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Chair: Mr. John Aldag



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• (1540)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.)): Welcome to meeting number 15 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Natural Resources.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee is meeting on the study of creating a fair and equitable Canadian energy transformation.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the House order of November 25, 2021. Members can attend both in person and by Zoom. For everybody who is here, including witnesses, now that we're in session, no screenshots or photos are permitted. As per the directive of the Board of Internal Economy on March 10, 2022, all those attending the meeting in person must wear a mask, except for members who are at their place during the proceedings.

I have a few comments for members and everybody who is here.

Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. For those participating by video conference, please click on the microphone icon to activate your mike, and please mute yourself when not speaking. For those on Zoom, there is a choice for interpretation of floor, English or French. Those attending in person can use the earpiece and select the desired channel. All comments should be addressed through the chair. For anybody joining us virtually, if you'd like to speak, please use the "raise hand" function, and I will do my best, with the assistance of the clerk, to figure out the speaking order should any hands be raised.

I think today we have all of our regular members. Mr. Morrice, I'd like to welcome you to our group.

Before we get started hearing opening statements, we need to adopt a budget for this new study, since this is the first meeting of the new study. We've distributed a budget to everybody. The proposed budget is in the amount of \$11,925 to cover this study. It essentially covers the cost of phone lines and headsets required for our meetings.

Is it the will of the committee to adopt this budget?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: In order to get the lists of witnesses lined up for when we're back from our constituency weeks—they're coming up after this week—we're proposing that we have this Friday as the deadline for our witness lists. If each of the parties could get its wit-

ness list for this study to the clerk by the end of Friday, it would be really helpful, so we'll have two weeks to get the panels organized.

Is somebody willing to put that motion, which we can then hopefully adopt? We'll have witnesses by this Friday. Is everybody in favour of that or supportive of it?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: The clerk will send out the template and the request, and if everybody could work with their respective teams to get their lists in by end of day Friday, that would be really helpful.

With that, we are now getting into the study.

Larry, go ahead.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Thank you.

Just on that, we're all here, or many of us are here in the chamber now. Is there any talk about allowing witnesses to be present in the chamber?

The Chair: We'll check with our clerk.

Apparently there is not yet.

Mr. Larry Maguire: We have about three weeks before we'll have witnesses, other than the ministers and those here today. I'll just throw it out there.

The Chair: I'll check. I don't know if that's a Board of Internal Economy issue or who is making that decision.

I think for the budgets, we haven't included any travel at this point. For this study, we may end up being still primarily virtual unless we have witnesses such as ministers.

I hear your point. It would be nice to start seeing people in the room with us again.

Mr. Larry Maguire: That's all.

The Chair: Mr. Angus, go ahead before we get into introducing our witnesses.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): I very strongly support my colleague. I think it's a really different dynamic in committee when we are able to see the witnesses, so I would ask if you could bring our concerns forward.

If they did agree to that and we were able to invite witnesses to come here, would that mean we'd have to adapt the budget?

The Chair: We would have to amend the budget we've just approved.

We'll keep an eye out, and I will express that to the liaison committee.

Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Chahal is having trouble getting into the meeting.

The Chair: We'll keep an eye out. Mr. Chahal is trying to join us.

This is the first hearing on the study on creating a fair and equitable Canadian energy transformation.

For our panel today, we have the remainder of the time until 5:30.

From the Department of Employment and Social Development, we have Andrew Brown, senior assistant deputy minister, skills and employment branch; and Chris Bates, director general, apprenticeship and sectoral initiatives directorate. From the Department of Natural Resources, we have Debbie Scharf, associate assistant deputy minister, energy systems sector; Roisin Reid, director, energy and environment policy division; and Jasmine Redenbach, acting manager, energy and environment policy division.

Thank you to each of you. I assume that each of the departments will take one five-minute opening slot, and then we'll get right into our questions and answers.

From the Department of Employment and Social Development, who is going to do the five-minute opening statement?

• (1545)

Mr. Andrew Brown (Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Skills and Employment Branch, Department of Employment and Social Development): I will be giving the opening statement for ES-DC, but I believe my colleague from NRCan will be starting off today.

The Chair: Okay. I'm happy to go with that.

Natural Resources, we'll turn it over to you.

You have probably been here before. I have a quick-card system. I'll use yellow when there are 30 seconds left, and red when the time is up. Don't stop mid-sentence, but wind up your thought. That will apply when we're into the questions and answers as well.

Natural Resources, I'll start the clock at five minutes. We look forward to hearing from you.

Ms. Debbie Scharf (Associate Assistant Deputy Minister, Energy Systems Sector, Department of Natural Resources): Thank you very much.

Good afternoon, and thank you for inviting me here today. I'm pleased to be speaking to you from Ottawa, the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people. My name is Debbie Scharf. As mentioned, I'm the associate assistant deputy minister of the energy systems sector at Natural Resources Canada.

Just transition is a policy approach that puts people at the centre of the Government of Canada's climate policy. To date, the government's actions on just transition have focused on phasing out coal-fired electricity generation, which has had a major impact on workers and communities in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. It has led the government to commit \$185 million

in budgets 2018 and 2019 towards economic diversification and skills development initiatives. This funding seeks to strengthen communities affected by the transition away from coal power, enabling their residents to pursue meaningful careers and enjoy a high quality of life for generations to come.

Today, the government is looking at the energy transition writ large, knowing that the world is moving to a low-carbon energy model. Canada has an opportunity to be an economic and innovative leader in a net-zero future. Government climate policy is not the only driver. Smart investors know that the opportunities of the future will need to be low-carbon, and we're already seeing investments shift away from high-carbon industries. So, too, the energy transition ahead of us is not about "phasing out" any industry; it is about industries making changes, reducing carbon intensity and finding new ways to adapt to the changing market.

Finally, the impacts of the transition will affect not only one industry or segment of workers. Oil and gas workers may pivot to hydrogen. Mechanics will learn about zero-emission vehicles. Construction workers will integrate the most energy-efficient building codes. All this means that just transition is about ensuring that Canadian workers have the skills and training they need to seize the opportunities created by the energy transition. We know that some who work in high-carbon industries may lose their jobs, but we also know that Canadian workers who built our current energy systems have the know-how, the ingenuity and the work ethic to see them thrive in green energy jobs.

The government is doing its best to make sure those jobs are available. My department is supporting energy projects in every region of Canada and creating jobs through programs like the greener homes grant, the clean fuels fund and our nuclear strategy.

We are looking at economic diversification by supporting the opportunities unique to each region and each sector, whether it's hydrogen in the Prairies, critical minerals in Quebec and Ontario or biofuels in British Columbia. In fact, because the clean energy sector is growing faster than the economy overall, we see the potential for skilled labour shortages in a number of those areas, including nuclear, green mining and energy efficiency. This means we need to attract young people to careers in the natural resources sectors and break down systemic barriers that have kept women and racialized Canadians out of employment in traditional energy jobs.

That is why the government is committed to introducing a just transition act, and why my department has begun working with experts and stakeholders to support the development of the legislation. Last July, we launched public consultations with a broad range of stakeholders, including workers and labour organizations, industry, academia, non-governmental organizations, youth and experts in skills training, diversity and inclusion. This is in addition to having meetings with provinces, territories and indigenous organizations. To date, we have received over 17,000 submissions, and we are still accepting written submissions until April 30. The proposed legislation will be guided by the feedback we receive from the consultation sessions and a “what we heard” report, which will be published once they are complete.

I look forward to sharing more information at this time and seeing the conclusions this committee will reach after meeting with officials and stakeholders. As mentioned, I'm pleased to be joined by my two colleagues, Roisin Reid and Jasmine Redenbach, and we will be pleased, at the right time, to answer your questions.

Thank you.

• (1550)

The Chair: Excellent. Thank you so much.

Now we'll go to the representatives from Employment and Social Development for their opening five minutes. I'll just restart the clock here.

I'll turn it over to you whenever you're ready.

Mr. Andrew Brown: Thank you, Chair.

I'm Andrew Brown, senior assistant deputy minister for the skills and employment branch at Employment and Social Development Canada.

I'd like to begin by acknowledging that I'm participating in today's committee meeting from the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people.

I'd also like to echo the sentiments of my colleague from Natural Resources Canada, Ms. Scharf. A key component of a just transition is helping Canadians have the skills and training they need to seize the growing economic opportunities arising from Canada's ambitious goal of net-zero emissions by 2050. I would like to elaborate on what ESDC is doing to support this from a workforce development perspective.

While climate change will result in a number of employment challenges, the shift to a low-carbon economy will also provide exceptional opportunities to build an inclusive and skilled workforce to drive economic growth. As Ms. Scharf highlighted, Canada's clean energy sector is growing. In fact, this growth will continue to accelerate, doubling to approximately 640,000 workers by 2030.

In addition to clean energy, other priority sectors related to the low-carbon economy include construction, natural resources, transportation, environment and the emerging battery supply chain industry. Employers and workers across sectors and industries will require varying levels of support to develop the skills needed to seize current and emerging opportunities. Employment and Social Development Canada is committed to leveraging our existing skills and

employment programming to train, upskill and reskill workers to help ensure that all Canadians can benefit from these opportunities, especially those from equity-deserving groups.

The mandate of the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion includes three specific commitments to support the skills component of a just transition: first, to support the Minister of Natural Resources and the Minister of Labour in moving forward with just transition legislation; second, to launch a clean jobs training centre to help workers across sectors upgrade or gain new skills to be on the leading edge of the zero-carbon industry; third, to address gaps in training and upskilling to help ensure that all Canadian workers can take advantage of sustainable battery industry opportunities.

