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Thursday, March 22, 2018

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Chair

Mrs. Deborah Schulte

Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development

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• (1110)

[English]

The Chair (Mrs. Deborah Schulte (King—Vaughan, Lib.)): I call the meeting to order.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Chair, I have a point of order.

The Chair: What's your point of order?

Ms. Linda Duncan: I would like to table a motion.

The motion is as follows:

That, with regard to the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development's consideration of Bill C-69, an act to enact the Impact Assessment Act and the Canadian Energy Regulator Act, to amend the Navigation Protection Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts—

The Chair: Hang on, Linda. You have a point of order. You can't move a motion on a point of order. So what are you doing?

Ms. Linda Duncan: I'm tabling a motion.

The Chair: You can't table a motion without notice.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Yes, I can. I can table a motion.

The Chair: You're giving notice.

Ms. Linda Duncan: I'm giving notice of the motion.

The Chair: So you're not tabling the motion, you're giving notice.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Yes, I'm giving notice of the motion. I'm not expecting that we'll debate or vote on it.

The Chair: That's fine.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Sorry: wrong language.

The Chair: I was just trying to figure it out. Thank you.

Ms. Linda Duncan: I am giving notice of a motion that I think you will find interesting:

That, with regard to the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development's consideration of Bill C-69, an act to enact the Impact Assessment Act and the Canadian Energy Regulator Act, to amend the Navigation Protection Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts

(a) the Chair of the Committee write, as promptly as possible, to the Chairs of the following standing committees inviting them to consider the subject-matter of the following provisions of the said Bill:

(i) the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, Part 2 Canadian Energy Regulator Act, Part 3 Pipelines, Part 4 International and Interprovincial Power Lines, Part 5 Offshore Renewable Energy Projects and Offshore Power Lines, Part 6 Lands, Part 7, Exports and Imports, Part 8 Oil and Gas Interests, Production and Conservation, Part 9 and Part 4 at General;

(ii) the Standing Committee on Transport and Infrastructure, Part 3 Navigation Protection Act;

(iii) the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, Standing Committee on Natural Resources, Standing Committee on Transport and Infrastructure, Part 4, Consequential and Coordinating Amendments and Coming into Force as the provisions may be relevant to each respective parts of bill C-69;

(b) each of the standing committees, listed in paragraph (a), be requested to convey recommendations, including any suggested amendments, in both official languages, in relation to the provisions considered by them, in a letter to the Chair of the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development, in both official languages, no later than 9 a.m. on Monday, April 30 2018; and

(c) any amendments suggested pursuant to paragraphs (b) shall be deemed to be proposed during the clause-by-clause consideration of Bill C-69, and further provided that the members of the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development may propose amendments notwithstanding the recommendations received pursuant to paragraphs (b).

Thank you very much. I have copies that I can circulate.

The Chair: That's great. We'll take those on board, and we'll put that for consideration at subsequent meetings. Thank you very much.

I want to welcome the ministers to the environment and sustainable development committee. We are kicking off our evaluation of Bill C-69, an act to enact the Impact Assessment Act and the Canadian Energy Regulator Act, to amend the Navigation Protection Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts. We're very, very appreciative of having both ministers here with us today.

I will turn the floor over to you for 10 minutes each. Then we'll go into our rounds of questioning.

Minister McKenna, I think you would like to go first. The floor is yours.

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I certainly appreciate the opportunity to speak today about this important piece of legislation, and I really appreciate the hard work of all the committee members.

The legislation we introduced earlier this year aims to restore public trust in how the federal government makes decisions about such major projects as mines, pipelines, and hydro dams. These better rules are designed to protect our environment, improve investor confidence, strengthen our economy, and create good middle-class jobs. They will also make the Canadian energy and resource sectors more competitive.

[Translation]

With these better rules, we are working to build on Canada's strong economic growth and historic job numbers.

[English]

Together with my ministerial colleagues, I have been working very hard to deliver this government's promise to regain public trust in environmental assessment and regulatory processes to help get resources to market in a sustainable way and introduce new, fair processes. As a first step, in January 2016 we introduced an interim approach and principles that will guide decision-making for projects that were already in the system.

[Translation]

These interim principles clearly show the following.

First, decisions will be based on scientific and probative data as well as on sound traditional indigenous knowledge.

Second, we are going to listen to the opinion of Canadians and of their communities.

Third, indigenous people will be consulted in a significant and respectful way.

Fourth, decisions will consider the effects of the various projects on the climate.

Fifth, no project that has already been assessed will have to start the process from scratch.

[English]

Our government did not stop at interim principles. In June 2016, we launched a comprehensive process to review existing laws and seek Canadians' input on how to improve our environmental and regulatory system. This review was guided by two expert panels, two parliamentary committees, as well as extensive consultations with indigenous peoples, industry, provinces and territories, and the public.

[Translation]

The expert panel established in August 2016 and tasked with examining environmental assessment processes, travelled for four months to consult Canadians across the country. After that, the committee submitted to me a report that included a summary of the comments received and the way in which they had been examined, together with recommendations to improve federal environmental assessment processes.

[English]

The government then held a public comment period on that report and engaged with stakeholders and indigenous peoples. Over 1,000 online comments and 160 submissions were received, and over 100 in-person meetings were held with thousands of Canadians from across the country.

We then took all the information and input that we heard and released a discussion paper that outlined the government's proposed path forward, based on the feedback from the expert report and the submissions provided. This too was the subject of extensive consultations, both online and in person.

On February 8, I introduced Bill C-69, which is the culmination of all that input. The proposed legislation responds to what we heard from provinces and territories, indigenous peoples, industry stakeholders, environmental groups, and the public, addressing what matters to Canadians. Bill C-69 will introduce a modern assessment process that protects the environment, supports reconciliation with indigenous peoples, attracts investment, and ensures that good projects go ahead in a timely way to create new jobs and economic opportunities.

First, assessments will consider not just environmental impacts of projects, but also the social, health, and economic impacts they may cause. When making decisions, we will consider whether companies are using the best available technologies and practices to reduce impacts on the environment, and a gender-based analysis will ensure any potential impacts unique to women, men, or gender-diverse people are identified and addressed.

• (1115)

Under the proposed framework, decisions will be based on whether a project with adverse effects is in the public interest. A public interest determination will be guided by several factors, including the project's contribution to sustainability, impacts on indigenous peoples and their rights, and mitigation measures that are proposed to reduce the project's impacts on Canada's ability to meet its environmental obligations and climate change commitments.

[Translation]

Proactive strategic and regional assessments will allow the potential cumulative effects of development projects to be evaluated. In addition, the decision-making process will be more enlightened.

[English]

We also heard that project reviews need to be predictable, provide regulatory certainty, and work across multiple jurisdictions. The new legislation proposes to have one agency, the impact assessment agency of Canada, lead all major project reviews and coordinate with indigenous peoples. One project, one assessment, is a guiding principle to drive co-operative reviews and avoid duplication.

New tools are available for the impact assessment agency to work collaboratively with jurisdictions and with life-cycle regulators such as the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission and the proposed Canadian energy regulator to ensure this principle is met.

A new early planning phase will engage jurisdictions, potentially affected indigenous peoples and communities, to ensure that key issues are raised early so that project proponents know at the outset what is expected from them.

[Translation]

Thanks to this early planning and participation stage, we will also be able to encourage the public on the front lines to participate in the dialogue. That stage will also allow us to simplify the process, something that is positive for everyone.

[English]

For the first time, there will now be a legislated timeline for decision-making for assessment. These timelines will ultimately shorten project assessments, allowing proponents to spend more time investing in project development to build the Canadian economy.

Indigenous peoples are leaders in conservation. They've long been stewards of the environment and have rights related to the management of land, waters, and wildlife. They have knowledge of the land that spans generations. We will advance Canada's commitment to reconciliation and get to better project decisions by recognizing indigenous rights and working in partnership from the start.

[Translation]

We will require traditional indigenous knowledge to be considered, as well as available scientific and other data.

Indigenous governing bodies will have more opportunities to exercise their powers and responsibilities under the Act to enact the Impact Assessment Act.

In addition, we will increase funding to the Participant Funding Program to support indigenous participation and to strengthen capacities linked to impact assessments.

[English]

We also heard that Canadians want to ensure that assessments are grounded in science and that the process is transparent and accessible. The bill proposes a number of measures to address these issues. Greater public participation opportunities will be provided, including during the early planning phase and during the impact assessment process. All Canadians will be assured the ability to participate.

● (1120)

[Translation]

An online registry will provide access to information on specific environmental assessments of projects, including the scientific data used in the impact assessment.

Summaries of the facts supporting the assessments, written in plain language, will be made available in order to ensure strong participation.

[English]

Assessments and decisions will be informed by the best available science, evidence, and indigenous traditional knowledge. Scientific evidence will be tested, and where findings are uncertain, third party reviews will be available.

The bill also proposes to increase transparency by requiring that decisions, with detailed reasons, are made public so that Canadians can better understand the rationale behind the decisions.

As you know, the proposed impact assessment act was informed by extensive consultation, and I am committed to continuing the dialogue.

