



## DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

**Speaker: Honourable Danielle Barkhouse**

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### First Session

**THURSDAY, MARCH 20, 2025**

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**HALIFAX, THURSDAY, MARCH 20, 2025**

**Sixty-fifth General Assembly**

**First Session**

**1:00 P.M.**

**SPEAKER**

Hon. Danielle Barkhouse

**DEPUTY SPEAKERS**

John White, Marco MacLeod, Tom Taggart

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

**PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS**

**PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford Basin.

TIM OUTHIT: I have a bill for you. As vice chair of the Committee on Public Bills, I am directed to report that the committee has met and considered the following bill:

**Bill No. 36 - Free Trade and Mobility within Canada Act.**

THE SPEAKER: Ordered that this bill be referred to the Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

The honourable member for Waverley-Fall River-Beaver Bank.

HON. BRIAN WONG: As chair of the Committee on Private and Local Bills, I am directed to report that the committee has met and considered the following bills:

**Bill No. 30 - Windsor Curling Club Continuation Act.**

**Bill No. 48 - An Act to incorporate the Trustees of the Third Cornwallis or Billtown Baptist Church, Kings County (amended).**

The committee recommends these bills to the favourable consideration of the House, without amendments.

THE SPEAKER: Ordered that these bills be referred to the Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

**TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: I hereby table copies of three regulations made by the House of Assembly Management Commission on March 19, 2025. These regulations must, pursuant to Subsection 11(5) of the House of Assembly Management Commission Act, be tabled in the House and adopted by a resolution of the House, which I will propose during Government Notices of Motion, before they can take effect.

THE SPEAKER: Tabled.

**STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

**GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

**RESOLUTION NO. 135**

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future date I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the House of Assembly Management Commission on March 19, 2025, approved regulations amending the House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations to increase the monthly amount outside members can claim for accommodation expenses, to increase the monthly amount members can claim for constituency expenses, and to provide for the automatic annual

increases of the fixed amounts set out in the Regulations other than the amount set out in Clause 50(a) and Subsection 33(2); and

Whereas Subsection 11(5) of the House of Assembly Management Commission Act provides that a regulation changing the level of amounts of allowances and resources provided to members is not effective unless the regulation is first laid before the House of Assembly and a resolution adopting the regulation is passed; and

Whereas the regulations that were approved by the Management Commission on March 19, 2025, and that must be adopted by resolution of the House to become effective were tabled in the House earlier today;

Therefore be it resolved that pursuant to Section 11(5) of the House of Assembly Management Commission Act, this House adopts the regulations approved by the Management Commission on March 19, 2025, and tabled in the House today.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed? It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie.

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: Madame la présidente, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

COLTON LEBLANC: Madame la présidente, aujourd'hui nous célébrons la Journée internationale de la Francophonie, une journée particulièrement spéciale ici en Nouvelle-Écosse car c'est la première fois en tant que membres observateurs que la Nouvelle-Écosse célèbre son statut comme membre de l'OIF, l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie. On est devenu membre en octobre dernier, et nous avons la chance aujourd'hui d'accueillir des membres de la communauté acadienne.

Today is International Francophonie Day. We are celebrating it here in Nova Scotia for the first time as an observing member of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, of which Nova Scotia became a member back in October of last year. It is a very special day for the Acadian Francophone community, and we have members in your gallery who join us.

Je demande aux personnes suivantes de se lever pour recevoir l'accueil chaleureux de l'Assemblée : Denise Comeau-Desautels, présidente de la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse - Denise is the president of la FANE, la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse; Jules Chiasson, executive director - directeur général de la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse; Issam Wade, qui est président du Conseil communautaire du Grand-Havre; Isabelle Pédot, executive director - directrice générale de l'Alliance française de Halifax; et Mark Bannerman, executive director - directeur général du Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Welcome to the House. We hope you enjoy your time here.

The honourable Minister of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 136**

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: Madame la présidente, à une date ultérieure je demanderai l'adoption de la résolution suivante :

Attendu que la Journée internationale de la Francophonie est soulignée le 20 mars de chaque année pour célébrer et honorer la culture, le patrimoine, et la diversité de plus de 300 millions de francophones dans le monde entier; et

Attendu que la communauté acadienne et francophone s'épanouit continuellement et contribue considérablement à la vitalité culturelle et économique de notre région depuis son premier établissement à Port-Royal en 1605; et

Attendu que de nos jours en Nouvelle-Écosse, plus de 100 000 personnes parlent le français et qu'environ 35 000 personnes d'entre elles ont le français comme langue maternelle, qu'ils s'agissent de membres de la communauté acadienne, d'autres francophones, ou de nouveaux arrivants;

Par conséquent, qu'il soit résolu que tous les membres de l'Assemblée législative se joignent à moi pour reconnaître la Journée internationale de la Francophonie et pour rendre hommage



aux communautés acadiennes et francophones florissantes de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

Madame la présidente, je demande l'adoption de cette résolution sans préavis et sans débat.

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

Whereas International Francophonie Day is recognized each year on March 20<sup>th</sup> to celebrate and honour the cultures, heritage, and diversity of the more than 300 million French speakers around the world; and

Whereas the Acadian francophone community has continued to flourish, contributing significantly to the cultural and economic vitality of our region since their first settlement in Port-Royal in 1605; and

Whereas today more than 100,000 Nova Scotians speak French, including 35,000 Acadians, francophones, and newcomers who speak it as their first language;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly join me in recognizing Francophonie Day and honouring the thriving Acadian and francophone communities in Nova Scotia.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed? It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 137**

HON. TORY RUSHTON: Speaker, I hereby given notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas for over 300 years Nova Scotia's miners have shaped our communities, our culture, and our economy, enabling for the growth of rural and urban communities alike by harnessing those resources under our feet to power our cities and towns and to heat our homes - first coal and now those minerals that will see our transition to clean energy; and

Whereas Nova Scotia would not be where it is today without the struggles and successes of those miners and their families, and today we cannot move forward without them as we continue to unlock all our critical mineral potential, bringing good-paying jobs to communities across the province; and

Whereas this year marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of William Davis, in whose name we honour miners for their sacrifices to ensure Nova Scotians today can have their good paying jobs, so hard fought for, and harness the natural resources that the world is demanding;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House join me in observing Davis Day on June 11<sup>th</sup>, reflecting the legacy of William Davis and all miners, past and present, who build up our economy, and in acknowledging the continued importance of mining for all Nova Scotians.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed? It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

## **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill No. 97 - An Act to Enhance Breast Screenings. (Susan Leblanc)**

**Bill No. 98 - An Act Respecting Pay Equity and Pay Transparency. (Hon. Iain Rankin)**

**Bill No. 99 - An Act to Amend Chapter 18 of the Acts of 2006, the Midwifery Act. (Rod Wilson)**

[1:15 p.m.]

**Bill No. 100 - An Act to Amend Chapter 5 of the Acts of 2005, the Emergency Health Services Act, to Make Ambulance Trips Free. (Rod Wilson)**

**Bill No. 101 - An Act to Amend Chapter 27 of the Acts of 1998, the Wilderness Areas Protection Act. (Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin)**

**Bill No. 102 - An Act to Amend Chapter 25 of the Acts of 1996, the Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act, and Chapter 504 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Wildlife Act. (Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin)**

**Bill No. 103 - An Act to Amend Chapter 10 of the Acts of 1994-95, the Workers' Compensation Act, to Support Mine Rescue Workers. (Kendra Coombes)**

**Bill No. 104 - An Act to Amend Chapter 1 of the Acts of 1994-95, the Environment Act. (Kendra Coombes)**

**Bill No. 105 - An Act Respecting the Viability of Cape Breton Regional Municipality. (Kendra Coombes)**

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

#### **NOTICES OF MOTION**

#### **STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

#### **RECIPS.: CORONATION MEDAL - CONGRATS.**

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: Our communities are a better place to live because of people, the people who give freely of their time for the betterment of our province. Recently, the King Charles III Coronation Medal was awarded to individuals who have made significant contributions to our communities, our province, and our country through various contributions and achievements.

I rise today to recognize the recipients from my region who were awarded the Coronation Medal for various contributions to our province and country, including advocating for veterans, serving on boards and committees, or their overall unwavering commitment and involvement in our communities. I would like to recognize Curtis Doucet, Denise Babin, Cassie Amirault, Clinton Saulnier, André Boudreau, Don McCumber, Yolande Donaldson, and John Grattan.

I ask that all members of the Legislature join me in congratulating Curtis, Denise, Cassie, Clinton, André, Don, Yolande, and John for receiving this prestigious award. Thank you all for your service and your invaluable contributions.

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

### **INT'L FRANCOPHONIE DAY: CELEB. OF CULTURE - RECOG.**

LISA LACHANCE: Madame la présidente, aujourd'hui je voudrais reconnaître la Journée internationale de la Francophonie. On célèbre cette occasion le 20 mars chaque année. Le thème cette année est « Je m'éduque, donc j'agis ». La date de 20 mars signifie l'anniversaire de la naissance de l'Agence de coopération culturelle et technique. Née le 20 mars 1970 au Niger, cette organisation deviendra éventuellement l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie. En ce moment, nous nous joignons avec des personnes partout dans le monde qui célèbrent cette journée importante.

J'invite tous les membres de l'Assemblée à me joindre en célébrant plus de 50 ans de la Journée internationale de la Francophonie.

Speaker, I rise to recognize the International Day of Francophonie, which takes place every year on the 20<sup>th</sup> of March. This year's theme for the celebration is "I educate myself, therefore I act." March 20<sup>th</sup> signifies the anniversary of the 1970 founding of the Agence de coopération culturelle et technique, which would later become the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie. Together, we join with all those who celebrate francophonie around the world.

I ask that all members of this House join me in congratulating everyone for 50 years of celebrating francophonie on March 20<sup>th</sup>.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

### **INT'L FRANCOPHONIE DAY: CELEB. OF CULTURE - RECOG.**

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Madame la présidente, je veux prendre un moment aussi pour célébrer notre peuple francophone lors de la Journée internationale de la Francophonie. Aujourd'hui, c'est une journée pour démontrer notre soutien pour la langue française ici en Nouvelle-Écosse et partout autour du monde. Nous célébrons l'histoire riche de la langue française et des peuples francophones et acadiens. Vive la francophonie.

Speaker, I want to take a moment to celebrate our francophone population today on the International Day of Francophonie. Today we show our support for the French language here in Nova Scotia and around the world. We celebrate the rich history of the French language and francophone and Acadian people. Long live francophonie.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Uniacke.

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Speaker, I beg leave to make a quick introduction before my member's statement.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

BRAD JOHNS: Speaker, in your Gallery - the Speaker's Gallery - we're joined by Tasia Yuriev and her mother, Nadine. I'll ask them to stand. Tasia is a Grade 12 student at Millwood High School who is actually going to be helping us out in our constituency office this Summer. I'd just like to take a moment to recognize them and welcome them to the House. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Welcome to the House. We hope you enjoy your time here.

The honourable member for Sackville-Uniacke.

### **SPRING: ARRIVAL - RECOG.**

HON. BRAD JOHNS: I rise today to celebrate the arrival of Spring, a season that brings with it a sense of renewal, growth, and hope here in Nova Scotia. The changing of the seasons holds a special significance as we emerge from the quiet of Winter and into the vibrant energy of Spring. This time of year, marked with the vernal equinox, symbolizes balance and harmony, as day and night stand at equal lengths.

In Nova Scotia, Spring is a time when our communities come alive, the snow melts away and reveals the first blooms and the calls of returning songbirds. Spring reminds us of the resilience of our province and our people. Just as the daffodils push through the thawing snow, Nova Scotians continue to demonstrate strength and perseverance in the face of challenges.

This season inspires us to come together to support one another and look to the future with hope and determination. As we welcome Spring, let's take a moment to appreciate the beauty of our province, the strength of our communities, and the promise of new beginnings.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

KRISTA GALLAGHER: Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

KRISTA GALLAGHER: Thank you very much. In the Speaker's Gallery today is David Gallagher. He is the executive director of Aerosan Technologies, a dedicated

international development activist, my father-in-law, and the subject of my member statement today. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Welcome. We hope you enjoy your time here.

The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

**GALLAGHER, DAVID: INT'L DEVT. WORK - THANKS**

KRISTA GALLAGHER: Today I rise to acknowledge the great work and dedication of David Gallagher. David has worked extensively with Cuso International, Oxfam Canada, and CARE Canada for the better half of five decades. During this time, he has spent working on international aid and development and promoting democracy in countries such as Cuba, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Bosnia, and Nepal.

We proudly tell the story of David being the very first person to shake Nelson Mandela's hand after he cast his vote in South Africa's first democratic election in 1994. David has always had a passion for adventure and travel. In his 20s, he drove a Land Rover from his home in Oxford all the way to Kathmandu, Nepal.

David is currently the CEO of Aerosan, a social enterprise that works towards sustainable technology development, policy advocacy, and equitable access to essential services. Aerosan's mission is to provide sustainable sanitation solutions to the world's most vulnerable populations.

David has worked on projects such as public washrooms and sanitation in Nepal, an initiative recognized by the United Nations Science, Technology and Innovation Forum in 2020. I ask the members of the House to join me in thanking David Gallagher for his extensive work and career in international development. (Standing ovation)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

**MARSHALL, AUDREY (HEIDI): COM. LEADERSHIP - RECOG.**

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: I rise in my place to recognize someone that many people know at home, and that's Audrey (Heidi) Marshall. She was just named in *Atlantic Business* magazine one of the 25 Most Powerful Women in Business.

She lives in Membertou and as I said, she has her own media advisory and consulting services company, but she's also the CEO of the Mi'kmaw Circle of Hope Society. She does a lot of work with the Elizabeth Fry Society and other organizations across the community and across the province. She does a lot of focus on reconciliation with communities, both in Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

She's a graduate of Cape Breton University. She has her law degree from Dalhousie University. She has been a friend of mine for many years. She puts on a fashion show each year in Sydney in support of advocacy work around missing and murdered Indigenous women. I rise in my place to recognize a wonderful community leader, Heidi Marshall.

[1:30 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

### **GALLAGHER, BENTON: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

NICK HILTON: Speaker, I rise today to remember Benton Gallagher. Benton passed away unexpectedly on March 12<sup>th</sup> while on a family vacation in Cuba. He was with his wife Dani, his son Aage, and parents Jon and Linda. He was only 36 years old.

