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# Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development

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Chair: Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia





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• (1140)

[Translation]

**The Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.)):** Good morning, honourable members.

I welcome you to the committee, Mr. Simard. This is not your first time with us, is that right? Yes? You may have been with us during the last Parliament.

The minister is with us as well. Welcome, Minister.

Before we begin, I would ask the members of the committee if they agree with the budget for the briefing of the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development, the budget for the review of the main estimates and the budget for the meeting on the emissions reduction plan. I imagine that everyone agrees with those three budgets and that there is no need to debate them. Everyone agrees.

I would also like to ask the committee one thing. I am told that we can continue until 1:30 p.m. I imagine there's no objection to us continuing past the time when the meeting normally ends.

I now invite the minister to give us his opening remarks.

[English]

**Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Chair, on a point of order, are we dividing up the time? Are we doing different rounds today?

**The Chair:** I believe it's one round. We're doing one round.

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** Is the minister here for the full time?

**The Chair:** He's here for one hour, I believe.

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** It's one hour, so—

**The Chair:** Oh, it's for the full time. I'm told he's here for the full time.

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** Okay. My understanding is that we'll have different witnesses in the first half and the second half and that the Impact Assessment Agency will not be here for the second half. Is that correct?

**The Chair:** Witnesses are here for the whole time.

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** All of them are?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** Okay.

Thank you so much.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[Translation]

The floor is yours, Minister.

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I am pleased to be here with you today to discuss the 2022-23 main estimates for Environment and Climate Change Canada, the Parks Canada Agency and the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada.

[English]

With us today are Paul Halucha, associate deputy minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada; Ron Hallman, president and CEO of the Parks Canada Agency; and Terence Hubbard, president of the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada, as well as other officials.

I am joining you from Montreal on the traditional territory of the Mohawk and other Haudenosaunee people.

The critical responsibilities under my portfolio are vital to ensuring our environment, economy and people are healthy and thriving. Our success relies on direct and meaningful engagement with indigenous peoples. These aren't just words. I feel very strongly about our relationship with indigenous peoples.

At the same time, strong leadership, broad and inclusive collaboration, and evidence-based decisions informed by traditional knowledge and transparency are all core to delivering on the ambitious goals and priorities that we have set to help ensure a more resilient, equitable and prosperous Canada.

[Translation]

We will begin with Environment and Climate Change Canada.

Since we last met, the department's focus has remained primarily on working with Canadians to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and pollutants, and adapt to the changing climate while protecting and conserving nature.

[English]

One of the most significant steps forward is the 2030 emissions reduction plan for clean air and a strong economy, which I introduced with the Prime Minister and Minister Wilkinson on March 29, 2022.

The plan provides a credible road map to enable Canada to achieve 40% to 45% below 2005 levels by 2030, and it reflects input from provinces, territories, indigenous peoples, the net-zero advisory body, stakeholders and more than 28,000 interested Canadians.

We've also continued working to ensure our waters are healthy and clean, to strengthen environmental protection, and to provide weather and environmental information that will help Canadians make informed decisions on health and safety.

[Translation]

All of this important work is reflected in the department's 2022-23 main estimates, which present approximately \$2 billion in total spending. This is a net increase of almost \$270 million over the main estimates total expenditures last fiscal year.

The major requests include over \$478 million for taking action on clean growth and climate change. This includes more than \$20.5 million in grants and over \$332 million in contributions.

• (1145)

[English]

These numbers include \$2.5 million in grants and more than \$291 million in contributions in support of the low-carbon economy fund, which supports projects that help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. There are also over \$10 million in grants and \$16 million in contributions to support Canada's international climate finance program. This funding helps developing countries in their transition to a sustainable, low-carbon and nature-positive economy.

[Translation]

As you know, Mr. Chair, nature and climate are inextricably linked. This is why we have set a target—to conserve a quarter of lands, inland waters and oceans by 2025 and 30% of each by 2030.

This is why these estimates also include more than \$609 million to conserve nature, including almost \$76 million in contributions and \$289 million in contributions to support the Canada nature fund.

[English]

In addition, Mr. Chair, there are also more than \$379 million to prevent and manage pollution. This includes contributions of more than \$27 million to support initiatives, such as the Great Lakes action plan and engagement with indigenous partners to establish the Canada water agency.

Plastic pollution also remains a high priority. Public consultations for the proposed single-use plastic prohibition regulations ended this March, and I expect that we will be seeing them come into force soon. There are also almost \$282 million toward predicting weather and environmental conditions, plus over \$219 million for internal services.

[Translation]

Let's turn to the Parks Canada Agency.

The agency is responsible for protecting Canada's natural and cultural heritage and presenting nationally significant examples. It

shares the stories of these treasured places and works with indigenous communities to provide opportunities for them to share their stories, cultures and contributions.

Parks Canada's 2022-23 main estimates are currently \$988 million. This represents a decrease of \$140.5 million over last year, primarily due to the reduction in time-limited funding for infrastructure projects at Parks Canada administered places.

That said, the agency is developing a long-term plan for the management and sustainability of its infrastructure. Funding in the main estimates helps Parks Canada deliver its important work at 171 national historic sites, 47 national parks, five national marine conservation areas and one national urban park.

It also supports Parks Canada's commitment to a system of national heritage places that recognizes and honours the historic and contemporary contributions of indigenous peoples, their stories and their cultures, as well as the special relationships indigenous peoples have with ancestral lands and waters.

[English]

It will also support Parks Canada's work with partners to consider new national parks, national marine conservation areas and cultural landscapes, as well as the creation or enhancement of urban parks and ecological corridors. These important measures will contribute to Canada's commitment, as I mentioned earlier, to protect and conserve a quarter of lands, inland waters and oceans in Canada by 2025, and 30% of each by 2030.

Increases in funding support a number of priorities, such as an enhanced nature legacy to respond to the biodiversity crisis and pressures for the sustainable recovery and well-being of Canadians; establishing and managing marine protected areas in support of Canada's new marine conservation targets; enhancing wildfire resilience, prevention and response in Parks Canada-administered protected areas; and the Wood Buffalo National Park world heritage site action plan. We will strengthen the management of the park in collaboration with indigenous partners and address imminent threats to wood bison in Wood Buffalo National Park.

There is also funding for an Inuit impact and benefit agreement for the Wrecks of HMS *Erebus* and HMS *Terror* National Historic Site and advancing archeology and conservation of the wrecks. There will be negotiation with indigenous peoples to implement rights and advance reconciliation while reducing litigation risks, building partnerships and advancing mutual priorities.

There is additional assistance for youth through the youth employment and skills strategy, and a national campaign to promote protection of Canada's heritage places and visitation to Parks Canada-administered places to support a safe and sustainable tourism recovery.

• (1150)

[Translation]

Mr. Chair, let's turn to the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada, which is responsible for conducting impact assessments under the Impact Assessment Act, which came into force in August 2019.

The agency continues to complete project assessments under the former Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012. Its 2022-23 main estimates total \$80 million. This represents a small increase of \$1 million over last year and is primarily due to an increase in operating funds and an increase in the statutory vote for employee benefits programs.

This funding supports the agency's ongoing delivery of high-quality assessments to support government decisions on major projects across the country. This ensures that the agency can deliver what the Impact Assessment Act requires—complete, robust and timely assessments that examine the positive and negative environmental, economic, social, health and gender effects of designated projects.

It will also ensure that the assessments are based on science and indigenous knowledge, protect our rich natural environment, respect the rights of indigenous peoples and support our natural resources sector.

As well, it will support meaningful public and indigenous consultations, including important capacity building funding programs for participants and indigenous peoples.

This year marks the last year of the five-year, \$258.6-million budget that was originally allocated to the newly established agency. Budget 2022 commits to considering the new funding requirements of the agency and of other relevant departments as part of the fall 2022 economic and fiscal update.

Mr. Chair, I will stop here in the hope that this summary provides an overview of the 2022-23 main estimates.

I would be happy to answer any questions from the members of the committee.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister.

Before we begin with questions, I would like to ask that all the witnesses who are joining us virtually turn on their cameras, as we want to see them. I would also note to the members of the commit-

tee that, 15 minutes before the end of the meeting, at 1:15 p.m., we will need to vote on the budgets.

Mr. Seeback, you have six minutes.

