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# Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development

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Chair: Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia





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• (1105)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.)):** I call this meeting of the Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development to order. This is our second meeting of the 44th Parliament.

We meet today in a hybrid format. Welcome, everyone.

I remind you that taking screenshots or photos of your screen during the meeting is not permitted. We must follow some directives from the Board of Internal Economy. First, we must maintain physical distancing of two metres and we must wear a non-medical mask when circulating in the room. If you are in the room, I urge you to wear your mask at all times, except, of course, when you are speaking. You have hand sanitizer if you need it. I would also like to point out that, because of the current circumstances, we have been advised that we can only have one assistant per party with us, not one assistant per member. I see that we are complying with that directive.

I am not telling you anything you don't know because you are all experienced and the witnesses have all appeared previously. But I must mention that you can use the official language of your choice. Please stay on mute until I give you the floor.

[*English*]

That pretty much covers it for procedure and protocol.

Before we start, we have up to five minutes of committee business. Essentially, the item of committee business we have to deal with is adopting the report of the steering committee. Are members all agreed to adopt the report?

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** Mr. Chair, thank you very much, and happy new year to you and to all committee members. It's great to be back here at work at ENVI.

On the subcommittee, I totally understand the clerk is in a very difficult situation, because lots of stuff gets discussed at subcommittee. While I agree that we all agreed on the Bloc Québécois motion to study nuclear waste and the NDP study to study subsidies, and then a yet to be determined or named Conservative study, the Liberal one contains a “seven meetings” reference.

I wanted to see if we can separate out the number, because I don't believe we actually agreed to a number of meetings. I think that—in good faith, Mr. Chair—we should have a discussion around that. Either we can remove the Liberal motion as it stands and refer that

to the subcommittee to have a little further discussion around the number of meetings.... I'm fine with whatever subject Liberal members want to talk about. I respect their voters and I also just want to have a discussion on the amount of time.

Either we can send that to the subcommittee or we can just delete the reference to the number of meetings—in this case the number is seven—and then simply approve it as is and then have that discussion at an upcoming subcommittee meeting.

**The Chair:** Mr. Longfield, I don't want to spend too much time. If this becomes a broader discussion, I suggest that we discuss the subcommittee report on Thursday. I was hoping we could get it settled today, but....

Go ahead, Mr. Longfield.

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.):** I put my hand up right away. I was going to move that we accept the report as presented to us.

**The Chair:** Would we like to vote on whether we adopt the report as is?

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Mr. Chair, if you find that motion in order, we can debate that. I'll just make an amendment to delete the reference to the number of meetings, and then we can have a good-faith discussion at the next subcommittee.

As I said, I'm not opposed to Liberals doing a study. I actually think a water study would be rather enlightening. I don't believe we agreed on the number of meetings yet. That's my recollection of it. If other subcommittee members would like to speak up on that, I'd be happy to.... If I'm in the minority, we will simply just have the motion pass.

I do want to get to the environment commissioner, though.

• (1110)

**The Chair:** We have the commissioner waiting. I propose that we just do this on Thursday here in the committee and get on with the—

**Mr. Dan Albas:** I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** Wait a minute.

Mr. Longfield, did you have your hand up?

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield:** Yes. The meeting reference, seven, was in the motion I presented to the committee, so there wasn't a change there. That was before the subcommittee. If there needs to be further work, so be it, but that is part of the motion I presented.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** On my point of order, we actually can't move on to the environment commissioner, and I do want to, until we resolve the report from the subcommittee. You can't defer it, because it allows for today to happen.

**The Chair:** Who else?

Sorry, Ms. Collins. Apparently Mr. Duguid was first.

It's very hard. There's a screen and there's in person. There are hands going up left, right and centre.

Mr. Duguid.

**Mr. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, I think this is in the spirit of where you're coming from. We have the sustainable development commissioner waiting. Could we defer this to the end of the meeting and have the discussion?

I think there will be considerable debate on this issue; I think the honourable members want to get on to the sustainable development commissioner.

**The Chair:** Ms. Collins.

**Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP):** I'm going to echo the same thing. If we could at least defer the conversation around the seven meetings, if we could separate that out and continue on, we'd like to get to the commissioner.

**The Chair:** We're debating Mr. Albas's amendment to Mr. Longfield's motion to adopt the steering committee report. Is that correct?

**Mr. Dan Albas:** I didn't enunciate the specifics, though.

Mr. Chair, just to speed things up, I move that we amend the original motion that is for the Liberal study on water so that it does not refer to number of meetings, and just say "yet to be determined amount of meetings". Then we'll just pass that to the subcommittee and we can get it moving.

**The Chair:** Would somebody like to speak to Mr. Albas's amendment?

Mr. Duguid.

**Mr. Terry Duguid:** Well, Mr. Chair, it seems that our friends from the NDP and the Conservatives have been chatting about this issue. While I certainly hope they will come to the conclusion that seven meetings or more are warranted on a topic that has been dominating our headlines, the ridings of two of the honourable members, if not three, have been under water. We have a water crisis in this country. We have a climate change adaptation crisis in this country. My friends from Manitoba will know that we've had the worst drought in some districts in 130 years. I'm really surprised that members opposite wouldn't give this study its due. I guess their minds are not completely made up. I will certainly be working hard to change their minds if they are proposing that the number of meetings be reduced.

I would remind honourable members that I was there for your speech in which the honourable member for Victoria asked you to reduce the number of meetings, I think, from nine to seven and you agreed. I'm really disappointed in the honourable member for Victoria.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Ms. Pauzé, the floor is yours.

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Chair, I am wondering about the procedure.

Ms. Collins suggested moving right away to the Commissioner's presentation and finishing these discussions later. Am I wrong?

In my opinion, the Chair can decide whether the committee must continue the discussion or postpone it to the end of the session. Once again, am I wrong?

• (1115)

**The Chair:** One moment please, Ms. Pauzé.

You can make a proposal, but I cannot rule on it. Your proposal can be that we discuss it at another time.

The clock is ticking and that would leave us less time to ask the Commissioner questions. But, you can suggest, for example, that we discuss the matter on Thursday.

Is that what you're proposing?

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** I am proposing that we hear from the Commissioner and the officials from the department right away.

If we have any time left at the end of the meeting, we can discuss it then. If not, we can postpone the discussion until Thursday.

**The Chair:** I don't think we will have any time left at the end of the session. We have already used 15 minutes at the start. That means that our witnesses are going to have less time for their appearances. One moment, please.

We are going to have to continue. Unfortunately, Ms. Pauzé, we cannot discuss or decide on your proposal. We must decide on Mr. Albas's proposal, which we are in the process of debating.

Mr. Longfield, you have the floor.

[English]

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield:** Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Thanks to Madame Pauzé. I really like the direction she was taking to try to get back to our meeting. A dilatory motion to do that would be, I think, something that could be considered in order. I would make that motion that we postpone the discussion of our motion, which, again, is exactly what I presented to the committee, and it's also the motion that we were considering in the last Parliament.

Nothing has changed, other than all of a sudden, today, at the last minute, Mr. Albas wants to reduce the number of meetings for a critical study for this committee to undertake, a study that includes the Canada water agency, which should be reporting back to Parliament. I would love to see what they're doing. Water is a critical issue.

I agree with Mr. Duguid. We need meetings to do that discussion, but obviously this is going to be a longer discussion, so I would defer this debate until our next meeting.

**The Chair:** Just a moment, please. I have Mr. Davidson.

**Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Through you, I respect everyone on this committee. We're in a minority Parliament, and for my colleague across the way here, Mr. Chair, they're making the assumption that we want to decrease the meetings on water. We just want to have an open discussion. Maybe we're going to need nine days. Maybe we're going to need eight. Maybe it is seven. We just wanted a discussion. We might need more. We know how important water is—

**The Chair:** I don't think that's where people are going.

Apparently, Mr. Longfield, you could propose that we adjourn this discussion, in which case I will reschedule it and we can start with the commissioner, if that's what you want to do.

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield:** Okay. I propose that we adjourn this discussion.

**The Chair:** Just a moment.

We're going to vote on just adjourning this debate so that we can get to our discussion with the commissioner, and then I'll schedule another meeting to discuss this.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** On a point of order, Mr. Chair, if we end debate, we don't have a subcommittee report that allows us to go to the environment commissioner.

**The Chair:** Actually, I think we kind of agreed to have the environment commissioner—

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Well, I just.... The whole point.... That's why I was just hoping that we could quickly vote on this or quickly just say, "Yes, let's have the subcommittee work." I do want to hear from the environment commissioner, but I also.... We did not get agreement on the number of meetings. We had an agreement that we'd have a—

**The Chair:** I understand that, yes. [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] the environment commissioner, but first we have to vote on Mr. Longfield's motion to adjourn this particular debate and do it at another time.

