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• (1635)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.)): I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting 111 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Natural Resources.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on Thursday, June 6, 2024, the committee is resuming its study of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format. I would like to remind participants about the following points.

Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. All comments should be addressed through the chair. Members, please raise your hand if you wish to speak, whether participating in person or via Zoom. The clerk and I will manage the speaking order as best we can. I use two cards for the folks online and in the room. Yellow is a 30-second warning, and red means your time is up. I will not interrupt you mid-sentence so that you can finish your thought.

I'd like to welcome our witnesses for today's study.

From the Business Council of Alberta, we have Adam Legge, president, by video conference. From the Calgary Chamber of Commerce, we have Deborah Yedlin, president and chief executive officer, by video conference. From Canada's Building Trades Unions, we have Sean Strickland, executive director, by video conference.

You will have up to five minutes for opening remarks, after which we will proceed to rounds of questions.

We will begin with our first five-minute opening statement. It's by Adam Legge from the Business Council of Alberta.

Mr. Legge, the floor is yours.

Mr. Adam Legge (President, Business Council of Alberta): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and good afternoon, committee members.

I represent the Business Council of Alberta, which is a public policy organization of Alberta's largest employers and most successful entrepreneurs.

I'm speaking from the traditional territory of Treaty 7 and the Métis Nation of Alberta regions five and six.

I'd like to speak to four key points: economic value, indigenous reconciliation, trade value and building major projects in Canada.

In terms of economic value, the oil and gas sector is Canada's most productive sector and our most important export sector. It's no secret that this country is struggling greatly with productivity and a lower quality of life for Canadians compared to our peer nations. Therefore, further production and export activity in that sector benefits Canada as a whole. EY estimates that between 2024 and 2043, the expanded Trans Mountain system will pay \$3.7 billion in wages, generate \$9.2 billion in GDP and pay \$2.8 billion in government taxes. The Bank of Canada predicts a 0.25% bump in GDP in Q2 of this year due to the expansion.

The CER estimates that the TMX expansion will close the gap between benchmark oil prices and what Canadian producers receive by about nine dollars per barrel. This will result in more royalties and tax revenue for governments. CAPP notes that oil and gas companies paid \$34 billion in oil and gas royalties to provincial governments in 2022, so it is reasonable to expect this figure will grow because of the TMX expansion, which will positively support Canada's finances.

We, as a nation, should be actively working to create more opportunities to grow our energy sector's production and export—not to curtail it with layered policy.

In terms of indigenous reconciliation, as has been noted by previous witnesses, the future of the pipeline could be a watershed moment in righting the wrongs of the past by enabling indigenous ownership of the pipeline at some point in the future. One can look at the opportunities for reconciliation being generated through the Cedar LNG project, which is majority-owned by the Haisla first nation. At the final investment decision announcement, Crystal Smith, chief councillor of the Haisla Nation, said, "Cedar LNG will make the most significant mark on economic reconciliation ever in our country. With Cedar LNG, we have proven that Indigenous communities can successfully forge a path to economic independence and generational prosperity."

There is opportunity for the TMX expansion, at the right time, to do the same through an indigenous equity ownership position. That benefit will be on top of the incomes generated from the estimated \$4.9 billion in contracts with indigenous businesses during the construction phase of the project.

From a trade value perspective, Canada's energy sector made up 23% of Canada's total trade export value in 2023. The expansion creates even greater value opportunity. However, Canada is highly reliant on a single trading partner—the United States. Exports to the U.S. account for 77% of Canada's total export trade value. With uncertainty as to the outcome of the looming U.S. election and for diversification of our trade portfolio, the expansion project provides welcome optionality for our energy products to go to other markets that can diversify our portfolio and reduce exposure to risks such as a downturn in the U.S. economy, energy demand or retaliatory trade measures.

Canada should be doing more to support the export of its natural resources to our allies and other nations in need of them, largely in pursuit of their own decarbonization efforts. Whether it is oil, LNG, propane, ammonia or critical minerals, the expansion can and should be the start of further expansion of Canada's resource export capacity.

In terms of building major projects, Canada struggled to get big things built and the TMX expansion project is illustrative of that challenge. We have a lengthy and uncertain regulatory and permitting process in Canada. It's a process with an inappropriate degree of political involvement. We must fix this so we can be recognized globally as a place that can build large projects quickly, efficiently, safely and to the highest environmental and reconciliation standards.

Our 2023 report, "Future Unbuilt", addressed many of the changes needed in Canada's regulatory and permitting process. The ministerial working group on regulatory efficiency for clean growth projects' action plan made some progress but did not go far enough. Adding to that challenge, concerns remain that the federal government did not go far enough when it amended the Impact Assessment Act in response to last year's Supreme Court decision. We must use the experience of this expansion project and global best practices to further refine and improve Canada's regulatory and permitting process.

In closing, the TMX expansion is an important project for Canada's most productive sector—the energy sector. Even with cost overruns, it will be a huge net positive for our country. In fact, Canada needs more big projects like this one, and we need to build them faster.

Canada has a chance to globally step into the spotlight and deliver things the world needs right now—energy, minerals, food, wood and more. We must seize this moment for Canadians and for the world. We must improve our approvals process in Canada to allow us to build the right things for the world and build them fast. That will help generate prosperity for Canadians and solve global challenges.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

• (1640)

The Chair: Thank you for your opening statement, Mr. Legge.

We will now go to Deborah Yedlin from the Calgary Chamber of Commerce.

You have five minutes. The floor is yours.

Ms. Deborah Yedlin (President and Chief Executive Officer, Calgary Chamber of Commerce): Thank you, Chair. Good afternoon.

I want to thank the committee for the opportunity to present to you today regarding the economic benefits of the Trans Mountain pipeline.

I'm a member of the Calgary Chamber of Commerce, which includes businesses, large and small, in Calgary.

It's important we look at this project despite the cost overruns and time it took to build and recognize it is important for the country in the long run. We've become too focused on short-term, quarterly results or election cycles without realizing projects that are worthy take time and, yes, sometimes they can be over-budget.

From the perspective of Trans Mountain, failure was not an option. This project needed to proceed to break our entire dependence on the United States as our only export market for crude oil and to increase the amount of money we receive per barrel produced. One of the key measures used in this context is a differential between Western Canadian Select and West Texas Intermediate. For every dollar the differential goes down, it means an additional \$1 billion to companies and the economy. It's at \$13 now and is expected to narrow to nine dollars because of the Trans Mountain expansion. That's another \$4 billion in annual revenues flowing into the country, which translates into \$2 billion a year in government revenues, half of which goes directly to the federal government.

We own the resource. We should be getting the highest price for it, but without options for egress to other markets, returns have long been compromised. As a trading nation, the more access we have to new markets, the better it is for us. This pipeline opens new trading routes. No country ever suffered from having more options for trading.

Also important is the context of the market valuations of the energy companies themselves. It bears mention that Canadians from coast to coast, through pension plans and mutual funds, own shares in these energy companies. It's for the benefit of all Canadians that returns are maximized. People are concerned about the costs. That's what gets the headline. Even with the cost overruns, the tolls levied on the shippers will cover approximately 30%, or \$9 billion, of the cost of the tolling. While this is more than what was expected, consider that shipping oil by rail, which has been an important source of transportation, costs shippers between \$15 and \$22 U.S per barrel.

The TMX investment will pay for itself in the next 10 to 12 years. It also has to be noted that the cost overruns are covered by issued and outstanding debt, which will be part of the valuation of the asset when it is sold. It is not for the taxpayers to bear. Beyond that, the numbers show opportunity cost. If the pipeline wasn't built, it would amount to about \$240 billion over a 20-year period. Who can afford that, given the fiscal challenges facing the country?

Let's break down the numbers: \$34 billion to buy the project, about \$8 billion in equity, revenues will reach \$3 billion, expenses \$500 million, and debt servicing costs are \$1.6 billion. Revenues more than cover the servicing costs. Over the next 20 years, the value of revenue generated by Trans Mountain, depending on the discount rate, is between \$26 billion and \$38 billion. The higher the discount rate, the lower the valuation. During a time of falling interest rates, and as the project is effectively de-risked, the valuation should go up.

Was it worth the price tag? Yes, because of the value that will accrue to Canadians, starting with a 0.25% increase to our GDP in the third quarter. What were the reasons for the overruns? Time is one reason. Approvals that were given were withdrawn. The scope of the project changed and new approvals had to be granted. One hundred and fifty-seven conditions needed to be met. Sixty-nine agencies were involved. One hundred and thirty indigenous communities were consulted. It was technically more challenging than expected, including two mountain ranges and 47 slopes with a more than 15% grade. The pandemic didn't help, nor did weather events such as wildfires or atmospheric rivers that caused flooding. The project was the largest archeological dig in Canadian history, with 255,000 first nation artifacts uncovered at 360 sites, and 27,000 bird nests were monitored. Finally, shipping channels off the B.C. coast were improved as part of the work, which is of net benefit to all export and import activity.

There is no world in which estimating the cost of such a complex project was easy or could be accurate. Instead of being critical, we should think in the context of how Canada has set a new standard for pipeline construction, including the incorporation of ESG metrics and the benefits that will accrue to Canadians over the life of the project.

Here's what's also important: This project set the stage for true economic reconciliation. It included almost \$5 billion in procurement deals, and 10% of the workforce came from indigenous communities. This is relevant when we think about who the buyers might be when the government decides to sell the asset. This shouldn't happen until the tolls are decided, because this is critical to the valuation of TMX.

Furthermore, there needs to be clarity on the emissions cap, which is a de facto production cap, and could compromise the barrels entering the pipeline. No project is perfect, but Trans Mountain, despite all its challenges, will prove to be of net benefit to Canadians and the Canadian economy for decades to come.

Thank you for allowing me to present this afternoon. I look forward to your questions.

• (1645)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Yedlin, for your opening statement.

We will now go to Sean Strickland, from Canada's Building Trades Unions.

You have five minutes, sir. The floor is yours.

Mr. Sean Strickland (Executive Director, Canada's Building Trades Unions): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of committee, for the opportunity to address you here this afternoon and speak about the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion.

My name is Sean Strickland. I'm the executive director of Canada's Building Trades Unions, an affiliation of 14 international unions that represent 60 different trades and 600,000 members from coast to coast. Of our affiliates, four are concerned with pipeline construction: LiUNA, representing labourers and construction craft workers; the United Association, representing welders and pipe trades; Teamsters, who move pipeline equipment and materials; and the International Union of Operating Engineers, who operate and maintain the heavy equipment. Together, our four pipeline unions and signatory contractors constructed nearly 90% of all major federally regulated pipelines in Canada.

Patrick Campbell, who sits on our Canadian executive board for the operating engineers, gave evidence earlier this week. I thank him for sharing his depth of expertise with you.

As you heard from previous witnesses—and which I will reiterate—the construction of the 980-kilometre Trans Mountain pipeline is a major nation-building project, which brings Canadian energy to Pacific markets. The successful completion of this project is an ongoing, fantastic testament to the engineering and construction capability of Canada's pipeline industry. This is a major accomplishment for the benefit of all Canadians. However, as you heard from others, there have been real challenges—foreseen and unforeseen—during this project.

In the clearly predictable category, one foreseen challenge was labour supply. As you heard earlier, the involvement of unionized contractors and workers was not by choice but by necessity, with approximately one-fifth of the project delivered through signatory contractors. This was only once it became apparent, in 2020, that, due to regulatory delays, alternative and non-union contractors simply could not supply sufficient workers in competition with other projects that paid higher wages. This is a common challenge—a tight supply of skilled labour and what's called “project stacking”—and these factors frequently contribute to major project delays. In the future, as we recommended in other venues, strong workforce development planning is critical to ensuring there are enough skilled trades workers available to take on such nation-building and economy-driving projects.

I also reiterate comments that I made previously at other committees. Canada's Building Trades Unions believe that, any time the Government of Canada makes an investment or puts skin in the game, it should come with strong labour conditions—good wages and benefits, prevailing wages, as well as apprenticeship requirements and local and indigenous hiring obligations. These measures aren't “nice to haves”. They are essential to major project delivery. Strong apprenticeship requirements ensure we build the future skilled trades labour supply, and strong wages and benefits ensure that workers are attracted to major projects when and where they are needed. They also ensure that Canadian construction workers see real benefits and are adequately compensated for the work.

You also already heard about the other challenges—the lack of regulatory efficiency that drove up costs and unforeseen events such as the atmospheric rivers, floods, wildfires and a global pandemic, to name a few—all of which disrupted construction operations. Imagine going to work on a construction site, wearing a mask and adhering to the protocol that was in place during COVID. It's very difficult for workers to work in those kinds of environments.

Despite all of these unforeseen and uncontrollable challenges, the men and women of the building trades delivered. They built one of the most complex environmentally protected and safest pipelines ever completed—not just in Canada but in the world. It is a project with an immense legacy beyond what high-level balance sheets show: hundreds of new skilled trades apprenticeship opportunities for Canadians and indigenous peoples, more than 35,000 jobs during the construction, hundreds more for maintenance and environmental monitoring, and downstream multiplier jobs and economic benefits throughout Canada for the input materials in fabrication and welding shops right across our country.

Canadians should be proud of what our skilled trades workers, engineers and contractors managed to accomplish. We should learn important lessons for the future about workforce planning, regulatory efficiency and labour procurement, so that major project delivery can be improved in the future.

I thank you, and I look forward to today's discussion.

• (1650)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Strickland.

That concludes our opening statements.

We now go to the first round of questioning, which is a six-minute round for each party. I'll start with Mrs. Stubbs.

Mrs. Stubbs, you have the floor, and you have six minutes.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Thanks, Chair.

Thank you to all of the witnesses here today.

You talked about the long-known and proven importance of oil and gas to the entire Canadian economy and to indigenous communities for opportunities that are otherwise lacking in many of the regions and remote areas where they live. You talked, of course, about the fact that the oil and gas sector has, for decades, employed indigenous Canadians to a much higher degree than other sectors. Thank you also for articulating the importance of LNG and energy transportation infrastructure for the entire country.

Of course, the fact about TMX is that the federal government naturally failed, even after federal approval, to enforce the rule of law that would have given political and legal certainty to private sector proponents, so they could go ahead and build the big project in the national interest of Canada. In the case of LNG, we all know the only shovels in the ground on an LNG export terminal in Canada are the ones originally approved by the former Conservative government for LNG Canada. Zero LNG export terminals have been constructed in Canada since, even though there have been 18 proposals from private sector proponents since this government took office in 2015. The United States, of course, has rapidly constructed 22 export terminals in the exact same time frame.

This goes to the point that each and every one of you made about regulatory uncertainty, inefficiency and permitting. Those are exactly the issues that common-sense Conservatives seek to fix for all Canadians, to the benefit of every single community across this country.

All of that being said, there's still the fact that it's not quite true the TMX pipeline is the only export pipeline available. The vast majority of that product still goes out from the Gulf Coast of the U.S. In fact, a staggering, stunning decision was this Prime Minister's unilateral decision to veto and overrule the northern gateway pipeline, which was the stand-alone export pipeline that was previously approved. The court said the Prime Minister could go back and get indigenous consultation right. Of course, he surprised all of the indigenous communities that supported northern gateway by not consulting them on that and vetoing the pipeline. That's what killed stand-alone export infrastructure for Canada.

Here we are with TMX now well behind schedule and well over-budget, and we all know darn well that Canada is already running out of pipeline export capacity.

Thank you, Ms. Yedlin, for your point that is so true: The emissions cap is a production cap. Could you explain the impact of Canada's production cap on the royalties and taxes that get paid, providing services all Canadians care about, and the impact on TMX?

Adam, you may want to comment on that as well.

Thank you to the representatives of the workers who do all the work here.

• (1655)

Ms. Deborah Yedlin: Thank you. I would be happy to go through some of the numbers.

There was a report published by Deloitte that found that the cap would curtail production by 10%—626,000 barrels a day by 2030—and natural gas production by 12%. It would hit Alberta the hardest with 3.6% less in investment, 70,000 jobs lost and a 4.5% decrease in the province's economic output by 2040. Ontario would lose 15,000 jobs and \$2.3 billion from its economy. Quebec would lose 3,000 jobs and \$400 million from its economy.

The entire country would experience an economic loss of about 1% of GDP, translating into lower wages, the loss of nearly 113,000 jobs and a 1.3% decrease in government tax revenues. We already know we're struggling with GDP growth, and this would represent a significant decrease in our economic opportunities. As Adam pointed out, the productivity factor would also be compromised.

