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# **Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Tuesday, April 12, 2016**

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**Chair**

**Mrs. Deborah Schulte**



## Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development

Tuesday, April 12, 2016

•(1310)

[English]

**The Chair (Mrs. Deborah Schulte (King—Vaughan, Lib.)):** We have a couple of things that we need to do. We need to pick witnesses. We need to make sure that we have all agreed on the direction we're going in the next couple of months. I sent out a few emails on that.

We agreed at the last subcommittee meeting that we would go in a certain order, or at least we had said that we would bring that forward to committee. Then it all went out the window when several things occurred and the minister couldn't come on the date, so all the dates started to change. Subsequently, I sent out an email with a suggestion.

Let's just make sure we're all on the same page with the work plan for the next couple of months.

You all have the calendar now. Today and Thursday is our meeting on the Federal Sustainable Development Act, and we will be bringing forward a report at the end of that session on Thursday. If you have any ideas, make sure you come prepared for that on Thursday, if you don't mind.

The next week we start with the minister on the 19th, so be prepared for that. On the 21st we get started on our federally protected areas study. I think we've all agreed on that. On May 3, 5, 10, and 12 we'll stay on that subject.

I'm just going to go through the calendar to make sure that everybody is agreed on it, because this is what we're going to bring forward for approval on Thursday. I don't think we ever actually adopted our calendar. We proposed it in the subcommittee and then didn't adopt it. I remember your discussion saying that it didn't even work anymore, so we needed to redo it. We had the meeting for the 24th cancelled and everything got shifted.

As I say, I just want to make sure we're all on the same page.

We had thought that the commissioner would bring forward her spring reports to us on May 31, but that is actually the day she's tabling her reports, so that's not going to work. We're just going to switch the FSDA from June 2 to the 31st, and then she will come on June 2. We have the consultation for the report. We are switching that to the 31st.

Shall we just leave it at that for now? I think if we get too far ahead of ourselves, we may end up having something else come up.

Let's just get through April, and then we can look to what we're trying to do in the rest of June. Is that all right with everybody—or what do you think?

Go ahead, Nathan.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** I think the sequence of events works well just in terms of the commissioner's coming down with her report at the end of the month and then our dealing with it a couple of days later. I think it would be timely. Then we'll be able to wrap up the report on FSDA within the month of May, hopefully. I looked at the blank slots here, and I want to get my numbers right, and perhaps you can help me, Chair, if I go through this calendar. We have five on protected areas. We'll have the environment commissioner, we'll have a day with the minister. Is it right that we'll have four on CEPA to this point? We've done two, with two more planned.

•(1315)

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** I was going to suggest that we start to allot—and I know you want to be cautious about how far ahead we do this—the climate change motion to the month of June, unless there's some objection to that.

**The Chair:** I have my comments. We have a lot of balls in the air. I think we are very bold already in trying to move things along simultaneously. I think I mentioned this before when you raised this: I'm concerned that we have so much on the go that we will lose our focus on what we're trying to achieve in the committee. I'd like to try to get some things wrestled to the ground so that we see success.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** I appreciate that, but I guess what I'm seeing in this calendar is that we are ticking off the boxes of our work plan, in the sense that we'll have had five on the protected areas and we'll have wrapped up the FSDA study in the previous month. We'll have seen the minister, and by the 2nd we'll have seen the environment commissioner. So I appreciate the number of balls in the air and our not wanting to lose focus, but if FSDA is done, we'll have done four on the CEPA review, which is a year legislated for the review and the act. We'll have done four by the time the clock has started.

**The Chair:** It's a big act.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** I understand, but I feel that we're ahead of the game, frankly, on that one. The committee has a year. We're not going to spend an entire year's worth of committee meetings on the act, I hope.

**The Chair:** No, absolutely not.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** So we're good on that. It feels like we're ticking our work boxes.

It's just the motion that the committee already agreed to. The guiding motion that I keep going back to is the one we voted on. The element that has not yet been covered is clean technology and climate change. In this regard, I don't understand the concerns about the balls in the air...