Benton was a beloved teacher at Maple Grove Education Centre in Yarmouth, where he taught Grades 7 and 8 Technology Education. Benton was a strong community and union member, always putting others' rights and needs above his own.

I had the pleasure of sitting with Benton on the board of directors of the local golf and curling club. He was genuine, he was thoughtful, and he was caring. Benton valued our community, the well-being of his students, the friendships he made so easily, and most importantly, his family.

Our community lost Benton's grandfather just a few short years ago. Benton's grandfather Pat played golf at 8:08 every morning at Yarmouth Links. I have no doubt that somewhere this morning at 8:08, Benton was standing on the first tee with his grandfather, preparing for a friendly game of golf. Benton's energy and smile will be missed by many. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends at this time.

I ask all members of the House to join me in a moment of silence in his memory. (A moment of silence was observed.)

THE SPEAKER: Please be seated.

The honourable member for Fairview-Clayton Park.

LINA HAMID: Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

LINA HAMID: Today in the gallery, I have the privilege of welcoming a number of special guests to the People's House: Lisa Sullivan, the subject of my member statement, is here today with loving family members; her wife, Peggy McCann; Peggy's father,

Donald McCann; Lisa's mother, Diane Sullivan; and our very own Wendy Burns, a dear friend of Lisa's. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Welcome to the House of the People. We hope you enjoy your time here.

The honourable member for Fairview-Clayton Park.

**SULLIVAN, LISA: RETIREMENT - BEST WISHES**

LINA HAMID: Speaker, I rise to recognize Lisa Sullivan, a pillar of the Fairview community, who recently celebrated her retirement after 15 years managing Freeman's Little New York on Dutch Village Road.

Throughout her life and her work, Lisa has been a tireless community leader and champion. There has rarely been an event in Fairview that Freeman's has not sponsored or supported through her, whether it be food donations or any other help that might be needed. Lisa has brought people together through trivia, music nights, bingo nights, local music shows, auctions, fundraisers, holiday parties, family days, and so much more. Lisa fulfilled a dream by becoming a justice of the peace, being able to provide a safe space for 2SLGBTQIA+ folks. So many people have been touched by her generosity and advocacy.

In retirement, I know Lisa will remain an active community member, continuing her rewarding work as a justice of the peace, enjoying quality time in her RV, the Sully Rose, golfing, and spending time with her wonderful family. Lisa, I wish you all the best in this chapter. I ask all members of the House to join me in thanking Lisa Sullivan for her extraordinary community-building and offering heartfelt congratulations. Thank you, Lisa.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

**RHYNO, TERRI-LYN: ANIMAL ADVOCACY - RECOG.**

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Speaker, I rise to recognize Terri-Lyn Rhyno, the founder and dedicated volunteer at South Paw Conservation.

Terri-Lyn has been an invaluable volunteer leader at South Paw Conservation, dedicating countless hours to rescuing and rehabilitating animals in need. Her work has supported spay and neuter programs, as well as the rescue and care of over 1,500 animals. The profound and lasting impact extends beyond the local community of Tantallon to the broader municipality. As a volunteer leader at South Paw Conservation, she played a pivotal role in raising awareness about responsible pet ownership, spay and neutering issues, and the importance of animal advocacy.



Terri-Lyn has demonstrated that individuals can make a real difference by leading with empathy and commitment. I ask the members of the House of Assembly to join me in celebrating Terri-Lyn's remarkable achievements and acknowledge the spirit of volunteerism and community engagement that she embodies.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

**ARUDRA DANCE ACADEMY: AUTISM FUNDRAISER - RECOG.**

DAMIAN STOILOV: I rise today to recognize Arudra Dance Academy, located in Bedford South. Not only do they strive to introduce Indian classical dance to the Halifax region, but they are also dedicated to giving back to the community, including organizing an annual fundraiser for the past few years. Kalanjali raised \$2,000 in 2023, and \$3,500 in 2024, with the proceeds donated to Autism Nova Scotia.

The 2025 event is taking place this month, Speaker, and I am excited to see the result. I ask the members of this House to please help me in celebrating Arudra Dance Academy for their contributions to our community and wishing them all the best in 2025 in their drive to support Autism Nova Scotia.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: May I make a quick introduction, please?

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

SUSAN LEBLANC: I'd like to draw the attention of the members to the gallery opposite, where we have two special guests who will be the subject of my statement today. We have Sultana Ahmed and Mehnaaz Haniff. Please stand and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Welcome. We hope you enjoy your time here.

The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

**IAN'S WOMEN'S CMTE.: RAMADAN ART CONTEST - RECOG.**

SUSAN LEBLANC: In March 2021, members of the Islamic Association of Nova Scotia Women's Committee were brainstorming on how to mark Ramadan during the thick of the COVID-19 pandemic. They came up with the Ramadan Art Contest, which is still going strong five years later. The art contest, pitched by Sultana Ahmed and Mehnaaz Haniff began as a way to cheer up the community and occupy the children when they couldn't go to school or to the Masjid. Once the contest was announced, many people

requested an adult category. That first year they received submissions from 30 contestants, the theme simply being Ramadan.

Each year, around 35 people submit their art to the contest. For the last two years, the pieces have been displayed at the Dartmouth North Library. This year's theme is Lessons From the Koran. The winner from each age category will receive a \$50 prize funded by the sale of the mugs featuring last year's winning community-themed piece.

I will say right now that if members would like to see this beautiful mug, I have one that they can take a look at. It's down there. I ask the House to thank Sultana, Mehnaaz, and the women's committee for their efforts to bring people together in the name of community and creativity through the Ramadan Art Contest. Ramadan Kareem to all who are observing.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

#### **TARTAN DOWNS HOUSING PROJECT: FUNDING - RECOG.**

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Speaker, yesterday I was happy to hear an announcement at home of over \$17 million provided by the federal government to the Tartan Downs Community and Housing project. That is a big project in the core of Sydney, which is being spearheaded by that organization. It consists of some of the board members at CBU, some community leaders, and of course, CBU overall.

I rise in my place to recognize and congratulate that group. It is going to be a mixed housing space for students and for families in the community. I know the current government has invested in it as well. That's an important project for housing in Sydney.

I rise in my place to recognize and congratulate CBU and the community housing group who put a ton of work into that over the years. A big step happened yesterday.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

#### **VOL. FIREFIGHTERS: KEEPING COMMUNITIES SAFE - THANKS**

HON. FRED TILLEY: As we head into Spring and the weather gets warmer, I would like to bring the issue of grass fires to public attention. While grass fires may seem like harmless adolescent fun to many people, they are actually a serious situation for many of our local fire departments. Grass fires can get out of hand, causing injuries to those who set the fires or to our local fire departments who have to respond. The potential is also there to create property damage as well as more serious situations for homeowners.

At this time, I would like to thank the various volunteer fire departments in my constituency: The Sydney Mines Fire Department, North Sydney Fire Department,

Florence Fire Department, Coxheath Fire Department, and the Westmount Fire Department. These men and women respond to emergencies day and night to keep us safe. In addition, they add so much to our communities through volunteerism and community connection. Speaker, I would ask the members of the Legislature to join me in thanking all firefighters in our communities for keeping us safe.

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

LISA LACHANCE: I beg leave to make an introduction relative to my member statement.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

The honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

LISA LACHANCE: Joining us in the gallery is Cotney Davis. Cotney moved to Nova Scotia from St. Lucia in 2017 and attended SMU. You'll learn more about him in a minute. Welcome to the House. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Welcome. We hope you enjoy your time here.

The honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

**DAVIS, COTNEY: EVOLVE FITNESS LTD. - RECOG.**

LISA LACHANCE: Speaker, I rise today to recognize the continued impact of the Evolve Fitness organization, of which Cotney is a member. I have spoken about Evolve Fitness before in this House. For more than 10 years, Mat and Mitch Benvie have built more than a gym. It's a community centred around supporting people to be their healthiest self. It's a community that regularly bands together to fundraise and support a multitude of community needs such as Books Behind Bars, Bryony House, and over \$1.3 million raised through Ride for Cancer efforts. It's also a community that supports everyone who walks through the door - whether that be in Halifax, Bedford, Dartmouth, Truro, or right here in Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

Located in Founders Square, there is an Evolve gym where you can sign up for personal training or the Evolve Fitness Forever group classes. Best of all, when you go, you'll be under the expert guidance of Cotney Davis. Lifting really heavy weights is a great antidote to long days sitting in this House. I extend my gratitude to the Evolve community and to Cotney, and to encourage all members to check them out.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

**U.S. THREATS: NEED TO STAND TOGETHER - RECOG.**

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: For generations, Canadians have stood firm against threats to our sovereignty. From resisting invasion in 1812 to proving our strength on the world stage at Vimy Ridge, we have never been a nation to back down. Today, we face a new challenge - one that comes not from the past but from our closest neighbour. Every day, President Trump is making reckless claims about our country, calling us the 51<sup>st</sup> state and threatening our independence. His words are not just empty rhetoric; they are fuelling anxiety, uncertainty, and division.

But let's be clear: Canada is not for sale. Canada is not to be taken. Canada is strong. We are free, and we are unbreakable. At a time when the world is filled with instability, we must stand together as a nation. Let's stand for Canada, stand for democracy, and stand for our future united and unshaken. Let's let the world know we are not the 51<sup>st</sup> state. We are Canada.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

**GOODLAND, DORIS: NAT'L CH'SHIPS COMPETITION - RECOG.**

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: I rise today to wish Doris Goodland good luck at the Canadian Indoor Track and Field Championships in Ontario this weekend. Doris is the daughter of David and Chelsea Goodland from Cloverville, Antigonish - and full disclosure, she is my beloved niece. Doris is a terrific young athlete. She is determined, dedicated, and disciplined in her training and her studies. More importantly, she is kind and compassionate.

She has exhibited great sportsmanship and determination, especially in difficult moments. She is the eldest of four children, and is a responsible and caring big sister to her siblings. She has an incredible sense of humour and is a terrific storyteller. Doris will be competing in the 60-metre, 200-metre, and 300-metre races, and the 4x200-metre relay.

Speaker, I ask all members of this House to wish Doris good luck as she competes nationally. I have complete confidence that Doris will represent herself and Nova Scotia well.

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

**PILKEY, TERESA: LITTER CLEANUP - RECOG.**

KENDRA COOMBES: I rise to recognize litter warrior Teresa Pilkey. Teresa has been picking up litter on the New Waterford highway in South Bar, and the community has noticed her efforts. While in Halifax, a community member came to my office to tell us about Teresa and a group of volunteers cleaning up the community, specifically along this

very dangerous highway. We can all contribute to cleaner communities by safely cleaning up litter and by simply not littering.

[1:45 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Annapolis.

**SAVAGE OIL: CONTRIBS. TO COMS. - RECOG.**

DAVID BOWLBY: I rise today to recognize Savage Oil, a local business in Middleton that has been keeping our community warm for more than 25 years. Founded in 1998 by Brock Savage, this family-owned and -operated company has grown from a single truck to a fleet of six delivery trucks and two transport tankers. This allows them to service more customers across the entire Annapolis Valley. It is indeed the entire Annapolis Valley; I drove for them one Winter and we covered a lot of ground. As well, Savage Oil's dedication to supporting local organizations, from the Middleton Arena to the Royal Canadian Legion, reflects their care for our community.

I ask all members to join me in recognizing Savage Oil for their contributions to our communities and their commitment to keeping Nova Scotians warm this Winter.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

**INT'L FRANCOPHONIE DAY: CELEB. OF CULTURE - RECOG.**

SUZY HANSEN: I rise today to recognize Francophonie Day, March 20, 2025. Francophonie Day is observed by the International Organisation of La Francophonie to celebrate the French language and francophone culture. It is celebrating the commemoration of the 1970 Niamey Convention, where French-speaking states signed to align their mutual interests.

On this day, more than 300 million francophones across different continents and countries celebrate their languages and the diversity and love for the French language. The beauty of language is that as we learn it, we too are a part of its evolution, because language can change and adapt and intertwine us all.

Let us honour our French-speaking communities in Nova Scotia and celebrate Francophonie Day, and may we aspire to learn this beautiful language.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

**GRAHAM, KERRY: GREENWOOD CLERK - THANKS**

CHRIS PALMER: I rise today to recognize an outstanding individual in our community, Kerry Graham, who is the village clerk for the Village of Greenwood. Kerry has been a steadfast and dedicated public servant whose commitment to the residents of Greenwood is making a tremendous impact.

Kerry's leadership, professionalism, and forward-thinking approach have helped strengthen the village's operations and services. Beyond her role as clerk, Kerry is a champion for community engagement, whether it's through her involvement in local initiatives, her efforts to modernize administrative processes, or her unwavering support for village development, Kerry's work continues to shape Greenwood into the thriving and welcoming community it is today. She's the driving force behind bringing the ever-popular Ribfest to the community over the last couple of Summers. It's been a great success.

I'm very thankful for her friendship and support of my recent campaign. She did a great job running my campaign office. I ask all members of the House to join me in thanking Kerry Graham for her dedication, her vision, and her many contributions to the Village of Greenwood and surrounding communities.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

**SACKVILLE: KRAFT HOCKEYVILLE BID - RECOG.**

PAUL WOZNEY: Recently, I congratulated Sackville's Kraft Hockeyville committee for a first-rate campaign founded on local pride and sincere dedication. Today I rise to report that Sackville is the only contestant in the Maritimes to make the top four.

The work isn't done yet. The next phase of the competition gives us a short window to win over the course of a single day. Canadians will be asked to cast a vote at [krafthockeyville.ca](http://krafthockeyville.ca). When the voting opens on April 5<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m., all of us need to be ready to jump over the boards and get on the ice.

I'm no fan of the Boston Bruins or the Florida Panthers, but even I respect that Brad Marchand, a former TASA Duck and long-time rival of the Sackville Flyers, took to Instagram to voice his support for Sackville's bid, noting that the Sackville Arena is a special place all Nova Scotians can get behind. If even a "little ball of hate" can set aside his differences with Sackville, surely we all can too. Though it may say Sackville in our arena, a final four victory will be one all Nova Scotians can celebrate.

