 basically remained at a stagnant level and was absorbed into the Office of Addictions and Mental Health.

I just think that in the face of growing profits, that is not an equal balance out. I'm also concerned - there was a reference during that committee meeting around the importance of thinking about the social determinants of health and thus being able to encompass folks who struggle with problematic gambling into the overall work of the Office of Addictions and Mental Health.

While that's true, it's also true that different mental health concerns and addictions concerns have specific issues. We need to maintain some level of capacity to support people with gambling addictions, and it's not clear from questions that I've asked of the ministers here, from that Public Accounts Committee meeting, that any consideration of that has been given.

I would say that despite this being the common structure in the Maritimes, we don't know why it's the structure that we need for Nova Scotia. When we talked about online gambling and I asked the minister for information about that decision - what policies were developed, what was put in place - I was assured that in fact there are no records of those discussions.

I certainly hope that by bringing this into the Department of Finance and Treasury Board that actually the work becomes far more transparent and accountable, and we don't have any other major decisions issued without any sort of written record that can be shared. With that, I'll take my seat.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: I just want to make a few comments about this piece of legislation. Some of the previous members have spoken on some of the concerns that I bring forward. Obviously this is a piece of legislation that deals with board governance, and I do have concerns about the lack of having a board on such a very important topic. There is no question that there is conflict when a government is receiving revenue from something that also is potentially creating and feeding into addictions and mental health.

I recently learned that the money that is being collected from the government from gaming - whether it is online or in-person gaming - is not put directly into addictions and mental health. I think that is something that fundamentally should be fixed right away.

There are a lot of issues as well and I think the issues are increasing with online gaming. There are a lot fewer rules and regulations as the Atlantic Lottery Corporation that Nova Scotia is part of and that this gaming piece of legislation is related to in order to be competitive with non-Atlantic Lottery systems getting looser and looser with their rules. For example, people can gamble online 24 hours a day, whereas in person it's 12 hours a day; online they can use their credit card, whereas in person they have to be able prove that there's money in their bank account.

People with addictions to gambling are going further and further into debt and it is a worsening problem here in Nova Scotia since the pandemic, and that has been documented. Also, when people do online gambling the limit is much higher. When you are in person, there is a low limit on the amount per spin but online my understanding is up to \$50, so it takes a lot less time to burn through a lot of money, Mr. Speaker. There is definitely a direct conflict there for the government.

The other concern I'll just mention was shared with me from constituents was the removal of the board, but in the spirit of some of the other conversations that have been brought up around board governance here is the issue of nepotism and government appointing personal friends to the board. It is my understanding that the chairperson for the fundraising campaign of the last election is now a paid board member on the Atlantic Lottery Commission. That is nepotism, Mr. Speaker, in the purest of definition, in the purest of form.

Removing this board further highlights that this is a problem, and it should be addressed, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to hearing more comments in Law Amendments Committee.

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

The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I now move second reading of Bill No. 219, Amendments to Part 1 of the Gaming Control Act.

I'll just share a few comments in response to some of what I've just heard, Mr. Speaker. The member for Northside-Westmount mentioned that he felt this was an initiative which was bringing power to the centre and control to elected members. Really, this is about avoiding duplication, going through one organization only to go through another organization, being the government department, to get to the same decision point.

Government is ultimately responsible for gaming decisions. We will always get the blame from the Opposition, no matter what we do, Mr. Speaker. They are not going to blame a gaming corporation when they can blame us. We are happy to be accountable for decisions. That's what this is really about.

I know the member also brought up problem gaming. There are supports for problem gaming. It's a reality. Problem gambling would happen whether the government was in the business of gaming or whether it was not in the business of gaming. There're 2,000 online casinos, if you will, 2,000 websites. They're happening no matter what the government does.

There are some people who are going to go on those sites, and they're going to have bad experiences, and they're going to lose money. It's going to bring stress and strain to their families and so on. Government - whether we are in the gaming business or not, that is still going to happen. What this does is bring the Gaming Corporation back into the provincial government.

The member for Northside-Westmount was suggesting there would be a conflict. I want to tell you very sincerely that this government will always be guided by our response to problem gambling from another minister, the Minister responsible for the Office of Addictions and Mental Health, because that is where that expertise lies. It is that office that should lead the response to support people who suffer with those issues.