This is something that would also compromise the valuation of Trans Mountain. We know it is contracted, but there is a portion that is not. If there's no certainty in terms of what can be produced and fed into that pipeline, the valuation of the asset will be compromised.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Thank you for those facts.

Adam, I don't know whether you want to add some comments or context to this.

Also, do you have comments on regulatory uncertainty, permitting timelines and, especially, your point about the fact that the government hasn't gone far enough to fix the broken system they introduced in the first place with Bill C-69, otherwise known as the Impact Assessment Act, which was declared unconstitutional?

Mr. Adam Legge: Thank you, Mrs. Stubbs. I'll touch on the regulatory issue first.

In our report from last year, it's very clear that the regulatory system is broken in Canada. We are not building things quickly enough. We are not giving investors certainty, which sends a signal to the world that investment is not to be guaranteed here in this country. I can tell you that, when CEOs are standing in front of their boards and asking for investment capital, the first question the board will ask is whether there's certainty and confidence that this investment will actually materialize. If a CEO can't guarantee that for their board, it's unlikely the board will get a final investment decision. They will scan the globe to see where there is certainty and

where the returns are greater, and they will put their capital there. Unfortunately, the signal Canada is sending is that we can't give that certainty, so capital is going elsewhere.

In terms of some of the changes that were made in the Impact Assessment Act, we don't feel they went far enough. There's a whole host of issues, whether it's the concept of standing, the continued political risk associated with ministerial designation and decision, even after an extensive process....

I see, Mr. Chair, you're holding a red card.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Thank you for your comments. Hopefully, there will be more time to get into more issues.

Of course, just be careful of the use of the word "we". Certainly, there's only one party that's been in government for nine years.

Thank you for all your testimony.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Legge, for seeing the red card. The time's up.

As I mentioned earlier, you can finish your thought. I don't want to cut you off mid-sentence, but I appreciate your being aware.

Thank you.

We'll now go to our next speaker.

Ms. Lapointe, you have six minutes.

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

My first question is for Ms. Yedlin.

From a business perspective, can you tell us how the federal government's purchase of the TMX pipeline has contributed to job stability and business confidence in Canada's energy sector?

Ms. Deborah Yedlin: Certainly.

The purchase of the pipeline has provided certainty in terms of getting the project across the finish line. This is because we know Kinder Morgan was not going to proceed with the project on its own, and that was due to the regulatory challenges that were consistently put in front of the company. It needed to make a decision, as Mr. Legge just pointed out.

Companies in the energy space have the opportunity to make investments all over the world. We compete with the world for investment dollars, and without this certainty, this project would not have been built and Canada would have lost, as I said in my comments. The opportunity cost of this not being built would have been significant, so this was the only way it was going to get across the finish line.

It's unfortunate, but it really was the regulatory challenges and the fact that Kinder Morgan had to think about looking elsewhere for its investment opportunities.

• (1700)

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: Thank you.

My next question is for Mr. Legge. Your organization has done some incredible work toward securing long-term economic growth in your province.

How do you see the TMX pipeline fitting into Alberta's strategy and Canada's broader strategy to transition toward clean energy, all while maintaining competitiveness in the global market?

Mr. Adam Legge: The expansion provides the opportunity for the sector to continue to grow, flourish and provide good jobs and economic contributions, not only for the province of Alberta but for the country as a whole, and to generate government revenues.

As many of my members in the energy sector will tell you, the continued growth and operation of their companies and their plans are integral to supporting cleaner investments, whether they're in carbon capture and storage or looking into the hydrogen economy. We simply can't cut off that sector's capital flows, investment flows and revenues.

This continues to enable them to operate successfully and begin to move additional funds into some of these newer technologies that will help reduce emissions as a sector and as a country.

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: Thank you.

Mr. Strickland, I appreciated the experiences of your members in construction, which you shared in your opening statement.

Can you tell us how the experience you gained from building such a large-scale project like the TMX pipeline can be leveraged to accelerate Canada's clean energy transition? What role can the federal government play in facilitating the transition for your members?

Mr. Sean Strickland: I think many of the skills that are involved with constructing a pipeline are transferable. When we talk about our energy transition to hydrogen, carbon sequestration, small modular reactors, etc., the welding and the earth-moving are transferable, but we'll need some additional training for these new energy sources of the future. Our industry has been around for hundreds of years, and we constantly evolve and adapt to new technologies, but every now and again we're going to need some help from the federal government with training dollars to help position us for those new energy sources of the future.

I would add, if I might, that when I hear about regulatory certainty, I think that's important for these major infrastructure projects, but it's not a race to the bottom. I think what we need is regulatory efficiency. We have so many permitting bodies and so many different agencies involved that are cross-ministerial, cross-departmental and intergovernmental. For major infrastructure projects like this one, and for the new ones to help us transition to a net-zero carbon economy, we need to achieve that regulatory efficiency across all those different government bodies so that we get these projects out of the ground quicker and get them to market.

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: Thank you.

Ms. Yedlin, how do you see the pipeline balancing the need for economic growth with the ongoing efforts to transition to clean energy across Canada?

Ms. Deborah Yedlin: There's no transition to clean energy without the involvement of the energy sector.

As has already been pointed out, you have revenues that can be applied to technologies and you have processes that continue to decrease emissions. I would argue that this is something we have to consider. We also need decarbonization policies that balance economic goals and environmental goals. They must be structured in a manner that recognizes that this is a long-cycle investment time frame.

This goes back to how I originally started my remarks: We are too focused on the short term. These are long-cycle investments. There's no switch. We can't go from system A to system B. It has to be done in a thoughtful way so that we don't decarbonize and compromise our economic opportunities at the same time. Policies need to have certainty, and we need to understand what those look like in order to make those investments going forward.

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

We will now go to Monsieur Simard for six minutes.

[*Translation*]

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

I'm going to take a few minutes to move a motion. I apologize to the witnesses. I hope we can get back to our discussion with them right away afterwards.

I had an email exchange with the Parliamentary Budget Officer, who indicated that his updated Trans Mountain analysis would be completed shortly and that he expects to table the printed version in early November. The Parliamentary Budget Officer also told me that he himself would be prepared to present his findings to the committee verbally.

I therefore move the following motion, and I hope we can deal with it quickly so we can continue our discussion with the witnesses:

That the Committee invite the Parliamentary Budget Officer to appear before the end of the Trans Mountain Pipeline study to share the findings of his update.

That's all there is to it. I think we need to have a discussion with the Parliamentary Budget Officer about his updated analysis. His last analysis of the pipeline project was in 2022, when the estimated cost was \$12 billion, if I remember correctly. Today, it is an estimated \$34 billion.

In his analysis, the Parliamentary Budget Officer told us that the project was unsustainable and represented a net loss for Canada. I suppose that, at \$34 billion, a positive outcome for taxpayers will be even less likely.

I think we can have a quick vote on this. Also, it ties into the study we're doing now. If my colleagues are ready to vote, it's basically just a formality.

• (1705)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Monsieur Simard.

I'll let you know, witnesses, that we do have a motion on the floor. We will go to the proceedings on the motion and get back to you very soon, hopefully. Please wait patiently as we deal with the motion.

I think everybody has heard and understands the motion on the floor.

Is there debate on the motion?

Go ahead, Ms. Stubbs.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: I just want to say that of course we support our colleague's motion to get this transparency and accountability that Canadians deserve. We of course absolutely support the Trans Mountain expansion, as we have done consistently, and we recognize the importance of energy transportation infrastructure to every single community across the country. Certainly Canadians deserve to have this review and to get these answers, so we Conservatives support our colleague's motion.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Stubbs.

I'm going to go to Ms. Goodridge and then I'll go to the other speakers.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*Translation*]

I'm very grateful to my Bloc Québécois colleague for moving something that is really relevant to our study and the responsible thing to do for taxpayers. As my colleague said, we will support this common-sense motion.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Goodridge.

I'm going to go to Mr. Angus.

Mr. Angus, the floor is yours.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The reason I brought forward the motion on TMX is that we have to get answers as to why we are paying \$34 billion to build it. The fact is that we are being asked to subsidize every barrel that is sent down the pipe by companies that continue to raise emissions, so we need to get answers. Canadians want answers, and boosterism isn't an answer; we need facts.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer said that there is no business case. He needs to come and explain to us, because our job is to hear the testimony and prepare a report for Parliament so that Canadians can make up their minds.

I certainly support my colleague.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Angus.

I'm going to go to Ms. Dabrusin.

Go ahead, Ms. Dabrusin.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): I'll be fast so that we can get to the witnesses.

I agree with the motion, and I think that we talked about it when the PBO was here the first time, so I'm in agreement with Mr. Simard's motion.

The Chair: I don't see any more speakers, so let's call the vote.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: The vote is unanimous. That's great. Thank you.

Mr. Simard, I'm back to you. You have about a minute.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard: Unanimity for Quebec; that's fantastic.

I have a very quick question for Ms. Yedlin.

Ms. Yedlin, in response to an earlier question, you said that you need certainty to move this project forward and that regulatory barriers were the reason the government had to get involved.

In my opinion, the first principle of capitalism is that private companies assume the risk. It strikes me as odd that, when it comes to oil infrastructure, apparently the government needs to assume the risk.

We've talked to many big oil companies about carbon capture and sequestration, but nobody wants to take a chance on improving their greenhouse gas reduction practices without government support. For major infrastructure like the Trans Mountain expansion project, or TMX, private companies seem unwilling to take on the risk.

I'm going to ask you a very simple question about something that's bugging me: Is Canadian oil profitable?

• (1710)

[*English*]

Ms. Deborah Yedlin: It is, but we also need to have an underlying policy certainty that is straightforward and not layered by other policies. Right now the energy sector is profitable.

I'll just put one thing in front of you. There was a time when the price of oil was \$8.64 a barrel. That was in 1998. It took until 2005 before oil hit \$60 a barrel and the oil sands companies and the energy sector started making some money.

Now, without policy certainty, if you have regulatory pieces—
[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard: I appreciate that. I just want to point out that, at \$34 billion, this is the most expensive certainty in history, in my opinion. Anyway, thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Deborah Yedlin: Can I just make one point?

In 1971, the Government of Ontario, the federal government and the Government of Alberta came together to support the ongoing development of Syncrude. At that time, the C.D. Howe Institute said that this was exactly the time for government to step in and share the risk to ensure the viability of the project. I would argue that the same thing has happened today.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Yedlin.

We will now go to Mr. Angus for six minutes.

Mr. Angus, the floor is yours.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you.

I'll start with the Calgary Chamber of Commerce. I'm sure you're aware of the Calgary Economic Development study that was done in 2021, the Alberta Energy Transition study. Do you remember that?

Ms. Deborah Yedlin: I'm sure I do.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Oh, good, because I remember in 2022 being in Alberta, and there was so much excitement. I mean, you are an energy capital. Nobody has the kind of skill that Alberta has. I'm saying that; my wife's an Albertan, and the old man worked in the oil patch. In terms of being in there and talking about clean energy, nobody knows it like Alberta.

The Calgary Economic Development study, done with Edmonton Global, predicted there would be "170,000" jobs in clean tech in Alberta, contributing "\$61 billion in GDP..by 2050". That was in the report. I would think you'd want to read that one.

The interim president and CEO of Calgary Economic Development said, "Calgary's vision is to be the destination of choice...for innovators to solve the greatest global challenges, including the energy transition" and the "pursuit of net-zero".

How do your members feel about the moratorium brought in on renewables by Danielle Smith?

Ms. Deborah Yedlin: I think the question really is about how we move forward with policy certainty. It's everything from investment tax credits to support—

Mr. Charlie Angus: I'm sorry. That's not the question. I asked how your members feel about the moratorium. You represent many people who would have been beneficiaries of this massive investment in clean tech.

Ms. Deborah Yedlin: In fact, investment in the renewables sector has continued, because there were projects under way. I think the uncertainty that has been created has caused people to sit on the sidelines, but that's not unlike what happens in any situation like

this. Any time there is regulatory uncertainty, dollars sit on the sidelines—

Mr. Charlie Angus: I agree with you. I'm sorry; I'm running out of time here.

The issue of regulatory uncertainty is my concern here. There were 53 projects, representing 8,600 megawatts of power, shelved after the moratorium. There were 118 projects affected. The Pembina Institute—I'm sure you read that study from August—has counted out that \$33 billion was lost, with an additional \$263 million per year of revenue in municipal and land taxes in 27 different municipalities lost as well.

We've heard from businesses that say they just don't think Alberta is a place to invest in because they don't know what the rules are going to be. We've spoken with clean-tech people who go stateside. I mean, they're going to Texas. I don't want to be mean, but Texas has way more climate deniers than the UCP does, and yet our clean-tech economy is going there.

Without this regulatory certainty, what's happening right now in Alberta? What are your members telling you?

• (1715)

Ms. Deborah Yedlin: Our members are looking for certainty from a provincial standpoint and from a federal standpoint.

I will say that a lot of money has gone south of the border because of the Inflation Reduction Act. That's been taking place. I want to say that we need to have the underlying certainty to support investment. That is what we're asking for, both federally and provincially.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you so much.

Certainly we've lost to Biden with the Inflation Reduction Act and our lack of action. I'm still waiting on my Liberal friends over there to get those tax credits moving. We've heard a lot of great talk. We can't lose these jobs. I certainly don't want to see them leave Alberta.

Mr. Legge, you talked about the need to close the gap. Did you say it was \$9 a barrel that TMX allows us to do? Is that the differential?

Mr. Adam Legge: It's an estimate of the differential, yes.

Mr. Charlie Angus: We heard from the TMX corporation the other day that the barrels going down the tube right now are being subsidized by \$13 a barrel. I'm thinking, "Okay, if this is such a great project, why do we have to pay the oil giants \$13 a barrel through taxpayers' money to ship oil?" How does that make sense?

Mr. Adam Legge: I can't speak to the toll structure. That's not an area of expertise of mine.

What the construction of the pipeline does is enable Canadian product to get more global prices, which means Canadian producers can earn more and generate more jobs and investment and bring revenues to governments as a result.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I certainly get that. I guess my question is that the oil giants right now say that they don't like the tolls. They think they're having to pay too much when they're paying 48% of the toll, which means 52%, at \$13 a barrel, is being paid by whom—by the public, by debt? I don't know. I don't know any business on the planet that subsidizes an industry like that.

The reason I asked the question is that this Simon Fraser study that just came out—I'm sure you've read it—has tagged this subsidy at between \$581 and \$1,248 per household. I'm being told that this is a nation-building project. Well, certainly it is, because everybody in the nation is paying up to \$1,250 per household to run this bitumen down that pipeline while Suncor is getting it at a discount of over 50%.

Can you explain to me the mathematics of 21st century capitalism and if that's how it works?

Mr. Adam Legge: I can't speak to the specific Simon Fraser study you're referencing, nor can I speak to the—

Mr. Charlie Angus: Do you think they should pay their way? I mean, if this is such an important industry and if it's so profitable, do you think they should pay the full share?

I mean, this is how industry is done and this is how it's always been done—the tolls pay for the cost. Should they not pay the cost?

Mr. Adam Legge: I would argue that the bigger picture needs to be viewed, in the sense that there is a lot of economic benefit that happens from the entire value chain, supply chain and government revenues, and—

Mr. Charlie Angus: There's a subsidy of \$13 a barrel. What you're telling me is that this is not an industry that can make it on its own if we have to do a \$13-a-barrel subsidy.

Thank you.

The Chair: Time is up. Thank you.

Mrs. Stubbs, I'll turn it over to you for five minutes.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Thanks, Chair. I'm going to cede to my colleague Jeremy, but I just wanted to correct some of the facts from our esteemed colleague, MP Angus.

Alberta, of course, has long been and remains the far-and-away leader in clean-tech investment and alternative renewable energy development. This includes before and after the pause by the provincial government, which was deliberately designed to work out the regulatory details and provide certainty and confidence, so that the government could be confident that Albertans could get to a yes and be confident with all of the new development. That is nothing new in Alberta, particularly among the traditional energy companies, which, as a sector in this country for private sector investment in clean tech, are far and away the private sector leaders on investment in clean tech right across Canada.

Jeremy will continue with questions.

• (1720)

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Thank you very much.

Just building off that quickly, Ms. Yedlin, was it a good idea for the Alberta government to provide certainty for investors and for Albertans?

