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# Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs

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Chair: Mr. Patrick Weiler





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• (1545)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.)):** I call the meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 122 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs.

As always, I want to start by recognizing that we are gathering on the ancestral and unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people, and I want to express gratitude that we're able to do the important work of this committee on lands they've stewarded since time immemorial.

Pursuant to the order of reference of Wednesday, June 5, 2024, the committee is resuming consideration of Bill C-61, an act respecting water, source water, drinking water, waste-water and related infrastructure on first nation lands.

Just so colleagues know, we have invited a number of different governments to present to our committee, but we've been unable to find a time for them to attend. Rest assured we have sent invitations to six different governments, and I think we will be getting some briefs.

With that, I would like to welcome our witnesses here today.

From the Alberta Wildlife Federation, we have CEO Kelly Carter. From the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake, we have Grand Chief Cody Diabo, joining virtually, along with Katie Spillane, legal counsel. In person, from the Six Nations of the Grand River, we have Chief Sherri-Lyn Hill here with us, along with Mr. Greg Frazier.

With that, we're going to go to the opening round of statements. Each witness will have five minutes for an opening statement, after which we will proceed with rounds of questions. We'll start online with Grand Chief Cody Diabo.

With that, I'll turn the microphone over to you for five minutes or less.

**Grand Chief Cody Diabo (Mohawk Council of Kahnawake):**  
*Shé:kon sewakwé:kon!*

I am Grand Chief Cody Diabo with the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake. The Mohawk Council of Kahnawake thanks the committee for the invitation to make submissions regarding Bill C-61, the first nations clean water act. We thank you for this opportunity, since the consultation process—like so many consultations, stating it frankly—are quite abysmal.

The MCK stands with indigenous peoples across the land who struggle for clean water. However, we oppose Bill C-61, which reproduces Canada's flawed positions on the inherent governance rights of indigenous peoples and limits Kahnawake's right to govern waters in our own backyard. The Kanienkehaka of Kahnawake have been self-governing since time immemorial. We exercise our inherent right to self-government in accordance with Haudenosaunee law, not with any delegated authority.

The watersheds of the St. Lawrence Valley have always sustained our community and our people. We fish, hunt and trap, harvest food and medicines, camp, canoe and raise our families on these waters. We have a deep connection to them. They are an integral part of our culture and our society.

It is the Kanienkehaka of Kahnawake, and no one else, who protect the waters that sustain us and who decide how our water treatment services will be managed.

Our main objection to Bill C-61 is that it pretends to affirm our inherent right of self-government in relation to water while attempting to subordinate our laws to federal legislation. The primary mechanism for this is clause 8 of the bill, which is offensive for two reasons.

First, clause 8 reinforces Canada's paternalistic posture by subjugating indigenous jurisdiction to a generic suite of federal laws. This is unacceptable. Indigenous jurisdictions are not based on or constrained by Canadian law. It cannot be artificially limited to areas of jurisdiction that are considered integral to distinct indigenous cultures. The MCK did flag this in the very limited consultation that took place before the bill was tabled—like so much other legislation that is out there that we provide comment to.

Second, to add insult to injury, when we saw the next draft of the bill—the one that's before you—the MCK was outraged to see that additional laws had been added to clause 8 without any consultation whatsoever. The Canada Marine Act and the Canadian Navigable Waters Act have huge implications for governance of the St. Lawrence Seaway, which runs directly through our territory.

Including these laws in clause 8 seems to single out Kahnawake and attempts to severely limit our ability to govern our own waters. It is wildly contradictory with Bill C-61's stated purpose to recognize that protecting the waters we drink requires recognizing our rights to protect those waters ourselves.

The MCK has actively called out the exclusion of Kahnawake from any participation in the governance and stewardship of the St. Lawrence River and the Seaway. In the context of Parliament's consideration of Bill C-33, we ask you to amend the Canada Marine Act to include the recognition and protection of our rights—on your end, that is. The MCK has also repeatedly requested changes to Seaway governance to honour our right to participate in governance of these crucial waters that are firmly within our territory. Our concerns have been met with total silence, as I pointed out, like so many others have.

True reconciliation requires Canada to stop trying to govern over us and over all aspects of our territory. The sooner Canada realizes that it does not have jurisdiction over first nations peoples, the sooner we can have true reconciliation.

While the MCK fully supports ensuring all indigenous people have access to clean water, we oppose the inclusion of Seaway-specific legislation in Bill C-61 and strongly caution Canada against a piecemeal approach to extracting itself from what is rightfully our jurisdiction.

• (1550)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Grand Chief Diabo.

Next, I'll be turning the floor over to Chief Sherri-Lyn Hill for five minutes.

The floor is yours.

**Chief Sherri-Lyn Hill (Six Nations of the Grand River):** *Nia:wen*. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Bill C-61.

My name is Sherri-Lyn Hill. I am the chief of the 59th elected council of Six Nations of the Grand River territory. It's the most populous first nation in Canada and is located a short drive from Toronto, Ontario.

Please note that a written submission was prepared in support of my commentary. I will refer to my community as SNGR or Six Nations from this point forward.

It blows my mind that in 2024, in a G7 country, legislation is required to provide safe drinking water for first nations, but here we are.

With respect to water equality, there are different standards in this country. First, the Canada Water Act manages water resources for the benefit of all Canadians. This act is binding on His Majesty. Second, Ontarians have access to drinking water with source and tap protections and legally binding test standards. Then we have Bill C-61, which introduces non-binding legislation that promises "best efforts".

This is a slap in the face. No wonder first nations often turn to the courts to pursue federal accountability for their issues. SNGR has fought for access to safe drinking water for decades without success. Most of the Haudenosaunee of Six Nations have relied on

unprotected ground-source drinking water since the lands were granted to us by the Haldimand Treaty in 1784.

The federal government has had knowledge of unsafe water at Six Nations for decades. The first community water system, which serviced 11% of households, had contamination issues that led to boil water advisories in 1990. In 2022, Six Nations Health Services released a report on water testing from 2003 and 2022, which revealed that water safety issues remain an ongoing problem. It will take 30-plus years to provide water services to on-reserve members.

