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Chair

Mr. Tom Lukiwski

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• (1540)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC)): Colleagues, I'll convene the meeting now. We're running a little late, because of votes, but thank you all for your patience.

Colleagues, we have a number of witnesses appearing as a panel today.

We have from the Treasury Board Secretariat, Nick Xenos and Jessica Sultan. We have representatives from the Department of Public Works and Government Services, the Department of the Environment, and also the Office of the Auditor General.

My understanding is that the two of you from the Department of the Environment will be sharing an opening statement of 10 minutes, and then all of the others will be giving a brief 10-minute opening address. Following that, we will go directly to questions.

Without any further ado, I would ask Mr. Xenos from the Treasury Board Secretariat to introduce his guest, if he has any, and give his opening statement, please.

Mr. Nick Xenos (Executive Director, Centre for Greening Government, Treasury Board Secretariat): Thank you very much. I have with me Jessica Sultan, who is with the Office of the Comptroller General; Kevin Radford with PSPC; Carol Najm, ADM with Environment Canada, real property and corporate services; Gail Haarsma with the sustainable development policy division at Environment Canada; and Vincent Ngan from the strategic policy branch at Environment Canada.

[Translation]

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am pleased to have this opportunity to talk to you about the Government of Canada's greening government strategy.

The aim of the greening government strategy is for the Government of Canada to transition to low-carbon and climate-resilient operations, while also reducing environmental impacts beyond carbon.

Through this strategy, the government commits to the following measures: ensuring low-carbon, sustainable and climate-resilient real property; adopting low-carbon mobility and fleet solutions; pursuing climate-resilient assets, services and operations; and procuring greener goods and services.

[English]

The broader context, of course, for the greening government strategy is that it's consistent with the Paris climate change agreement to keep climate change below 2°C. It's consistent with the pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change, the federal sustainable development strategy, and the ocean plastics charter.

Under the pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change, Canada committed to reducing its national greenhouse gas emissions and to showing leadership in reducing emissions from government buildings and fleets, to set reduction targets for government operations, and to scale up greening procurement. Therefore, the government committed to a 40% cut in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 or earlier, and a 80% cut by 2050, and to using 100% clean electricity by 2025.

[Translation]

The centre for greening government was established within the Treasury Board Secretariat in the fall of 2016 to meet these low-carbon government commitments.

[English]

The centre provides guidance and coordination to departments on federal greenhouse gas emissions reductions, resiliency and greening government initiatives. The centre has a mandate to lead and coordinate the federal emissions reduction, resiliency and greening government initiatives, track and report on federal emissions, coordinate the government's overall efforts to green its operations, and drive results to meet the government's greening objectives.

It's important to note that the centre for greening government complements the leadership role that Environment and Climate Change Canada plays in sustainable development and climate change writ large for the Government of Canada.

The centre and departments are implementing the greening government strategy. I would like to highlight some of the specific commitments of the strategy to green government operations.

As mentioned, the commitments include a 40% cut in federal greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 or earlier, and an 80% cut in emissions by 2050 in line with the Paris Agreement; new buildings that are net-zero carbon ready, meaning they should be zero carbon or on a path to zero-carbon, and low-carbon retrofits; 75% of new light-duty administrative fleet vehicle purchases to be zero emission vehicles or hybrid vehicles starting in 2019-20, that being April 1 of the 2019 fiscal year, and moving to 80% zero emission vehicles by 2030; 100% clean electricity for government operations by 2025; diversion of 75% of federal operational waste and 90% of construction waste by 2030; incorporating climate resilient design and delivery into all major real property projects, and adaptation to climate change planning in departmental risk planning; and integrating sustainability and life-cycle assessment principles into procurement policies and practices.

[Translation]

Earlier this year, the government updated the policy on green procurement to better reflect the greening government strategy. The federal government is a significant purchaser in Canada, purchasing over \$20 billion in goods and services a year.

[English]

Through the greening government strategy and this updated policy on green procurement the government will aid the transition to a low-carbon economy through green procurement, the adoption of clean technologies, and green products and services by integrating sustainability and life-cycle assessment principles; working with major suppliers to encourage the disclosure of their greenhouse gas emissions and environmental performance information; supporting departments in adopting clean technology and clean technology demonstration projects; and increasing training and support on green procurement for public service employees.

For procurement, the early focus has been some of the areas with the biggest greenhouse gas emissions, such as buildings, vehicle fleets, and electricity.

This fall, consistent with the greening government strategy and the oceans plastics charter, the government also committed to taking action to reduce plastic waste by diverting 75% of plastic waste by 2030. Again, that in line with the waste diversion targeted in the green government strategy, eliminating the unnecessary use of single-use plastics in government events and meetings, and procuring more sustainable plastics in key areas where plastics are really important and, of course, moving to more reusable recyclable plastics etc.

Another important area of work for the centre is disclosing progress. Last fall, the centre posted a dataset in the greening government section of Canada.ca showing that the government's GHG emissions had been reduced by 28% in 2016-17 from 2005-06 levels. The inventory is made public through the government's open data portal, giving Canadians single window access to tracking information about the government's emissions.

[Translation]

We are working to further expand this inventory to provide a more complete picture of federal greenhouse gas emissions and energy

consumption, to better understand sources of emissions and to identify opportunities for action.

[English]

We have released updated data annually for the last two years. Going forward, we will continue to update the emissions annually, and the data will include more departments and agencies, as well as an expanded scope of activities. We're hoping to post the latest data later in the fall, in November or December.

The centre works closely with Public Services and Procurement Canada, Natural Resources Canada, the National Research Council and Environment and Climate Change Canada to provide guidance and support to implementing departments on greening real property, fleet, procurement, and adaptation to climate change.

• (1545)

[Translation]

Departments are making progress in advancing energy-efficiency and low-carbon projects. The largest federal emitter, the Department of National Defence, is now purchasing renewable energy in Alberta.

[English]

The Department of Defence is also hiring energy managers for its major bases, implementing energy efficiency projects and greening its administrative fleet.

[Translation]

The second-largest emitter of greenhouse gases, or GHGs, Public Services and Procurement Canada, is also implementing numerous measures.

[English]

My colleague, Mr. Radford, can expand on this in his opening remarks.

By collaborating with the private sector and other stakeholders, the government will implement initiatives aimed at greening its operations and adopting green technologies, and it will mobilize federal employees to find new ways to reduce our environmental footprint.

Looking ahead, we'll continue reviewing the government's policies to strengthen greening and achieving its low-carbon target.

[Translation]

The centre looks forward to continuing to work with government departments and agencies to do this.

[English]

Mr. Chair, I thank you and the committee for the opportunity to describe our work, and how it contributes to the government's efforts to achieve sustainable development.

[Translation]

I welcome your views, comments and questions.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Radford, from the Department of Public Works and Government Services, you have 10 minutes, please.

[Translation]

Mr. Kevin Radford (Assistant Deputy Minister, Real Property Services, Department of Public Works and Government Services): Mr. Chair, thank you for the opportunity to appear and speak about the greening government strategy. I am happy to share with you the important work we are undertaking at Public Services and Procurement Canada, or PSPC, to green government operations and ensure a more environmentally sustainable future.

[English]

If we, as a country, government and people are serious about moving toward a greener future that, among other things, does not depend on non-renewable greenhouse gas emitting carbon-based fuels, then we need to make some fundamental changes in the way we work, live and how we make real property investment decisions. We also need to change the way we think about energy, where it comes from, how efficiently we use it, and whom we share it with.

Buildings are significant emitters of greenhouse gases, contributing 23% of GHG emissions in Canada. As providers of office accommodation to the Government of Canada and as a major provider of real property services to other government custodians, with about \$1.88 billion in operations in 2017-18, PSPC is in a unique position to both influence and have a direct impact on the greening of government operations and the reduction of GHG emissions by the federal government.

PSPC is in the midst of a fundamental shift in how we make real property investment decisions. We are applying a whole-of-government, portfolio-based approach to our real property assets that allows us to prioritize and allocate resources, so that we can make smarter, more sustainable investment decisions for the best long-term value for Canadians. This approach will give PSPC an even greater ability to enable our tenants to serve Canadians well, and to deliver on our greening government strategy commitments.

PSPC sees tremendous opportunity to deliver on big government objectives, such as smart portfolio investments, greening infrastructure and climate resiliency, modernizing the public service, leveraging technology and realizing socio-economic benefits for all Canadians. We can do this by shifting away from transactional decision-making, and instead apply national portfolio objectives and strategies in how we approach all of our public sector real property decisions.

[Translation]

Greening is one of the main criteria we use to evaluate our assets and prioritize our investments. Traditionally, the main considerations in real property projects were health and safety, followed by building code compliance. Now, greening is increasingly important, both as a criterion on its own and as a key element in ensuring the health and safety of our building occupants.

[English]

Additionally, a new model for accrual budgeting, combined with a component-based accounting approach to our Crown-owned assets, will allow us to amortize our green investments and factor long-term energy savings into the project cost options analysis process.

Reducing our environmental footprint is one of PSPC's top priorities. How tenants leverage the space in our infrastructure also has a major impact on GHG emissions. As a result, we've already implemented a variety of initiatives to reduce the carbon footprint of our GC workplaces, including the move towards optimizing our space usage. We are promoting a reinvented GC workplace that integrates activity-based working, alternative working arrangements, unassigned seating, and location-based co-working hubs with hotelling spaces. We are modernizing the public service and leveraging technology to influence the GC work culture and facilitate a healthier, greener and more sustainable environment.