• (1120)

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Alexandre Longpré):** The vote is to adjourn debate.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 7; nays 4)

**The Chair:** We'll proceed with hearing from the commissioner.

Commissioner, welcome. It's nice to see you again.

I believe you have prepared a 10-minute opening statement. Please go ahead.

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco (Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, Office of the Auditor General):** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We're happy to appear before your committee this morning.

I'd like to acknowledge that this hearing is taking place from the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people.

With me today are Kim Leach, James McKenzie, David Normand and Michelle Salvail. They are responsible for the reports that were tabled in the House of Commons on November 25, 2021.

I will start by providing an overview of the commissioner's role before going over the findings of those reports. The Office of the Auditor General of Canada conducts performance audits, including audits of the environment and sustainable development that are led by the commissioner, who is appointed by the Auditor General. We examine whether the activities and programs of federal organizations are managed with due regard to economy, efficiency, effectiveness and environmental impact. We provide parliamentarians with objective, fact-based information and expert advice.

On behalf of the Auditor General, the commissioner reports to Parliament at least once a year on environment and sustainable development matters that the commissioner considers should be brought to Parliament's attention. In practice, I will normally be reporting twice a year. The reports are referred to this committee.

The commissioner helps the Office of the Auditor General of Canada incorporate environmental and sustainable development considerations, as appropriate, across its work. This includes considering the United Nations' sustainable development goals when selecting, designing and carrying out performance audits. These goals are a priority area for the work of the entire office.

[*Translation*]

The Commissioner also reviews and comments on the federal government's draft sustainable development strategy under the Federal Sustainable Development Act. Once the strategy is implemented, we monitor and report on the extent to which federal departments and agencies contribute to meeting the targets of the overall federal strategy and the objectives of individual departmental strategies. We also review the fairness of the information in the federal government's progress reports on the implementation of the strategy.

The Commissioner manages and reports on the environmental petitions process on behalf of the Auditor General. Through this process, Canadians can directly ask federal ministers specific questions about environmental and sustainable development issues under federal jurisdiction and are guaranteed a response.

In addition, as you are aware, the Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act came into force in June 2021. The act requires the Commissioner to examine, report on, and make recommendations about the Government of Canada's implementation of measures to mitigate climate change, including those meant to achieve the government's most recent greenhouse gas emission target.

I'm going to turn now to our recent reports. The first report that I would like to focus on provides the findings of our audit of the Emissions Reduction Fund for the oil and gas sector. This fund was part of the measures that the Government of Canada rolled out in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It aimed to reduce harmful emissions while maintaining employment and encouraging investments in oil and gas companies.

We found that the program was poorly designed because it did not link funding to net emission reductions from conventional on-shore oil and gas operations. For example, in two thirds of the 40 projects funded by the Emissions Reduction Fund, companies stated in their applications that the funding would allow them to increase their production levels. When production increases, so do the related emissions, and these increases were not reflected in Natural Resources Canada's projections.

To help Canada achieve its national targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, Natural Resources Canada should make sure that its policies, programs, and measures are based on reliable estimates of expected emission reductions.

• (1125)

[English]

I will now move on to our next report. In this audit, we examined whether Environment and Climate Change Canada and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada were working together using a risk-based approach to reduce algal blooms caused by excess nutrient pollution in three Canadian water basins. The three basins we examined were Lake Erie, Lake Winnipeg and the Wolastoq Saint John River.

Canada has a stated goal of increasing sustainable agricultural production, which could increase nutrient runoff. Excess nutrients can lead to a runaway growth of algae, which can in turn produce toxins that are harmful to humans, livestock, pets and wildlife.

We found that the two departments were moving in the right direction, but could have an even greater impact on freshwater quality outcomes if they further coordinated their science efforts and shared information with other organizations involved in water resource management.

For the next report, as we do each year, we assessed the progress of selected departments and agencies in implementing their sustainable development strategies, focusing on transparency and accountability in reporting. We reviewed departmental agency actions under three federal goals: healthy coasts and oceans, pristine lakes and rivers, and sustainable food.

Overall, reporting on actions to achieve the federal goals was poor. Departments and agencies did not provide results for almost half of the actions they reported on. Gaps in reporting make it difficult for parliamentarians and Canadians to understand progress being made against Canada's sustainable development commitments.

[Translation]

Our recent reports also included the annual report on environmental petitions. We received 14 petitions from July 2020 to June 2021. They raised concerns in areas that included biodiversity, climate change, and toxic substances.

I'm going to turn now to my last report, which is not an audit but a summary of lessons learned from Canada's climate change efforts since 1990.

After more than 30 years, the trend in Canada's greenhouse gas emissions, which create harmful climate impacts, is going up. Despite repeated government commitments to decrease emissions, they have increased by more than 20% since 1990.

At the heart of this report are eight lessons learned from Canada's action and inaction on the enduring climate crisis.

Leadership is the first lesson. Stronger leadership and coordination are needed to drive progress on climate change.

Other lessons include reducing dependence on high-emission industries, learning to adapt to climate change impacts, investing in a climate-resilient future, increasing public awareness, acting on and not just speaking about climate targets, involving all climate solution actors, and protecting the interests of future generations.

[English]

In closing, there is a need for the federal government to achieve real outcomes on environmental protection and sustainable development, not just words on paper or unfulfilled promises. All too often, Canada's environmental commitments are not met with the actions needed to protect air, land, water and wildlife, now and for future generations, and this is a trend we urgently need to reverse.

It is my hope that you'll invite us and government officials to appear before your committee on every one of our audits and at any other time we may be able to support your work. Using our audit work and the expertise and insight of department and agency officials and other stakeholders helps your committee enhance accountability. Asking departments and agencies to provide the committee with action plans to implement our recommendations and any recommendations that the committee makes will also help raise the progress bar on environmental and sustainable development issues on behalf of all Canadians.

Mr. Chair, this concludes my opening remarks. We're happy to answer any questions the committee may have.

• (1130)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Commissioner DeMarco.

We'll go to Mr. Albas for six minutes.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Thank you, Commissioner. I appreciate the work you and your office do.

In your opening comments, you suggested something similar to what the Standing Committee on Public Accounts does on a regular basis. When Auditor General reports come in, the committee reviews them. They have the Auditor General come in and speak to them, and then they will usually—again, I'm using this term habitually—agree with the Auditor General, make recommendations and ask for an action plan from departments.

Is that what you are suggesting in your comments?

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** That is something that the committee could consider to enhance accountability. With your experience at public accounts, I'm sure you're aware that typically at the beginning of each parliamentary session the public accounts committee adopts a motion regarding those action plans. It's something that could be done with this committee, too, because as we are part of the Office of the Auditor General and there's that accountability measure for Ms. Hogan's reports that go to the public accounts committee, you could consider having a similar accountability mechanism with respect to the reports that I table with the Speaker that are referred to this committee, yes.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** We have a government that prides itself on its own actions, its own policies, and I will be getting into some reports that are very critical of the government, but this is more of a meta-question here, then, in regard to your suggestion. Are you not getting sufficient action plans and responses from the departments? Do they agree with you? If so, are they not taking action on your recommendations?

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** That's a good question. One of the advantages of having action plans produced at the committee is that we give our draft reports to the entities, such as federal departments, and they provide an immediate response, which we include in a text box in our reports. Those are their immediate thoughts on our recommendations.

However, it takes longer to produce an action plan, and we would have to wait months to publish our reports if we waited for action plans, so there's an issue of the short-term feasibility of the response and the longer-term feasibility of an action plan. If we came to the committee with an action plan after having had time to digest a report and consider an action plan that would breathe life into the response that the department has given, that would enhance accountability beyond the audit cycle that we work with in producing our reports.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** The government will answer to your recommendation and say they agree, but it seems you are suggesting that the government doesn't take it seriously enough to actually respond with an authoritative action plan. Is it because they don't respect your office, or is it because they simply don't want to be accountable or follow through with your recommendations?

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** I don't think there's an across-the-board answer for every report, because some of our recommendations are implemented more diligently than others. It was certainly one of the lessons learned for our own report on lessons learned on climate change. When we put together that appendix in the lessons learned on climate change, we saw how many of our recommendations, over the years on climate change, were accepted by the government. It wasn't a case of their rejecting our recommendations; they were accepted but we weren't seeing that follow-through in terms

of results and actions. That's why the committee could consider this enhanced accountability of requiring action plans.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** If my wife asks me to do the dishes, and I accept her recommendation but then proceed not to do it over a long period of time, Commissioner, wouldn't my wife be willing to say that I have rejected that recommendation or that I don't respect her office?