[English]

**Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Minister, you talked in your opening statement about your credible road map to achieve greenhouse gas emissions 40% to 45% below 2005 levels by 2030, and you've talked both publicly and in the House of Commons with pride about the 8.9% greenhouse gas reductions from 2019 to 2020. Is that 8.9% reduction that occurred in 2020 part of your road map to 2030?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** Thank you for the question, MP Seeback.

I have not spoken at great length about the 2020 emissions reductions numbers that we saw in the last inventory. I have spoken about the 2019 numbers simply because we know that 2020, because of the pandemic, was an anomaly. What I have pointed out is that in 2019, oil production alone went up by a little more than 700,000 barrels that year, yet emissions declined in 2019.

**Mr. Kyle Seeback:** You recognize that the 8.9% reduction in 2020 that your government talks about came as an effect of a 5.4% contraction of GDP?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** I have asked the experts in the department several times about this. I think we have some of them with us on the line who could give you a more specific answer as to whether or not we were able to make a determination to what extent the emissions reduction in 2020 was a result of the economic slowdown from the pandemic and to what extent it was a result of measures that we have been deploying in Canada over the last few years. What the experts tell me is that it is very difficult to discern what comes from the plan and what would be more pandemic-related.

• (1155)

**Mr. Kyle Seeback:** If they do that, I'd be happy if they tabled that with the committee, because if the plan is that to get an 8.9% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, we have a 5.4% contraction in GDP, you'd agree with me that that's not a great plan.

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** I would invite you to look at the emissions reduction plan, where we make no such linkages between emissions reduction and economic development.

**Mr. Kyle Seeback:** Right, so if a plan is reducing GDP significantly by 5.4%, if that's the result of the measures you're taking, then you would agree that it's not a great result for Canadians.

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** Again, as I said, our plan is based on a number of different data sources, including projections of economic growth. Oil and gas production will increase, according to the Canada Energy Regulator, between now and 2030, and despite that, our plan shows very credibly how we can reduce our emissions by between 40% and 45% by 2030.

**Mr. Kyle Seeback:** Minister, a big part of your reduction to achieve 40% to 45% is going to be based on EVs and there being more electricity in the Canadian electricity grid. RBC did a report on the transition to net zero and estimates that we're going to have to roughly double our electricity supply in order to meet our emission reduction targets. Do you agree with that assessment?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** When you say a “big part” of our plan, can you define “big”, maybe in percentage terms?

**Mr. Kyle Seeback:** With respect to reducing emissions by 11 million tonnes, RBC says it would cost \$5.4 billion per year to double the electricity output of the country. Is that something you've looked at?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** Unfortunately, I don't have that report in front of me, so it's difficult for me to comment on it.

**Mr. Kyle Seeback:** Have you looked at what is going to be required to build out the EV charging network across Canada? The RBC report suggests that it's going to cost \$25 billion per year for this to be built out across the country. How much has your government allocated towards this?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** Again, I'm really sorry, MP Seeback, but I don't have the RBC report in front of me, so it's difficult for me to comment on something I can't see.

**Mr. Kyle Seeback:** Whether you have the report or not, and whether you can say you don't know if it's going to cost \$25 billion a year, as RBC says, I think they're probably right. You may disagree.

What is the government saying it's going to spend per year for the build-out of electric charging stations. Is it anywhere near the \$25 billion per year that the RBC report says is required?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** Again, I haven't seen the report. I can't comment on those numbers. What I can comment on is that we're in the process of installing 25,000 charging stations across the country right now and the investments are there for that.

**Mr. Kyle Seeback:** What's it going to cost?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** In the emissions reduction plan, we made a commitment to double the number of charging stations that will be installed in Canada in the coming years to 50,000 charging stations across the country. That obviously excludes charging stations that people install at their homes; we're talking here about public charging stations. I don't have the emissions reduction plan in front of me, but I believe, for that, we're providing somewhere in the order....

Maybe I could turn to Associate Deputy Minister Halucha for the exact number.

**The Chair:** Unfortunately, maybe you could submit that in writing, because we're past the six minutes and we have to go to Ms. Thompson—with pleasure, of course.

Go ahead, Ms. Thompson.

**Ms. Joanne Thompson (St. John's East, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Welcome, Minister.

I want to touch on the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada. In the text of your opening remarks, you mentioned that the Impact Assessment Agency's main estimates total \$80 million, which represents “a small increase of \$1 million from last year”. Could you please explain what this increase in operating funds is?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** As you know, the impact agency of Canada, or IAAC, is a federal body accountable to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change. It serves Canadians by delivering high-quality impact assessment that looks at both positive and negative environmental, economic, social and health impacts of potential projects. IAAC contributes to informing decision-making on major projects in support of sustainable development in Canada.

This \$1 million in additional funding supports the agency's continued delivery of high-quality assessments to support government decisions on major projects across the country. It will ensure that the agency can deliver what the Impact Assessment Act requires—namely robust, timely, comprehensive assessments that will look at the positive and negative environmental, economic, social, health and gender effects of designated projects.

It will also make sure that the assessments are based on science and indigenous knowledge and that they will protect our natural environment, respect the rights of indigenous people and support our natural resource sector. As well, it will support meaningful public and indigenous consultations, including important participation and indigenous capacity-building funding programs.

● (1200)

**Ms. Joanne Thompson:** On a slightly different topic, a few weeks ago, Minister, you announced a national ecological corridors program. Can you tell us what the benefits are of this program, and also whether there is any funding related to it?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** The funding that was announced is a funding amount of \$60 million over five years. The reason is simply that experts agree that biodiversity is declining at an unprecedented rate. Habitat loss and fragmentation are important contributions to this decline. Additionally, the impacts of climate change, such as the increased likelihood of extreme temperatures and precipitation and the changing frequency and intensity of wildfires, droughts and floods may force many species to move due to changing conditions.

Ecological corridors help species adapt to these impacts by facilitating movement from one area of habitat to another and helping to maintain biodiversity. Corridors also support ecological processes and functioning ecosystems that provide resilience against the effects of climate change.

Furthermore, ecological corridors offer numerous benefits. They support vital ecosystem services, such as the provision of food, clean air and water; contribute to sustainable livelihoods for local communities by supporting various compatible economic activities, such as agriculture and tourism; and provide opportunities for reconciliation with indigenous people through land stewardship and connection.

**Ms. Joanne Thompson:** Thank you.

Switching once again to Parks Canada, I'm aware that Parks Canada has made significant investments in assets over the last five years. How will Parks Canada maintain its asset portfolio for Canadians with a decrease in capital funding?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** Parks Canada applies available funding to priority projects to maintain asset conditions, protect cultural and natural heritage, deliver high-quality visitor service and experiences, and address health and safety concerns.

As a result of the agency's capital program, the percentage of assets in good to fair condition has improved from 50% to 69% over the last five years. Parks Canada is working on a long-term investment strategy to ensure that assets needed to meet its objectives are sustained into the future.

**Ms. Joanne Thompson:** Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Canadians have turned to the safety and well-being offered through the outdoors for recreation and vacation time. How many visitors went through Parks Canada in 2020 and 2021, and what is Parks Canada predicting for 2022?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** Thank you for your question, MP Thompson.

Maybe for that I could turn to Ron Hallman, president and CEO of Parks Canada, to provide that data.

**Mr. Ron Hallman (President and Chief Executive Officer, Parks Canada Agency):** Thank you, Chair.

Total annual visitation for the 2021-2022 operating year, meaning April to March, is projected to come in at between 21.1 million and 21.5 million, which would be an improvement over the last year, although it's still lower than historical values.

We have been very proud, though, that when we had to suspend visitor services in March 2020, we were able to reopen the majority of our parks and sites on June 1 and provide wide outdoor spaces for Canadians to come to during the pandemic. We have received great feedback. Visitors continue to poll in the mid-90s in terms of satisfaction and enjoyment at our places, even where some of the services may be reduced.

We're looking forward to a good year coming up. It's hard to predict what it will be with international travel, but domestic use has been strong.

• (1205)

**Ms. Joanne Thompson:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** We're pretty much done, unfortunately, but there will be another opportunity in a bit.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simard, you have the floor.

**Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Guilbeault, I greatly admire the work you have done in the environmental sector.

This morning, I was following the debates from the climate summit, and you made a statement that somewhat intrigued me. You made the following comment:

I am an environmental activist and warrior... Today, however, I must represent all Canadians and accept that I cannot win every battle. You are disappointed with the Bay du Nord decision, I know.