[*Translation*]

The department is making progress with regard to each of these commitments. For example, ESDC has supported and will keep supporting our colleagues at Natural Resources Canada throughout the stakeholder consultation process, to move us closer to tabling a just transition act in Parliament.

We'll also consult with these subject matter experts on the development of the clean jobs training centre to help ensure a people-centred approach to this new initiative.

In addition, the government announced a major new investment of \$960 million in budget 2021 for the new sectoral workforce solutions program. A key pillar of this program is to prioritize investments in building talent for the low-carbon economy across multiple sectors.

The program will support the design and delivery of training and human resources solutions that meet the needs of businesses, especially small and medium-sized businesses, as well as help recruit and retain a diverse and inclusive workforce.

[*English*]

We just closed a round of a call for proposals for the sectoral workforce solutions program in March, and we are currently in the process of assessing and prioritizing projects. Projects to address the skills needed for a just transition could begin as early as summer 2022. In addition, Employment and Social Development Canada has a large suite of skills and employment programming, and we are currently exploring how these programs can also be leveraged to support just transition and the implementation of Canada's new emissions reduction plan.

• (1555)

Given my time, I'll try to close up by saying that I believe that addressing emerging labour shortages and equipping the workforce with new skills will be a critical enabling element of our collective actions on just transition. I look forward to advancing the department's contribution on this important issue.

Thank you.

The Chair: Excellent. Thanks to both departments for their opening statements.

For the first round, each of the four members will have six minutes. I always like to let the witnesses know, in case they have their stopwatches running, how long each session will go for. These are six-minute rounds. We're going to be starting with Mr. Maguire.

Mr. Maguire, it's over to you for your first six minutes.

Mr. Larry Maguire: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

I appreciate the witnesses' being here today to start this new study.

I have a number of questions. I'm going to be asking for some information, so I'll get right at it. I'm deeply concerned about the negative impact of the government's policies on the oil and gas sector. Before the government goes to make any further decisions, it's imperative that we get a sense of the number of jobs directly or indirectly related to the oil and gas sector. I'm wondering if you could table with the committee any information you have on how many current jobs are either directly or indirectly related to the oil and gas sector, broken down by province.

Mr. Chair, I could go through these, but is there any comment on that? I'm assuming they can provide that.

Ms. Debbie Scharf: Mr. Chair, thank you for the question.

At this point in time, for that level of detail and given where we are with the emissions reduction plan and the decisions still to come, that's not a question I can answer.

I would like to point out that the emissions reduction plan did set a sector-by-sector approach to look at emissions reductions between now and 2030. It provided guideposts for action. The government has indicated that it will consult, in particular, on an oil and gas cap. I think there's some more work ahead of us to see how that's going to be designed and rolled out.

Mr. Larry Maguire: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I feel consternation that this information isn't available. We have to have a base to start from. I'm going to ask the witnesses to provide as much detail as they can on that breakdown by province.

Also, we've heard from indigenous witnesses about how the oil and gas sector is creating wealth and prosperity in their communities. I am wondering if the witnesses could table with the committee any information they have on how many current jobs are either directly or indirectly related to the oil and gas sector in indigenous communities, which is very important. These sectors account for many jobs created and depended upon in those areas.

If the witnesses could include that information, Mr. Chair, I'd appreciate it.

The Chair: Does anyone have any response or insight? If not, we'll see what information can be provided after.

Ms. Debbie Scharf: That would be wonderful. Thank you.

Mr. Larry Maguire: I can supply this to the clerk later, too, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Sure. Thanks.

Mr. Larry Maguire: The government announced that all new vehicles produced in Canada after 2035 will be electric. For this transition to happen, we know that Canada will have to produce a tremendous amount of new electricity and build the necessary infrastructure. Can you table with the committee the following: the modelling on how much more electricity is needed or will be needed to meet this demand, the modelling on the sources of that extra electricity generation, the cost to the government and to consumers of generating this electricity, and the cost to the government and to consumers of building community and personal generating stations?

Having spent some time with the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, I think it's quite pertinent that we look at what can be done for these situations in those communities, and not necessarily just those. There are other small communities throughout the country as well. I'd ask for the information on those four areas as well.

The fourth area is that Canada has an abundance of critical minerals. We still rely on other countries for imports of critical minerals for electric batteries and other clean energy technologies. Can you please table with the committee a full list of the amounts and source countries of our imports of critical minerals for the past five years? These include copper, cobalt, nickel, lithium, chromium, zinc and aluminum. I won't name them all, Mr. Chair, but there are 17 rare earth minerals as well that are quite important.

• (1600)

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): On a point of order, I'm just curious. I thought we were talking about sustainable jobs and a just transition. I'm a little confused, at this point, about what this has to do with workers and regions and our communities. Perhaps I could have a little bit of help to understand that.

The Chair: I stopped the clock. I wasn't sure if this was a point of order. I think the member has the ability to ask questions.

I don't know what kind of list you have here, Mr. Maguire—

Mr. Larry Maguire: There are just a few more.

The Chair: —if the officials want to make any comment on the list of things. The officials will then be invited to supply whatever information they can. We can see if there is any relevance, as the analysts write the report, to the information that's being requested.

Mr. Larry Maguire: It's my time.

The Chair: It's your time.

Mr. Larry Maguire: Okay.

The Chair: I'll restart the clock. I stopped it, so you still have a minute and 45 seconds left.

It's back to you.

Mr. Larry Maguire: I'm glad to answer that.

It's just as I said in my opening comments, before the questions started, that it's to get a base of information. I'm asking for any information that is available. If it isn't available, well, we'll look at that.

I would ask, as well, if they could please table any information with the committee on how many tonnes of these minerals I just listed are produced in Canada every year, broken down by province. That has to be available, I think, through the provincial areas as well. I'm sure there's an accumulation of it at some point.

Can they please table with the committee the aggregated and full-some list of funding that the government has provided since the fall of 2015 in support of research and development on small modular nuclear reactors as well? Those were the ones I was talking about in regard to some of the remote areas of Canada. We need to have a base of where we were at before, as the study moves on.

There are just two more, Mr. Chair.

We know there is a shortage of Red Seal-certified tradespeople in Canada. That's been talked about. We know there will be a demand for tradespeople for the development of green technology. Can they please table with this committee a list of projected Red Seal trades skills needed to meet the expected demand for this just transition?

The last one, Mr. Chair, is that Canada is in the top 10 oil and natural gas-producing countries in the world. We have some of the highest environmental labour standards in the world. The sector provides hundreds of thousands of jobs and contributes over \$100 billion to Canada's GDP. To the best of their knowledge, have any of the other nine top energy-producing countries—the United States, Saudi Arabia, Russia, China, Iraq, Iran, UAE, Brazil and Kuwait—implemented an emissions cap for their oil and gas sectors?

That's one that maybe they could answer now.

The Chair: Yes, but unfortunately we're out of the six minutes at this point.

You've been able to put forward many requests for information. We'll work with the clerk. We can actually send that out to the participants here today and see if they have information that can be shared.

If anyone wants to pick up on any of this, they will have other opportunities as we go around in the time remaining in the meeting.

With that, we have Ms. Jones next.

You have six minutes.

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank our guests who are before the committee today. Thank you for your opening comments.

I also want to say to my colleague who just asked questions that the critical minerals study that was released has a lot of the information in it in terms of mineral production, quantities and exports. A lot of that information is in that report as well. I just wanted to point that out.

My colleague talked about the impact on jobs. We know that in a just transition there are going to be new opportunities and new jobs. I'd like to focus on that as well. We know that transitioning with energy means transitioning with jobs and employment. We have to be very proactive to protect Canadians and to ensure that they can make this transition and that they have the skills they need to do it.

What sectors do you predict will have the greatest employment opportunities and growth? I think in identifying these sectors, we can get a very good picture of where some of those jobs are going to be and what skills will be required.

That's for whoever would like to go first. It's probably Mr. Brown.

• (1605)

Mr. Andrew Brown: Thanks for the question.

I'm just looking at Chris here. I'm wondering if he wants to jump in on that.

Mr. Chris Bates (Director General, Apprenticeship and Sectoral Initiatives Directorate, Department of Employment and Social Development): Yes. Thank you, Andrew.

We are looking at different sectors. As pointed out earlier by the other member, certainly some of the trades will be severely impacted. We think all sectors will be impacted to differing degrees.

Workers in some sectors will require a little skills upgrading to adjust to changes in their jobs, whereas for those in other sectors, there will be transformational changes to their jobs with completely new skill sets required. Sectors like transportation could see impacts. Certainly the environment sector will have impacts. The oil and gas sector, as we transition to a hydrogen economy, will as well.

Maybe some of the NRCan colleagues here might have additional details as well.

Ms. Debbie Scharf: One of the things I would mention is that a number of studies have been done to look at the type of growth that could be expected from the clean energy sector, which includes a number of the areas that my colleagues from ESDC just mentioned: from the production of clean energy, like clean hydrogen or biofuels, to the production of clean electricity and zero-emission vehicles. These are all types of sectors of trades, of course, for energy efficiency.

I would point out that some fairly large studies have looked at this. Clean Energy Canada projected a 2.5% growth year over year, over the next decade, in the clean energy sector. As well, the Royal Bank of Canada did an analysis that projected 235,000 to 400,000 new clean energy jobs by 2030.

These studies are certainly interesting to look at as well, as you're thinking about whom you would like to bring forward in your future meetings to unpack that question in more detail for you.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: That's good information, and I'm sure our committee will certainly entertain doing that as well.