**The Chair:** I'm just going to say this and then open it up to thoughts from anybody else. The motion that we agreed to in principle, unanimously, was that we would do.... An FSDA strategy and act have jumped ahead; we thought that was going to be third. I actually thought when I heard the comments around the room that we were looking to complete those first two before we moved on to anything else. The strategy got jumped in there. I agree that it wiggled its way in, so why can't we wiggle something else in?

I really do want to hear from the other representatives around the table about what we want to do. I don't mind, but I'm just mindful that we will then have three things on the go. I mean, hey, we're a great committee, and there's a lot we can do, but we'll have three things in process, and it gets to be a bit of a challenge with witnesses and staying with the thought and the theme. As you're listening to witnesses and staying cohesive in your thinking and then you start bringing in yet another big project that we're looking at, it might get more challenging for everybody to keep aligned with what's happening in the different work packages that we're trying to do.

Does anybody else have any comments? Those are just mine.

Mr. Aldag.

**Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.):** I have a couple of points for clarification.

I assume we're going to have reports or some sort of summary on the FSDA and the protected areas. Was the plan to try to do both of those?

**The Chair:** Yes. What we're intending to do is have drafting instructions this Thursday for the federal sustainability development act, and listen, on what we've heard today and the questions from you and others about how broad it could be and whether we're going to be able to do all of that in the short period of time that we're trying to do it in, let's just keep trying.

Then we will go on to the protected areas. I don't believe, but we will know once we progress, that the time we have given for this is adequate to complete it. I don't believe that four sessions would actually complete it. That's a very big project too.

Oh, I'm sorry, there are five. There are five weeks, five sessions. Will we actually be able to get to where we want to make recommendations at that point? I don't know. If you think we can, that's great, and then we will do drafting instructions and we'll go through the process that we're doing on the FSDA with that one too.

**Mr. John Aldag:** Yes. The point I'm raising is simply that if we're trying to conclude a couple of those, there may be a day or two, the seventh, or the ninth, or something like that, when we may need to tie it up. I agree. I'd like to get into that next piece at some point.

There's another question I have. Do we know when we're actually ending in June? It's showing six unallocated weeks, and I'm hearing rumours already that we may be done after the ninth.

•(1320)

**The Chair:** I just heard yesterday that we may be going into July, so I don't think we know what we're doing.

**Mr. John Aldag:** Okay. That's where we can pencil things in or...?

**A voice:** It's like this every year.

**Mr. John Aldag:** This is what it's like?

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Yes, it's about now that the rumours start about how we're going to end early, and then we end almost exactly.... We may be a half a day or a day early. This has been the 11-year tradition.

You guys may be different and want to cut class early—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** —but it's not the tradition around Parliament that I've seen so far.

**Mr. John Aldag:** No, we don't. I just wondered if anybody knew what—

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** The rumours are great. I think people invent them. They're wishful thinking.

**Mr. John Aldag:** So then the theory is that if we build in a couple near the end, if that's what you're talking about, it would give us a chance to at least introduce it. I'd be happy with that and to give it some thinking time over the summer. It's just that if we do get cut early, then we risk it.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** It's a risk I'm willing to take.

**Mr. John Aldag:** Yes, that's what I would throw out. Let's leave a couple of days, the seventh and the ninth, to sew up a couple of the reports. Then we could start bringing in some of the other pieces, like the clean tech.

**The Chair:** You're the most experienced one on the committee in terms of parks. Do you think that's an adequate amount of time?

**Mr. John Aldag:** Well, with Martin and Jim—

**The Chair:** That's true. I'm sorry.

**Mr. John Aldag:** —there's some interest on protected areas, given the areas they represent. I don't see this as being one that goes on forever. It's about getting a sense of where we're at in our strategies, what needs to be done, and what actions we can take. I think five would be a good number to work towards.