I think the members opposite are really opposing for the sake of opposing. If I move to my colleague for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island, yes, there are new revenues coming in from iCasino. But if the province did not have iCasino, those revenues would be going to those 2,000-plus other online gaming websites. None of that money would be coming back here to help source revenues which are needed to support people who need help.

I know we're getting asked every day by the Opposition to spend money here and there. So yes, we're generating more revenues through iCasino, Mr. Speaker. But we're going to be able to use those to help people as well, and we should. We have a new Office of Addictions and Mental Health. We have a new minister. We're just getting started.

The concerns raised by the member are very relevant. I would say keep an eye on this new office and this minister. They're doing good work, and they're doing new work from new investment that has never been put forward before.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask members to reflect upon that before this comes back for third reading, and maybe those words will give them more confidence that what we are doing here is not to present conflicts. It is not to take over something that somebody else could do without a conflict. It's really about avoiding duplication. It's about being accountable for what actions are taken in gaming.



At the end of the day, yes, we do agree with the Opposition - government has to be there to help people who suffer from problem gambling.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 219.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: That concludes government business for today. The House will meet again tomorrow, Friday, October 28<sup>th</sup>, from the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Government business will include second reading of Bill Nos. 222, 223, 224, 225, 227, and 230.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is that the House do now rise to meet again tomorrow, Friday, October 28<sup>th</sup>, 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.

We stand adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, October 28<sup>th</sup>, at 9:00 a.m.

[The House rose at 5:44 p.m.]

**NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)****RESOLUTION NO. 423**

By: Hon. Karla MacFarlane (Pictou West)

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

Whereas Pictou West resident Judy Smith was inducted into the Canadian Collegiate Athletic Association (CCAA) Hall of Fame in the builder category; and

Whereas Judy has been involved with the CCAA, in some capacity, for 50 plus years, including serving several terms as president; and

Whereas in 2008 Judy was named CCAA Athletic Director of the Year and in 2019 the CCAA renamed an award the Judy Smith Exemplary Leadership Award;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Judy Smith for her induction into the CCAA Hall of Fame.

**RESOLUTION NO. 424**

By: Lisa Lachance (Halifax Citadel-Sable Island)

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

Whereas the intersex community in Nova Scotia is a strong and diverse community that is essential in its contribution to Nova Scotia and has fought to promote the social, political, and medical rights guaranteed by governments and Legislatures to all individuals and communities; and

Whereas the House of Assembly and the government of Nova Scotia are constitutionally-obligated to ensure that every Nova Scotian is equal before and under the law, and that every Nova Scotian enjoys the same substantive protections and benefits; and

Whereas the intersex community faces challenges particular to the community such as harmful and unnecessary treatments without their consent and discrimination in access to adequate health care, among others;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly acknowledge with renewed commitment the need to engage with the intersex community to actively assess opportunities, protect its rights and to secure access to services.

**RESOLUTION NO. 425**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a truly grassroots project 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; and

Whereas the fridge and pantry are open to anyone 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and are stocked with staples like dry goods, fresh fruit, and vegetables but also frozen meals, snacks, pet food, and hygiene products; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a completely volunteer-run effort that allows people from all walks of life who need a little support the opportunity to access it on their own schedule;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Carla Adams for helping make this valuable resource a reality in Dartmouth South.

**RESOLUTION NO. 426**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a truly grassroots project 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; and

Whereas the fridge and pantry are open to anyone 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and are stocked with staples like dry goods, fresh fruit, and vegetables but also frozen meals, snacks, pet food, and hygiene products; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a completely volunteer-run effort that allows people from all walks of life who need a little support the opportunity to access it on their own schedule;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Toby Balch for helping make this valuable resource a reality in Dartmouth South.

**RESOLUTION NO. 427**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a truly grassroots project 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; and

Whereas the fridge and pantry are open to anyone 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and are stocked with staples like dry goods, fresh fruit, and vegetables but also frozen meals, snacks, pet food, and hygiene products; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a completely volunteer-run effort that allows people from all walks of life who need a little support the opportunity to access it on their own schedule;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Kathleen Dolan for helping make this valuable resource a reality in Dartmouth South.