Access to safe drinking water is a necessity for all life. No human, plant or animal can survive without it. The lack of access to safe drinking water profoundly impacts quality of life. Nearly 2,000 elderly members living on my reserve have spent most of their lives hauling water for their families. Some of them, in their eighties, continue to climb trucks at a fill station.

It was hoped that Bill C-61 would go beyond the status quo.

The Auditor General of Canada said, in a 2021 report that "Indigenous Services Canada did not provide the support necessary to ensure that First Nations...have ongoing access to safe drinking water." Furthermore, the report noted that ISC "had not amended the operations and maintenance funding...for First Nations water systems since it was developed 30 years ago."

There are many aspects of this legislation that are concerning. The repeat use of the phrase "best efforts" does not bind the Government of Canada to action. To successfully achieve the purpose of the bill, several amendments are necessary.

Firstly, consultation must comply with first nations consultation and accommodation policies. Next, the definition of "First Nation governing body" must reference the legally recognized government.

Bill C-61 must ensure that first nations are guaranteed access to safe drinking water that meets all current and future needs. Bill C-61 must require the achievement of outcomes. It must also provide for quantities of water that meet economic and cultural needs. It requires Canada to provide adequate funding for water services and it must ensure all first nations have access to binding dispute resolution.

There are other areas that require strengthening to ensure the inherent rights of first nations are upheld—the rights, I add, that first nations never gave up.

Again, *nia:wen*. Thank you for the opportunity.

• (1555)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Chief Hill.

With that, we are going to move over to our third and final witness for opening remarks.

Mr. Carter, I'll turn the floor over to you for five minutes or less.

**Mr. Kelly Carter (Chief Executive Officer, Alberta Wildlife Federation):** Thank you, Chair and committee members, for the invitation to speak with you today.

I'm Kelly Carter, the chief executive officer of the Alberta Wildlife Federation.

Today, I'm a visitor speaking to you in Ottawa from the unceded Anishinabe Algonquin territory. I reside and live in Edmonton, which is in Treaty 6 territory. The Alberta Wildlife Federation honours all first nations, Inuit and Métis people and their valuable contributions to this land.

The Alberta Wildlife Federation is an organization that represents over 16,000 members from diverse backgrounds who are brought together by their love of hunting, fishing and exploring the outdoors. Water is an integral part of our communities. We love to live, work and play in it.

Firstly and importantly, I want to reinforce our support for the human right of access to safe, clean drinking water and the sanitization of waste water. As a human right, it applies to all people, with no exceptions. We appreciate the effort being made to improve drinking water quality, specifically on first nation lands in Canada. This is long overdue.

After reading Bill C-61, the Alberta Wildlife Federation would like to share some thoughts and perspectives with the committee. We support the intent of Bill C-61 to address and improve drinking water for those living on and visiting first nation lands. Access to a reliable stream of safe, clean drinking water is essential.

The term "source water" appeared multiple times in the bill, but without a definition. We have some concerns about how this could be used in the implementation of the act and the resulting impact it could have on our recreational outdoor communities. This comes up in paragraph 5(1)(b), which reads, "the effective management and monitoring of all stages of water services delivery, from the protection of source water".

What does this protection mean? There could be a wide interpretation of this, and vast consequences for those who enjoy angling in our rivers and lakes, along with all Canadians who want to explore our waterways on paddleboards, kayaks and watercraft.

Upon review of the bill, we were left unsure what a source water "protection zone" is, along with what impact it would have if one was declared. Clause 29 states that first nations law must "protect the environment as much as or more than" current regulations listed in the bill. This needs to be in collaboration with all levels of government when it impacts any water that is not located on first nation lands. The creation of a first nations water commission is good, but again, we note that it includes a section on source water protection plans. The Government of Canada, along with provincial govern-

ments, has a role to play in this responsibility when it comes to source water.

The more we read the act, the more it became evident that source water protection is a recurring theme that is broad and without definition. Why are we concerned about this? Because it commonly shuts down access for hunting and fishing and reduces opportunities.

I want to emphasize that water is for all Canadians to enjoy, access, drink and explore. Bill C-61 could present challenges if access were restricted to water bodies and if fishing opportunities were eliminated, restricted or further controlled. We want to know what guardrails are in place to protect these interests.

We are worried and concerned that the use of source water protection clauses in this act go beyond the intent of what is needed to provide safe drinking water. Any discussion involving that source water should include everyone, as we all have a stake in water management.

I want to reinforce that fishing, hunting and trapping communities contribute \$13.2 billion in Canada's GDP, \$18.9 billion in direct spending and 107,000 Canadian jobs with an estimated labour of \$6.4 billion. That's based on a Conference Board of Canada report from 2019. In Canada, we have 2.9 million licensed anglers, and recreational fishing brings \$10.3 billion to our economy. Nine in 10 Canadians support hunting, fishing and trapping, according to Nanos Research.

Water is also critical to our tourism industry, which requires access to water for recreational purposes as well. Think of all the rafting tours, fishing guides and hikers who want to experience this vast natural resource.

I paint this picture because access to outdoor areas to participate in these activities is essential. It comes back to the impact of protecting source waters and what that means for implementation. How this bill will be interpreted and the economic risks that could result concern us. We need federal guardrails in place to protect these interests. Anything to do with source water or the protection of source water must be done in a collaborative manner that respects provincial authority and the interests of all Canadians.

In summary, we respect the human right to safe, clean drinking water and the sanitization of waste water. We are concerned by the use of the term “source water” throughout the bill and its inclusion in a first nations water commission regarding how it could impact recreational communities, and we are concerned by the lack of guardrails within the bill.

• (1600)

Thank you for your time today and for allowing me to address the committee on this important matter. I hope all first nations communities are able to access healthy, safe and clean drinking water as soon as possible.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Carter.

With that, we're going into our first six-minute round of questioning, starting with Mr. Zimmer for the Conservative Party.

**Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, witnesses, for coming all the way to Ottawa.

We've already seen a lot of closures across the country, like caribou closures. I'm from the northeastern part of British Columbia. We've seen potential closures, too, on the west coast—fishing and other closures. British Columbians are very aware of closures, because they've affected us already, personally.