[Translation]

Since the bill was tabled in the House of Commons, I have met with stakeholders from industry and from environmental groups, with representatives of indigenous peoples, and with my provincial counterparts in order to obtain their reactions on what has been proposed in the bill.

[English]

The better rules we announced this year reflect what we have heard overwhelmingly and consistently from Canadians over the past year and a half.

They want a modern environmental and regulatory system that protects the environment, supports reconciliation with indigenous peoples, attracts investment, and ensures that good projects can go ahead, which creates good, middle-class jobs and grows our economy. As we always say, the environment and the economy go together.

Thank you, Madam Chair, for the opportunity to speak to the committee today. I would like to thank the committee for the collaborative approach that you have taken in your work around this table to date, and I look forward to the outcome of your review of this important piece of legislation.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Minister McKenna. We appreciate those kind words for the work of the committee.

Minister Carr.

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good morning, everybody.

Let me begin by thanking you for your work. Really, the work of committees is at the heart of our democracy. The fact that it's in the centre of this building is a metaphor for how important it is.

I want to say that for ministers to come together and be accountable in front of members of Parliament from all parties is one of the most important things that we ever do. I look forward to the exchange, which I am sure might have its spirited moments, and that's the way it should be.

I also want to begin by picking up on something that Minister McKenna said, right at the end of her remarks. That's the importance of Bill C-69, to ensure that the economy and the environment continue to go hand in hand.

It makes sense for us to appear together. I'm sure both Conservative and Liberal members will remember that it wasn't always this way. There was a time when ministers of the environment and natural resources would probably not sit at the same table. When they sat around even their own partisan tables, things were always a bit tense. We believe in 2018 that there is one conversation.

Also, the minister and I were together in Vancouver last week at the GLOBE conference, giving keynote addresses and participating in panel discussions during round tables with indigenous people, with environmentalists, with leaders of industry and clean technology. It didn't matter in front of what audience, our message was always the same, the message that we're delivering this morning.

I think it is a powerful message that Canadians see the Minister of Natural Resources and the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change sharing the same table, demonstrating that the economy and the environment are not competing interests, but equal components of a single engine that drives innovation, jobs, and economic growth. That has been our government's vision from day one, and the results speak for themselves.

[*Translation*]

Last year, Canada added more than 420,000 jobs, most of them full-time positions, and many of them in our resource sectors.

Alberta, a province hit hard by three years of low oil and gas prices, is among those posting large job gains, adding 55,000 new positions. Its economic output per capita is again leading the country.

• (1125)

[*English*]

As one University of Calgary professor told the Canadian Press last month, Alberta's economy is recovering faster than almost anyone could have expected. On the other side of the country, Quebec is essentially at full employment, with labour shortages reported in some parts of the province.

It's not surprising, then, that Canada led all G7 countries with 3% growth last year and that our unemployment rate has been hovering around 40-year lows. Such robust growth is difficult to duplicate year after year; we know that. We also know that governments are a part of it; job creation is really due to the actions of individual Canadians.

Economies have their cycles, but the message is clear: we can create good jobs for the middle class and those working hard to join it, with a future built on the three pillars of economic prosperity, environmental protection, and indigenous participation.

Bill C-69 is a big part of our vision. It has the potential to transform our natural resources sector by providing project proponents with clearer rules and greater certainty, by allowing local communities to have more input, and by ensuring indigenous people have more opportunities in the development and oversight of our nation's vast resources.

That includes our energy sector, which is why we are proposing a new Canadian energy regulator, or CER, to replace the existing National Energy Board. We want to create a new federal energy regulator with the necessary independence and the proper accountability to oversee a strong, safe, and sustainable Canadian energy sector in the 21st century.

It would be a federal regulator with a modern, effective governance structure, one that includes a chief executive officer who would be separate from the chair; a board of directors that would provide strategic direction, distinct from a group of

independent commissioners responsible for adjudication; and at least one member of both the board and the commissioners who would be first nation, Inuit, or Métis.

That's what the Canadian energy regulator act proposes to do.

Under our plan, timelines for reviews would also be shorter, more predictable, and better managed. Project reviews would not exceed two years for major new projects, and not more than 300 days for smaller ones, all the while continuing to recognize the expertise of the offshore boards and the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission.

At the same time, the CER act would make public engagement more inclusive. For example, the NEB's existing "test for standing" would be eliminated to ensure every Canadian has an opportunity to express his or her views during project reviews. Participant funding programs would be expanded to support new activities.

We also want to advance reconciliation by building and funding the capacity of indigenous peoples to participate more meaningfully in project reviews, as well as recognizing indigenous rights up front, confirming the government's duty to consult, requiring consideration of traditional indigenous knowledge, and aiming to secure free, prior, and informed consent.

The new CER would have more powers to enforce stronger safety and environmental protections, including new powers for federal inspection officers.

All of these enhancements would ensure that good projects can proceed without compromising the environment or engagement, allowing our energy resources to get to markets in responsible, timely, and transparent ways.

Canadians have painted a similar picture for our country in this clean growth century through the hundreds of thousands who joined our ongoing Generation Energy discussion to imagine Canada's energy future, the hundreds more who travelled to Winnipeg last fall for our two-day Generation Energy forum, and the thousands who participated in 14 months of public consultation to draft this legislation. Canadians have told us that they want a thriving, low-carbon economy. They want us to be a leader in clean technology, and they want an energy system that provides equal opportunities to Canadians, while minimizing harm to the environment. They also understand that we're not there yet. We need to prepare for the future, but we must also deal with the present by providing energy that they can count on when they flick on a light or fill up their cars.

A modern energy regulator is essential to that, and to ensuring all Canadians have continued access to a safe, affordable, and reliable supply of energy. That has been the role of the National Energy Board since 1959. Under its almost 60-year-old mandate, the NEB has been responsible for making recommendations and decisions on projects, overseeing the safety and environmental performance of facilities, and engaging Canadians.

Today the NEB regulates approximately 73,000 kilometres of international and interprovincial pipelines and another 1,400 kilometres of international power lines, as well as all of our Canadian imports and exports of energy.

• (1130)

[Translation]

Unfortunately, the NEB's structure, role and mandate have remained relatively unchanged since the National Energy Board Act was first introduced in 1959.

[English]

That has created some challenges at a time when energy regulation should be evolving and adapting with the changing times, and when a modern energy regulator is central to integrating Canada's energy, economic, and climate goals. The new CER would help to address all of that.

For example, it would introduce a more inclusive approach to reviewing energy projects by incorporating a full impact assessment of key factors. As well, the CER's mandate would cover emerging energy developments such as the regulation of offshore renewable energy, and with legislative timelines, the new CER would significantly strengthen investment certainty. So will the new transition period that is based on clear rules, the earlier engagement to identify public priorities, the clearer direction on indigenous consultations, the coordinated activities between the CER and the new impact assessment agency, and the continued government responsibility for final decisions.

Bill C-69 is ambitious, but achievable. It is legislation designed for the Canada we know today, and the Canada we want for tomorrow, a Canada where we create the growing middle class we all want, while protecting the planet we all cherish for generations to come.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Minister Carr.

Before I open it up to questions, I thought we might introduce the rest of the panel up there, your team.

With Minister McKenna, we have Ron Hallman, the president of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency.

We have Stephen Lucas, deputy minister from the Department of the Environment.

We also have, from the Department of Natural Resources, Christyne Tremblay, who's the deputy minister, and Jeff Labonté, who is the assistant deputy minister at the major projects management office.

Welcome and thank you very much for joining us today.

Our first question is from John Aldag.

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Ministers McKenna and Carr, thank you for coming to our environment and sustainable development committee to speak to Bill C-69. Like many of my colleagues, I believe this may be the most important piece of legislation that our government passes, and we have passed some very important legislation since forming office.

As a British Columbian with strong roots in the Prairies, I feel strongly that the current legislative and regulatory framework for projects has in the past decade failed our country, including our economy, our environment, and, as importantly, our indigenous peoples. We're seeing this through the conflict that's arisen, as an example, under the Kinder Morgan pipeline project that affects British Columbians, Albertans, and Canadians.

As a government, we added interim principles to address the shortcomings of the legislative and regulatory process left by the previous government for the Kinder Morgan pipeline project, and yet conflict remains.

Can each of you summarize for our committee and for Canadians who are following these hearings how Bill C-69 will provide clarity and certainty in the process for assuring future projects under federal jurisdiction, how this legislation will provide better protection for our environment, and how future assessments will include the input of Canadians, including indigenous Canadians with whom we, as a country, have a special relationship that requires special consideration? If you could each take about two minutes to provide your summary, that would be appreciated.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: All right.

Thank you very much. I also want to thank my deputy, Stephen Lucas, and also Ron Hallman, the president of CEEA. They've done an amazing job.

We knew when we came in as a government that we needed to rebuild trust in our environmental assessment system. We heard that from environmentalists and from indigenous peoples and from Canadians. We also heard that from industry, because it was impeding trust, which meant that it was much more challenging for good projects to go ahead, so that's exactly what we've done in the proposed legislation—rebuild trust. Rebuilding trust means that we have made clear that the views of Canadians and the views of communities will be heard. There will be no standing test so that if you have concerns, you will have your opportunity to make them clear.