**The Chair:** Okay.

**Mr. John Aldag:** We may need something in the drafting instructions after that. So I would like to request one of these be held —

**The Chair:** For drafting and discussion.

**Mr. John Aldag:** Yes, and then there would be the review and, I guess, the report. That may take a full month.

**The Chair:** Okay.

**The Clerk of the Subcommittee (Ms. Cynara Corbin):** May I just clarify something about the reporting process? I know you've been through it. The analysts usually take a week or two to write the report, and then it is translated, and then we consider it in the committee. But following that, there are a few steps that take two to three days before the chair can present it in the House. If you're looking at June, I would just caution the committee that if you're adopting a report on the 21st, that's getting into dangerous territory in terms of the ability to present it in the House before it rises for the summer.

**Mr. John Aldag:** I guess this is a procedural question. If we adopt it without presenting it to the House, can it be brought forward in the fall? My concern is having something half done and forgetting where we're at, and then having to come back in September and ask ourselves what we talked about and rehashing everything.

I suggest we at least get it to the report level. I'm not as concerned if it doesn't get tabled until the fall as long as it doesn't disappear. In fact, I think there could be some benefit to that, because, otherwise, if it gets tabled near the end of June and we go away for three months—

**The Chair:** We lose the continuity.

**Mr. John Aldag:** Yes, and the attention, or the ability to actually raise it.

Anyway, that's one of the thoughts I had.

**The Chair:** Did you want to say something, Jim?

**Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC):** In quickly going over this, I see that we have five days for federal protected areas and conservation. Are you planning to do drafting instructions for the report on the 12th, or when were you planning on it?

**The Chair:** That's kind of what we're discussing. It's really to see if five sessions is enough. If we are in a position, we can do what we're trying to do with the Federal Sustainable Development Act and add it into one of the sessions, which is what we're doing on Thursday.

But we just don't know. I just don't have a sense of how much time that's going to take. We can add 30 minutes to a regular session. We can actually extend the meeting. We can do a few things to try to make it happen.

I'm waiting to hear what witnesses have to say and the breadth and scope of what we'd like to do before I can feel comfortable that we would actually get it done. I'm willing to go with it as long as there remains some flexibility within the committee to make adjustments as we see it unfolding. We have a timeframe that we're trying to respect, but we need some flexibility if things don't quite go as planned.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** I think the idea of putting drafting instructions in on the 12th is a good idea.

As many members have said today as we were looking at this, these are conversations that could go on all day and all year. Any study, depending on your expansiveness, could be as long or as short as you want it to be. The sense I get from members across the way is that including drafting on the 12th would be good.

Chair, you're seeking some buffer and I think that's always wise. If we allow the buffer on the 7th as well as the 9th for unexpected things—

**The Chair:** In June?

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** In June, yes, but with a proviso, knowing that the House could break with tradition and shut down early.

We would at least get our teeth into the climate study and allot those for the final four, with the full knowledge that it might not all happen.

• (1325)

**The Chair:** Are you saying that would happen after the 9th?

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** The 14th, 16th, 20th and 23rd. It's going to be the environment commissioner on the 2nd, with two buffer days for language or drafting or whatever didn't come out of either FSDA or the other.

**The Chair:** Listen, if we do well and we get the Environmental Protection Act moved forward and we don't need the buffer, then we'll have even more time.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** I may be off topic a bit here, but remind me of the chapters that the environment commissioner is including in her next report.

**The Chair:** Well, do you have the chapters?

I don't have them in my head. Extreme weather, health, and infrastructure are a few.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Okay. I'll check my notes.

I make the proposal—

**The Chair:** Okay. Does anybody have anything else they want to say before we agree on that in principle?

**Mr. William Amos (Pontiac, Lib.):** I share Mr. Cullen's desire to get into the climate change study before the summer. I'd like to be out in my community discussing some of the climate issues that have been brought to bear by witnesses. By the same token, if we press pause on our CEPA discussion on May 19 without doing any drafting, we won't have gotten to anywhere close to a conclusion. We pause on May 19th. We don't do a single thing on it in June. Then we wait until late September to address the most complex piece we're working on. It's going to be hard for members who are not fully seized of that matter to just let it go for a quarter of the year and then come back.

Instead of having four on climate, Mr. Cullen, I'd suggest that we do two and two. I suggest we jettison one of each if the time compression doesn't allow us to do those four.