**RESOLUTION NO. 428**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a truly grassroots project 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; and

Whereas the fridge and pantry are open to anyone 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and are stocked with staples like dry goods, fresh fruit, and vegetables but also frozen meals, snacks, pet food, and hygiene products; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a completely volunteer-run effort that allows people from all walks of life who need a little support the opportunity to access it on their own schedule;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Sarah Duggan for helping make this valuable resource a reality in Dartmouth South.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 429**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a truly grassroots project 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; and

Whereas the fridge and pantry are open to anyone 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and are stocked with staples like dry goods, fresh fruit, and vegetables but also frozen meals, snacks, pet food, and hygiene products; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a completely volunteer-run effort that allows people from all walks of life who need a little support the opportunity to access it on their own schedule;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Christina Duncan for helping make this valuable resource a reality in Dartmouth South.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 430**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a truly grassroots project 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; and

Whereas the fridge and pantry are open to anyone 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and are stocked with staples like dry goods, fresh fruit, and vegetables but also frozen meals, snacks, pet food, and hygiene products; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a completely volunteer-run effort that allows people from all walks of life who need a little support the opportunity to access it on their own schedule;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Gail Ellesworth for helping make this valuable resource a reality in Dartmouth South.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 431**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a truly grassroots project 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; and

Whereas the fridge and pantry are open to anyone 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and are stocked with staples like dry goods, fresh fruit, and vegetables but also frozen meals, snacks, pet food, and hygiene products; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a completely volunteer-run effort that allows people from all walks of life who need a little support the opportunity to access it on their own schedule;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Erin Ferguson for helping make this valuable resource a reality in Dartmouth South.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 432**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a truly grassroots project 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; and

Whereas the fridge and pantry are open to anyone 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and are stocked with staples like dry goods, fresh fruit, and vegetables but also frozen meals, snacks, pet food, and hygiene products; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a completely volunteer-run effort that allows people from all walks of life who need a little support the opportunity to access it on their own schedule;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Carla Foxe for helping make this valuable resource a reality in Dartmouth South.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 433**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a truly grassroots project 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; and

Whereas the fridge and pantry are open to anyone 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and are stocked with staples like dry goods, fresh fruit, and vegetables but also frozen meals, snacks, pet food, and hygiene products; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a completely volunteer-run effort that allows people from all walks of life who need a little support the opportunity to access it on their own schedule;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Laura Fraser for helping make this valuable resource a reality in Dartmouth South.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 434**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a truly grassroots project 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; and

Whereas the fridge and pantry are open to anyone 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and are stocked with staples like dry goods, fresh fruit, and vegetables but also frozen meals, snacks, pet food, and hygiene products; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a completely volunteer-run effort that allows people from all walks of life who need a little support the opportunity to access it on their own schedule;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Gabrielle Smith for helping make this valuable resource a reality in Dartmouth South.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 435**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a truly grassroots project 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; and

Whereas the fridge and pantry are open to anyone 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and are stocked with staples like dry goods, fresh fruit, and vegetables but also frozen meals, snacks, pet food, and hygiene products; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a completely volunteer-run effort that allows people from all walks of life who need a little support the opportunity to access it on their own schedule;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Milagros Gonzalez for helping make this valuable resource a reality in Dartmouth South.



**RESOLUTION NO. 436**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a truly grassroots project 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; and

Whereas the fridge and pantry are open to anyone 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and are stocked with staples like dry goods, fresh fruit, and vegetables but also frozen meals, snacks, pet food, and hygiene products; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a completely volunteer-run effort that allows people from all walks of life who need a little support the opportunity to access it on their own schedule;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Henry Jack for helping make this valuable resource a reality in Dartmouth South.

**RESOLUTION NO. 437**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a truly grassroots project 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; and

Whereas the fridge and pantry are open to anyone 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and are stocked with staples like dry goods, fresh fruit, and vegetables but also frozen meals, snacks, pet food, and hygiene products; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a completely volunteer-run effort that allows people from all walks of life who need a little support the opportunity to access it on their own schedule;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Justin Lee for helping make this valuable resource a reality in Dartmouth South.

**RESOLUTION NO. 438**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a truly grassroots project 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; and

Whereas the fridge and pantry are open to anyone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and are stocked with staples like dry goods, fresh fruit, and vegetables and also frozen meals, snacks, pet food, and hygiene products; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a completely volunteer-run effort that allows people from all walks of life who need a little support the opportunity to access it on their own schedule;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Karen MacPhail for helping make this valuable resource a reality in Dartmouth South.