Reconciliation is a top priority for our government. We need to be working in partnership with indigenous peoples, and that starts at the very beginning. That starts in a new early engagement phase and it goes all the way through monitoring of projects. Indigenous traditional knowledge is a must-have, not just a nice-to-have.

We've moved from looking at just the environmental factors to doing a broader impact assessment test that will look at factors like the social impacts, the health impacts, and the economic impacts of projects, as well as, of course, the environmental impacts. We realize this is actually going to be better, because when we do this, we will be able to build trust in Canadians that we are making decisions based on robust science, that we are listening to communities, that we are working in partnership with indigenous peoples, and at the same time that we are making sure that good projects go ahead in a timely way.

As part of that, we've also looked at how we can ensure that we do more work in the front end, where we will give more certainty to businesses by looking at how we work with provinces so that we aren't duplicating efforts and making it more difficult for proponents, and also that we're giving them guidance about how to consult with indigenous peoples and about the permitting process.

•(1135)

Hon. Jim Carr: I would add that this is a different world from what it was in 1959 when the National Energy Board was first established. This is a different world even from what it was when the first idea of building pipelines was developed by proponents and the process of regulatory review was established a number of years ago.

This bill reflects that changing world, and we believe it reflects it in a way that recognizes and honours the three pillars of responsible economic development in the energy sector, and that is that we want good projects to go through. We understand that the expansion of export markets is of vital Canadian interest. Ninety-nine per cent of Canada's exports of oil and gas go to one country, the United States. We don't think that's healthy in the short term or the long term.

We started looking at what results we want and we concluded that we want responsible, good projects to go through in a timely way while respecting the environmental realities and our international and domestic obligations and our constitutional and moral obligations to indigenous peoples. We think that all three of those pillars and the values that underlie them are reflected in Bill C-69.

Mr. John Aldag: Perfect. Thank you.

The Chair: Perfect timing. Before I move to Mr. Fast, I want to welcome a few people to the committee. Obviously having the two ministers here together is fantastic, but what's really nice is that we also have natural resources committee members here as well. We have the chair, James Maloney, and the vice-chair, Shannon Stubbs. It's really nice to see you here. Welcome.

We also have Elizabeth May. Welcome too.

Mr. Fast.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): It's rare that we have two ministers appearing before us at the same time, so thank you for that.

Minister McKenna, you often say that the environment and the economy go hand in hand. Minister Carr repeated that in his statement as well. I'm looking at clause 22, subclause 1 of the bill, which articulates the factors that must be taken into account. One of those factors is under (i) "the extent to which the effects of the designated project hinder or contribute to the Government of Canada's ability to meet its environmental obligations and its commitments in respect of climate change".

You're well aware that both the Auditor General and the United Nations have highlighted the fact that right now Canada is not on track to meet its greenhouse gas emission targets under the Paris agreement.

Ms. McKenna, do you acknowledge that that gap presently exists?

•(1140)

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Of course, when we do environmental assessments, we need to be making sure that they take into account our environmental obligations, domestic and international, including under the Paris agreement. Unfortunately, under the previous government, which took no action for 10 years, our emissions went up.

For the first time ever, we came up with a climate plan—negotiated with provinces, territories, and indigenous peoples—whereby we've taken significant action: phasing out coal, putting a price on pollution, making historic investments in innovation, and making historic investments in public transportation. The second phase of light rail transit in Ottawa will bring the largest greenhouse gas reductions in the city's history.

Hon. Ed Fast: Minister, the question was very simple. Do you acknowledge that a gap exists between Canada's climate change targets under the Paris agreement and where we're on track to end up right now?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: We have said very clearly that we will meet our 2030 target.

Hon. Ed Fast: Right now, those agencies—the Auditor General and the United Nations—have both said we're not on track to meet those targets. Would you acknowledge that?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: We have taken the measures that were negotiated with provinces and territories. I know the opposition member and the opposition party also agree that we need to meet our 2030 target. We will meet our 2030 target. That's why we've taken ambitious action. Some of the action has not come into effect. When you phase out coal by 2030—

Hon. Ed Fast: I'm gathering from your response that your answer is yes, there remains a gap between Canada's commitments and actually where we're tracking. In fact, that gap is increasing as time goes by.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: We've been very pleased to see our emissions going down. We need to be ambitious. We need to meet our 2030 target and we are absolutely committed to doing that. I would certainly hope that the opposition would support the measures that we've brought in place under our climate plan.

Hon. Ed Fast: Thank you, Minister.

Now, I'm going to repeat that you've often said that the economy and the environment go hand in hand. I've gone through Bill C-69 with a fine-tooth comb. It addresses many of the environmental challenges that projects that fall under the ambit of the act will face. Nowhere is there any reference to economic benefits or anything compelling the agency or the review panel to actually consider the economic benefits for Canada.

Despite the rhetoric we hear from you and your government, it appears that in fact the economy and the environment don't go together. This legislation, which addresses economic projects that drive prosperity in Canada, doesn't in any way address the economic benefits that would accrue to Canadians as a result of these projects.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: I'd like to thank the member for highlighting the importance of the environment and the economy going together, and for the first time ever, through a sustainability test, we will be looking at the economic benefits of a project. Previously, under the legislation that was brought in by the Conservative government, there was no way to do that. It was through a press release at the end that you were trying to explain to Canadians the economic benefits. We have made it very clear that a sustainability test means looking at the environmental impacts but also the social, health, and economic benefits. We think that's critically important, and that was something that we heard loud and clear from proponents. I spent a lot of time meeting with proponents.

Hon. Ed Fast: Minister, the sustainability test is not articulated in subclause 22(1). I've looked through it many times. It's not there. This is a one-sided piece of legislation that focuses on the environment without taking into account the economic benefits.

Now, since my time is short, I have one last question. This is one of the tools you're using to hopefully achieve your targets under Paris. Another tool you're using is the carbon tax. Can you tell us today how much you expect the carbon tax backstop that your government has implemented to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Canada?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Just to confirm, it's section 63 that mentions, under the sustainability test, the economic impacts. Just to clarify, it is very clear there.

Putting a price—

• (1145)

Hon. Ed Fast: It's not a factor to be considered under clause 22.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: —on pollution is part of our climate plan, but we've said....

It's in section 63.

We have been very clear that it's up to provinces and territories to determine how they want to put a price on pollution consistent with what we've said is the benchmark, and provinces and territories have taken action. Eighty percent of Canadians—

Hon. Ed Fast: The benchmark you referred to is \$50 per tonne. It's my understanding that we will not be reducing our—

The Chair: Ed—

Hon. Ed Fast: —greenhouse gas emissions under that tax.

The Chair: Ed, you're out of time, and so I need to bring that your attention. Sorry to cut you off, but we have time constraints.

I did forget the last time around to introduce one more member at the table, Kim Rudd, the Parliamentary Secretary to Minister Carr.

Ms. Duncan.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Thank you to both the ministers and your officials.

I think you know that we're hoping we can at least have your officials at the tail end of the review—possibly the ministers—so that you can respond to some of the recommendations made by the witnesses who come before us, which we think will be useful. It's good to hear from you at the outset, but it will be good to hear from you at the end about what you think Canadians are asking for.

Mr. Carr, my first question is for you.

Why is it that the CER appointees to panels are not required to consider climate commitments or cumulative impacts?

Hon. Jim Carr: The legislation, I think, is clear on what is to be considered.

Ms. Linda Duncan: And they are not included.

Hon. Jim Carr: Well, all designated or major projects regulated by the Canadian energy regulator will be subject to an impact assessment.

Ms. Linda Duncan: I'm talking about EI panels.

Hon. Jim Carr: Yes, subject to an impact assessment—

Ms. Linda Duncan: CER commissioners can be appointed—

Hon. Jim Carr: —proposed by the Canadian energy regulator will be subject to an impact assessment, so Canada's climate change commitments will be considered in the impact assessment of major pipeline and energy transmission projects.

Ms. Linda Duncan: I won't belabour it. Yes, the panel will consider, but not the CER appointees, so you might want to revisit the legislation. That might be something that you might want revisit.

Hon. Jim Carr: Okay.

Ms. Linda Duncan: How do you respond to concerns? Both ministers might want to speak to this. The expert panel appointed by the government recommended, having heard from everywhere across Canada, a permanent quasi-judicial tribunal. Why was the decision made to simply have ad hoc panels of people appointed each time there was a project?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: We've taken a very different approach from the previous government. We've been very clear about the factors that must be considered. We've been clear that there will be one agency that will be leading the assessment. At the end of the day, it's up to elected representatives to make decisions on projects that are worth billions of dollars. In fact, in the next 10 years, it's estimated that projects will be worth \$500 billion, and that we—

Ms. Linda Duncan: With all due respect, Madam Minister, that's not my question. The question you're answering is if the panel will be decision-making or recommending. My question is, why did you decide to have ad hoc panels as opposed a stand-alone, full-time, permanent, quasi-judicial panel that would have expertise?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: I'm happy to turn this over to my deputy to answer in more detail. We are going to look at the best, most qualified people for a particular panel, and we've been clear about the requirements for the panel, that people need to have expertise on indigenous issues.