**The Chair:** Mr. Cullen, what do you think?

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Sorry, what's the two and two?

**Mr. William Amos:** My suggestion would be that instead doing all four on climate, let's put two on CEPA and then two on climate. This way we're not leaving CEPA alone from May 19 to whenever we resume in October. I'm just concerned about our capacity.

**The Chair:** We may get the 7th and the 9th to be able to do it.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** I think we're going okay. Why not go three and three, with the strong possibility that the 7th and 9th may disappear?

**The Chair:** You're saying that they may be added into opportunity for discussion on either or both of the topics.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** I can live with that.

**The Chair:** You're good? Then I think we have agreement. Let's just make sure I know what we just agreed to.

We are doing protected areas on the 21st, 3rd, 5th, 10th, and 12th. We have CEPA on the 17th and 19th of May. We're going to have the FSDA draft report coming forward on June 31. We're going to do the commissioner's report on May 31st and we are then going to have a potential buffer. We'll leave the 7th and the 9th open for the moment. We need to get a sense, as we're going through May, whether we may need or not need those two sessions.

**Mr. John Aldag:** What I heard is that we allocate the 7th and 9th as a ...

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Start with them.

**Mr. John Aldag:** Yes, start with them and then take them out if we have to.

**The Chair:** Okay, so we're going to start with climate on the 7th and the 9th. If we need the time, we'll move the climate later.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Then come back ...

**The Chair:** We have that flexibility, and it's agreed on. I'm good with that—as long as we can adjust as we see things changing.

We're going to have one more week that will be the climate, and two.... Which ones? Which ones do you want to go for?

**Mr. John Aldag:** The 7th and 9th is climate. Do three on climate and then three on CEPA.

•(1330)

**The Chair:** But it won't be three. It will be the 7th, 9th, and 14th on climate, and the 16th and the 23rd. Oh, I forgot the 21st. Sorry, okay, we're done. Parks will be done. We're going to do the report.

**Mr. John Aldag:** CEPA....

**The Chair:** What I'm hearing is that the report on the parks is going to come after the summer break.

**Mr. John Aldag:** I think we're going to drafting on the 12th.

**The Chair:** So when is it going to come back?

**Mr. John Aldag:** It could be any one of those.

**The Chair:** So we need to make a spot for it.

**Mr. John Aldag:** How long does the review take? We don't set aside two hours.

**Mr. Jim Eglinski:** On either the 7th and 9th we could take part of the day to come back....

**The Chair:** They need time to draft. That's too short for them.

**Mr. John Aldag:** How long do we need to review the report?

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** The length that committees take on reports is usually correlated with the contentiousness of the report itself. If you have something that's somewhat adversarial, there's the haggling and the arguing and a dissenting report and those types of things. I don't get the sense that parks is going to be that way. You never know but that's the correlation. If it's something really hot and bothered for folks, then it takes a while. But if we get the draftings out.... We talked about the report going to the 14th.

**The Chair:** The 7th, 9th, and 14th will be climate. Penny, do you think you could pull the report together for the 16th of June if you get your drafting instructions on the 12th of May? Then the 21st and the 23rd will be CEPA. How's that?

**Mr. John Aldag:** The only question is, do we need to set aside the full two hours on June 16 for the review?

**The Chair:** I think at this point we should put it aside so we have the flexibility to shuffle things, if we need to, and as we start to see how May plays out.

Cynara is telling me that we can add another meeting if we feel we need to, although I know people's schedules are pretty jammed. We can also extend the meeting, as we are right now in a regular meeting, to try to get some more time to do that. Respecting everybody's time, I'll see how we can make it work. As always, I'm in consultation with you. If things look like they are starting to change we can get that sorted.

So I think we're ready to bring that forward to committee, and we'll then need witnesses for the 3rd, the 5th, the 10th and the 12th.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** What process are you suggesting? Sometimes we do a deferral to the chair and your staff to go through and apportion witnesses. Parties usually come forward with a ranked sort of process, with their highest priority witness first and then further down the line. Are you imagining today that we're going to go through and circle and pick and choose, or is it a report back simply to let us know who is coming?