We have also implemented numerous initiatives to lower the energy consumption and GHG emissions of our federal buildings, so much so that PSPC has already exceeded the greening government strategy's target of a 40% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030. PSPC achieved and reported a 54% reduction in GHG emissions in 2017, compared to 2005, for its Crown-owned assets. Because of this success, our plans are even more ambitious for the future. In fact, PSPC hopes to surpass the 2050 target of an 80% reduction, by achieving a carbon-neutral portfolio by 2050.

A point of personal pride for me is that PSPC is the first department to both set a target and to complete a national carbon-neutral portfolio plan in support of our commitment to a low-carbon government. Recognizing that the most efficient unit of energy is the one that you don't use, the first priority of PSPC's carbon-neutral portfolio plan is to reduce energy consumption through a variety of measures.

● (1550)

[Translation]

We now have over 340 energy-efficiency and GHG-reduction projects approved and being implemented across the country. These include smart buildings, deep energy/carbon building retrofits, boiler replacements and building envelope upgrades in our Crown-owned portfolio. These smaller projects are in addition to major investment in district energy in the national capital area.

[English]

We've already seen impressive returns on the smart buildings initiative, which used real-time data analytics to drive energy and carbon reduction. We'll see further reductions from the modernization of the district energy system under the energy services acquisition program. These projects are making our assets more efficient, resilient and environmentally friendly.

Additionally, PSPC is working with provincial and territorial partners to develop nationally consistent green-lease clauses that will leverage energy, GHG and waste reduction opportunities in our leased portfolio and provide green leadership to the built sector.

There's more work on the way. We already have Energy Star ratings for all our Crown-owned assets, and now we are undertaking major portfolio, building and engineering asset studies that will inform us on future energy-efficiency and GHG reduction initiatives. There are currently 70 carbon-neutral studies, 140 energy studies, a national carbon-neutral portfolio implementation plan and a deeper greening study for our national capital area energy services acquisition program, or district energy system.

Our second priority is fuel and energy switching to use cleaner sources and on-site renewable energy generation to further reduce the GHG impact of our operations. In provinces such as Quebec, Manitoba and British Columbia, the switch from natural gas to hydro electricity for certain energy needs is a potential easy win. In other areas, such as Nova Scotia, Alberta and Saskatchewan, we will look at options for switching from traditional fossil fuels to cleaner alternatives such as on-site renewables.

Recognizing that we may not be able to get to a carbon-neutral portfolio on our own, our final priority is to offset any remaining carbon-emitting energy consumption through energy procurement strategies that will help to green Canada's overall public utility infrastructure. These procurement strategies help to stimulate private investment in renewable energy sources across Canada, which is good for our economy, our citizens and the world.

[Translation]

The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's centre for greening government recognizes that PSPC is well positioned to develop a centre of expertise in this domain. We have already demonstrated our ability to provide green energy services through energy procurement vehicles such as the national bulk natural gas contract and the Alberta bulk electricity contracts.

[English]

For fleet vehicles, our department took the initiative of installing electric vehicle charging stations, or EVCS, at the 100 Wellington Street site and at locations in and around the NCA, both in Gatineau and Ottawa, to charge ministers' and deputies' fleet vehicles. To date, PSPC has installed 59 electric vehicle charging stations in PSPC-owned and leased facilities. Also, a PSPC procurement instrument is already in place to allow government access to electric vehicle options when fleet inventory turnover occurs. Another procurement tool is being finalized to facilitate the acquisition of additional EVCS infrastructure.

PSPC has undertaken several initiatives to green public procurement. Specifically, PSPC has optimized internal processes by adopting electronic tools such as electronic bid submission, increased use of electronic signatures, electronic archiving and the electronic procurement solution, as announced in budget 2018.

Additionally, environmental considerations have been included in the procurement instruments for more than 35 commodity groupings. This allows government departments to easily access environmentally preferable goods and services that contribute to government objectives with respect to the environment and climate change. By collaborating with the provinces and territories, we can potentially extend our influence well beyond federal public procurement.

● (1555)

[Translation]

In line with the recently announced ocean plastics charter, we are also working with other departments to examine opportunities to reduce plastic waste from government operations. We are assessing our current procurement volumes and requirements to identify the best science-based alternatives to plastics and to include specific criteria in relevant procurement categories.

[English]

On the topic of climate adaptation, PSPC is currently doing a study to assess the climate change vulnerabilities of its assets in the national capital area. This study will identify the climate-related hazards, including extreme weather events, for the land, buildings and engineering assets that PSPC owns. This is a first step toward incorporating climate adaptation measures into the department's asset management plans and policies. In parallel, the parliamentary precinct branch is applying Engineers Canada's Public Infrastructure Engineering Vulnerability Committee protocol to assess climate vulnerabilities specific to the parliamentary campus.

There is also work under way outside the national capital area. For instance, in the Quebec region, the PIEVC protocol will be applied to nine buildings. In Toronto, PSPC is consulting with the city to learn from its 10 years of experience working on climate adaptation requirements for the greater Toronto area. We are also participating in a pilot project to assess the climate resiliency of assets using the climate resilience tool developed by the Building Owners and Managers Association of Canada, or BOMA.

Finally, as a member of the federal government departmental advisory committee on codes, PSPC is also involved in supporting the development of resilient codes and standards.

In conclusion, greening government is achievable. Ultimately, greening is not just about the bottom line of using less energy, but includes socio-economic benefits and long-term effects on the health of our environment beyond the immediate, measurable reductions in space, energy costs or GHG emissions.

We need to move away from looking at things in transactional terms, such as designing a LEED silver or gold building, and instead consider where and how a building fits into an overall portfolio plan that focuses on long-term benefits and best value for Canadians and the community.

[Translation]

How we operate, how we manage and recapitalize our assets and how we invest and innovate—all of those decisions also have a wider influence on the real property sector both at home and abroad. What we do will set the standard and influence others to follow suit.

[English]

We have the technology to—

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll now go to the Department of the Environment.

My understanding, Madam Haarsma, is that you will start. Are you splitting your time?

Ms. Gail Haarsma (Acting Director, Sustainable Development Policy Division, Strategic Policy Branch, Department of the Environment): That is correct. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to you today about the work we have done at the sustainable development office at Environment and Climate Change Canada to ensure that the federal sustainable development strategy, or the FSDS, includes federal actions to green its operations. I will begin by providing you with some background on how greening government operational activities fit within the FSDS. I will then outline our governance practices, and will close with a mention of Bill C-57, an act to amend the Federal Sustainable Development Act.

First, as a bit of background, the federal sustainable development strategy is the primary vehicle for federal government sustainable development planning and reporting. It sets out the government's sustainable development priorities, establishes goals and targets, and identifies actions to achieve them. The 2008 Federal Sustainable Development Act provides the legal framework for the FSDS. By law, 26 departments and agencies participate in the strategy. Additionally, 15 departments, agencies and Crown corporations participate on a voluntary basis.

The Minister of Environment and Climate Change must consult on and table a strategy and produce a progress report every three years. Indicators to track progress at the goal and target level are drawn largely from the Canadian environmental sustainability indicators program. The process includes a 120-day public consultation period that allows parliamentarians and Canadians to review the draft strategy and to make suggestions for improvement.

The first FSDS, tabled in 2010, had greening government operations as a goal, and that goal was to “minimize the environmental footprint of government operations.” This included

supporting targets on building environmental performance in existing and new builds, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, ensuring proper electronic and electrical equipment disposal, reducing paper consumption and printers, implementing green meeting practices, and undertaking green procurement.

Since that time, each subsequent FSDS—in 2013 and 2016—has included greening government practices within a separate and specific goal focusing on greening government operations. For example, the current 2016-19 FSDS has a low-carbon government goal as one of the 13 goals, and we anticipate it will remain a key component of future strategies.

Developing an FSDS that includes input from 26 legislated and 15 voluntary organizations requires an effective governance structure. ADM and DG committees provide guidance and direction on the structure of the strategy, as required. It also requires a great deal of collaboration between the sustainable development office and the departments and agencies that lead on or contribute to the goals and targets. This helps to ensure that when deputy ministers review the documents, their departmental stories reflect their priorities and key activities.

As you may be aware, Bill C-57, an act to amend the Federal Sustainable Development Act, is currently in committee in the Senate. This bill would not change any of the good practices in place to develop and implement the federal sustainable development strategy, but would take the next step towards a more effective, accountable and inclusive approach to sustainable development in Canada.

The bill also contains a number of significant changes, including setting a higher bar for transparency and parliamentary oversight and an expanded set of sustainable development principles. A whole-of-government approach will also be achieved through this bill by expanding the number of federal organizations subject to the act from the 26 I mentioned to more than 90, many of which have a significant environmental footprint.

In 2016, the centre for greening government was created within the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat to centrally track federal greenhouse gas emissions, coordinate efforts across government and drive results. Amendments in Bill C-57 would formalize Treasury Board's role, which includes developing policies and issuing directives on sustainable development that impacts government operations.

In conclusion, greening government operations will continue to be a significant part of the federal sustainable development strategy, and we will continue to work collaboratively with the centre for greening government to ensure that the two strategies are mutually reinforcing.

Mr. Chair, thank you for the opportunity to address the committee.

I turn the rest of the time over to my colleague Carol.

• (1600)

Ms. Carol Najm (Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services and Financial Branch, Department of the Environment): Thank you.

[Translation]

I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to you today about the work Environment and Climate Change Canada is doing to meet its commitment to green government operations.