• (1135)

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** I can't speak for her or for you, but I would say that you didn't follow through on the commitment in your response.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Really, either the government is making pretty claims and then just letting things slide back to...whether it's bureaucratic inertia or whatnot, or it just doesn't care.

I'll just move on, though, to "Report 5: Lessons Learned from Canada's Record on Climate Change", and I hope, in a second round of this, that I can ask some more specific questions. I'd like to again ask a meta-question. Why is it you've chosen historical analysis rather than a performance audit?

**The Chair:** Be fairly brief, if you could, Commissioner. We're on a tight timeline today, for obvious reasons.

Go ahead, please.

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** We wanted to give Canadians and Parliament the full picture of Canada's climate record. Audits are very important, and that's the mainstay of our work, but they're typically time-limited and they focus on one program or another, like the emissions reduction fund, which we may talk about later. We wanted to weave together all of the lessons we could have learned from many years of audits on climate change into one comprehensive report. That was the point of that report.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Duguid for six minutes.

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

I want to thank the commissioner for his report, particularly his excellent work on river basins.

I was talking about water not too long ago. We have members gathered here who have faced the water challenges up close and personal, with droughts and floods. We know what our country is facing. We have a water crisis.

You point out the need for coordination between departments—the agriculture ministry along with Environment and Climate Change Canada—but the last time I checked, 26 departments and agencies touch water in one form or another. You may have read in Minister Guilbeault's mandate letter the need for the creation of a Canada water agency, not just to coordinate what Agriculture Canada and Environment and Climate Change Canada are doing, but also to have that whole-of-government, cross-ministry approach to deal with some of our water challenges.

I wonder if you would have some comments on the need for new institutional relationships. Most water challenges are what I would call governance challenges.

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** The water issue illustrates the complexity of the environmental and sustainable development challenges we face. Many times these issues that are intractable and long-standing are ones where there is dispersed decision-making authority. This is not only across departments and institutions within one level of government, but also across levels of government—provincial, municipal, indigenous—and across boundaries, international boundaries, which is the case for these three water basins.

As our environmental and sustainable development problems have become more complex and difficult to address through single departments, a one-window approach isn't so.... There is a need for more coordination and more coordination bodies, so long as they focus not just on coordination, but also on real results—on water in this case, on land, on the atmosphere or on wildlife. I would suggest that with many of these issues of a horizontal nature, like water, we need to increase the level of coordination and increase the focus on tangible progress in the form of outcomes.

**Mr. Terry Duguid:** You've just described what we hope the Canada water agency will do. I hope you will be auditing the Canada water agency in the next year or two.

My next question comes from your report, in which you highlight that we're falling behind on investing in a climate-resilient future that points to climate change adaptation. Again, the minister's mandate letter calls for him to have a climate change adaptation strategy plan by the end of 2022. What kind of metrics and what kind of design of a program would you be looking for, so that it results in tangible outcomes?

• (1140)

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** Well, I can speak to that issue in part. I say in part because we're actually in the throes of an audit related to climate-resilient infrastructure. We'll have more to say on that later this year.

This is another issue that requires coordination. Even though the types of impacts vary across the country, there does need to be a coordinated approach for prioritization. The scale of problems is immense and growing each year, as many of your constituents well know. The features that we would like to see are that ample resources are put to the problem, that we work simultaneously on adaptation, resilience and mitigation, and that we do not give up on mitigation and focus just on adaptation or vice-versa. We need to work on both to produce the scale of effects as well as to move forward with adaptation.

We will have much more to say on that in our next report on that very issue.

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

Mr. Chair, I think I have about a minute left, so let me just address one more issue.

The commissioner rightly points out that governments have been long on rhetoric and short on the delivery of results over the last 30 years.

Would the commissioner agree that with the most recent climate plan, which I believe is granular and detailed and has begun implementing measures like carbon pricing, we have started down the road of delivering concrete results? I wonder if he's confident about the 36% reduction in emissions that are projected by the plan.

**The Chair:** Unfortunately, we're all out of time. Maybe you could weave your answer into a response to another question. I'm sorry about that.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Pauzé, the floor is yours for six minutes.

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good morning, Commissioner. Thank you for joining us and for the interesting reports you have submitted.

In the last Parliament, we talked about the funding for your organization, the Office of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, and about the means that you have at your disposal. You were given new responsibilities under Bill C-12, which was passed in June 2021.

Have the financial resources at your disposal increased as a result?

Also, for how many years has the budget increased? Is it a long-term increase?

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** Thank you for your question.

The Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act does give us an important new mandate. I can say that we have not received a new budget for that mandate specifically. We are currently studying our options for this new mandate. To this point, we do not know how much each option could cost, whether we will be asking for additional resources, or whether we will find the resources we need in our current budget.

This is a new mandate. Our first report has to be published in 2024 at the latest. We are currently studying our options, including how to finance the resources for those options.

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** Okay.

In one of your reports in November, on the federal sustainable development strategy, you paint a troubling picture. My question is much like the one my colleague Mr. Albas asked.

How are you going to fulfill those responsibilities in terms of a federal strategy, if your recommendations are not fully implemented, with timelines and monitoring?

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** Yes, your question is much like the one Mr. Albas asked.

There must be accountability. It is all very well to publish reports and to receive responses, but, in my opinion, actions speak louder than words. I want to know whether our actions will produce results. We have to focus on results, not just on responses.

• (1145)

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** Agreed.



You state in your report and in your presentation that, when oil and gas production increases, emissions increase as well. We know that, during the election campaign, the government made promises about putting a cap on greenhouse gas emissions. But there was no mention of production.

Does the example of the Offshore Deployment Program not in fact show us that promising reductions is useless if the state is helping to increase production?

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** The temperature of the planet is affected by the emissions and concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. The amount of greenhouse gases that goes back into the oceans must also be considered. We need a target that measures all emissions, meaning net emissions. There are a number of possible ways of establishing such a target.

Because of lesson 2 in our report entitled “lessons learned from Canada’s record on climate change”, I believe that Canada has begun to realize that a ceiling for emissions must be established because we have set net-zero as our target. So net emissions must be brought to zero in 2050 and reduced to 45% as of 2030. We must put a cap on our net emissions if we are to achieve our targets for 2030 and 2050.

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** Okay.

So, in order to put a cap on emissions, we must also look at reducing production.

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** Those two factors go hand in hand. We have many options. Today’s plan has 64 different programs, so I cannot give you the full picture.

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** A number of things can be done. As you were saying, there must be no more talk and much more action.

Some comments I have read say that your reports are the harshest that an environment commissioner has submitted since 1995. We know that the Liberal government has announced targets with no accompanying plans or new measures to reduce emissions. The plans are there but the measures don’t seem to be following. After seven years of Liberal governance and the nationalization of a pipeline, is it reasonable for us to attribute the failure of Canada’s climate policy solely to the government that has been in power since 2015?

Actually, the government’s reaction to your reports was to say that everything stems from decisions made prior to 2015. But since then—

**The Chair:** Mr. DeMarco, you have 10 seconds in which to answer those questions.

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** They are difficult to answer in 10 seconds.

**The Chair:** So let us continue with Ms. Collins.

Ms. Collins, you have six minutes.

[English]

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** Thank you, Mr. Commissioner, for appearing before us. I also want to thank you and your team for these critical reports on these critically important and pressing issues.

Following your report, the Minister of Natural Resources said that the emissions reduction fund was not the kind of fossil fuel subsidy that the government had promised to eliminate. That’s despite the fact that, as you reported, 27 of the first 40 projects funded by the program claimed they would be increasing production.

Isn’t handing out taxpayer money to oil and gas companies without linking funding to actual reductions in greenhouse gas emissions a fossil fuel subsidy?

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** This is a fossil fuel subsidy. Only the minister can answer your question as to whether it’s the type of fossil fuel subsidy that he wishes to eliminate, but it is a fossil fuel subsidy, no doubt.

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** You said you were disappointed in the department’s response to your audit and that it doesn’t bode well.

Does the response from the minister that this isn’t a subsidy also raise concerns for you, given the government’s promises to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies?

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** We just received the information from the department on the changes that they propose to the emissions reduction fund. Whether we do a follow-up audit on it or not, it’s too early to tell whether they have addressed the key problems in the fund.

I would say it’s too early for us to really indicate one way or the other whether the changes recently announced for round three of the emissions reduction funding will properly address our recommendations.

I note that you have departmental officials slated to appear before the committee, so you could ask questions of them as to how well their changes to the program will match up with the recommended changes we made in our report in November.

• (1150)

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** I watched the hearings that you had yesterday at the natural resources committee. You did express some concern about the response you received from the department.

Could you elaborate on that?

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** Yes. I expressed that same sentiment on the day of tabling, because they didn’t agree completely with all of our six recommendations. They agreed completely with only four of them. Two of them they agreed with partially. Even on the ones they agreed with, there was a lot of grey in their response. Even though it says “agreed”, that was followed by a lot of words afterwards, and we weren’t quite sure whether they fully agreed or not.