**RESOLUTION NO. 439**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a truly grassroots project 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; and

Whereas the fridge and pantry are open to anyone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and are stocked with staples like dry goods, fresh fruit, and vegetables and also frozen meals, snacks, pet food, and hygiene products; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a completely volunteer-run effort that allows people from all walks of life who need a little support the opportunity to access it on their own schedule;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Margaret Langley for helping make this valuable resource a reality in Dartmouth South.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 440**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a truly grassroots project 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; and

Whereas the fridge and pantry are open to anyone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and are stocked with staples like dry goods, fresh fruit, and vegetables and also frozen meals, snacks, pet food, and hygiene products; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a completely volunteer-run effort that allows people from all walks of life who need a little support the opportunity to access it on their own schedule;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Glen Leck for helping make this valuable resource a reality in Dartmouth South.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 441**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a truly grassroots project 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; and

Whereas the fridge and pantry are open to anyone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and are stocked with staples like dry goods, fresh fruit, and vegetables and also frozen meals, snacks, pet food, and hygiene products; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a completely volunteer-run effort that allows people from all walks of life who need a little support the opportunity to access it on their own schedule;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Kelly Lee for helping make this valuable resource a reality in Dartmouth South.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 442**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a truly grassroots project 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; and

Whereas the fridge and pantry are open to anyone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and are stocked with staples like dry goods, fresh fruit, and vegetables and also frozen meals, snacks, pet food, and hygiene products; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a completely volunteer-run effort that allows people from all walks of life who need a little support the opportunity to access it on their own schedule;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Heather MacDonald for helping make this valuable resource a reality in Dartmouth South.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 443**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a truly grassroots project 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; and

Whereas the fridge and pantry are open to anyone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and are stocked with staples like dry goods, fresh fruit, and vegetables and also frozen meals, snacks, pet food, and hygiene products; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a completely volunteer-run effort that allows people from all walks of life who need a little support the opportunity to access it on their own schedule;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Mike MacPhail for helping make this valuable resource a reality in Dartmouth South.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 444**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a truly grassroots project 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; and

Whereas the fridge and pantry are open to anyone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and are stocked with staples like dry goods, fresh fruit, and vegetables and also frozen meals, snacks, pet food, and hygiene products; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a completely volunteer-run effort that allows people from all walks of life who need a little support the opportunity to access it on their own schedule;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Cheryl Miller for helping make this valuable resource a reality in Dartmouth South.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 445**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a truly grassroots project 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; and

Whereas the fridge and pantry are open to anyone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and are stocked with staples like dry goods, fresh fruit, and vegetables and also frozen meals, snacks, pet food, and hygiene products; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a completely volunteer-run effort that allows people from all walks of life who need a little support the opportunity to access it on their own schedule;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Meghan Mombourquette for helping make this valuable resource a reality in Dartmouth South.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 446**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a truly grassroots project 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; and

Whereas the fridge and pantry are open to anyone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and are stocked with staples like dry goods, fresh fruit, and vegetables and also frozen meals, snacks, pet food, and hygiene products; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a completely volunteer-run effort that allows people from all walks of life who need a little support the opportunity to access it on their own schedule;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Carolyn Roosen for helping make this valuable resource a reality in Dartmouth South.

**RESOLUTION NO. 447**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a truly grassroots project 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; and

Whereas the fridge and pantry are open to anyone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and are stocked with staples like dry goods, fresh fruit, and vegetables and also frozen meals, snacks, pet food, and hygiene products; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a completely volunteer-run effort that allows people from all walks of life who need a little support the opportunity to access it on their own schedule;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Sheena Russell for helping make this valuable resource a reality in Dartmouth South.

**RESOLUTION NO. 448**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a truly grassroots project 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; and

Whereas the fridge and pantry are open to anyone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and are stocked with staples like dry goods, fresh fruit, and vegetables and also frozen meals, snacks, pet food, and hygiene products; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a completely volunteer-run effort that allows people from all walks of life who need a little support the opportunity to access it on their own schedule;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Ruth Ellen Jack for helping make this valuable resource a reality in Dartmouth South.

**RESOLUTION NO. 449**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a truly grassroots project 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; and

Whereas the fridge and pantry are open to anyone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and are stocked with staples like dry goods, fresh fruit, and vegetables and also frozen meals, snacks, pet food, and hygiene products; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a completely volunteer-run effort that allows people from all walks of life who need a little support the opportunity to access it on their own schedule;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Sandy Smith for helping make this valuable resource a reality in Dartmouth South.