**The Chair:** I had thought we could prioritize and make sure we know who we're going after, because—

**Mr. Jim Eglinski:** I would just as soon go back and consult with my other two and fire them off to you on Thursday when we're here.

**The Chair:** If that's what you'd like to do, we're here to serve and to try to find a balance of witnesses. I think we've done very well. Cynara and Penny and Tim have been very consultative with me. I've been consultative with you guys. I think it has worked out very well; we've had the people we need in front of us. So if you want to send me your messages for Thursday so that we know whom you're proposing. Don't just send me the names, send me your priorities, because sometimes—

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Rank them.

**The Chair:** Yes, rank them, please. It would be very helpful. And for the CEPA ones, can you rank those ones that you've sent us? We have witnesses who we haven't heard yet. Can you give us some ranking on the CEPA ones as well, so we know whom we're really pushing to try to get and which of the ones, if they don't call us back, we can leave? You know, we're trying to figure it out.

There's one last thing I need to ask you. There's an Indonesian delegation that is coming on Thursday. How many members are going to attend? We need to get a sense of who will go.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** I'm going to actually pass it to my caucus and see if—

**The Chair:** Okay, can you, please?

Jim, is there anybody from your team? I think Mr. Fast said he wanted to go.

**Mr. Jim Eglinski:** Yes, I think he did. I don't know about Martin, but I'm tied up that night.

**The Chair:** No, it's not in the night, it's in the morning. It's happening before this committee meeting in the morning at 9:30. I think it's in the same area that we're going—

**A voice:** It's in this room.

**The Chair:** Yes. So we don't have everybody running back and forth, we tried to put it in the same area.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** I'll try to come back after at least.

**The Chair:** That would be great.

How about our side, what are we doing?

John, are you coming to that?

You guys can send me an e-mail. I don't want to hold you up while you're all figuring it out, but we'd like to know because we need to make sure that we—

• (1335)

**Mr. William Amos:** What time is it?

**The Chair:** It's at 9:30 a.m.

**Mr. William Amos:** Is it on Thursday?

**The Chair:** On Thursday.

**Mr. William Amos:** I will place on the public record that I will be at my daughter's theatre performance at her school and therefore I will not show.

**The Chair:** You won't be here.

Is there any other business that anybody needed to put forward before we close this meeting?

Go ahead, Mr. Amos.

**Mr. William Amos:** If I have other witnesses to suggest who are not on this list. Can I do that?

**The Chair:** Yes, please send them to us.

**Mr. William Amos:** Okay, that's great.

**The Chair:** Send them to Cynara and me. We'll be working on that.

**Mr. William Amos:** Okay.

I have a question about communication to the public: is there any reason why this committee can't have a Facebook page? If we don't know the answer to that question. Could the—

**The Chair:** We can check it out. I think it would be up to us to decide if we want to.

**Mr. William Amos:** I think that's the case, and if it is permitted... If we can find out the threshold answer, then I'd like to have that separate discussion, because I personally think it would be in the public interest for people to know what we're doing regularly through Facebook, and not only through the website, which nobody

**The Chair:** So we have something for the committee.

**The Clerk:** I can certainly raise this with my management, but I do know, for example, that the Senate has a Twitter account for, I think, all of their committees. But one of the issues is that we obviously have to do everything bilingually and Facebook is not... and that poses a challenge. Everything we'd post would have to be bilingual, and then it's a matter of who is moderating the comments and so forth.

I just put that out there.

**The Chair:** We'll look into it.

There's another thing I wanted to ask. We were going to do a press release and, Nathan, you rightly said that we should hold off on that because we don't know what we're doing. Now we do. If we revise the press release with the changes and we bring it back on Thursday... It's not as exciting as it would have been a month or so ago, but I think it's still very important and speaks to what Will is talking about—getting some messaging out there to people.

Does anybody have a problem with bringing that back for committee business on Thursday?

**Some voices:** Sure.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We are now done.





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