You were talking about creating a just transition advisory body. To help our committee move forward with our study, can you tell us what this advisory body would do? What role do you guys see for it? What would be the relationship between it and the net-zero advisory body that we're looking at as well?

I don't want the public to be bogged down with all of these committees, so understanding what their role is in working with industry, unions, provinces and territories and, of course, indigenous governments will give us a better understanding of the work we're going to undertake in the next few weeks as well.

Ms. Debbie Scharf: Thank you for that question.

Right now we're undergoing consultations on what could be in just transition legislation. We have a discussion paper out, in which we're proposing a just transition advisory body, but certainly what we hear from Canadians could influence and refine some of the thinking in that space. I just want to put that caveat out there when I describe what we're proposing the just transition advisory body, if one were to proceed, could do.

Number one, we see this as a body that could provide ongoing advice to the government on the type of regional and sectoral strategies and actions that would need to take place in the years to come. Number two, it would play a consultative role to help keep the social dialogue going. In this particular area, it's important to keep social dialogue with Canadians going. Those are the two types of functions.

In terms of the net-zero advisory body, very quickly, this body provides advice on the pathways to net zero. A just transition advisory body could provide advice on the types of actions we need to take to build sustainable jobs and the right skills for Canadians to meet the pathways to net zero.

The Chair: That's the end of your time, Ms. Jones.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Okay.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: We're going to go now to Mr. Simard.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Thank you.

I have a quick question for Ms. Scharf.

In her presentation, she said that the department is currently working on a just transition bill and that meetings were held. I assume that these meetings will lead to feedback. However, I know

that you don't undertake this type of bill without having some guiding principles.

I would like her to elaborate on the principles that will guide the consideration of this bill.

• (1610)

Ms. Debbie Scharf: I want to thank the member for his question.

[*English*]

We are proposing, as outlined in the discussion paper that was released, a series of just transition principles that could be outlined in legislation, which would guide government decision-making on these issues and in the context of climate change. These were informed by international guiding principles—by the International Labour Organization as a starting point—and we are seeking feedback on them.

If you'd like to have a little bit more detail on what those principles are, I'd like to turn it over to my colleague Roisin Reid, who can give a little more detail on the principles.

Ms. Roisin Reid (Director, Energy and Environment Policy Division, Department of Natural Resources): Thank you.

On the principles, I'll repeat Debbie's caveat from earlier that these will, of course, be informed by the feedback from our ongoing consultations with stakeholders and partners. We looked at the ILO's guidance document on just transition and tried to come up with some principles that would complement what they're telling us are the best practices.

The first one we have is that we continue to have adequate, informed and ongoing dialogue on a people-centred just transition that would engage all relevant stakeholders to build strong social consensus on the pathways to net zero. The second one is that policies and programs in support of a people-centred just transition must create decent, fair and high-value work designed in line with regional circumstances and recognizing the different needs, strengths and potential of communities and workers.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard: Thank you.

That wasn't exactly where I was headed. In my previous life, I taught at a university. If a student told me that he was starting a job with such vague and diverse intentions, I would have said that it didn't bode well.

I'll be more specific. If you're talking about the principles that should govern the just transition, you should first explain what you mean by "transition". To me, it means making us less dependent on oil and gas. The government's actions seem like a search for vague solutions. A number of witnesses appeared before the committee to illustrate this point. It's more about looking for solutions to increase oil production by reducing intensity levels.

In my opinion, the transition principle involves not only a reduction in oil consumption, but also investments to provide new jobs for people who will probably and unfortunately be left out in the cold.

Is this part of your thought process?

[English]

Ms. Debbie Scharf: Thank you very much for the question.

I would say, around the transition, just to lay this marker, that there are multiple pathways for how we get to the transition to the net-zero economy. We can't say up front that it will take five tablespoons of this and three tablespoons of that. There are multiple pathways. We know what those pathways are. We have an understanding of what it will take to get there, but there are multiple pathways.

When we think about a just transition, perhaps I'll elevate three concepts for you that I think are really important. The first is that you want to support workers to have the right skills for the types of jobs that are going to be emerging in the clean energy economy. Second, you want to have an inclusive economy, which means you want to break down barriers so that all Canadians can participate in the workforce, including those who've historically been marginalized. Third, when there are communities or workers who are impacted, you find ways to minimize those impacts.

Those are three aspects of a just transition that are important to consider in the context of the net-zero transition.

• (1615)

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard: I understand, but you're leaving me somewhat wanting. If you want to talk about a just transition, I believe that it will take courageous steps.

I want to determine whether you know the ratio of oil and gas sector jobs and financial support for the sector, or if there's a way to calculate it. I'm asking because we conducted a study on the emissions reduction fund. The commissioner of the environment clearly showed that the money invested didn't help meet the goal set by the program, which was to maintain jobs.

Lastly, I want to warn you about your just transition. It mustn't be a greenwashing activity where you justify the funding provided to the oil and gas sector without ever considering the effects on workers. A just transition is about putting workers first, and not oil companies.

Your response worries me a little bit. You're saying that we need to maintain a robust economy. What will be the priority, the workers or the robust economy?

[English]

The Chair: We're out of time, but we will be coming back to Monsieur Simard if he wants to pick that up or if anybody wants to respond at that point.

Now we're going to move over to Mr. Angus for his first six minutes.

Go ahead, Mr. Angus.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you very much.

Thank you so much for your participation in this very important study.

I come from northern Ontario. I've seen what transition can be when it is unjust. We have lost all our silver and iron jobs in my community. They never came back. When Elliot Lake went down, we knew what was happening. We knew the dates on which the mines would close. We knew where we were going to be to the very last mine. It was devastating but it was focused. This is much more complex.

Ms. Scharf, I want to ask you a bit about that complexity. You said that this transition "is not about phasing out any industry; it is about...finding new ways to adapt to the changing market." Is that to say that part of the natural resources department's plan is to work on supporting exports for oil and gas, as the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers has suggested?

Ms. Debbie Scharf: What we're trying to do with the just transition is to engage Canadians in understanding how to put together a plan, an approach, a set of principles that will help guide decision-making in the future, regardless of which type of clean energy pathways take us to net zero. When we understand that there will be opportunities and there will be impacts—

Mr. Charlie Angus: Sorry, I don't want to be rude, but I only have six minutes. To adapt to changing markets, it has been suggested to us that exporting to the global south or exporting with competitors would be one of those approaches.

Is that part of what you're factoring in?

Ms. Debbie Scharf: As I said previously, there are going to be many different approaches to get to net zero, many different pathways, which I know the committee is well aware of, from clean energy production to zero-emission vehicles and energy efficiency. Those pathways are going to depend on the choices that are made globally by other countries, as well as the choices made by Canada. We have to be ready for that, and we have to understand how to adapt our workers to be able to have the right skills at the right time for the jobs of the future.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Okay. Thank you.

The Canada Energy Regulator said that even factoring in carbon pricing and others, we're looking at an increase of 1.2 million barrels a day in the coming years. In terms of the transition, would that be something that your department has factored in?

Ms. Debbie Scharf: From a just transition perspective, what we are trying to do right now is to consult Canadians and to hear from as many Canadians as possible about the approaches that we want to take to guide the decisions we have to make in the future around how to have an inclusive and equitable future for workers and communities.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I get that. I just don't know that you need to be asking the ordinary Canadian whether or not we're on track to make 1.2 million barrels a day. That's something the industry would know.

Have you factored that in? That's what our regulator is saying. Is that something that is part of your planning?

Ms. Debbie Scharf: Our planning is focused on the question around just transition. It's focused on talking to workers and Canadians across the country around how we can create a fair and equitable future for everyone. That's really what we're focused on—

Mr. Charlie Angus: Listen, I get it.

Ms. Debbie Scharf: —in these consultations we're—

Mr. Charlie Angus: I'm there with you. I'm just trying to get a sense of... We're factoring in the economics here.

Today, the IPCC released its latest report and it says, "It's now or never" to avert irreversible climate breakdown. They're saying that greenhouse gas emissions must peak by 2025. That's in three years. They say that this is a final warning to government. That's a game-changer. That's right out of that Netflix movie about the comet.

Has the government factored in that quick of a response that we have to make on the international stage to avert a climate catastrophe?

• (1620)

Ms. Debbie Scharf: There is definitely a scientific and economic imperative around reducing emissions, and the emissions reduction plan was announced just last week around how to address climate change and meet our 2030 objectives.

There is no question that the oil and gas sector is one important contributing sector. A quarter of the emissions in Canada in 2019 came from that sector. The emissions reduction plan provides a guidepost for how we're going to go forward, a blueprint for how we're going to go forward and guide actions to develop an oil and gas cap with consultation with stakeholders and others to get there.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you.

United Nations Secretary-General Guterres said that governments and businesses are "lying" in claiming to be on track to limit the damage to 1.5°C. I'm certainly not suggesting you're the one who is doing that. However, based on what your department has seen, there is no way, from looking at Mr. Guilbeault's plan, that we are going to meet what the IPCC is saying.

Mr. Guterres is saying that governments and businesses are failing us. Would that mean a revision, based on the IPCC...? Let me put it this way. I'm going to follow up on my Conservative colleague. With a report as devastating as this, would that be something that you would have an analysis of? Would you undertake an analysis of this to see whether or not Mr. Guilbeault's plan and the government's plan are anywhere close to being able to meet it?

If you don't have a plan or a response to that, why not? If you do, would you share it with our committee?