Please join us on April 5<sup>th</sup> in showing Canada that Sackville is a clear-cut choice as Kraft Hockeyville 2025.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

**AMHERST: FRENCH TOAST FEST - RECOG.**

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: What do you do when you have an egg factory like Maritime Pride eggs, a bread factory like Wonder Bread, and you're surrounded by maple sugar woods? You have French Toast Fest. This week in the town of Amherst, restaurants and coffee shops and delis are serving up a menu for French Toast Fest. In Amherst this week, from March 17<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>, local restaurants are pulling out all the stops to create delectable, one-of-a-kind French toast creations in celebration of French Toast Fest.

Participating restaurants include Abstract Coffee, Art of Eating Deli & Catering, Bliss Cafe, Breakfast at Brittney's, Portlander Jamaican Restaurant, the Elm Tree, the Old Warehouse Café and Lounge, Harvest Clean Eats, House of Birria, and Johnny's Java. French Toast Fest was also celebrated this week at Spring Street Academy and it was a huge success.

Thank you to the original brainchild for this event, Rebecca Taylor, and thank you to all of the Town of Amherst staff who worked with local businesses to put this together. Thank you. I can't wait to get home and enjoy some of the treats.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

**MACPHEE, CYRIL: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

HON. TREVOR BOUDREAU: I rise today to acknowledge the life of Cyril MacPhee of Sampsonville, who passed away on January 31<sup>st</sup>.

Cyril was well known across Nova Scotia for his musical talent. He performed with bands Notework and Brakin' Tradition, touring across Canada and the U.S., and opening for acts like The Rankins before venturing into a solo career. Cyril was known for his vast range of musical knowledge, performing Scottish, Irish, and rock music. He was a fixture in the festival circuit and served as the Artist in Residence at Celtic Colours in 2012, sharing the stage with world-renowned musicians.

Cyril leaves behind his wife Rhodena, his daughter Haley, and many extended family and friends who will deeply miss his sense of humour and his voice. He truly was one of a kind. I ask members to join me in honouring the extraordinary life of Cyril MacPhee and offering our deepest sympathies to his family.

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

**LYME DISEASE: NEED FOR ACTION - RECOG.**

KENDRA COOMBES: A friend of mine, Keith O'Flaherty, has Lyme disease. A number of years ago, he began experiencing severe health issues. Despite the number of tests, blood tests, doctor visits from Sydney to Halifax, numerous ER trips, and the process of elimination, no one thought to test for Lyme disease. After two years of self-advocacy, Keith was diagnosed. He had been working hard to promote early detection, because this disease can masquerade. The symptoms are linked to other illnesses. The diagnosis delay can be devastating and have significant consequences for people like Keith, especially the chronic health issues that can require time off from work. Keith still suffers from the health effects years after diagnosis and treatment.

Speaker, more education on ticks and access to health care, testing, and Lyme disease specialists are needed in Nova Scotia.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

**MACNEIL, BRENNAL: THE CORNER STORE BY MISSBRENNAL - RECOG.**

KYLE MACQUARRIE: I rise today to recognize an outstanding entrepreneur and community leader, Brenna MacNeil, owner and founder of The Corner Store by missbrenna in Inverness.

Originally from Inverness, Brenna spent 25 years in Halifax, where she studied graphic design, a path that sparked her passion for creating her iconic Cape Breton Collection. After five years as a vendor at the Mabou Farmers' Market, launching a Coastal Collection, and hosting a successful pop-up shop, Brenna took the leap and established a permanent storefront.

Beyond her business, Brenna is a true community champion. She hosts creative workshops, bringing people together for evenings of fun, relaxation, and artistic expression. She and her team actively participate in Summer festivals and seize every opportunity to support the community that has supported her.

I ask all members of this House to join me in recognizing Brenna's dedication, creativity, and unwavering community spirit. Cape Breton has always been known for its breathtaking landscapes, but thanks to artists like Brenna, it is also known for its breathtaking designs.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.



**NAT'L MACARON DAY: PASTRY APPRECIATION - RECOG.**

SUZY HANSEN: I rise today to recognize National Macaron Day. This day is meant to celebrate the tasty goodness that is the macaron. A macaron is a sweet-tasting confectionery that has its origins in France. It is a chance for macaron lovers to taste delectable French macarons from various bakeries while also supporting local businesses. I just have to say that P4 Patisserie makes the most amazing, delicious, melt-in-your-mouth macarons - tasted by moi, et c'est très magnifique.

This day also coincides with the first day of Spring, as well as the International Day of Happiness - both of which are very symbolic of the effect a macaron has on us. I would like all members of this House to get out and have a breath of Spring air and find a bit of happiness with a delicious macaron.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis.

**MORRISON, ALEX: COM. SERV. - THANKS**

HON. JILL BALSER: I rise today to recognize and extend my sincere gratitude to Alex Morrison, a dedicated public servant who has represented District 6 with distinction for the past 12 years. As a resident of Cornwallis Park, Alex has served with unwavering commitment and passion and significant contributions to the growth and development of our community.

For the last two years, he has held the position of warden, a role in which he led with integrity, vision, and a deep sense of responsibility. Known for his quick wit, engaging history lessons and his sense of humour, Alex has brought energy and enthusiasm to every meeting, every project and every initiative he was ever part of. His ability to balance hard work with laughter made him a beloved figure among his colleagues and the people he served.

Alex, through his years of service, has represented the Municipality of the County of Annapolis with the utmost dignity and pride. His contributions have made a lasting impact, and his leadership will be missed by all. We thank him for his years of service and wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

**TRANSIT OPER. & WORKER APPREC. WK.: IMPACT - RECOG.**

SUSAN LEBLANC: As a frequent transit rider, I would like to mark this Transit Operator & Worker Appreciation Week by appreciating all the transit workers who move many of us around every single day. I'm proud that the Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 508, is located in Dartmouth North, just around the corner from my office.

Transit operators and workers get us to work, school, appointments, the store, to see friends and family, out on the town and back again. They move us around in all sorts of weather and other difficult conditions. This week and every week, we can show transit workers our appreciation by treating them with respect and kindness anytime we board a ferry, bus, or Access-A-Bus. We can also do so by properly funding and prioritizing public transit clear across the province, so that they have tools that they need to do their jobs.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

HON. SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: Imagine my surprise, looking up at the gallery and seeing a favourite constituent: Howard Gibson. Howard - I was not expecting to see him today, but he is a dedicated volunteer in the greater New Germany area and a stalwart of Royal Canadian Legion Branch 102 in New Germany. And if he's not at the Legion, he is at the school. He is a real worker for our community. The fact that he's up there probably means we need to speak about something. But actually, we've got an appointment to talk soon. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

**GIDMAN, MELISSA: CONSTITUENCY ASSISTANT - WELCOME**

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Today I rise to welcome Melissa Gidman to my office. Melissa officially took on the very difficult position of being my constituency assistant at the start of the year. I am pleased that she has agreed to fill this position.

I'm going to go a little off-script here because my office has never been cleaner, and that's because I'm never there. Just joking. Melissa is incredible. She's such a good constituency assistant that at 7:30 this morning, she dropped off homemade rolls to my house. Melissa will be stepping into the shoes of my previous CAs, Kelly and Codie - who did an incredible job - in a full-time capacity. With her previous work experience, compassion and empathy, she is a fantastic fit for the office. She is always willing to listen to not only constituents but my rants and find solutions to the issues that our community is facing.

I am excited, really excited, to have Melissa work with us in Halifax Atlantic, and I know she will be a huge asset to our office and to the community. Welcome aboard, Melissa.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

HON. TIMOTHY HALMAN: Permission to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

TIMOTHY HALMAN: In the gallery we have two very good friends of mine, Jeff Brown and Lisa Beddow. Jeff and Lisa, I'd ask you to please stand and receive the warm welcome of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Welcome to the House. We hope you enjoy your time here.

Order. The time allotted for Statements by Members has expired.

[2:00 p.m.]

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

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

THE SPEAKER: Order. The time is now 2:00 p.m. We will finish at 2:50 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

### **PREM.: UNPROCLAIMED BILLS - NOTIFY**

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Speaker, when legislation is passed in this House, we often invite stakeholders to mark the moment. This is especially true when legislation has wide-ranging impacts or has been championed by advocates or community groups. But we have seen bills that get passed by this House fade into obscurity because governments never proclaimed them. If a bill is passed but not proclaimed, does the Premier think that those same stakeholders deserve the courtesy of being informed?

HON. TIM HOUSTON (The Premier): Speaker, when the Legislature makes a decision on a bill, I'm not sure which ones are proclaimed and which ones are not. I think our government has proclaimed the legislation that we've passed, but the broader theme of the question is: This government listens very carefully to Nova Scotians and takes every step to respect Nova Scotians. When we make a mistake, we have the courage to say we made a mistake, and we will continue to operate like that. We are only here in support of Nova Scotians. That's why we do everything we do.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Speaker, we have a law requiring criminal record checks and training for bouncers at bars in this province. It was passed, but it was never proclaimed. It was brought forward in 2010 after a young man died following an assault at a bar. His parents were here when it passed, and they were here to voice their concerns this

week. The family only found out that the law wasn't enforced after learning of another tragic, preventable death similar to that of their son.

Not only has the law been left unproclaimed, but it will soon disappear completely because of changes proposed by this government. Will the government enact this law so that no other family has to go through what this family has suffered?

THE PREMIER: Speaker, obviously these are incredibly tragic situations, for sure. The hearts of all Nova Scotians go out - when somebody is out with friends having a good time and something tragic happens, those are heartbreaking stories to hear. In the case of this piece of legislation, I think it was passed by the NDP - I'm not sure why the NDP didn't proclaim it. Then, of course, we had years of Liberal government, and I am not sure why they didn't proclaim it. My understanding is that when it came to our attention, the department worked to make some regulation changes and try to meet the safety standards, but this is certainly an overall - it's just a tragic situation for everyone, for sure.

CLAUDA CHENDER: The families feel that this tragic situation could have been prevented by this law being put into force and whoever proclaimed it - it's true, the NDP government didn't, but it is this government that has the opportunity to do it now.

Another example of legislation that was passed in this House with all-party support is the Coastal Protection Act. Years later, with no explanation, this government shelved it and there was a tremendous public outcry. Despite this government's terrible decision not to enact the law, that public outcry has actually forced some of the investments that we've seen. Now with these changes, Nova Scotians won't know when legislation isn't enacted.

In addition to all of the other attempts to evade oversight, why does the Premier think that keeping information about the bills that govern us secret is necessary?

THE PREMIER: Speaker, certainly it was no secret that we were not going to proclaim the Coastal Protection Act. To insinuate that was a secret would absolutely be false. We are not proclaiming the Coastal Protection Act. It will not happen under our government, and we made that clear before the election. Nova Scotians had a chance to have their say on what they thought of that as part of the election, and I think they spoke loud and clear because what we did do - and they had great respect for - is we initiated another suite of actions.

If we are not going to proclaim a piece of legislation, we will be pretty frank and clear. It is unfortunate that the NDP wasn't equally as frank and clear when they decided not to proclaim this legislation all those years ago.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Liberal Party.

**PREM.: PROFESSIONAL REGULATORS - EXEMPT**

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: We all support reducing trade and economic barriers between provinces, but we also have a responsibility to ensure that removing these barriers doesn't mean lowering professional standards in Nova Scotia. This government has already had to amend legislation multiple times, and still serious concerns remain. Last night, we heard from engineers, social workers, and other professional regulators who fear that under this policy, Nova Scotia could be left with the lowest standards in the country. Now that the government says they will exempt health care regulators, will the Premier do the same for the other professions to protect public safety?

THE PREMIER: I personally spoke to a number of those associations before the committee. I'm glad they had an opportunity to come to the Public Bills Committee. That committee is functioning very well - Nova Scotians having an opportunity to come here and have their say on legislation to members of the Legislature. Now, two weeks ago we were told by the NDP that that was not going to happen in this province anymore, that in our affront on democracy, we've gotten rid of that committee. That was not true then. It's not true now. We will continue to listen to Nova Scotians, and the Public Bills Committee is a committee we watch very closely.

DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Attacking the NDP on my questions - okay. Beyond the risk of lowering professional standards, the government's approach also lacks a clear enforcement mechanism. If someone is licensed in another province but working here, who is responsible for ensuring they follow our rules? What happens if they violate those rules? Right now, there's no clear answer. Can the Premier tell us what steps the government is taking to prevent bad actors from exploiting these gaps?

THE PREMIER: We've said that people practising here who are licensed in other jurisdictions should be licensed here. We've said that. We made that clear. We'll make that change to the bill, but the reality is this piece of legislation is getting national attention in a very positive way. I had a tremendous discussion with Minister Freeland yesterday, who is thanking Nova Scotia for their leadership, saying they want to work with us. The Prime Minister is personally engaged in this legislation and giving shout-outs to Nova Scotia. This is a good bill for Canadians, and I think . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order.

The honourable Leader of the Liberal Party.

DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: We support the bill. We support the economic components of the bill. (Interruption) Oh, I'm sorry. I forgot. That's right. That's right. You're right. Absolutely.

THE SPEAKER: We're not allowed to speak about bills that are on the floor.

DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: That's right.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Liberal Party.

DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: We support the intent of what everyone's trying to do in this House in breaking down trade barriers, and professional regulators play a critical role in protecting public safety, but under the government's policy, regulations in Nova Scotia may not have the authority to properly oversee professionals working here with out-of-province credentials. We've already seen them backtrack on health care. Regulators of other professions are raising the alarm. Will the Premier listen to them as well?

THE PREMIER: As we've previously stated just a few minutes ago and numerous times: Yes, we will. We will ensure that there's a requirement to license with the local registrar. I think that's an important thing that came out of discussions that I had with a number of regulatory bodies. But let's not lose sight. This is leading the country. We are leading the country, and I think when it comes right down to it, that's the Opposition's problem with this bill. They don't like to see Nova Scotia leading the country. They prefer it when the sky is falling. The sky is not falling. There are good days ahead for this province, and I am delighted to be leading it at this time.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

### **DAE: TRUMP-STYLE POLICIES - EXPLAIN**

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Yesterday, the *Globe and Mail* reported - or this morning, actually - that the U.S. government is threatening the academic freedom of Canadian researchers. At the Trump government's request, U.S. funding agencies are being required to tie support to conservative government policy. The American government, under the guise of cutting wasteful spending, is letting conservative values dictate what research gets funded. Here at home, the government wants to let the minister decide and dictate the priorities of Research Nova Scotia instead of leaving these decisions up to the independent expert board. My question to the minister is: Why is this government imposing Trump-style policies on Nova Scotians?