This intrigued me because I am in a position similar to yours. I am a sovereignist and have been promoting that cause for the last 25 years. I am convinced that the cause of Quebec independence goes hand in hand with the people I represent. However, your quote led me to believe that you think that the environmental issue may go against the interests of Canadians.

Can you confirm this?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** No, not at all.

I thank you for your question, Mr. Simard.

As I have said publicly on many occasions, the Bay du Nord decision was a hard one to make for my government and for me, both professionally and personally. In a pluralistic society like ours, whether in Quebec or in Canada, people do not agree on everything. This is true for many topics, and it is certainly true for the issue of the environment.

In the environmental community, many people were disappointed by the Bay du Nord decision. The speech that I gave this morning simply recognized that fact.

**Mr. Mario Simard:** I understand.

Reading between the lines, I understand that you, too, were disappointed by the decision.

Earlier, you referred to the 2030 emissions reduction plan. Most environmental group representatives with whom I speak frequently tell me that Canada has no plan for getting away from fossil energies and that your emissions reduction plan cannot be considered as such. As evidence, I cite what the Prime Minister said when he presented your emissions reduction plan, that the desire was to offer the entire world low-carbon oil and gas.

When I heard that, what came immediately to mind was what a contradiction it was. It is like wanting diet poutine. It will never exist. Low-carbon oil will never exist.

I get the impression that, in your emissions reduction plan, the path that you have taken is instead to make oil acceptable in terms of carbon emissions. It is as though you want to end a prime environmental principle, the polluter pays principle.

Do you agree with that?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** I strongly disagree with both your statements.

First, it's important to take the time to read the report from the International Energy Agency, presented just before the Glasgow conference, or the report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, or IPCC.

These two international organizations—which are made up of eminent people, it's safe to say—state that, in a scenario of limiting global warming to no more than 1.5°C, the planet will consume between 25 million and 35 million barrels of oil per day in 2050.

This is a significant reduction compared with today, when we are consuming approximately 100 million. There will therefore be a lot less oil. According to those two agencies, the oil we will be using at that time will no longer be in the form of commodities, but derivatives. This includes solvents or the production of asphalt, among other things. We will continue to use oil, even in a scenario in which we attempt to limit global warming to 1.5°C. Mr. Simard, you know as well as I do that low-carbon oil is not some fantasy or fabrication.

When I approved the Bay du Nord project, I was speaking to an oil sands company, telling them that a project that produces 10 times more greenhouse gas emissions per barrel, no matter how you calculate it, would not be acceptable in the context of the Canadian plan.

If you want to believe that emitting 10 times more greenhouse gases makes no difference to the atmosphere, then we are not on the same page.

• (1210)

**Mr. Mario Simard:** Mr. Guilbeault, the IPCC also tells us that we must not accept new oil and gas projects. In that sense, this directly contradicts the findings in the IPCC report.

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** Have you read the exact quote from the IPCC?

**Mr. Mario Simard:** Yes, and we can discuss it.

For now, I would simply like to come back to—

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** I think it is important to have a debate on—

**Mr. Mario Simard:** I'm sorry to interrupt you, but I have very little time left.

I simply want to come back to what you said.

You said that there could be low-carbon oil. That is strange, since all the experts I have spoken to have told me that carbon sequestration and capture in the oil and gas industry was a deception. It can apply to some heavy industrial sectors but in the oil and gas industry, it is a deception. Using it is essentially an attempt at greenwashing.

You began your presentation by saying that we needed to listen to science. However, I get the impression that how you listen to science often varies.

**The Chair:** Your time is up. Mr. Simard, you went over the six minutes that you were allotted.

Minister, you can address Mr. Simard's two comments when responding to another member. You can also provide clarification on the IPCC quote.

I will now give the floor to Ms. Collins.

[*English*]

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm going to pick up on some of the questions from Mr. Simard.

We've heard a lot of expert witnesses during our study on fossil fuel subsidies telling us that the CCUS tax credit is a fossil fuel subsidy. It is a financial contribution by a government that confers a benefit on a company or a sector. That clearly meets the WTO's definition. We've heard that not only is it a subsidy, but it's also handing over billions of dollars to profitable oil and gas companies. It's a technology that hasn't been proven at scale. Oil and gas companies have been using it as an excuse to increase their production. This is absolutely the wrong direction.

I'm curious to know why your government isn't listening to these 400 academics, experts, climate scientists and economists. Why wouldn't you or Minister Wilkinson even meet with these signatories? Why are you not listening to them when they're urging you not to continue to subsidize big oil?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** Thank you for the question, MP Collins.

I don't know if you read the last report of the IPCC. I'm trying to find the exact page for you, but—

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** I did. I'm actually specifically asking you about why you didn't listen to those experts and why you didn't meet them.

**The Chair:** Ms. Collins, the minister is trying to respond.

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** As I was saying, the IPCC, which is considered by many, perhaps not you, as an authoritative figure when it comes to climate change, in its last report refers to carbon capture and storage as a critical technology for the world to reach—

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** I'm just going to quickly interrupt you. I understand you're—

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** —net zero in 2050.

Maybe you don't believe in the IPCC, and—



**Ms. Laurel Collins:** I believe 100% in the IPCC report. Your government, it's documented, lobbied the IPCC drafters to include more carbon capture in the language. This is very problematic.

Your colleague Minister Wilkinson dismissed the 400 experts who wrote to you urging you not to go forward with this subsidy, saying that they were “not experts”. I think that is really dismissive. I'm curious to know if you agree with your colleague when he's labelled these economists, environmentalists and climate experts as “not experts” and that you're not willing to meet them.

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** I haven't seen this comment from Minister Wilkinson. Therefore, I can't comment on something I haven't seen.

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** You're—

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** I meet, and I continue to meet, experts and scientists—

**The Chair:** Ms. Collins, perhaps you could let the minister answer. You've raised many points here, and I'm kind of interested to hear the—

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] said he can't comment on the thing that I raised.

Your government seems happy to meet with oil and gas lobbyists. They have been asking for this tax credit. Last week the CEO of Cenovus said the tax credit is not high enough, which is incredible, given that the company is reporting billions in profits and tripling their dividends to shareholders. The oil sands pathway alliance is lobbying for funds from the net-zero accelerator. There's also the new Canada growth fund. The mandate of the Canada Infrastructure Bank was just expanded to include carbon capture, utilization and storage. The EDC just created a new transition bond framework aimed at CCUS.

• (1215)

How many billions can Canadians expect to shell out and just how much is your government prepared to hand over to profitable oil and gas companies?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** Specifically on the comment from the CEO of Cenovus, I did put out a publication on Twitter. It reads as follows:

Building a sustainable future for Canadians and workers means taking action to cut pollution.

Our [government] has stepped up with a real plan.

With record profits, oil and gas companies have the money to do their part. The time is now.

In the transition to a low-carbon economy and society, I think we all have a role to play. The private sector has a role to play. Civil society has a role to play. Investors have a role to play, and government has a role to play. We've said that as part of a fair transition, we would work with every sector of our economy and every region of the economy to ensure that the transition to this low-carbon economy is done in a fair and respectable manner for everyone. That's exactly what we're doing.

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** Thank you.

When we're talking about profitable oil and gas companies, it would make sense for them to be paying for this. Last week we had

EDC, Export Development Canada, join us for our committee study on fossil fuel subsidies. EDC claims that its financial support to the oil and gas industry is “not a subsidy”. Despite providing over \$5 billion to the Canadian oil and gas sector last year, EDC's president and CEO claimed she's unaware of any well-established “international definitions” of a subsidy. That is a bit shocking to me.

We've heard from numerous witnesses, including some at that very same meeting, that the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme have long defined a subsidy as a financial contribution by a government or any public body that confers a benefit to a company or sector.

Canada gives out more public financing than any other G20 country. Does it concern you that the head of Canada's export development credit agency doesn't understand what a fossil fuel subsidy is and isn't familiar with internationally agreed-upon definitions?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** You might have seen, as part of the tax credit for carbon capture and storage the Minister of Finance has unveiled in the budget, that we are making a very significant difference between providing support for the oil and gas sector to decarbonize, as we are providing for every other sector of the economy, and providing incentives to enable the oil and gas sector to increase their production. We've been asked and we have resisted and we have refused to include, for example, the use of carbon capture and storage under the tax credit for enhanced oil recovery, because it would directly—

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** Does it concern you that Export Development Canada—

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** Ms. Collins—

**The Chair:** Ms. Collins, I'm going to give the minister a little extra time.

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** He's just not answering my question.