[English]

In the federal sustainable development strategy under the pan-Canadian framework, the Government of Canada committed to lead by example by making its operations low carbon, and has set a target to reduce GHG emissions from facilities and fleets by 40% below the 2005 levels by 2030, or sooner—potentially by 2025.

• (1605)

In support of the FSDS, Environment and Climate Change Canada developed a departmental sustainable development strategy for 2017-20, articulating departmental actions that will contribute to the FSDS commitments to improve energy efficiency of our buildings, modernize our fleet, support transition to a low-carbon economy through green procurement, demonstrate innovative technologies, promote sustainable travel practices, and understand climate change impacts and build resilience.

In line with the FSDS, the centre for greening government at Treasury Board developed the greening government strategy, setting out a more ambitious target to reduce the GHG emissions from federal operations by 80% by 2050, relative to the 2005 levels, as well as outlining specific measures to reduce water consumption and its load on municipal systems, and the environmental impact of waste.

In translating the centre's vision, Environment and Climate Change Canada has created a greening and environmental programs division to mobilize departmental action under this goal and to meet our GHG target reductions, in particular from our facilities and our fleet. To this end, Environment and Climate Change Canada is rationalizing our real property portfolio and implementing strategies to reduce energy consumption, developing a road map for short-term and long-term investments to be made in our facilities, seeking alternative fuels, modernizing our fleet management strategy, electrifying our inventory and expanding our deployment of charging stations.

Environment and Climate Change Canada has a capital planning process in place to identify greening projects, and these are emphasized and implemented with the objective of reducing our GHG emissions. In 2017-18, Environment and Climate Change Canada invested \$5.6 million in capital funds aimed at greening our facilities, and will invest another \$8.8 million in planned projects for greening our facilities in 2018-19.

Our five-year capital plan focuses on our facilities that Environment and Climate Change Canada owns and manages, with projects specifically aimed at maximizing our reductions at the earliest

possible opportunity. Over this period, an estimated reduction of 1,697 tonnes of emissions will be achieved with the implementation of these projects. Environment and Climate Change is increasing employee awareness and mobilizing from within to reduce waste and find alternative innovative solutions to minimize consumption of single-use plastics. We are planning to undertake waste audits specifically focused on the plastic waste stream to establish a baseline for waste production. This will serve to provide a benchmark against which our progress will be measured in meeting our waste reduction targets.

[Translation]

Environment and Climate Change Canada is relying on internal experts, as well as other departments, to work with its partners to achieve the best procurement and innovative technology outcomes.

[English]

Environment and Climate Change Canada is implementing central agency directives on green procurement, exploring paperless options as part of contracting operations, developing green procurement training with a particular focus on credit card acquisitions, prioritizing the reduction of embodied carbon and minimizing the use of harmful materials in the construction and renovation process. In order to measure our progress towards our targets and deliver on our commitments, we have established a governance structure and invested resources to strengthen the capacity within the department. In addition, we are undertaking an assessment of our business processes and establishing a monitoring and reporting mechanism to make sure we are measuring progress towards reducing our GHG emissions, waste and water.

As part of the national effort to combat climate change, Environment and Climate Change Canada has adopted the Government of Canada's commitment to reduce its GHG emissions by 40 % by 2030, or earlier, against the baseline of 2005. In the fiscal year 2017-18, emissions have been reduced by 24.5% against the 2005-06 levels. Steady and strong progress is being made to drive down GHG emissions.

We continue to work closely with the centre for greening government, Public Services and Procurement Canada, and with departmental partners and other government departments to expand and deepen our departmental actions and to further our goals in meeting the Government of Canada's commitments.

I thank you for the opportunity to share with you the work we are doing.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Our final intervention will be from Madam Gelfand, who is with the Auditor General's office.

Madam, the floor is yours.

Ms. Julie Gelfand (Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, Office of the Auditor General): Mr. Chair, thank you for this opportunity to appear today before your committee. Joining me at the table is our principal, Kimberley Leach.

I, as commissioner of the environment and sustainable development, or essentially the environment auditor general, have a specific mandate to audit and monitor issues related to the environment and sustainable development, and I report them to Parliament. In fact, I have a legislated mandate to review the federal sustainable development strategy.

Since the beginning of my mandate, I made it a priority to look at climate change from many different perspectives. This means that, since 2014, we have audited areas such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions, adapting to climate change, the issue of severe weather and how Canada is ready to adapt to that, the funding of clean energy technologies, and federal support for sustainable municipal infrastructure.

We have also audited whether Canada is reaching its commitment to eliminate inefficient fossil fuel subsidies, and this is a topic I will follow up on in my spring 2019 reports.

This afternoon I hope to present to you an overview of the recent audit results that may provide your committee with useful context as you begin your study of this greening government strategy. I will then provide you with a few comments on the proposed strategy itself from an auditor's perspective.

[Translation]

In our spring 2016 reports, we looked at what the federal government was doing to support efforts to mitigate the effects of severe weather. Severe weather events are expensive and are becoming increasingly common. The federal government had spent more on recovering from large-scale natural disasters between 2010 and 2015 than in the preceding 39 years combined.

We found that the federal government had not been successful in its efforts to encourage provinces and territories to invest in projects designed to mitigate the impacts of severe weather. The federal government could have also better supported the planning of resilient infrastructure through the information and tools it made available to decision-makers.

For example, the information used to predict the probability of extreme rainfall amounts and the duration of storms, and to enhance flood-plain maps had not been updated in 10 years and, in some cases, 20.

• (1610)

[English]

Let me now turn to our spring 2016 audit that looked at federal programs intended to support the sustainable infrastructure of Canadian communities.

Overall, we found that it was not clear to what extent a decade, 10 years, of federal funding programs in excess of \$13 billion had produced the environmental benefits they were supposed to bring.

When we looked at infrastructure projects that Infrastructure Canada had funded under the gas tax fund, for example, we found that the department did not have indicators in place to assess to what extent the money had resulted in cleaner air, cleaner water and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

When it comes to considering infrastructure projects for funding, we found that Infrastructure Canada expected proposals for major projects to include information on environmental risks, but it did not use this information to analyze the risks of climate change, for example.

[Translation]

In the fall of 2017, we presented to Parliament three audits on topics related to climate change: mitigation, adaptation and funding of clean energy projects.

We audited three funds that support the development of demonstration projects on clean energy technology. I was happy to report that the three clean energy funds we looked at were working well overall.

With respect to reducing our greenhouse gas emissions, our office has indicated that meeting Canada's new 2030 greenhouse gas emission target will require substantial effort and actions beyond those currently planned or in place.

With respect to adapting to climate change, we looked at whether 19 federal organizations had identified and addressed climate change risks to their programs and operations.

Environment and Climate Change Canada developed a federal adaptation policy framework in 2011, but the department did not move to implement it. The department also failed to provide other federal organizations with adequate guidance and tools to identify their climate change risks.

As a result, we found that only five of the 19 departments and agencies we examined had fully assessed their climate change risks and acted to address them. We found that the 14 other departments had taken little or no action to address the climate change risks that could prevent them from delivering programs and services to Canadians.

[English]

This is a really important point. Canada has \$66 billion in assets, and overall, in reviewing those assets to see whether they were prepared to adapt to a change in climate, we found that the Government of Canada was not prepared to deal with a change in climate and these \$66 billion of assets.

With respect to the strategy you are reviewing today, I would argue that the section on adaptation could be improved by reviewing our audit recommendations on adaptation and integrating them into the greening of government strategy.

The last report I wish to draw your attention to is the collaborative report, “Perspectives on Climate Change Action in Canada”, presented in Parliament in March 2018. This report was historic and ground-breaking, because it was the first time that so many auditors general in Canada—provincial, territorial, and the federal Auditor General—had worked on any topic. The topic that they picked to work on together was climate change action.

At the provincial-territorial and federal levels, Canada's auditors general found that most governments were not on track to meet their commitments to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and that most governments were generally not ready to adapt to the impacts of a changing climate.

The collaborative report included questions that legislatures and Canadians could consider asking their governments as these governments move forward on their climate change commitments. You will find these questions in the appendix to this opening statement. I encourage you to look at them and perhaps ask the government representatives here some of those questions.

Finally, as an auditor I wish to provide you with some comments on the greening of government strategy—which at some point we will audit, so I can't give you too much. My office, though, looks at these strategies with the SMART framework in mind; that is, are the objectives specific, measurable, achievable, and realistic, and are there timelines associated with the activities?

When I reviewed the strategy, I found that the sections of the strategy dealing with greenhouse gas emissions, real property, mobility, and fleets have fairly specific targets that have timelines and that are measurable, for the most part.

We did not see that same specificity in the rest of the strategy. As I indicated earlier, I am particularly concerned with the area of adaptation to climate change and even the area of oversight and performance management, given the results of our previous audits.

From my perspective, questions for each part of the strategy should include the following. When will these activities be completed? Who will complete them? How much will actually get done?

I encourage this committee to consider a recommendation to include SMART objectives throughout the entire strategy so that Parliament and Canadians can measure the results.

Finally, I encourage the committee to consider the accountability of the strategy and ensure that it is made clear to everyone.

• (1615)

[Translation]

Mr. Chair, this concludes my opening remarks. We would be pleased to answer any questions the committee may have.

Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll go immediately into our seven-minute round of questions, starting with Monsieur Drouin.

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will apologize to the witnesses if I don't have a chance to ask all of you at least one question.

I am going to start with Mr. Xenos regarding the centre for greening government. What is its role? Does it play a coordinating role within government, and does it set objectives for the government? I'd like to understand the roles that each of you people play in relation to the centre.