I will ask Ron Hallman, the president of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, to respond.

Mr. Ron Hallman (President, Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency): The benefit of having a wider range of potential members on a roster is that the breadth of the types of projects that the agency undertakes assessment of are much wider than what the typical life-cycle regulator would look at. We look at dams, mines, roads, railways, etc. It's useful to have a roster of experts in a wide range of things that can be brought together for a specific project at a specific time within a range of circumstances, indigenous realities, community realities, etc. That's the system that we have at this time.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Thank you.

The Minister of Environment repeated many times, when she spoke at second reading of the bill, the importance of public participation in the review of these major projects and how important it was that this legislation would resolve the lack of faith in the current NEB process where clearly there was great consternation because people were being denied the right to provide evidence or to cross-examine. Why is it then that this legislation is vacuous on prescribing specific rights? It simply says there will be a right to participate. It doesn't say whether that will include the right to table evidence or to cross-examine and it simply leaves it to the agency to decide from time to time when someone can participate, when they can't, what they'll be allowed to do, what they can't do.

• (1150)

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Under the previous government there was a standing task when it came to the National Energy Board. That has been removed. We have heard loudly and clearly that Canadians want the right to participate, and they should. We certainly believe that we need to hear from communities because that will help us make the best decision possible. That's the principle we will be following. The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency does a very good job right now of reaching out and hearing from communities and from Canadians across the board. We think that's the approach we should take. Under the previous government people were shut down, they were prevented from testifying, from expressing their views. We think that is a wrong-headed approach.

Ms. Linda Duncan: With all due respect, this legislation does not change that situation. It is also silent on whether costs will be available. I have a lot of experience in participating in energy reviews. The only way the community and indigenous peoples can participate is to be fully allocated costs and cost advances. We see nothing in the budget and there's nothing specifically prescribed that costs will be available to everyone who wishes to participate.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: We've been very clear that we will be providing support for communities and indigenous peoples to participate. We've increased it significantly. This consultation will start at the beginning, in an early engagement phase; we think it is critically important to hear those voices, voices from community members and also from indigenous peoples.

The Chair: Thank you. You're right on the button.

Mr. Maloney.

Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Thank you for the invitation and including not just me but the parliamentary secretary as part of this committee. As Minister Carr mentioned, it is not just the two ministries that work together, but the two committees work together. I think that's a strong statement. I for one think this bill is a reflection that the economy and the environment go hand in hand.

In my capacity as chair of the committee over the past few years I've had the opportunity to meet with stakeholders on a regular basis. We heard the words "trust" and "certainty" today. One of the issues that comes up on a regular basis is the word "confidence". When I've been speaking with stakeholders from across the country, they have expressed to me some concern about confidence with regard to investing in Canada because of the process that has been in place for the last number of decades.

My question is to both ministers. How do you see this piece of legislation changing that and restoring confidence to stakeholders so we can move forward with all the large energy projects in the system?

Hon. Jim Carr: Let me start by agreeing with the premise. The major objective of this legislation is to find the balance among investor certainty and predictability, environmental stewardship, and indigenous partnership and participation. We think we have met that balance. In my conversations as recently as a few weeks ago in Houston, when the energy world gathered to talk about these issues, to talk about competitiveness, and in all my conversations, to talk about Canada.... We have an awful lot going for us in this country, but it's important to underline the fundamental issues of predictability and certainty among investors when they look at decisions that can be made virtually all over the world. Canada has to be able to make the argument convincingly that the set of conditions in place in our country is favourable against any other country that may be competing for international business. We believe that this legislation will enhance our competitiveness because of the importance we are putting on certainty and predictability.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: I can just add to that. We spent a lot of time hearing from industry about the need for certainty, but I think everyone agrees on the need for certainty. Through early engagement, we will be having outputs that industry is very happy to see. We will be working with provinces to have one project, one review. That means we will eliminate the duplication that is burdensome for industry and also takes additional time. We can align our timelines with provinces. We will also help them understand the consultation that's needed with indigenous communities. They've asked for support in that regard, and also on the permitting process. They want to understand what the permitting process is.

We think this is actually going a long way to responding to exactly what industry said. They said, "Tell us what we need to do", and that was not available under the previous system. We think this will actually make our system much more attractive to business, provide the certainty that's needed, ensure we're protecting the environment, but also ensure that good projects go ahead in a timely way.

• (1155)

Hon. Jim Carr: Also, we'll make sure that all of that is done at the front end of the project. That's why you'll see that there is a front-end load of information and of certainty, so that the proponents know exactly what's expected of them as they move through the process so there are no surprises—certainty, predictability, no surprises.

Mr. James Maloney: Thank you. I have a small amount of time left.

A number of projects are currently pending before the National Energy Board. Can you tell us what's going to become of those projects and how this is going to change when the new legislation comes into effect?

Hon. Jim Carr: All projects that are currently under review will be reviewed under the National Energy Board. We are expecting that this legislation will be ratified by Parliament sometime in 2019, so it will be as is until the legislation is proclaimed.

Even after the legislation is proclaimed, those projects that began under the current system will remain under the current system unless the proponent makes the choice to move to the new one. It would be a decision that the proponent would make.

Mr. James Maloney: Thank you. I have about—

The Chair: One minute.

Mr. James Maloney: If you can answer this question in one minute, I'm not sure you can, but I'll let you try.

What's the biggest difference between the new national energy regulator and the National Energy Board right now?

Hon. Jim Carr: First of all, it has a modernized governance structure, which is very important to split the functions that were combined. There will be, by legislation, the necessity of appointing an indigenous person as one of the commissioners. That's a difference. One of the seven statutorily will be required. It will be active in one project, one assessment with the impact assessment agency and will also work with the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission and the offshore boards. They will be working with the impact assessment agency.

We think we have streamlined the process. We have been very specific about the governance structure that would lead to more expeditious decision-making, more accountability, and more transparency for Canadians.

The Chair: You're right on the button.

Mr. Sopuck.

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Thanks.

I'd like to correct the minister here, correct the record. She made a statement that was incorrect. Under our government, from 2005 to 2015, emissions went down from 738 megatonnes to 722. I wish she would use the correct facts when she makes statements like that. At the same time, under our government, most environmental indicators in this country improved. I should advise the minister that if you're talking about the environment, using numbers is what actually counts.

I have a very specific question regarding the \$50 carbon tax. How much will Canada's emissions be reduced under a \$50-a-tonne carbon tax? I want a number here.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Thank you very much. I would like to say that a large part of the emissions that went down in Ontario was because of the coal phase-out, so a shout-out to the Government of Ontario for taking action to improve health and also build a cleaner environment.

As I said, it's important to understand that putting a price on pollution is part of our broader climate plan. We believe in numbers so we spend a lot of time modelling. We also worked closely with provinces and territories, and each province and territory—

Mr. Robert Sopuck: What is the number?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: —is different and—

Mr. Robert Sopuck: What is the number?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: —they are the ones that are implementing the system that's consistent with our benchmark.

As I say, 80% of Canadians live in a jurisdiction where there's a price on pollution—

Mr. Robert Sopuck: What is the number of the reduction?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: —and the good news is that all the jurisdictions that have a price on pollution—the four provinces of Alberta, B.C., Ontario, and Quebec—are the fastest-growing provinces in the country, so it's great to see that you can put a price on what you don't want, pollution—

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Okay. So quite clearly—

• (1200)

Hon. Catherine McKenna: —so you can grow your economy.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Quite clearly, the minister is simply unable to provide a number, which is clearly ridiculous. When I ran the environmental program at a paper mill, we installed a waste-water treatment plant and we knew exactly how water quality would improve because of the installation of that plant. What you're telling Canadians here is that they will be asked to pay a \$50 carbon tax—probably increasing over time—and there is absolutely no measurement of what the environmental effect will be. That's basically what I'm hearing, and that's fine.

I now would like to address the issue of competitiveness. What I heard from both ministers is simply beyond belief in terms of how this will help Canada's competitiveness. It will help to destroy it. In fact, my first job as a young fisheries biologist was doing pipeline assessments in the Mackenzie Valley. Twenty-five years of process on that potential project killed that project, and now we have impoverished communities all along the Mackenzie Valley because that pipeline was not built. Bad process kills projects.

For example, on February 9, 2018, Steve Williams, the CEO of Suncor, said that Suncor was to shun major new projects amid Canada's "difficult" regulatory environment, and we're one of Canada's major oil companies and we're not investing here anymore....

I have a paper here: "Pipeline shortage to cost the economy \$15.6 billion this year". Maybe you wouldn't run into so many deficits in your budgeting if you allowed the economy to actually proceed and create income. In terms of the legal review of Bill C-69, in the legal *Daily* publication, the headline reads, "Bill C-69 aims to expand and speed federal reviews, but lawyers doubt process will be faster or cheaper".