Ms. Deborah Yedlin: Absolutely. As I said before, you can't expect anybody to invest a dollar in anything without providing certainty. People don't risk capital on a promise; they risk capital on certainty. That's what we need in order to move forward, regardless of the industry that you're in.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Yes, that's it exactly.

In your opening remarks and in a different round, you talked a little about how an emissions cap would be a production cap. You had a short time frame to address that. I'm wondering if you can talk a little more about how damaging and harmful that would be to the future viability of this project, and also to any other projects that can and will and should be built in this country.

If we have an emissions cap in place, what would that mean to any future project?

Ms. Deborah Yedlin: That means there would not be investment in future projects.

I also think it's worth mentioning that the emissions cap will do nothing in terms of addressing global emissions. We are still a very small part of the global emissions picture. Having an emissions cap in Alberta, which would constrain oil production and natural gas production, would contribute absolutely nothing to decreasing the emissions on a global standpoint.

Why compromise our economy and the potential for adding more infrastructure to support the most productive industry in the country by having an emissions cap? It makes no sense.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Yes, exactly. This is the only government in the world that has one in place, and they seem to be bragging about how amazing it is. You've laid out quite clearly here the damage that it would bring.

On the tolls, in your opening remarks you mentioned there would be about \$9 billion of value in the tolls. I'm wondering what number you were using to come to that conclusion on what the toll would be.

Ms. Deborah Yedlin: It's \$11 a barrel. About 30% of the cost overages, or about \$9 billion, are expected to be covered by the producers through the toll.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: The CER, the Canada Energy Regulator, hasn't actually made that official yet. Is that correct?

Ms. Deborah Yedlin: There's a hearing in May of next year.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Oh, okay.

Ms. Deborah Yedlin: However, until those tolls are decided and until we know what that number is, the valuation of the asset itself is going to remain uncertain.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Wow.

I'm just wondering about the impact assessment. Mr. Legge, you were talking about that a little bit and how the changes that the government made don't go far enough. I'm wondering if you could elaborate on that a little, because, again, we're trying to find certainty here.

What killed this project, in a sense, from being built by the private sector was a lack of certainty. Conservatives tried to address that when the Atlantic accord came through, because they still hadn't made any changes to it. They were going to try to pass a bill that had unconstitutional references to it, so we were trying to sort through that then. As we know, the Government of Alberta is challenging the constitutionality of the revised version of it.

I'm wondering if you could talk a little about what more certainty is needed, or, better still, about how we could fix the Impact Assessment Act, especially around standing and how that works.

Mr. Adam Legge: Thank you, Mr. Patzer.

Our biggest concerns are the ministerial designation powers and the political interference that can come with a decision, which is why we saw the gateway project cancelled at the last minute.

One of the biggest concerns, which you raised, is also the concept of standing. With any of the projects that go before the agency, any member of the public, whether they are near or far, or directly or indirectly or not even remotely impacted by the project, has the ability to weigh in on the impacts. Therefore, changes to the act need to clarify the sense of standing so that only those who are materially and directly impacted have the ability to weigh in on the consultations.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll now go to Ms. Jones for five minutes.

Go ahead, Ms. Jones, please.

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

I want to thank our guests for joining us today. I appreciate your feedback.

I'm going to start with Ms. Yedlin.

How does this project increase the competitiveness for Canada's energy in the world? I think that's been the catalyst for this entire project. Do you see it as infrastructure that is absolutely necessary to do that?

• (1725)

Ms. Deborah Yedlin: I think it's really important to recognize that it improves Canada's energy security, and it also accounts for 17% of total pipeline capacity. What it means is that we become a more reliable supplier of oil, which is crucial for energy security, broadly speaking, around the world.

We've seen the impact of what happens when there are geopolitical events. If we can be a supplier that is reliable and if this pipeline gives us the opportunity to play a larger role on the global stage, then that's why it's important.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Thank you.

My next question is for Mr. Legge.

Over the years, we've repeatedly seen bottlenecks in the supply chain that seriously harmed Alberta energy workers in particular, as well as the economic benefits of the energy industry. How does TMX alleviate these constraints today?

Mr. Adam Legge: The TMX expansion enables production growth to happen so that we can actually drive more jobs and more investment in the energy sector and decrease some of the bottlenecks that were happening in terms of the supply getting to market.

The biggest thing for Canada is to get its product to market. We produce more than we consume domestically. Finding new ways to build more access to international markets is an imperative so that we can enable the sector to grow. We can create more jobs and enable the sector to contribute more to Canadian prosperity.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: When we were discussing this earlier, we talked about a number of factors, about the economic benefits this would bring to Canadians, to jobs and to the unions.

Mr. Strickland, when members of the International Union of Operating Engineers came before our committee, they said they were only engaged in this project after the government had purchased TMX. Is that the same experience for your union workers as well, with the building trades?

Mr. Sean Strickland: Yes, that's right. We weren't involved. The pipeline trades, the operators, the Teamsters, LiUNA and the UA were not engaged early in the process.

For large infrastructure projects, it's much better if building trades are engaged earlier in the process. That would have helped with planning the labour force. It would have helped with planning the availability of the labour force at different times throughout and throughout different locations of the pipeline project. We advocate that all large buyers of construction engage early with contractors and unions so that we can adequately supply the skill-trained labour that the projects require.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Thank you.

My next question is for Ms. Yedlin again.

You once spoke about the importance of having reliable infrastructure for energy. You disagreed that this project was necessary for us to have that energy security. Let me ask this question: Why was the project not built or approved when it was originally presented under the former Conservative Harper government?

Ms. Deborah Yedlin: The project was filed in 2013. It was recommended by the NEB that it be approved. It was approved by the Prime Minister in 2016. The investment decision was announced in 2017 by Kinder Morgan, and then costs started to escalate because there was unreasonable regulatory risk. That continued to move until the federal government decided.... Kinder Morgan suspended non-essential spending on the project in April 2018. There was too much regulatory uncertainty for them to proceed and to continue to take that risk to get the project done. That's what happened.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Part of the risk behind this project came from the British Columbia government, which was opposed to it, as well as from other legal action by environmental groups, and you'd be aware of that. One way to reduce that risk and reduce this environmental concern that was being expressed would be to lower the emissions in the oil and gas sector.

Despite that, you oppose the emissions cap. I'm not sure what the other panellists feel about this, and I'd like to know. While the oil and gas sector is increasing its emissions today, do you feel that lowering these emissions in the sector is something that needs to happen and would help reduce the risk of projects being delayed by environmental concerns?

• (1730)

The Chair: Ms. Yedlin, give a very short answer, if you could, please, because we're at time.

Ms. Deborah Yedlin: Emissions intensity per barrel has decreased 23% in the oil sands since 2009. The companies themselves are decreasing emissions. That continues, but I will say this: Bill C-59 is going to compromise their ability to tell you about that because of the disclosure regulations associated with that bill.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: She's telling the truth, all of the truth.

The Chair: Thank you.

We will now go to Mr. Simard for two and a half minutes, please.

Mr. Simard, the floor is yours.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard: I'm sorry, Mr. Chair, I was busy with something very important. I was responding to my son.

I have a quick question for you, Ms. Yedlin. Earlier, you responded to a colleague's question about capping emissions, and that piqued my curiosity a little. So here's my question for you. Do you believe that an economy based on carbon-intensive energy sources is as competitive as an economy based on energy sources capable of reducing carbon intensity? I'd like to quickly get your thoughts on that. You'll see why.

You look confused, so let me clarify.

Industrial sectors that consume a lot of energy are currently looking for places where they can access low-carbon energy sources. Germany is one such country, and places that have aluminum smelters and various very heavy industrial processes. I gather those folks don't want to go to Alberta, where there's abundant oil available. If they don't want to go to places where there's carbon-intensive energy, there has to be a reason.

What I'm saying is, I think that, in the long term, we're doing a disservice to Alberta's economy by letting it rely solely on oil, because the demand for that kind of energy may drop one day.

They put \$34 billion into a pipeline. Earlier, you said you didn't understand why there would be an emissions cap, since that wouldn't be in Alberta's interest. However, the interests of other parts of Canada, particularly Quebec, may not tie into carbon-intensive energy sources.

[English]

Ms. Deborah Yedlin: I would answer your question with the following. We know that the German chancellor was interested in finding ways to source LNG, liquefied natural gas, from Canada to Germany. That was not seen to be a priority.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard: No, that's not true. I'm sorry, but it's not true.

[English]

Ms. Deborah Yedlin: Excuse me?

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard: That's not true.

[English]

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms. Yedlin.

Ms. Deborah Yedlin: I'll also add that we know that LNG is being asked for. They would like to source it for Asian economies, South Korea and Japan. I would argue that your reasoning, sir, is flawed and that we are moving as an industry. The energy sector is investing. It is the largest investor in clean tech in the country, and moving to decarbonize.

We also know that our LNG should be exported around the world. We know that people are asking for it. The problem is that we don't have the infrastructure. We have one project.

The Chair: Thank you—

Ms. Deborah Yedlin: Our natural gas gets transported down to the United States, and then it gets exported as LNG.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Yedlin.

We will now go to Mr. Angus for two and a half minutes, please.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you, Chair.

I'm just going to follow up on my colleague.

I did meet the German chancellor last year in Berlin. He told us that they were not interested in Canada's LNG at all. He said they wanted to know if Canada could provide them with clean energy, but then he asked us if we had stable, non-conspiracy-driven governments. I was saying, "Well, maybe, but we'll have to see." However, that's not the reason I'm mentioning this.

Last summer, as 200,000 people fled their homes from climate fires, Rich Kruger, Suncor's CEO, made a statement that there was a state of emergency and that the industry had to make even more money and expand production as people were fleeing. I was thinking, "God, the disconnect."

This summer, when Jasper burned—what a tragedy—we had Cenovus's CEO, Jon McKenzie, here. I asked him if he believed there was a connection between fossil fuel burning and the climate crisis. He didn't believe there was one. He didn't know. I thought that was wild, given all the lawsuits the industry is facing and all the science.

What I haven't heard from anybody here is a mention of environment or climate obligations. I didn't hear it from our CEOs. You did mention atmospheric rivers and wildfires and how you managed to get past that.

I have a simple question for each of you.

Do you believe there is a direct link between fossil fuel burning and the climate crisis that is hitting our communities across the country?

Mr. Legge, is there a connection?

• (1735)

Mr. Adam Legge: I think the science is far too difficult to determine, particularly when it comes to forest fires and natural disasters that are—

Mr. Charlie Angus: Okay, thank you.

Ms. Yedlin, do you believe the science? Is it too difficult for you or do you believe there's a connection?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Chair, could the witness be allowed to actually finish his comment there? There are facts about the forest fires—

The Chair: We are at the end of your time.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Can I just get them to say yes or no?

The Chair: You can finish off with that, please.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Is there a connection, Ms. Yedlin?

Ms. Deborah Yedlin: This is a multifactorial issue. There's not an A-then-B connection.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Is there is no connection between fossil fuel burning, or is it that you don't know?

Ms. Deborah Yedlin: There are many—

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Strickland, do you know if there's a connection, or is this too complex for you too?

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: I have a point of order.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Is it yes or no?

The Chair: Mr. Angus, I'm going to ask you to hold. We have a point of order from Mrs. Goodridge.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: I appreciate that Mr. Angus might not want to hear the response, but I believe interrupting the witnesses after he gave very long questions is disrespectful, especially in speaking over powerful women who are simply trying to get their answer in.

Mr. Charlie Angus: That's fair enough, and I have a point of order, Chair.

I agree. I'm more than willing to give them as much time as they want to talk. I won't say another word.

Can you tell me if you believe the science of climate change—

The Chair: Mr. Angus—

Mr. Charlie Angus: I'll stop talking and let them talk.

The Chair: I'll need you to stop because there is a point of order by Mrs. Goodridge and yourself.

To everybody around the table here, if you ask a question, allow the witnesses to have the opportunity to provide an answer, even if it's a brief answer, and let's try to not interrupt or talk over each other, just to keep the committee running smoothly, as it has been over several meetings. I thank you for your co-operation.

Mrs. Goodridge, thank you for highlighting that. Thank you, as well, Mr. Angus.

On a point of order, go ahead.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I certainly don't want to seem like a hard guy. I love Calgary. I spend a lot of time there. I love Edmonton; my wife's from there.

I didn't want to be rude, but I only get two and a half minutes.

The Chair: Your time's actually up.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I know. This is my point of order.

Would they be willing to write, like other witnesses, to tell us if they believe in climate science—

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: I hate to say this, but oil and gas development isn't actually in Calgary itself. They could have just let Ms. Yedlin and Adam answer—

Mr. Charlie Angus: They could write to the committee and we can see. That way I haven't interrupted them.

The Chair: Mr. Angus, I'm sorry. It's not a point of order, but on your point of clarification is taken.

To the witnesses, if you choose to write and would like to provide an additional brief on anything you've provided today or anything you may have missed, or if you'd like to add any extra context or information, you are able to do so by sending it directly to the clerk.

We are out of time on that round of questioning and I want to go to our next speaker.

Mr. Falk, you have five minutes, so ask away.

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): You're generous today. Thank you.

Thank you to all our witnesses.

I took a quick look at your biographies a few minutes ago and I didn't see "scientist" on any one of them. If you're being asked scientific questions and you don't have an answer, that's totally understandable.

I did know, Ms. Yedlin, that you have a degree in economics and you have an MBA, so I want to ask you some questions about money.

How did we get to \$34 billion? That was really the intent of the study: How did we get to \$34 billion from what should have been \$12 billion at the outset? If you go right back to the outset, it was \$9.7 billion.

I know we've heard all kinds of things, but in your opinion... Have you had the time to study it? Could you give us what you believe cost the extra money?

• (1740)

Ms. Deborah Yedlin: There were delays, for one thing, as well as the fact that the approvals were withdrawn and the scope was changed. There were a lot of technical issues that had to be addressed. There was a pandemic. There were some other unforeseen environmental issues. As economists would say, there were a lot of exogenous variables that contributed to the rising costs, like supply chain issues, work stoppages and the challenges of dealing with the protests. There was also meaningful consultation that took place with 130 indigenous communities.

All of this took time, and time is money. Unfortunately, this is the number that we've come to for the project, but I do believe that the valuation is going to be such that we will capture the value of the project over time and that it will have been worth the dollars that were spent to buy the pipeline.

Mr. Ted Falk: Thank you.

At our last meeting, we had Mr. Maki, the CEO of Trans Mountain, with us. He indicated he was very committed to being a disciplined seller and that the Canadian taxpayer would get a 100% return on their investment.

Can you tell me what the toll would have to be to get a 100% return on \$34 billion? I know there are lots of variables. I totally understand that. We saw a half per cent interest rate drop today from the Bank of Canada, which will have a huge impact. Do you have a ballpark number or a range?

Ms. Deborah Yedlin: I'm not an expert on tolls. I had a finance professor who was a witness at the Ontario Energy Board on tolls, but I am not an expert on tolls. I don't know what that number should be, but I do know that when you think about what companies were having to do in order to ship their barrels south of the border at between \$15 and \$22 U.S. a barrel by rail, which also takes longer, that is something the industry had to deal with.

We're going to be looking at the tolls that will be decided by the CER. Obviously, there'll be a lot of push-back on both sides. I think it's a function of the revenues it's going to generate. It's also a func-

tion of the value that it's going to add. The right buyer is going to see a return on that investment, because it's going to generate cash.

Mr. Ted Falk: Mr. Legge, you have previously written articles in the Calgary Sun and other periodicals about your opinion of the production cap or emissions cap. Can you expand on that for this committee, please?

Mr. Adam Legge: We are firmly opposed to the proposed oil and gas emissions cap. It is unnecessary regulation. It would put Canada in an uncompetitive position, curtail investment in the sector and ultimately result in lower economic activity, productivity and prosperity for Canadians. It is a poorly thought out regulation, and we've asked government to scrap it.

Mr. Ted Falk: Can you also comment on what an emissions cap would do to the valuation of the pipeline?

Mr. Adam Legge: I don't necessarily have the specific numbers around that, but ultimately, if we can't produce as much as we have potential for in the country, we can't ship it. Therefore, we're not going to generate the revenues, the royalties, the jobs and the investment associated with it, so it would materially affect the valuation of the pipeline in a negative way.

Mr. Ted Falk: Thank you very much.