Mr. Nick Xenos: Okay. Thank you for the question.

The role of the centre for greening government is to coordinate the efforts to get to results in the greening government strategy. We developed the strategy. Our job now is to implement it with our colleague departments.

At Treasury Board Secretariat, being the management board, we have an essential role in government administrative policies. For example, Jessica here is with the Office of the Comptroller General. That office is the lead on the real property policies of the Government of Canada's fleet and procurement policies. Really, those are some good levers to move.... Given that our emissions are mostly from buildings and the fleet, those are the essential kinds of policies you want.

Part of our role is to align central policies with the greening government strategy, including those I mentioned. We own, of course, the policy on green procurement as well. We own those policies and that central management function.

Second, we're driving to implement and coordinate results. We provide direction and guidance to departments. We coordinate with the expert departments. In all of these different areas, there are departments with different expertise. Natural Resources Canada has expertise in buildings. Public Works has expertise in buildings and contracting. Environment Canada has expertise in adaptation, for example, and in other areas such as waste management, etc. The National Research Council has the construction institute that does the building codes, etc.

We bring together that expertise as a service to the implementing departments, which ultimately are the ones who will take action to reduce their emissions. They control their real property and fleet. Through their buying of real property and fleet, they can lower emissions. They have the direction from Treasury Board, the oversight function from Treasury Board and the support function from technical expertise.

PSPC owns the second-biggest portfolio. The biggest by far is defence; then second is PSPC. Environment Canada has expertise in sustainable development, generally. Adaptation leads the climate change work across Canada and with provinces and territories, etc.

I can let my colleagues add anything if they want to.

•(1620)

Ms. Gail Haarsma: Sure. The sustainable development office at Environment and Climate Change Canada is responsible for maintaining systems and procedures to monitor progress on implementing the federal sustainable development strategy under the Federal Sustainable Development Act. Part of that is to ensure that greening of government operations is part of the strategy. It's an overview of sustainable development activities within the Government of Canada. Therefore, it includes activities from different departments. But there is a specific chapter on greening government. As I said from the outset, since the very first strategy was implemented in 2010, each subsequent strategy has had an element of greening government in its own goal.

Mr. Francis Drouin: Is your department responsible for standardizing how we monitor and measure carbon emissions for buildings or for...?

Ms. Gail Haarsma: We work with the centre for greening government to provide departments with guidance on how to implement the greening government strategy. We do it for the 12 goals in the current federal sustainable development strategy, and the centre for greening government provides guidance for their goal.

We work together to ensure that its seamless and works well.

Mr. Francis Drouin: Okay.

Mr. Radford, I think you wanted to jump in.

Mr. Kevin Radford: Sure. Besides telling us what to do from a GGO perspective, Nick's team is bringing us together. If we're doing things like district energy as an example here in Ottawa, we can share that experience with National Defence and the heating plants that they need to start refurbishing and modernizing across their bases, wings and units. We can share what works and what doesn't. If we're testing waste oil fuels or if we're testing biomass, we can share those kinds of results through the GGO. That actually allows us to do horizontal activities in an easier fashion.

The results that we get from a major rehabilitation of an existing building, like 25 St. Clair in Toronto, will contribute to the Canada Green Building Council's new LEED certification around net-zero carbon. But the data and the effort that we put into that facility will then be made readily available, with information shared on what's working, what could be done a little better, where we could achieve continuous improvements across the whole infrastructure spectrum of the 26 custodians, etc.

This is the kind of relationship that we have. I think it's a good one. It's helping with sharing information on a regular basis.

Mr. Francis Drouin: Thanks for the question.

[Translation]

Ms. Gelfand, I listened closely to your opening remarks. I think it's great that the auditors general are working together, but what happens when the federal, provincial and territorial governments are not all working towards the same goal?

That's evident here, in Ontario, where the provincial government has decided not to make climate change a priority. In that case, what should our role as lawmakers be? What can we do to encourage provinces to move in this direction? You mentioned setting up

incentives. What incentives would you suggest the federal government put in place in order for provinces to follow suit on climate change action?

Ms. Julie Gelfand: That's an excellent question.

[English]

The Chair: Unfortunately, Ms. Gelfand, you have about 30 seconds.

Ms. Julie Gelfand: Okay.

[Translation]

My job is not to give you advice. Rather, it is to audit the federal government's operations. What makes this initiative so historic, however, is the fact that all the auditors general across the country worked together on the same audit.

Mr. Francis Drouin: Very well, but you were the one who brought up the operations of the provincial and territorial governments. If it's not part of your job, why did you do it?

Ms. Julie Gelfand: All the auditors general and I produced this report together.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. McCauley, take seven minutes, please.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Welcome, everyone.

Before I get to my questions, I'd like to introduce my motion, which we put on notice on September 24 this year. I think the clerk has it.

I think our clerk will hand it out.

The Chair: Could you read it into the record?

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Sure. It is:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates undertake a study of the federal government's defence procurement process and; that the study consist of no less than 10 meetings; and that the study begin no later than Friday, November 30, 2018.

•(1625)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. McCauley, I'm sorry for interrupting. Before you begin—and obviously we're into debate now on your motion, and you can speak as long as you wish—I will mention that I will try to accommodate anyone else who wants to get on the speakers list. Mr. Nicholson has indicated that he would like to speak to this.

Do we have anyone else?

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I'll defer to Mr. Nicholson.

The Chair: Mr. Nicholson, go ahead.

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank all the witnesses here today for their testimony. I'm pleased to be here as recently appointed shadow minister for public services and procurement.

I'd like to address the motion that's been put forward by my colleague Kelly McCauley. The motion requests that this committee undertake a study of the federal government's defence procurement process.

I think, Mr. Chair, that this is simply a good idea. I think it would present an opportunity for the committee to address what I think—and I think most Canadians would agree with me—is an urgent need in the Canadian Armed Forces.

I appreciate the study that you're doing on greening and I certainly appreciated the witness testimony here. That said, it has been studied quite a bit over the last number of years. Conversely, a non-partisan study on cleaning up the extremely cumbersome procurement process gives an opportunity to the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates to work in tandem to address the needs of the Canadian Armed Forces and the security of all Canadians at the same time.

Mr. Chair, the burdensome procurement process, as you know, is not something new; it has been around for years. I have been told by a number of officials, for instance in the Department of National Defence, that this can and should be a top priority. As procurement ombudsman Alexander Jeglic noted, the present process is complicated, time-consuming, and bureaucratic, with far too many overlapping procurement rules.

One suggestion was to implement training for every bureaucrat. I unreservedly agree with that recommendation, as they are in the best position to simplify the process and make it accessible.

Getting feedback from those who bid on contracts, I think, is also of key importance for this improvement. I've heard time and again, particularly from small businesses, that the administrative process is too burdensome. I'm sure all my colleagues have heard this from small businesses that have wanted to be part of this process.

Colleagues, I think we have the opportunity to make a real difference with this study, to streamline the process. Naming a decision-maker for timeline approval alone would make a tremendous difference. It shouldn't take years to see the construction of a single Arctic patrol ship and select a preferred designer. Our allies are able to deliver these projects in less than two years. I think we should certainly look at the processes of our allies, such as Belgium and Australia, within this study.

It should be noted that the scope of the study would not encompass decisions made; it would rather focus on restructuring the process for maximum efficiency. We need to do better, and if we commit to working together, we can do better.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for your time. I look forward to further discussion on this matter. I hope it is something that will have the support of everyone here. I think it is very timely.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Nicholson.

I have two people on my speakers list, Mr. McCauley—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I'm fine.

The Chair: You're fine?

Then, Mr. Peterson.

Mr. Kyle Peterson (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Thanks, Mr. Chair.

I move that the debate be now adjourned.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

That motion is in order. We'll have an immediate vote on it.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Mr. McCauley, we left off with you. You have seven minutes, please.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Thanks for bearing with us, folks.

I have questions, and feel free, everyone, to jump in.

We have, I think, four departments, represented here. Who is in charge ultimately for the greening of government? We've seen issues such as the Phoenix problem. We've seen in defence procurement that we have different fingers in the pot and nothing is getting done. We have failure after failure.

Who's in charge? Who does oversight of the whole process?

● (1630)

Mr. Nick Xenos: I can start.

The overall strategy and the coordination and implementation of the strategy is led by Treasury Board Secretariat, but each department of course has accountability and makes the decisions for its own real properties.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: What's the follow-up from Treasury Board, then, to ensure that these goals are being set and being met, etc.?

The reason I ask is that I want to follow up on Ms. Gelfand's comment about accountability. I sat here and listened to everyone say that they're doing this and that. I sat there and have read through your departmental plans for Environment, Treasury Board, and PSPC, and PSPC is the only one that actually has set a goal on these issues. There's one single line item in all of the departmental plans, but not one in Environment about greening the government, which I find quite shocking. There's nothing in Treasury Board. There's one line item in PSPC: reduce greenhouse gases from the buildings by 17% from the previous year, which is great because we know it's the highest GHG emitter.

I question, however, who is in charge of the process, if we don't even have our own department of environment setting goals in this matter.

Mr. Nick Xenos: The way we show progress is that every year on the Open Government website.... The centre for greening government has a website—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I'm sorry, I'm going to interrupt.

Yes, but this is after the fact. If our own departmental plans, which are issued at the same time as the estimates and the budget, come out saying, "This is our goal for the year", and they haven't set a single goal, what's the point, if the only accountability is a year later, asking whether we met our goals? "Oh, well, we actually didn't set any goals"—apart from PSPC.