Based on those responses, I was of the view that it didn’t bode well. This is another reason, now that a few months have passed since their responses, for requiring departments to put forth actual detailed action plans to this committee. That will allow you and your colleagues on the committee to have that accountability and ask, “What exactly are you going to do in response to these recommendations?”

Here we have seen immediate action in the changes to round three. Whether they are meaningful or not would require further research and analysis.

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** Your report on Canada's climate record is very critical of the lack of action Canada has taken to reach its climate targets, saying, in your words, that they can't keep going from failure to failure.

Since the Paris Agreement in 2015, Canada has continued to see emissions rise. We have become the worst performer on climate action in the G-7.

Can you elaborate on some of the failures you see that have led Canada to fall so far behind our peers when it comes to action on the climate crisis?

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** That's a big question.

I would say to please look at the lessons learned, because we couldn't narrow it down to one silver bullet that, if fixed, would address the climate crisis in Canada. We have those eight lessons learned. We have included in there questions you may pose to departments, not just in response to our reports but in the context of the other studies you're considering, as I heard earlier today in your deliberations. Those are questions you can pose to the department in terms of tackling this issue.

I would add that Canada has been the worst performer in the G7 since Paris. Canada has also been the worst performer since this whole file started in the early 1990s and the Rio Convention on climate change in 1992. Since that time, and, I would add, for the last three decades for which we have official data—from 1990 to 2019, because there's a bit of a time lag in retrieving the data—Canada is also the worst amongst the G7 from 1990 to now, not just from Paris to now. That's one of the reasons we look at the 30 years rather than just the recent history.

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** You mentioned the lessons learned. One of the lessons you highlighted in your report was on the need to reduce dependence on high-emission industries. Oil and gas make up the largest. They're a huge and growing proportion of our emissions. I want to dig into that a bit more.

What kinds of risks does Canada face, both environmental and economic, if we don't start seriously planning for this shift to a low-carbon economy and really ensuring that those high-emission industries are reducing their emissions?

**The Chair:** Please give us an answer in 20 seconds, Commissioner.

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** The world is on its way to a net-zero future. Even the International Energy Agency notes that. Canada should get ahead of the curve in a just transition to make sure no one is left behind in that transition. It can't just stick its head in the sand and hope that it will catch up eventually. The economy and the environment are too important to leave for a later date.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll go to the five-minute round.

Mr. Dreeshen.

• (1155)

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and welcome to our witness, Commissioner.

Let me begin by stating that as a proud Albertan, I acknowledge the hard work and commitment of Canada's natural resource workers, and I give thanks that we as Canadians are blessed with these treasures.

It's what makes us a nation that has been the foundation of our outstanding contribution, not only to our citizens but to the entire world. Whether it's agriculture, forestry, mining, or oil and gas, Canadians have always sought the right balance between the environment and growth. Therefore, protecting our environment by proper stewardship of our water, our soil, and our air is something that all Canadians should celebrate. I believe this report speaks to the importance of this.

I live north of the 49th parallel, quite a ways north. It has been said that changes in latitude mean changes in attitude. I understand the issues of high-density urban settings and the love of isolated island paradises, but I also understand the uniqueness of our country. The special accommodations that allow for hydro projects, unique Canadian technology that allows for nuclear power generation, and the world-class oil and gas industry that generates the mobile energy that allows us to live in this vast country that spans six time zones and reaches from points as far south as California to the north pole, that's the Canada I love.

Having served as a member of the public accounts committee, I also appreciate the work of your office. I would like to deal with "Report 4: Emissions Reduction Fund—Natural Resources Canada". Specifically, the onshore program makes specific assumptions about the potential benefit of government declarations.

I would like to start with exhibit 4.1, which shows the reality that emissions have risen from 2016 to 2020. I believe the commissioner already mentioned the difference between 1990 and the present. However, if you take a look at the linear target for 2030, as it goes down, that was from the 2005-06 point and the 2010 point. Coincidentally, the low point of 2010 is when the Harper Conservatives were there.

The model for exhibit 4.4 shows what would be the case, prior to 2020 and onward, if neither the federal methane reduction program nor the onshore program is implemented. It then shows lower trajectories, illustrating expected reductions from each of these two programs. This is in the report, but I also noticed that this comes from the World Resources Institute of 2014. The other chart I talked about was actually a 2021 chart.

We're making some assumptions that there would be expected reductions by complying with these federal methane regulations, or the onshore program to which you say there are difficulties in trying to track down exactly what has taken place. If we go to section 4.32, it speaks of the overestimate of emission reductions estimated from the onshore program, and it further states in 4.33 that the estimates did not consider the overlap of programs and, as your analysis has stated, that they are not accurate.

My question is this. If these programs are ill-advised and will not meet targets, would a program that incentivizes innovation specific to Canada's unique greenhouse gas realities be a more logical goal, thereby recognizing advances in both renewable and non-renewable energy resources? Does your department have the ability to track such metrics?

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** There's a lot there, so I'll just highlight a few issues.

First of all, regarding the question of the environment and the economy, or the environment and growth, there's a growing recognition that we need to work on the two in parallel tracks. It's not necessarily a trade-off for one or the other. It's a trade-off in the short-term, but in the long term a healthy environment and a healthy economy should coincide with one another. We should work together to this cleaner net-zero future in a way that supports both the economy and the environment.

With respect to your question regarding options such as innovation, obviously innovation and new technologies will be an important part of that transition to a greener future, a net-zero future, and it would be one of many different strategies. As I said before, there's no one silver bullet; it's a component of the strategy.

• (1200)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Longfield, you have five minutes, please.

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield:** Mr. Commissioner, it's wonderful to have you here. We just passed our accountability legislation in June, and at virtually our first meeting you're here to talk about accountability, which is so critical to us getting to the results that Canadians are expecting from us.

I want to build on some of Madame Paupé's questions, which I thought were excellent, on the funding and the budget. I know that we increased the budget for the Office of the Auditor General and that she was going to be hiring some support people to look at the environment. Is that something you're evaluating, to see whether you need additional funding carved off, or are you working with her; are you working with the government?

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** We're one office—the Office of the Auditor General—and I'm appointed by the Auditor General. The teams represented on this call with our principals are teams that work on reports for Ms. Hogan and reports for me. It's an integrated model.

The funding that you're talking about was announced in the fall economic statement of 2020. That has been received. The hiring has taken place for that. I believe Ms. Paupé was asking whether we got additional funding tied to the net-zero act in June of this year.

There was no additional funding for that. The last increase amounts were from the fall 2020 economic statement.

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield:** Great. Thank you. That was really well clarified. So that's an evaluation, as we pass legislation, to make sure that the enabling part of the legislation is covered off through funding.

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** Yes. We're assessing our options as to delivering on that mandate. We can speak about that at our next appearance.

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield:** Great. I really think that part of it is critical.

The action items that come from the departments are also critical. I served on public accounts as well. That is a non-partisan committee that really looks at results. I hope that this committee will reflect that type of attitude when it comes to climate change, so that we're working on the problem—not trying to get in each other's way but enabling each other to get there for results.

On the reporting, though, of the action items, Canada leads in some ways in our public accounts there. Is this something that you're seeing the departments embracing? When we were getting reports against the United Nations' sustainability goals, as an example, not all departments were embracing that. Is that a hurdle that we need to get over, or is that something that you see evolving quickly?

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** One of the patterns we've noted is that it's not difficult for departments or governments to embrace environment and sustainable development objectives and goals, including the 17 specific UN SDGs. It's really the operationalization of those commitments and the focus on results rather than just on process; that's where we're seeing the problems that help account for the fact that we have a curve on emissions that's gone up 20% in three decades instead of down.

There was no shortage of commitments to bring the emissions down. There was a shortage of action. That's another reason for action plans and another reason to focus on results.

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield:** As you're structuring your audits and your planning, emissions intensity seems to be a number that would be the best number for us to track. As Mr. Dreesen mentioned, in 2010 we were coming out of a global recession. Our production was down. The market was down globally. Our emissions dropped because of production being down. Now production is increasing and our emissions are increasing.

Rather than looking at that curve, then, the curve to zero is the curve we should be looking at. The industry is taking steps to get the emissions intensity down. Is that a number you're focusing on?

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** Improvements in emissions intensity have been happening for quite some time. There has been a partial decoupling of growth and emissions in Canada in terms of population and production. That's a good trend. However, the atmosphere responds to the total net emissions—sources and sinks—so if you increase production and get more efficient at it, the atmosphere responds to the total emissions, not the intensity.