Mr. Strickland, we've been told previously during this study that contractors were replaced at the outset of the project with unionized Canadian workers. Can you tell me why this was done and what benefit Canadians received?

Mr. Sean Strickland: I think there were a couple of reasons.

The main reason was that the contract model from the outset was awarded to one contractor for the entire spread of the project, and it would have been better to diversify the contractor pool for that length of the project, at 890 kilometres.

At the same time, you had tight labour markets with Site C under way, as well as LNG Canada and Coastal GasLink, so it would have been much more advisable for the project proponents to sit down and work with the Pipe Line Contractors Association and unionized contractors to figure out how to get our members deployed across the country to better deliver and construct that pipeline.

Mr. Ted Falk: Thank you, Mr. Strickland.

The Chair: Mr. Falk, your time is up.

Mr. Ted Falk: Thank you.

The Chair: Somebody else can ask, or you can follow up later. Thank you.

We are now going to go to Ms. Dabrusin.

Ms. Dabrusin, you have five minutes. The floor is yours.

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

I'm going to move to resume debate on the motion that I had brought and that we were unable to complete our debate on in the last meeting.

• (1745)

Mr. Charlie Angus: I have a point of order.

The Chair: Ms. Dabrusin, we have a point of order. I'm going to ask you to hold.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: I'd like to speak to that.

The Chair: Wait one second. First, before we speak, we're going to go to a point of order.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you.

I think that this motion is important, but we've had great testimony from our witnesses. Out of respect to them, I think they don't need to sit here and listen to us debate a motion.

Can we get consent for the witnesses—

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Since all of those witnesses are Albertans, I think they absolutely deserve to stay and witness this debate.

The Chair: Thank you.

It is a dilatory motion. The clerk has told me that we have to put it right to a vote. We'll put it to a vote to resume debate, please.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Can we have her read the motion into the record before we vote?

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Don't let the witnesses go until the vote happens.

The Chair: The motion is to resume debate on the motion.

You've put it, and we're going to a vote.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 7; nays 4)

The Chair: The motion is adopted, so we will resume debate.

I'm sorry—

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: That just proves how much they really want to hear from witnesses.

The Chair: I'm going to ask—

Ms. Yvonne Jones: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

I have to say that I have sat in this room with Mrs. Stubbs and the opposition bench when we've had witnesses on the screen and have never gotten to ask them one question or have any feedback. I resent the fact that this evening she's making an unfair accusation when she has done this many times, shutting down our committee to witnesses who were here.

The Chair: Ms. Jones, thank you.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Thank you, colleague, for your comments. I apologize if you felt that way. Thanks for your point.

The Chair: Mrs. Stubbs, I'll ask you just to....

Colleagues, let's avoid the cross chatter, the cross debate and interrupting each other so that we can continue on and ensure that things run smoothly here today.

Now, I apologize. I'm just going to....

Mr. Angus, before we went to a vote, you had a point of order. Was that to release the witnesses? Was that what you were saying?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Yes, I think they've given us a lot of their time and their expertise. For them to have to sit and watch us beat

each other with cardboard sticks is probably.... They have better things to do.

I think, in fairness, our witnesses should be able to get on with their important work, and we'll carry on with our committee work.

The Chair: Thank you.

Do you have a point of order, Mr. Dreeshen?

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): I would like the witnesses to stay as long as they possibly can. It would be very important for them to hear what is being presented in the debate that is going to take place. I would welcome them to continue to stay as long as they possibly can so that they can understand what is going on here.

Thank you.

The Chair: Witnesses online, just so you know what's going on, I will let you know that we have a motion that's been moved on the floor. If you so choose to remain for the rest of the meeting, for our allotted time, you can do so. You're welcome to stay. If the motion does pass, then we would come back to you, but debate on the motion could also continue. There's no timeline to that. I will leave it up to you, witnesses, to decide what you would like to do. You can proceed from there.

The only thing I would mention is that if there is anything, Mr. Strickland, Mr. Legge and Ms. Yedlin, that you may have missed answering in today's meeting or if you don't feel like you gave a complete answer, you can provide a briefing to the clerk and send that in directly.

I hope that clarifies where we're at procedurally in today's meeting. If you do choose to leave, I want to thank you for taking the time to provide important testimony for our study. I look forward to seeing you again.

I'll leave that up to you. Thank you so much.

Now we're going to go to Ms. Dabrusin.

The motion is on the floor, Ms. Dabrusin. You have the floor. Please continue.

[*Translation*]

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

As you know, the motion was discussed at the last meeting and at another meeting before that. However, the text was amended by an amendment, so I will read the amended motion to ensure everyone has a good idea of what we are talking about:

Given that:

There are 1,600 abandoned and orphaned oil wells in Alberta polluting farmland, waterways, and air;

The number of abandoned wells in Alberta are set to increase by an additional 1,800 to 2,000;

These additional abandoned wells will cost more than \$200 million to clean up;

The Government of Alberta sent back \$137 million because they failed to use the funds provided by the Government of Canada to clean up abandoned wells and create jobs in the pandemic;

The Government of Saskatchewan used their allocated funds in their entirety to clean abandoned wells and create jobs;

Companies who abandon wells and fail to pay for their cleanup negatively impact provincial taxpayers and municipalities;

Orphaned and abandoned wells present an economic opportunity to support energy solutions like geothermal energy.

The Standing Committee on Natural Resources begin a five-meeting study on the impact of this failure to clean these wells, the impacts of the pollution from not cleaning up abandoned and orphaned wells, the costs of cleaning up abandoned and orphaned wells, the federal regulations to hold companies to account for well cleanup, and the potential opportunities associated with cleaning up abandoned wells, and report its findings to the House of Commons.

I've already stated the reasons why I think this motion is important, and everyone seemed to agree, based on what I heard, so I hope we can vote on this fairly quickly.

• (1750)

[English]

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: I have a point of order.

The Chair: Yes. I'm sorry, Mrs. Goodridge. Go ahead.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Thank you.

I was just wondering if we could have the motion circulated to members in both official languages.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Goodridge, for that suggestion. It has been circulated, and the clerk can send you a copy so that you have it.

Ms. Dabrusin, are you done?

You are. Okay. I just wanted to make sure.

I want to go to you, Mrs. Stubbs. You have the floor.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Thanks, Chair.

It's certainly a fair comment and request from my colleague Laila, since she's not a permanent member of this committee but is joining us today.

We did discuss this issue at the last meeting. I, of course, as an Albertan who lives among and with resource development, have expressed that Albertans have long cared about this issue and that all Albertans who live near, with and around resource development—development that provides great benefit to our own communities and indigenous communities and great, significant outsized benefits to the entire country—are all concerned with these issues.

Since this motion was moved, of course the Alberta government did respond. I will read that response into the record so that people can hear it. The Minister of Energy from the Government of Alberta said:

The motion being debated by the Standing Committee on Natural Resources earlier today was factually wrong and frankly nonsensical. It's extremely concerning that Liberal and New Democrat Members of Parliament sitting on the Natural Resources committee don't appear to understand what an abandoned well is. For their enlightenment, a properly abandoned well is a good thing—it means the well has been properly decommissioned and does not pose risk of polluting any land. You would think that an MP sitting on this particular committee would know something about the industry they and their staff are supposed to monitor.

He went on to say:

The Liberals and the NDP need to get their facts straight before setting forth on these expeditions to shame Alberta. Alberta is properly decommissioning more wells than ever before, we are also remediating and reclaiming oil and gas sites faster than ever. Over the last five years, the Orphan Well Association (OWA), which looks after cleaning up wells and sites belonging to bankrupt companies, decommissioned more wells and completed more reclamation projects than any other time in their history. The OWA fully closed 622 sites in 2023-24, up 44 per cent from the year before.

Further, every single dollar of federal funding through the Site Rehabilitation Program was committed to be spent, and we successfully spent about \$864 million of the \$1 billion provided. We fought hard for two years, with the backing of 17 First Nations chiefs, for an extension to allow private industry and indigenous companies to clean up wells on reserve—which happened to be the responsibility of the federal government.

That, colleagues, as we all know, is distinctly, explicitly and solely federal jurisdiction.

These funds would have been spent for remediation on First Nations land, but Ottawa refused. We reluctantly returned the remainder of the funds when we had no other choice.

This is an issue that has been kicked down the road by previous governments of all stripes. Alberta has a premier and an energy minister with the courage to prioritize fixing this problem, and that is what we will do. NDP and Liberal MPs, who end up demonstrating their ignorance in an effort to score political points, do nothing to move this important work forward.

I will remind colleagues of what I said in this first debate. In 2020, or earlier, I, on behalf of all Conservatives, put forward Bill C-221, the environmental restoration incentive act, which would have allowed the creation of a tax credit for flow-through share provisions for small and medium-sized oil and gas producers who could no longer access capital as a result of the Redwater Supreme Court decision. That bill had a sunset clause in it. It deliberately targeted producers of 100,000 barrels per day or less and was a potential real federal tool. It did not interfere in provincial jurisdiction—which all of this actually is—except for the wells on first nations.

Colleagues, as I reminded everyone, I know we might have made strange bedfellows, but the common-sense Conservatives supported that bill, and so did members of the Bloc, the Green Party and the NDP. In fact, it was the Liberal government that defeated that bill.

It was an applicable, surgical, targeted, sunset-claused tool that could have helped with access to capital for companies that were literally going bankrupt because of the anti-private-sector, anti-energy decade of darkness over which this government has presided, leading to situations that deeply concern Albertans all across the province.

I also brought that forward because this is a challenge not only in Alberta; the recovery of wells is significant throughout the country—especially, I would note, in southern Ontario.

• (1755)

That, of course, is why I had brought that bill forward at that point. It would have just allowed more capital in the private sector to complete their requirements of environmental remediation. That, of course, is exactly what Albertans and every Canadian expects when their resources are developed, because that's the social contract with proponents: It is that they can develop these resources to the grand benefit of a province—and in this case, of the entire country—but they must meet their environmental remediation, reclamation and expectations after that.

That's in part why Alberta is the first jurisdiction in all of North America to set targets for emissions reductions, to report on them, to monitor them, and this includes an innovative tool from more than 17 years ago that actually is an example of revenue going from private sector companies directly into innovation and clean tech, unlike the models that others have experimented with since.

Now, on the subject of this motion, as you all know, in Lakeland I represent nine indigenous communities, and I'm very proud to do so, just as is the story of Alberta and the relationships between indigenous companies, indigenous leaders, indigenous community members and private sector proponents who develop resources in Alberta. Those partnerships have been long-standing. It is so inspiring to see so many of the indigenous leaders and entrepreneurs speaking out more and more about the benefit, and they do so also, by the way, in major challenges to doing that. What champions they are for the best interests of their communities, which actually, in this case, also serve the best interests of all Canadians.

To the point of my colleague's motion, here is what I would like to read from the Treaty 6, 7, and 8 first nations, the ones that represent all of the first nations communities across Canada, across Alberta, on this exact issue.

There is a letter, of course, about the unanimous decision among chiefs to tell the federal government to ensure that extension and make sure that the money could be spent in their communities. Let me just read the last paragraph in particular.

This is from the chief of Treaty 7, but it should be noted that the chiefs of all Treaty 7, 6, and 8 nations are in support of this. What his letter says is:

In closing, the Chiefs have united in calling for Government of Canada to transfer the \$134 million held by Alberta to the FNSRP in order for us to continue the extraordinary work and economic benefits to Treaty 6, 7 & 8 Nations in Alberta. We ask that you set political considerations aside to rekindle the spirit of collaboration, and to do the right thing for the environment, for First Nation economies, and for the lands that our Nations hold sacred. We implore your government to work with Alberta to ensure that the \$134 million dollars is made available to the First Nations who require these funds to continue this work.

That letter was dated December 20, 2023.

I have already read the clarification statement that the Government of Alberta put out this week in response to the initiation of this motion, but perhaps it bears repeating, because there seem to be so many misunderstandings here, even when the facts and truths are spoken straight up. The statement said:

Further, every single dollar of federal funding through the Site Rehabilitation Program was committed to be spent, and we successfully spent about \$864 million of the \$1 billion provided. We fought hard for two years, with the backing of 17 First Nations chiefs, for an extension to allow private industry and indigenous companies to clean up wells on reserve — which happened to be the responsibility of the federal government. These funds would have been spent for remediation on First Nations land, but Ottawa refused. We reluctantly returned the remainder of the funds when we had no other choice.

If my NDP-Liberal colleagues really want to debate this motion on this issue, in particular on their federal responsibility and the way that they have failed first nations people, whom I and all the Alberta representatives across our province proudly represent, just as we do every single other non-indigenous Canadian in our communities.... We proudly represent the Métis people and the first nations and all of the diverse communities who live and work and have helped to build our provinces with private sector proponents to develop our resources responsibly and effectively, matched second to none by any energy-producing jurisdiction in the world, long before this government came into power and agonizingly, it seems, a long and dark nine years ago.

• (1800)

If my colleagues want to have this debate, first of all, Chair, we ask you to provide us with the schedule up until Christmas so that we can demonstrate to Canadians that we're going to get our job done here, that we're not just going to sit around and say things like, "No, there are a bunch of studies, a bunch of reports, that we haven't done anything on, so let's now go on to this study."

This is exactly why Canadians are losing confidence, trust and faith in politicians, in bureaucracies, in government and in parliamentary committees. It's because we sit here and we study the same things over and over. We produce the same reports over and over.

Stakeholders participate in good faith, like these people here today and all others. Ted Falk and I sat on this committee when we did this study on electricity. This government hasn't been able to get the interties done, and now here we are, back here on this committee, doing the study again to put out yet another report, and the government doesn't even have the first things first yet, as is the case on almost every single thing they do and say.

Colleagues, we certainly support having this debate. We certainly support setting the record straight and we certainly support that every single Canadian is probably concerned about these issues in all of their communities and all of their provinces right across the country.

Again, members here cannot make an informed decision on whether or not to move forward to this study until, as we requested, we see the daily schedule and then agree to finish the work of previous studies, of ongoing studies, and get these reports out the door so that Canadians can see that we're worth the paycheques they give us for doing our jobs.

Thanks, Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Stubbs.

I'll now go to Mr. Angus.

Mr. Angus, you have the floor.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you, Chair.

As a follow-up to my colleague, who worries that we're putting out all these reports, it is the role of the committee to get testimony, to get witnesses across the different points of view and to come forward with recommendations to present to Parliament and then to the Canadian people so that they can make informed decisions.

In terms of our work schedule now, I believe we have finished the electricity grid study, on which we had really interesting testimony, which I hope will help move government policy forward. We are finishing TMX now. I believe what's outstanding is that we've asked to hear from the environment minister; Mr. Wilkinson, the natural resources minister; Deputy Prime Minister Freeland; and my colleague Mr. Simard has asked for the PBO.

I think that puts us in a good position to make recommendations, and one thing about committees is that we don't all have to agree on the recommendations. We can have minority reports, contradictory information. However, those reports are essential. That's what we do.

I'm hearing from my Alberta colleague that she's more than willing to have a debate. I don't know what the debate's about. If all the evidence she has is that good, I'm up to having the witnesses. Let's look at this issue, because the issue of abandoned wells has been something that has been of concern, so we need to get numbers.

The numbers are all over the map. I've crunched numbers on abandoned wells and federal liability, provincial liability and corporate liability, and it's incumbent upon us to get witnesses to come forward. Then we can explain to Canadians where we're at.

I had agreed in the previous meeting that I felt it was important to get where the abandoned wells are across Canada, because we can compare jurisdictions. Certainly the first oil wells ever drilled were in southern Ontario in Petrolia. What is the situation there? We know that Saskatchewan, according to my colleague Ms. Dabrusin, had spent the money and had dealt with theirs. Was there a difference between what Saskatchewan did and what Alberta did?

At the end of the day, coming from mining country, it is for me fundamental. You have to clean up your mess. No community has mess in mining like my community, because we were one of the first, although I would point out to my honourable colleague Ms. Lapointe that her industry, for decades, was poisoning our lakes. We were pretty good-natured about it, but we fortunately brought in changes that cut the sulfuric acid emissions coming out of the Sudbury stack, and now I believe the big stack is coming down, and

they are actually more efficient than ever. All that pollution that used to go up in the air for free is now captured and sold.

There are lessons to be learned. In the mining sector, we set rules for cleanup and rules for liability so that industries couldn't walk away, because that was a standard thing that used to always happen. They would construct a mine and make the money, and then they would pitch it off to a junior company or a shell company and then walk away. The hills of northern Ontario are full of those sites.