That's what I want to get to. We have four different departments here, but who is actually ensuring that this stuff gets done? If you leave it to departments, it's clear that it won't get done. That's clear from Ms. Gelfand's comment about accountability.

Mr. Nick Xenos: Every year what we do is issue how each department is doing. We're very specific: how each department has progressed to the 40% and 80% goals. That is publicly disclosed on the website. We can send you the link afterwards.

We know, then, how each department is doing and we track that, and not just at the end of the year, but that's when we officially get the submissions. But, of course—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Do you look at their goals in advance, though?

Mr. Nick Xenos: Well, the goals in advance are 40% by 2030 and 80% by 2050, and so—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: This is not shown in any departmental plans.

Mr. Nick Xenos: Do you mean in departmental sustainable government strategies, or—?

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I mean the departmental plans that are issued for every department, saying where they're spending their money and what results they expect to achieve with that money.

Mr. Nick Xenos: Every department reports in their departmental sustainable development strategy—this is goal number two of the federal sustainable development strategy. Right now we've achieved a 28% reduction, so we're well on our way to the 40%. As I said, we report on that annually.

Also, I chair an interdepartmental committee at a senior level, an ADM level. We work with departments to see what the upcoming issues are and what lessons we can share.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I'm short on time, so I'm just going to interrupt.

I think that if you're leading this interdepartmental committee, you should maybe suggest that they read their departmental plans and get back to the committee about why we don't actually have any goals set in the departmental plans, apart from PSPC's.

Do we know how many people are working on greening in government across all the departments and how much we're spending on the process?

Again, this gets back to what Ms. Gelfand was saying, in that we don't seem to have a lot of accountability. We have this great aspirational goal, which I think we all support, but we don't seem to have the accountability of getting either a bang for our buck or ensuring that people are doing what they should be doing for greening in government.

The Chair: Do you want to direct your question to an individual, Mr. McCauley?

Mr. Kelly McCauley: It's to Treasury Board, if they're in charge of this. Treasury Board overlooks the public service.

Have we looked at how much we're spending, by department or overall; at how many overlapping...? Do we have a lot of overlapping goals?

Mr. Nick Xenos: In terms of the greening of government operations, I'm be happy happy to speak to that.

We have integrated it into people's roles. Because 88% of the emissions are from real property, it's the real property.... There are no special additional FTEs for greening government. It's integrated with the people managing the buildings and the fleet managers. These are targets that they have to meet within their...and integrated within their work.

Each department is organized a bit differently, but in terms of real property, fleet procurement, adaptation, etc., this is integrated into their work.

• (1635)

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I think I'm out of time, but we'll go back to it.

The Chair: You have about 30 or 40 seconds.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I'll ask a question very quickly. We'll go back to Mr. Radford.

I'm wondering whether you're satisfied with the pilot projects for the greening of the various buildings and whether you believe we're getting the proper returns, because I have some stats. We won't have time—we'll get it in the next round—but I'm not seeing from the response to our ATIP request that we're seeing an actual reduction in our releases.

Mr. Kevin Radford: I'll answer this way—

The Chair: You only have a few seconds, sir.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: We'll come around the next time to address that.

Mr. Kevin Radford: Do I have just a couple of seconds, or no?

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I'll ask you the next time around.

Mr. Kevin Radford: In each portfolio plan there are categories of elements that will reduce GHG in and around infrastructure. I'd be happy to share those, if we have the time.

The Chair: We should have another round coming.

Mr. Blaikie, you have seven minutes, please.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

With apologies to our witnesses again, I'm going to take a moment to deal with some business for which I served notice on Thursday, November 1.

I move:

That, pursuant to Standing Orders 108(3)(c)(ix), the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates invite the Interim President and CEO of Canada Post Corporation, Jessica L. McDonald and the national president of Canadian Union of Postal Workers Mike Palecek (CUPW), to provide a briefing on the management practices of Canada Post, particularly the deplorable practice of targeting sick and vulnerable workers in response to the rotating strike taking place during the current round of collective bargaining, and that this briefing take place no later than Thursday, November 8, 2018.

This is, of course, why it's important that we deal with the motion today, in order to be able to change our schedule for Thursday.

I learned about this last Monday when I visited striking workers in Winnipeg on the picket line and began hearing stories of workers who are collecting their disability insurance because they're sick or they're injured.

When the rotating strike began, Canada Post issued a missive to their workers saying that if you're on short-term or long-term disability or if you get a maternity leave top-up under the collective agreement, Canada Post would be ceasing those benefits.

That obviously puts those workers in a very difficult position. We know from the Phoenix disaster what it looks like when people aren't getting paid: what it means for their mortgage payments; what it means for, in this case, any medications those workers have to have.

This isn't a necessary part of collective bargaining and certainly not any kind of fair collective bargaining. For any corporation—particularly a Crown corporation, in the name of Canadians—to be targeting sick and vulnerable workers as a bargaining technique I think is disgusting.

The evidence suggests that this is exactly what's going on. I've heard from many postal workers who are on disability leave, “Yes, that's my story; that's what's happening to me”, and “Thank you for trying to do something about it”.

What I think is important is that we hear the facts; that we get the president and CEO of the company here to tell us their side of the story, whatever it may be. I've been trying to imagine how you justify doing this. I can't, so I would need to hear it from her.

I'd like to hear from the president of the union to hear some of those stories and to get the union's perspective on why this is happening and on the mechanisms that even allow this to happen in the first place.

Those are the reasons I think this is really important. It's important that we do it as soon as possible, because these workers right now aren't being paid. The longer we wait to get an assessment of the situation and the longer government waits to do something about it, the more likely it is that we're going to find ourselves in a situation in which these workers are suffering material, lasting financial harm and the other kinds of harm that come from not being able to make payments.

We've heard, for instance, from the call centre that helps administer these benefits to workers. Since Canada Post made the announcement, they've been receiving more calls, and workers are reporting anxiety, depression, in some cases suicidal ideation.

This is a real thing that is happening right now to people who work for a Crown corporation. It doesn't have to be happening. I think it's important that we get to the bottom of it as the committee that's responsible for Canada Post.

Thank you.

• (1640)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I have two people on my speakers list, Mr. McCauley and Mr. Peterson.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Thank you for that, Mr. Blaikie.

Generally, I would support this.

Most importantly I'd love to hear from the temporary president of Canada Post but also from the head of the union whether this is purely a negotiating ploy instead of... Canada Post has tools to counter the rotating strikes. Are they doing this instead of a lockout, or are there other issues? I'd certainly like to hear.

I would perhaps suggest that we also invite Minister Qualtrough to appear and explain the government's role with Canada Post. There are several reasons for doing so. One is that she, when we had the interim president of Canada Post here nine months ago, made it very clear that we were very close to landing a new president for Canada Post. It's clear that the government has no intention of finding a permanent president right now for Canada Post. I think the reason for that is so that they can pin this strike and any bad feelings from the strike on an outgoing president, not a new president. I think that has to be addressed.

We haven't yet seen the long-term plan from the government or from Canada Post that was promised to this committee when we had the president here, addressing such issues as the \$8 to \$9 billion pension deficit, the long-term plan to counter FedEx, UPS, and all the others, and the way they're going to maintain a business model.

I think it's very important that we hear from the temporary president, but perhaps also from the union side, and perhaps also from the government. I've heard very clearly from Canada Post that they have not received their marching orders yet from this government on how to address the pension issues, long-term viability, and the other things.

I fully support this motion, with or without Minister Qualtrough, though I believe she should be here to discuss the broader issues at hand.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Peterson.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: I don't know whether Mr. McCauley was proposing an amendment and Mr. Blaikie deemed it friendly, or where we are procedurally.

The Chair: I don't believe there was an amendment.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: Okay. I just wanted to be clear on that. I won't address that point then, because it's not formally part of the motion.

We certainly sympathize and empathize with the plight of the workers in these cases.

Mr. Blaikie, I think you asked a question of the minister today during question period in the House, which was the proper forum to do so. The two parties right now are at the bargaining table. We strongly encourage them to remain at the bargaining table. We'd hate to have our committee interfere with what is, I think hopefully, going to be a fruitful process.

I'm wondering whether there might be a reluctance on the part of these two parties to appear before a committee, given that they're clearly in the bargaining process right now trying to come to a mediated resolution to the labour situation.

For those reasons, although we empathize and sympathize with the workers, I think bringing these parties before the committee would be inappropriate. It may actually defeat the purpose of the motion.

The Chair: Mr. Blaikie, I have you on the list as well.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Thank you very much. I'll make a brief response to those points.

First of all, I think it's important to say that this practice of targeting workers who are on sick or maternity leave doesn't have to do with bargaining demands. While I agree that outside interference in the bargaining process itself, in terms of what's being discussed at the table, is one thing, this is a management practice. It is a practice that the management of Canada Post has adopted in the name of Canadians to try to get leverage over the union at the table. It's not something that's happening at the table and it's not about the demands at the table. It's about using what's happening outside of that process to affect negotiations.

I thus do think this would be within our purview. I do not believe it would be inappropriate for the committee to look at it.

I would just add one thing to keep in mind when we're evaluating this kind of management strategy. I don't think it would be okay in any circumstance to make sick and vulnerable workers a pawn in negotiations. This is a rotating strike. Canada Post is making its money. Mail and packages are being delivered; the revenue is coming in. These workers aren't seeing a dime. The response is completely disproportionate to what is being done involving the rotating strike. I think that's another reason—certainly not the only reason—that Canada Post needs to stop this.