Ms. Debbie Scharf: What I can say is that the Government of Canada released its emissions reduction plan just last week, with an approach to—

Mr. Charlie Angus: But this report came out just this week.

Ms. Debbie Scharf: —how we're going to get to 2030.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Wouldn't it be reasonable, since we're talking about the future of our planet, that you guys would do an analysis so we can know whether we're going to make this or the comet is going to definitely hit us?

Ms. Debbie Scharf: We—

The Chair: If you'd like to take a few seconds to respond, I'll give you the ability to do that, or... We're out of time on this one. I'm happy to move on to the next speaker as well.

Okay. We'll leave it there, Charlie, with your six minutes.

We're now going to go to Mr. McLean for five minutes.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'll ask the NRCan representative my questions first of all. I believe that is Ms. Scharf.

In July 2021, NRCan did a consultation paper, "People-Centred Just Transition". In July 2021, Parliament was not sitting, and it ended in August 2021, so no politicians, no elected public officials, had any input on this study, yet you're confident that the paper you came out with actually had the input of Canadians. It was open for a very short time.

Can you please explain, number one, the timing? Number two, can you table that in the House of Commons, as far as its thinness of input goes, from what you've received?

Ms. Debbie Scharf: In July 2021, we launched the consultation around the just transition legislation.

I may ask my colleague Roisin Reid to confirm that the document in question is in fact the discussion paper that was released.

Yes, that is in fact the discussion paper that was released. The discussion paper was really to prompt discussion and engagement with a whole host of Canadians and stakeholders around what should be in the legislation. That was the purpose it played.

It continues to be in the public domain, and we continue to seek input from Canadians. We've received over 17,000 submissions so far. The comment period is open until the end of April. In addition, we are—

Mr. Greg McLean: Let's go to that, then. It's a little deeper than the question we have time for here.

Let's ask about that 17,000. When you wrote this document on March 30, it was 16,000. Are you saying that there are 17,000 individual types of responses? Or are they a bunch of form letters that you're getting in your office?

Ms. Debbie Scharf: I'm going to pass that over to Roisin Reid, who will be able to comment on that, please.

Ms. Roisin Reid: Yes, there are a number of form letters and letter-writing campaigns that are part of that number. I couldn't—

Mr. Greg McLean: Thank you. That's all I wanted to know. I appreciate the quick response.

I'll go back to you, Ms. Scharf, because I think there are a few other things you want to address here.

On part of the transition, the vulnerable sectors we're talking about here account for, I'm told, 70% of Canada's export goods. That's what we're talking about. This employs over 800,000 Canadians, and somehow we're going to price ourselves at a disadvantage to our competition in some respects.

How do you think we're going to have an export economy if we continue to drift this way? We don't have, in Canada, closed borders at this point in time. How will this affect our export industries?

• (1625)

Ms. Debbie Scharf: Perhaps what I can say is that the Government of Canada is making quite a number of strategic investments, of many billions of dollars, in fact. There have been a number of different numbers quoted, from the \$9 billion in the most recent emissions reduction plan to the \$100 billion in previous plans. These investments are to help the clean energy economy get built up and for other natural resource sectors to be part of the net-zero economy, and to strengthen those sectors and create jobs.

There are quite a number of investments being made across the country to help build clean energy systems and help Canadians use clean energy.

Mr. Greg McLean: Thank you very much.

One of the things you talk about here is sustainability. Let's talk about sustainability from an economic perspective. Number one, we're going to give up our export business in Canada, but on sustainability, the government continues to throw money at this, and every one of those hundred billion dollars you're talking about is money that comes from the taxpayers.

“Sustainability” means that eventually these jobs will have to pay for themselves. Right now, none of these jobs pay for themselves. They are continually subsidized, both at the production level and at the consumption level, by the Government of Canada. How do you think this is sustainable going forward?

Ms. Debbie Scharf: All I can say is, look, there are investments being made to build important industries that are going to be part of the net-zero future. The work we're doing on the just transition is to help make sure that we have the right workers in place for the jobs that are going to be there and available, and we have to—

Mr. Greg McLean: You realize that, number one, they're mostly in provincial jurisdiction that we're talking about. You're allocating money, but at the same time, you haven't actually looked at where they're going to be affected province by province. There are some

holes in what you're doing here. You're already allocating money without—as my colleague pointed out earlier—actually indicating where that money might be spent or on what sectors, so a little macro before we're actually dealing with the details....

I'm going to echo what my colleague Ms. Jones said. We're looking at so many consultations with the public of Canada here that they're confused about what you're actually doing with this government. You have how many different levers that you're pushing on the Canadian people? What business is looking for government to do here is provide some kind of balance, some kind of actual base going forward, something so businesses can say, “This is what the landscape looks like going forward.”

Do you have any comment?

Ms. Debbie Scharf: There is an emissions reductions plan—

Oh, I'm sorry.

The Chair: You can finish your thought there, and then we'll move on to our next speaker.

Ms. Debbie Scharf: Okay. The emissions reduction plan, which was released last week, provides a blueprint for how we're going to get to 2030. So there is information around the types of actions and activities that are going to take place and the types of questions that still need to be answered. The just transition consultation will support that to help us understand how to bring the jobs, the workers and the communities to where they need to be as we move to net zero.

The Chair: That's great. Thank you.

We're now going to move to Ms. Lapointe.

You'll have the floor for five minutes of questions.

Ms. Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.): Thank you.

My question is for Ms. Scharf.

We know other countries and regions have already implemented just transition policies, and some are considered best practices. Has the Government of Canada consulted those jurisdictions and reviewed their policies?

Ms. Debbie Scharf: Thank you for the question.

In fact, we have looked at a number of other countries, including the ones that are leading and the ones that are taking more concise or narrower approaches to the just transition. There are many on the list, from Scotland and the U.K. to Germany and the EU. Absolutely, we have looked at those. In fact, some of them are world leaders, in particular Scotland, and we've taken our cue from some of the things they've done, which we have tried to bring into our thinking here in Canada.

We're absolutely aware of what's happening internationally.

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: What are some of the policies those countries have implemented that are demonstrating measured positive outcomes?

Ms. Debbie Scharf: I'm going to turn that over to my colleague Roisin Reid, who can perhaps speak about Scotland or some of the other leading jurisdictions for some lessons learned.

• (1630)

Ms. Roisin Reid: Thanks, Debbie.

Scotland has included a set of just transition principles to guide their government's climate action in their climate change legislation, similar to what Canada is looking at doing with the proposal we have put forward in our discussion paper. They've also established a just transition commission, which is mandated to undertake broad consultations and social dialogue. That was established in 2018, and it just recently released its final report to the Scottish ministers in March 2021. It proposed 24 different recommendations for government to constitute a framework for government policies and actions on a just transition. It's been fairly well received by the Scottish public, and it has been supported by what they call their "green new deal", which came out in 2020. It is a three-billion-pound package of investments through the Scottish National Investment Bank in order to attract more finance to clean-energy industries.

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: My next question is for Mr. Brown.

In your opening statement, you mentioned two items that I would like to get some more information and some details on. One is the clean jobs training centre and the other is the sectoral workforce solutions program. Can you inform this committee on those two initiatives?

Mr. Andrew Brown: Sure. Thanks for the question.

First of all, I would just mention that of course there are some existing programs in place that we would be looking at making use of and leveraging to support workers who would be affected through just transition, but we're also taking a look at exactly those programs—the sectoral workforce solutions program and the clean jobs training centre.

I think the sectoral workforce solutions program is well placed to contribute to just transition, as it supports key sectors of the economy, including sectors linked to the low-carbon economy, and to implement solutions to address current and emerging workforce needs through training and upskilling initiatives. It will also help workers transition from sectors in decline to high-growth sectors. I think it's important that among those eligible to apply for the sectoral workforce solutions programs funding are a range of sectoral stakeholders, including for-profit and non-profit organizations, indigenous organizations, provinces and territories.

To speak about the clean jobs training centre, perhaps I could turn it over to Chris Bates.

Mr. Chris Bates: Sure. Just quickly on that, we're really in the early stages of working on the implementation of that commitment. We're consulting stakeholders, both through NRCan's just transition consultations and otherwise, to look at how we can support different courses and training opportunities, with a focus on equity-deserving groups to make sure they can be part of Canada's just transition.

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: Thank you.

The Chair: We are now going to go to Monsieur Simard, who has two and a half minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Scharf, one of your earlier responses made me raise my eyebrows somewhat. You said that one of the principles guiding the reflection process was a robust economy.

I don't have anything against that. Far from it. However, it gives me the impression that the relative importance of workers and environmental groups will be much lower than the importance of the industry.

I'd like to know who received an invitation. Did the department invite any stakeholders to comment? I'm talking about an invitation from the department, and not about the consultation that you referred to earlier.

Has the department invited any stakeholders to speak about its just transition bill? If so, who are these stakeholders?

[*English*]

Ms. Debbie Scharf: I'm going to turn that question over to Roisin Reid.

Ms. Roisin Reid: We've had two sessions so far with labour representatives. We believe they are an important part of representing the interests of workers in the new economy. Our first meeting with them was with national unions, and our second meeting was with provincial federations of labour.

• (1635)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard: Will oil and gas companies be invited to participate in future meetings? Yes? Okay.

I want to read a quote that struck me today. It comes from the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Gutteres:

Climate activists are sometimes depicted as dangerous radicals. But the truly dangerous radicals are the countries that are increasing the production of fossil fuels. Investing in new fossil fuels infrastructure is moral and economic madness.