You can't do that anymore. The issue of what the liability situations that we as taxpayers are on the hook for is pretty straightforward.

Given what I've heard from my colleague Ms. Stubbs, I believe we should be ready to go ahead and vote on this. We are pretty much done the one study. We have three or four witnesses in the next one. We can debate this forever, but I actually think it would be good if Ms. Stubbs, who is really raring to go and ready for a fight—which she always is—would bring her witnesses. We'll get the witnesses. We'll get a cross-section. We'll hear testimony and then we'll make recommendations, and yes, we will create another report. That's what committees do. They create reports to Parliament and the people of Canada.

I'm ready to vote on this and move ahead, Mr. Chair.

● (1805)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Angus.

As you're ready, I think there are many others who aren't, because we have a list of speakers to go through.

We will go to our next speaker, Mrs. Goodridge.

Welcome to committee, and you have the floor.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Thank you so much, Mr. Chair. It's wonderful to be here at the natural resources committee.

It's a shame that although we had Alberta witnesses here talking about how TMX impacted my home province of Alberta as well as some of the impacts on jobs in Ontario and Quebec, their testimony was cut short so that we could bring forward this motion and discuss it.

The part that frustrates me as an Albertan—Mr. Chair, you're also an Albertan, so I'm not sure how you feel about this—is that this government continually attacks Alberta and singles Alberta out as if somehow everything would be fine if only Alberta did this or if only Alberta did that. There are actually abandoned wells right across the country. There are abandoned wells in most provinces that have had oil, yet we're not even talking about that. This motion is only looking at Alberta.

This process that was brought forward in the \$1.7-billion program that was brought in during COVID was as much about job creation—as per an Auditor General's report from the Province of Alberta—as it was about cleaning up orphaned wells.

There were some unique challenges in the energy industry as a direct result of struggles around COVID. This was an innovative way of changing things up and doing things a bit differently.

I was actually an MLA at that point. This is where this becomes really interesting, because we had all kinds of conversations, and one of the things that Alberta did that was really interesting—although it wasn't as simple as, perhaps, Saskatchewan's solution to this—was working with the first nations and having the first nations site rehabilitation program. The program really involved first nations. It did things in a very innovative way, allowing them to be partners in prosperity. There were direct impacts to indigenous communities.

It's interesting: I know that at the government operations committee is currently looking at indigenous procurement. The program that the Government of Alberta put forward met all of the indigenous procurement requirements and exceeded them, and there were many benefits to communities as a result of this. There were environmental benefits, but there were also benefits to many communities.

I'm going to read off some of the community benefits here. This wasn't something the Government of Alberta had to do; this was something the Government of Alberta chose to do because it was the right thing to do. It wasn't within its jurisdiction; it was actually within the jurisdiction of the federal government. The federal government didn't require this, but the Government of Alberta knew that it was the right thing to do, so it chose to do it.

In the Cold Lake First Nations, they utilized several nations—

● (1810)

The Chair: Mrs. Goodridge, we have a point of order. I'll ask you to hold on for one second.

Ms. Dabrusin, go ahead on your point of order.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: What I've been finding very interesting is that all of this is the type of thing that could be brought into the study in testimony. It seems to me that this is no longer debate about the motion; it's actually trying to figure out the evidence that could be called.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Dabrusin. The point of order is not a reference to a standing order or a point of order.

I'm going to go back to Mrs. Goodridge on what I think your concern is, which is about focusing on the motion.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard: I have a point of order as well.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you for advising us.

I'm going to go to you, Monsieur Simard, on a point of order.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard: Just to clarify, and because I want my colleague to talk about the motion as it is currently worded, I would remind everyone that we amended it to specify that the study would focus solely on federal regulations.

It's interesting to see what Alberta has done, and I'm quite prepared to hear what it has to say. However, the committee adopted an amendment to the motion to specify that the study in question would, on the one hand, focus on federal regulations and, on the other, would not apply solely to Alberta's orphan wells, but to all such wells.

Earlier, my colleague called this a direct attack on Alberta. I don't think that's the intention. I just want to reframe her remarks. I think we need to stick to the motion at hand and what it says.

I myself would like to know what will happen to orphan wells and what's happening with the federal money, some of which come from Quebec, that's being used to solve this problem.

I think we need to refocus on the motion. People can disagree on the motion. If so, all they have to do is vote accordingly. Regardless, we need to refocus on the motion.

[*English*]

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: I have a point of order.

The Chair: I'm going to address Mr. Simard's point of order. I apologize, but I have to wait for interpretation to hear your point of order because I can't hear it, even though the interpreters are doing a tremendous job.

Once again, Mr. Simard, on your point of order about getting back to the motion, I think it's partly a point of clarification. Through a point of order, you were saying that there was an amendment brought forward that changed the motion—and I'm summarizing, just to make sure Ms. Goodridge knows that it's broader and not just an Alberta initiative. Thank you for providing that clarification, but it's not a point of order.

I just want to let you know as well that I think Ms. Goodridge has a copy of the new amended motion, I believe, or should have it. If not, we can make sure she gets it.

Now, you have a—

● (1815)

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: I have a point of order.

Very specifically, at the beginning of this conversation I asked to have the motion sent to me so that I had it, and I did not have an amended version sent to me.

It was very much an attack on Alberta. I understand that my colleague Shannon Stubbs provided an amendment the last time, but the one that was sent to me at the beginning of this meeting, after I asked specifically for it, was one that was a direct attack on Alberta, and so I do think that this was very wrong.

The Chair: Mr. Patzer, can you hold for a moment, please? I will go to you. I just want to address Ms. Goodridge's point of order.

Ms. Goodridge, we will rectify it to make sure that you do have the correct amended motion and so that there's no more miscommunication. I apologize on behalf of the committee if the wrong one was sent to you. We will get that back over to you momentarily while I hear the point of order from Mr. Patzer.

Mr. Patzer, go ahead on the point of order.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Thank very much, Mr. Chair.

Just to further add on to what Ms. Goodridge said—

The Chair: Is it on that point of order?

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Yes, it's very much on that point of order.

The motion that was recirculated today prior to question period is very much an attack on Alberta. All it does is talk about Alberta. The preamble is the exact same preamble as we originally debated on Monday, so I'm actually concerned that we don't even have the appropriate motion.

The fact that Mrs. Goodridge asked to have the actual proper motion circulated—

Mr. Charlie Angus: I have a point of order.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: —and I think the fact that it has not been sent to all of the members needs to be addressed before we continue down this road.

If that could happen, that would be fantastic.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I have a point of order.

The Chair: Hold on. I'm going to get the clerk to speak, if that's okay, Mr. Angus.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Certainly. I'll wait.

The Chair: I'm going to go to the clerk to speak on Mr. Patzer's point of order, just to provide clarity to committee members on what the motion is and what has transpired.

Go ahead, Mr. Clerk.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Thomas Bigelow): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Today the committee members were sent the amended motion, the adjourned motion as amended. The preamble of the motion still makes reference to Alberta and Saskatchewan. The section of the motion that was amended on Monday, by the amendment made by Mr. Simard, touches the final paragraph of the motion. It removed “in Alberta” after the words “orphaned wells”, and it added the word “federal” in front of the word “regulations”.

[*Translation*]

In the French version of the motion, Mr. Simard's amendment removed the words “in Alberta” and added the word “federal” after “regulation” in the last paragraph.

[*English*]

I speak in English to address the question that's being posed. The preamble does indeed still reference Alberta and Saskatchewan, as

that section of the motion was not touched on Monday. Merely the bottom paragraph was indeed amended, and that is indeed the text of the motion that has been circulated today.

The Chair: Thank you.

Now I'm going to go to Mr. Angus on a point of order. Thank you for waiting patiently, Mr. Angus.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you.

I had to step out for five minutes, so in case I missed something, could you just give us a replay of the last five minutes? I'm not sure if I missed a point.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Angus. That's not a point of order, but thank you for letting us know that you're leaving.

I'm going to go back to you, Ms. Goodridge. You have the floor, and you can continue with your debate.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's really interesting. Process is often ignored and people think that it doesn't really matter, but often, clerks recommend against having preambles in motions, because preambles are not actually the motion.

The problem is that this preamble is a direct attack on Alberta. It is a direct attack on Alberta. It says:

Given that:

There are 1,600 abandoned and orphaned wells in Alberta polluting farmland, waterways, and air;

The number of abandoned wells in Alberta are set to increase by an additional 1,800 to 2,000;

These additional abandoned wells will cost more than \$200 million to clean up;

The Government of Alberta sent back \$137 million because they failed to use the funds provided by the Government of Canada to clean up abandoned wells and create jobs in the pandemic;

The Government of Saskatchewan used their allocated funds in their entirety to clean abandoned wells and create jobs;

Companies who abandon wells and fail to pay for their cleanup negatively impact provincial taxpayers and municipalities;

Orphaned and abandoned wells present an economic opportunity to support energy solutions like geothermal energy.

I don't understand, Mr. Chair, how a normal person reading that would not see that as an absolute attack on the province of Alberta and on Albertans.

The motion has been amended and was expanded.

We know, as of 2020, that Ontario had somewhere in the range of 900 inactive wells that could become orphaned should companies go bankrupt. Overall in Canada, based on 2020, there were about 130,000 inactive orphaned and abandoned wells. If there are 130,000 in Canada, and we're saying that there are 1,800 or possibly 2,000 in Alberta, that's a very small percentage of the total overall number of abandoned wells.

It's really frustrating. As an Albertan, I'm not going to sit here and be mansplained that somehow it's okay that—

• (1820)

Mr. Charlie Angus: I have a point of order.

The Chair: Colleagues, I have a point of order from Mr. Angus.

Go ahead.

Mr. Charlie Angus: As the old white guy in the room, I always need explanations.

It's Ms. Dabrusin's motion, and she doesn't look like a man, although I've known guys who had hair longer than hers—

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: You're doing it right now, bud.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Is Ms. Dabrusin mansplaining? How is the mansplaining working here?

The Chair: Mr. Angus, that is not a point of order.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: This is why this is so embarrassing.

The Chair: Colleagues, I'm just going to remind everybody to raise your hand.

On a point of order, if you would like to debate—

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Why are you looking at the Liberals?

The Chair: I'm looking at everybody. I'm turning my head left and right.

Please use the points of order for points of order. Please use your time to debate. If you want me to put you on the speaking order, I will, and your turn will come up. Feel free to debate as you wish when your turn comes.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Now I will go back to Ms. Goodridge to continue on.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: I would like to continue my remarks by giving you a sense of the situation in Canada.

An article in *Le Devoir* reported that 92 wells were problematic, according to a government report published in 2023. It's really a problem across the country.

[*English*]

I will not sit here and somehow have someone say that this is absolutely A-okay, that we should be having this and that we should be debating and voting on this motion and that it's absolutely fine because the motion itself includes all of Alberta. The preamble, which is the first thing that people are going to see, is absolutely a full attack on my province and on hard-working people.

The part that really frustrates me is that there weren't conversations and work during the pandemic trying to make sure that government money was being spent appropriately and that it wasn't going to groups like GC Strategies and all kinds of consultants who were getting rich claiming to be in the indigenous procurement space. Some of this is really important.

The fact that the government is now putting really inflammatory language in their preambles critiquing the Government of Alberta

for properly spending money to clean up these wells and not having a full conversation is very frustrating but—

The Chair: Ms. Goodridge, we have a point of order.

Ms. Dabrusin, go ahead on the point of order.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: In my experience, the whole point of such a study would be to get the complete explanation. That is what we do. We bring the motion and we have the witnesses come, and then we get to hear from them. We would get to hear about about what was done by Alberta, but we'd also get to hear from Saskatchewan. We would get to hear from other provinces as the witnesses are proposed.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Dabrusin, for your point of order. Those are great points to make during debate, but I want to get everybody to focus on using....

I'll go to you, Mr. Dreeshen, on a point of order, and then I have Mr. Angus on a point of order.

Let's go to you, Mr. Dreeshen.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Thank you.

I'll respond to Ms. Dabrusin's point.

If that is actually the case, then, that she gets rid of the preamble, it still goes into the “clean these wells in Alberta”, and there's talk about “these wells”, which of course relates to the ones that were talked about earlier. If she is saying that she wishes to remove that, then certainly that would help.

The Chair: Mr. Dreeshen, I gave you the leeway to hear your point of order, but once again, that's a point of debate. You are on the list. You're welcome to make all those points during your time for debate.

We'll go back to you, Mr. Angus, on a point of order.

Mr. Charlie Angus: This is strictly a point of order. I've already spoken. I have nothing more to add on this. I'm looking forward to getting ahead.

The clock is ticking down. I'm concerned that my colleagues will talk the clock out. At 6:30, are we done this gong show, or...?

The Chair: We are currently scheduled to go until 6:30.

• (1825)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Goodridge, you have the floor again.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: On Monday they wanted to keep going for the debate.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Interesting.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Yes.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Well, it is fun to come to a new committee and learn new things.

Ms. Dabrusin is in fact the parliamentary secretary for natural resources. This motion did in fact come from her. That means that if the government didn't draft it and if the ministry of natural resources didn't draft it and she drafted it herself, it's concerning to me that someone who is in the role of parliamentary secretary for natural resources would put forward such a violent attack on my home province—

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: And needs a study to learn about it.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: —and then needs a study to learn about something that she should be able to ask for a briefing on from the department and be able to get.

The problem comes back down to the fact that this Liberal government sees Alberta as a cash cow. They see Alberta continually as something to be whipped and then take the profits and run. They talk about emissions caps on a regular basis. They talk about all kinds of different things—

Ms. Yvonne Jones: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms. Jones.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: I'd like to clarify for the record that this is not the intent of the government, and neither is it the opinion of the government. I want to put that on the record.

I also want to say that if the government did not appreciate and value Alberta, we never would have bought the TMX pipeline—

The Chair: Thank you, Ms.—

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: It's not a pipeline for Alberta. It's a pipeline of national interest, according to—

Ms. Yvonne Jones: It's a pipeline for Alberta to get oil and gas to market—

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: It's not a pipeline for Alberta. It's a pipeline for Canada in the national interest, per your own approval—

Ms. Yvonne Jones: —and created 35,000 jobs in Alberta.

The Chair: Ms. Jones and everybody else—

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: It's crucially important energy infrastructure for the whole country.

The Chair: All right, folks. We will suspend.

[The meeting was suspended at 6:26 p.m., Wednesday, October 23, 2024]

[The meeting was resumed at 11:01 on Monday, October 28, 2024]

The Chair: I call this meeting back to order. We are resuming meeting number 111 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Natural Resources.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format.

I would like to remind participants of the following points.

Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. All comments should be addressed through the chair.

Members, please raise your hand if you wish to speak, whether participating in person or via Zoom. The clerk and I will manage the speaking order as best we can.

When we suspended the meeting last Wednesday, we were debating the motion of Ms. Dabrusin as amended.

At the time of our suspension, Mrs. Goodridge had the floor.

Mrs. Goodridge, I will turn it over to you. It's good to see you online. Please go ahead.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Thank you so much. It's a pleasure to be here today from Fort McMurray.

It's frustrating beyond belief that we're sitting here debating a motion that is so anti-Alberta. I know that members opposite did point of order after point of order the last time we met, trying to justify that having a massive preamble that talks about Alberta only in a negative light is somehow not attacking my province—your province, Mr. Chair. However, it is.

I'm not sure how members opposite can sit there, especially members from the Liberal Party, and continually attack the province of Alberta and just treat it like a cash cow. That's exactly how so many people feel. I know that when I'm home in Alberta, talking to people on the streets, out in the grocery stores and throughout our communities, I hear that they feel like the Liberal government doesn't listen to them. They feel like they are the whipping boy for.... It will very happily take the resource money, but they don't feel like they're supported in any other way by the government.

This motion furthers that, because it continues a negative tone with regard to the province of Alberta, honing in on abandoned and orphaned wells only in Alberta and not even going off fact. It's not like the preamble uses verified facts that came from, perhaps, the Alberta Energy Regulator or other sources. It's literally from a news article, and it has charged language.

However, this is what we've come to expect from a government that shows no mercy when it comes to our province. It's frustrating how it continually puts Alberta in such a negative light. This is one of the challenges that we're going to continue facing on this committee as long as that preamble is part of this motion. It is something that tells every single person in Alberta that they are welcome to work in the energy industry as long as the government is getting some resources revenue from it. However, the government doesn't really respect them.