THE SPEAKER: Do you want to just hiss and boo at each other all day? (Applause)

The honourable Minister of Advanced Education.

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: The only Trump-style politics I see is the fear and rhetoric coming from the Opposition - the bending of the narrative to fit their narrative, speaking into echo chambers. The truth is - we've said it all along - hundreds of millions of dollars goes into investments here in Nova Scotia. We will have no input into that. There's \$8 million that comes from Nova Scotia taxpayers. We are going to work with

universities - w-o-r-k - work with universities to ensure that they are meeting what Nova Scotians need and the universities need also.

THE SPEAKER: Order. The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Let me be clear: The minister has given himself the authority to dictate the research priorities of Research Nova Scotia - period - full stop. Nova Scotians know what's going on. The overreaching proposal to change how this funding works is being pushed forward despite tremendous outcry. A representation for the Association of Nova Scotia University Teachers, many of whom are funded by this, said that the consequences extend far beyond policy. It threatens academic independence, institutional autonomy, and the very foundation of higher education in our province.

My question to the minister is: Will the government drop this frightening agenda and walk back these changes?

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: The only thing frightening is the flip-flop we hear. One day they support the AG; the next day they don't support the AG. The AG has been very clear about money that goes to universities. The responsibility of government is to make sure it's being spent and to track it. This does not touch academic freedom. Those members haven't spoken to a single university president, but they seem to know what's on their minds. I've met with them several times; we are having conversations.

I did not interrupt you. Please don't interrupt me.

THE SPEAKER: Fair statement, and you are out of time.

Order.

The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

#### **DAE: MUSIC BUSINESS PGM. CUT - EXPLAIN**

SUSAN LEBLANC: NSCC's Music Business Program attracts top talent. Grammy-winning artist Dyson Knight of the Baha Men recently said he was excited to enroll in this program so his "music can step up a bit." That's a quote, and I will table it. We're hearing that this program is being cut because it doesn't fall within any of the government's priority areas. My question to the minister is: Why is support for the music industry not a priority for this government?

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: I am confused, Speaker. You want us to not interfere with academic freedom on one hand, and then the next person gets up and says to interfere with academic freedom on the other. This government has supported the arts more than any other government. There is an announcement today around a sound stage for the

arts. The film industry and the arts industry are flourishing in Nova Scotia. The government is not directing the NSCC on what programs to have and what not to have. They make decisions based on enrolment and what they see fit for their own institution.

[2:15 p.m.]

SUSAN LEBLANC: This government is intent on aligning post-secondary institutions with their own agenda. We have heard it over and over again, and we have a bill in front of us saying that very thing. The loss of the Music Business Program shows that this government's agenda is having a really negative consequence on the lives of Nova Scotians. Speaking of film, many of the people who write and compose music for our film industry will have gone through this program that's being cut. Without this program, we will lose talented people, and the continued success of our music industry will be put at risk. Why is the government putting Nova Scotia's vibrant and valuable music industry at risk?

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: I don't know how many times I can repeat it before it sinks in. We are not going to tell schools what they can and cannot teach. What we're saying is that when you have positions that are not being filled - health care positions - we need them filled. We are asking them because they are seeing a shortage in funding because of the temporary student caps to align with the workforce, to work with the workforce. Guess what? NSCAD is just as valuable as Dal. The School of Theology is just as valuable as any school. We appreciate the arts. We will continue to support the arts. NSCC is an institution all to their own.

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

#### **DNR: URANIUM & RADON HEALTH RISKS - ADDRESS**

LISA LACHANCE: Despite the rhetoric about lazy policy and special interest, Nova Scotians have very real concerns that we hope the minister will respond to, such as: If uranium mining exploration starts in Nova Scotia, will I have the ability to protect my property or woodlot? How can people's well water be monitored? How can people's health and the health of workers be protected? How many jobs will be created? Does the minister agree that Nova Scotians have legitimate questions about lifting the ban on uranium mining?

HON. TORY RUSHTON: Yes, of course. Communication and conversation are very important. That's key in this development of the sector. Quite honestly, as the mineral rights regulator, we're not the regulator of the development. Mining for uranium is actually regulated - as we discussed during Estimates this year - by a federal agency. It's not a provincial agency, but they also have to work with our local Department of Environment to ensure that there's a regulatory pathway there. Conversations have to happen, protection of well water has to happen. We've been clear right from the get-go. We will be having



conversations with all partners, and we will make sure we can do things safely before anything takes place.

LISA LACHANCE: Throughout our discussions on uranium, the minister has asserted that all we have ever known about uranium in Nova Scotia is lost, and thus we haven't been able to manage this resource at all. But I think the minister's own department has some information, such as this 2020 report that maps uranium and well water across the province. I'll table that.

We can do lots to learn about uranium and the risk of radon in this province. We can make well water testing free and keep updating this map. We can expand the provincial radon testing program. We can learn a lot without ever touching the earth. There are airborne geophysical surveys, magnetic and gravity surveys, aerial radial metric surveys, and seismic surveys.

What I would like to know is: Can the minister outline how we can address the health risks of uranium and radon without mining uranium in Nova Scotia?

TORY RUSHTON: I can't stress it enough again: Safe, safe, safe. That is the process we are following on this. The studies that the member is talking about - us doing research and evaluating what we have - the ban is there. We can't even study it from a health risk aspect. The ban needs to be lifted before we can actually look at this aspect.

This is a process that we're taking for manyfold reasons. Health and safety is one of them, and possible economic benefit. We know that there are radon issues in and around because of uranium in our system. We don't know the amount of quantity and the quality of the radon that we have in Nova Scotia. This is one of the steps that we need to take. Actually, uranium is one of the critical minerals in Canada that the Canadian federal government has on their list as well.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

### **DOE: POWER BILL INCREASES - EXPLAIN**

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Nova Scotians are opening their power bills to find shocking increases. Some have more than doubled. I know members opposite would see those emails coming in. What makes this even worse is that the Premier and his party ran on lowering power bills, but under their leadership, power rates have increased by more than 20 per cent - and they still have all of the expensive coal units running that were in 2021, four years later. Can the Minister of Energy explain why Nova Scotians are facing these massive increases and what his government is going to do to ensure that people can afford to keep the lights on?

HON. TREVOR BOUDREAU: As a government, we've taken extraordinary measures to support Nova Scotians and reduce the risk of significant increases in power bills. Absolutely, during colder months - and this has been a colder year - electricity bills do go up as we were typically in our houses more often. Just as an aside, smart meters are audited every year. Approximately 300 of them are audited by Measurement Canada to ensure their accuracy. What I would say is that if people are feeling that they are being overcharged for their power, I would encourage them to reach out to Nova Scotia Power to get an understanding of that.

IAIN RANKIN: Nova Scotia Power is in front of the NSUARB this week for hearings to justify its soaring fuel costs. The Consumer Advocate has made it clear over the last two years that Nova Scotia Power has spent millions of dollars on decisions that were "imprudent or uneconomic." I'll table that. In New Brunswick, after seeing similar power bill increases - and I'm talking about comparing last Winter to this Winter - their government is launching an independent audit of their utility to get real answers and ensure accountability. Will this government commit to launching an independent audit of Nova Scotia Power or intervene at the NSUARB to find out exactly what's driving up costs, in some cases more than double?

TREVOR BOUDREAU: We absolutely are always looking out for the best interests of ratepayers here in Nova Scotia. As I said before, if people feel that they are being overcharged, I encourage them to reach out to Nova Scotia Power to make sure that they can have Measurement Canada take a look at that smart meter to see if it is acting appropriately. I will also say, with respect to power bills, Efficiency Nova Scotia does some tremendous work. I would encourage Nova Scotians to reach out to Efficiency Nova Scotia to have a conversation about how to support reducing their energy needs. As I said, we'll continue to look at supporting Nova Scotians to the best of our abilities.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

#### **OSD: INAUGURATION MEETING SCHEDULE - TABLE**

PAUL WOZNEY: Yesterday, the Premier said he was proud that the Minister of Opportunities and Social Development took a taxpayer-funded trip to celebrate the inauguration of the American president. Apparently, this government was so proud that it didn't bother to tell Nova Scotians about the trip, and the minister is so proud that he won't tell us what he did on that trip. My question to the minister is: Will he table his meeting schedule so that Nova Scotians will know that they got their money's worth?

HON. SCOTT ARMSTRONG: As I said the other day, I was proud to be part of a team of Canadians down there celebrating not the inauguration of the President of the United States but celebrating our ability to stand up for Canada, to fight the tariffs, and making sure our voices are heard amongst Canadian manufacturers and business leaders - many American business leaders and politicians. We need to use every connection we have

and every ability we have to make sure that Americans understand the value that we have to them, and how much these tariffs are going to hurt their people. That's what I was doing. I was proud to do it on behalf of Canada.

PAUL WOZNEY: The Premier accused us yesterday of trying to minimize this government's efforts south of the border, and yet by not being transparent about the minister's trip in the first place, the government minimizes the fact that Nova Scotians footed the bill for the minister to celebrate a president we all knew was threatening to annex our country and wreak havoc on our economy. I ask again: Will the minister table his meeting schedules so Nova Scotians can know that celebrating Donald Trump's big day was worth their money?

SCOTT ARMSTRONG: Speaker, I can tell you that one of the meetings I had was with a reporter from the *Boston Globe*, where I stood strong for Nova Scotia, promoted Michelin - which is one of our biggest employers - as well as our seafood industry, and many others. I was the only provincial Cabinet minister quoted. There were many down at the inauguration. There also was a Liberal minister, a Liberal MP, and many others quoted defending Canada. I was proud to be part of that team.

We need to get our voices heard amongst American politicians and amongst American business leaders. More importantly, the American public has to understand what this administration, which I believe is the most protectionist administration since the 1970s - we have to do what we can to get our message out so that American people will stand up and fight for Canada as well.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

### **OSD: INCOME ASSISTANCE - FIX**

KRISTA GALLAGHER: Speaker, human rights lawyer Vince Calderhead has called this government's treatment of people who receive income assistance "a borderline human rights violation." While the costs of food, rent, and basic necessities have skyrocketed, this government has done little to lift people out of poverty. Why does this government continue to allow folks on income assistance to live in poverty? That's to the Minister of Opportunities and Social Development.

HON. SCOTT ARMSTRONG: Finally a good question, Speaker. Listen, nobody wants to be on income assistance. We need to make sure that we stand up for people and support them when they're going through times of need. That's why, because of inflation, we have actually indexed income assistance to inflation. Many governments talked about it. It was this Premier and this government who did that. I want to thank the Minister of Advanced Education and the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development for putting that through. It was passed on April 1<sup>st</sup> but retroactive from July at 2.5 per cent,

and 3.1 per cent on January 1<sup>st</sup>, which aligned it with the CPI. What's really important is we're working to make sure that . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order. The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

KRISTA GALLAGHER: This government talks a lot about indexing income assistance, but we're hearing from people every day that it's just not enough. The rates are too low for people to afford the basics, and the rules are too strict for people to engage in flexible work when the opportunities are available. Will the minister commit to actually fixing the Income Assistance program?

SCOTT ARMSTRONG: Like I said, the Income Assistance program is there for people when they need it. We have indexed it. We're working on making sure that we keep up with inflation to support them. The best social program is a job. That's why we're putting effort, time, and programs in place to connect people to employment and work.

I want to talk specifically about the EDGE program. This was a pilot project that we have now made permanent. Of the 252 participants in 2023-24, 40 per cent of them have now connected to employment and have come off income assistance. We want to make sure we connect people to work. That's our goal: Fewer people on income assistance, more people employed. That's what they want, and we're here to support them.

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

### **EECD: DAYCARE WAIT TIMES - REDUCE**

KENDRA COOMBES: Speaker, the last time the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives analyzed the level of child care that is needed versus the level of child care that is available, Cape Breton stood out. The vast majority of towns were classified as child care deserts, meaning access to child care was so scarce that there were more than three kids competing for each spot. Can the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development explain why it is that this government is making families compete for daycare spots in Cape Breton?

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Obviously, we're working very hard to meet our target. On average, most parents' child care has been reduced by 50 per cent. We're opening up thousands and thousands of spaces. We're going to continue to work with our non-profit providers. As a matter of fact, we were just in discussion on a new child care agreement. We understand the pressures that are on parents. We want to make sure that every family has child care for their children, and we're going to continue to work toward that goal.

KENDRA COOMBES: In 2023, this government promised two daycares with more than 300 spaces in Cape Breton. Slow progress has been made. Since they were

announced, the cost of delivering these spaces has increased seven times over, and I will table that. Neither families nor the Province can afford to wait any longer. How much longer will the families in Cape Breton have to wait for the daycare spaces that they needed yesterday?

[2:30 p.m.]

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: They not only needed them yesterday - they needed them five, ten, fifteen years ago. I wish that those investments would have been made then, but we are catching up. Due to the past child care agreement, lots of work had been done, and we've got a new child care agreement on the way.

We are committed to ensuring that people who need child care will get it, whether they're in Cape Breton, they're in Digby, they're in Spryfield, they're in Fairview - it doesn't matter where. We want to ensure that they have child care - and there's no barrier to work; that people can find the child care so they can go to work, they can go to school, and they can do the things that everybody's doing. We'll continue to work with the people in Cape Breton. We'll continue to work with the federal government and our non-profits.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

#### **LSI: FOR. WORKER PGM. APPLICATIONS - APPROVE**

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: My question is for the Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration. This government has paused approving applications for the Nova Scotia Foreign Worker Program, and the results are that employers do not have enough workers, and many business owners in Cumberland North have told me they are on a pathway to possibly closing their business due to a lack of workers. The result also means that workers who have been employed here in Nova Scotia are anxiously awaiting their work visas to be approved. They are stressed, and they find themselves in financial hardship. Will the Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration tell the House when the Nova Scotia Foreign Worker Program will be reinstated, and when will applications once again be processed and approved?