Quite clearly what your government is doing is severely constraining the development of Canada's natural resource industries. You're reaping the remnants of the good governance under Stephen Harper, but that will quickly dissipate. How will you ensure investors with a process like this? Why do you think someone like Steve Williams has decided to shun Canada in terms of investing?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Bad process kills projects: I agree. That's what happened under the previous government.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Nonsense.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Their projects did not go ahead.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Nonsense.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: The government ended up losing in court a number of times because the duty to consult was not met. Unfortunately, when you don't have a system that listens to people, you don't make decisions based on robust science, and you don't meet your constitutional obligations, and, as Minister Carr said, your moral obligations to indigenous peoples, you can't get good projects built.

Under our government, we have approved major projects, and we have a system here that will provide the certainty that business is expecting. It will create a world-class system. In terms of the timelines, we heard loudly and clearly that we need to have clear timelines. We've reduced the timelines for impact assessment—

Mr. Robert Sopuck: I only have a bit of time and, to refute your argument, the Northern Gateway pipeline passed with flying colours through a proper regulatory process with some 238 conditions. The Prime Minister arbitrarily killed that project for political purposes. We had community after community all along that proposed pipeline route devastated by that political decision by the Prime Minister after a sound and rigorous environmental review process.

Hon. Jim Carr: Madam Chair, I would not want to refute my fellow Manitoban, but I'm afraid I'm going to have to. It was the Federal Court of Appeal that quashed Northern Gateway, not because of insufficient consultation from the proponent and not because of insufficient consultation from the regulator, but insufficient consultation from the Harper government. That is why we changed the process for Trans Mountain: because any sensible person would look at failure and say that we don't want to repeat it.

The Chair: Thank you.

Next up is Mr. Amos.

Mr. William Amos (Pontiac, Lib.): Thank you to our witnesses, including the civil servants who work so hard to support our ministers.

I think your appearance here is an important aspect of our democracy. I note that, because when the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act of 2012—which was a gutting of the previous environmental assessment regime—was passed, I seem to recall that neither the Conservative environment minister nor the natural resources minister appeared before any committee to discuss this issue, so thank you for being here.

I would like to start by going into the issue of scientific integrity and the role of science in impact assessment. I think Canadians view this as being really important. The expert panel on environmental assessment processes concluded that, "stronger guidelines and standards are needed to ensure that [impact assessment] processes include rigorous scientific methods." Clearly, science was a focus of the expert panel.

However, in clause 22 of the act, there a number of factors set out that are required to be considered in the context of conducting impact assessment. They include things like sustainability, traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples, etc., but science-based evidence isn't included as a factor.

I'm wondering if this is an oversight, and I'm wondering if there is not an intention to ensure that science is incorporated into the factors that are considered.

● (1205)

Hon. Catherine McKenna: We certainly agree that making sure you make decisions based on robust science, evidence, and indigenous traditional knowledge is key. That has to be throughout, so we've talked about the new sustainability, looking at the sustainability and all the factors, and we've said that would be throughout. We would be considering the science throughout that.

Government scientists would also be very engaged in that they would review any studies provided by companies. When there's public concern, there would be independent scientific reviews that would be done.

The indigenous traditional knowledge, as I mentioned, is a must-have, not a nice-to-have.

We are going to be making sure the science is put out in a transparent way. We believe transparency is extremely important, making sure folks can see what the basis is for decisions, so there's going to be a new online open science and data platform.

As you know, under our government, we brought in a new chief science adviser. That chief science adviser is tasked with reviewing the methods and integrity of the science of the decisions, and we think this brings a lot more rigour to how we will be making decisions and making sure we will be using robust science.

Hon. Jim Carr: Just to add, that's also true for the Canadian energy regulator. It says specifically in the bill that the commission will have to look at scientific information and data, so it's explicit.

Mr. William Amos: Thank you.

I'd like to shift to the issue of strategic and regional impact assessments. As you're aware, the expert panel indicated the importance of these. It specifically said, "Regional [impact assessment] is too important to long-term federal interests to be triggered on an ad hoc basis...".

Previous federal environmental assessment rules have provided for this kind of regional, and also strategic, impact assessment, but they've rarely been conducted. My own view is that, as we talk about environment and the economy going hand in hand, both of these regional and strategic impact assessment aspects are crucial to ensure that the economic aspect doesn't get the upper hand, if you will.

I wonder why the proposed legislation leaves strategic impact assessment and regional impact assessment entirely to discretion, and I wonder if there's not a way to put a better frame around it and to more firmly ensure that such assessments will occur. The suggestion has been made that there be an independent body created to carry these out.

I just wonder if you could speak to that theme, please.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: We heard that loud and clear, not just from the expert panel, but across the board. It was proponents, indigenous peoples, environmentalists, and provinces and territories, saying that we need to use the tool strategic and regional assessments. Why? It's because one project can't bear all of the cumulative impacts. We were trying to bring much broader issues into one project assessment. It doesn't work that way, nor does it provide certainty. We certainly agree.

It's key to understand that we must do regional or strategic assessments with provinces. There is provincial jurisdiction. We certainly recognize that, as a federal government, we need to be working with provinces and territories. We have announced that we will be conducting the first strategic assessment on climate change. We've been very clear that we need to meet our international obligations. We are going to be starting with that. It's going to be launched in the coming weeks with a consultation paper, and this

will be requiring close collaboration with provinces and territories, obviously, but also with indigenous peoples and other stakeholders.

• (1210)

Hon. Jim Carr: I will just add that there also will be regional assessments in the offshore and that the continuing role of the Newfoundland and Labrador offshore board and the Nova Scotia offshore board will include those assessments.

The Chair: Thank you.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: My deputy wanted to add I think a very useful point.

The Chair: Okay. Real quick.

Mr. Stephen Lucas (Deputy Minister, Department of the Environment): As the minister indicated, there's a critical role in collaborating with provinces and territories on identifying key ecosystems and their value, and in working collaboratively on regional and strategic assessments, but the act also provides a means for people to request consideration of a strategic assessment and for the minister to respond publicly with the reasons for the decision.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Next up is Mr. Godin.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Can you let me know when I have one minute left in my time? I am going to share the time with Mrs. Stubbs.

Madam Minister, Mr. Minister, and the senior officials, my thanks for being part of this morning's exercise.

I was pleased to hear the Minister of Natural Resources say that he was happy to sit down with the Minister of Environment and Climate Change. I completely agree with that approach. Now, beyond the approach and the image, we must work together to attain concrete results.

Madam Minister, in your presentation, you said that Bill C-69 is intended to ensure that scientific data are considered, that indigenous people are consulted to find out their interests and their opinions, that public opinion will be able to be expressed, that groups that want to provide information to the process can do so, and so on.

Let me lead by example. Following a request from the Department of Environment, I led a consultation in my constituency of Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier. I have sent you the information.

I am having a hard time assessing the consistency of the entire process. At second reading in the House, there is a time allocation motion. You want to hold consultations and make everyone happy. But here you are actually limiting the participation of parliamentarians in the debate.

Madam Minister, can we hear your comments on the paradox that is jumping out at us?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: My thanks to my colleague for his question.

I always try to answer in French, because I feel that it is really important.

Thank you for leading a consultation in your community, Mr. Godin. I know that there is keen interest in this issue in Quebec.

Of course we have to hold consultations. We have done so all through the process, which started very early. We announced interim principles and afterwards we held consultations. An expert panel consulted Canadians. Four ministers are directly responsible—

Mr. Joël Godin: Madam Minister, despite all the respect I have for you, I have to tell you that my time is limited.

I would like to hear you talk about the paradox, about the consultation, and about the illusion that you are creating by saying that you are going to consult everyone while we parliamentarians are being gagged. That is what I would like to hear you talk about.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: I am really pleased to be here to talk to you. I know that you have a process at the committee, that you not only consult ministers, but also industry representatives, indigenous peoples, environmentalists and the public. I really believe in consulting widely, and that is what we have done throughout the process.

Mr. Joël Godin: Madam Minister, I gather from your answer that you agree with your government gagging us as parliamentarians.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: We believe that it is really important to listen to Canadians. That is what this committee has the opportunity to do.

Mr. Joël Godin: I would like to ask you another question.

Are you able to give us any figures about the impact of the carbon tax in terms of reducing greenhouse gases?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: As I said previously, pollution has a price. We have to work with the provinces and territories. Our program puts a fixed price on pollution

Mr. Joël Godin: I want figures, Madam Minister.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: ...all across the country. Each province and territory must have a price and a system

Mr. Joël Godin: Excuse me, Madam Minister. I appreciate your work and I have a lot of respect for you, but I see that you have no figures to give me.

I will move to another question.

• (1215)

[English]

The Chair: You have two minutes left.

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Godin: I now turn to the Minister of Natural Resources on the same subject. This is about the transparency of the consultations and about adopting measures that would allow us to be more effective.

Mr. Minister, do you believe that changing the NEB for a new structure, such as a Canadian energy agency, and that by encumbering the process, you are going to achieve the objectives set out in the act? I seriously question it. I would like to hear what you have to say about the appropriateness of creating a Canadian energy agency when organizations already exist. We could improve those rather than create another one.

[English]

Hon. Jim Carr: Actually, it's clearer now and it's less complex and it's less layered. It's also true in the legislative timelines.