Hunting and fishing organizations have a lot of questions about source water and the associated protection zones referenced in Bill C-61, as you do. According to clause 21(1), defining what a protection zone is.... It actually doesn't define it. It's whatever the minister says it is. I think that becomes the question. Meaning depends on whatever the minister sitting in that chair decides and then applies. Then people will be shut out from their ability to fish and hunt in areas they've long fished and hunted in. There's a misconception that people just do it for fun, but it's often for sustenance. You probably have a lot of friends who fill up their freezers to survive the winter, whether it's arctic char, moose or deer. It's about feeding our families.

Do you share those concerns about all Canadians' potential loss of access to hunting and fishing areas?

**Mr. Kelly Carter:** Absolutely. That's the primary concern among our members and what they've been experiencing, as you identified already, with regard to protected areas being put in place. A reduction in access means fewer people who want to fish and hunt.... It impacts food security, as well.

**Mr. Bob Zimmer:** I will give up my time and pass it over MP Melillo.

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

Thank you, Mr. Zimmer.

I'll pick up on that topic as well, just to keep things going there.

Thank you, all, for being here, by the way, for this important discussion.

All witnesses have raised concerns of some kind regarding this legislation. They also, of course, applaud the idea and motives behind the legislation. I think that's very important as well. Protection

zones is one area that is very unclear and leaves much to the minister. The minister can make regulations without the consent of even the first nations, going forward.

I'll start with Chief Hill.

Do you also share those concerns about the minister having authority over first nations in terms of what the protection zones will be? As a follow-up, do you have ideas on what a protection zone should look like? We've asked many times over the course of this committee study what a protection zone is or should look like. Some folks don't know, or they have very different ideas.

• (1605)

**Chief Sherri-Lyn Hill:** I'm sorry. I lost you for a bit.

I'm going to ask Councillor Greg Frazer to respond.

**Dr. Greg Frazer (Councillor, Six Nations of the Grand River):** Thank you for that question.

In this bill, the minister has the right to make that decision. That concerns us quite a bit.

I will put the protection zones in a historical context. When we entered into Six Nations of the Grand River, we were given six miles on either side of the Grand River. We actually came from the American Revolution. We missed out on nine million acres because of the war. Therefore, we ended up in southern Ontario, right through the heart of southern Ontario, right through the economic engine of southern Ontario. We were given, in 1784, six miles on either side of that, and that included tributaries. It included from the mouth to the source, from Dundalk all the way down to Lake Erie.

Then over time, of course, as we all know, it was whittled away. We ended up going from 950,000 acres to 46,000 acres. However, on that six miles on either side of the Grand River, we still have the interest in that land and water. We still have various treaties that have clauses on hunting and fishing rights, such as the Nanfan Treaty. We often see that everything seems to be restricted. You'll probably bring up jurisdiction. We're talking about these protection zones.

Protection zones to us are where all of the sources of our water come to affect us. It's six miles on either side of the river. I grew up on the river. My house is on the river. However, we cannot rely on the minister to tell us how far out the tributaries come or how far out all of the land comes. We're actually still in a court case over this.

We have a court case that's going after the fiduciary land claim of almost a million acres. Within that million acres was our watershed and our protection zone. From a historical context, we have six miles on either side, which actually encompasses all of the tributaries, and now, we've lost that.

We get a little offended. It's offensive for the ministers to say, "Okay, you have the right to this much or that much". That is our stand on that issue.

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

I think I'm running low on time. There's much more I wanted to get to.

Can I just ask a simple, quick question?

Chief Hill, you raised some amendments, obviously, in your opening remarks, but as the bill is written now, would you support it?

**Chief Sherri-Lyn Hill:** No, I would not, just because of the wording.

**Mr. Eric Melillo:** Okay, I appreciate that.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Zimmer and Mr. Melillo.

With that, we'll be moving over to Mr. Battiste for six minutes.

**Mr. Jaime Battiste (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.):** Congratulations on your recent election, Chief Hill.

I wanted to talk a little about the wording around "best efforts". I'm reading in the "Powers, Duties and Functions of Minister" where it says this:

The Minister, in consultation and cooperation with a First Nation governing body, must make best efforts to ensure that access to clean and safe drinking water

If you could replace that with an amendment, what wording would you suggest instead of "best efforts"?

**Chief Sherri-Lyn Hill:** I suggest "must provide" or "must ensure" so that it actually happens. It's not that it's a "best effort", but that they actually must provide it or must ensure it.

**Mr. Jaime Battiste:** Okay. We were talking about making the funding allocations. It's not just best efforts, but it has to go a step further. Is that correct?

• (1610)

**Chief Sherri-Lyn Hill:** Yes.

**Mr. Jaime Battiste:** Yes. Looking at clause 27 and subclause 27(3), where it talks about the funding allocation decisions, it says:

The Minister's consultations and cooperation with respect to the making of funding allocation decisions are to be guided by the principles that the funding for First Nations water services should

(a) be adequate, predictable, stable, sustainable and needs-based;

Do you agree with that in terms of moving forward? Would you agree with those principles, that they're important ones for communities to have?

**Chief Sherri-Lyn Hill:** Yes, but also, it's frustrating when operations and maintenance funding by ISC only covers about 50% of what is required at Six Nations, and it hasn't changed in 30 years.

**Mr. Jaime Battiste:** I think that speaks to the second two things, and I'm glad you raised that because after that it talks about "be responsive to current and projected needs with respect to infrastructure" and "be responsive to infrastructure lifecycle planning related to local needs".

I read that as the minister working with stakeholders to say we understand that there are going to be things that we need to do, and that's in that funding allocation so we're trying to figure out how do we strengthen this.

As someone who comes from a first nation community myself, a reserve of 5,000, our goal here is to ensure that first nation communities have access to drinking water with the principles that are laid out, but we know one-size-fits-all doesn't necessarily apply to everyone. You have a rather large community and there are some communities that have less than 200 people.

How do we get to a point where we're protecting all of the needs of either the large ones or the small ones with the same wording?

**Chief Sherri-Lyn Hill:** I'm going to ask Councillor Greg Frazer to respond.

**Dr. Greg Frazer:** I think we're talking about a commission as well, formulation of a commission. I don't think that's going to work in our respect because of the different sizes of first nations, because of the variability across Canada. It should be the input from the first nations that makes those decisions. I don't think it's really fair to compare us to someone, for example, in Shamattawa.

**Mr. Jaime Battiste:** I think that's where, when we're talking about funding allocations and decisions, we're on the same page. We're just saying different things but in order to achieve the same objective. I appreciate that.