I don't think that's the kind of message we should be sending to Albertans. That's not the kind of message we should be sending to Canadians. We should be working to unite people, not divide them. This motion, from its very preamble, seeks to divide. It doesn't seek to unite. It's very frustrating as we sit here.

I will continue debating this because, frankly, Mr. Chair, this is an attack on your province. This isn't just an attack on people in Fort McMurray—Cold Lake. This is an attack on energy workers who work in Calgary. Many people actually commute regularly from Calgary to the oil sands, whether they be in Fort McMurray, in Cold Lake or in Bonnyville. There are a lot of people who work throughout Alberta in the energy industry and live in Edmonton or Calgary. However, specifically, they live in Calgary. I talk to many of them on a fairly regular basis. This is one of the things that they find so frustrating. They find that this Liberal government, led by Justin Trudeau, has passed its expiry date and doesn't seem to be interested in finding solutions. Instead, it focuses on dividing Canadians.

This motion here, with the preamble that is such an affront to Alberta, is yet another proof point that this government isn't listening. If Liberal members were really serious, they wouldn't have done point of order after point of order because we were upset that their preamble did, in fact, attack our province of Alberta. They would simply have tried to find some way of not doing it to begin with.

Once you do it, however, you need to apologize, and you need to make things better. There has been none of that from your government, Mr. Chair, which is really sad for the people of Alberta. I think this is one of these places where it is so incumbent on us as legislators to make sure that we are doing things and are keeping in mind the words and the actions we use.

Frankly, this is not something that I can support. This is not something that Conservatives can support. This is not something that Albertans support, because this is a problem.

Until that preamble is removed in its entirety, there is no way we can actually have a fulsome, real conversation on the substance of this motion. The preamble attacks the very province I come from and that you come from, Mr. Chair.

As such, I'm going to cede the floor to my colleagues, but I would urge every single person to vote against this motion. It is not a motion that's been put forward in good faith. If it was put forward in good faith, I'm telling you right now it's not being received in good faith; therefore, it needs to change.

I'm going to cede the floor.

I was wondering if you could confirm what the speaking order is.

The Chair: The next speaker is Ms. Jones. I have Mr. Patzer after that, and then it's Mr. Dreeshen.

Thank you, Mrs. Goodridge.

We'll now go to Ms. Jones.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

It's absolutely a pleasure for me to speak today on this motion put forward by my colleague, MP Dabrusin. I know it was amended by MP Simard, and we're happy to support the motion as amended.

My colleague who just spoke, Mrs. Goodridge, spoke last week as well. There are a couple of things in her commentary that I really would like to address.

First of all, whenever we bring a motion to the table, it's never about the preamble; it's about the actual motion. What we're voting on is the last stanza in the motion, which is what is calling for action. The rest of it is basically not as relevant. However, if she's offended by a comment, she should not be, because it's just stating the facts very clearly.

I want to run through that motion to start with, because I think it's important for people to understand the context in which this motion is being brought forward.

First of all, if you remember, during the pandemic and subsequent to that, there were a lot of issues around the oil and gas sector and the impact of it on companies, workers and so on. The Government of Canada did a deal, I guess, with Alberta, or they did a deal to invest in the cleanup of abandoned and orphaned wells in the region.

In Alberta, a number of these wells were identified—up to 1,800 to 2,000. In Saskatchewan, a number of wells were identified. That's why these two provinces are mentioned. They are the only two that received federal government money to do orphaned and abandoned well cleanup, which is a responsibility of the provincial governments, not of the federal government.

First of all, that's why they are mentioned in the preamble. Again, the preamble basically has no influence in terms of what the motion is.

The motion itself is calling on the Standing Committee on Natural Resources to:

begin a five-meeting study on the impact of this failure to clean these wells, the impacts of the pollution from not cleaning up abandoned and orphaned wells, the costs of cleaning up abandoned and orphaned wells, the federal regulations to hold companies to account for well cleanup, and the potential opportunities associated with cleaning up abandoned wells, and report its findings to the House of Commons.

That's the motion that's before us on the table.

My friend seems to be hung up on the fact that two provinces are mentioned in the preamble. One is Alberta and one is Saskatchewan. I reiterate that they are mentioned because they have the largest number of orphaned and abandoned wells. They also are the only provinces receiving federal government money.

The motion itself is very clear, but the preamble does allude to the fact that Alberta sent back \$137 million of federal government money that was provided to it to clean up these abandoned wells and create jobs during the pandemic. The whole idea was to reduce pollution, reduce our environmental footprint, clean up the orphaned and abandoned wells and keep Albertans and people in Saskatchewan working and in jobs.

The Alberta government made a choice that it did not want to spend this money. It did not want to clean up these 1,800 to 2,000 orphaned and abandoned wells. That's why it returned the money.

The purpose of the study is to look at those wells. How important is it that they be cleaned up? How important is it that the right federal regulations be in place to hold these companies accountable? It's to look at what the opportunities are for cleaning up abandoned wells and report those findings back to the House of Commons. It's very simple. There's nothing complicated about any of this whatsoever.

I think my colleague is really bogged down with information that has absolutely nothing to do with it but really is just conceived, at this point, as a speaking point for herself.

You know, if she wants to see what a real attack on a province looks like, I'm going to give her the example of Bill C-49. I sat through this committee for over two months while the Conservative caucus filibustered Bill C-49. They used every second of time they could in this committee to bring forward fictitious motions and to make comments that had no real impact whatsoever on Bill C-49. It was an intentional means to filibuster the bill, to hold Newfoundland and Labrador hostage to this committee and to the House of Commons, simply because they did not want to pass this piece of legislation.

Just like the Harper government before them, they did not believe that Newfoundland and Labrador should have any special agreement or rights when it came to oil and gas. They obviously felt that Bill C-49 was going to afford this province once again an opportunity to earn royalties, create real jobs and produce clean offshore wind energy. As a result, they held the bill hostage, and they held our province hostage and our workforce hostage, and they held up big projects.

That, my friend, is what you call holding a province back, and that's exactly what the Conservative Party did. They held back the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, and they held back the province of Nova Scotia as it relates to wanting to lead clean offshore wind energy in their provinces.

What we are doing today is supporting Alberta, supporting Saskatchewan and supporting a clean environment for Canadians, making sure that when we have abandoned wells that are left behind, there is a mechanism to get those wells cleaned up, to reduce the amount of pollution in the environment but also to create very important, well-paying jobs in these provinces.

No one should be offended by that. I can honestly tell you that there is tremendous support, especially on my side, for Alberta and especially for Fort McMurray, where I have many constituents who live and work. I have family members and close relatives, a sister who lives out there. It's not about being offside with any province.

I take exception to her comments around that. That is not what the motion is asking for at all. The motion is very clear. I don't want to read it over, but I think anyone who can comprehend the language in the bill will see that it is not offensive to any province or territory. Rather, it is a mechanism by which we make sure that abandoned wells, no matter what province they're in—in this case, it happens to be in Alberta—can be cleaned up, and it can be done in a way that is very practical and engaging for the community.

It allows businesses to make money. It allows workers to gain opportunities. It allows the province to be able to talk about the

great work they're doing in cleaning up abandoned wells and creating a clean, fresh, new environment to enable other opportunities to proceed. We see this as a win-win situation, so I take great exception to that, because I have a lot of time and a lot of support for the province of Alberta, just like I do for my own province and the other provinces and territories in the country.

Any time we bring forward a motion like this, it is always with the best of intentions. It is never to undermine or to single out any particular region, any particular industry or any particular province. Just like every single day in the Government of Canada and in this country, there are debates around legislation; there are debates around projects, and there are differences of opinion on how we move forward and what is best. I think, at the end of the day, our collective goal is the same, and that is to do the best we can for Canadians.

In this case, the Government of Canada felt that orphaned and abandoned wells, especially when you're looking at up to 2,000 of them in one particular region of the country, are something that we should be addressing as a government. We stepped up to address that and very simply made the funding available so that, when people were displaced during the pandemic, they would have an opportunity to gather other employment, to have new, well-paying jobs created in their economy that they could solicit and work in. They would be able to bring stability to their own income and that of their family and still contribute to their province. This is not a bad thing.

We know it's going to cost over \$200 million to clean up these wells, and why the provincial government in Alberta would return \$137 million to the federal government without creating those jobs in their own province for their own people, without even putting these contracts out to tender for local companies to do the work.... They were satisfied to allow up to 2,000 abandoned and orphaned wells to just continue to exist, to continue to cause pollution in the economy and in the environment. We know it's having a negative impact, and any scientists or studies that have been done on orphaned and abandoned wells will certainly substantiate that information.

The motion is simple. It's very clear. In my opinion, it's the smart thing to do.

I also want to address a couple of other comments that came up. Obviously, one was with regard to the Alberta piece, so I hope I've been able to clarify that. This has nothing to do with the province of Alberta in terms of giving them a black mark. It has everything to do with giving them a hand up, giving them some assistance on cleaning up orphaned and abandoned wells—which is the right thing to do in Canada—providing them money to create jobs in their local community, to give businesses and contractors opportunities they didn't have.

Again, it comes back to the overarching message that Conservatives refuse to believe in doing anything that is helpful for the environment. They refuse to accept that we are in an environmental crisis. They refuse to accept that reducing pollution is the way forward to a clean economy and to a better world for all of us, and certainly a better Canada. They have only to look in their own province and see what happened in Jasper last year to know that climate change is real and is impacting our communities in a very real way.

When you look at the fact that more than nearly 240 structures were lost in Jasper in that fire, including people's homes, businesses, bridges, roads and other pieces of infrastructure, this is very serious environmental damage that is occurring because of climate pressure. If we don't accept that that is real and start drastically making more changes in society, we're going to see a lot more of it.

In Canada, in 2023, we had 15 million hectares of land destroyed by fire in the environment. This affects animals, plants, communities, people, homes and everything of that nature. Normally in Canada, we would have had fires that would have destroyed probably about 2 million hectares a year, on average. To go to 15 million hectares is huge. It's one of the largest. It is the largest in Canada, and it's a trend that we don't want to see continue. We're also seeing it in other parts of the country, not just in Alberta, but Albertans have had their share of wildfires. Even their firefighters are saying that these fires are different: They're more rapid; they're more aggressive; they require specific and specialized training; they require a response that has not been seen in the past when it comes to these kinds of wildfires.

The experts who are out there in the field fighting these fires are the people who are saying that. That's why, in Canada, we want to set up the fire training facility of excellence. We want to train firefighters across Canada so that they are able to deal with specialized situations and the changing and aggressive wildfires that we're seeing today.

They don't have to look far to know that capping orphan and abandoned wells is a critical part of our response to reducing pollution, to protecting the environment and trying to avoid major wildfires like the ones we saw in Jasper this year. Even in my own riding this year, I've had two communities evacuated, up to 10,000 people at a time. When you live in the north, it's even more complicated. You don't always have a road out, and if you have a road out, it's usually only one road out. That causes serious life-and-death situations in many communities.

Just think: In Canada today, when we are evacuating some of these communities, we're having to do it by air. In my own riding, we evacuated hospitals and long-term care facilities in the middle of the night by aircraft to the nearest other hospitals and facilities. This is what Canadians are dealing with every single day in this country, whether it be floods, fires or major storms. This is what we're dealing with.

We believe firmly, as does the world—except for Conservatives—that this is very much instigated by changes in the environment. We know that our job is to try in every way possible to reduce pollution without having major impacts on the lives of Canadians. I know we're not always going to agree on how we do that. However, surely we can agree that when the Government of

Canada gives a province the money to clean up abandoned and orphaned wells that are causing pollution as a means of making the environment a cleaner, more pristine place and to create jobs for people, then the province should at least step up to try to do that.

I'd like to make sure that this is on the record and that people understand that there is a real reason behind doing this. It's partly to create jobs and to give businesses new opportunities, but the huge part of this is the environment, as well, and cleaning the environment, making sure that we have the resources and the potential available that people need.

Mr. Chair, I'm hoping that the motion will pass. I hope that members opposite will see that there's value and importance in this, and that they will not get caught up in the fact that Alberta is singled out. The reality is that Alberta does have these numbers of abandoned and orphaned wells, and the reality is that the Government of Canada is giving Alberta a cheque to deal with it, to create jobs, to give businesses more opportunity, and to clean up these orphaned and abandoned wells.

No one should take offence to it. It is a good program for Alberta, just like it was a good program for Saskatchewan. We want to make sure that it gets implemented and done properly. We don't need to belabour this issue. It's very, very simple; the writing is very clear. I would ask that colleagues support this motion so that we can pass it and move on to the study in committee, where every member will have the opportunity to make whatever points they want to make around this motion. Whether they support it or are against it, they will have the opportunity to lay that out in the committee and to make their points. However, as it is right now, the Government of Canada stands by Alberta. We stand by our policies on the environment. We know that climate change is real. We know that doing the right thing is the way forward. This is the right thing. Including Alberta, supporting Alberta financially, giving Albertans jobs, giving businesses in Alberta a new opportunity for contracts and, at the same time, reducing pollution.... That is a way forward for all of us. It's a win-win.

I would ask all members of the committee to support the motion put forward by MP Dabrusin.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Jones.

We'll now go to Mr. Patzer.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Just for ultimate clarity here for everyone, we're on the main motion now. Do I understand that correctly?

Ms. Yvonne Jones: We're on the amended motion.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Yes, we're on the amended motion, as we voted in favour of Mario's amendment last meeting. Is that correct? The amended body of the main motion is where we're at, right?

The Chair: That's correct, Mr. Patzer. The original motion was brought forward by Ms. Dabrusin. It was amended by Mr. Simard, and we are now on the amended main motion.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Could I interest you in just reading it out for any of the viewers who are watching, just so that people who are watching know what exactly it is that we are on?

The Chair: Would you like me to read it out or the clerk?

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: I'd like you to read it out. You're the chair.

The Chair: I can ask the clerk to have the official copy read out if you'd like, just for clarity.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: That would be fantastic.

The Chair: Mr. Clerk, would you be able to do that?

The Clerk: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As suggested, we are now resuming debate on the motion of Ms. Dabrusin, which has been amended. It reads in English:

Given that:

There are 1,600 abandoned and orphaned oil wells in Alberta, polluting farmland, waterways, and air;

The number of abandoned wells in Alberta are set to increase by an additional 1,800 to 2,000;

These additional abandoned wells will cost more than \$200 million to clean up;

The Government of Alberta sent back \$137 million because they failed to use the funds provided by the Government of Canada to clean up the abandoned wells and create jobs in the pandemic;

The Government of Saskatchewan used their allocated funds in their entirety to clean abandoned wells and create jobs;

Companies who abandon wells and fail to pay for their cleanup negatively impact provincial taxpayers and municipalities;

Orphaned and abandoned wells present an economic opportunity to support energy solutions like geothermal energy.

The Standing Committee on Natural Resources begin a five-meeting study on the impact of this failure to clean these wells, the impacts of the pollution from not cleaning up abandoned and orphaned wells, the costs of cleaning up abandoned and orphaned wells, the federal regulations to hold companies to account for well cleanup, and the potential opportunities associated with cleaning up abandoned wells, and report its findings to the House of Commons.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Thank you very much. I think that helps provide a bit of clarity to help anybody who might be listening to this debate to know what exactly it is that we are doing here.

One thing I find interesting about all of this is that it's actually a recommended practice in the big green book that we all have to not include a preamble on motions, the reason being that when there's a report tabled in the House of Commons, that gives you an opportunity to speak to whatever you would want to say that is relevant to it. It is actually, yes, a recommendation to not provide a preamble on motions for this very reason; therefore, we could avoid motions being politicized per se.

It also helps to make sure that there are accurate or real facts that are part of these motions when they get moved. I think it's important to note that the Alberta Energy Regulator, of course, would have been the natural place to go and look for the correct dataset and information on what the situation is like in the province of Alberta with abandoned and orphaned oil wells.

It's also worth noting that if you go to the Alberta Energy Regulator's website, there's a very thorough description of what an abandoned well is and what an orphaned well is. I think for certainty and clarity it is important to note that there is actually a very strict process that's already in place around what the process is for abandoning a well.