I would appreciate committee members' support in helping us get to the bottom. If there are other facts, I'm open to hearing them. That's why I'm asking that the CEO of Canada Post come here as well. I haven't heard any credible countervailing facts. In the absence of those, I think it's imperative that the government take responsibility for this and put a stop to it.

Thank you.

• (1645)

The Chair: Thank you.

I have no others on my speaking list, which means we will go to a vote on the motion immediately.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I'd like a recorded vote.

(Motion negatived: nays 5; yeas 3)

The Chair: Mr. Blaikie, we're back to you for a full seven minutes.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Thank you very much.

My question is for Mr. Xenos. In the briefing we had, we had representations by the various departments responsible for the Government of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions. It's clear that the Department of National Defence, by far and away, is the leading producer of emissions. Within that envelope, it's especially the building envelope that produces the emissions.

I recently had the honour of travelling to Canada's Arctic with the foreign affairs committee to study Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic. We were in northern communities and visited a number of DND sites as well as a number of northern communities. Of course, one of the issues up there is power and how to supply power in a reliable way that doesn't produce a lot of emissions.

I'm just wondering, as part of the greening government strategy, if you've already figured out how much of that DND building envelope comes from Northern Watch stations and other defence buildings located up north that are running off diesel generators. Obviously that's going to produce a lot. The challenge of moving to alternative energy sources is also very real because that is the challenge of the north.

Do you have a sense of how much of that DND building envelope is from northern facilities?

Mr. Nick Xenos: We have looked at DND facilities, because, of course, they are by far the biggest chunk of our emissions. When you look at their bases, heat and electricity are ultimately the two main things.

When you look at the size of the bases, the emissions are predominately from the southern bases. Halifax's naval base is the biggest operational base. I would say, if you take, for example, the two big naval bases, Esquimalt and Halifax, and the major bases in Alberta, Ontario, New Brunswick, etc., and combine them with the emissions factors of the utilities, the grids, and the energy sources in each province, you get a different....

With respect to the northern installations like Alert or the smaller-footprint Fort Eureka, they use a lot of diesel, but their operations aren't that big.

There are different solutions to each of the bases in the sense that at somewhere like Alert or Ellesmere Island, the economics of becoming more energy efficient makes a lot more sense, because the less fuel you need to bring up there, the bigger the savings. Of course, the solution might be different in different places.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Yes, for sure.

In terms of the funding envelopes available for the greening government strategy, are there dedicated funds in the strategy for infrastructure to go above and beyond staffing a coordinating strategy? One of the potential benefits, if we look at northern communities—and even southern communities—where a DND base is powered by utilities that are very carbon intensive.... Are the funding envelopes structured in a way that, by trying to green the government buildings, we could also help reduce the emissions of adjacent communities by providing alternative power sources, or is that way outside the scope of the funding envelopes?

Mr. Nick Xenos: The funding for the greening has really incorporated.... It's the real property funds, the buildings funds and the fleet management funds, that departments have in their existing budget. It's really about doing things a bit differently. Often when you spend money on energy efficiency, you're going to spend a little bit on capital, but you'll get it back in operating savings. The funds that departments are using are their real property and fleet funds.

There is a lot of opportunity for synergies, I would say, with local communities. For example, the Department of Defence has put out a request for information. It's looking at renewable energy and indigenous possibilities to get a sense of what's out there. DND bases are located very close to communities across the country and, of course, any opportunities there are—

• (1650)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: To what extent does your mandate include thinking about and incorporating into the strategy a very deliberate attempt to leverage the greening government strategy as much as possible, and to make gains when it comes to greenhouse gas emission reductions in the wider community, whether in the north, south or wherever?

Is that a very intentional part of the strategy?

Mr. Nick Xenos: Yes. There is an engagement section to the strategy that talks very much about how we can partner with communities, be good neighbours and work on synergies where it's a win-win situation; where we need more clean power and the community is producing clean power. We want departments to take advantage of that. You might want to give an example.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: I was going to ask if you have an example of what's going on.

Mr. Kevin Radford: With the district energy system that I spoke to in our opening remarks, as we modernize the current heating plant infrastructure and all of the tunnels that switch from providing steam heat to Parliament Hill and about 82 different along Wellington.... Part of the contract for the distribution system, when we convert to low-temperature hot water, will allow other organizations outside of the federal government to hook into or put a T in the tunnels and pipes to allow geothermal-type district energy heating to come into various facilities.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: I understand that at the moment this infrastructure is already largely in place and that the government is looking at privatizing the management of that.

Is that correct?

Mr. Kevin Radford: There's an RFP on the street right now to modernize the five heating plants, to get about a 70% reduction overall in GHG emissions and to convert some of those heating

plants that are 60- or 70 year-old infrastructure into modern infrastructure going forward.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: What evidence do you have that the privatization of that system will lead to savings for government?

Mr. Kevin Radford: What evidence do we have?

We're at a point now where we absolutely have to modernize it. We'd be glad to take you on a tour of some of the facilities, the Cliff Street Heating Plant, etc. The evidence is more that the private sector has a lot of experience in Toronto, and other jurisdictions in urban centres where—

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: But the public sector has been running the system for a long time now here in Ottawa.

The Chair: I think we're going to have to cut it off there, Mr. Blaikie.

We'll now go to Mr. Peterson for seven minutes, please.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: Mr. Radford, I'm going to give you an opportunity to complete your answer to Mr. McCauley. Time didn't allow that, so please go ahead.

Mr. Kevin Radford: Thank you both.

Back in mid-2015 or the fall of 2015 when I moved into this role, we didn't have a lot of data and evidence around all of our facilities. We received some program integrity funding in budget 2016 that allowed us to actually study our facilities and do things that I mentioned like Energy Star ratings on those facilities.

The way we used to make investments in our facilities was largely based on health and safety issues, addressing issues where we were outside of code. Some of the targets that my colleague Nick Xenos mentioned are actually allowing us to start looking at greening infrastructure targets as well.

I have a couple of small examples. You'll remember that not long ago LED lights were fairly expensive, etc., but over time they've become easier for us to purchase. Just doing small refits in lighting allows us to accomplish a 6% reduction in overall GHG across the infrastructure. The cost-benefit associated with that is shown in the ROIs, which are about seven years for those various investments, and the savings in electricity.

Another small example would be some of the smart building technology that we've been piloting and installing. I mentioned that we have 66 buildings that are done and we're going to 100 facilities by the end of this year. Our initial pilots allowed us to save about 15% on our energy bills, and the ROI on some of those investments is about five years.

Those are some of the things we are doing. We're tracking and costing, and the methodology is available to the Chair.

• (1655)

Mr. Kyle Peterson: Thank you for that.

Madam Gelfand, you talked about the collaboration report. You mentioned that most governments are not on track. I'm a glass-is-half-full kinda guy so I read that as saying that some governments are on track.

Which ones are on track, and what are they doing right? Are there things we can learn from those governments?

Ms. Julie Gelfand: In terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, we found that most governments, except Saskatchewan and the NWT, did have plans to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. That's a good thing.

However, only the federal government and, at the time, Ontario, New Brunswick and NWT, had 2030 targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Eight governments did not have 2030 targets. As you know, the Canadian government's target year in the pan-Canadian framework is 2030, and we found that eight governments didn't even have a 2030 target. There were a few that did but several that didn't. Those are two examples of where governments were and were not prepared.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: That's good. I would like to expand on that.

You and the auditors general audited their jurisdictions on the sustainability of their—

What were you auditing?

Ms. Julie Gelfand: We developed a set of questions around whether or not that particular government was going to achieve their greenhouse gas reduction targets. Did they have a target, were they going to achieve it, or have they achieved it? Then there were a series of questions on adaptation. Had they looked at the risks? Were they ready to adapt?

Each auditor general in each province and territory asked their governments exactly the same questions as minimal questions, and then each of the auditors general reported to their own parliaments or legislatures. Then all of us pulled together a summary report, which was presented in the Canadian Parliament.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: You said this was the first time all the auditors general had worked together on anything?

Ms. Julie Gelfand: On anything. Yes.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: Do you perceive this being a trend among other—

Ms. Julie Gelfand: We're tired of corralling.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: Is this what auditors general talk about at cocktail parties?

Ms. Julie Gelfand: Actually, they talk mostly about financial stuff, so to get them to think about climate change—there are serious impacts because these auditors general who do the public accounts are now thinking about climate change in terms of whether we're going to reach our targets. But probably even more important is how much this is going to cost each territory or province, and are we ready to adapt?

Mr. Kyle Peterson: You looked at the broad GHG reduction strategy in all those jurisdictions?

Ms. Julie Gelfand: That's correct.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: We're talking today a little more specifically on the greening government initiative.

Within that study was there a review of what role a greening government strategy could play in the overall reduction?

Ms. Julie Gelfand: The simple answer was no. We did not look at that. Certain auditors general went beyond the minimal questions, but I don't believe—and Kim can answer—anyone looked at the greening of government.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: Okay. So no one's audited the program yet or anything like that?

Ms. Julie Gelfand: No. We audited it in 2013, I believe, and in 2008.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: I suspect in the future you will be taking a look at that.

Ms. Julie Gelfand: Now that we have a new strategy, yes. Maybe.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: What's my timeline, Mr. Chair? Do you I have one minute left?

The Chair: You have one minute and 20 seconds.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: Mr. Radford, I want to talk to you a little about real property. Canada's federal government owns a lot of property, but we also lease a lot of property.

What measures can be taken to do what we can to green the leased properties as well? Obviously we don't have the same impact with those, because we're not necessarily building them or doing anything, but how do we track what's going on there?