Chief Diabo, you said that the clause 8 laws are contradictory towards the laws, the inherent rights, of your community and your nation. Do you think that, if an amendment was to be provided where nothing in this act would abrogate or derogate away from inherent rights or treaty rights and that this legislation would be seen as affirming section 35 inherent treaty rights, it would be enough to balance your rights, your section 35 constitutional rights in your community, by ensuring that important legislation that already speaks to water exists knowing full well that section 35 paramountcy means that your constitutional rights would be put above any kind of legislation that was currently in this legislation?

**Grand Chief Cody Diabo:** My understanding is that's already in there, and that's not enough in some way.

**Mr. Jaime Battiste:** Why? If we're saying that your constitutional rights are coming before this other legislation, and we know that section 52 of the Constitution says that the Constitution is the supreme law of Canada, and those section 35 rights are already included in this Constitution, it would appear to say that your inherent rights would be above these federal statutes. Wouldn't it?

**Grand Chief Cody Diabo:** According to section 35, at the end of the day, it's less than UNDRIP's recognition of indigenous rights. Section 35 is still contingent on Sparrow and Van der Peet, so unless Canada gets rid of the common law for section 35, it's inadequate at that moment. If we keep going back to section 35.... Our law and jurisdiction predate section 35, but we have to fall under section 35?

**Mr. Jaime Battiste:** But section 35 recognizes that the rights exist. It's not creating new rights. It's recognizing and affirming the rights from my reading of it.

**Grand Chief Cody Diabo:** That's according to Van der Peet and Sparrow, so we still have to then prove all of this stuff and that we've had these rights pre-contact. It's more far-reaching than that.

**Mr. Jaime Battiste:** Shouldn't a nation have to prove the rights if they're claiming that it's paramount over federal legislation?

• (1615)

**Grand Chief Cody Diabo:** Does Canada have to prove its rights to the United States? Why do first nations have to prove their rights to a settler nation at that moment?

**The Chair:** As much as I'm enjoying this exchange right now, and I'm finding it fascinating, I'm afraid I'm going to have to stop you there, Mr. Battiste.

[Translation]

Mr. Lemire, you have the floor for six minutes.

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to all the witnesses.

I have been on this committee for almost a year, and I am always amazed at the stories we hear from coast to coast to coast. It saddens me to see the acts committed against indigenous communities whose members were expropriated or forced to move.

Over the course of its history, Kahnawake has suffered enormous losses as far as land and use of waterways are concerned, particularly when the St. Lawrence Seaway was constructed. I sincerely hope that the legal proceedings under way will enable you to remedy historical wrongdoings to your satisfaction and that it will allow for some reconciliation.

Grand Chief Diabo, thank you for drawing our attention to the problematic aspects of clause 8 of the bill, which were the subject of prior consultations. First nations water sources are increasingly degraded by industrial activities, agricultural runoff and land-based waste disposal practices. However, first nations leaders have said that indigenous governments are not involved in the management of these water sources.

Can you tell us more about the type of collaboration your community would like to see under Bill C-61? How would you like to be consulted?

Also, do you have any idea what the definition of a real protected zone should be?

[English]

**Grand Chief Cody Diabo:** You have my apologies. I put the translation on a little bit later, so I just got the end of that.

In a nutshell, from my perspective, it would be having proper consultation right away. It would start with that rather than the limited amount we've gotten.

Again, I do apologize. I only clicked on the translation afterwards. My legal counsel is more versed in the French language than I am. Perhaps I can turn it over to her to provide an answer on the beginning part of the question.

**Ms. Katie Spillane (Legal Counsel, Mohawk Council of Kahnawake):** Certainly.

You asked about the definition of protection zones. I think Mr. Frazer put it quite eloquently in his response to earlier questions, that it really has to come from first nations themselves to determine where their source waters are coming from and how they might be affected. As Grand Chief Diabo mentioned, there has been very limited consultation on this bill. It doesn't bode well for the implementation of the bill to have so much run through without adequate consultation.

[Translation]

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** Grand Chief Diabo, in the preamble to my question, I acknowledged the enormous losses you have suffered as far as land and use of waterways are concerned, particularly after the St. Lawrence Seaway was constructed.

I will move on to my second question.

If the federal government truly intends to protect water sources in Canada, it must amend, strengthen and enforce laws to prevent industry from releasing effluent into those sources and put the onus on industry to provide drinking water treatment systems that provide access to truly safe water for communities affected by industrial operations.

Metals and carcinogens on the bottom of the Great Lakes are causing concerns in terms of infertility for indigenous men, problems with enteric and skin diseases and high rates of cancer in the population. These are all concerns that this committee has heard from witnesses. That does not include the social repercussions, particularly on the conduct of activities in the communities.

The construction of a nuclear waste dump on the shores of the Kitchissippi River, the Ottawa River, where four million people get their water, should be alarming, in my opinion. That should be obvious. However, the voices of indigenous communities, be they Anishinabe or upstream communities such as yours, are ignored.



What action should be taken to protect our waterways and to prevent irreparable damage that will have an impact on downstream communities?

• (1620)

[English]

**Grand Chief Cody Diabo:** Thank you for that.

In a nutshell, give first nations the right to govern our own waters.

[Translation]

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** How do you think that should be included in a bill? Obviously, the waterways and lakes can be larger than the size of your territory. When a number of territories are affected, how should that be managed from one territory to another, or even from one province to another?

[English]

**Grand Chief Cody Diabo:** It's all our land. It's unceded.

Now we have to jump between jurisdictions. Ontario is working with us, at the end of the day. Including us in the process later on and recognizing.... I hate using that word, because I don't want to say that I need Canada's recognition. However, on Canada's end, it needs to recognize that it's not the only nation here, despite all the laws it's instituted, from the Indian Act and downward. You need to include first nations in the drafting and in being part of the program and the solution, rather than saying, "We're going to legislate this and you have to fall in line at the end of the day." You have to go back to section 35 and this kind of stuff. We need to be part of the process. If we're going to traverse the analogs of time, going forward, we have to do it together. It's not with a paternalistic stance, where Canada is here, the provinces here and first nations here.

We're on a par with Canada. At the end of the day, our relationship is with the Crown, the British monarch and Canada. The federal government is holding that responsibility. We are on a par with the federal government. We need to start working at that level, together.