**RESOLUTION NO. 450**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a truly grassroots project 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; and

Whereas the fridge and pantry are open to anyone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and are stocked with staples like dry goods, fresh fruit, and vegetables and also frozen meals, snacks, pet food, and hygiene products; and



Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a completely volunteer-run effort that allows people from all walks of life who need a little support the opportunity to access it on their own schedule;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Lisa Scott for helping make this valuable resource a reality in Dartmouth South.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 451**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a truly grassroots project 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; and

Whereas the fridge and pantry are open to anyone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and are stocked with staples like dry goods, fresh fruit, and vegetables and also frozen meals, snacks, pet food, and hygiene products; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a completely volunteer-run effort that allows people from all walks of life who need a little support the opportunity to access it on their own schedule;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Jonathan Stewart for helping make this valuable resource a reality in Dartmouth South.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 452**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a truly grassroots project 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; and

Whereas the fridge and pantry are open to anyone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and are stocked with staples like dry goods, fresh fruit, and vegetables and also frozen meals, snacks, pet food, and hygiene products; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a completely volunteer-run effort that allows people from all walks of life who need a little support the opportunity to access it on their own schedule;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Melanie Sturk for helping make this valuable resource a reality in Dartmouth South.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 453**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a truly grassroots project 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; and

Whereas the fridge and pantry are open to anyone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and are stocked with staples like dry goods, fresh fruit, and vegetables and also frozen meals, snacks, pet food, and hygiene products; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a completely volunteer-run effort that allows people from all walks of life who need a little support the opportunity to access it on their own schedule;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Sue Tom for helping make this valuable resource a reality in Dartmouth South.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 454**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a truly grassroots project 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; and

Whereas the fridge and pantry are open to anyone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and are stocked with staples like dry goods, fresh fruit, and vegetables and also frozen meals, snacks, pet food, and hygiene products; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a completely volunteer-run effort that allows people from all walks of life who need a little support the opportunity to access it on their own schedule;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Jennifer Vanderburgh for helping make this valuable resource a reality in Dartmouth South.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 455**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a truly grassroots project 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; and

Whereas the fridge and pantry are open to anyone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and are stocked with staples like dry goods, fresh fruit, and vegetables and also frozen meals, snacks, pet food, and hygiene products; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a completely volunteer-run effort that allows people from all walks of life who need a little support the opportunity to access it on their own schedule;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Maria Wilson for helping make this valuable resource a reality in Dartmouth South.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 456**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a truly grassroots project 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; and

Whereas the fridge and pantry are open to anyone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and are stocked with staples like dry goods, fresh fruit, and vegetables and also frozen meals, snacks, pet food, and hygiene products; and

Whereas the Dartmouth Community Fridge is a completely volunteer-run effort that allows people from all walks of life who need a little support the opportunity to access it on their own schedule;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Justeen Hartigan for helping make this valuable resource a reality in Dartmouth South.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 457**

By: Hon. Colton LeBlanc (Argyle)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is an exciting and momentous event and marks the beginning of a wonderful journey; and

Whereas few events in life are as powerful and positive as the birth of a child; and

Whereas on August 7, 2022, Candice and Sebastien Boudreau welcomed their son into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Candice and Sebastien Boudreau on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them a lifetime of happiness as parents.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 458**

By: Hon. Colton LeBlanc (Argyle)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is an exciting and momentous event and marks the beginning of a wonderful journey; and

Whereas few events in life are as powerful and positive as the birth of a child; and

Whereas on August 18, 2022, Tiffany Nickerson and Jordan Doucet welcomed their daughter into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Tiffany Nickerson and Jordan Doucet on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them a lifetime of happiness as parents.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 459**

By: Hon. Colton LeBlanc (Argyle)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is an exciting and momentous event and marks the beginning of a wonderful journey; and

Whereas few events in life are as powerful and positive as the birth of a child; and

Whereas on August 25, 2022, Alissa and Kenneth Newell welcomed their son into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Alissa and Kenneth Newell on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them a lifetime of happiness as parents.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 460**

By: Hon. Colton LeBlanc (Argyle)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is an exciting and momentous event and marks the beginning of a wonderful journey; and

Whereas few events in life are as powerful and positive as the birth of a child; and

Whereas on April 11, 2022, Anita and Alana Jacquard welcomed their son into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Anita and Alana Jacquard on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them a lifetime of happiness as parents.

**RESOLUTION NO. 461**

By: Hon. Colton LeBlanc (Argyle)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is an exciting and momentous event and marks the beginning of a wonderful journey; and

Whereas few events in life are as powerful and positive as the birth of a child; and

Whereas on April 23, 2022, Colette Weaver and Craig Corporon welcomed their son into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Colette Weaver and Craig Corporon on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them a lifetime of happiness as parents.