HON. NOLAN YOUNG: Right now in Nova Scotia, we're focusing on attracting the skilled workers that the province needs. The federal allocations were cut, so we are prioritizing key sectors such as construction and health care, but I believe the program the member is talking about would be the federal Temporary Foreign Worker Program. If we'd like to take it offline, I could help her navigate.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: I actually have, in my defence, sent two letters to the minister about this because I have people who are coming to my office every day who don't have enough money to pay their bills. They've been working here in the province for a couple of years, some of them. Many of our restaurants are on a pathway to

being closed because they don't have enough workers because they're all waiting for approval of their applications. This is a major problem.

In fact, there's another thing that's happened. Our international nurses who have come here - welcomed, in fact, and have Nova Scotia nursing licenses - are not being hired by the Nova Scotia Health Authority, and the bridging program has been paused.

I'm wondering: Is there any connection between these two things? At a time when we need these workers is not the time to pause the door.

NOLAN YOUNG: As I mentioned before, when it came to our skilled workers, we're working with our industry partners and we're working to fill the labour shortages. If the member has something in particular, I'd be happy to chat with her offline.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

### **PSC: PUBLIC SERVANTS' RIGHTS - PROTECT**

PAUL WOZNEY: Public servants have been put on notice by this government. On February 18<sup>th</sup>, the Premier sent an email to public servants directing them to become more efficient problem solvers. That same day, the Premier shamefully tabled a budget that cut 159 positions from the public service and has since put forward measures to strip public servants of basic labour rights. My question is to the Minister of the Public Service Commission: What problem is being solved by this government scrapping the labour rights of public servants?

HON. TWILA GROSSE: I've said this a number of times, and I will continue to echo it. We appreciate our public servants. They work hard every day for Nova Scotia. They are the backbone of our government. They will always be treated fairly. Let me tell you a bit about the department that I am so proud to represent: the Public Service Commission. The Public Service Commission's role is to ensure that departments are supported to excel in their roles.

PAUL WOZNEY: I thank the minister for an explanation of what her department does, but we still haven't heard a single viable explanation about why these changes are necessary. The government is trying to make it sound better by saying employees dismissed without cause will receive compensation for years of service. The fact remains that public servants standing up with expert evidence or concerns raised by Nova Scotians that don't align with this government can be fired without additional cause. It's also a fact that the government can already compensate employees above the standards of the labour without needing to bypass the labour code. I ask the minister again: Why is this government giving less protection to public servants, whom it says it values so deeply, than people who work in any other sector in the province?

TWILA GROSSE: I repeat: Our province is growing. We need the resources and we need the talent as we continue to move forward. Nova Scotians expect an efficient and nimble Public Service - that is as things change and as times change, we have the skill sets and the right people in the right place to carry out the responsibilities. We value and respect our public servants.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

**EECD: DAYCARE WAIT-LIST - CREATE**

SUZY HANSEN: When in Opposition, the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development advocated for a centralized daycare wait-list. He believed this would not only benefit parents but also create greater transparency and accountability. He explained that the government is “spending tens of millions of dollars every year, and you have no clue how many people are waiting for child care.” I’ll table that. Now that he can make a real difference, my question to the minister is: Will the minister create a centralized daycare wait-list?

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Hansard got me again. We’re going to continue to work with our daycares, and we’re in the process of collecting the information and data. We want to make sure every person who needs access to child care - it is a big lift, and we want to make sure everybody has it. Obviously, these are barriers to work and barriers to education. We are proud to work with the federal government on this. We’re going to continue to work to ensure everybody has access to daycare.

SUZY HANSEN: I see now, Speaker, that this is the flip-flop the minister spoke about as happening. I see it now happening right before us. Parents are endlessly calling daycares, being put on dozens of wait-lists, and given no clear timelines on when their child will secure a spot. Despite this high demand, the province has lost over 1,300 spaces since this government took office in 2021. I already tabled that. The extreme level of uncertainty that parents are faced with right now is unacceptable. My question to the minister is: Why is the minister not delivering more accountability and transparency for young families in need of daycare spaces?

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. Flip-flop: On the one hand, they are telling us, Don’t give universities accountability. On the other hand, they are saying, Give accountability for child care. You can’t have it both ways. We are working with our child care sector. We are going to continue to work with them. We are working on getting information out to parents.

THE SPEAKER: Order. Let’s try to respect the person who is speaking.

The honourable Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Speaker, we are going to continue with our child care sector. This government has given fair contracts to our child care sector, and we continue to invest it. We have created 2,045 child care spaces, 1,648 family homes, 2,849 before and after school care, and we are going to continue . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order. Everyone is spicy today, aren't they?

The honourable member for Fairview-Clayton Park.

### **OSD: SHORT-TERM HOUSING - IMPROVE**

LINA HAMID: We've heard from this government that there are currently 212 households living in provincially funded short-term housing. That's 212 households living in small hotel rooms, spaces that lack basic things like stoves to cook meals, quiet areas for young children to complete school work, and privacy for parents to process trauma of losing a home. Does the minister believe that a hotel room is an appropriate space for anyone to live?

HON. SCOTT ARMSTRONG: I want to thank the member for their question. The answer is no. We think that people should not be living in hotel rooms, and that's why we've invested heavily over the last several years in places like The Rose. The Rose has moved 18 families in downtown Halifax out of hotel rooms into proper apartments with a kitchen, with a bedroom. It's got a gym; it's got a playground. It's a great place. There are families in there where babies were living in hotel rooms.

We are working really hard to provide the facilities necessary. We hope the NDP will support our budget because there is a lot of money in there to continue to build these types of facilities, to buy these types of facilities, and support families as we can move them out of any hotel rooms.

LINA HAMID: And yet we still have 212 households living in temporary housing. When will this government take real action to make sure all families in Nova Scotia have homes that they can afford?

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Growth and Development.

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: We recognize that people do need places to call home, so while the Minister of Opportunities and Social Development works to support vulnerable Nova Scotians, my department is working across government and working with other levels of government to build more supply.

We have a five-year action plan on housing, and we are making groundbreaking investments. This action plan has seen national attention. We are meeting or exceeding all of our targets. We believe the solution to these challenges we are seeing across the spectrum



is investments in that spectrum. We are making that progress happen, and we are going to continue that work.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

**GAD: OneNS WEBSITE - RESTORE**

HON. IAIN RANKIN: After the Ivany report was released in 2014, the ONE Nova Scotia Commission was put together to monitor our province's economic growth and its progress on the 19 goals identified in the report. Our province has hit some of these goals and still has progress to make on others. These goals remain an important part of our province's economic plan, and I have spoken to the minister several times this session about where we are at with this work.

[2:45 p.m.]

I was surprised yesterday to find the government has taken down the website monitoring progress on these goals. Actually, I wasn't surprised - I called it. This was an important resource for open, public access to economic data, like exports, which is super important today.

My question is to the Minister of Growth and Development: Why has this information been removed from public view?

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: The Ivany report, at a point in time, 10 years ago, was important to provide some direction to government and beyond, at that time. But how the world has changed. We've seen changes in government, of all stripes, but we also have gone through a global pandemic. We're now faced with unprecedented challenges based on tariffs from China and the United States.

We recognize that we need to continue to grow and scale up and diversify our markets, and work across government. We have a trade action plan in place that is being implemented. We're working hard; the Premier is working hard to break down interprovincial trade barriers. We're leading the charge, and we're going to continue that work.

IAIN RANKIN: I would challenge the minister to say which targets are no longer important in this world. Is it exports, is it tourism, is it population growth? Is it the value of universities, perhaps?

It's clear the government has no plan for economic growth. They haven't since they dismantled the Economic Growth Council. It's also clear that there is no need to make public any information that the government doesn't want them to see. They will make the

information private. They will do it with the doctor wait-list, they'll do it with changes to the FOIPOP system, and now we're seeing it with the OneNS tracking dashboard.

In this House, we could all be working together to support real, sustainable economic growth. That can't happen unless we see targets that are public. My question to the minister is: Will he reinstate the website and work with us to modernize these goals for today's world?

COLTON LEBLANC: The member may have been satisfied, during his time in government, to be last, to be 60<sup>th</sup> out of 60 on GDP. That is not the position of this government. That is absolutely not the position of this government. We believe in the future of this province. We believe in our traditional industries - forestry, fishery, agriculture.

And guess what? We also support tapping into untapped opportunities. There are bills on the floor of the Legislature to make that happen. I call on the Opposition to help us make that happen too.

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

### **EECD: TRANS & NON-BINARY STUDENTS - SUPPORT**

LISA LACHANCE: This government also says that it wants to stand on the facts of an issue. So, fact: This government launched a multi-year process to update the 2014 guidelines to support trans and non-binary students, and the previous minister recommitted to these guidelines on numerous occasions. I have a whole bunch of Hansards to table on that. Fact: The current minister has made it clear that the guidelines aren't coming, but instead have been somehow subsumed in the soon-to-be-released code of conduct.

Will the minister stand today and reassure students in Nova Scotia that the code of conduct will reiterate those 2014 guidelines and guarantee that students in Nova Scotia schools have the right to be addressed by their names and pronouns?

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Obviously, we want every single student, no matter their gender, race, or religion, to feel safe in our schools and be able to express themselves freely. The report that was done, or the information that was gathered by the previous minister, is extremely important and very collaborative. I'm very thankful for all the work she did on that.

We're going to use that, and we've used that for the code of conduct. What I can tell the member is when the code of conduct comes out, it's going to address these issues, and many, many more. I'm willing to sit down with any group to have the conversation if they feel like it doesn't address certain things.

LISA LACHANCE: As I've reiterated, as my tabled documents will demonstrate, in fact, the previous minister was able to make that commitment to students. That was a really helpful commitment, when students contacted me worried about their safety in schools, and their experience in schools, and that things were going to get worse.

It's also being respectful. On one hand - maybe this is the minister's - the government doesn't reach out to organizations and sectors time and time again, but this time they did. They reached out to youth; they engaged them in the process. They reached out to educators and engaged them in the process, and they've not provided any feedback.

Will the minister ensure that specific communication regarding the fate of the guidelines specifically reaches students in Nova Scotia?

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: As a minister and as an MLA for the last I don't know how many years, I consult. That's what I do, and I will continue to consult. I'll continue to talk. I don't have all the answers. I don't have near all the answers, so that's why you need to speak to the experts.

Yes, the code of conduct will be sent out to the students. The students will be very aware, and we will not tolerate . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order. Order, please.

The time allotted for Oral Questions Put by Members to Ministers has expired.

The honourable member for Kings South.

JULIE VANEXAN: I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

JULIE VANEXAN: In your Gallery, I would like to welcome Lindsey Corkum, Cameron Corkum, Sadie Corkum, and Violet Fairn. They all worked so hard on our campaign and played vital roles. They helped with signs, office management, and getting out the vote on election day. I am so happy they could make the trip today, and I would ask that they rise and receive a warm welcome from the House. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Welcome. Welcome. We hope you enjoy your time here.

## **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: My son keeps calling me. Pursuant to Rule 5C, I move that the hours for today be not 1:00 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. but be 1:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. Also, pursuant to Rule 5C, I move that the hours tomorrow be 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.

THE SPEAKER: Pursuant to Rule 5C, there has been a request that the hours for Thursday, March 20<sup>th</sup> not be from 1:00 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. but from 1:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., and for the hours for Friday, March 21<sup>st</sup> be 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Speaker, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. isn't bad. Come on. Would you please call the order of business Government Motions.

### **GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Would you please call Resolution No. 38.

### **Res. 38, Natural Resources: Need for Development - Recog. - notice given Mar. 6, 2025 (Hon. T. Houston)**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Energy.

HON. TREVOR BOUDREAU: Special interests have captured sectors of Nova Scotia's and Canada's economy. Their veto over development undermines our economic and energy security. According to the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, the overly complicated regulatory process and vetoes exercised by special interests cost our country tens of billions of dollars. Building this infrastructure is an essential part of tearing down internal trade barriers. Without pipelines, rails, and transmission, we will continue to face obstacles to increased trade between provinces. The complete lack of west-to-east energy infrastructure makes us dependent on the United States for our energy needs. One hundred per cent of our natural gas flows through the U.S., and it comes from places that hydraulically fracture.

We should not have politicians in this Legislature prioritizing U.S. economic growth. Empowering the U.S. during a trade war is inexcusable. We need more energy infrastructure - not less. It's time for the NDP to stand with Canada and Nova Scotia and stop empowering the United States, yet given the chance to do just that in this Legislature,

the NDP voted against Nova Scotians and instead stood by the Bloc Québécois and their leader, Blanchet. I'd like to give the NDP an opportunity to explain why.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable minister needs to rise and ask that the resolution do now pass.

The honourable Minister of Energy.

TREVOR BOUDREAU: I rise and ask that the resolution do now pass.

THE SPEAKER: The member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Like when this resolution was tabled in the first place, the reason the NDP voted no on it was because we had no notice of the resolution, we didn't have a written copy of the resolution, and we are simply not going to say yes to things in this House without some real scrutiny and without some thought and some research done. That's the number one reason. If the minister wants to know why we said no, we did not vote no on the resolution. We voted no on the passage without debate, so here we are in the debate.

The minister may not be familiar with the way these things roll out in the Legislature, but with a resolution like this, we can vote notice of waiver and passage without debate. We can say no to that if we actually want to debate the thing that's being talked about, instead of ramming it through like all the other things this government has been trying to do. That is the number one reason for the minister.

Now, because we had no notice that we would be debating this today, I will probably let my other colleagues speak on this. However, I remember my gut reaction - which is not a good thing to talk about in this Legislature, frankly - but I remember when this notice was first introduced a week or so ago, my gut reaction was that this government is trying - in the same voice that it is saying we must unite as Team Canada and fight Trump's tariffs and join together - in the same voice that they were talking about that, Speaker, they are talking about condemning leaders of political parties, condemning provinces.

What does this government want? The Minister of Advanced Education stood up several times today in Question Period and talked about how we in the Opposition were flip-flopping - on one hand we want this, on the other hand we want this.

In fact, Speaker, if he looked at the questions or listened to the questions we were asking, he would see that that is, in fact, untrue. In this case, I would put it right back on the government: What exactly do they want? Do they want to stand as Team Canada, or do they want to divide this country?

It is shameful, Speaker. Just let me know, colleagues, if anyone else is ready to speak on the resolution and I will have a seat. Okay, thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

HON. IAIN RANKIN: On the resolution, the government is singling out a federal Opposition leader and comments they made and asking the Legislature to castigate those comments and rise up against a comment made by a federal leader of an Opposition party.