[Translation]

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** Thank you, *meegwetch*.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Lemire.

[English]

Next, I'll turn the floor over to Ms. Idlout for six minutes or less.

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Qujannamiik*, Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for appearing on Bill C-61. It's such an important bill.

I completely agree with you, Chief Sherri-Lyn Hill. It's ridiculous that we're here regarding this bill, because jurisdiction over water was stolen from you. It was stolen from first nations, Inuit and Métis. The way this bill is drafted.... It's not a very reconciliatory way of giving that jurisdiction back.

I want to ask you this very quickly, Chief Hill and the grand chief on the video conference call: Were either of you engaged in consultation on this so-called codeveloped bill?

Maybe I can start with you.

**Chief Sherri-Lyn Hill:** No.

**Ms. Lori Idlout:** To the grand chief on the video conference, were you engaged in the codevelopment of this bill?

**Grand Chief Cody Diabo:** Are you asking me first?

**Ms. Lori Idlout:** Yes.

**Grand Chief Cody Diabo:** No, not on the codevelopment.

**Ms. Lori Idlout:** Thank you.

I think it's particularly important to ask that question because, when this bill was first introduced, it was touted as being "codeveloped". When I asked questions about how many first nations would be impacted and how many were engaged, the numbers were quite stark.

I'm going to move to another issue related to clause 26 and clause 27 of the bill because they are very different from each other. I want to get your understanding, Chief Sherri-Lyn, Kelly or Greg.

Do you understand what clause 26 is regarding? The minister "must ensure" access to clean and safe drinking water is how the clause should read, not that the minister will "make best efforts" regarding access to clean and safe drinking water.

**Chief Sherri-Lyn Hill:** I'm going to ask Councillor Greg Frazer to respond.

**Dr. Greg Frazer:** Yes. That popped up several times, of course—the consultation and co-operation part of it.

As the chief mentioned earlier, in her opening statement, often it lacks.... To Chief Diabo's point about being initially consulted, it doesn't happen. It happens like you said. The other thing, too, regarding consultation and co-operation—

• (1625)

[Translation]

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** Mr. Chair, I am sorry to interrupt the witness, but his microphone was not on when he started speaking, so the interpreter could not translate what he said.

[English]

**The Chair:** I hate to interrupt here. We're having an issue with—

[Translation]

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** Could the witness repeat the last three sentences of his answer, please?

[English]

**The Chair:** Sure.

Could the witness repeat the last three phrases? I've paused the time.

**Dr. Greg Frazer:** Is my mic on now? Is everything okay?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** It's that little red light there.

**Dr. Greg Frazer:** Going back to the wording on the consultation and co-operation, we see that often. Asking the minister to be making those decisions at this point always lacks the accommodation part—the commitment part. We always see the initial part, but we don't see the emphasis on the accommodation part.

That's something that's often bothered us.

**Ms. Lori Idlout:** Thank you.

I'll follow up with you, Greg, on clause 27. To me, it is a very different clause that we heard questioning about. I'd like to get your understanding.

Section 27 speaks to consultations “in respect of a framework for assessing needs”, which to me is very different from clause 26. Clause 26 talks about “access to clean and safe drinking water”, whereas consultation in clause 27 talks about “a framework for assessing needs”.

Is that your understanding as well?

**Dr. Greg Frazer:** Yes, but often that word “framework” is a bit of a concern to us. Framework means that he's building a framework...to suit whose needs?

As first nations, are we building the framework, or is the minister building the framework? That's what has to be clear. The framework has to be built by first nations, not by outside governing bodies.

**Ms. Lori Idlout:** Thank you so much.

I wanted to then ask both witnesses about the lack of direction given in this bill about protection zones.

The way that I understand this bill is that jurisdiction to first nations regarding source water would not happen until the protection zone negotiations happen at a later date. This lack of clarity is what I am concerned about because then your first nations would have to either consult or work with provinces or municipalities. You would have to negotiate with another level of government before that protection zone negotiation happens.

I wonder if maybe both of you could respond to your concerns regarding that lack of clarity.

**Grand Chief Cody Diabo:** I'll jump in there.

Being in the province of Quebec causes a huge concern, because we're always in a battle with the province in terms of jurisdiction recognition. I foresee it becoming a major issue down the road.

We see it on other files as well in terms of health care and other sectors, when it comes to having to deal with the province. I hate using the words “recognition of jurisdictions” because in my view, this whole area is unceded territory of the Kanienkehaka since time immemorial. We've never ceded it, but we have to now negotiate in terms of when these protection zones come into effect. We're limited to our reserve lands as opposed to our traditional lands.

It will definitely be an issue.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Idlout. I'm afraid I'm going to have to interject at this point, as the time has elapsed.

We'll be now moving into our second round of questioning, starting with Mr. Shields for five minutes.

**Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC):** Thank you to the witnesses for being here today.

I think we've heard a little bit about protection zones a few times.

Mr. Carter, do you have an idea what a protection zone would look like, reading the legislation?

• (1630)

**Mr. Kelly Carter:** Reading the legislation, no I don't. I think it's vague and unclear in regard to how it could be incorporated, interpreted and enacted. I think that's where some of our members' concerns definitely arise.

We would like to see clarity on this and would be willing to put forward a recommendation or consideration for that.

As it stands right now, it leaves uncertainty.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Would you submit that from your organization?

**Mr. Kelly Carter:** Yes, I could look at putting that together.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** I have one last thing for you, then.

When you talk about confusion, you mentioned provinces, you talked about a water council and we talked about an indigenous water council.

Do you feel that there will be clarity when we have three different organizations out there that are going to be dealing with this, and then you throw the minister in to do what he wants?

**Mr. Kelly Carter:** I think it's what you call “kicking the ball”. It's just being passed around.

I can speak personally on this. People want to see some action. They want to see safe drinking water everywhere. They want to see access to water and the protection of water. Water impacts everyone. I think that's where there is probably agreement at the table. It's difficult when you start talking about water ownership—who owns water, who accesses it—and the rules.

We need safe, clean drinking water to recreate in, to drink, to live and to sustain life. That's where we'd like to see it move forward. Creating multiple bodies doesn't help get us to a solution sometimes. Action does.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Thank you.