In the case of major projects, 365 days moves to 300 days, less than one year. In the case of CER non-designated projects, it moves down from—

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Minister, let me stop you right now. I do not want you to talk to me about the process, because we are going to lock horns on the matter of when in the calendar we start the clock. If we consider the process as a whole, I am not sure that the proposed bill has any advantage.

Thank you, Madam Chair. I will yield the floor to my colleague.

[English]

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Thank you.

Thank you, Ministers, and officials for being here.

Minister McKenna, I have a question for you.

As you know, and as I'm sure we can all agree, we all believe in Canadians' right to peaceful assembly, but the B.C. Supreme Court recently established a buffer on the construction of the Trans Mountain pipeline and has made it clear that protesters must not obstruct the expansion. On Monday, four RCMP officers were physically injured by illegal protestors at the site, including one who was kicked in the head and sustained a head injury, and then two other officers were injured.

I just wonder if you will clearly, for Canadians, as a leader, condemn the violence against RCMP officers by those illegal protestors at the Trans Mountain site.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: We heard from the Minister of Public Safety in the House. Of course, we have—

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: I'm asking you if you're prepared to condemn it. I guess the answer would be yes, which you could do quickly.

The Chair: You are out of time but I am going to give the minister a very quick answer.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: We certainly support the hard-working RCMP officers in doing a very tough job.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Rogers.

Mr. Churence Rogers (Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, Lib.): Thank you, Ministers, for being here today.

Seven Liberal MPs from Newfoundland and Labrador, indeed every one from our province, complained before, during, and following the 2015 election that Harper's CEA 2012 legislation ignored our offshore oil industry and the role of the C-NLOPB as a life-cycle regulator for our industry.

Can you explain to the committee how this legislation will restore the faith of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in the offshore exploration regulatory regime?

Hon. Jim Carr: I'd like to thank the member for the question. I want to let him know how much I am enjoying my visits to Newfoundland and Labrador, including visits to describe the process that led to this legislation, including very important meetings with the industry and others, and including an assessment of the offshore board and the contribution that it has made over the many years that it has been in operation. I am enjoying learning from the advice given to us during the consultation process, which led us to the conclusion that the offshore boards had lots of expertise that should be considered as an important part of environmental impact assessments, and will be, according to this legislation.

We respect the accords. We understand how important they are to Newfoundland and Labrador, and to Nova Scotia.

We consulted, and we heard the advice. That advice can be seen in this legislation, and that advice will be seen as we roll out the implementation of this bill.

Mr. Churence Rogers: Thank you, Minister.

I have a very similar question, but just on another point.

As you said, you were recently in St. John's and speaking to industry leaders in the offshore oil and gas. On the feedback you received from the MPs and the stakeholders, did that result in any provisions in the legislation to address your ministry's obligations under the Atlantic Accord?

Hon. Jim Carr: We understand and recognize in the legislation the formal role for the offshore boards, and the expertise that's contained within them. We honour that expertise, we recognize it, and we embedded it in the legislation.

Also, there is the possibility down the road that there will be additional responsibilities for the boards if there is renewable energy generated in the offshore. If it's necessary to amend the accords, with the co-operation and with the leadership of Newfoundland and Labrador, we would be pleased to consider that.

• (1220)

Hon. Catherine McKenna: I might just add that it was very useful hearing from the members of Parliament from Newfoundland and Labrador. You expressed strong views. We believe there is an opportunity through the project list, avoiding the need for a separate impact assessment for offshore exploratory drilling activities where a regional assessment has been carried out. We are doing consultations on the project list.

We think that's something we heard, that it was an opportunity to be more efficient, and not reinvent the wheel every time. That was in direct response to good discussions with industry in Newfoundland and Labrador, the government, and also our members of Parliament, so thank you.

The Chair: You have two more minutes.

Mr. Churence Rogers: Thank you, Madam Minister. Those are the questions I had.

Can I pass my time to some others?

The Chair: Does anybody else have questions over there?

Mr. Bossio.

Mr. Mike Bossio (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Lib.): Ministers, thank you very much for being here this afternoon. I very much appreciate it.

Having gone through provincial terms of reference and the environmental assessments process multiple times, how does Bill C-69 ensure that the IA process is not just one of checking off boxes? You know, consulted with indigenous groups, check; consulted with local residents, check; received technical briefs from opponents, check.... At the end of the day, none of the consultation briefs, in my experience, were taken seriously, or considered or reflected in the final project deciding the design or alternatives.

How does Bill C-69 ensure that all public input is considered, reflected, or acted upon? Does Bill C-69 ensure that the IA process is not simply a checking boxes routine?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: I totally agree with you. It can't be about checking boxes but not doing a serious job.

There are a number of measures that we think are extraordinarily important. We talked about the expansion of public participation. That's going to be from the very start, from the early engagement phase. There's the partnership with indigenous peoples.

Transparency is critically important throughout, but especially when you make the decisions. You'll have to actually show how you reflected the factors, what you heard, and how that plays out in the decision you made.

Also, in the monitoring and following up, making sure that if there are conditions associated with the project, communities and indigenous peoples have confidence there is monitoring of the conditions, and that there is follow-up and enforcement of the conditions.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Duncan, you have three minutes.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Thank you, Chair. I have one very quick question for the Minister of the Environment.

Will this committee and the public receive the project list before our review of Bill C-69 completes, and before third reading proceeds?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: The project list is currently out for consultation. There's certainly a lot of interest in the project list.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Just a yes or no, because I have a second question.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: We're consulting on the criteria for the project list. We believe it's important to have a final project list, ideally at the same time when you have final legislation passing.

Ms. Linda Duncan: I don't hear a yes or a no on that. That's a little discouraging.

We have a dilemma here. To both of the ministers, I know that the government wants to fast-track this bill. We had closure on debate in second reading. We're anticipating that we'll have that in the third reading as well. There's also a lot of stress on this committee to limit who can come forward.

I've heard both ministers over and over saying it's important that everybody have their say. Who would you suggest that we not invite to testify before us from the first nations communities?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: I certainly have great confidence in this committee. I have great confidence in the chair that you will make decisions about who you should be consulting with.

We are also meeting on a regular basis with the national indigenous organizations. We have made that commitment to them.

We think it is very important that you hear from the people you believe have the expertise and can support the committee's work.

• (1225)

The Chair: You have one more minute.

Ms. Linda Duncan: I'd still like an answer to my first question, so that we know if we have any substance to our review. There's no substance to this act until we know the project list. Will it include in situ, and will it include dangerous rail cargo?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Back to your point about consultations, I think it's critically important that we hear from folks about the criteria for the project list. That is exactly why we are consulting on the criteria for the project list right now. We know there's a lot of interest in that, and we're very interested in getting the report on what people have said.

Ms. Linda Duncan: We don't know if we will have the list or not.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: I'll pass this over to Ron Hallman from the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency.

Mr. Ron Hallman: Right now, as the minister indicated, we're consulting on criteria for the types of activities that would go on the project list. We anticipate that after we receive the input that we're getting, we would have a proposed list for further public consultation very early in the fall.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: I might just add that this is very different from the previous government where there were absolutely no consultations. It was a political decision about the project list.

The Chair: Thank you very much. That was perfect timing.

The ministers have very graciously given us two full hours of their time to be with us at committee for questioning, so we have an opportunity for one more round.

We have Mr. Sopuck sharing with Ms. Stubbs.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Thanks.

That last sentence was complete nonsense, Minister.

I find it amazing—and this is directed to officials— that... Under the proposed \$50 per tonne carbon tax, has there been a report written or an analysis done that shows what the reduction in CO2 emissions from Canada would be under a \$50 carbon tax?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: We have done modelling. When you look at the climate plan that was negotiated with the provinces and territories, we have looked at all the measures and how they work together, so that we have a plan that will take us to our target.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Well, give us a number. I'm asking for a number.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: I will pass it over to my deputy, Stephen Lucas.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: This is a very fair question because whatever environmental action you do, there should be an environmental outcome. You put a scrubber on a smokestack and SO2 goes down. You plant grass on fragile land and soil erosion goes down. You get very specific results from environmental actions, but it's quite clear that, under the \$50 carbon tax that this government is proposing, this government has absolutely no idea what the reduction in emissions will be.

Could you please respond to that?

Mr. Stephen Lucas: As the minister indicated, the modelling that we do, through a transparent process with the provinces and consulting with expert groups, and that we provide in our annual reports that are public, and in reports to the United Nations, includes carbon pricing. It includes the carbon pricing that British Columbia put in place many years ago and that other jurisdictions have. There are interactive effects with other measures, but the recent report provided to the United Nations in December 2017 showed the single biggest drop in emissions since we've been reporting, which includes the effects of carbon pricing in those jurisdictions that have those plans to contribute towards meeting our target in 2030.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Yes. I've heard this answer before. In fact, I saw it on the show, *Yes, Minister* when Sir Humphrey was in front of a committee, so thank you for that very opaque answer.

Again, I'm going to make the point. Canadians are being asked to pony up money for a carbon tax, yet this government has absolutely no idea what the effect will be and will not provide any numbers to back it up.