As a committee, we saw the minister's response from the province of Alberta. I'm just going to read from his statement from September 27 again.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Chair, on a point of order, I'm just trying to clarify if the member opposite is suggesting witnesses whom we should be calling to speak to this study, or if he is arguing whether we should do this study about how we can support communities in this issue of how they deal with abandoned wells and what the regulations are, and also the opportunities? Maybe it's more a point of clarification, but I'm just trying to figure it out. I'm sure we would all be happy to hear from the Alberta Energy Regulator. They're interested in speaking to this point.

Are we talking right now about witness suggestions or are we talking about whether there's any value in doing a study about abandoned wells at all?

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Dabrusin.

I think Mr. Patzer, through his debate, will look to clarify some of your comments.

Mr. Patzer, go ahead. The floor is yours.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: I was just getting started, so I'm sure if the member would allow me the time, she would be able to listen and find out what exactly it is I'm about to say. She can derive from that what she will.

What I was getting at was being factual and making sure, if we're going to have motions before us, that they actually be based on fact and on reason.

I'm going to go back to this minister's statement here, because I was just talking about the difference between abandoned wells and orphaned wells.

The minister in Alberta said, "The motion being debated by the Standing Committee on Natural Resources earlier today was factually wrong and frankly nonsensical. It's extremely concerning that Liberal and New Democrat Members of Parliament sitting on the Natural Resources Committee don't appear to understand what an abandoned well is. For their enlightenment, a properly abandoned well is a good thing—it means the well has been properly decommissioned and does not pose risk of polluting any land. You'd think that an MP sitting on this particular committee would know something about the industry they and their staff are supposed to monitor."

The reason I read that, Mr. Chair, is that when I was looking on the Alberta Energy Regulator's website, I saw that there is a process in place for how to decommission a well. There's also monitoring that is required for an abandoned well to make sure that there are no leaks. If there are leaks, then it is incumbent upon the company that is responsible for that well to make sure there's a process in place to either stop the leak or continue to monitor it if the levels are below the regulated level of concern.

It's important to know that there is actually already a very strict process in place in Alberta for how to properly deal with an abandoned well.

The difference between an abandoned well and an orphaned well, as you know, is that with an orphaned well there is no longer a company that the liabilities can be attached to. As we know, the Orphan Well Association in the province of Alberta has done quite well at cleaning up the wells. It closed 622 sites in 2023-24 alone, which was up 44% from the year before.

When you look at what they are actually doing in that province, they are doing a good job of getting on top of a very difficult situation. It is one that the province is pushing very hard to make sure is properly taken care of.

Beyond that, we have the issue of jurisdiction. Obviously, natural resources development is provincial jurisdiction. The provinces have their processes in place, as I just outlined, in regard to abandoned and orphaned wells and how to deal with them. They are doing what they need to do on that.

When you look at the money that was allocated to the province of Alberta—they were given \$1 billion—every penny of it was allocated for cleanup. I think it's important to note that the minister from Alberta did say that they had asked for an extension from the federal government to be able to get these wells cleaned up and to be able to spend the remaining monies, which was \$137 million.

When they've asked for an extension, that means they were told no. That means the federal government didn't want them to spend that remaining \$137 million, because it didn't agree with the manner in which the province was looking to spend the money within its own jurisdiction, which was its right to do.

I think it's very interesting to note as well that they were looking to partner with Treaties 6, 7 and 8, to spend that \$137 million to make sure that these abandoned and orphaned wells could be cleaned up.

I'm just going to read another quote from a letter that the Treaty 7 First Nation Chiefs' Association wrote to Minister Wilkinson, in which they said:

To date, First Nation contractors and the Nations have successfully reclaimed over 1,600 well sites utilizing the FNSRP funds in a safe, responsible, and efficient manner. The transfer of the \$134 million from Alberta to FNSRP is required to allow for a seamless continuation of these successes.

That's who they are looking to partner with. It's an organization that has the skill set, the labour force and the knowledge to be able to properly go through this process.

Now, I suppose the Province of Alberta could have spent \$137 million on a bunch of random contractors who don't necessarily

have the knowledge, the skill set or the wherewithal to get it done, or a track record of getting it done, which is something that we have continually seen this Liberal government do when it comes to many of the different spending scandals. None rings any truer than that of GC Strategies, which got hundreds of millions of dollars to be an IT company run out of a basement and actually did no IT work. That's just one of several scandals that have happened.

When the province is looking to find contractors of this magnitude and success, you'd think that the federal government would actually listen to that proposal and would be willing to enter into and accept the province's request to have an extension to get it done, particularly since it would be the federal government's responsibility to make sure that these wells are cleaned up on first nations land.

That fact is being ignored by this motion. The fact that the Province of Alberta was the one that was willing to work here to see that they would have funding available to clean up wells on their lands says all that you need to know about the intent and the focus of this particular government.

We heard a lot of talk about the preamble. I mentioned earlier that, in the book of practices, it's recommended to not include a preamble in a motion, but I think that when we look at the context of what is in it, it says a lot about the heart of this government. Division is all that I see in here, because we know that abandoned orphaned wells are not an Alberta problem. They're not a Saskatchewan problem. They exist all across this country. If this were about the government tackling the issue of abandoned wells and orphaned wells and their cleanup or their reclamation, seeing them done properly all throughout the industry, then, of course, the preamble would include mention of the fact that this is a lot more than just an Alberta issue.

However, they're specifically pointing the finger at the province of Alberta. I take great offence to that, because there are many people from Saskatchewan who work in Alberta. We hear the joke regularly, and I've heard it said of a few different provinces in the maritimes, so I'll generalize it, I guess. It's that the second largest city in Newfoundland is Fort McMurray. Now, that's because people from Newfoundland, and also from other provinces in the Atlantic region, regularly fly out there to work. There are a great number of people working in Fort McMurray and the area who are from other parts of this country.

I think it's important to note that this is an industry that supports workers across the country, but the issue of abandoned wells and orphaned wells goes far beyond just the province of Alberta. To deliberately write in here, "Well, Alberta didn't do this, but Saskatchewan did that," is a way of pitting one province against another, the two provinces that just happen to be the biggest energy-producing provinces in the country.

I think that it's not proper for the government to do that. I think it should be focusing on how it can be productive in a way that would unite the country, and in a way that would speak well of the industry that this committee is actually supposed to be working to support, and that is not what we are seeing from the preamble of this motion by the Liberals.

Now, that's also why, when our colleague from the Bloc Québécois proposed an amendment to include federal regulations in there, at least that brought a little bit of the scope of this motion to where it should lie, which is actually in federal jurisdiction, federal regulations, and not meddling in the province's jurisdiction. I'm grateful that at least my colleague from the Bloc is mindful of provincial jurisdiction and the important role it plays in the way our country operates.

If the government were serious about trying to do something on this issue, then members would have made sure that the scope of the motion was actually proper, and in the preamble they would have indicated that this was about dealing with a nationwide issue and not just trying to dump on one particular region of the country.

Now, Mr. Chair, part of why we are where we are today is also that you still haven't provided this committee with a schedule for our work going forward. The only way I knew what we were up to today was based on the notice of meeting that was sent out by the clerk.

Thank you, Clerk, for that.

Mr. Chair, what's been requested of you numerous times, looking for clarity going forward, is a way for us to best plan out what we are going to do as a committee. It would be a lot simpler to look at scheduling some of these motions that have been put on notice or that are being debated here today. It would be better to have a sense of where and when we could fit these motions in if we actually knew what our schedule was.

That, Chair, is where your role comes into play. I think it would be incumbent upon you to distribute a schedule of what you have planned going forward for this committee. This is something that I have seen regularly from other committees. In fact, when I was a member of this committee previously, that was a regular practice that the chair at the time undertook. They made sure that a proper schedule was sent out to all members, so that we could focus on the work rather than jumping back and forth to all these different studies.

Then there's the fact that we haven't even finished some reports and some other studies that we've almost gotten through. You could have those scheduled out, but you don't. You haven't bothered to put that in writing for us as a committee to see where we are. I think that would be a great place for you to try to at least attempt to show some leadership of this committee. That would go a long way to helping us be able to do our work.

This is why we proposed an amendment to try to strike the preamble from the motion, but also to indicate that this study shouldn't take place until after a carbon tax election, when Canadians can have a say on who's going to run this country going forward. Based on the way things are going in the House of Commons these days, we know that this Parliament probably isn't long on

time here. We probably wouldn't be able to finish this study anyway, so we might as well push it off until after the next election.

That was what we tried to do, Chair, but you ruled it out of order. You said we can't strike the preamble, even though it is a common practice listed in the big green book that we shouldn't include preambles in these motions anyway.

If you could provide us a schedule, Chair, that would be very helpful.

We heard the member opposite talk about how the preamble isn't "relevant". Well, if it's not relevant, then why was it included in the first place? On what I just said about the preamble not being required, you'd think the government would have accepted our amendment to strike the preamble if it's not relevant. If it's not relevant, then why would you use it deliberately as wording, or why would the government use it deliberately as wording, to deliberately slag on one of the provinces of our country? That's very clear. The government has made it very clear what its intent is. Its intent is to point fingers at the province of Alberta and to try to pit one region against the other, which is something it has continually done for over nine years in government. We are continuing to see that from the government with this motion.

I would like members to be serious. I'd like them to take into consideration the fact that Canadians have pretty firmly let it be known to this government that they're tired of their divisive tactics. They're looking for some unity. They're looking for some knowledge, at least, on some of the topics we're talking about here. I mean, if the parliamentary secretary knew a little about what was going on in natural resources, she would know that the preamble isn't even based on facts or on relevance. I think that would go a long way as well. The preamble would have given her a chance to show that she actually knows what's going on in the industry, but it's been made abundantly clear here, with the misinformation that's in here....

Mr. Chair, there's another point I want to talk about briefly. It's about what happened in Jasper. Now, I think it's important to note for viewers that both the current environment minister and the previous environment minister, Catherine McKenna, were told that the forests in and around Jasper, within Jasper National Park, were a tinderbox waiting to ignite. The warning was given a long time ago.

Actually, I believe my colleague from Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, who opened the meeting.... No. I'm sorry. It was the member from Yellowhead. It was the member from Yellowhead's predecessor who spoke about this particular issue on this committee and in the House of Commons about a decade ago already. He warned this government that the conditions were ripe for the forest to ignite around the townsite of Jasper, and for this type of destruction to occur.

The member mentioned that at the time, and both ministers—the current one and the former one—were warned. They were notified that this was a problem and that they needed to deal with it. Catherine McKenna was asked to come to testify at the environment committee about what she knew about the briefings that she received on this, and she said no. Now, if she was so confident in her decision to ignore the warnings that were coming from both inside and outside, then you'd think she'd be able to come and confidently speak about that and her time as minister. She refuses to do so because she knows that she was wrong to ignore the warnings that were coming to her, both from the opposition and also from government officials.

Then, for them to try to equate abandoned and orphaned wells to the reason that the townsite of Jasper burned to the ground is absolutely ludicrous and ridiculous, Mr. Chair. It's quite embarrassing for Canadians and for people who live in Jasper that the government would go to those lengths to try to say that was the reason it happened, when we know, based on emails that were made public, that it's abundantly clear that this government deliberately chose to do nothing because of political optics and what would happen if they actually took seriously the job of making sure our forests were properly managed.

I was on this committee previously when we talked to some people within the forestry industry. One of a number of issues they brought up a couple years ago was cleaning up the dead wood that's fallen on the forest floor and all the undergrowth that's in there. That was something they warned us about in this very committee just a couple of short years ago, Mr. Chair, and nothing was done by the government.

Now, the member opposite also talked about letting the experts do their job. Well, the experts trying to do their job were firefighters. When it came time to put out the fire, Parks Canada wouldn't let the firefighters enter the townsite to do their job, so what more...? For her to talk about letting experts do their job when they literally wouldn't let the experts do their job is absolutely appalling. To let the townsite burn the way they did by not letting firefighters in is absolutely ridiculous. It's important to make sure that we have that record straight.

Now, the other thing she talked about was that Conservatives were pointing fingers at her province and region with Bill C-49. Well, obviously, she didn't quite catch the drift of what we were talking about on Bill C-49, Mr. Chair, because at the time, Bill C-49 had no fewer than 37 direct references to the unconstitutional parts of the Impact Assessment Act. We firmly believed—and there were many experts within the industry and people in her own province who also agreed—that making sure there was regulatory certainty was of utmost importance.

Bill C-49 was the modernization of the Atlantic Accord, which Conservatives supported. However, what we didn't support was the inclusion of the unconstitutional Impact Assessment Act. At the time that we were debating it here in this committee, the government did nothing to change that and gave no indication as to when it would do so, other than to say, "Well, at a later date we will get to it." It wasn't until the budget implementation act came through that we finally saw the government take action on changes to the Impact Assessment Act.

Mr. Chair, I assume that you know this, seeing as how you yourself are from Alberta, but the Province of Alberta once again told the government that it is going to be seeking legal action against the federal government because it believes that the Impact Assessment Act is still unconstitutional and that there are still some outstanding issues around standing, ministerial discretion and things like that, amongst other things that are still unconstitutional because they were part of what was ruled unconstitutional before and still haven't been changed.

If the member opposite were concerned about what's happening in her province, then she would want to have absolute certainty in the Impact Assessment Act and not have an unconstitutional element to it still going forward. That's something we wanted to have addressed at that particular time: It's still something we want to have addressed today when it comes to the Impact Assessment Act.

In the study that we were previously on, Mr. Chair, you'll remember that we had multiple witnesses come to this committee and once again tell us that there are still outstanding issues with the Impact Assessment Act. There is no indication that this government is going to take that seriously and seek to have that uncertainty dealt with and resolved in order for private business to have absolute certainty going forward for the next project that they want to build. We know that there is a need and demand for more pipelines to be built in this country. We're going to be at capacity by 2028, and there will be a need for more export capacity in this country.

There are a lot of things going on here that I think ultimately need to be addressed.

Getting back to a different point, Mr. Chair, that's why the schedule would be helpful to this committee. It's so we know where we're at with these things. That way we'll know when our next meeting is going to be on the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion. I know that it says on the screen that we're debating today, but that's not what we're debating today; we're debating a motion that has to do with orphaned and abandoned wells.

Mr. Chair, I think that is where I'm going to wrap up my remarks at this particular point in time. I know that my colleague from Alberta, Mr. Dreeshen, will have lots to say as well. I look forward to hearing from somebody who's from Alberta talk about what's happening in his province on this issue, and not somebody from downtown Toronto, as the parliamentary secretary is.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Patzer.

Before I go to you, Mr. Dreeshen, I want to clarify one point.

Mr. Patzer, you stated that the preamble—the point of discussion previously when we brought forward the preamble being amended, changed or deleted—could be amended, but it could not, because we had a motion on the floor by Mr. Simard. We had an amendment on the floor by Mr. Simard to the main motion, so at that time it could not be amended.

I just want to make sure that you're aware of this and that it is clarified. The preamble can be amended, as I've been advised by the clerk and as has been stated a number of times by the previous speaker. Ms. Goodridge may have referenced that, but I know you just did through your intervention.

I wanted to clarify that, so you understand that it could be done and that members are aware of that.

Now I will go to Mr. Dreeshen.

Mr. Dreeshen, you have the floor.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I had a few comments previously on this motion. I know that, as you were mentioning, the preamble is something that maybe shouldn't be there. Of course, we've had others who say, well, all we're doing is trying to set the stage.

I have a few points to make on the preamble, and I'll go to the part that was presented in the main motion. It moves that "the Standing Committee on Natural Resources begin a five-meeting study on the impact of this failure"—I don't know which failure we are speaking of—"to clean these wells". We did have at least a recognition that if we were dealing with national issues, it should be the whole country rather than just in Alberta, so we did cancel that off.

It continues with, "the impacts of the pollution from not cleaning up abandoned and orphaned wells". Of course, we did have that discussion with Mr. Patzer a moment ago about the difference between abandoned wells, which are at that stage because they are safe—they're still on the books but they are safe, at that point—versus the potential with orphaned wells, because they may or may not be safe. This is the aspect that is there.

However, going back to the preamble, it doesn't say that. It says, "There are 1,600 abandoned and orphaned oil wells in Alberta polluting farmland, waterways, and air". There's an inaccuracy there. Of course, that, then, becomes part of the actual motion. People get the idea that there is something extremely wrong taking place, but that certainly isn't the way it is.

Then they discuss "regulations to hold companies to account for well cleanup". That's already there. That's what the Alberta energy resources regulatory group is for. It says, "the potential opportunities associated with cleaning up abandoned wells, and report its findings to the House."