While there is another federal Leader of the Official Opposition whom that party has very strong connections with. I know they try to shy away from those connections, but we also know that their former Minister of Finance and Treasury Board from the last term, a ranking member of their Cabinet, is now running for that team. Surely they have some connections to that party that also has their former communications director running here in Halifax for that party.

Whenever an MLA in this House from the PC Party runs federally, which party do they run for? Whether that's Eddie Orrell; Alfie MacLeod; Chris d'Entremont, the current deputy speaker of the House of Commons, there are undisputed connections with the Nova Scotia PC Party and the Conservative Party of Canada. It is literally structurally in their constitution to co-operate.

What has that leader said federally? He wants to cancel the Canada Infrastructure Bank. He said that to a Chamber of Commerce in Vancouver. Incidentally, our Premier has written a letter that he wants to tap into that fund to build a pulp mill.

What else is that fund important for? The Green Choice Program, renewable energy that we need. Now, this resolution is missing out on the whole picture of what we need in our region - that is, yes, conventional sources of energy. We're still using it, we need it. We also need renewable energy, like what was in the Green Choice Program, the wind tender that hangs in the balance if the government changes.

I think there could be appropriate energy - and there is now disproportionate energy spent on a party that has virtually no chance of becoming the new government in the next election, the Bloc Québécois - to a party that has conceivably a chance to become the next government. They are openly saying that they want to cut the Canada Infrastructure Bank, that we need to ensure we have preferred financing for our renewable energy projects that are already approved and this government purportedly supports. We have substantial funding on the line, and this party has former members running under that banner.

Dental care - that's at risk. What about the pharmacare deal? That's at risk.

We also know that the Canada Infrastructure Bank funding is recently supporting the intertie, which will bring not only the fossil fuels that we're talking about - the pipeline

in this resolution - but we need all the above energy with our energy needs growing exponentially. Now we have funding for the intertie system that I've been pushing for in this House. I pointed out back in 2021 that that program was eligible for the CIB. They waited until months before a federal election, with that Official Opposition Leader, Pierre Poilievre, saying he will cut that funding.

[3:00 p.m.]

There are a number of things that I think are missing in this resolution. The House Leader gave us what we were supposed to be talking about today, and this resolution wasn't on it. The spirit of collaboration has completely vanished in this House. I was recently told that a bill important to the Down syndrome community will not be entertained tomorrow.

Every day is a different surprise in this House for me. Say what you want about past governments having a firm hand with certain bills progressing through this House, but we listened to the Opposition. We passed amendments. I passed amendments myself. For the member for Halifax Atlantic: The former member for Halifax Needham came to me on an issue around the Crown Lands Act and embedding climate change lenses into the bill. We passed that. We had Deputy Speakers from Opposition.

This is a pattern from this government that's power-hungry and doesn't like to share information. We talked about that in Question Period.

We have a resolution that's asking for the Legislature to come out against the member for somewhere in a different province who represents a party that represents that province when they are silent about the threat to our national energy with the Leader of that party. I know some of them are worried about campaigning with him because he's not particularly popular, but when any of them decide to run federally, guess what ticket they'll be on.

I would encourage bringing a resolution forward to tell Mr. Pierre Poilievre to back down on his threats to our energy security in our province, and threats to the pharmacare program, which he said he would scrap. We're going into an election now - it's official this weekend. Then the government will go into caretaker mode - you can't sign big important deals. We could be leaving the pharmacare deal completely at the whims of the next government, and if the Conservative government comes in, it's gone.

Meanwhile, people in British Columbia, Manitoba, Prince Edward Island, and I think, now New Brunswick has joined - somehow, women in particular have greater equitable access to contraceptives than women in Nova Scotia. Diabetes treatment - because that government wants to play politics with the Bloc Québécois.

Our energy future is important. We need conventional energy in this province, but we need all of the above. We need to harness wind - the cheapest form of energy in our

province - and there is federal funding that is supporting those projects to bring the costs down. I think it's 6.5 cents a megawatt. At one point it was 5 cents a megawatt.

We have a federal government right now that aligns with so many different revenue streams that this province can leverage to create a better, more renewable, green future. We even still have performance standards bringing in \$17.4 million of revenue, the minister said in Estimates, to put forward on green projects. If Mr. Poilievre has his way, that system is no longer required under the pan-Canadian framework to tackle climate change. I ask the question: Does the province keep that fund?

The great thing about that fund is it's separate and needs to be spent on renewable energy, green projects. It's a different iteration from the former Green Fund. That money can be leveraged exponentially from existing funding from the Liberal federal government. What's more at risk here: The Bloc Québécois winning and stopping pipelines, or their federal cousins in Ottawa winning? Not only winning but just having a voice during Question Period and more voices across the entire country outside of Québec.

I haven't heard anything from any minister or member talking about the need to tell Mr. Poilievre to back down on his dangerous rhetoric when it comes to our energy. Surely, some of these members have connections to that party, that they can make a call. Some of them are campaigning right now in this city.

Of course, we on this side of the House don't want that party to win. We - maybe not most of us - want Mr. Carney to win. I never hide the fact that there are relationships with the provincial Liberal and the federal party. We're not the same party, but there are relationships. Generally, when people leave the House from the Nova Scotia Liberal party, they run federal Liberal. We don't report to them. We're separate entities, despite the last election and the success politically of the PC Party tying the Prime Minister to the former leader of the provincial party. That's good politics, of course.

What I'm talking about today is the gap in this resolution, and no mention of the party and the leader they are most closely aligned with. It's in their constitution to co-operate with the federal Conservative Party. When former high-ranking members are at fundraisers and for political reasons, this government does not want to be seen together with some MPs. They are out there with them.

We have substantial funding on the line. That's real. To talk about Québec politics - which is, I would say, as complex as any other province in our country - in this Legislature while ignoring the fact that we have serious issues with the federal Conservative Party is, frankly, not appropriate. I would encourage any other member from the government to stand up and tell us about what their initiatives are to try to get any other leader to back down. The Premier even sent a letter to Mr. Carney about a number of projects. Where's the letter to Mr. Poilievre about the threats to our energy security here in Nova Scotia?



Surely, he's not going to try to trick Nova Scotians saying that he has more alignment with Mr. Carney than he does with Mr. Poilievre, like he did before with Mr. Trudeau when it was politically convenient. Then once the Prime Minister's polls started to go down, he separated himself as much as he possibly could.

This resolution is nothing but a gain. It's a gain. Resolutions in this House actually don't have any legal merit. That's my understanding. This is about a way to try to create a bogeyman argument that the NDP is blocking our economic interests in our province. I hope the Premier gets up and speaks to his resolution today and espouses the value of his economic plan.

Instead of having 19 goals on the website, we have one goal that costs \$10,000 on the front of the *Chronicle Herald* to start fracking again. At least replace the website that you took down with a new one showing your two goals of fracking and uranium mining, because that is the only thing that was brought up in this House in terms of economic development.

Where is the conversation with the other federal Opposition leaders, the Official Opposition Leader, who is very clear and on record of not supporting the needs of transforming our electricity sector here in the province? I know there are members of the government who believe in that just transition. I know that. They support the wind tender. They support the Green Choice Program. They support ensuring that there is ownership from Mi'kmaw communities on those very important projects, but those projects are contingent on significant preferred financing from a specific fund that is at risk. This government says nothing, unless you can table any evidence - a letter maybe, sent to Mr. Poilievre to back down on his threats to our energy security.

When we're talking about energy - gas and oil - we should be talking about everything in that bucket, especially with the tariff war. We need to ensure that that intertie gets built. We need to ensure that we continue to build up the Atlantic region and have stronger connections throughout the whole region to buy and sell to the United States. Anything can happen. Québec may not have a sustainable partner when they sell their hydro to the United States, which makes an even better business case for connecting and bringing in Québec hydro and lowering the price. Anything can happen.

This resolution is not a serious thing that they brought forward. They actually don't want members to speak to it. Otherwise, they would have told us it was coming. No warning. They just want to corner the NDP, and it's despicable. Some Nova Scotians will buy into it, and that's why they're doing it. They just want the NDP to vote "no" on castrating the Bloc Québécois for saying they have a position against pipelines going through their province. It's so out of bounds.

He could actually bring up his conversations with the Québec premier, his counterpart, about the issue around pipelines and energy, the need to move electrons

around, and where we're at with all that stuff. But he's picking on a leader of a party who represents a regional interest in the federation and ignoring the detrimental public statements from their cousins in Ottawa. I would encourage government members to tell me about their conversations - about their understanding of the Canada Infrastructure Bank and all the opportunities that are around it to support wind projects throughout our communities. They're facilitating some of this work by making sure some of the projects go through and municipalities don't have unnecessary setbacks. We can support that. We could have that conversation, but that funding is there to make those projects economically valuable for communities, for municipalities, and to benefit ratepayers. Rates have gone up over 20 per cent under this government's watch. Yet we still have all eight units of coal burning expensive coal. Most of those increases are fuel increases. We do need more affordable, predictable, sustainable flow of energy into our province, which is why this resolution needs to be strengthened.

[3:15 p.m.]

I'm probably on the attack ad now from the PC Party website. I don't know, but I will say I'm not against the resolution. I'm saying the resolution needs to be strengthened and more focused on areas that are pertinent right now to our province's economic and energy future. It's beyond energy that's at risk if the federal government changes, especially to Atlantic Canada.

It would have been nice to know that this resolution was coming. It would be great to hear from the Premier, so I encourage the Premier to get up and talk about all the merits in his way of trying to attack the Leader of the Bloc Quebecois and asking for our support to do that while ignoring their federal counterparts in Ottawa, where we have former MLAs - at least two of them I can think of - who ran for that party and who will be running for that party by this weekend. I hope it's clear on their campaign literature all the things that Mr. Poilievre is advocating for.

We know that renewable energy - especially wind - is the lowest-cost energy in our province and in our region. No one is disputing the need to continue to use fuel. There needs to be a discussion of what the Irving refinery can handle in terms of heavy crude from Alberta and who pays for the cost and all that. It's much more complex than drafting a resolution in two minutes and bringing it to the House. The government knows that. I'm sure there are very smart people who know that this resolution does absolutely nothing, that this is a political game. That's really what we're seeing throughout this sitting: a consistent theme of no economic plan, no bills of any substance that came out of the mandate they got from Nova Scotians, and congratulations to them - a complete, different plan that they weren't bringing forward to the electorate.

They want to dismantle institutions, quiet the voice of opposition, create enemies that aren't there, and try to treat Opposition members like we don't want to co-operate when we are literally tabling way more bills than they are every day with new ideas on

economics and energy. We're advocating for what we're hearing from our constituents. I didn't get one email from a constituent asking me to support something about the Bloc Québécois's statement on pipelines. I didn't get it.

I did hear from different interest groups - I'll call them an interest group - the Down Syndrome Society. I got an email asking me to bring a bill forward that was brought forward by my former colleague. I thought that in the spirit of collaboration, that's a great bill that we should look at again: Harvey's Law. I brought it forward and thought, this is one that the government could surely pass. The Premier has said: We're looking for new ideas and we haven't had any new ideas yet.

THE SPEAKER: Order. You're going off. I ask that you get back onto the resolution.

The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

IAIN RANKIN: I'm speaking to the resolution's intent to get support from other parties and the need to collaborate with one another. An example of trying to collaborate is when we bring bills forward, and we thought we had support for a good bill from an interest group. The Premier likes to talk about special interests, and everybody has interests.

My interest is the public interest. When I see good things to bring forward, I'll do that. When there are good bills to support, I will support them. When I have questions around it, or if I don't think they're fulsome enough, like this resolution - I think this could certainly be more targeted, more focused, especially in areas they have relationships in.

I have relationships with some of these members, like Alfie MacLeod, Eddie Orrell, and Chris d'Entremont. They were great representatives for their people. If I go up to Ottawa, I talk to Chris. I go to see him. He's a great guy. I'll tell him what I think of Mr. Poilievre. Why don't any of you?

My biggest problem is that we have so much money - tens of millions of dollars - that we think is needed for our energy future. This resolution does not speak to the need to ensure that we lock that money in. Nova Scotia Power has big battery projects that will need Canada Infrastructure Bank funding to ensure we are able to move and then transition.

That funding is at risk - not because of the Bloc Québécois but because we have the Federal Leader of the Official Opposition, the Conservative Party of Canada, talking about the need to scrap that fund. I disagree with that federal leader. I'm not in the habit of commenting on federal leaders, but this resolution that was brought up without consultation - neither when it was tabled nor when it was called for debate - asking members to comment on the resolution, it puts us in an odd position, because it's an order, of course. You can put what you want in a resolution.

I find it hypocritical, to say the least, when there's a resolution brought forward that talks about the leader of a regional party - federally - getting in the way of our energy future when they have direct access and structural access in their constitution to co-operate in this Progressive Conservative - unless they changed it; at one point they did. Co-operate then and tell Mr. Poilievre in Ottawa to back down from his threats to our energy future, including renewable energy.

I don't know if all members agree with that transition and the need to unlock our energy future with lower-cost wind, battery storage, and the intertie bill. It all costs money, but those projects, by and large, are contingent on preferable financing - the kind of preferable financing that is at risk from the federal Conservative government. Sorry, I'm getting ahead of myself - not the federal Conservative government. I hope that never happens, but if it does, why not have a resolution?

If you want to separate yourselves, now's the time. I don't know if you can amend a resolution, but why don't you put your money where your mouth is and criticize Mr. Poilievre for his positions that would hurt not only Nova Scotia but Atlantic Canada? When we have battery projects that we need and more predictable flow of electrons from New Brunswick - whether that ends up being nuclear or not - specifically, the Green Choice projects my colleague here launched back in 2019 - that program was worked on. Now the PC government, I'll give them credit: They did endorse a lot of the projects that were started. The tender for wind - they did endorse it. They're only endorsing it for economic reasons, but that's fine.

They know. I remember when I was the only member in the House talking about how wind was the most cost-effective energy and that we need to transition away from coal, which is becoming more and more expensive and tied to the market prices and commodity prices.

We continue to spend money. I couldn't get it in Estimates, but I await the information from the Department of Energy on how much money is spent on maintenance every year for our coal-fired generation plants. How this is related to the resolution is that we need to make that transition. We need the Canada Infrastructure Bank money to make sure those projects are built as soon as possible to start shutting down those coal plants.