I have the same question for the Six Nations chief about when we see different bodies being organized and a minister with the final “maybe” say. It doesn't say that he consults, but it doesn't say that he has to get agreement.

**Chief Sherri-Lyn Hill:** Thank you for that.

It's going to be a mess and a lot of confusion. Again, water has no boundaries. Every level of government needs to work together to find solutions as equal levels of authority.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Great. Thank you. I appreciate that.

Grand Chief, I'll ask you the same thing. When we have proposed a number of bodies and a minister, where do you think this is going to go?

**Grand Chief Cody Diabo:** Knowing politics, it's going to take a long time, but I have to agree with my Six Nations colleague that we all have to be on the same level. Nobody is above another. Water knows no boundaries. It doesn't adhere to our jurisdictional boundaries.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Thank you.

I'll turn the rest of my time over to Mr. Schmale.

**Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC):** Thank you very much.

Chief Hill, I liked what you had to say regarding outcomes and the fact that the government isn't achieving the outcomes that I think we would all like in terms of clean drinking water. What are the specific barriers now that prevent nations from achieving clean drinking water? Is it the technology piece? We've heard about that. Like, the technology exists to....

Maybe I'll let you expand on that.

**Chief Sherri-Lyn Hill:** I'm sorry. What was the last part?

**Mr. Jamie Schmale:** It was about what is preventing those outcomes from being possible now.

**Chief Sherri-Lyn Hill:** I think the biggest one is the lack of infrastructure. We have a \$1.6-billion gap in my community for infrastructure and a water plant from 2013 that still needs repairs.

**Mr. Jamie Schmale:** Would the possibility of changing the way Ottawa collects tax revenue help you? For example, if your nation were able to keep the excise tax revenue generated from your businesses, giving you as a local leader the ability to make those decisions on how you wished to proceed, would that be a potential movement in the right direction?

**Chief Sherri-Lyn Hill:** I'll ask Councillor Greg Frazer to respond.

**Dr. Greg Frazer:** Thank you, Chief.

Yes, excise tax is a big issue, especially in our community. Our community has some fairly large industry. What happens is that one of the industries can pay out about \$350 million to \$400 million per year in excise taxes. Excise taxes do not come back to our community. They are gone into the coffers of the province or the federal government. We have no access to that, even though the sales and the people paying for the product are on reserve.

Our community is on us as leadership regarding section 87 of the Indian Act. "We don't pay taxes," they say. We say, "Okay, it's going to the government." "We don't pay taxes," they say. "It's as simple as that."

However, to your question, it would benefit us greatly to that effect. That would wipe out the \$1.7-billion gap in infrastructure. Not

only would it help our water system, but our water system is directly linked to our health care system.

Just briefly, the health of our community is not the same as the health of the communities around us. We have higher rates of gestational diabetes for our young mothers. We have higher rates of overweight babies. We have higher rates of diabetes. Why is that? That's because we've supplemented water. We don't drink water out of a tap. We see a tap and we don't go near it. A lot of us, 70% of our community, are on either wells or cisterns. We've turned away from water.

What have we turned to? We've turned to sugar drinks. One of our convenience stores was the highest-selling Pepsi seller in Ontario. What does that lead to? That leads to poor health. That is something that was brought up as a social determinant of health. That's a behavioural change.

• (1635)

**The Chair:** Mr. Frazer, I'm afraid I'm going to have to interject. We're much over time here. I think that may be a line of questioning that one of my colleagues might pick up on afterwards.

With that, I'm going to turn the floor over to Mr. Hanley for five minutes.

**Mr. Brendan Hanley (Yukon, Lib.):** Thanks for setting me up, Mr. Chair.

I did want to follow on that line of questioning, actually. As someone with a medical background and not a legal background like my colleague, Mr. Battiste, I was drawn to the previous testimony of Dr. Martin-Hill, who wrote a paper about the expansive health ramifications of not having access to clean water. She talked about water insecurity and the many aspects of water insecurity, particularly through a gendered and age-based lens. I was really interested in how, for instance, water insecurity affects mental health, emotional health and the whole social health of the community.

I wonder, Chief Hill or Mr. Frazer, if you could briefly comment on that connection.

**Chief Sherri-Lyn Hill:** I think it's a huge one for mental health. I have community members with depression or sadness, worrying if they have enough water for their kids to even have a bath, worrying if they can get a load of water because sometimes they can't get a load of water. Those are emergency calls.

The other part of it is that sometimes the kids worry. They know they didn't have a bath that night, but are other kids going to know? This is a huge mental health issue weighing on parents and especially on kids who have to go back into school. They know what's going on at home. There are some who still do not have running water in their homes. There are some who are using outhouses.

This is 2024. That's why I did my statement. We're sitting around this table talking about legislation for first nations people—that's what boggles my mind—while we first nations, my community and other communities, struggle with this.

**Mr. Brendan Hanley:** Thank you, Chief.

I'll cede the rest of my time to Mr. Morrice.

• (1640)

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Thank you, MP Hanley.

Chair, I understand that MP Lemire is also open to sharing two and a half minutes of his time. Is that your understanding as well?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr. Mike Morrice:** Excellent. Okay.

[Translation]

Thank you, Mr. Lemire.

[English]

Thank you, Brendan, as well.

Chief Hill and Councillor Frazer, I so appreciate you both being here to help us understand the reality of what folks in your community are facing. What we get told is, and here's the quote from Indigenous Services Canada: "all residents of Six Nations of the Grand River have access to safe drinking water". The reserve is not under a water advisory according to Indigenous Services Canada.

Can we just get clarity for the record?

Councillor Frazer, I believe you just finished sharing with a colleague that 70% of residents at Six Nations do not have access to clean drinking water. Can you clarify that? What percentage of residents do not have access today to safe drinking water from the tap?

**Dr. Greg Frazer:** Yes, let me bring you up to speed statistically on that.

Thirty per cent of our community is on the water line from our water plant. Seventy per cent have to use either cisterns or wells. I just got a call today. Since that study came out in 2022, from 2003 to 2022.... It was a community study showing that the water that was tested in all of the places, all of the areas, that were not on the water line was determined to be either dangerous or unsafe. That is the reality of the situation. There is unsafe water. The things we get from ISC are not always accurate.