**The Chair:** He's trying.

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** I'm hoping that you'll—

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** You spoke specifically about the incentive for carbon capture and storage. I'm exactly answering your question—

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** My question is about the CEO and president of EDC.

**The Chair:** Unfortunately, we're out of time on this round.

We'll go to Mr. Dreeshen for five minutes, please.

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Minister, thank you for being here today to discuss your departmental spending priorities and the program effectiveness.

In listening to the last two speakers, I don't share many of the positions they take, but I will talk about how this government has made a commitment to provide \$5.3 billion in international climate financing by 2026, in which the plan is to help other nations transition to sustainable “low-carbon, climate-resistant, nature-positive, and inclusive” development. These are a number of the terms that we read.

Your department has asked for \$26 million in grants and contributions this year. Are these programs still priorities for the recipient countries or are they looking for real energy solutions, such as our clean LNG or responsibly produced hydrocarbons, which means a yearning for the true Canadian leadership we have, and has anyone asked them what it is that they need?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** Thank you for the question. I have ongoing conversations with counterparts from different countries. In fact, I will be visiting some of them in the coming weeks.

Let me assure you—or perhaps reassure you—that climate change remains a very high priority for developing countries, as it does really for the rest of the world, and finding solutions to decarbonize their economy either through technology or nature-based solutions remains a very high priority for the recipient countries.

• (1220)

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen:** Thank you very much.

I would probably expand into that in my next comments, because I understand what's being advocated for by the “dark green” environmentalist world, but in the real world, particularly in those countries where energy security is so important and so urgent, people are clamouring for clean natural gas. They are rethinking their previous nuclear objections. They are recognizing their electrical grid limitations. They're hoping that countries like ours, with a reputation of using our wealth, our expertise and our innovation, will be there to help them through these tumultuous times.

Can you tell the more than two billion people in this world who use dung for their energy and those countries that are forced to rely on conflict oil that Canada will use every bit of its energy know-how to bring all of our resources to their shores, or are we simply going to go down this path that seems to have been set up by this government in the eco-activist approach that seems to be used?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** Thank you for the question.

I would like to quote to you the president of the European Commission, who said this recently. She was talking about about Europe's dependency on Russian oil and gas:

...in the long run, it is our switch to renewables and hydrogen that will make us truly independent. We have to accelerate the green transition. Because every kilowatt-hour of electricity Europe generates from solar, wind, hydropower or biomass reduces our dependency on Russian gas and other energy sources—

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen:** Thank you for the quote. I've read the quote too. Thank you very much.

Of course, I have also been involved—

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** It's not just the Canadian government that believes it is important to transition to a low-carbon economy—

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen:** You are right. There are governments in the world that believe that too. However, as someone who has been involved with the OSCE, I have talked to all of these countries in the world that are looking at the issues taking place right now. They are not as single-minded and single-focused as we seem to be.

I just wanted to mention this. All energy sources leave an environmental footprint, even the 25% of the world's citizens who actually use dung for energy. You don't flood massive tracts of land for electricity for an eternity for hydro power without consequences. You don't build massive windmills without using hydrocarbons. You don't build solar panels without dealing with toxic substances. You don't mine or drill oil wells without disturbances. Plus, you need energy to build out each one of these.

I believe that when we discuss any energy source development, its transportation and use, its recycling and/or its disposal, or its effect on the living things that surround it, we have to analyze the entire upstream and downstream effects, from the first shovel digging it up to the last shovel covering it up. Only then can we talk about the consequences of these technologies of EVs, hydrogen, hybrid ICEs or full battery production, repurposing or recycling.

Only then will Canadians be able to make educated decisions about the energy options that are faced by this nation. If we take the political science out of this equation and focus specifically on the true metrics of these choices, then we will have accomplished something.

Will your government ensure in the future that all types of energy sources will be subject to the same rigorous assessment as this government has demanded with Canada's oil and hydrocarbon industry?

**The Chair:** Unfortunately, Minister, you're going to have to weave that answer into a response to another member.

Mr. Duguid is next.

**Mr. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to thank the minister for being with us today.

Minister, you referenced in your opening remarks the \$2.5 million in grants and more than \$291 million in contributions in support of the low carbon economy fund. I'm aware that in Manitoba, this has been very beneficial in funding green trucking initiatives and partnerships with the province. I'm wondering if you could amplify for us how an expanded low carbon economy fund will help us get to our 2030 targets.

You and Minister Wilkinson wrote an article recently on using every tool in the tool box, whether that's supporting our auto sector or CCUS. Maybe you could offer a comment in response to some of the earlier questions you've received.

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** Thank you very much, Mr. Duguid.

You are right. The low carbon economy fund, or LCEF, supports projects that help to reduce Canada's greenhouse gas emissions, generate green growth, build resilient communities and create good jobs for Canadians. These projects are critical as Canada continues to build a sustainable net-zero emissions economy towards 2050.

The fund is an important part of the pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change as well as Canada's strengthened climate plan, which is a healthy environment and a healthy economy.

The LCEF has two envelopes. The first one is the low carbon economy leadership fund, which provides money to provinces and territories that have adopted the framework, so that they can identify emission reduction projects to receive funding.

The second one is the low carbon economy challenge, which provides money to a wide range of recipients, including provinces, territories, businesses, municipalities, and indigenous communities and organizations. Successful applicants will leverage ingenuity across the country to reduce emissions and generate clean growth in support of the framework of Canada's strengthened climate plan.

Thank you for letting me come back to some of the comments that were made. No later than yesterday I was talking to Germany's vice-chancellor, Minister Habeck, who said in no uncertain terms that despite the challenges that Germany is facing right now, they are steadfast in their intention to continue fighting climate change and to move—and even accelerate—Germany's transition to a low-carbon economy.

That's exactly the type of partnership they are looking to Canada for. In fact, the chancellor and vice-chancellor will be in Canada next summer to talk about some of these opportunities in the coming months and years.

• (1225)

**Mr. Terry Duguid:** Thank you, Minister.

I'll direct my next question to officials, Mr. Chair. Probably Ms. Geller will respond.

The minister briefly referenced water in his remarks. I wonder if Ms. Geller could again amplify his remarks regarding some of the investments being made through the 2022 budget.

I'll call to her attention that this committee will be undertaking a freshwater study. How can we build upon the good work that is highlighted in the 2022 budget?

**Ms. Hilary Geller (Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Policy Branch, Department of the Environment):** Yes, budget 2022 did extend, for an additional year, funding for the federal freshwater action plan, which is the flagship initiative that Environment Canada works with in the Great Lakes, Lake Winnipeg, the St. Lawrence River, the Fraser River, the Mackenzie River and the

Saint John River. The goal, of course, is to protect and restore fresh water in Canada.

The government has a commitment to increase that funding. We are continuing to work to support the government in its decision-making on exactly what that would look like.

There was also funding provided for the Canada water agency. There is a transition office that has been set up. It is working extremely diligently to provide options to the government on what form and function that agency would ultimately take. It has been using the funding for the last little while to engage in extensive consultations with the provinces and territories, indigenous colleagues, and Canadians writ large, to support the government in making its ultimate decisions.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Thank you. Unfortunately, your five minutes are over, Mr. Duguid.

I will now give the floor to Mr. Simard for two and a half minutes.

**Mr. Mario Simard:** Thank you very much.

Mr. Guilbeault, I have a small question on what is meant by an efficient or inefficient subsidy in the oil and gas industry.

Can you define what that represents?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** As you know, the efficiency or inefficiency of certain fossil fuel subsidies stems from an agreement between the members of the G20 in 2009, an agreement that has since evolved somewhat. Work is therefore being done within the G20 to define that issue.

Apart from the issue of the efficiency or inefficiency of subsidies, we can agree that our government's commitment is to eliminate all subsidies that increase fossil fuel production, whether oil, gas or coal.

That said, I do in fact draw a line and, on that, I think I disagree with some members of the committee: funding the decarbonization of a sector of the economy, regardless of the sector, is not a fossil fuel subsidy, certainly not within the meaning of the agreement entered into by the G20 countries in 2009—

• (1230)

**Mr. Mario Simard:** Oh, but wait. I can tell you that, on the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, we studied carbon capture strategies, and most oil producers, when asked if they were able to reduce their production, said no.