Mr. Kevin Radford: One of our initiatives in our net-zero carbon strategy is to also look at the leasing portfolio. We own about half our office portfolio. It's seven and a half million square metres. The other half is leased from the market.

We're having three sessions this month with the landlord community to start looking at how can we start injecting green lease clauses as we renew that leasing environment. We also struck a working group with the federal, provincial and territorial real estate group, and we have lots of interest from the provinces and territories in working with us on the development of those green lease clauses.

To answer your question more specifically, I've always found when you're working with the landlord community that it's best to have a lot of consultation before you do something on your own, and that you co-develop what those clauses and leases could look like. Then you look at the impact of those leases and maybe use those clauses and start gradually introducing them into the built sector. Our hope would be that our example might be picked up by other organizations as well.

● (1700)

Mr. Kyle Peterson: I'm out of time, but thank you very much for those answers.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Colleagues, we will now go to five-minute interventions. We will start with Mr. McCauley.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I want to go back to the pilot project for the buildings. I'm looking at the numbers for RH codes, health protection, StatsCan main and the Major-General Pearkes Building.

I'm looking at the numbers, comparing them with the pre pilot period. There are months, usually over the winter, when there's a massive increase year over year despite spending money on the pilot project to reduce that. I know some is related to the weather differential, etc.

How is backing that out to ensure we're getting success from the pilot project we're doing? I'm looking at kilowatt hours, not actual dollars. It's sometimes 20% to 30% higher year over year.

Could you keep it brief because I have a couple of other questions?

Mr. Kevin Radford: Leveraging smart building initiatives is an example. We can look at when the building is occupied, and we can start to try to reduce the use of some of our HVAC systems when the building is less occupied, maybe start looking at reducing lighting. That would be just a small example.

With some of the organizations you mentioned, like the Major-General Pearkes Building, National Defence headquarters, there may be times when that's a 24/7 operation, but for the most part those are the types of things we can do.

From a lighting perspective, I think some of the—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: The pilot projects are pretty small...?

Mr. Kevin Radford: Yes, I certainly don't think that we'll meet the 2030 targets or the 2050 targets—any of the custodians in the federal government—by doing small lighting projects—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Right.

Mr. Kevin Radford: —or small smart building projects.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Yes, I was just asking about the scope of that.

If 88% of our GHGs—let's round it up to 90%—in government is from the buildings, are we focusing 90% of our efforts on that? Or are we getting sidetracked by other things?

Mr. Kevin Radford: Certainly at PSPC, as the person responsible for our real estate portfolio, I'll say that we're focusing very heavily on GHG reductions from the infrastructure. I mentioned that we're at 54%. We've exceeded the 2030 targets. We're injecting in the district energy area as well, but certainly.... Are there distractions? I don't really think so. I think we're—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I wouldn't call them distractions, but if it's in line with Pareto's law of averages, the 80-20 distribution, and we see that it's 88%, are we focusing at least 88% of our efforts on the buildings?

Mr. Kevin Radford: It's a very interesting point of view. We haven't talked about it, but even how tenants use the facilities has a significant impact on GHG reductions as well. A 10% overall reduction in the footprint would lead to roughly a 13% reduction in GHGs. The easiest square metre to heat or light is the square metre that you don't have.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Did I hear correctly that it was 57 electrical vehicle charging outlets that we've installed? Was that through PSPC?

Mr. Kevin Radford: Yes.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: How many cars are those 57 servicing? How much was the cost to install those? Do you know?

Mr. Kevin Radford: I don't know that offhand—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Do you know how many cars they're servicing?

Mr. Kevin Radford: Sorry?

Mr. Kelly McCauley: How many cars?

Mr. Kevin Radford: On how many cars, I don't know offhand the number of vehicles, but certainly one part of our efforts is to move to electric vehicles. We can find out for you.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Yes, please do, if you don't mind getting back to us.

Mr. Kevin Radford: Okay.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: We've heard that DND, of course, is the largest emitter. We tried to have DND included in this study, but our government friends here actually blocked that.

Who is overseeing the reduction from the government side for DND on their reductions? I looked at the departmental plan. It's not mentioned once, yet we see that they are by far the largest emitter. Who's coordinating that? Is it just left solely to them?

Mr. Nick Xenos: No. We're working very closely with DND as the biggest emitter. They're on my speed-dial, if you wish.

They have an energy and environment strategy. Also, if you look at their strong, secure and engaged defence strategy, you'll see a lot in there on carbon reduction. Again, the DND energy and environment strategy is on the web. It has a long outline of the projects and the plans they have to reduce emissions. It includes many different things, including energy efficiency projects, buying renewable energy and greening fleets.

There's a long list of what they're doing. They're hiring energy managers at the different bases to look at where they can get savings from better tracking their energy use and where they can use less energy in getting better metrics. They have quite a bit in there, including their heat plant upgrades, etc.

● (1705)

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Okay. I'm out of time. Thanks.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We will now go to Madam Ratansi for five minutes, please.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.): Thank you very much, and thanks to all of you for being here.

I just want to confirm with the environmental commissioner—I was going to say “the Auditor General”, but you’re not the Auditor General—that you have not done an audit of the greening of government. Is that correct? That’s because it’s a new program. This program is new and you have not touched it, but you have given some suggestions, and I think that would be applicable throughout if somebody took on a new program.

My question is for the Treasury Board, perhaps. What sorts of challenges have you faced or are you facing in terms of implementing this greening strategy and what have you done to mitigate that? I think the Auditor General’s office has given us some very interesting venues in which to mitigate risks and do adaptation. I’m wondering whether you have taken those things into consideration.

Mr. Nick Xenos: The first challenge that we found was that we wanted departments to take a whole-of-department view on the most cost-effective and most impactful actions by first getting a good sense of the metrics, a good sense of where the emissions are per department, and then what actions they can take.

Usually, it’s like three buckets of goods.

One is what spaces you don’t need. As Mr. Radford said, if there’s a floor or a building that you don’t need, then you can consolidate or operate differently, and you don’t need to heat and cool it. There’s that component. The second component is how you make the buildings that you have as energy efficient as possible. The third is how you fuel-switch if there are still remaining carbon emissions and costing that out and getting a sense of what actions you can take.

As opposed to taking individual actions, what you can do is take a comprehensive approach to where your best emissions and impacts are. Departments are working on that in that kind of an approach, where they’re looking at the whole of their portfolio. Mr. Radford talked about the work at PSPC.

The second thing, then, is that there are things like aging buildings and aging infrastructure. That’s where we’re looking at it over the next 30 years and saying, “Okay, what’s our real property plan?” Then, how do you integrate that analysis into the real property plan so that when you do a retrofit you’re thinking of these things, as opposed to having to redo the retrofit a second time? It’s really integrating it there, I think, generally.

The other thing is that different departments are at different places. Some of the larger departments have more expertise and some of the smaller departments have less expertise, and then it’s about sharing best practices and expertise from expert departments that have a lot of knowledge, buildings and fleets, etc., with departments that are working in a different area or have a smaller footprint. We’re also sharing practices with the provinces, for example, and other partners.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: In terms of the PSPC, you have buildings that the government owns and buildings that it leases. How do you ensure that both are following the strategy? Is there an educational component that you have to put into place? Are there people who are resistant to change? Normal...?

We call you the “permanent workers”, and we call ourselves the “temporary workers”, so how will you ensure that strategy is sustainable?

Mr. Kevin Radford: Thanks for the question. I think we need to lead by example.

One of the questions I was asked earlier was about a Pareto type of approach. When we did our Energy Star ratings on all of our owned assets, we found that about 20% of our facilities were actually contributing about 80% of the GHGs, so that allowed us to take our capital program and refocus it on that 20% of the heavy emitters, etc., and to develop and learn from those programs that we were putting in place and apply them to the rest of the owned environment.

In the leasing environment, it is a little different. We need to work with the markets in the various urban centres. About 56% of public servants reside in the national capital area, and about 44% are out in urban centres. About 80% of public servants are in the eight other major centres, Calgary, Edmonton, etc., if you go east to west, and the markets are very different in those locations. Vancouver and Toronto are very different from, say, Halifax.

Our approach on the leasing environment is to work very closely with the landlord community to show and demonstrate in an open way the work we’re doing on our owned inventory and to try to work with them on introducing some clauses into our leases such that we will give preferential treatment to leasing organizations that are actually taking steps forward around infrastructure. That’s the approach we’re taking.

• (1710)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. McCauley, you have five minutes.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: That was a good question, Ms. Ratansi.

Mr. Xenos, who from DND would be the best person to appear before us to chat about their efforts, assuming we’ll be allowed to do it?

Mr. Nick Xenos: The ADM of infrastructure and environment would be my counterpart.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Okay. Thank you.

Maybe this is for Mr. Radford, because it’s regarding PSPC.

Of the 631 cars the government bought for the G7 meetings—of course, that’s been mentioned in the newspapers—only 51 of them could be repurposed. Is that because we bought 631 that weren’t—

Mr. Kevin Radford: As the the real estate guy, I wasn’t really heavily engaged in the G7 procurement activity, but I can reach into our department and find out some information for—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Do we have directives when we are buying cars on a temporary basis that they should be either EV or like a Prius so they fit within the government plan?

Mr. Kevin Radford: Certainly—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Again, it goes to my question about who is in charge, because if they’re going out and buying—

Mr. Kevin Radford: My counterpart who runs the acquisitions and procurement services part of the organization has looked at 35 different commodities, and vehicles are certainly one of those commodities for which there are standing offers to purchase the type of vehicles you are mentioning.