I will now turn my time over to Ms. Stubbs.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Thank you.

Clearly, the carbon tax buying social licence is baloney, since Alberta was the first jurisdiction in all of North America, more than a decade ago, to regulate targets for reductions in emissions and implement a carbon levy on major industrial emitters, yet we still face significant opposition to energy development in Alberta and the construction of pipelines.

I must revisit this issue with the Minister of the Environment, since I ran to the end last time. It's very concerning, so I just want to give you another opportunity to clearly condemn the violent actions of the illegal protesters at Burnaby on Monday, who injured those RCMP officers who were just there to do their jobs.

• (1230)

Hon. Catherine McKenna: As I said, we support our RCMP officers—

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Do you condemn the violence of the protesters—

Hon. Catherine McKenna: —and we support the actions that they take.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: —against the RCMP officers?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: We always support our RCMP officers and the actions they take. They work in very difficult circumstances and the Minister of Public Safety has been very clear on that.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: I'm asking you if you condemn the violence.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: We have the right to—

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: I'm not worried about the Minister of Natural Resources because he said he'd bring in the military about a year ago to get this thing built. I think the concern is that you refuse to condemn the violent actions of illegal protesters and anti-energy activists for votes because you want to keep that soft—sorry—NDP, left, and anti-energy activist coalition of voters in British Columbia. Therefore, it is very concerning to me that you, a senior minister speaking on behalf of the government, will not condemn illegal, violent, physical attacks on RCMP officers. I think you should answer clearly that yes, you condemn it.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Violence is never appropriate, but to your broader point, I've been 100% clear that we approved the Kinder Morgan pipeline, and that we went through—

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: I think that goes without saying. Do you condemn the violence?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: No, you just said that we were trying to appeal to voters who might not support the project.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: No, you. I mean you.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: I, certainly, have been 100% clear that that project went through robust review—

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: So, just as clearly, condemn the violent attacks against RCMP officers by illegal protesters in Burnaby.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: I will be clear. Violence is never appropriate, but people have a right to free expression.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: So specifically with regard to the RCMP officers who were injured on Monday, do you condemn the violent acts by those illegal protesters on those RCMP officers?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: As I said, violence is never appropriate. We have the rule of law in our country, and there's.... I don't know how I can be more clear.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: I think the way that you can be more clear is just to say that, yes, you condemn those violent acts.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Violent acts are never appropriate, so any acts of violence against RCMP officers—

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: I'm asking you specifically about what occurred on Monday in Burnaby.

The Chair: Can you give her a chance?

Mr. William Amos: I have a point of order, Madam Chair. Member Stubbs is badgering the witness. This is inappropriate and unparliamentary.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Thanks, Dad, but I was just asking for an answer.

The Chair: I do believe that you keep repeating the same question and you're not giving a chance for an answer, so let's give her a chance.

A voice: [*Inaudible—Editor*]

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Very feminist.

Am I out of time?

The Chair: You're very close to being out of time.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Okay, we'll give you one more chance. Just to be clear, do you condemn the violent actions of the illegal protesters who injured two RCMP officers on Monday?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: I condemn violent acts of any sort against RCMP officers. With regard to particular incidents, it's up to the Minister of Public Safety to comment, but I certainly condemn violent acts, yes.

The Chair: All right, we're going to move on to Mr. Bossio.

Mr. Mike Bossio: Thank you, Minister, for your patience and for the decorum that you've exhibited here today. We appreciate it.

Your mandate is to restore public trust in the environmental assessment, to provide meaningful public participation, to ensure that decisions are based on science, and to advance reconciliation through nation-to-nation co-operation with indigenous peoples.

I have a group of questions, and they are aimed at determining whether, or to what extent, those goals are actually satisfied in Bill C-69 and whether further amendments are going to be needed.

First, why are the five public interest factors for ministerial cabinet decisions, found in clause 63, merely considerations? For accountability purposes, why are they not the mandatory basis for decision-making?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Those factors are mandatory. The legislation spells out clearly that they must be considered for decision-making. Those factors, just to be clear, are the project's contribution to sustainability, the impacts on indigenous peoples and their rights, the adverse effects, the mitigation measures that are in place to reduce the project's impact, and Canada's ability to meet its environmental obligations and climate change commitments.

We think that these are critically important. Also important, as we've mentioned repeatedly, is transparency. When we make a decision, it will have to clearly set out the basis on which it was made, and it will need to show that these factors were considered.

Mr. Mike Bossio: Would you consider that to be a legally enforceable approval test?

• (1235)

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Well, it says that they are mandatory for decision-making. Ultimately, the minister or cabinet has to make a decision about a designated project. While those are factors that might be considered, there's no magic formula for how you weight these things. You need to take into account all of these factors when you make a public interest decision, and it will be made in a transparent way with the reasons posted.

This is a new step that did not occur under the previous government. There was no transparency in terms of how decisions were made, and that really eroded public trust. We believe that it is important that you have clear factors and that you also need to explain to Canadians how you made a decision about a particular project.

Mr. Mike Bossio: Thank you.

What does “contributes to sustainability” actually mean? Once again, this is in clause 63. Precisely how will this be determined or evaluated by the minister or cabinet?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Sustainability was something that was very important. We heard that from Canadians and from environmentalists. This is really about sustainability in the long term. It's about how you can protect the environment, how you can contribute to the social and economic well-being of Canadians, how you can preserve health in a manner that benefits present and future generations. That's how you would look at sustainability.

We've also been clear that there needs to be a gender-based plus analysis as part of this, and we think that this gets you to better decisions.

Mr. Mike Bossio: Will the government be proposing to include all high-carbon projects on the project list?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: As we've said, we're absolutely committed to our domestic and international obligations, including with respect to climate change. We have announced that we will be doing a strategic assessment when it comes to climate change.

In terms of the project list, we are consulting on the criteria for the project list. We believe that it should consider an environmental threshold, including greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Mike Bossio: I think, if I heard you correctly earlier—and maybe just to verify this—you'd said that the project list would be a part of the final legislation.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: It's a regulation, but we do believe that the timing of the project list ideally would coincide with the legislation.

Mr. Mike Bossio: Okay.

In the absence of mandatory strategic regional assessments, precisely how will the act effectively address the cumulative effects of multiple small projects, including projects on federal lands?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Once again, we really believe in the importance of regional strategic assessments. When you look at cumulative effects, it's not one project. It's often multiple projects that have had an impact. We will be looking at conducting these strategic and regional assessments.

In terms of federal projects on federal lands, the same tests will apply. We think that you need to be robust, and then there's also, once again, the project list where a project could fall under the project list once it meets the criteria.

Mr. Mike Bossio: Excellent. Thank you, Minister.

The Chair: Mr. Fast.

Hon. Ed Fast: I want to thank both ministers again for being here because I've been in that seat before, and it's sometimes not a pleasant place to be. I found that it's sometimes easier simply to answer the questions. If it's a yes-or-no question, you either say yes or no, and then the committee has the answer it needs or that it has asked.

On five occasions now, Minister McKenna, you have been asked, “Do you know how much your national carbon tax backstop will reduce greenhouse gas emissions?” We still don't have an answer. I know you've found ways around the question, but we really need to know. Do you and those in your department know how much that carbon tax will actually reduce our greenhouse gas emissions in Canada?

Yes or no?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Once again, we have provinces that already have a price on pollution. You can look at British Columbia. It has a price on pollution. The prices are not the same right now. At the end, we have said that it's a \$50 price by 2022. Some provinces have cap-and-trade systems, but our focus is on how we meet our 2030 target and how carbon pricing fits in with the overarching plan.

Hon. Ed Fast: I believe our questions were specifically on a \$50 per tonne price on carbon and whether you or your officials know what impact that will have on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

We're going to keep asking that question because you're not answering.

• (1240)

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Maybe my deputy can do a better job in being clear, because I'm trying to be clear, but I will pass it on to my deputy.

Mr. Stephen Lucas: As I noted over the past decade or more through our reporting to the United Nations and in alternate-year reporting to Canadians on emissions, that includes our modelling. That modelling includes all measures that have been undertaken and implemented by the Government of Canada or the provinces and territories, including carbon pricing in provinces such as British Columbia, going back a decade.

Hon. Ed Fast: If there were a \$50 per tonne carbon price across Canada consistently, each province and territory, what kind of greenhouse gas emissions reductions would we achieve as a country?

Mr. Stephen Lucas: I don't have that number offhand. As I noted, it's built into the modelling along with other measures such as—

Hon. Ed Fast: I'm not mixing it with other measures. This is one tool. Before we implement tools in government, we like to make those decisions based on evidence, on science, and I'm not hearing that. You've said that you don't have that figure available. Could you provide it to our committee?

Mr. Stephen Lucas: We've been transparent on our modelling and the assumptions that underlie it, the contributions of both measures in place and planned measures. We will—

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Lucas, I'm glad to have you at committee. We've known each other for quite a while, but that answer isn't going to provide any assurances to Canadians that this Liberal government knows what it's doing on the climate front because there are no answers.

We've asked, “Yes or no, do you know what these carbon taxes are going to do to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions?” We still have no answers. It's very disappointing.