It's literally in law that coal should not be burned beyond 2030. We're five years away, yet in the last four years, not one of those eight units has been closed down. We're still burning expensive coal at over \$100 a megawatt hour.

I talked in Question Period today about some of the other issues that the consumer advocate is talking about in terms of non-prudent spending that has to do with fuel costs. Where in this resolution does it talk about the need to have renewable energy flowing through, along with the conventional energy sources the minister is talking about with natural gas and with coal?

I don't really like surprises like this. I don't mind debating. I actually wasn't going to speak to some of the bills at Committee of the Whole House on Bills, but maybe I will. It's just the attitude around all of this that bothers me the most. We were told just as early as this morning what bills were coming forward, and I didn't even know what resolution the House Leader talked about when he said Resolution No. 38 until the Minister of Energy got up.

I'm looking forward to what the Premier has to say to his own resolution. I'm looking forward to his comment on his discussions with Mr. Poilievre, whom I think is the bigger problem here, whom I think has probably a better shot of becoming Prime Minister than the Bloc - I don't know, but I think most people would probably see that.

Let's call this resolution what it is: It's just a political game to try to villainize members of the Opposition. The NDP is particularly their target, but I'm jumping up to become one. (Interruption) No problem.

I'm proud of where I stand. I think this resolution needs to be strengthened. I think it's misguided. I think it was drafted within two minutes by somebody on the seventh floor who said, This is a good idea. It was probably the same people who drafted some of the bills that are now being walked back.

"How do we play games and corner our political opponents in this session? How do we silence them? How do we get away from the media? How do we not have a problematic Auditor General or Information and Privacy Commissioner?" The list goes on and on. Just as long as we still can walk back and claim that as some kind of show that they're listening to Nova Scotians.

This session has accomplished nothing that they ran on in the last election. How are they going to lower power bills when they're at risk of the Canada Infrastructure Bank not actually funding our programs if the federal Conservative Party Leader wins the next election? Their former members are running under that banner. Their former Minister of Finance and Treasury Board - a great person, Allan MacMaster. Presumably, you still have his cellphone number. Why can't you talk to him about Pierre Poilievre's stance on energy in this resolution and a whole bunch of other issues, like the pharmacare plan that's at risk, the dental plan that's at risk? How come the members don't see that individual as a problem? That's too inconvenient, because there are people who are federal Conservatives in the caucus. Maybe not all are, but there certainly are some. If they run, they will run Conservative.

I would recommend that a resolution be modified, or at least pulled back and then another one brought forward, to talk about all of our relationships with federal members and how we can position Nova Scotia in the best way to ensure that none of the federal leaders are talking against our region's interest.

We can always have disagreements with our federal counterparts. We, in the provincial Liberal Party, have had disagreements with our federal counterparts. We agree on a lot of things, though. Those conversations are important to have, especially when it comes to pocketbook issues and energy.

[3:30 p.m.]

The climate crisis is still there, and we need to find ways we can transition away that bring people along. If it's a pipeline that takes a number of years and has to go through the regulatory process, the company - I don't know even know if the company is interested in building this pipeline anymore. In the meantime, we have very important projects right here in Nova Scotia so we can make that transition to benefit our ratepayers here.

This government is not interested in talking about that with other federal leaders. For some reason, they want to talk to one federal leader whom they think somehow has a shot in the next election to block pipelines. That's why I thought it was important to rise and speak for a few minutes on this resolution, of which I don't have a copy in front of me right now because I had no idea that it was being called for debate. Oh, here it is.

They want us to affirm "support for the responsible development of Canada's natural resources as a cornerstone of our economic security and national self-reliance." Of course, that's important. They are calling upon the Government of Canada. They do have two parties covered with this because currently the federal Liberals are the government.

"To prioritize and streamline the approvals for oil and natural gas infrastructure. . . ." Just oil and natural gas. I don't see any interest in any other source of energy when we know, and it's already a fact and proven in this House, that the lowest-cost energy comes from renewables. I'm not saying that I'm against this resolution; I'm saying that it needs to be strengthened and that we, at this juncture, need to ensure that we have a plan to move beyond conventional sources.

Now, to be clear, I'm not saying "keep it in the ground." I do think that, when a resolution such as this is brought forward, it would be helpful if we actually talked about some of the opportunities we have here and support from the Government of Canada that has specific programs that this government is tapping into that are at risk when the federal election - that their staff members are now running in, that their former MLAs are now running in, and probably some of their staffers will be campaigning for them - starts.

We know that Nova Scotia has relied on traditional sources of energy for a long time, whether that is oil or the move to coal. We need to start moving in another direction. I thought this government was in favour of that by putting that in law.

If this resolution is not a game - which I think it is - you would think that they would want to include not only the leader of the Bloc Québécois, not only the federal government

- which happens to be the Liberals - but maybe the Conservative Party of Canada that happens to be the Official Opposition in Ottawa, and the NDP too, and maybe the Green Party of Canada. Why aren't we talking to all leaders about our need to be more self-reliant and our need to ensure that we have a better energy future in the province?

We can all get behind responsible economic development and building infrastructure in this House, but bringing a resolution forward to try to corner your opponents is not the way to do it. We're all for job creation, as this purports to try to promote. We're all for energy security. We're all for developing and transporting these resources responsibly, but I'm getting kind of tired of the political games and, frankly, the hypocrisy of omitting the federal party that they have the greatest ties with. That's just a fact. I think I've laid that out pretty clearly.

I don't know when the vote comes on this resolution, but I will vote that we support efforts to work together to build infrastructure projects to support our energy. I want to make sure that we have a full discussion with all leaders of influence, since we're opening that up. They're the ones who opened it up. I didn't come here - I could, with just a normal notice of motion demanding that they speak down to Pierre Poilievre and his - the number of statements he's had. I could do it with energy. I could do it with social programs. It's all on the record, but this government brought the resolution forward. They've opened themselves up.

One member spoke - and I can't wait to hear the Premier, especially, but others get up on why they can't speak to Mr. Poilievre or how closely they are connected with them or their candidates who are now running in the federal race starting this weekend. What are their views on Mr. Poilievre telling the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade that he will scrap the multi-billion dollar Canada Infrastructure Bank fund that we need to secure our energy future. We have a federal government right now that is the most friendly to moving in the just transition than we've ever had. We need to tap into all those programs, and there are federal leaders who are talking about dismantling them. We don't have an answer on what will happen with our performance standards. Mr. Carney supports that. That's still part of his plan - industrial carbon pricing. It is carbon pricing. If Mr. Poilievre wins, what happens to the provincial OBPS system?

We need to have that conversation with - if we're talking to the Bloc Québécois leader and trying to pick a fight with a leader in Québec, surely we can have conversations with their counterpart in Ottawa.

I think most members would support maybe a strengthened resolution that talks about our need to secure our energy future - not only conventional sources, but also the need to secure renewable sources here: battery storage, hydro, wind, solar. These are all important projects, but they need significant financing and traditional lenders don't give preferred rates like the Canada Infrastructure Bank.

I would ask the Premier to - in case he might be going to Ottawa to meet with folks - that maybe he take a meeting with Mr. Poilievre. Presumably, he's meeting with the Leader of the Bloc Québécois, since he's put a resolution before the House and is asking members to vote about their, in his words, opposition to critical infrastructure projects. That doesn't seem like the spirit of Team Canada in unity, to me.

Whether we agree or disagree with a particular party in Québec, surely the Premier could use his trip to speak to this person who, I think, has good intentions, who if he believes something, should be able to do that on behalf of his constituents. Instead, we have a resolution that was drafted to play political games in this House. When we could be speaking about very important issues, we have to speak about this.

We've tabled I don't know how many bills - I think the NDP caught us and have probably passed us now - about economic development, and economic development is tied directly to what we're talking about in this resolution and our energy future. We're talking about lower power rates in the long term for our industry, for Nova Scotians to grow jobs - and there are thousands of jobs in the renewable field. It's just exploding. It was exploding when we were in government, especially the solar, and the 350 megawatts of wind will create about 5,000 jobs. I remember that. I don't even have to table it because I just know it off the top of my head - throughout mostly rural Nova Scotia.

I think that, given the stakes of all those big projects and the Province asking for securities to start moving forward on some of these, proponents are worried about uncertainty. If we have a massive fund that's willing to finance it - and who knows what happens with the tariff war and interest rates - they are not going to move forward until they have greater certainty. I think maybe Poilievre is a more imminent threat to our energy security in the region than Mr. Blanchet.

That's why I think it's important to speak a little bit to this resolution just for a couple of minutes to ensure that my point is clearly that this resolution - there are obviously some good words in it: economic well-being. This is probably the only piece of paper that they've brought forward that mentions the economy in the whole sitting, when their only economic plan is to start fracking and start mining for uranium, right? Unless somebody has something else they want to bring forward, but that's all I've heard so far - that the Ivany report that has goals around exports is outdated. Not interested in exports, not interested in population growth - we've done too much of that, even though it's slowed down significantly.

Tourism: We had great tourism years, but the pandemic set us back and we need to start building our tourism sector back. We need to start valuing our post-secondary and we need to start attracting more investment here. Not only are they not interested in any of those 19 goals that all three parties in this House supported at one juncture, but they want to distract Nova Scotians from how bad - because their economic record is so bad that they



want to convince as many people as they can that we're going to find liquid gold in massive amounts and start growing jobs across the province for an infinite amount of time.

[3:45 p.m.]

I think it's short-sighted to just speak to one sector and spend taxpayers' money, put it on the front page of the *Chronicle Herald* rather than actually having different mandates for different ministers, especially the Minister of Growth and Development and the Minister of Energy. It seems now that the approach to energy beyond conventional natural gas is to have one-off announcements. If the government changes in Ottawa, you're going to see those announcements go down significantly, because there are not any more funds to tap into.

I guess it's an opportunity for me to campaign a little bit in the House, because there is a danger. I will be supporting the federal party. I said that to people when I was campaigning. No, I'm not a federal Liberal, but I will be supporting them in the next election, whether that was Justin Trudeau staying or not. This government took in more windfall revenues from the Trudeau government than any provincial government in the history of our province, and they villainized him.

Some of these programs are only there because of his passion for protecting the environment and ensuring a better energy future for the whole country. I am worried about the future and the direction that Canada will take next. For this resolution, we need to start calling out people who are in the way of what needs to be done. The federal Conservatives are certainly in the way of what needs to be done to protect our children's future.

Let's look at this resolution and strengthen it a bit more. Let's use the connections we have in Ottawa to speak to all candidates who are running for Member of Parliament, whether that's Liberal, NDP, or Conservative, because we do have really big issues with our energy future in the province. We also have big opportunities. How we maximize those opportunities, how we ensure that Mi'kmaw communities and African Nova Scotians benefit from those projects, and ensuring that those who are traditionally left behind and those most marginalized benefit from the significant public funding that is going to be needed to build up Nova Scotia - whether that is potentially pipelines.

I supported the LNG proposal that I was criticized for from some people. That's okay to have criticism. These are really tough conversations to have. I did feel very strongly that we need to move away from coal. I do see natural gas as a short-term alternative to bridge that movement away - to protect ratepayers and to ensure that we aren't disproportionately harming Nova Scotians, especially those most vulnerable and those who live near coal plants who traditionally have higher rates of cancer, whether that's Pictou or Cape Breton.

How do we move in that direction responsibly? I still do support today conventional uses like natural gas, but we need to do it all. Projections are showing we're going to need to double our energy. That was some time ago. It's probably closer to triple our energy output in this province, especially with electrification of our transportation sector. We are going to need the funding that the federal government has - the funding that's at risk. The incentive for EVs - something that the PC Party, predictably, like their federal Conservative counterparts were opposed to. There were letters sent out to targeted rural ridings in 2021, mocking the EV incentive - and the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

They did follow through on the commitment and cancelled the Art Gallery. I guess they're the champion of arts, but not for that big project. They kept the EV incentive, and I think they did that because they knew that Nova Scotians wanted it. I will give some credit to this government. When they think 51 per cent of Nova Scotians want something or don't want something, they tend to either do it or pull back on things. They govern a bit more by polls than anything that I've ever seen before, which is why it's important for us to speak as Opposition in terms of what we can do to work together.

We have constituents who are bringing forward real priorities around energy and economic development. I can tell you that more people in Timberlea-Prospect are angry about Mr. Poilievre than they are about Mr. Blanchet.

If we're going to spend a couple minutes each speaking to a resolution - and I would love to have some time to prepare for such an important debate - maybe we could talk about people who are in a position that they could take over the federal government and could be the Government of Canada. I'm fine with affirming my support for responsible development of Canada's natural resources as a cornerstone of our economic security and national self-reliance. Of course. That's what I've been advocating for 11 years in this House - responsible.

Now, we can support many projects together, not just natural gas projects. There is no mention of that untapped, affordable, clean energy that we can move around the province, the region, and the country in a better way. Folks mentioned the Atlantic Loop. That was not a new concept under the Liberal government. That's been going on for a long time. I think it was called Eastward Energy at one point. Eventually, we are going to build that. That's going to need to be done. It was already started with the Maritime Link before I was even in this House. The next piece is the intertie. Then it's how far do we need to go to tap into Hydro-Québec? Maybe there's a nuclear option in New Brunswick. Those conversations need to be had.

If we're only talking about interest in natural gas infrastructure, what happens with the conversation around the need to move those more long-term, predictably priced electrons around our region? To protect rate payers, to protect long-term jobs because the resource is renewable - what we can do is we can support this. We can support a resolution and have a fulsome debate. I look forward to members opposite either extolling the virtues

of why they don't want to call out the leader of the federal Official Opposition - the Conservative leader - or why they are okay. I think they owe it to the House to tell us - the members - where they stand.

Why do they see fit to only target one leader of a federal party and open this box where Nova Scotia's Legislature is going to start to weigh in on federal issues? Why is it the leader of the Bloc Québécois and conveniently not the leader of the only party that's mentioned in their constitution to co-operate with? The only party members, where they're seen at public events, at tables . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order. It's starting to get a bit too chatty in here. I would ask that everybody respect the person who is speaking.

The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

IAIN RANKIN: I'm feeling the respect. Don't worry. (Interruptions)

Well, if you gave me time to prepare, I . . . (interruptions).

I wasn't going to speak to some of the bills that were in Committee of the Whole House on Bills, but Question Period ended and a resolution was called with no notice. So don't be surprised when you do that to me, as a member, that I will get up and speak.