I'm repeating this quote because, for the past 15 years, the federal government has very rarely listened to social and environmental movements. However, we know that the federal government listens carefully to a strong oil and gas lobby.

Isn't your consideration of the just transition somewhat tainted by the wishes of oil and gas producers?

[*English*]

The Chair: If anyone wants to make a brief comment, they're welcome to, but we are out of time on this one. I want to make sure we get through as many other rounds as possible.

Ms. Debbie Scharf: Perhaps the only thing I will say is that we are committed to consulting with a broad range of Canadians. This is an area where social dialogue is important. Therefore, we're taking the maximum opportunity to engage with the maximum number of Canadians possible through various means.

The Chair: Great. Thank you.

Mr. Angus, it's over to you now for two and a half minutes.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I think one thing that's really important to recognize is that the transition is happening. It can be either a clear transition or a chaotic transition.

Particularly in oil and gas, it is a very complex industry. The workers are very different. What you have upstream is many fly-in contract workers. They might work for seven months of the year and then not work the rest of the year. Midstream, you're looking after pipelines. The downstream, value-added jobs are jobs that are going to be there for a long time, no matter what happens. In construction, we've already seen a real loss, and construction was driving a lot of the western boom for so long.

Mr. Brown, I've been in the IBEW training centre in Edmonton. They've been training their workers for years. They've been saying, "We're ready for transition. Where is the government?" Are you willing to work to make sure that these worker training centres are able to train workers while they're still employed, so that if there is a bump, they can make the choice to make the transition and not have to wait until the transition hits them?

Mr. Andrew Brown: Thanks for the question.

I wonder, Chris, if you could help out in terms of responding. I'm thinking about some of the other work that's going on with unions as well, in terms of preparing workers.

Mr. Chris Bates: Yes, for sure.

I think that's exactly what we're trying to do with the ESDC programming, to actually look at some of our current suite of programming and how we can do that. We have a union training and innovation program already.

One of the things we recently did with that was to put a priority on purchasing equipment and materials that support the development of environmental skills in the Red Seal trades. That's already looking at putting equipment in the hiring halls, so that people would be able to train on what's more green—

Mr. Charlie Angus: I interrupted because I only have two and a half minutes and I just want to augment that point.

The issue that happens with transition is that the workers aren't able to transition to get trained until they've lost their jobs, and that's when the devastation happens. Are you willing to put in place, and are you putting in place now, training to upgrade, so that, through their union, the workers can move out of that sector if they so choose?

The other issue is them being able to get their certification. A lot of people come into the industry and work their way up. Some of them don't have certification to be able to move. Can they get that now, so they're not waiting until a site goes down?

The Chair: If somebody wants to respond briefly, I'll give them a bit of time here.

Mr. Chris Bates: I think what we're trying to do is to recognize that some workers only need a certain amount of skills to upgrade or transition to certain jobs because they're already building off the existing skill sets they have.

That's what we're trying to do through both the union training and innovation program and the sectoral program. It's not asking people to go back to school for a huge length of time, but to build from the skill sets they have so that they can be successful in making transitions as we transition to a low-carbon economy.

• (1640)

The Chair: Great. Thank you.

Now we're going to go to Mr. Bragdon.

You have five minutes for your questions.

Mr. Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's an honour to be here with each of you and all the witnesses. I think it's my first opportunity to ask some questions in the natural resources committee—and I count it as an honour—on behalf of many of the workers from coast to coast who have huge concerns about their employment and the future of their employment opportunities going forward.

I want to go back to a point, and I'll ask Ms. Scharf this question.

To the best of your knowledge, have the nine other top energy-producing countries in the world, namely the United States, Saudi Arabia, Russia, China, Iraq, Iran, the UAE, Brazil and Kuwait, implemented an emissions cap for the oil and gas sectors? Are you aware of that, yes or no?

Ms. Debbie Scharf: Unfortunately, I don't have the information to be able to answer that question, but it's certainly something we can come back to the committee with afterwards.

Mr. Richard Bragdon: I think it's pertinent for us to know what other jurisdictions and energy-producing nations are doing on that front, and what measures they're putting in place.

We do know—and you can correct me if I'm wrong—that a neighbouring jurisdiction saw an increase in energy production in recent years, increased their exports and actually increased their capacity for energy development, while at the same time reducing their carbon footprint. That's in comparison to our own country in a similar period of time. Is that true or not true?

Ms. Debbie Scharf: The question isn't specific enough. I'm not sure what jurisdiction you're referring to, but we could certainly come back with that information if you provide a bit more specificity on the jurisdiction.

Mr. Richard Bragdon: My understanding—and I think it's public, Ms. Scharf—is that the United States increased its energy output, became energy-independent and exported more, but at the same time has reduced its carbon footprint at a greater rate per capita than Canada has over the last six years. I would love to see the research on that, and what information and data the government may have collected in regard to that. If you can get back to us, that would be most appreciated. Thank you.

I would also like to ask what the key risks of this low-carbon transition are, particularly for our rural communities. Our rural communities are facing increased challenges with this transition. As we know, with the implementation of the carbon tax, it disproportionately affects those living in rural communities and small towns.

What does this transition mean for jobs in our rural communities across the west and throughout the country, including in my region of Atlantic Canada, like Newfoundland? Has there been consideration of that?

Ms. Debbie Scharf: Coming back to the types of issues we're trying to cover, I think these are the aspects we're looking to understand as part of the just transition consultations, which are around how you get the right workers for the right jobs, how you make sure you're inclusive of all Canadians, both those living in the city and those in rural and remote communities, and how you minimize the impact on workers and communities. In particular, there are communities that rely on certain types of industries that perhaps could be impacted by the net-zero transition.

All of these issues are part and parcel of what it is we'd like to hear about from Canadians to help shape where we go on the just transition legislation and the actions after that.

Mr. Richard Bragdon: In the context of this and the just transition, what we're hearing, it seems, and what I'm hearing, increasingly so, from Canadians is that with what's happening geopolitically and internationally there is a desire to get more Canadian energy to world markets to displace dictator oil and dictator energy with good, democratic energy that is produced under some of the most stringent environmental regulations on the entire planet. I think the Canadian energy sector has a great story to tell.

Yes, we're for all of the above and we're all for transitioning and having good, clean technologies emerge, but in the meantime, and for the foreseeable future, it seems like the world is desiring energy. It needs energy to function. Would it not be good for our plans to envelop and incorporate continued production of Canadian energy, getting those products to market and protecting jobs in our rural communities across the country? Is that not worthy of consideration?

Ms. Debbie Scharf: At Natural Resources Canada, the government has made significant investments in clean energy. I can point you to programs like the clean fuels fund, which is helping to de-risk investments in clean fuels production across the country, and our programs to help produce clean electricity, smart grids and renewable energy. There are billions of dollars being put to good use to help de-risk these types of investments so that Canada can keep producing or produce even more clean energy that not only will

service our domestic emissions reduction objectives but also will service global markets for their clean energy needs.

• (1645)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Maloney, we're going to move to you. You have five minutes.

Mr. James Maloney: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank all of our witnesses for joining us today, on the first of many days of this very interesting and incredibly important study.

I had some concerns going into this study that we're starting today, because the utopian view of the world, as I think everybody around this table would agree, is that what we want is an economy and a world where we all have good, high-paying jobs, we're all able to drive the kinds of cars we want, we're all able to heat our homes and we're able to do all these things at an affordable price. The only problem is that we don't live in a utopian world, so we're in a situation here where we're talking about a just transition and where we have a whole variety of competing interests. My concern was that this study was going to descend into a picking apart of little pieces of it here and there, and I think we've already started down that path. I'm probably going to do it myself at some point, so I'm not pointing fingers at anybody in particular, just to be clear.

Part of the problem, in my view, is that when you start talking about this, you're using words like “pathways” and you talk about “principles”, and you use all this other lingo that we constantly hear so much, and the average person doesn't understand what that means. I'm not sure that some of the people using those words necessarily know what it means either, to be honest.

My question to you is, assuming my premise is correct that we all want to live in this utopian world, how do we approach this discussion using language that's going to appeal to people so that they understand it, grasp it and buy into it?

I didn't think anybody was going jump at that one, but....

Ms. Debbie Scharf: Perhaps one thing I can say is that we are spending a lot of time talking to Canadians right now. We have put some text, some proposals, in front of them to seek their feedback, and I think what we hear from them is going to be important. We will hear from them whether or not the words make sense. We will hear from them whether or not the words are focusing on the right things. We will hear whether the actions are focusing on the right things.

We will have a “what we heard” report that is going to be published this summer. We will take all of the information from the round tables, the letters and the input we’ve received and try to put together a summary of what Canadians are saying on this topic. We are doing some work to understand some of the things that you are raising right now to make sure that it’s meaningful and that we’re moving in the right direction. We just need a bit more time to get through that process.

Mr. James Maloney: That’s helpful, because I want to get away from a situation where we have people hauling out reports that were too thin and then, on the other hand, people saying that all politicians aren’t telling the truth and so on.

What I want to focus on is, where are these jobs that are going to replace the ones we have now? The reality is that our economy is very reliant on the oil and gas sector. Can you tell me what the major growth areas are—the fastest-growth areas—in the clean energy field that can give some people some encouragement, so that they can see some light at the end of the tunnel?

Ms. Debbie Scharf: I’m wondering if my colleagues from ESDC would like to take a start at that question.

Mr. Andrew Brown: Chris, I don’t know if you’re able to jump in there in terms of some of the sectors that are growing or projected to grow the most over the next period of time.