For sure, that's available to departments, but ultimately, what departments decide to buy is a departmental decision.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Again, it goes to my question. We have this grand plan, but if departmental plans aren't committing to it, what is the point of spending so much taxpayers' money to create all of these great talking points. Someone can just turn around and say, "Well, I'm going to buy 631 cars" if a bunch of them are Nissan Rogues, which are small, tiny crossover utility vehicles whose job could easily have been done by a Prius or a Santa Fe hybrid. Again, it goes to my question, but I think I'm getting my answer.

In the short amount of time I have left, can you walk me through something? You've put in your departmental plans a 17% reduction of GHGs from buildings, which is great, and that's on top of 13% the year before, I think. Every year we're seeing good results from PSPC on that. Can you walk us through some of the ideas or the programs that we might be looking at to get to that 17% reduction?

Mr. Kevin Radford: Sure. As I mentioned earlier, one of the ways we're looking at doing this is by focusing on the 20% that are heavy emitters, which gets us the biggest bang for the buck in the investment side of it.

The other way of doing it is by looking at how we invest in real estate decisions a little bit differently. When we go forward and ask for permission from central agencies for major rehabilitation, you don't do those every 10 years. That is something you do maybe in the life of a particular building around every 40 years for an office tower, by way of example. What we do is to try to look at what the cost would be over a life cycle. I mentioned that we're adjusting our finances to an accrual-based budgeting methodology. That allows us to amortize investments over a longer period of time.

One of the ways we look at it is to look at what we could get to a LEED gold or silver standard. Then we'd take it to another GHG or net zero carbon-type facility, and then we look at a hybrid of the two from a cost analysis over a 25 or a 35-year period, depending on the asset.

What we're finding is that, for a small increase in initial capital cost, our predictions over the life cycle, which will have to be measured on the returns on investment, etc., can jump from, say, a 25% reduction in GHG to a 94% reduction in GHG with maybe about a 6% to 12% investment up front, and then—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Do we have a sense of how many buildings we should maybe just sell or tear down because the cost to renovate them is going to be far too high for any possible return and we could be better off looking for other property?

Mr. Kevin Radford: Right now we own about 350-plus buildings, and we tier those assets based on a number of different criteria, but certainly greening capability, the ability to green that infrastructure, is one of those major factors that we look at in a future investment decision.

If a building that we look at is just impossible for us to rehabilitate.... Now, there are other factors around heritage, etc. that would have to be taken into consideration, balanced and weighed across those factors, but what we're finding is that we would move buildings that require a lot of investment, which are office towers that are available in the market, and would shed those assets or recommend that we dispose of those assets, but we don't make those decisions. We usually go to—

• (1715)

Mr. Kelly McCauley: When you have them tiered, do you have a ballpark figure of how many are in the bottom tier?

The Chair: Unfortunately, Mr. McCauley, we're completely out of time.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Thanks.

The Chair: Madame Yip, you have five minutes.

Ms. Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Thank you for coming.

This question is for Mr. Xenos.

On page 2 of your remarks, what is meant by the life-cycle assessment principles in procurement policies and practices?

Mr. Nick Xenos: What we're trying to do is to take a life-cycle assessment of both the cost and the environmental impacts of anything we buy. For example, there is a certain cost to buying something, and then it will last a certain period of time. If you buy something, and it lasts 10 years, you may think about buying something better, which might be a little bit more expensive but lasts for 15 years, so you could do a cost assessment of that. You also want to look at the environmental impacts of those things.

You want to have a mix of best value, which includes the environmental impacts of that over the life cycle of a product, versus the cost of that product.

Ms. Jean Yip: Can you comment on how the integration of the sustainability and the life-cycle principles in the procurement policies is working, including in the government supply chain?

Mr. Nick Xenos: Sure. In procurement, what we focused on is the biggest areas of impact, for example, buildings, construction, and then fleet and energy.

Buildings are a good example. You take a life-cycle assessment of the building. What is the cost to build it? What is the cost to operate it? What's the cost of disposal or the full life-cycle cost? What are the environmental impacts throughout that? The commitment is to have net-zero carbon ready buildings, and low carbon for retrofits.

PSPC is a good example in that assessment. When they come forward to build or retrofit a building, they're looking at various options for what they can do and what the cost equation is for getting it to lower carbon. You determine what's cost neutral. What are all of cost-neutral things you can do to lower its carbon footprint, and what things might cost you a little bit more in capital, but make you money over the 30 or 40 year life-cycle of the building?

Buildings are a really good example of where we're first applying these principles, and we're pushing this because it is the biggest area that we buy.

Ms. Jean Yip: With respect to the greening strategy, is there any thought of your working with the provincial government, trying to reduce some of our costs?

Mr. Nick Xenos: Yes. One of the first things we did was to create a community of practice. With the B.C. government, I co-chair a community of practice of our federal and provincial counterparts. We share what each is doing in the buildings area, in the fleet area, in the procurement area and in adaptation.

We've produced a compendium of best practices in greening government, which is on the web and is a really good example of what different jurisdictions are doing in greening government and what the best practices are. If somebody were to start in any jurisdiction tomorrow, for example, they could look at this. It's almost a one-to-one in terms of what you can do in the buildings, fleet, adaptation, and procurement areas. The different provinces have different expertise in different areas, and we can collaborate in those areas.

Like my colleague, Mr. Radford, said, leasing is a really good example. We've been working together to develop green lease clauses for instance. We've also been in touch with cities like Vancouver, Toronto and so on. There are a lot of good examples where we can share and learn from each other, in terms of what everyone's doing.

Ms. Jean Yip: Thank you.

The Chair: Now you have one minute left.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: I'm going to take her one minute.

We were talking about inventory. In the past, we used to have all of our furniture and fixtures destroyed. It was a horrible thing to do, but with your constituency office, if you lost the election, that's what you did. I also find that you have a lot of real estate that has old furniture in it. How does that match with the greening government strategy?

• (1720)

Mr. Kevin Radford: We've started something called Government of Canada workplace solutions. I would invite you to come to see where I work. I've implemented that. I don't have an office. All of our environment is very modern, similar to this type of infrastructure. No one has an assigned seat. It's a balance of interactive space and autonomous space. People can put their heads down and work when they need to on a particular file, but we find that people don't work like that anymore. Work is something you do, not a place that you go.

I'd encourage this committee, if they would like, to visit our facilities. I could give you a tour. It's what a modern workplace could

look like, and we're able to increase the capacity significantly and offer things like alternative working arrangements for people who work for us. The key is integrating your IT strategy, your HR strategy, and your real estate strategy on how people will work, and making sure that people have the tools.

The Chair: Thank you very much, and thank you for the offer.

We will now go to our final intervention. It will be for three minutes by Mr. Blaikie.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: I'd like to go back to the question on the vehicles that were purchased for the G7 summit, from the point of view of trying to get to the way you implement a plan like this.

I don't know whether it was Public Safety or somebody in the RCMP who did some of that procurement, but if I were the person who ultimately ended up charged with procuring those vehicles—we have an event, we've done the cost-benefit analysis, we think it's better to buy than it is to lease—is it up to me to know that there's a greening government strategy and to search my email? For example, I might say, I think I got something 10 months ago; maybe there are some best practices in there.

How do you make the link between the strategy you're devising for fleet management, for instance...? It would be great if vehicles were purchased that were part of a fleet renewal program, and then either you could use older vehicles in the fleet for the G7 and then get rid of those, or the new vehicles that you buy could then be integrated into the fleet and you could jettison some of the older vehicles that you wanted to jettison anyway.

How does that hook up, for the person who's in a department making those decisions? Or is it that we just issue an advisory and are really hoping that people are excited about it and remember it when the time comes?

Mr. Nick Xenos: No. We're working really closely with the acquisitions branch at PSPC, the vehicle purchase group, and we are looking at the various vehicles and classes of vehicles. In this particular case, it was national security-related. Obviously, there's a special consideration when they're national security-related vehicles.

With the RCMP, of course, we have ongoing discussions. We've actually had many discussions on their fleet and on what we do to green it.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: If we were hosting a conference that didn't raise the same national security considerations the G7 summit did, how would the procurement process for those vehicles have looked different? What would have been different for the person doing the work?

Mr. Nick Xenos: We chair an interdepartmental committee of the fleet managers of the 23 fleet-managing departments that have fleets of more than 50 cars. We communicate the strategy, we communicate the way we're going to report on it, we communicate the way we're going to deal with particular challenges and different issues. Fleet managers will share their experiences. In that group, we also have the acquisitions branch of PSPC, which deals with vehicles. We definitely have that community and are working to be aware of any major purchases.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: That's the perspective from the top, which is great; I'm not trying to devalue it. From the perspective of the person doing the legwork for securing those vehicles, though, what does it look like? How do they know to take these things into consideration when they're making a decision? That was something we heard earlier: that ultimately this is a departmental decision.

The Chair: Mr. Blaikie, sometimes there are question best left unanswered—

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: —but in this particular case, I hope we do get an answer to that question.

Gentlemen and ladies, thank you so much for being here. I know that in many cases there is not enough time to give adequate answers to some pretty good question. I would suggest that, should any of you have any other additional comments, suggestions, or observations that you think would be of benefit to the committee, you submit them to our clerk. They will help form part of our final report. If you have any other suggestions, or if there are questions, such as Mr. Blaikie has posed, that you didn't have time to answer, you can certainly provide those as well.

Thank you all for being here.

Committee members, we are adjourned.

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