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield:** Your emissions have to outpace the increase in production in order to get progress. That's clear. That's also a challenge when we're a resource-intensive economy. Canada is one of the leading reserves for oil and gas. We have this dichotomy of how we do this efficiently.

• (1205)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll go to Madame Pauzé now for two and a half minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thought that I only had two and a half minutes, but I'm very happy to find that I have five and a half.

**The Chair:** Ms. Pauzé, you do only have two and a half minutes.

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** My happiness is fleeting, then.

**The Chair:** I am sorry, Ms. Pauzé.

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** Commissioner, I am going to leave the reports that have been submitted and ask you a question about reports yet to be published.

We read on your website that your teams are working on publishing a report, scheduled for the fall of 2022, on the management of radioactive waste. The committee will be starting a study on the same topic next week. Now, according to the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission's calendar, they are considering issuing permits to authorize a project at Chalk River and to abandon a reactor in the very near future.

I feel that you are meticulous in your work. Is it not your opinion that, out of an abundance of caution, the Commission should postpone issuing its permits until the committee's work is done and your report is published?

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** That is the government's choice. We are conducting an audit on the matter and are planning to publish a report in the fall. However, all activity does not cease because we are conducting an audit. I cannot speak for the government, which will have to decide on its own if the project must be pushed back.

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** Nuclear waste presents very significant problems. Consequently, I feel that the government must go along with the important work that your organization and our committee are doing. I feel that the government has to have all the right information before it sets a precedent.

Let me go back to your previous reports. Given your experience in Ontario and given that the budgets have been renewed, are you hopeful that, in the next six years of your mandate, the government will get its act together, will respond to your recommendations, and will finally set off on the course that we all want?

**The Chair:** You have 15 seconds left, Mr. DeMarco.

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** I hope so, and we'll see what happens. I'm a little optimistic, more now than I was, because everyone understands the challenges we have to overcome in terms of the environment and sustainable development.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Ms. Collins, you have two and a half minutes.

[*English*]

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** We were talking a little about the lessons. Another lesson that you highlighted is the need to invest in a climate-resilient future. However, you found that Canada hasn't been a key player in the international discussion on sustainable finance.

Are we at risk of being left behind and allowing other countries to set the agenda on this?

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** Yes. As we noted in the report, it's an emerging and a very fast-moving issue, both at the governmental level and in the private sector, in terms of green finance and so on.

That train left the station a while ago. I wouldn't say that Canada was in the first car of that train, but it does have the opportunity to catch up. You will see—I guess it would be in section 23 of the new net-zero act—some movement toward government accountability for the minister of finance on risks and opportunities related to climate change. Then the mandate letters require moving forward with mandatory climate-risk disclosures.

It appears that the wake-up call has been heard. They'll be playing catch-up, but at least they're moving forward now.

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** Canada's current climate plans aren't projected to achieve Canada's target of 40% to 45% below 2005 levels by 2030. They're definitely not on track for the IPCC's recommendation of cutting emissions by half or 50%, so clearly more policy action is needed.

We're still waiting to see the emission-reduction plan as required under the Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act, but you've also said that Canada needs to shift its focus to actually meeting targets and not just making plans.

How do you see the role of your office in really keeping them on track?

**The Chair:** You have 30 seconds, please.

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** Through our new mandate on the net-zero act, we will be keeping a constant eye on this file. As you know from the lessons learned, we aren't going to just look at plans; we're going to look at results. We've had a lot of plans that have added up over the years and I'm sure—I'm not sure, but I'm hopeful—that the next one in March will add up as well.

Really, what we need to do is meet the plans, not just make them.

• (1210)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Thank you, Ms. Collins.

Mr. Mazier.

**Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC):** Thank you, Commissioner, for coming out today.

I'm focusing on report 3, on water basins. I've always been of the mind that agriculture should be set up as part of the solution when it comes to environmental challenges, and the environment department should be working with agriculture and agriculture producers, people in the landscape.

Do you believe that Environment and Climate Change Canada is working enough with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada?

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** There's room for improvement.

The report on the three water basins indicated that they were moving in the right direction. There were often mechanisms in place for some coordination, but not enough.

We also noticed—and this is perhaps something for a future audit—that despite the co-operation and the coordination, there were still long-standing problems with the actual water quality. As per my focus on outcomes and results and not just on process, if we look at this issue again, or if this committee looks at this issue in the context of the water study that you were debating earlier today, I would propose that you ask for solutions that are going to actually affect the water quality itself, not just the co-operation related to water quality. That focus on outcomes is crucial.

I grew up next to the Great Lakes, and Lake Erie was the closest water body. It's still, in terms of eutrophication, a big problem 50 years later. There's lots of coordination and lots of co-operation, but not enough results. That, of course, includes the U.S. in that factor too.

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** I'm from Manitoba, so Lake Winnipeg is near and dear to our hearts as well.

Paragraph 3.27 of your report discusses the lack of information sharing actually between Environment and Agri-Food Canada. I'll quote from the report: "Furthermore, neither department had a formal and consistent process for sharing information about risks with the other...."

Can you tell me how a government is supposed to meet its targets when one department is doing one thing and another department is doing another?

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** That's an excellent question.

I'll have principal Jim McKenzie address that specific question, if he's available and can turn on his video.

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** Actually, Commissioner, I have more questions for you, so we can go back when Mr. McKenzie is back here for the next hour, I believe.

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** I think he's available. No, he's just here for this hour.

Here he is.

**Mr. James McKenzie (Principal, Office of the Auditor General):** I'll be brief.

We found some coordination, some sharing of information. We found no formal mechanisms that would allow departments to share information on risks with each other, which we felt would provide them with a more complete picture of, for example, areas of the country that they needed to focus on more, information gaps that would prevent them, or if they were to be addressed would help them better understand some of the issues.

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** If I could summarize that, they're operating still in silos and they're not communicating, basically. They could do it a lot better, I guess, to meet their goals, and that needs to happen to meet their goals.

I'll go back to the commissioner.

How important would you say local involvement is to reaching our climate targets, under water management especially?

I represent a very rural riding. It's the size of Nova Scotia and it drains.... It's all part of the Assiniboine watershed.

How important do you think it is working with those managers of the landscape, those agriculture producers, at the ground level?

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** It's absolutely crucial. Addressing climate change, drought, flooding and so on requires a whole-of-society approach. Even though I'm reporting to the federal government and auditing the federal government's role, it's not the only player on all of these issues, whether it's climate or water. There are various different levels of involvement.

Often, the people who are closest to the land, whether they're farmers, local water managers, local residents or others, will know best the issues that affect them in the local watershed, for example. It's absolutely crucial to involve all levels of government, all private and public sector agencies, civil society and indigenous communities.

• (1215)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll go to Ms. Taylor Roy for five minutes.

**Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.):** Thank you so much, Mr. DeMarco, for being here this morning.

I'm finding the conversation, despite the report's findings, to be very encouraging. The fact that you are here, that you are fulfilling this task and coming up with these recommendations for action and coordination, I think, will help us to move in a better direction than, as you have pointed out, our governments have over the past 30 years.

I want to follow up on one of the statements made earlier. One of the members said he thought we had a proper balance between environment and growth. I was wondering—and it's a very high-level question—if, given the results of your historical analysis, you could comment on whether you think we have the proper balance right now and how you would see that shifting.

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** That's a big question.

On your first point, I would commend you to read the last page of our climate change lessons learned report, if you haven't already, because we do strike an optimistic note there, and we're hopeful that this can be turned around.

It's too late to stop climate change, but we can at least mitigate and reduce the magnitude of the potentially catastrophic effects. We live on a finite planet with a certain amount of carbon. We don't want to have too much of it in the upper atmosphere and too little of it in the biomass, water, soil and earth, so, yes, we have to reconcile economic development with environmental protection in the long term, because we live on a finite planet with finite resources. There has to be a sustainable approach, as opposed to looking at it as growth at the expense of the environment, because the environment ultimately provides us with the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat. There needs to be more of what I would call an integrated approach—and this is reflected in the Federal Sustainable Development Act—to the environment and economy, and movement past the more old-style trade-off approach, which is that we'll protect the environment in times of luxury or when it's feasible but that economic growth takes precedence. They have to go hand in hand, and that's what I think a net-zero future looks at, a healthy environment and a healthy economy working together, as opposed to being at odds with each other.

**Ms. Leah Taylor Roy:** I agree.

One of the ways I think we can mobilize or actionize some of these things is by having more quantification of the cost to our economy of some of the things that are being done that are affecting our environment. I know there's movement towards that with the different kinds of risk management and risk perspectives.

Do you think more has to be done on that by our government in order to achieve that kind of quantification and the ability of people to see the economic impact on the environment of doing less?