Mr. Chris Bates: Yes, we have a bit of data on that. With the sectoral program, we put an emphasis on sectors that are going to be significantly impacted by just transition: the agriculture sector, the clean technology sector, construction, natural resources and environment, as well as the transportation sector. We’re looking at those from different perspectives. For example, with the construction sector, we know that building retrofits are going to substantially change some of the jobs and impact jobs. We’re going to need people to do all these retrofits that are planned, but there are going to be different skill sets, such as those of a pipe fitter, for example, to do different parts of the construction.

We’re looking at how we can equip workers with the skills they need to successfully make that transition and ensure that we have workers in place to do those jobs.

• (1650)

Mr. James Maloney: I have about 10 seconds left, so I’ll leave this ask on the table: Can you make it as simple and clear as possible and identify the areas of growth so people can understand it? Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Continuing right on with our discussion, we’re going to go over to Mr. Melillo.

You’ll have five minutes for this round of questions and answers.

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to all the witnesses for joining us today for this conversation, which is so important. I think all of us around the table can agree on that.

Part of the problem with going so late in the rounds here is that a lot of what I wanted to ask has already been covered or is close to having been covered.

A voice: Not as well as you would ask.

Mr. Eric Melillo: That’s a good point by my colleague here, my neighbour from northeastern Ontario. I’m going to ask my questions anyway. I suppose I will be directing them to Natural Resources, but if anyone else wants to jump in with comments, please feel free to do so.

I’ll pick up on a comment by my colleague Mr. Bragdon around rural communities, and I will extend that to northern and remote communities. What actions is the government taking to ensure that specifically northern rural communities aren’t going to be so badly displaced by this transition, given how much those regions rely on sectors like natural resources?

Ms. Debbie Scharf: Perhaps I’ll come back to the principles on which we’re trying to consult here on the just transition. It’s really about how we should guide the kinds of decisions we will need to make and the kinds of actions we will need to take as we move to a net-zero future, in terms of both getting workers ready and minimizing impacts on communities and workers. We need to understand what the guideposts are for us to know how to make the best decisions and what the best actions are to take when these types of things happen or how best to prepare for the types of jobs and activities we need.

That’s really where we are right now, and that includes Canadians from coast to coast to coast and communities from coast to coast to coast.

Mr. Eric Melillo: I appreciate that.

I don’t remember if it was you, Ms. Scharf, but somebody mentioned that, I believe, there were 17,000 submissions throughout the consultation. Do you have, or are you able to provide to the committee if you don’t know off the top of your head, a geographical breakdown of those submissions? I’d like to see how many folks in northern Ontario, for example, have been consulted so far.

Ms. Debbie Scharf: I’m not sure if Roisin has any of that information off the top of her head, or if it’s something we’d have to get back to you on or it will be summarized in the “what we heard” report.

Ms. Roisin Reid: It will be summarized in the “what we heard” report, but we can probably get back to the committee sooner than that. Our mailbox submissions period will end April 30, so we can do a summary of what’s there now.

Mr. Eric Melillo: I appreciate that. Thank you.

I have another similar question. Mining is very important in my region in northwestern Ontario, and I think many folks, including the Canadian Climate Institute, have identified mining as a key industry that is transition-vulnerable. Is there an estimate at this point of how many workers in the mining industry may be displaced as a result of the just transition?

Ms. Debbie Scharf: I don’t have a particular answer to this question, unless my colleagues from ESDC are able to offer any insights into that.

Perhaps there is one comment that I would like to make.

I know there's a question about displaced workers. I also want to emphasize that there are going to be new clean energy industries and associated industries that are built as part of the transition to net zero. A fantastic example in the mining field is critical minerals—which other colleagues around the table asked for some information on earlier in the meeting—where we see a significant opportunity for growth. There are going to be shifts that happen, and in those shifts, there will be a need for similar skill sets and sometimes different skill sets. That's what's really important to understand so that we have the workers ready for the jobs that are to come.

Mr. Eric Melillo: I appreciate that.

To pick up on that, I think a lot of the training that comes with mining is very specialized, very specific. You mentioned critical minerals. That's obviously a very important opportunity. Are there other industries you see—and I'll open this up to anyone who has a comment—as an opportunity for folks who are displaced from the mining sector specifically?

• (1655)

Mr. Andrew Brown: Thanks for that question.

I'm going to turn to Chris to see if he can add anything else on that.

Mr. Chris Bates: Overall, I would say that Canada is very well positioned in the mining industry. We're likely to benefit from things like renewable energy, transition to electric vehicles, and production of graphite, lithium and cobalt, which are all expected to increase as we make that transition.

I don't have any specific data with regard to the mining industry as a whole. If we look at the forestry industry as well, that might be one that we would expect to grow. I think that's a whole part of it. It's really hard to predict some of the data for these specific industries.

The Chair: We're out of time on that one.

We're going to move over to Ms. Dabrusin.

You have five minutes for your discussion and questions—whatever you'd like to do with it.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's been interesting to hear all of the different ways that people are coming to this question. It's a big study for us, an important one, and I think it's one that Canadians care about deeply, as to how we're positioning ourselves as we transform our energy towards clean energy.

One question I have, speaking of clean energy, is based on a bit of my experience in Ontario. We switched from coal-fired electricity, and that meant we went from having literally 50 smog days a year on average to none. It's hard to really remember what it was like. There were days when you couldn't go outside if you had asthma, and now people can go out.

Our government did work on the transition towards sustainable jobs for people who worked in coal-fired electricity. I'm wondering

if you could speak about the lessons learned from that, and how that projects forward into the work we're doing when we talk about sustainable jobs now.

Ms. Debbie Scharf: I want to start with one particular distinction between the coal phase-out and where we find ourselves today. I often hear coal and coal mentioned side by side. The idea around coal was that it was something that a regulation was going to cause the end of, or cause something to stop. That is one particular context for which there was a task force, a series of recommendations that the government considered, and \$185 million of funding was put forward to help address some of the impacts associated with that.

In the case of the energy transition, it's much, much more complicated, as you noted. Not only is it complicated in that it's bigger, but government is not the only actor in the economy making decisions. The government may be writing policies or regulations that will have impacts on the economy, but private sector investors will also be making decisions that will have an impact on the economy.

While I think that the just transition task force on coal did provide some good recommendations that the government considered very carefully, in this particular case we have to see it as quite a bit broader. It's not solely focused on stopping one thing; it's transitioning from certain things to other things, or perhaps doing things slightly differently, and reacting to a lot of decisions being made but with a lot of independent players, actors, and governments domestically and internationally, because the decisions being made internationally are also going to impact Canada.

There's a lot to learn, but we also have to be careful to make sure that the conditions of today are well understood as we go forward.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I don't know if someone from ESDC also has something to add to that.

Mr. Brown, did you have something that you were going to add?

• (1700)

Mr. Andrew Brown: I didn't particularly have a response on what has been learned to date. I was just going to say that in terms of supporting workers I think that's really the focus we have, being able to provide them with training, with re-skilling, to be able to take on the new jobs or to adapt to the new jobs in the cleaner economy.

That's really where our focus is, and I really wanted to emphasize the fact that it's not something we do on our own. We also work with provinces and territories. In fact, we provide about \$3 billion annually to the provinces and territories to support training within their own jurisdictions, and that allows them to tailor the responses to employers and workers in their own jurisdictions in a way that the federal government might not be able to do.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Thanks.

I don't have much time, but I'll go back to Ms. Scharf, if I could.

You mentioned how we have a large diversity of players that comes into play on the decisions that are going to be made on how things go forward. How can we look to bring people together in different regions from different industries and different positions to be able to help inform what we'll be doing going forward?

Ms. Debbie Scharf: Thank you for the question.

In addition to all the things I've talked about today around just transition and the emissions reduction plan, we're also taking a perspective as we move forward from the emissions reduction plan to look at what regional economic opportunities we have around the country that we can leverage to grow new industries, taking a bit more of a place-based approach.

This is another perspective that the federal government, in partnership with the provinces and territories, would like to explore, so that we can be laser-focused on building those economies of the future, where every region has a comparative advantage, and then to be able to line up behind that what sustainable jobs will be built from those sectors and those industries, and then how we bring to bear the types of programs that ESDC and others have to get those workers and communities ready.

That's another thing we're looking at, to really look across the country and look regionally at what can be done for our economic advantage.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Thank you.

That's all my time.

The Chair: All right.

We'll go back to Monsieur Simard for two and a half minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Scharf, my colleague, Mr. Maloney, said earlier that it was unrealistic to think that we could do without oil. I don't want to put words in his mouth. However, I think that's what he meant.

Yet we know very well that some sectors were left out in the cold because they had too much of an impact on public health or on the environment. I'll simply give you the example of the asbestos sector in Quebec. This sector was abandoned because of its impact on the health of individuals.

When speaking about a just transition, a number of environmentalists are making it clear that we need to plan to stop oil sands production, or at the very least, stop the increase in production.

Are you thinking of including this consideration in the upcoming bill?

[*English*]

Ms. Debbie Scharf: Thank you for the question.

I think plans like the emissions reduction plan, which has a number of measures and activities that will give us pathways to net zero, and the work we'd like to do on place-based strategies regionally, which will help grow new industries, this is all the type of intelligence—it has been asked where those new jobs are going to be—that will help us understand the directions we need to take.

Then, the just transition legislation and the work we're doing will help bring the types of principles and approaches that we need to consider to make decisions on how to bring the right skills and the workers to the jobs of the future. That's really how the two pieces fit together.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard: The statistics show that Canada is one of the G7's worst performers when it comes to renewable energy investments. It ranks high in oil and gas investments.