**RESOLUTION NO. 462**

By: Hon. Colton LeBlanc (Argyle)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is an exciting and momentous event and marks the beginning of a wonderful journey; and

Whereas few events in life are as powerful and positive as the birth of a child; and

Whereas on July 5, 2022, Emma and Jade Smith welcomed their son into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Emma and Jade Smith on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them a lifetime of happiness as parents.

**RESOLUTION NO. 463**

By: Hon. Colton LeBlanc (Argyle)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is an exciting and momentous event and marks the beginning of a wonderful journey; and

Whereas few events in life are as powerful and positive as the birth of a child; and

Whereas on September 12, 2022, Gillian Stoddard and Jordan Nash welcomed their daughter into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Gillian Stoddard and Jordan Nash on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them a lifetime of happiness as parents.

**RESOLUTION NO. 464**

By: Hon. Colton LeBlanc (Argyle)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is an exciting and momentous event and marks the beginning of a wonderful journey; and

Whereas few events in life are as powerful and positive as the birth of a child; and

Whereas on April 19, 2022, Josette Bourque and Corey Clamp welcomed their twin boys into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Josette Bourque and Corey Clamp on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them a lifetime of happiness as parents.

**RESOLUTION NO. 465**

By: Hon. Colton LeBlanc (Argyle)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is an exciting and momentous event and marks the beginning of a wonderful journey; and

Whereas few events in life are as powerful and positive as the birth of a child; and

Whereas on August 11, 2022, Matthew and Britthany Gaudet welcomed their son into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Matthew and Britthany Gaudet on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them a lifetime of happiness as parents.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 466**

By: Hon. Colton LeBlanc (Argyle)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is an exciting and momentous event and marks the beginning of a wonderful journey; and

Whereas few events in life are as powerful and positive as the birth of a child; and

Whereas on April 27, 2022, Megan Hennigar and Colby Huskins welcomed their daughter into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Megan Hennigar and Colby Huskins on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them a lifetime of happiness as parents.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 467**

By: Hon. Colton LeBlanc (Argyle)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is an exciting and momentous event and marks the beginning of a wonderful journey; and

Whereas few events in life are as powerful and positive as the birth of a child; and



Whereas on June 17, 2022, Nadine and Vincent Bourque welcomed their daughter into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Nadine and Vincent Bourque on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them a lifetime of happiness as parents.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 468**

By: Hon. Colton LeBlanc (Argyle)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is an exciting and momentous event and marks the beginning of a wonderful journey; and

Whereas few events in life are as powerful and positive as the birth of a child; and

Whereas on August 11, 2022, Raquelle and Brody Pothier welcomed their son into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Raquelle and Brody Pothier on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them a lifetime of happiness as parents.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 469**

By: Hon. Colton LeBlanc (Argyle)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is an exciting and momentous event and marks the beginning of a wonderful journey; and

Whereas few events in life are as powerful and positive as the birth of a child; and

Whereas on July 30, 2022, Bailey Amirault and Samuel d'Entremont welcomed their son into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Bailey Amirault and Samuel d'Entremont on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them a lifetime of happiness as parents.

**RESOLUTION NO. 470**

By: Hon. Colton LeBlanc (Argyle)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is an exciting and momentous event and marks the beginning of a wonderful journey; and

Whereas few events in life are as powerful and positive as the birth of a child; and

Whereas on March 23, 2022, Erin Goodwin and Jocelin d'Eon welcomed their son into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Erin Goodwin and Jocelin d'Eon on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them a lifetime of happiness as parents.

**RESOLUTION NO. 471**

By: Hon. Colton LeBlanc (Argyle)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is an exciting and momentous event and marks the beginning of a wonderful journey; and

Whereas few events in life are as powerful and positive as the birth of a child; and

Whereas Raven and Logan d'Entremont welcomed their daughter into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Raven and Logan d'Entremont on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them a lifetime of happiness as parents.

**RESOLUTION NO. 472**

By: Hon. Colton LeBlanc (Argyle)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is an exciting and momentous event and marks the beginning of a wonderful journey; and

Whereas few events in life are as powerful and positive as the birth of a child; and

Whereas on April 8, 2022, Tiffany and Chris Frotten welcomed their daughter into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Tiffany and Chris Frotten on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them a lifetime of happiness as parents.