To give you just one indication, the two largest carbon capture projects in Alberta represent \$2.5 billion, and 57% of that money is from the government, either the Government of Alberta or the federal government. That means the government is subsidizing the oil industry so it can produce low-carbon oil and increase production. Whenever people were asked to limit their production, they refused. However, the government's direction is to limit emissions. It contradicts what you just said.

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** No, not at all. From an atmospheric standpoint, what counts is emissions, and the cap on greenhouse gas emissions that we are going to put in place—the consultation document will be published in the coming weeks—will clearly define how emissions will be reduced, regardless of what happens with production, whether it increases, decreases or remains stable.

As I explained earlier to the honourable member Ms. Collins, we made it impossible for businesses to use the tax credit for carbon capture and storage to increase oil production. The purpose of the tax credit is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to decarbonize the industry, just like we are helping decarbonize the aluminum industry, which you are very familiar with, or the steel and cement industries.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Ms. Collins, you have the floor.

[English]

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to go back to my question for a simple yes or no. Does it concern you that the EDC president and CEO claimed that she's unaware of any well-established international definitions of a subsidy?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** I have not seen this quote by the CEO of EDC, but I would be happy to follow up with you after this meeting, after I have seen and read this quote.

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** Thank you. I'd appreciate that.

I'm concerned that the environment department and the Department of Finance aren't using these internationally recognized and agreed-upon definitions. I'm curious why your government isn't using the WTO's and the United Nations Environment Programme's definitions, since they are well established, internationally recognized ones.

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** As you are well aware, we committed to eliminating any type of public subsidy to fossil fuel in the last election campaign, and we will be holding consultations in the not too distant future with Canadians, Canadian organizations, companies and provinces on this very topic. Obviously, we will need to agree on a common definition as this work unfolds.

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** This has been going on for years. This is delayed. Your government is way behind on its peer review as part of the G20 commitment to phase out fossil fuels.

Today, 112 environmental organizations, including Environmental Defence, Climate Action Network and Équiterre, sent a letter to cabinet outlining their concerns that these commitments aren't enough, that they are not in line with our international climate goals

and what's needed to keep us on track and keep the world on track to reduce temperatures by 1.5°C.

Will you at least make a binding commitment to not introduce more subsidies, and put that commitment into law?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** I would be curious to know if you know of any other G20 countries that have made a commitment to eliminate all of their public fossil fuel subsidies two years earlier than the 2025 agreed-upon G20 target—

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** I guess it's—

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** —because as far as I know, Canada's the only one.

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** The thing is, if you make that commitment now but it's not in law, and you just introduced billions of new funding to fossil fuel subsidies, it's hard to believe that we're going to meet those commitments when we continue to fail again and again.

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** We haven't failed on fossil fuel subsidies. The deadline is 2025 for G20 countries, and we decided that we would do this two years earlier—

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** We are failing. We have been increasing fossil fuel subsidies year after year—

**The Chair:** The time is up.

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** They've been reduced by \$3 billion since 2018, and you know that.

• (1235)

**The Chair:** Colleagues, the time is up.

It's an interesting discussion. I like when it gets lively like that. It makes for a more stimulating meeting.

We'll go to Mr. Mazier for five minutes.

**Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, Minister, for coming out today.

Minister, last week the environment commissioner said that the carbon tax disproportionately impacts rural, remote and northern Canadians. A month earlier, the Parliamentary Budget Officer reported that most households in the Prairies will see a net loss from the carbon tax.

The carbon tax is clearly hurting Canadians. Can you promise Canadians today that your government will not raise the carbon tax above \$170,000 a tonne after 2030? I want a yes-or-no answer, Minister.

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** As you are probably aware, both the environment commissioner and the Parliamentary Budget Officer have recognized that as of now, eight out of 10 households in provinces where the federal system is applied are better off with carbon pricing than without carbon pricing. Those eight out of 10 get more money in their pockets, so the—

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** The question is—

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** —richest in those four provinces don't, but both of them agreed—

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** Minister, the question is whether you are planning to raise the carbon tax after the year 2030.

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** We've made a commitment all the way to 2030. We've made no commitments as to what would happen after 2030.

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** I don't know why we'd believe that, because if you have made no commitments, you've promised nothing, basically.

Your claim on the additional 10% rebate for the carbon tax is that it's to cover that added financial burden for rural Canadians. How did the government decide that 10% was sufficient?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** We worked with provinces and territories when carbon pricing was first established to make a number of these determinations. If you want a more technical explanation, I would be happy to turn to Douglas Nevison, who's—

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** That's all right.

Do you know personally? Have you got to the file?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** I would be happy to provide you with a very detailed and technical answer to your question, if that's what you wish.

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** You don't know how they got to that number. Okay.

APAS reported—

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** That's not what I said, Mr. Mazier. Don't put words in my mouth. I didn't say that.

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** APAS reported that the carbon tax will increase the cost of wheat production by \$12.50 an acre. How much higher will the cost of food production have to be before you amend the environmental policies so that Canadian farmers can remain competitive?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** As you know, in the emissions reduction plan that was tabled on March 29, we made a commitment to provide more than \$1 billion of measures to support the agricultural sector in Canada. On top of that, we are working with the agricultural sector to recycle some of the revenues of carbon pricing directly to the sector. We are very supportive of our agricultural sector in Canada.

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** So you'll keep on adding to the price. You don't know what the price is.

You're going to keep on—

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** Of course we know what the carbon price is. We know it all the way to 2030, sir.

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** Okay.

I'm going to ask about fertilizer. The government plans to reduce fertilizer emissions. Just out of curiosity, do you believe in the phase-out of synthetic fertilizers?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** I believe there are a number of technologies and agricultural practices that can help us reduce the emissions of the agricultural sector in Canada. In fact, a number of farms across the country are—

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** Do you believe in the phase-out?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** —already conducting some of these technologies in agricultural practices.

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** So there's no answer.

When was the last time you visited a grain farm?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** It's not because it's not the answer you want that it's not an answer, sir.

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, gentlemen; I have to stop the clock. Mr. Longfield has a point of order.

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.):** I'm listening to questions that are being posed and answers being given, and then people are contradicting answers that they don't like because they don't believe the answers line up with their own personal opinion. I think we need to let the minister answer his questions, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** We have another point of order.

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

While I don't agree necessarily with my colleague or his line of questioning, I do think that the minister can answer and doesn't need members of the committee defending him.

**The Chair:** Yes, he can certainly answer for himself. I understand the process. I've been here long enough to know that it's a time to ask pointed questions to ministers, but I think we should let the minister answer more fully.

Anyway, we'll keep going and see how it works out.

• (1240)

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** I have a minute left, right?

**The Chair:** Even a little more than that: a minute and seven seconds.

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** Minister, when was the last time you visited a grain or cattle farm in western Canada as an environment minister?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** I've been an environment minister for about five months, and I haven't had a chance to visit a farm yet in eastern, central or western Canada.

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** Your carbon tax applies to thousands of municipalities, schools and hospitals across Canada. Can you tell me how taxing these institutions is reducing greenhouse gas emissions?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** I would be happy to organize a workshop for you and any of your colleagues on why. Pretty much every expert around the world who has looked at different mechanisms to reduce emissions have come to the conclusion that putting a price on pollution is one of the most effective ways of reducing emissions. Basically, you're sending a price signal to consumers and the market. That's one of the most basic economic systems we know of.

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** You mean taxing a hospital?

**The Chair:** We're out of time, unfortunately. We'll have to go to Mr. Weiler.

**Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Minister, for taking part in our committee today.

Minister, in your opening remarks, you mentioned that alongside working to lower emissions, ECCC is protecting and conserving nature. More than \$609 million in these estimates is devoted towards conserving nature, and over \$289 million in contributions are going to the Canada nature fund. I know the nature fund has supported important projects like the Ryan River Conservation Area in my riding.

Areas like old growth forests in British Columbia and the boreal forest in Ontario provide important ecosystem services, and they're globally significant in acting as carbon sinks. I'm hoping that you could tell this committee more about our current efforts to conserve more of these important places.

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** Thank you very much, Mr. Weiler.

You are correct. Our government has made historic commitments and investment in nature conservation. In budget 2021 we included \$2.3 billion to deliver on our commitment to protect 25% of our lands and oceans by 2025, building on the historic investment of \$1.3 billion in budget 2018.