**Mr. Mike Morrice:** Thank you, Councillor Frazer.

I'll just read from a CBC article that Chief Hill participated in a few weeks back that speaks more to that. Ashley Cooke said, "Mostly everybody knows the reserve doesn't have clean drinking water.... We've never ever trusted our tap water."

Is that the sense you get from most community members?

**Dr. Greg Frazer:** Yes, no one drinks from the tap. We have to buy water. The 70% who are not on the water line buy it, and then they have to store it in a cistern. The cisterns are not cleaned. They're not tested. They are just left.

**Mr. Mike Morrice:** If we shift to what this committee could do to make progress, I understand another colleague asked you, Chief Hill, if you'd been consulted. We're being told that consultations began in 2018. You already answered that you were not consulted, Chief Hill. I recognize you were also newly elected in November of last year.

Has anyone you know of been consulted to date at Six Nations of the Grand River?

**Chief Sherri-Lyn Hill:** Go ahead.

**Dr. Greg Frazer:** No, not that we're aware of. No one has directly approached us or the chief's office on that.

**Mr. Mike Morrice:** I guess this is the first consultation, this committee meeting right here. Is that true?

**Dr. Greg Frazer:** Direct...? Yes.

**Mr. Mike Morrice:** It's all the more important that you're here with us today.

Chief Hill, you also earlier said to another colleague that you wouldn't recommend we support the bill as it stands. You shared a number of proposed amendments for the committee to consider, including language like "must provide" and "must ensure" in place of the government being required to provide "best efforts" for clean drinking water. If those amendments were passed, do you believe it's possible the bill could be improved to be something that would be helpful to you?

**Chief Sherri-Lyn Hill:** I think there are a few more. There's what I talked about with legally recognized government, so that one. There's to recognize access to safe drinking water as a human right through inclusion of a new subsection. There's requiring achievement of outcomes, not simply "best efforts", so what I talked about with the wording. There's to ensure the bill guarantees access to an adequate supply of clean water not solely for domestic fire protection and emergency management needs, but also for economic and cultural needs through an additional preamble or statement and an amendment. Then there's adequate funding for water services on first nation lands, not simply to "make best efforts".

**Mr. Mike Morrice:** Thank you, Chief Hill.

If all of those amendments were passed, would this be a bill you would support moving ahead?

**Chief Sherri-Lyn Hill:** I think it would be closer to our approving it. Again, what we've missed in the beginning is any consultation with first nations.

• (1645)

**Mr. Mike Morrice:** Again, I really appreciate you both being here to provide this kind of testimony this afternoon.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Morrice.

With that, we'll be turning it over to Mr. Bachrach, who's joining our committee here, for two and a half minutes.

**Ms. Lori Idlout:** Before we hand it over to my good friend Taylor, I just wanted to say a very quick thank you to all of the witnesses for appearing on this study. Thank you for making such clear and strong statements regarding the changes that we need to make to make sure that this bill is more acceptable than the way it is at the moment.

I think that, if MPs were getting the same quality of water that first nations get, we wouldn't be able to legislate, so I know it's very important that we do a better job to make sure that indigenous rights are being respected in a much better way.

I'm going to now hand the floor to Taylor.

*Qujannamiik.*

**Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** *Qujannamiik*, Lori.

Thank you to the committee for allowing me to join your meeting.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here.

I hope you'll forgive me if I shift gears for a brief moment to bring up another matter that is before the committee. Obviously, Bill C-61 is a very important bill and, as one of the witnesses said a little while ago, it's going to take a long time to move it through this process and get it right.

There is other business before the committee. One of those pieces of business is Bill S-16, the Haida Nation recognition act, which passed through the Senate unamended relatively swiftly and now awaits this committee's deliberation.

We would like to propose that the committee pause its work on Bill C-61 and turn its mind to Bill S-16 for two meetings in order to quickly hear from witnesses, conduct the line-by-line review of that legislation and hopefully report it to the House as quickly as possible.

I do have a motion that's been duly put on notice, and I'll move it at this time, Mr. Chair. I move, as it relates to the committee's future business, it be agreed:

That:

- i. The committee dedicate its meeting on October 24, 2024, to hear from witnesses as part of the committees review of Bill S-16, An Act Respecting the recognition of the Haida Nation and the Council of the Haida Nation;
- ii. Any amendments to the bill be submitted no later than 5:00 p.m. EST on October 25, 2024;
- iii. Clause-by-clause consideration of the bill start no later than 8:15 a.m. EST on October 31, 2024; and,
- iv. That the committee report this bill to the House as soon as possible following the conclusion of clause-by-clause consideration.

Having read that, I'll note that I understand that there's a friendly amendment to change the date of clause-by-clause consideration from October 31 to October 28, which would get this business done even faster, so I would be happy to accept that as a friendly amendment.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Bachrach.

Of course, this motion was circulated with the required 48 hours' notice, so we're now moving into debate. First on the list I have Mr. Battiste.

**Mr. Jaime Battiste:** As it would happen, Mr. Chair, from the discussions that we are in support of this, we do need a little bit of time to go to the stakeholders on some of the amendments around the first nations water legislation, so we would be proposing to move this up by one day. As opposed to having it on October 31 at 8:15 a.m., we would like to see it at 3:30 on October 28 instead.

I think that would give us, not only an ability to get through Bill S-16 in a way that is good for that nation, but it also gives us the ability to hear from the stakeholders about the possibility of amendments for the water legislation, which we need to get right.

With that, I'd hope that we'd all be in agreement with this.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Battiste.

I'm going to see if there is anyone else who would like to make an intervention.

Mr. Schmale, I know I had you on the previous list, but would you like to contribute to the amendment to the motion?

• (1650)

**Mr. Jamie Schmale:** Yes, I'll speak to the amendment to the motion. I thought I was going to speak to the motion, but that's fine. Thank you.

I understand the importance of the Haida Gwaii legislation. I want to echo some of what Jaime was talking about and suggest that we wrap up or at least get as far as we can on C-61 and hopefully get this finished before we jump to S-16. I think we've heard a lot of powerful testimony through this study, and I think it's incumbent upon us to try to get that done as soon as possible and then, of course, move into the Haida Gwaii bill as soon as possible.

I agree. I don't think it'll take very long, but at the same time, bouncing around here a bit might take the focus off the clean drinking water legislation.