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** Absolutely. Externality as an economic theory has been a major problem in terms of the environmental process. Many of the true costs of doing business in, for example, fossil fuels before carbon pricing, were externalized, and that reflected neither the cost of doing business nor the cost to consumers, but we ultimately pay for that in terms of climate-related disasters, extreme weather and so on. Reducing those externalities using the principle of internalization of cost, polluter pays and a lot of things like that will help us have a full picture.

As I said, once you do that, and once you internalize social, environmental and economic costs into a comprehensive model, you will see more of a dovetailing between the environment and economy, as opposed to looking at it mainly from a financial point of view, where one could profit by externalizing costs to society and the environment. From a full economic point of view, it's not a good news story. It may be profitable for the entity involved, but it may not be economically or environmentally sound for society as a whole.

Cost internalization and the quantification of some of these ecosystem services and other natural assets that we have—and nature-based solutions come into play here too—are all emerging and critically important issues. As someone mentioned, one of the biggest impacts on the environment each year by governments is its

budget decisions, not just the regulatory decisions of the environment department or the natural resources department in a given jurisdiction. Once we look at those together, we'll be on a good path.

• (1220)

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

**Ms. Leah Taylor Roy:** Can I just—

**The Chair:** Your time's up, Ms. Taylor Roy. I'm sorry about that, because it was a very interesting question.

We're going to have a very short break to bring in witnesses from the Departments of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Natural Resources and Environment.

Mr. Clerk, I'll let you take over to bring in the new witnesses.

We're suspending for a couple of minutes.

• (1220)

(Pause)

• (1220)

**The Chair:** We'll resume our meeting.

We have witnesses from the three departments that I mentioned originally. I would like to read the names of everyone on the call, but in the interest of time you have that in front of you on the notice of meeting.

Each department has five minutes as per routine motions. However, whatever you can do to come in under five minutes would be greatly appreciated by your chair.

We'll start with the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food for five minutes.

Mr. Campbell, go ahead for five minutes, or less if you can.

• (1225)

**Dr. Ian Campbell (Director of Research, Development and Technology Transfer for the Charlottetown and Fredericton Centres, Science and Technology Branch, Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food):** Honourable members, I'm pleased to be here today to talk about Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's contribution to the report on scientific activities in selected water basins by the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development.

At AAFC, we welcome the findings of the commissioner as part of our commitment to continuous improvement. We will continue to work with our colleagues at Environment and Climate Change Canada to improve information sharing and collaboration. AAFC and ECCO will update their memorandum of understanding on science and re-establish national and regional joint science committees. For each water basin, we will work together to review our respective departmental objectives and research projects.

As well, we will closely track our outreach and knowledge transfer activities to ensure our external partners are getting the information they need. Through these joint science committees, we will identify new opportunities to coordinate our research. Our common goal is to help Canadian farmers and food processors continue to be global leaders in the field of sustainable agriculture.

Canadian farmers are an important part of the climate change solution. Farmers already contribute to safeguarding our environment and water quality through sustainable practices such as fencing, tree planting and reduced tillage.

At AAFC, we're working with farmers to help them protect our soil and water resources for future generations.

Over the past three years, we have been bringing researchers, farmers and other stakeholders together to form collaborative research networks known as "living laboratories". Together, they develop and test sustainable farming practices and technologies that help reduce the farm's environmental footprint.

The research takes place directly on the farmers' fields. Farmers can see the results in real time and can adopt innovative practices more quickly, and they share their knowledge across Canada so other farmers can learn from their peers how to apply new stewardship tools and approaches to reducing emissions, build healthier soils, boost production and enhance wildlife habitat.

Living labs are now up and running across Canada, in Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Ontario and the eastern Prairies. In PEI, farmers and researchers are working together to find the best ways to apply fertilizers so that they can save money, help the environment and reduce greenhouse gases all at the same time. In Quebec, farmers, researchers and first nations are looking at cover crops to reduce soil erosion; and in Manitoba, they're capturing and storing water on the farm to prevent nutrient runoff, while seeding plants that will attract pollinators.

The living labs model is also the cornerstone of our new agricultural climate solutions program, which will support regional collaboration networks across the country to develop climate-smart solutions on the farm.

The living labs approach has been endorsed by the G20 ministers of agriculture as a novel way to accelerate the development of sustainable agricultural practices and technologies around the world, and we are pleased with the commissioner's recognition of the living labs as a model for collaboration in both planning and project execution.

We will draw from the living labs collaborative approach and apply its best management practices to our ongoing projects with partners, including other departments such as ECCC.

To sum up, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada agrees with the audit recommendations. We welcome the findings of the commissioner as part of our commitment to continuous improvement, and we will take action to improve information sharing and collaboration with Environment and Climate Change Canada.

My colleague Matt Parry is also here today and will be able to address questions you might have on the department's progress in implementing sustainable development strategies.

Thank you again for the opportunity. We look forward to the discussion.

**The Chair:** Thank you for being brief.

We will go to the Department of Natural Resources. Is it Ms. Johnson who will be speaking?

Go ahead, please.

**Ms. Mollie Johnson (Assistant Deputy Minister, Low Carbon Energy Sector, Department of Natural Resources):** Good afternoon, everybody. Thanks for the opportunity to be here.

I'm speaking from Ottawa, as I mentioned a little earlier, which is the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people.

The Government of Canada's climate plan commits to decarbonization across all economic sectors by 2050. This includes, as you folks well know, a price on carbon pollution, strengthening existing methane regulations, clean fuels regulations, and putting a cap on emissions from the oil and gas sector.

The emissions reduction fund is part of that plan and one part of the comprehensive set of tools that are going to be needed to achieve our climate objectives, to support jobs, and to grow and secure the opportunities from the net-zero economy.

The program was launched in 2020 as a COVID response measure. The program sought to ensure the continued reduction of methane emissions at a time of record low energy prices and to maintain jobs during a very difficult period. It did that. In just over its first year, \$142 million was invested in 93 projects. Most involved small and medium-sized enterprises across western Canada, where they are having a positive impact on the local economies, such as Estevan, Brandon and Slave Lake. Those projects are expected to deliver 4.7 megatonnes of emissions reductions in the first 12 months after they're completed. That's equivalent to taking about one million cars off the road.

The pandemic is continuing, but at the same time we agree with the audit of the Commissioner of Environment and Sustainable Development that thankfully many of the economic circumstances since the program was introduced just over a year ago have changed. We're going to continue to evolve. The situation will continue to evolve.

The input of the commissioner and of stakeholders, industry and non-governmental organizations regarding the program has been fabulously welcomed and valued. In fact, since the launch of the program the department has made periodic changes throughout to improve its delivery.

The audit report helped us shape the relaunch of the program that happened on January 19. We received the audit that came out in public on November 25. In particular, I would flag three things for you.

First, we narrowed the scope to only projects that fully eliminate intentional routine methane venting and flaring. Those are the projects that will come forward in the third project intake period.

Second, we strengthened the criteria applied to focus on the greatest return on investment from an emissions perspective.

The third big thing we did was to provide greater transparency to ensure that projects demonstrate reductions that are incremental to Canada's methane reductions. These changes are going to further improve the program from its foundation, consistent with the conditions we're in today.

We're really grateful to have the opportunity to talk to you about this today. This is a program that gets into some technical issues. I'm very grateful to have the director general of the clean fuels branch, my colleague Debbie Scharf, here to speak with me.

I'll end there. We look forward to your questions.

• (1230)

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

We'll go now to the Department of Environment. We have Ms. Geller.

**Ms. Hilary Geller (Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Policy Branch, Department of the Environment):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Good afternoon, committee members.

In the interest of time, let me say just two things. We, too, agree with the commissioner's recommendations. We look forward to meeting with you today and discussing the report.

My name is Hilary Geller. I'm the assistant deputy minister of the strategic policy branch at Environment Canada. I have direct responsibilities for sustainable development, including leading work across government on the federal sustainable development strategy. Also, my branch leads, through our regional offices, the delivery of various freshwater programs in the Great Lakes, Lake Winnipeg and the Saint John Wolastoq river.

We also lead Environment Canada's collaboration with the Department of Finance on certain specific climate-related initiatives, like sustainable finance.

I'm joined today by my colleague Doug Nevison, the interim assistant deputy minister of the climate change branch.

Finally, we are also joined by Vincent Ngan, director general of horizontal policy, engagement and coordination in the climate change branch. As a collective, we're really looking forward to answering your questions on this report.

[*Translation*]

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

Thank you for being mindful of the time we have.

We have time for one six-minute round of questions.

We'll start with the Conservatives. Mr. Davidson will share his time with Mr. Mazier.

Go ahead, Mr. Davidson.

[*English*]

**Mr. Scot Davidson:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll be splitting my time with my colleague, Mr. Mazier, if you could keep an eye on time. Thanks very much.