It's not that I'm against the resolution, but I do believe it should be strengthened. I do think that it's misguided in terms of who the Premier is aiming his disdain towards when he has clear relationships with people who are in the federal government, staff level - donors are probably overlapping significantly - his base of support, and obviously some of his people who are in this race ready to run within three days.

Call the former member for Argyle-Barrington, Chris d'Entremont, the now Deputy Speaker of the House who reports to Mr. Poilievre. Call people who used to be running up in the Cape Breton area - again, good members. Allan's a friend of mine. He was a great MLA for Inverness. I just don't agree with the choices made, running for the federal party, obviously. It also doesn't surprise me, because generally PC members run federally for the Conservative Party. Clearly, there are relationships.

I look forward to learning more about the relationships with this debate that was called today, and whether there is an agreement about if we should add Mr. Poilievre and the need for him to back down on threatening Nova Scotia and the Atlantic region's future by saying he would scrap a multi-billion-dollar fund that would make sure we build more affordable wind, more affordable solar, battery projects with Nova Scotia Power, to protect our ratepayers, to protect our economy, to grow jobs - not only with natural gas, not only with infrastructure, but with young Nova Scotians who are looking to work here in Nova Scotia and not leave our province.

All of the above, Speaker. Let's add to this resolution and strengthen it.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

ADEGOKE FADARE: Speaker, I do not plan to speak for that long . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order. We're supposed to go in a circle, party by party. This is the first person I saw because I was looking this way, so I would prefer that I don't get looks like that.

The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

ADEGOKE FADARE: Like I said, I do not plan to speak for that long. I want to start by saying that we do not have any cousins in Ottawa. The PC Party does not have cousins anywhere in Ottawa. That needs to be clearly said. I see the member opposite spending quite some time trying to trace an imaginary line between the PC Party and the federal party with attempts of former Cabinet ministers now running federally under the ballot of the Conservative Party. I can't speak about individuals who do what they're told. The Premier has made it very clear that this alliance stands for Nova Scotia - that what he would do constantly would be to stand for Nova Scotians. Our party, the PC Party, is aligned with what is in the best interests of Nova Scotians.

This resolution is very simple and clear. When someone's house is under attack, it's important for everyone in the house to be united and to speak in one voice. Today, what was offered was an opportunity for the NDP to be able to speak with one voice with us to denounce the fact that a statement was made by the Bloc party that pipelines cannot reach us.

It's important for everyone in this House to speak united and for us to be in one voice. The resolution is about speaking in one voice. The remarks made by the Leader of the Bloc party against us having a pipeline that connects us with our partner's energy - we need to stand united and speak united against it. It's important we speak against it.

I heard the member opposite speak about the fact that we can strengthen the resolution. This is not about trying to strengthen the resolution. This is about us speaking as one voice to say that we need the energy that flows from Alberta. We cannot continue to rely 100 per cent on the oil that flows from south of Alberta. It is important for us to have Canadian oil flow towards Nova Scotia. Without this pipeline, Nova Scotians will remain dependent on U.S. oil. We can't afford to continue to be dependent on U.S. oil. That's why we've offered an opportunity, and we thought that the NDP and the Liberal Party would probably stand with us today to say to the Bloc Québécois that that pipeline needs to be built, rather than hearing the voices we echoed around that resolution.

[4:00 p.m.]

We've heard stories and postulations being made. I think that it's rather unfortunate that they didn't get to speak or start with us and stand with Nova Scotia. It's really interesting that the NDP still can't put aside a political ideology to stand for one second to support us as Canadians.

I don't want to spend so much time because I understand our time is valuable and there's a lot that we can achieve with our time. Speaker, I move for adjournment of this debate.

THE SPEAKER: Order.

The motion is to adjourn debate on the resolution.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

I'm following the rules. If the member for Halifax Needham did not see that I brought the Chief Clerk up here to understand how to proceed, then the member can rewind the tape.

The honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

LISA LACHANCE: I am rising on a point of order just to try to clarify what's going on. It's not direct. I'm just going to try to get there.

When this was initially tabled, I rose on a point of order because we hadn't seen it in writing. It had been said very quickly orally, and we needed a couple of minutes to have a look at it. Then we weren't going to waive notice. We were waiting for the debate. We were never advised that it was coming back for debate.

Now we've been invited by several members to respond as the NDP. We do have some responses that I would love to bring forward on the floor of the House. At the time when the member for Clayton Park West stood up, the Leader of the Official Opposition also stood up - I think earlier. I understand there's a rotation that often happens, but I would ask that debate be reopened on this. This is not fair.

THE SPEAKER: I would ask you to state what rule is breached, because right now nothing has been breached. There is no point of order for what you had stated. If you can point it out to me.

The honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

LISA LACHANCE: You know, honestly, there might not be. My point is that our Leader was standing first and we accepted the rotation. I believe there is value in actually having this discussion. Folks, I'm ready to talk about economic development. I cannot wait.

I am also going to table every time I've said the words "economic development" in this House since . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order, order. That's enough. First of all, the Minister of Energy stood up, then the Official Opposition did, then the Liberal Party did, and then the government did. It's right in my book - can't make this up - that you follow along from party to party. Now I saw the member from Clayton Park West - I got it right without looking - stand up first. I recognized this member. No law has been breached here.

The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

HON. JOHN LOHR: I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Please do. Let's lighten the mood.

JOHN LOHR: In the gallery above, I have my youngest son, Benjamin Lohr. He's almost finished his B.Ed., and he'll be going off to Birmingham, England in September to be a teacher. Very proud of him. And right beside him is his cousin - my niece - Allison Glode from America. Like in the famous book *Our American Cousin*, Alison is here studying at Dalhousie University in Nursing. Very pleased to have her here as well. Hope we'll give them the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Welcome to the House. We hope you enjoy your time here just as much as we all do.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Speaker, would you please call the order of business Government Motions.

### **GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Speaker, I move that you do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is carried.

We will have a short recess while the Committee of the Whole House on Bills sets up.

[4:34 p.m. The House resolved into the CWH on Bills with Deputy Speaker John White in the Chair.]

[9:02 p.m. CWH on Bills rose and the House reconvened. Deputy Speaker Tom Taggart assumed the Chair.]

THE SPEAKER: Order. The Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on Bills reports:

THE CLERK: That the Committee of the Whole House on Bills has met and considered the following bills:

**Bill No. 1 - Government Organization and Administration, An Act Respecting,** with certain amendments.

**Bill No. 11 - Administrative Efficiency and Accountability in Healthcare Act,** without amendments.

**Bill No. 21 - Justice Administration Amendment (2025),** without amendments.

The Chair has been instructed to recommend these bills to the favourable consideration of the House.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Speaker, would you please call the order of business Government Motions.

### **GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Would you please call Address in Reply.

### **ADDRESS IN REPLY**

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

BRAD MCGOWAN: I know it's been a long day, but if you've got eight more

minutes left in you, I would be grateful.

I'm Brad McGowan, and I am so grateful to be part of Premier Tim Houston's team and the MLA for Cole Harbour-Dartmouth . . . (interruptions).

THE SPEAKER: Order.

BRAD MCGOWAN: When I went to the amazing people of our community and asked for the honour to . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order. I just want to remind the honourable member that you cannot use your own name or another member's name.

The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Dartmouth.

BRAD MCGOWAN: I'm Brad McGowan, and I'm grateful . . . (interruptions).

I can't say my name?

THE SPEAKER: Order, order. I will remind the member once again that he can't mention his own name or other members in the House.

The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Dartmouth.

BRAD MCGOWAN: I am grateful to be the MLA for Cole Harbour-Dartmouth. When I went to the amazing people of our community and asked for the honour to represent them in this storied Legislature, I promised that if it mattered to them, it would matter to me. I've worked each day since and will continue to work every day moving forward to live up to that promise.

Today, I would like to share with this House and the wonderful people who saw fit for me to be here a little of the journey that led me to this incredible place and this moment. I was raised in Cape Breton - Whitney Pier, Sydney, to be exact - the oldest of three boys to an extraordinary single mom. It is her love, work ethic, and kindness that has made me the person that I am today. My mother, Cecilia, is one of seven children of R.J. and Jessie MacDonald from Riverside, Inverness County, Cape Breton. While my grandparents are no longer with us, their sense of family and caring continues and has been passed down from their children to my brothers and cousins. We have, in turn, passed it on to our children.

Even though there has been great loss in our family after losing Rannie and Donald and Marie, Joe, Allen, and Guy, the indelible family bond started by R.J. and Jessie endures to this day with the MacDonalds, McGowans, Arsenaults, MacNamarras, and O'Neils. Together, we carry each of the special people we have lost in our hearts.



My brothers and I were raised without a dad, but we were blessed that my mom worked every day to be both Mom and Dad. Our small group of four, with the support of some extraordinary role models like Uncle Donald, Guy, Rannie, and Leo, and my mother's sisters Jeannette, Marie, M.C., and sister-in-law Bupsie, certainly didn't want for any love. I continue to be grateful to be part of such a close family.

I do regularly feel the presence of my dad, Grant McGowan, even though he's been gone a very long time and I didn't know him well. The truth is, I often confuse his memory with my memories of Elvis - in my mind, they're interchangeable. I must say, the one person whom I've cobbled them together as is oddly important to me. For better or worse, I'm glad.

My two younger brothers, Buckey and Trevor, are truly extraordinary men. Dads to Shelby and Logan, Younna, Hayden, and Yeji, partners to Nancy and Ho Son, sons and brothers. Buckey is now papa to Eden, and they are so lucky to have each other. My brothers have gone on to become extraordinary educators and make a difference in the lives of countless students who are finding success at school because they truly matter to these caring men.

One of my favourite memories is of the three of us watching *Star Trek* with my mom on Saturday mornings and knowing that there was no place I would rather be and no people I would rather be with. I'm so proud of both of my brothers and the unit that they and my mom and I have been and continue to be. It has been and is the most safe and loving environment I have ever known, and I am grateful. I love you guys so much.

I've had a pretty amazing life so far. I have four degrees from three different Nova Scotia universities. I've led Summer school for HRCE where hundreds of Nova Scotia students were given a second chance to show how amazing they are. As an instructor with the ILA, I have taught school leaders across the province an assessment course that I know is making a difference for students in countless schools in our province.

I've been a teacher, a vice principal, a principal, a school supervisor, and now a member of the Legislative Assembly of Nova Scotia. As amazing as all that is, nothing compares to or matters more than my roles as dad, papa, and husband. This new unit that I am now part of is one where I work each day to ensure that its members feel as loved and as safe as my mom, my brothers and I made each other feel when it was us against the world in our little home down the Pier.

My daughters Braelea and Cassia are simply the greatest people I've ever known and have added more to my life than I could ever repay. These exceptional young women have always been - and will always be - my last thoughts each night and my first thoughts each morning. It is their love that has shown me that the world truly is a beautiful place. I am so blessed to have a front row seat to witness the exceptional adults they have become, and their love for one another, for our family, and for me is truly breathtaking. I can't wait

to see their next chapter. I love you both more than you could possibly understand. Always remember that the three of us are one thing.

Fifteen years ago, I was blessed to have my family grow as my beautiful stepchildren, Anna and Devon, became brother and sister to Braelea and Cassia. I am so touched by the love and respect they show each other each day. Devon and Anna are exceptional people, and I am so proud of the adults I have watched them become. I could not love them more or be more grateful for the love they bring to my life. Anna is married to D.J., and Devon has made a wonderful life with Phylecia. They, too, are loved and make our unit stronger. Anna and D.J. have blessed our family, allowing me to become papa to Violet, who is so smart and so beautiful and is the light of our family. Violet, Papa loves you so much, and you fill my heart every day.

Very little in my life would make sense if not for the love of my amazing wife, Janet Rose. Janet is my best friend, my love, and my number one supporter. Janet is the glue that holds our unit together, and the love that she has shown me and my children is one of the most beautiful things I have ever known. Janet is a school counsellor and has a private practice as a therapist, yet still finds time to also be an amazing mom, stepmom, daughter to Marg, sister to Jennifer, and wife. Janet really is the superhero of our family. Janet, I love you beyond words.

As I stand here so blessed for the opportunity to represent the people of Cole Harbour-Dartmouth, I am reminded of how lucky I am to also be a son, a brother, a dad, a papa, and a husband. I am so grateful for the life that I have lived and all the wonderful people I met along the way. I hope that I made a small difference in their lives, and I hope they know that they've made all the difference in mine. (Standing ovation)

AN HON. MEMBER: I move to adjourn debate on Address in Reply.

THE CHAIR: The motion is to adjourn debate on Address in Reply.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Deputy House Leader.

MELISSA SHEEHY-RICHARD: This concludes government business for today. I move that the House do now rise to meet again on Friday, March 21<sup>st</sup> between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Following the daily routine and Question Period, Government Business will include Bill No. 36, Bill No. 6, Bill No. 12, and Bill No. 68.

THE CHAIR: The motion is to adjourn the House and return tomorrow from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

All those in favour? Contrary minded?

AN HON. MEMBER: Nay. (Laughter)

THE CHAIR: That's what I thought.

The motion is carried.

The House is adjourned.

[The House rose at 9:14 p.m.]

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**NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)****RESOLUTION NO. 138**

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas the Five Bridges Wilderness Heritage Trust (FBWHT), a registered Canadian charity, was established in 2001 by a group of local volunteers who cherished the wild lands of the Chebucto Peninsula and aimed to preserve the area for future generations; and

Whereas by combining the talents, knowledge, and skills of its founding volunteers, the Trust successfully lobbied the Nova Scotia government to declare 8,600 hectares of public wilderness lands on the Chebucto Peninsula a designated wilderness area; and

Whereas the designation was achieved in October 2011, and the area was named the Five Bridge Lakes Wilderness Area, which includes five distinct watersheds, rivers, lakes, and an estimated 200-year-old settler route called the Old St. Margaret's Bay Road;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly extend our heartfelt thanks to dedicated board members Peter Lund, Ken Donnelly, Mike Marriott, John Cascadden, Bridget Adams, and Harry Ward for their unwavering commitment and contributions to the Five Bridges Wilderness Heritage Trust and for their stewardship of this wilderness area that serves hikers, bikers, ATVers, photographers, and paddlers to escape modern life and find solace in nature.