I don't see how we can plan a just transition and create jobs without supporting low-carbon industries.

Is this also part of your thought process? Wouldn't you benefit from providing much stronger support to economic sectors that have a low-carbon footprint?

• (1705)

[*English*]

Ms. Debbie Scharf: Thank you for the question.

The work we're doing around just transition is really focused on how we make sure we have an equitable and prosperous future as we transition to net zero. There is also an emissions reduction plan that provides a blueprint sector by sector for how we're going to get from here to our 2030 climate targets and sets us on the path to net zero.

The just transition is really about how we make sure that we have the right skills and the right workers, and that we're minimizing the impacts on communities and helping to bring everyone along as we're making that transition to a net-zero economy, which is outlined in the climate plan that we have available.

The Chair: Thank you.

Now, Mr. Angus, you'll get your last two and a half minutes. It's over to you.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Seeing as I'm extremely well known as “Mr. Congeniality” here in the chamber and all across parts of Canada, I am going to give my time to our guest, who comes here faithfully every week, and let him ask some questions.

I'll turn it over to the Greens.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Thank you, Mr. Angus.

I want to start by recognizing the incredible work that organizations like the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives have already done to go beyond the talk of principles and to get into specifics. As I'm sure witnesses know, it put together a report last April that called for very specific legislation and funding for a just transition fund, a just transition benefit for affected workers, and a just transition territorial and provincial transfer in the order of \$16.5 billion.

What we also saw last week, as has been referred to a few times, is a so-called emissions reduction plan that includes in it a new tax credit for carbon capture, a subsidy, in the order of \$50 billion.

My question is about the pace of how we intend to and can transition in this just transition and support affected workers. Specifically, I'm curious whether any witnesses can comment on the impact of further subsidizing the oil and gas industry to the tune of \$50 billion a year. How does that affect any plans towards a just transition for workers? Can any witnesses comment on that?

Ms. Debbie Scharf: What I can say is that when it comes to just transition, there is definitely a need to balance that with urgency. I think there's an understanding that there's a need to move swiftly on climate action but also to balance that with the need to take time to consult Canadians. There's absolutely a tension point there.

I've mentioned the words "social dialogue" several times in my discourse over the last hour and a half, and that's because Canadians care very deeply about this issue, as do parliamentarians and others, because it really is very central to us as human beings. So, we're trying to get the balance right between acting with urgency and taking the time to consult.

Mr. Mike Morrice: Thank you for that.

I think I have 20 seconds left, so I will ask a follow-up question.

Are you concerned at all, from a public service point of view, when you hear about a subsidy at that scale? To what extent do you feel it would slow down our progress towards a just transition, if at all?

Ms. Debbie Scharf: All I can comment on is what we're trying to accomplish with our work around just transition, which is hearing from Canadians about how we could best get this right.

The Chair: Thank you.

Now, Mr. Maguire, you have the floor for five minutes.

Mr. Larry Maguire: I'm going to cede that to my colleague Mr. McLean.

Mr. Greg McLean: Thank you for that, my colleague.

I'm going to go back to Ms. Scharf.

We started about the 800,000 Canadians who are going to be displaced—the people who are producing goods in Canada. We haven't even talked about agriculture and how that's going to be affected here, and I presume that's in addition to the 800,000. The report you referred to talks about 640,000 new subsidized jobs in these new clean energy economies. So we're going to lose 800,000, plus we're going to make all of our industries inefficient, and we're going to gain 640,000.

Can you please show me how that math goes around? It's not a hard question.

• (1710)

Ms. Debbie Scharf: It's not that it's a hard question. I'm just having a bit of trouble following where all of these numbers are coming from, so I'm having a hard time commenting.

Mr. Greg McLean: The 640,000 is from Clean Energy Canada's "The New Reality" report, which you quoted when you spoke today. The 800,000 is in the report we have here about 70% of Canada's goods exports employing 800,000 Canadians who will be affected by this transition.

Ms. Debbie Scharf: I have not read either of those reports in great detail. I would perhaps—

Mr. Greg McLean: Yet you quote it in your report here.

Ms. Debbie Scharf: Yes—

Mr. Greg McLean: All right. It's a headline for you, as opposed to an actual understanding.

Ms. Debbie Scharf: No, that's not it.

The reason why I quoted the Clean Energy Canada report, as well as the RBC analysis, was to provide some indications around the types of modelling that have been done in Canada around the types of opportunities that could be coming in the clean energy transition, as well as those reports being places where evidence and analysis could be brought to bear for this particular committee to look at where those opportunities may be.

Mr. Greg McLean: Thank you very much.

Let's go back to some of what you've raised here. I appreciate that some of my colleagues have noted that there are words here that don't mean anything to anybody. They're just strung-together phrases on paper, and we do need to analyze these to see where Canadians are going, because they are used to seeing the officials in Ottawa continue to say things that they cannot deliver on. Words coming out of people's mouths and the way they affect people's lives are two different things.

I do know that I hear you talk about this: "Smart investors know that the opportunities of the future will need to be low-carbon". If I may ask, just as a quick one, where are the smart investors making money today? I think the smart investors you're talking about are the ones who are being pushed by government to disinvest in actual profitable and sustainable industries. Do you have any comment?

Ms. Debbie Scharf: The reference to "smart investors" is referring to a number of markets and industries that are growing significantly across the globe. I can quote you a few stats off the top of my head in looking at critical minerals, hydrogen and clean power production, where there are billions of dollars of investment moving in that space, because they do offer the opportunity to provide low- and zero-carbon energy. Investors are making decisions to move into those industries.

Mr. Greg McLean: Smart investors go counter-cyclical as opposed to cyclical, and they don't follow the herd, but we'll go through that some other time.

In your report, you say that “the energy transition ahead of us is not about 'phasing out' any industry; it is about industries making changes, reducing carbon intensity and finding new ways to adapt to the changing market.” I think that's where industry wants us to be, and I appreciate that you put that in your report, but then, three points later, you jump to this: “We know that some who work in high-carbon industries may lose their jobs, but we also know that Canadian workers who built our current energy systems have the know-how, the ingenuity and the work ethic to see them thrive in green energy jobs.”

Now, do you have any idea what those green energy jobs are at this point in time?

Ms. Debbie Scharf: I believe we have gotten to that question....

I'm sorry. I hear an echo of myself.

The Chair: I think you're good. We're not getting an echo, unless you're finding it distracting.

Ms. Debbie Scharf: It has actually been fixed. Thank you very much.

I think we have talked several times over this line of questioning about where those clean energy jobs or green jobs are. I'm talking about zero-emission vehicles, clean power production, clean energy like hydrogen production and biofuels, and critical minerals. These are going to be the types of industries where [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] in trades and construction we're going to see those jobs being created.

I would like to point out that—

Mr. Greg McLean: Okay. I do bristle at this sort of “We're going to run towards green mining.”

If I have a few extra seconds here, Mr. Chair, because there was that echo there, I'd appreciate it.

You talk about the Atlantic loop and the clean fuels fund without mentioning the GHG footprint associated with so-called clean fuels. You also talk about sustainability here. When I was in the IEA, Jennifer Granholm had the same narrative that you have here, which is, effectively, that there are more jobs paying more money but there's no cost to the consumer at the end of the day.

I'm going to suggest that's a narrative and a math that doesn't work. This will be much more expensive. If the utopia you're talking about of better jobs paying more is actually on the horizon, this is actually going to cost Canadians a lot of money.

Thank you.

The Chair: We're at the end of time for that round, but we have a bit of time on the clock here. If anybody would like to respond to the closing statement, I'm willing to give you the floor before we go to our final questioner for this afternoon.

Seeing nobody rushing for the mike—it's not like we're on a game show—I will then go to Mr. Chahal, who will have his five minutes for what I believe will be our final round of questions here, given the time.

• (1715)

Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to all the witnesses for joining us today and the great conversation on this very important topic.

We are having this topic because in many provinces across the country we haven't taken diversification seriously. Alberta, which is my home, is a prime example. We've lived off the great revenues that the energy sector has provided, but we haven't invested back into our communities with new jobs and economic diversification.

This is a great opportunity to continue to make Alberta and western Canada an energy leader. I think being an energy leader, of all things energy, is what we should be focusing on: on the great aspects of our economy that are going to still provide us with a lot of energy for many years to come, but also on growing other sources of energy, which are going to be critical to meeting our goals and making sure we have a diversified and sustainable economy.

With regard to my first question, we're looking at Germany and some of the other nations that preceded us on this just transition in getting off coal. What are some lessons learned? I read in the report that they talk a little bit about focusing on regional economic development rather than direct financial supports. Is that the approach we're taking here, or are we looking at a combination of both to meet our goals with the transition?

Ms. Debbie Scharf: What I can perhaps say is that there has been a lot of investment, and there continues to be investment, to build up the types of industries we need to bring jobs and prosperity to Canada.

I take your point about different regions of the country having different comparative advantages. I think that's something we need to leverage as a country, to build the types of clean energy industries we need in the future and to have that help inform the types of jobs we'll need to bring to bear to be able to service those industries for economic prosperity.

One thing we are thinking of as a government is about how to work with all of the provinces and territories to be able to look at economic growth from a comparative advantage perspective: What does it mean for Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario or Newfoundland, and then how do we line up the types of jobs behind that?

While that is something that's happening in parallel and in complement to what we're trying to accomplish with the just transition legislation, it is absolutely an important part of how we think about building the types of sustainable jobs we want as a country.