Thank you, Mr. DeMarco. I appreciate your backdrop. That great picture almost looks like the Black River going into the great body of water of Lake Simcoe.

I'll have to keep my comments brief, Mr. Chair, because I have only three minutes.

I'm going to focus on report number six. Mr. DeMarco, what did you identify as the primary reason for the various departments' failing to report their progress on the strategy?

• (1235)

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** Thank you for the compliment regarding my late mother's oil painting in the background. It is an Ontario scene, so you're not far off.

I'm going to ask David Normand, who was the principal responsible for the sustainable development strategy report, to address that question.

**Mr. David Normand (Principal, Office of the Auditor General):** Good afternoon, everyone.

This year, we again looked at the departmental actions that individual departments were reporting on in line with the federal development strategy, and assessed the extent of progress based on the reports they provided to Parliament. For various reasons, we found many flaws in the reporting.

First off, we found that almost half of the departments in their departmental actions toward meeting the goal had not made links to the targets defined in the federal strategy. When reading the departmental sustainable development strategies, we were left asking ourselves questions as to how they actually contributed in a meaningful way to the achievement of the targets.

Even more concerning, we found that almost half of the reports we reviewed this year had reported no tangible progress toward—

**Mr. Scot Davidson:** I'm sorry, I'm on limited time.

I think what you're hinting at is that it was poor. There was a lot of grey. Half the reporting wasn't done.



This is the type of stuff that's very concerning to Canadians. Again, Canadians find that a report has gone into a storage unit somewhere. There's no one held accountable and no action taken.

Is there any indication taken from the flaws that were identified that they would be addressed before 2019-22, or are we going to be waiting now until the 2022-25 strategy?

**Mr. David Normand:** All departments and agencies that were subject to this year's report accepted our recommendation to improve reporting.

For the following years, we're adopting a bit of a different approach: Instead of just looking at the quality of the reporting, we're going to also look at the actual outcomes with the audit level of assurance.

This means we're going to go into the individual programs in departments and see if we can assess and see any tangible progress on the various actions.

**Mr. Scot Davidson:** Just quickly, my colleague, Mr. Duguid, mentioned 26 government agencies. He can correct me if I'm wrong. Are you finding that these bureaucracies are getting so big they can't manage what they're asking for? Can the bureaucracy not deal with the amount of reporting that has to be done now?

**Mr. David Normand:** Currently, under the act, there are 27 departments and agencies that are subject to producing the reporting. This number will increase to nearly 100. Yes, this entails a lot of coordination between departments.

The lead coordination is performed by ECCC on these reports.

**Mr. Scot Davidson:** Thank you very much.

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** I guess this question is for agriculture and environment. Under report three, has the government discussed any potential plan to limit the amount of fertilizer that can be applied to agriculture land?

**Dr. Ian Campbell:** I'm not really equipped to discuss that particular question at this time. It was not part of the audit, which is kind of what I'm—

• (1240)

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** It's part of the nutrients, under the nutrient management and sustainable.... Fertilizer is a very integral part of it.

How about under environment? Has any department discussed the application of fertilizer on agricultural land?

**Dr. Ian Campbell:** We certainly have lots of research on it and we have programs to help reduce it.

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** Anybody can answer this question. Has anybody in these departments talked about fertilizer?

**Dr. Ian Campbell:** Yes, of course.

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** How are they talking about it? Are they talking about restricting the use of fertilizer in Canada?

**Dr. Ian Campbell:** I am not aware of any discussions about restricting it. We're certainly working to optimize its use.

Matt Parry, do you want to jump in on this?

**The Chair:** Be very brief, please.

**Mr. Matt Parry (Director General, Policy Development and Analysis Directorate, Strategic Policy Branch, Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food):** The government indicated that it was intending to work with the agriculture sector to look at opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with fertilizer use. That work is ongoing.

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

We'll go to Ms. Thompson now for six minutes.

**Ms. Joanne Thompson (St. John's East, Lib.):** I want to say how pleased I am to be part of this conversation today. I am one of the six members from Newfoundland and Labrador. I represent St. John's East. This is very important within my riding, and certainly in the conversations I've had with stakeholders in the community. The link to a movement to lower emissions through actions to get to net zero in a timely fashion is incredibly important.

The balance between the environment and the economy and the need to move very much in a just transition are things I hear all the time. I respect that many of these things have been discussed, so I don't want to bring you down that path again but rather shift a little and still stay with climate change.

I'm not sure, Mr. Commissioner, if you're the one to answer this, or you, Ms. Geller. I'm really curious to learn from you something that's very important to me, which is this whole concept of partnerships. As we move to address the climate change crisis, we know that it requires leadership and coordination among all government actors. I believe that was the word you used, and I absolutely agree with this. It's not only federal organizations, but also provincial, territorial and municipal governments. Also, you state that there's a risk that climate action could be hampered through an uncoordinated policy approach.

With that in mind, this is for whoever wants to take the question. Can you point to the percentage of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions that are attributable to federal measures as opposed to joint measures, or those that are initiated purely at other levels of government? Can you give us that lens of the different players involved in getting us to net zero?

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** I'll jump in and start, and then perhaps Ms. Geller would like to add in.

We're looking beyond just governments, of course. A whole-of-society approach is necessary.

In terms of apportioning the amount of work that needs to be done at different levels, the answer is that everybody needs to do a part. One of the recent advancements was that the pan-Canadian framework was a national plan as opposed to just a federal plan. That idea of a national plan and working together is an excellent starting point, so that people have a common goal as opposed to their own agendas.

Even federal initiatives can be provincial initiatives at the same time, such as with the carbon price or the methane regulation. There are equivalency provisions allowing the province to step in with a made-in-province solution that displaces the federal solution as long as it reaches the requirements of the federal one.

Yes, they need to work together. I can't tell you that 60% of the target will be achieved by this level and 40%.... We need a national approach whereby the federal government—which signed the climate change convention and the Paris Agreement—takes the responsibility for coordinating all of those efforts but doesn't act at the exclusion of all those other actors you mentioned, as well as indigenous and local communities and so on.

Does Ms. Geller wish to add something to that?

• (1245)

**Ms. Hilary Geller:** Thank you. I think my colleague Doug Nevison is going to step in on this point.

**Mr. Douglas Nevison (Assistant Deputy Minister, Climate Change Branch, Department of the Environment):** Mr. Chair, it's an excellent question. I agree completely with the commissioner that meeting Canada's climate targets and commitments will require positive partnerships across the federation. That extends to not just federal, provincial and territorial governments but also municipal governments, national indigenous organizations and representatives, industry associations, stakeholders—you name it. As the commissioner rightly noted in his retrospective, it will require effort and coordination across the board to achieve the ambitious targets.

With respect to your question in terms of who is doing what, and at what level, between the federal, provincial and territorial levels, a number of reporting mechanisms are in place. The commissioner mentioned the pan-Canadian framework. Under that initiative, there is an annual synthesis report on the actions that have been taken at the federal level and by each of the provinces and territories in order to contribute to Canada's climate efforts. The next synthesis report will likely be coming out in the next couple of months for the 2019-20 year, I believe. We have a bit of a lag in reporting on that front.

Another area was in the nationally determined contribution that was submitted to the UNFCCC back in July, which announced Canada's commitment to 40% to 45% GHG emissions reduction below 2005 levels by 2030. There were annexes that provided, for each province and territory and also national indigenous organizations, the efforts they are making to help achieve those targets.

That's just to say that there's a lot of information out there and a lot of activity and effort across the board.

**The Chair:** Thanks.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Pauzé, you have six minutes.

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** First, I would like to thank all the departmental representatives who are here. My question is for Ms. Johnson, from the Department of Natural Resources.

With respect to the emissions reduction fund, did the department have a mandate to create a program that would achieve real greenhouse gas reductions, yes or no?

[*English*]

**Ms. Mollie Johnson:** Just to make sure I'm clear, is that to create a real-time emissions inventory? I just want to make sure I understand your question properly.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Could you repeat your question, Ms. Pauzé?

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** Yes. I hope this won't be taken away from my time.

The fund is called the emissions reduction fund.

So did the department have a mandate to create a program that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

[*English*]

**Ms. Mollie Johnson:** We were given the mandate to create a program to add infrastructure to existing projects that would lead to an outcome to reduce or eliminate methane from those facilities. A number of the projects and programs that we put in place have the outcome of reducing emissions.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** Yes, I did read that in your brief, but the commissioner's report is damning. I don't understand why we are continuing with a program that hasn't achieved its objective at all. This is a monumental mistake, in my opinion, given our obligation as elected representatives to fight the climate crisis.

I have another question, which will be for the commissioner.

Over the past five years, Canada has committed \$2.6 billion to more than 50 projects under the heading "Canada's international climate finance".