You're saying the 28th and their motion said the 24th. Is that correct?

**Mr. Jaime Battiste:** Yes, they said the 31st—Halloween—and we're saying the 28th, that Monday, instead because we do need some time to talk to the stakeholders about amendments that are coming from C-61. We just don't see that happening prior to that, so it gives a perfect little break for us to engage with the stakeholders on possible amendments while at the same time getting S-16 through.

If you think we can do it in one meeting, I'd be more than happy to see that, but line-by-line usually takes at least two full hours.

**Mr. Jamie Schmale:** To build on that, at what point do you see, as the government, going back to the excise tax study we had?

**Mr. Jaime Battiste:** Do you have witnesses you're planning to call who have confirmed?

**Mr. Jamie Schmale:** We also have the ministers coming. We passed a motion that they come within two weeks, and we're going on three now.

**Mr. Jaime Battiste:** I would say the first things we want to do are to make sure we get the legislation across the finish line and then come back to the ministers and make sure that, if you have any additional folks for the excise tax study who we haven't heard from and are brave enough to come and talk about taxing their people on the reserve, then we're more than happy to—

**Mr. Jamie Schmale:** Keeping tax harmony is what it was.

**Mr. Jaime Battiste:** Then we're more than happy to hear from them.

First, let's get the legislation all figured out. I figure that with any help we would be able to get the final amendments in by October 29 for the water legislation, and that would give us the ability to almost get into line-by-line in early November for C-61. I think with that time frame we'd have the ability to get through both pieces of legislation, with line-by-line, by the first week of November or the second week of November at the latest, before we get to the ministers and other studies.

**The Chair:** Mr. Shields, go ahead.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** What we need is an actual date and a timeline for when we're putting all these three pieces together. We're talking about it, but we have a couple of dates moving here and an amendment, so we need it broken down clearly on the dates we're talking about.

You're getting into November now, so I need a little more of a timeline of exactly what dates we're talking about.

**The Chair:** I have Mr. Bachrach and then Mr. Battiste.

**Mr. Taylor Bachrach:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, since I used our last round of questioning, which was going to be a two-and-a-half-minute round, to introduce this motion, I wonder if the committee might excuse the witnesses, unless they want to stay and hear us haggle over the dates. I'll just offer that as a suggestion.

I have one brief comment after that.

**The Chair:** I'm seeing agreement here.

With that, obviously, if our witnesses would like to stay, you're more than welcome to, but I would invite you to take your leave if you wish, because this is likely going to take us until the end of our meeting.

With that, I want to thank you very much for your testimony here today. It will be very helpful in the continued work that we're doing on C-61. I really appreciate your taking the time to be here in person and virtually so we could do that. Thank you.

We're back to Mr. Bachrach.

• (1655)

**Mr. Taylor Bachrach:** On the issue of the dates, I'm a little bit confused. It seems like there's some other stuff being introduced. The motion is very clear that the committee dedicate two meetings, one to hearing from witnesses and one to clause-by-clause consid-

eration of the legislation. Based on the friendly amendment, those meetings would take place on October 24 and October 28, I believe. Those were the dates that I was provided.

**The Chair:** Those are the dates I have as well.

Mr. Battiste put forward an amendment here. That would be on clause-by-clause and the deadline for amendments to Bill C-61, unless I'm mistaken.

**Mr. Jaime Battiste:** I think that's consistent with the understanding I have.

If I look at the calendar, we have another meeting on Thursday on Bill C-61. Then we have another meeting on the 21st on Bill C-61. Then, on Thursday the 24th—which is our regular schedule—we get into Bill S-16 with the hope of getting it done by the 28th. Then we would be able to go back on the 31st and the 4th to finish up anything else we have to do on Bill C-61. I think we're almost to the point where we've exhausted our witness list. That would bring us to November 4 and November 7 for line-by-line and amendments.

I'm hoping that clarifies it and we can get agreement on that.

**The Chair:** Mr. Melillo.

**Mr. Eric Melillo:** I appreciate that clarity. I don't take specific issue with that, per se.

I wonder, Chair, if we could have a quick, five-minute timeout here? I see Mr. Schmale is wandering. Maybe we could have a second to chat off-line to make sure we're all on the same page

**The Chair:** We'll take a five-minute recess here.

• (1655) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1705)

**The Chair:** I call this meeting back to order.

I believe, Mr. Melillo, you had the floor when we left off here.

**Mr. Eric Melillo:** Yes, but I'm done.

**The Chair:** I know there were discussions amongst the parties. At this point I turn it over to Mr. Battiste who, I believe, worked out a plan going forward that all are in agreement with. Mr. Battiste, go ahead.

**Mr. Jaime Battiste:** After some thorough discussions, I think we found something that everyone can be happy with.

First of all, we'd like to see Bill S-16 done the week of October 21, on the Monday and on October 24, after we come back from the constituency week. That would require us to move an amendment to the motion from my NDP colleague to say, instead of October 24 on the first one, October 21. We would then have the amendments due on October 22 as opposed to the October 25. We would go into clause-by-clause consideration, then, on October 24.

After that we are going to hear from ministers. Ministers Hajdu, Vandal and Anandasangaree will be here on October 28, which gives us enough time to get to the amendments for Bill C-61 on October 29, with the ability for us to start line-by-line on October 31 and go until we've gone through all of the line-by-line—hopefully—by mid-November. That's what I propose, and I believe we have consensus on that.

• (1710)

**Mr. Jamie Schmale:** And excise...?

**Mr. Jaime Battiste:** We'll finish that later.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for that, Mr. Battiste.

Are there any other members who would like to make an intervention on this?

(Amendment agreed to [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

(Motion as amended agreed to [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** We will amend this accordingly.

Just to run through it again, on October 21 we'll have witnesses for Bill S-16. Any amendments for Bill S-16 will need to be submitted the next day. On October 24, we'll go through clause-by-clause on Bill S-16. Then, on October 28, we'll have the ministers appear. On October 31, we will have clause-by-clause for Bill C-61, and amendments will need to be submitted by October 29 for that.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** That's clear. I just want to get the drinking water out there.

**The Chair:** With that, I believe that's everything we have on our agenda for today.

Is it the will of the committee to adjourn?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** The meeting is adjourned.

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