Mr. George Chahal: That's great. Thank you for that.

I think Mr. Bates talked a little bit about the clean jobs training centre earlier. With the Future Skills Centre, the clean jobs training centre, in talking to many businesses here, they say that as they transitioned to find new employees in the tech sector, it was because they had such skilled labour from the oil and gas sector.

Can you talk about how our focus on the Future Skills Centre has been augmented or changed, and the success of the EDGE UP program specifically?

I directed that towards Mr. Bates, but if someone else wants to answer that, go ahead.

Mr. Chris Bates: EDGE UP is not a program that I'm familiar with, nor do I think it's under ESDC's portfolio.

One thing that hasn't been mentioned here much, which kind of relates to what we're trying to do, is engaging with employers: recognizing the important role that employers will play in this and how we support employers to make that successful transition and make sure they have the skills and talent they need to prepare for—and succeed and have a competitive advantage in—the just transition.

I'm not too sure if any of my NRCan colleagues know about this specific program that was referenced.

Ms. Roisin Reid: EDGE UP is an initiative of the Future Skills Centre. It was a pilot that I believe they're now going to expand to other jurisdictions. Initially it was looking at helping oil workers who had been laid off in Alberta to find new jobs in the technology and IT sector.

• (1720)

Mr. George Chahal: Thank you for that. Are you able to expand on that, Ms. Reid?

You were saying it was a pilot and because of the success it's being expanded. Can you talk about some of the positive outcomes from that program and where it's being extended?

Ms. Roisin Reid: I would have to defer the questions for more information to my colleagues. The Future Skills Centre would be a great witness for the committee to call.

Mr. George Chahal: All right. We'd love to have the Future Skills Centre here to have a conversation on some of the great work that's happening through them.

With Germany specifically, the analysts' report identified some shortcomings with Germany's just transition and how they worked with various stakeholders. What have we done to make sure that with our just transition, we are better prepared to communicate with all stakeholders, and many of those who haven't traditionally had a voice at the table through this transition?

The Chair: We're out of time here, but if somebody would like to give a brief answer on that, it would be appreciated.

Thank you.

Ms. Debbie Scharf: I think it would be Roisin Reid who would need to comment on that.

Ms. Roisin Reid: We have developed a fairly extensive stakeholder list. I think we're going to have a total of 15 sessions with stakeholders, which would include employers, industry, utilities,

NGOs, academics, youth, coal communities that are already in transition and have been benefiting from the Canada coal transition initiative, as well as unions and workers.

The Chair: That takes us to the end of the rounds we have for questions.

It's 5:22. There isn't going to be enough time to....

Charlie, is it a point of order?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Yes, it is, before our witnesses leave us.

The Chair: Make your comment.

I was going to thank the witnesses and provide some summary statements, and then I have a couple of items to get to.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Sorry, I'll be quick.

In my first round of questions, I asked about whether or not the department would be doing an analysis of the IPCC recommendations, compared to what the government plans are, and if they would be able to table any analysis with our committee.

The Chair: That's noted. I will be working with the clerk to pull out a number of the items that were asked for from the officials who were with us today, and we'll be sending that off for input. Thank you.

I wanted to thank all of the officials for providing updates, providing responses, and being here with us today in the first session on this new study. It gives us a sense of some of the work that you're doing now. I appreciated hearing about some of the consultations. I'll be working with my team to push out there the consultation with the April 30 deadline. I'm sure others, like Mr. Melillo, will make sure their constituents are also given a chance to provide some input.

There's nothing further for the witnesses, but I have something for the members, so the witnesses can jump off now. Thank you for being here. We may hear from you again before we've finished this study, which will include up to nine more sessions. You can leave now. We'll be wrapping up in just a minute.

For the members, I have a quick update that on Wednesday, April 6, we'll have ministers Wilkinson and Guilbeault and officials from the Canada Energy Regulator appearing on our study of a greenhouse gas emissions cap for the oil and gas sector. The notice for that meeting has been posted. We are setting aside 15 minutes at the end of that day. The ministers will be here, as I said, for an hour. There may or may not be a vote on Wednesday after question period, so we'll get started as soon as we can. The ministers have indicated that they'll have about an hour to be with us, so we'll get through them and the officials. With the last 15 minutes, we'll have drafting instructions for the analysts so they can start writing the report.

As an update, when we return from the two weeks at home, the plan is to have our first Monday meeting to continue this study with witnesses. We'll be getting your lists by this Friday. For the second hour, we'd like to go back to, hopefully, finishing off the emissions reduction fund report. We'll spend the second hour on that report, so have your comments ready to go on that.

On a technical matter, I learned that we needed a motion to provide catering for the Finnish delegation that we've already fed and watered, but in order to tie things up with a nice bow....

What's that?

• (1725)

Mr. Charlie Angus: It was his idea. He can pay.

The Chair: If somebody would be so kind as to give me a motion to provide refreshments for the Finnish delegation, we can dispense with that.

James will move it.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Thank you for that. I'm sure the Finnish delegation also appreciates it.

We'll go to Mr. Angus.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Chair, thank you. What you've laid out all makes sense to me.

I thought we were getting an hour with Minister Guilbeault and an hour with Minister Wilkinson, not an hour together. I find that somewhat problematic.

The Chair: There was a request from the ministers to have them together. I know they have a hard stop. We aren't able to get them until 5:30. We'll make sure we have the full hour with them from whatever time we get started on Wednesday. If we can push it a little bit beyond, I'll try to do that. I think it is important that we hear from both ministers, so they will be here.

Mr. Maguire, go ahead.

Mr. Larry Maguire: Ironically, we might have read each other's mind. I felt that it was the same thing. I thought we were getting each of them for an hour, Mr. Chair.

If one of them can come and we have to have the other one on another day, then I think we should still do that. The agreement we had was for one hour with each minister or both of them for the two

hours. If one wants to be here for an hour and then the other one for the other hour, I'd be fine with that too.

A lot of information has come down from the government in the last few days or week. I think it would be pertinent for all of us to have the opportunity to get a little more detail on the type of questioning that is out there.

This is the first I'm hearing that we aren't going to have them for two hours.

The Chair: I appreciate the comments.

We've reached out. We've asked for availability. This is what we have. As I said, I will try to get every minute of the hour.

I guess the other thing is that we have a fairly ambitious work plan between now and the end of June. We would like to move into drafting instructions on Wednesday so that the analysts, as we're away for two weeks, will be able to start on their work on the report. Everything we defer is going to push us further down the line.

As I said, we reached out to the ministers. We requested. This is what they came back with as far as availability is concerned. We'll try to run it as quickly and as efficiently as we can to make sure we have as much time as possible for questions and answers.

Mr. Maguire, go ahead.

Mr. Larry Maguire: I find that unacceptable. We have lots of time between now and the end of June for the ministers to appear about this study. We're going to have them for estimates and other things as well, I know, but there's lots of time. If they can't make it....

Perhaps we asked them if they could be here on Wednesday; I don't know whether that was the specific ask. I think we should ask them when they are available and when they can appear before the committee. I think it's very important that the two of them get here for an hour each at least, or two hours together—I know that's probably more difficult.

I think, in regard to a study that's 10 or 12 weeks long, there should be time in there for the two ministers to appear at some point. I request that we continue to search that out with the two ministers and try to have them appear before the committee, without making it a motion, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: I'll work with the clerk to go back and see what we can get. They are both going to be here on Wednesday, and we'll... Anyway, I'll put the question and see what we get back. I know that they have limited availability as well.

Mr. Larry Maguire: So do we.

The Chair: Fair enough.

Monsieur Simard, go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard: I believe that Mr. Angus, Mr. Maguire and I thought that the committee would be meeting with each minister for an hour.

When these types of changes are made, it might be a good idea to let us know in advance, rather than presenting us with a fait accompli. This may have helped us to plan for Mr. Guilbeault to go first, followed by Mr. Wilkinson. Now we're faced with a fait accompli, which is a little annoying.

• (1730)

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Maloney, go ahead.

Mr. James Maloney: Invitations to ministers are always that—invitations—and they come when they can for as long as they can. I was always under the impression that we had the ministers for one hour.

In any event, it's now 5:30. This is not committee business. I suggest we adjourn and move on.

Thank you.

Mr. Greg McLean: On a point of order, Mr. Chair, you've dropped some news on us about what we thought was an agreement that ministers would come here for an hour each, and they're in fact coming for a combined one hour. That's half an hour each.

I do think it's something we should discuss here and come to a conclusion on, one way or another, before we adjourn today.

The Chair: The comment I'll make is that we invited the ministers. The ministers let us know when they're available, and they've come back and said that this is what they can offer.

As I said, I'm happy to go back to them. We have a day to see how much of the two hours we can try to get with them. I've been told that they do have things they need to move on to, but I don't know what that drop-dead time is on Wednesday. We'll go back and we'll find out.

I have Mr. Angus.

Mr. James Maloney: I'm sorry, Mr. Chair. I'll say it again: This is not committee business.

I move to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Charlie Angus: It is committee business.

Mr. James Maloney: The chair has indicated that he will invite the ministers again. Having done this myself in the past, I know that all you can do is extend an invitation. You don't control the answer.

I move to adjourn.

The Chair: With a motion to adjourn, we need to call a vote.

I count five in favour.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I don't want us to lose Wednesday, so we'll fight this on another day.

I will fight it on another day, but I don't want to lose Wednesday with the ministers.

The Chair: Okay.

So that's six.

We're adjourned. Thank you.

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