That's all well and good, but can we make sure that the money Canada invests is actually used in other countries to fight climate change?

• (1250)

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** We may be doing an audit on this.

This is a good question. It's a question we ask ourselves. I can't answer it, because we haven't audited that yet. Having said that, like you, we are interested in seeing whether this fund is achieving results or not. We need to do an audit to answer this question. It's a good question.

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** Thank you.

My next question is for the Department of the Environment official, Ms. Geller.

According to the commissioner's report, the federal government is failing to co-ordinate efforts to advance climate change commitments.

Some decisions are inconsistent. I'm thinking, of course, of the expansion of the Trans Mountain pipeline and the creation of the onshore and offshore emissions reduction fund program.

Based on these two examples, how does your department respond to policy decisions made by other departments when they are inconsistent with the Department of the Environment's mandate to address climate change?

[English]

**Ms. Hilary Geller:** I'll start, and then my colleague Doug Nevison, who's responsible for the climate change branch, may want to come in.

Environment Canada is responsible for supporting actions across the government, including many of our own, that add up to achieving the government's climate change commitments. That's probably the clearest way I can articulate that. We don't tell departments what to do; we support the government overall in putting in place the cumulative programs and policies that they need to achieve the objectives.

Doug may want to come in on that point.

**Mr. Douglas Nevison:** If I may, I would like to add that under the Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act, one of the key obligations is to coordinate across the federal government in developing, for example, the emissions reduction plan that will be established by the end of March.

Coming back to the question, it is indeed very important, now that climate is being mainstreamed in many government policy decisions, to ensure that this coordination across the government is clear. As I said, the act will help us on that front in terms of that coordination policy.

We have various other levels, such as the officials level and the deputy minister's climate policy implementation committee, as well as other levels.

[Translation]

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** Thank you, Mr. Nevison.

I know a little about the structure, and I would like to ask one last question.

**The Chair:** Ms. Pauzé, very briefly, please.

I'll give you some extra time, but I'll ask you to be brief.

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

There is an upcoming study on climate risks. Climate risks concern the state of co-operation between the Department of the Environment and the Department of Finance.

I have a question for you. Can you provide us with a document on the status of the collaboration between the Sustainable Finance Action Council team and the Department of the Environment?

**The Chair:** Your request is noted, Ms. Pauzé.

I'll now give the floor to Ms. Collins.

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** Thank you.

[English]

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

First, I'll go to Mr. DeMarco.

You described what you called the government's policy incoherence, for example, purchasing the Trans Mountain pipeline project extension on the one hand while pledging to reduce emissions on the other hand.

Do you see this emissions reduction fund as part of that policy incoherence? What impact do you think this policy incoherence has on our ability to reduce emissions and meet our climate targets?

**Mr. Jerry V. DeMarco:** The emissions reduction fund has the potential to be an example of policy incoherence because of the refusal of the department to look at the big picture of net emissions.

You've heard the number "4.7 megatonnes" in emissions reductions. You heard yesterday at the natural resources committee about 97% of emissions being additional, but until you factor in the effect of production or continued production or expanded production, you don't have a net number, and if the net number is close to zero or negative because of increases in production, then you get into the policy coherence area.

If in practice the net emissions are lowered, then it is a worthwhile project as long as it's being done on an efficient cost per tonne basis. So yes, it does provide an example of the potential for policy incoherence, in this case, mostly because they will not look at the net emissions and continue to look at equipment-level emissions without looking at the whole facility and all of the facilities together that are subject to the funding.

Until we get to that approach of net emissions, we may never see the curve come down in Canada, because if we don't look at the big picture, then you can have individual programs that appear to be adding value, yet the overall emissions curve goes up. We need to look at it in a holistic manner.

● (1255)

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** Thanks, Mr. DeMarco.

Ms. Johnson, will the department be conducting an additional analysis to determine whether the program constitutes an inefficient fossil fuel subsidy?

Reading report four, it seems pretty clear that the emissions reduction fund was essentially, at least in policy terms, set up to be an inefficient fossil fuel subsidy that allows companies to expand production rather than fulfill the fund's emissions reduction mandate.

**Ms. Mollie Johnson:** Mr. Chair, I'll maybe just say one thing and then ask Debbie to jump in afterwards.

When infrastructure is added with the intention of eliminating it—so when we put the infrastructure on we can say that it does eliminate the intentional venting and flaring of methane emissions into the environment—it's adding it to a facility. It's gone. It's having a positive impact on those emissions, and when we get to the G20 definition of an inefficient fossil fuel subsidy, it is not.... This is something that is helping move on the trajectory to a net-zero pathway, so it is—

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** Just to pause you there for a moment, given that companies were given public dollars when they admitted in their applications that they were increasing emissions, how does this not constitute an inefficient fossil fuel subsidy?

**Ms. Mollie Johnson:** I'll pass over to Debbie, who is on the program, but this is the production that was already planned.

Debbie, can you jump in on that?

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** For sure, but just before you continue, could you connect that to Mr. DeMarco's comments on the kind of change in frame that he is recommending?

**Ms. Mollie Johnson:** We have made changes on January 19 with the implementation of the third intake period, so maybe, Debbie, you could run through that too.

**Ms. Debbie Scharf (Director General, Clean Fuels Branch, Department of Natural Resources):** Just to reiterate, this is a program that is focused on reducing sources of methane from existing oil and gas production. It's not a program that is tackling the emissions from an entire sector. It's one part of a plan, one part of several instruments that are addressing GHG emissions.

We are focusing on reducing the sources of methane, the things that make methane go up in the air. The particular ones we're focusing on are what Ms. Johnson has referred to as the intentional venting and flaring of emissions, because those sources are responsible for 75% of the methane emissions in the oil and gas sector.

When a project was being implemented with funds under the emissions reduction fund, after that project was implemented, we counted how the emissions would go down. If there were already scheduled increases in production, we counted how the emissions would go up associated with methane, because that was the point of this program.

I'd also like to add that every company is required, as part of receiving federal dollars, to implement continuous monitoring and verification for five years following the implementation of those projects, and to report that data to the Government of Canada.

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** I have very limited time. Doesn't it seem like public dollars would be better spent investing in renewables? When we find out that these subsidies are not achieving even the kind of overall credible reductions in the oil and gas sector, can you explain how Natural Resources Canada will ensure that money in this and other funding programs is used in ways that actually reduce our net emissions?

• (1300)

**Ms. Debbie Scharf:** The first thing I'll say is that the IPCC makes it very clear that we will not get to 1.5 degrees in the long term without tackling methane. The International Energy Agency agrees with that. Tackling methane in the short term is critical. We

are talking about a global warming potential significantly higher than CO<sub>2</sub> and a short-lived climate pollutant. This is critical to reducing emissions nationally.

As I said before, and as Ms. Johnson indicated, when there is a project [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] that eliminates the sources of methane, whether production goes up, down or stays the same, it's eliminated.

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** I'll ask for a quick yes or no.

**The Chair:** We need a very quick yes or no, because we're over time.

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** Given the environment commissioner's report, are you concerned? You seem to be defending a program. Are you concerned, given the commissioner's report?

**The Chair:** We are way over time here, Ms. Collins. I'm sorry. It's an interesting question and an interesting line of attack, and those are interesting answers.

This brings us to the end of our meeting.

Yes, Mr. Albas.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Rather than having a full committee meeting—respecting members' time on Thursday—maybe we could use the time for the subcommittee and we can discuss the subcommittee report and update it. That would be a much more efficient use of time.

**The Chair:** Could you repeat that?

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Rather than having a discussion about the subcommittee report on Thursday, why don't we just have a subcommittee meeting where we can discuss and maybe issue a new report? Maybe it's the same; maybe it's slightly different or maybe we add a few more items that perhaps you and the clerk are dealing with. Rather than have a full committee meeting on Thursday to discuss the subcommittee report, it might be helpful for us to have a meeting of the minds.

**The Chair:** I'll take note of that, but we still have the problem that the full committee has to adopt the subcommittee report. It wasn't able to do so today, on a very simple matter.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Well, Mr. Chair, I don't want to be critical of anyone but, again, I'm not the person who approves the subcommittee report. I just noticed that there was a detail in that report that I don't believe was agreed to by everyone. Now, I may be wrong, and that's why I'd like us to have a subcommittee meeting where we can maybe do a new report and—

**The Chair:** I'll take it under advisement, but we are past one o'clock now.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Mr. Chair, again, I'm just trying to save a big, long process. Maybe if we have a good meeting of the minds and we actually agree that it's verbatim, we won't have this issue again.

**The Chair:** Perhaps. My objective is the same as yours: to get on with the nuclear study, and so on, if we agree to a nuclear study.

Do I have a motion to adjourn?

**An hon. member:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

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