Since 2015, approximately 290,000 square kilometres of land have been conserved, an area more than half the size of Manitoba. Some examples of newly protected areas since 2018 include the Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve, which is an area designated as a whole with indigenous protection and conservation. It's the transfer of over 800 square kilometres of native prairie grassland to Environment Canada from the Province of Saskatchewan to be managed as a conservation area.

The Government of Canada is also pursuing public-private partnerships to help meet, protect and conserve areas' objectives. Launched in 2019 with a \$100-million investment from the Government of Canada, the natural heritage conservation program, a four-year program administered by the Nature Conservancy of Canada, with contributions from partners like Ducks Unlimited Canada and the country's land trusts, supports the securement of private lands with high biodiversity value for conservation. The government is committed to protecting 25% of our lands by 2025, as well as our oceans, and 30% by 2030.

I should point out that before our arrival in 2015, the previous government had barely protected 2% of our oceans. Since 2015 we've brought that up to more than 14%. We've made significant progress to achieve our 2025 commitments, but we are well aware there is a lot more work that needs to be done.

**Mr. Patrick Weiler:** Thank you.

I'd like to follow up on that last point.

The 25% goal of lands and waters by 2025 is a very ambitious goal for the second-largest country in the world. Unfortunately, the departmental plans indicate that our target is only protecting 17% to 20% of our lands and inland waters by 2025. I was hoping you could tell this committee if Canada on track to meet our goals by 2025, and if not, what is it going to take for us to be able to reach those targets?

• (1245)

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** As I said in my answer to your first question, we've made significant progress, but we realize there is a lot more work that needs to be done.

I am confident, and I think the department is confident, that we can reach those goals. We are working with a number of partners that I've mentioned. I could add Nature Canada, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society and many other partners that also feel confident. It is a lot of heavy lifting, but with the money provided in budget 2018 and budget 2021, as well as the doubling of the funds for a nature-based solution in the emissions reduction plan, we're confident that we can get there.

**Mr. Patrick Weiler:** Thank you.

I'm going to cede my time to MP May.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** How much time do I have, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** You have 45 seconds.

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Quickly then, Minister, the timing was rather awkward in that the emissions reduction plan came out on March 29. I put it to you that it needs to be completely overhauled to meet the demands of the April 4 report of the IPCC.

I know you've asked other MPs for citations. On page 22 of the "Summary for Policymakers", in paragraph C.1, it says that we have to peak emissions no later than 2025 and have them drop in half by 2030.

Are you prepared to scrap the TMX pipeline and Bay du Nord to have any hope of meeting the IPCC advice?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** Thank you for your question.

As you know and as you can see from the national inventories, our emissions have already peaked and are declining. The IPCC, in its latest report, said that we should reduce emissions by 43% by 2030. Our goal is to reduce them by 40% to 45%. We've presented a plan that clearly shows how we get to at least minus 40%, and we're on track to meeting our....

There will be an update to the emissions reduction plan next year, in 2023, which I hope will clearly show how we get to minus 45%, therefore being exactly where the IPCC is asking countries to be in terms of their emissions reduction.

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** I don't think you can actually just divide the peaking globally—

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. May.

[*Translation*]

I must stop you there.

We have time for one more round of questions.

Mr. Mazier, you have the floor for five minutes.

[*English*]

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** Thank you, Chair.

For ECCC, has your department conducted any analysis on how much carbon tax will increase the cost of food?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** For a detailed answer, I could certainly turn to the associate deputy minister, Mr. Paul Halucha, who could provide you with some information to your question.

**Mr. Paul Halucha (Associate Deputy Minister, Department of the Environment):** We have John Moffet on the phone, so I'm going to give him the opportunity to respond, but I would say with regard to carbon pricing that we are very carefully looking at what the impacts are on different sectors of the economy. Part of the objective of providing certainty or clarity to 2030 was to make sure there was certainty in the market so that investments that needed to happen in different sectors, including the agricultural sector, could happen.

We are very much in regular contact with the sector and we meet with them on a regular basis, along with colleagues from the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. They are an important stakeholder in terms of the ongoing analysis on carbon pricing.

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** On that, the question was on how much the carbon tax will increase the cost of food from now until 2030. I guess you haven't done this, basically.

**Mr. Paul Halucha:** It's very hard to isolate—

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** Yes or no? Have you looked at it? It doesn't come to top of mind, so probably not, right?

**Mr. Paul Halucha:** Right now, I would say, given supply chains and given what's happening internationally, I think if we had done a study two years ago—and we can certainly check to see if we did do that—we would need to revise it in light of new economic factors.

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** Can you please check? That would be great if we could get that to the committee.

**Mr. Paul Halucha:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** Minister, how many electric vehicle charging stations does the government plan to build specifically in rural, remote and northern communities by 2035?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** I don't have the breakdown across the country in front of me. As I said, our goal is to double what we initially committed to, going from 25,000 to 50,000. We could certainly

ly provide you with a regional breakdown of where the stations will be.

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** Yes, that regional breakdown is very important, especially for the rural and remote areas, so that would be great.

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** As you know, our incentive does provide for people who want to use plug-in hybrids, so you have a battery that gives you 40 or 50 or sometimes a little bit more autonomy on electricity, and then your internal combustion engine kicks in for those people whose needs can't be met solely by 100% electric vehicles.

• (1250)

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** That's at what cost? We talked about this last time. Affordability is a huge issue with those vehicles.

For the minister, again, in 2019 the Liberals promised to plant two billion trees. How many trees have been planted to date, and how much has this cost the Canadian taxpayers?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** As you know, the commitment was to plant two billion trees by 2030, not in 2019. I don't have the details of the program in front of me, but we can certainly follow up with you specifically on that. As you know, this program is administered by the ministry of natural resources, not Environment and Climate Change Canada.

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** Okay. If that could be tabled, that would be great.

To ECCC, has the department developed a briefing or recommendation on increasing the carbon tax by more than the scheduled increase within the next 10 years in order to meet the government's environmental targets?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** You're asking if there's been briefing on....

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** I'm asking the department, actually.

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** Oh, sorry.

**Mr. Paul Halucha:** I'm glad to take the question.

The answer is that we have not.

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** Okay. I guess I'll go back to Paul, then.

There was supposed to be \$60 million provided to schools, hospitals and municipalities over five years through the MUSH retrofit stream and climate action incentive fund. ECCC's website says, and I quote, "Information about funding for municipalities, universities/colleges, schools and hospitals under the MUSH Retrofit stream will be posted on our website as it becomes available."

The website has not been updated since 2020. Zero money has flowed to hospitals and municipalities despite this promise. Why is this?

**The Chair:** You have 20 seconds.

**Mr. Paul Halucha:** MUSH programming has been and is being delivered.

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** It's not, not in Manitoba. There's zero in Manitoba. Why?

**Mr. Paul Halucha:** Doug Nevison is on the line, and he's the program manager for that program.

Doug, do you have information specifically around that—

**The Chair:** Maybe you could send that in writing, because we have to go to Mr. Longfield.

**Mr. Paul Halucha:** We can provide that information in writing.

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Getting back to the estimates. There are increases of over \$323 million in estimates from 2021 to 2022-23 on votes 1, 5, and 10. I know it's largely the result of the government taking action on clean growth and climate change.

As we accelerate toward our 2030 targets, especially in the wake of the emissions reduction plan having been tabled this month, could we anticipate further increases to achieve our climate change goals, including building in accountability, something that this committee is very seized with? How confident are we that this plan, and the associated funds, will be effective at reducing greenhouse gas emissions going forward?

That was for the minister, please, or the department.

Minister, are you tight on time?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** I do have to leave in a few minutes, yes.

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield:** Could you take that, or the department? My time is clicking by.

**Mr. Paul Halucha:** Could you repeat the question one more time? I apologize.

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield:** It's a long question.

We're accelerating our funding, and it's showing in the estimates. Is that the result of us accelerating our targets? Are we looking at further accelerations going forward?

**Mr. Paul Halucha:** Yes, the funding will accelerate. Many of the programs are, and were, new. There were obviously some impacts on program delivery as a result of the COVID crisis, so many of those have been worked through, and those affect transfers between years, but the programs are delivering in line with our expectations, and they will increase.

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield:** I know funding comes from our budgets, and that's a political realm. You work with what you get from our decisions. I'm glad to hear that you're looking at that in terms of getting results.