I did want to add one last question, Madam Chair, and that's to Minister McKenna.

Earlier, I asked you about the economy and the environment going hand in hand, which is something you've said regularly, something Minister Carr has said regularly. There is nothing in this legislation, however, that actually addresses the economic benefits that will accrue to Canadians at the review panel stage or at the agency stage.

Section 63, which you referred to, actually refers specifically to the minister's decision in that she has to take into account sustainability writ large, but in fact, there is nothing that compels the review agencies, either the review panel or the agency itself, to take into account the economic benefits that will accrue to Canadians as a result of a project being approved.

Where in this whole process, which is supposed to be about the economy and the environment going hand in hand, are the economic benefits going to be considered if not at the agency or review panel stage?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: I would just like to correct that actually the sustainability test does require looking at the positive and negative impacts, including economic, environmental, social,

and health impacts. This is different from the previous government. Under the legislation brought in by the previous government, which you were part of, there was no consideration of the economic impacts.

I'll ask the president of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency.

Hon. Ed Fast: Where in the legislation do we see the agency or the review panel being charged with taking into account the economic benefits to Canadians?

Mr. Ron Hallman: In the current act, what we looked at were adverse environmental effects.

In the proposed legislation, several new factors have been added. I won't list them all. However, one of them that speaks to the sustainability focus is that we will be required to look at environmental, health, social, and economic effects, and to assess both the positive and negative effects in each of those areas. That work will translate into tailored impact statement guidelines for the proponent to provide.

We've heard from proponents before, “Why are you guys just picking on the environmental stuff?” There is a lot of negative stuff. There are a lot of good benefits coming here in all of these areas.

What this proposes is that this will be required up front. It will be in the public impact statement that the proponent files. It will be commented on and challenged, and it will see the light of day through the public process that the agency will lead and report on prior to providing advice to the minister.

• (1245)

The Chair: Thank you very much. That was a thorough answer.

Mr. Fisher.

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Thank you, ministers, for being here. I know our committee certainly appreciates your appearance.

Madam Chair, I have one question, and then I would like to share my time and give Ms. May the opportunity to have a few minutes to speak to the ministers as well.

Ministers, back home in Nova Scotia, the Halifax Port Authority administers about 260 acres of federally owned land situated at multiple points around the navigable waters of beautiful—I am a little bit biased—Halifax harbour.

I'd like to know more about how Bill C-69 would change the way ports conduct their assessments and whether this may mean a strengthened oversight for projects on port lands.

I also would like to know if there is a possibility that Bill C-69's assessment of projects could be conducted by the agency itself.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: The impact assessment act provides oversight for all projects on federal land, so that would include port lands, and they would be required to undergo a rigorous assessment.

The port authorities would be required to look at whether a project is likely to cause significant environmental impacts. They would need to consider adverse impacts on the rights of indigenous peoples. They would need to consider indigenous traditional knowledge, community knowledge, and public comments as well as mitigation measures that would mitigate any significant adverse environmental effects.

I'm going to ask the president of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency to add to that.

Mr. Ron Hallman: I would add to the minister's comments that on all federal lands, including ports, federal authorities will be required to assess the environmental effects of a potential project that is not designated on the project list. They're already required to do that, but now the new act is going to stipulate the types of things they need to look at.

It's also going to require them to provide opportunities for public and indigenous engagement, and to report transparently on the registry what is being done and the follow-up from those assessments.

In addition, as the minister noted, if a project, activity, etc., is on the project list then even if it's on federal land, it will be subject to an assessment by the agency.

My final point would be that even for a non-designated project on the project list any Canadian, or even the federal authority, the port itself, could request the minister to designate the project, and she would be required to provide a response as to her decision related to that request.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Thank you.

I will share the remainder of my time with Elizabeth May.

The Chair: Ms. May.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): I want to start by thanking Darren and other Liberal members of the committee who agreed to allow me to put a question to the minister.

I thank both ministers for being here.

Preparing for this morning, I reviewed your mandate letters and found that the Prime Minister used identical language in the letter to Minister Carr and Minister McKenna on the subject before us today.

I'm going to read it into the record that you are to "...restore robust oversight and thorough environmental assessment of areas under federal jurisdiction". To determine what areas of federal jurisdiction will be recipients of this review, and robust oversight, I turn to the recommendations of the final report at the expert panel, in which the expert panel, under findings and recommendations at page 18 says the following:

Federal IA should be only be conducted on a project, plan, or policy that has clear links to matters of federal interest. These federal interests include, at a minimum, federal lands, federal funding and federal government as proponent, as well as..."

In the interest of time, I won't read out the 11 sub-categories, but they're all important: species at risk, fish, marine plants, indigenous peoples and lands, and so on.

My question, particularly to Minister McKenna since the IA portion of the legislation is under her name, is whether she agrees

with the high-level panel that this is the minimum level of federal review as required by her mandate letter.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: I want to thank you, Ms. May, for all your advocacy and all your work over the years. I know you care greatly about the environment, but in particular about environmental assessments.

We certainly took the input of the expert panel. We received a lot of other input as well.

The goal of environmental assessments—now we're calling them impact assessments—is to make sure you're considering the projects that will have a significant impact on the range of factors.

There was a proposal to have them on any federal funding, but the impact could be that you could have very small works because there was a tie to federal funding that would necessarily trigger a review. We think that our focus has hit the right... We're consulting on the project list, but we think we should focus on federal impact assessments on projects that have the most potential for adverse effects in areas of federal jurisdiction related to the environment.

•(1250)

Ms. Elizabeth May: The minister must be aware that, since the early 1970s, federal environmental assessments have primarily been a tool of planning and information for the federal government in exercising its decision-making. Since 1974, federal planning for any project involving federal funding right through until 2012 has always had at least an initial screening. Recently—

The Chair: Ms. May, I hate to do this but three minutes go by very fast. We're out of time.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: We have Ms. Duncan for three minutes.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Thank you very much.

I'd like to reiterate what Ms. May just called for. I'm deeply troubled, and I know that many who have submitted comments on the bill are deeply troubled, that the minister's given complete discretion whether to conduct a review, whether to allow a province to deliver a review instead of the federal government, and to decide whether she's going to look at impacts to fisheries, or to first nations, or transboundary impacts.

My question to the minister would be on the regional strategic assessments. The bill provides absolutely no specific criteria to trigger any regional strategic assessment. It's not really clear who would deliver that. The only strategic assessment I'm aware of that's proceeding right now is directed by UNESCO, and the minister in her wisdom sloughed that off to Parks Canada within their existing budget.

I wonder if the minister can advise us on how strategic and regional assessments are going to be delivered, who will have responsibility, and what the triggers will be.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: I want to just clarify at the beginning the idea that there are no criteria for a project to be considered. There's going to be a project list. We're actually consulting on the criteria for the project list right now.

In terms of regional and strategic assessments, as we said, we believe they're critical, and everyone agrees—it was almost across the board. You had industry, environmentalists, and indigenous people saying we need to do that. We know we need to be engaging provinces and territories. We're in a federation, so we need to be working together.

As my deputy noted, there's an ability to request a strategic or regional assessment, and then a decision is made. There has to be transparency as to why a decision was made to go ahead or not.

Maybe my deputy would like to say something.

Mr. Stephen Lucas: Further to that, as the minister noted earlier, the first strategic assessment will be on climate change and how, in terms of guidance to project proponents in consideration of project reviews, addressing our Paris commitments and the pan-Canadian framework will be considered—

Ms. Linda Duncan: Let me give you a specific.... We have a cabinet directive on strategic assessment. How does that tie to clause 92?

Mr. Stephen Lucas: For strategic assessments—and that obviously forms some of the context—the agency will be working to provide guidance on strategy and regional assessments. That will be consulted on. The bill provides for a high-level advisory committee, which will also provide guidance that then can form the basis for those exercises, as I noted. The advisory committee will work with provinces and territories through the open science platform to put the information out, to define areas of high ecosystem value and interest to look at, and to provide these results transparently through an open process the public can engage in and that can be commented on in draft and final form.

●(1255)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

That concludes our third round.

I want to thank both ministers and their teams very much for spending the full two hours with us, giving us a chance to get a good start to this study.

Before I end the meeting, I want to remind the committee that next week's a bit of a different set-up. We have a commissioner coming on Tuesday. She's going to come just for an hour after all, which means after that we're going to work on finalizing our witnesses and doing some committee business.

On Wednesday, we have a meeting that goes from 3:30 to 6:30. We're going to have Minister Garneau from 3:30 to 4:30, we're going to have his officials from 4:30 to 5:00, and then we're going to have a panel of industry witnesses.

On Thursday it's a Friday sitting schedule, so we are going to have an 8:30 to 10:30 committee meeting with a panel of industry witnesses, and that will complete our work next week.

Elizabeth.

Ms. Elizabeth May: I just wanted to tell you all the dolphins got out of Heart's Delight, Newfoundland. The bay opened up, the ice is gone, and they're all celebrating the dolphins. I just thought the environment committee would want to know.

The Chair: Thank you very much for that.

I wish you all a good weekend, and thanks again to everybody.

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