I visited the High Arctic in 2018. We have the polar research station up there that's co-located with Environment Canada, looking at predicting weather patterns. Many of our weather forecasts, the five-day forecasts, come through Environment Canada's prediction services, and some of those are in the High Arctic, where Canada plays a global role. In fact, having access to the High Arctic, we're one of the only countries that can do this type of work.

These estimates are showing some funding coming from FedNor. There's other funding coming from Natural Resources Canada. Could you comment on supporting Environment and Climate Change Canada in the High Arctic?

• (1255)

**Mr. Paul Halucha:** I would absolutely agree with your statement around the importance of Arctic research. It is absolutely critical, and our High Arctic research centre plays a really important role, both on the planetary science on climate change, and then obviously for Canada as well.

The expenditure that you're specifically talking about is \$16.3 million over three years, starting in 2021. This money will be essentially for infrastructure and to recapitalize the facilities in the north. This will allow for the continuity of critical and important data. I would note in particular that a lot of research is happening on climate, in addition to the atmosphere in general, and on water as well.

It's critical for much of our programming. The observatory supports many of our domestic priorities, as well as international obligations. I can give you a number of those: the chemicals management plan, the northern contaminants program, the Arctic Council and the Arctic monitoring and atmospheric program. There are numerous programs that the money supports directly.

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield:** Great. Thank you.

In the minute I have left, I want to follow up on MP Thompson's line of questions around the ecological corridors.

The University of Guelph is receiving \$100,000 over two years to look at monarch butterflies, rusty patched bumblebees, gypsy cuckoo bumblebees and yellow-banded bumblebees. We also have the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association in Guelph that's looking at \$437,000 over a two-year period to look at biodiversity impacts. This is closing the loop on climate change in terms of what is happening to our biodiversity.

Could you comment on our investments in that area? How important are they?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** Maybe I can take a stab at that, Paul.

We now know that not only do we have a climate crisis, but we have a biodiversity loss crisis as well. We can't solve one without solving the other, and this is becoming an international consensus. Not everyone is there, but we are getting there; hence the massive and historic investment that Canada is making in conserving and protecting biodiversity.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Simard, you have two and a half minutes.

**Mr. Mario Simard:** Thank you.



Mr. Guilbeault, earlier, we talked about fossil fuel subsidies, and it is unfortunate, because the government has never wanted to define what it means by “subsidies”. However, a report from Oil Change International refers to a ratio of about 1:14, meaning that the government invests \$1 billion in green energy and \$14 billion in the oil and gas industry.

I mention this because I often have the impression that the 1:14 ratio is reproduced in your programs. In particular, I am thinking of the low carbon economy fund. I have never seen any criteria in your programs that promote industries that are more competitive in carbon sequestration and capture, including the forestry industry.

You probably know this better than I do, but the forest is a carbon sink. Today, many products that replace petrochemicals can be made using forest waste. People in that industry, known as the bio-economy, tell us that your government is completely absent. You are there when you need to reduce the carbon footprint of the oil and gas industry, but you are absent when it comes to supporting an industry that is a natural carbon sink.

Do you not find that contradictory?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** First, I have before me a recent study by the independent international NGO Energy Policy Tracker, which asserts that Canada invests more in renewable energy and clean technology than in fossil fuels. This was updated a few days ago, on April 27, 2022. I will send you the reference.

As I said earlier, we are still investing in fossil fuels, but we have committed to eliminating those subsidies. We are therefore on the right path. I entirely agree that more must be done.

As for your question about the forestry industry, in particular, as you know, that industry falls under the Department of Natural Resources, not the Department of the Environment. I would be happy to forward your question to them.

Now, Mr. Chair, I am very sorry, but I am expected, so I will need to leave you.

• (1300)

**The Chair:** Okay.

Thank you for being here, Minister.

[*English*]

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** Mr. Chair, I have a point of order.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Yes, Ms. Collins?

[*English*]

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** I asked at the beginning if the minister would be here for the whole time, and you answered yes. We're at the very end, and I'm the only member left to ask a question. It would take two and a half minutes.

**The Chair:** There are two others after you.

The idea was that he would be here until one o'clock. That meant those two hours, but we started late.

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** Mr. Chair, I had some really important questions about the clean fuel standard.

**The Chair:** The officials will remain here.

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** Great. Thank you.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister, and see you next time.

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Have a good day, everyone.

**The Chair:** Mr. Simard, you have barely 10 seconds left.

**Mr. Mario Simard:** That is fine. Consider it my gift.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Ms. Collins now has the floor.

[*English*]

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

To the department officials, the much-delayed clean fuel standard is a critical part of the emissions reduction plan. As it stands, it's shaping up to be yet another fossil fuel subsidy.

Under the draft regulations, fossil fuel companies can meet compliance in part by selling products like asphalt, sulphur and plastic bags, which have nothing to do with transportation and artificially improve the economics of crude oil. Even worse, this undermines the economics of actual clean energy and clean fuels, such as electricity, advanced biofuels or green hydrogen.

These subsidies have real impacts, and in this case they're displacing the clean fuels that are so critical to a safe climate. Will the department be removing the standard's provisions that clearly subsidize the fossil fuel production but also displace real clean fuels?

**Mr. Paul Halucha:** I'll start, and then John Moffet can take a bit of it.

I would just note that we would disagree with the characterization of the clean fuel standard as a fossil fuel subsidy, recognizing that it is a term that requires some agility to define.

We would note as well that the clean fuel standards will come out in the springtime. This has been on the regulatory forward agenda for some time. It's a complicated package that we have been working on with really extensive consultations with the sectors, including the biofuel sector as well.

It has as its objective to decarbonize and reduce the carbon intensity of clean fuels—

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** Just because I have a very short amount of time—

**Mr. Paul Halucha:** Do you want to answer, John, just on the specifics on threshold—

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** Just for some context for John, no other jurisdictions that have clean fuel standards, such as B.C., California, Oregon and Europe, allow fossil fuels to earn credits when they're exported.

Not only does this do nothing to reduce emissions from the fuels we use in Canada, but every exported fossil credit is a credit that does not support real clean fuels.

Are you going to be addressing this loophole?

**The Chair:** Who is answering?

We have very limited time, but please take a stab at it for 15 seconds or so.

**Mr. John Moffet (Assistant Deputy Minister, Environmental Protection Branch, Department of the Environment):** I'm not sure I would characterize the issue as a loophole.

As our associate deputy minister explained, the goal of the clean fuel regulation is to reduce the life-cycle intensity of fuel. If we reduce the carbon intensity of the production of fuel in Canada, regardless of where that fuel is used, then we have reduced the life-cycle intensity of that fuel, and that's what we will be crediting.

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** Three megatonnes of reduction is largely because of double-dipping. Experts have said that the clean fuel standard should be reducing emissions about tenfold that amount. Because of these loopholes, because of this kind of double-dipping when these actions are happening anyway, the standard is not having the impact that it could.

• (1305)

**The Chair:** We're way over time, and it's very technical.

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** We'll have to go to Mr. Dreeshen, who will be splitting time with Mr. Seeback. I'll let both of you work out the proportions.

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Of course it does make me a little nervous when I hear non-scientific terms coming from the minister, such as tar sands, which of course they are not, but perhaps that was just something that was lost in translation.

He talked about how he hadn't made it out to a farm to take a look at what agriculture is about, and of course there's quite a bit of concern there, and also to the oil sands, I think everyone has to realize—it doesn't matter which one of us as MPs—that if there happens to be a chunk in our riding where we'd like to see an open-pit mine in order to get the rare earth minerals that are required, then we'd better go up to Fort McMurray to see what a reclamation program looks like, because that's where the world-class expertise really lies. That's where my question comes in.

I really want to know if this government has a real vision for the future, one in which the mining and processing of rare earth minerals takes our world-class reclamation expertise and our human rights records and deals with that, or when the time comes, is that too going to be politically demonized, as we hear when everyone says, "Oh, you can't do this in my backyard"?

**The Chair:** Who's that for?

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen:** Paul, go ahead.

**Mr. Paul Halucha:** The critical minerals strategy is led out of the Department of Natural Resources, but Environment Canada participates and has an important role in the minister's portfolio, especially given the fact that the Impact Assessment Agency forms a critical part of the social licence, which I think was a key part of your question.

It is fed through the environmental assessment process, and they make the determination. There are extensive consultations on the scientific side, as you know, and with community members and first nations to essentially establish whether and under what conditions projects can go forward. I think that's a critical part of this.

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen:** That's great. I do have to split my time, but I hope that all MPs from all parties are just as open when we have to do that type of engagement around the country.

Mr. Seeback, go ahead.

**Mr. Kyle Seeback:** I'm really concerned about costs to Canadians with the emissions reduction plan. I know that the minister said he hadn't read the RBC report, but they outlined some of the costs of this plan.

A big part of this is the zero-emissions vehicle mandate by 2035. It's 100%. In order to do that, you're going to have to build out a charging network. With all due respect to the minister, if you're in a rural area, a plug-in hybrid will not qualify as a ZEV in 2035, so that will not be helpful.

RBC says that \$25 billion per year needs to be invested, starting now, to build out the charging network. Have you calculated your different costs to build out the charging network across Canada to meet the 2035 ZEV mandate?

**Mr. Paul Halucha:** I'm looking at John, in case he has already done this. I believe the short answer is that we have not calculated out to the end point.

There are a couple of things that I would say. I think you raised the point earlier around the electrification challenges. You're right that there is going to be an increased demand in electrification. We have two issues in Canada. We need to decarbonize what we have, and then we need to expand. The investments and the costs of that are going to be very high.

**Mr. Kyle Seeback:** You just said you haven't done that for the charging stations, so that's—

**Mr. Paul Halucha:** On the charging stations, what the government announced was—

**Mr. Kyle Seeback:** I know what the investments are. I've seen the announcements. I'm just saying that if you've calculated the total build-out costs, and it doesn't look like you have—

**Mr. Paul Halucha:** I would think that's an unknowable. That would be a very challenging number to know, given how technology is changing right now. We did this in the nineties, when we built the information highway—

**Mr. Kyle Seeback:** It's an estimate. RBC came up with one. I would think that if they could do it, the Government of Canada probably could as well, if they turned their mind to it.

**Mr. Paul Halucha:** I don't want to comment on the RBC estimate. Estimates on that need to be carefully considered. I'm sure we could come up with an estimate.

There's an uptake and there's an amount of infrastructure you can build on an annual basis. The funding is sufficient at this point. To my knowledge, we haven't run out of the money needed. It's been recapitalized, just like the rebate program. There is strong support happening.

**Mr. Kyle Seeback:** There are six charging stations in my town, the Town of Orangeville—six. If it's a 100% ZEV mandate and there are six charging stations in Orangeville for 37,000 people, it's not going to work.

These are costs the government should be looking at and telling Canadians about, because Canadians have to factor in whether they're going to be able to afford this. That's where my question is. Have you looked at the cost of things like this?

For example, electricity is subsidized to the tune of \$7.5 billion a year by the Government of Ontario. If you're doubling the generation of electricity for ZEVs, what's that going to cost the Government of Ontario? Has the Government of Canada looked at these types of costs sector by sector? You put out a plan saying how you're going to do it. Have you looked at what the cost is and who's going to pay it?

• (1310)

**The Chair:** Please answer within 10 seconds.

**Mr. Paul Halucha:** The answer is yes. We do cost analysis on all programming.

The other question you asked was whether we know the full cost of every charging station up to the last one, and the answer to that would be no, but yes, the policy analysis that supports budgetary decisions is based on costing estimates.

**The Chair:** I'm afraid I have to stop you. We're way over time.

**Mr. Kyle Seeback:** Can we have those costing estimates tabled for the committee, please?

**Mr. Paul Halucha:** John, is there a costing estimate we can provide to the committee?

**The Chair:** If there is, please send it in writing.

Go ahead, Ms. Thompson.

**Ms. Joanne Thompson:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I wanted to circle back to questions for Parks Canada. The minister referenced this in an earlier question.

Could someone elaborate on Parks Canada's support for the recognition and implementation of the rights of indigenous peoples?

**Mr. Ron Hallman:** Parks Canada currently works within the traditional territories, treaties, lands and ancestral homelands of approximately 300 first nation, Inuit and Métis communities. We work with indigenous partners to advance stewardship and conser-

vation of both nature and cultural heritage in a way that reflects indigenous rights, priorities and aspirations, and that also advances the Government of Canada's commitments to reconciliation.

We're currently engaged in 37 recognition of indigenous rights and self-determination processes, working towards reaching negotiated agreements to support rights implementation. In addition, the agency participates in 29 modern treaty and comprehensive land claims negotiations in which indigenous partners have an interest in cultural heritage and lands administered by Parks Canada.

**Ms. Joanne Thompson:** Thank you.

On the same theme, could you speak to the efforts being taken by Parks Canada to advance indigenous stewardship initiatives across the heritage places within its administration?

**Mr. Ron Hallman:** Sorry, Mr. Chair, I'm having an issue with my earpiece.

Would you mind repeating the question, Ms. Thompson?

**Ms. Joanne Thompson:** Could you elaborate more specifically on Parks Canada's efforts to advance indigenous stewardship initiatives across heritage places under its administration?

**Mr. Ron Hallman:** Thank you.

Mr. Chair, the 2020 response to the minister's round table on Parks Canada included a commitment to develop a framework to support indigenous stewardship in Parks Canada places through processes of collaboration and dialogue with indigenous peoples, in recognition of the important roles and responsibilities of indigenous peoples in protecting and conserving land, water and ice.

We have undertaken preliminary policy work to advance indigenous stewardship across Parks Canada-administered places, with an approach that will strengthen reconnections to the land, water and ice; empower indigenous voices; support indigenous leadership and self-determination; respect indigenous rights and responsibilities, as well as indigenous knowledge and knowledge systems; and build a greener and more equitable future for future generations.

**Ms. Joanne Thompson:** Thank you.

I want to circle back to the Impact Assessment Agency. Could one of the witnesses address how the Impact Assessment Agency demonstrates to indigenous and public participants that their views are truly considered in policy development and decision-making?

**Mr. Terence Hubbard (President, Impact Assessment Agency of Canada):** One of the fundamental objectives of the new Impact Assessment Act was to support and encourage more meaningful consultations, both with the public and with indigenous peoples across Canada. We do this in a number of ways.

First off, it's through open participation, right at the beginning of our planning process, so that viewpoints received can be factored into how our process is mapped out and how communities can participate in that process throughout. We provide funding to support participation. A large part of the agency's grant and contribution programs is aimed toward building capacity and supporting meaningful consultations with indigenous communities across Canada.

More broadly, throughout our process we look to ensure that we can incorporate indigenous traditional knowledge and what we learn through communities and consultations as we look to advance ways to mitigate and minimize any potential impacts of projects as they're being developed.

It is central to our new legislative framework and it's something that we work to improve through each project that we assess.

• (1315)

**Ms. Joanne Thompson:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Thank you to the witnesses for being with us again. We look forward to meeting often in the future, so thank you.

Now members of the committee have to vote on the estimates. I will go through each vote individually and ask the question of whether the vote shall carry, less the amount voted in interim supply.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Vote 1—Operating expenditures.....\$969,250,762

(Vote 1 agreed to on division)

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Vote 5—Capital expenditures.....\$120,490,444

(Vote 5 agreed to on division)

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Vote 10—Grants and contributions.....\$770,281,713

(Vote 10 agreed to on division)

IMPACT ASSESSMENT AGENCY OF CANADA

Vote 1—Operating expenditures.....\$52,587,500

(Vote 1 agreed to on division)

IMPACT ASSESSMENT AGENCY OF CANADA

Vote 5—Grants and contributions.....\$21,453,903

(Vote 5 agreed to on division)

PARKS CANADA AGENCY

Vote 1—Operating expenditures, grants and contributions.....\$622,094,141

(Vote 1 agreed to on division)

PARKS CANADA AGENCY

Vote 5—Capital expenditures.....\$138,130,184

(Vote 5 agreed to on division)

PARKS CANADA AGENCY

Vote 10—Payments to the New Parks and Historic Sites Account.....\$21,258,071

(Vote 10 agreed to on division)

**The Chair:** Are we good, Mr. Clerk?

We're good.

Thank you to the members for an interesting discussion. We'll see you on Thursday for the last—I believe it's the last—meeting of our study on fossil fuels. We'll have representatives from the Department of the Environment and the Department of Finance.

The meeting is adjourned.







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