When I look at that, one thing that is significant is the opportunity for cleaning up abandoned wells and the kinds of other things that can be done. There are different choices as to how you're going to deal with that. Are you just going to close them in? Are you going to use them so that you can sequester carbon and then maybe try to regenerate and rejuvenate the pools that are there? That is certainly a discussion that has some merit.

Again, if one can't or doesn't understand what abandoned wells and orphaned wells are, then one is demonizing everything that is taking place.

There's another aspect that I really want to dwell on today. This is where it says, "The Government of Alberta sent back \$137 mil-

lion"—I think it's \$136 million, but that's beside the point—"because they failed to use the funds provided by the Government of Canada to clean up abandoned wells and create jobs in the pandemic". Again, this is a statement that maybe numerically has some sense; however, it doesn't address the true facts. This is what I presented last day: Those dollars that were being discussed, of course, were to have been spent on first nations land. Rather than simply saying that they'd get just anybody to go in there and reclaim it, the Alberta government worked extremely closely with first nations so that they could take on that responsibility.

Of course, it does take a bit of time to make that happen, and therefore it became an issue. One could have said, "We can find some of the other companies that have been doing the rest of it. We can put them into the first nations and push them aside," but there are two things here. First of all, that isn't how we do things there. Second, it's on federal land. I mean, it's a fact. I know that people are not overly proud of it, but it's a responsibility that the federal government should be dealing with.

Then, if you take a look at the actual numbers, you'll see that it's \$133.3 million that was to have been spent out of the \$137 million. I guess, if you want to be nitpicky, there's perhaps \$3 million that would have been in the fund that the Alberta government could have then maybe cleaned up two wells or something like that with, but that's being pretty nitpicky.

Here, then, you have this government trying to make a point about the irresponsibility of the provincial government, and it all says that. It goes through it. It lays that out constantly in every part of the preamble and in the actual motion, even though we tried to change it a bit—and with you, Mr. Chair, being able to make the change in that motion.

We have all of that, but there is zero recognition for the fact that the government knew that this \$137 million was allocated to cleanup on first nations. That in no way, shape or form has come into any of this motion. It comes in only because we know that—

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mario Simard): Ms. Dabrusin.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I'd like to clarify something.

I've never seen a situation like this in which committee members want to discuss what can be included in a study suggested in a motion without adopting the motion in question. There's no indication on their part that they have no interest in discussing it. Can they let us know if they're ready for the vote on the motion? That way, we can hear from experts who can give us their point of view, and we can find out everything we need to know about it.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mario Simard): The clerk is telling me that this is more a matter of debate at this point. That's a very good point. We can come back to this.

I invite Mr. Dreeshen to continue his remarks.

[English]

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that.

We don't see in the main motion that it talks about any recognition of what that money was allocated for, and I think that is significant. Of course, that would indicate that maybe this government isn't paying attention to that, or maybe it just felt that taking this blunt instrument and hitting Alberta with it would be the thing to do at this particular point in time, and failed to understand—and I do agree on this part—that if we were to bring in the experts, they would make this government look ridiculous, because it is not paying attention to this. There is that fact.

Probably we will all get a chance to vote on whether or not we want to bring experts in to make this government look ridiculous. I don't think it will be a problem; however, here is where the problem lies. We have all of the misinformation that is being presented by the government. We have a lack of acknowledgement of where this comes from. However, that isn't going to change. We've heard the comments this morning in the discussion and previously as to why Liberal members think this is such a great idea—so that isn't going to change. They will have people come in to talk, and I'm sure they are great witnesses, but they'll talk about something that is completely unrelated to the \$137 million. However, that's not the point. The point is, throw this into the mix and see where we go from there.

I really want to go back again to the actual main motion part, and I'll come back to what first nations were asking and hoping for.

It says, “The Standing Committee of Natural Resources begin a...study on the impact of this failure”. That's why they have to keep a preamble in, because of this failure they are speaking of and “to clean [up] these wells”. Therefore, they have to say, well, no, they don't care about all the abandoned and orphaned wells all over the country; it's just this, because, of course, there were some dollars associated with it—which is an argument, but that's it.

Again, we had previously, with Mr. Simard, taken away the “in Alberta” part to try to make it a pan-Canadian argument, at least.

Again, they still speak to “the impacts of the pollution from not cleaning up abandoned and orphaned wells”, which my colleague, Mr. Patzer, so eloquently described as the difference. If people don't know that, maybe that is again a good thing for us to understand. We have five meetings to deal with this. We could maybe look at the AER's reports and maybe have the Government of Alberta present something to this committee. That's five meetings about how the government doesn't know that it has a responsibility for first nations. Some days I think I wouldn't mind pointing it out for that length of time, but I think it's obvious just in the fact that it was presented this way.

To be perfectly honest, after we had the discussion last week, I believe, on this, I honestly felt that we were going to come here, and the government was going to say that maybe this motion wasn't that important after all, and that maybe they should just take this off, because they were going to look so stupid if they pushed this thing forward. However, that was not the case, and here we are taking a look at this in that way.

It says, “Companies who abandon wells and fail to pay for their cleanup negatively impact provincial taxpayers and municipalities”. That is true, but there are processes in place that deal with that.

There always have been. To hear, as Ms. Jones mentioned earlier, about how you would expect Alberta.... They don't have a track record of environmentalism.... That is so much nonsense.

I've mentioned before—and Mrs. Goodridge was speaking earlier about this—that when you go to Fort McMurray and take a look at the the mining site that is there, and then you turn 180 degrees to look at the forest that is there, you think, boy, look at what they're doing. They're taking these terrible forests and they're digging them up. No: They're digging them up and making them then into beautiful forests.

There's a 40-year responsibility for the companies before their responsibility is released. I've been up there. After 20 years, you can't tell the difference. There are no scars. There's nothing like that. It is an amazing type of technology to help in the removal of the natural oil spill, that is, the oil sands, in preventing it from getting to the rivers. I mean, that's the reality of it.

The point is, that's what reclamation is. I know that my good friend, Mr. Angus, has spoken a lot about mining sites. That's what this is—it's a mining site. If you can find a way to reclaim it, then you would think that the people there should stand up and be proud of it. I'm sure that in mining, whether it's in Ontario, Quebec, the Maritimes or wherever, they are proud of those, where they can make that difference.

Albertans are proud of what they do and the difference they make. We could go down the list of things that we excel at on a worldwide level. I hearken back to when I first got involved in politics, which is now just a little over 16 years ago. One of the guys came to me and said not to let anybody tell me that there's anything wrong with Canada's oil and gas industry. The only country that comes close to the environmental record of Canadian oil and gas is Australia. The only reason they do is that they are implementing the processes that Alberta has. That's what we're dealing with here.

When we talk about the great technology and the opportunities to sell this around the world, what we've been met with by this government is that it doesn't really want to do that. It doesn't want oil and gas development, if there's any way that it can stop that. The world is going this way, we hear from the minister, and we hear this from other folks who have something to say on the issue. That, too, is nonsense.

All that does is take the hundreds of billions of dollars of potential investment and put it into other countries.

I was just speaking with a gentleman who does business around the world. They're frustrated, but their next project is going to be in Kazakhstan. There's going to be oil coming out of there. It is a Canadian company, but it could have been done by Canadian workers. It could have been done so that the tax dollars go to the federal government, the provincial government and the municipal governments.

That could have been it, but our mindset is that the only things we want to have in the future are windmills and solar panels. That's how we will create that intermittent power that we need. I've heard people say that once we've developed this massive battery storage concept, then we'll be able to deal with that.

In the meantime, the rest of the world, even if they think it's what they want to do and even if they believe that having those particular types of renewables is a good idea, is still using oil and gas. They are cranking it up in other countries. They are still using their coal.

They're cranking it up, because they know that's how they can manufacture.... They know that's how they can get things done. They know that's how they can compete against people such as ourselves, who have handcuffed our industries. They just run over us, so of course, when we say.... Why don't we think about where the future is going to be? We can get where people believe we should be, or could be in decades from now, by becoming more efficient and everything else.

In the meantime, shutting our industry down.... This is just one shot across the bow. I mean, we see this constantly. Us shutting our industry down is simply going to mean that the rest of the world is going to take up the slack. You know, I sometimes think about eventual failures of governments, eventual failures of nations, eventual failures of economic systems. If we lose control over our natural resources, and some other country says, "You know what, we'll take over," right now, it's simply as investments, so there's competition at least. If you have no more control, and you think that now we'll just stand back, and we'll have another motion at some committee meeting to say, "Oh, that's not a good idea," well, we won't be able to control that. I think that's one of the main issues.

I'd like just now to go back to the first nations rehabilitation program. This report came from January 29 of this year. Basically, what they're talking about.... I'll read some of it. The Government of Alberta developed the liability management framework to mitigate the risk associated with aging infrastructure and site rehabilitation. With this, it confirmed funding to first nations and Métis communities. There is a list. I'm not going to go through all of it, because I know there are others who would like to make comments.

They go through all of the different first nations and the value of the projects for those communities. One close to myself is Ermine-skin Cree—there was \$2.6 million for that community. For Louis Bull it was \$1.7 million. These are just some of the ones that are close. For Sunchild it was \$1.2 million.

This goes through where these many millions of dollars aren't going to be spent. The government chose, for political grandstanding, to pull that money out. Now, it has to live with the fact that it pulled it out of first nations communities. It has to live with the fact that first nations, with the Alberta government's assistance, were trying to build up their capability and to manage these wells and the cleanups on their land.

First nations did not wish to be shell companies, where somebody simply says, "Oh, I think we can check off a box that says that we have a first nation running this," and then have others come in and reap the benefits. That's not what first nations in my province do. It's not what other first nations...because I've spent many years on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development in my time here. That's not what they do. They look after themselves and what is needed there. They don't allow a government to come in and say, "Oh, we need to check off a box that says that we have first nations participation." I think you're starting to see that now when the discussions are coming in place.

If not, I will tell you that in my discussions with first nations financial organizations, they are livid about the fact that they are being short-shrifted on this, simply for this government to check off a box and to say, "Oh yeah, we had this first nation working with us."

That's not what's happening in Alberta, because there is a respect for the industriousness of first nations people, certainly in my province, and I think that's very critical.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to close on this, but I do want to leave us with some of this information, especially when I'm speaking about the first nations. This is from the Treaty 8 First Nations in Alberta and the office of the Grand Chief, in December of last year, to honourable Minister Wilkinson, and it says:

On December 11, 2023, the Chiefs of Treaty 6, 7 and 8, met to discuss the First Nations Site Rehabilitation Program...and the \$134-million Site Rehabilitation monies unspent by the Alberta Government, and the request of the Government of Canada for these dollars to be returned as savings, instead of being invested to achieve their intended purpose. The same group of Chiefs have unanimously agreed the federal government should allow the \$134 million FSRP monies that the province currently holds to be placed into the FNSR Program, providing much needed funds to continue the successful work that has been accomplished by us—

They're already working. It's not like it's ground zero and we're starting this up. They said:

If we continue status quo, both the provincial government, the federal governments and industry would be leaving over 3,000 sites to be abandoned or reclaimed on First Nations lands and territories.

Three thousand.... Maybe we could take a look at what the preamble says. This is what they are talking about. If the chiefs who sat down and talked with me in my office got a chance to explain what they think of this government and its heavy-handed approach, that might be a very interesting meeting, but it's going to be an embarrassment for this government.

As I've said, there's still time. They could pull, change or get rid of the preamble and talk about just learning something about what abandoned and orphaned wells are. If that's all it said, I think it would be a much easier plan and then maybe.... We probably would point it out anyway, but maybe this government wouldn't be so embarrassed for the actions that it is placing on the table. If members are simply trying to set up some narratives for during the carbon tax election, to say, well, look at what we tried to do, and these guys didn't care.... If that's what their thoughts are, I guess that could be debated at another time.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dreeschen.

We'll now go to our next speaker, Mr. Falk.

Go ahead, sir.

Mr. Ted Falk: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank my colleagues, Mr. Patzer, Mr. Dreeschen and Ms. Goodridge, for their phenomenal job in explaining the situation that we have before us.

I want to speak to the amended motion and highlight a few things. I find it very disingenuous for a Toronto member of Parliament to put forward a motion—

Mr. Charlie Angus: I have a point of order. I've sat very politely and listened to the snowflakes going on about how mean we are to Alberta when we're talking about federal money being spent, but I've also seen how they can't have this conversation without continually denigrating people from other regions.

If they don't like the motion, they can vote against the motion, but these cheap attacks on parliamentarians who are doing their job regarding federal money.... They may not like that federal money is being considered accountable, but federal money is accountable, and that's the role of our committee.

I ask you, Chair, to ask these members to stop with these cheap personal attacks against colleagues.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Angus, for your point of order.

Colleagues, I think this is a good time to remind you all to focus on your debate and not target other colleagues around the table here. Please try to focus your debate on the amended motion at hand, so we can have a productive conversation on how to proceed with it and whether or not you believe there are benefits to it. Thank you.

I see Mrs. Goodridge online with her hand up.

Is it on a point of order, Mrs. Goodridge?

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Yes.

I appreciate Mr. Angus's point of order, in some capacity. Frankly, though, it wasn't a point of order. In doing his point of order, he actually proceeded to name-call Conservative members, which I think goes against the very spirit of this.

I would ask for an apology from him. He continues to name-call.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Goodridge.

If his point of order wasn't a point of order, yours wasn't either.

Look, colleagues—

Mr. Charlie Angus: I have a point of order.

Did I say “special snowflakes” or just snowflakes in general?

Mr. Ted Falk: It was just snowflakes.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Okay. That's good, because they're not special.

The Chair: Mr. Angus....

Once again, colleagues, let's focus on the debate, not on any personal attacks on individuals or parties. I know there's partisan strife around the table, but let's try to focus on the conversation at hand and debate the motion and the merits of the motion.

I hope that clears the air and we can get focused back on the work Canadians sent us to do at this committee. Thank you.

Mr. Falk, go ahead.

Mr. Ted Falk: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for those comments.

If the member who represents Timmins—James Bay had listened to the entirety of my comments, he would have realized there was context to what I was saying.

A Liberal member of Parliament from Toronto made a motion that has to do with Alberta, then presented a preamble in the motion that was very denigrating to the entire province of Alberta and the industry it so proudly represents. I think that was inappropriate.

It wasn't an attack on anything. It was to give geographical perspective to this motion, and also to the impact that it—

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: [*Technical difficulty—Editor*]

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms. Dabrusin, on a point of clarification.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I'm wondering if the Conservative Party's point of view is that Toronto MPs do not have the strength or ability to speak about federal funding to provinces. Perhaps they might want to make sure Torontonians know their feeling about people from that city.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Dabrusin.

I'm sure my colleague Mr. Falk will get into further debate and explain the rationale for what he stated or what he intends to state.

I'll go back to you, Mr. Falk.

Mr. Ted Falk: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The point I was going to make is this: The Liberal government, throughout the entirety of the past nine years, has sought to cause division in Canada such that I've never seen before in my lifetime coming from any other government. Instead of promoting nation-building projects and trying to create cohesiveness across our country with those projects, the Prime Minister, in particular, has sought to divide Canadians on every single level, whether it's economically, culturally or geographically. He's sought to create division among Canadians, instead of creating unity. Often, this Prime Minister has said that the fact that we have diversity is our strength here in Canada. I want to unequivocally say that it's not diversity that is our strength. It's our unity that is the strength we have here in Canada. When we present things in such a fashion and take swipes at other provinces, it doesn't create unity. I think it creates more division. However, this seems to be a hallmark or characteristic of this Liberal government.

I think the information presented in the preamble.... I have issues with some of the wording in the actual motion, as well, but my issue is primarily with the preamble. I don't think it's necessary that it be there. We've heard from previous speakers that, in fact, it's recommended that preambles not be included in motions precisely for the reasons we're experiencing here at committee. It actually creates problems and points of debate. We're not even debating the motion itself. We're debating the preamble. Often, it's easiest just to remove it. There's been an unwillingness on the part of the Liberals' parliamentary secretary to do that.

In the absence of that, let's talk about the accuracy of the information she's providing in the preamble. She makes a comment in the very first bullet point about "abandoned and orphaned wells in Alberta". Well, abandoned and orphaned are two different things. I don't know whether, on the other side of this committee room, individuals understand the difference between abandoned and orphaned wells. The comment later in that bullet point says that they're "polluting farmland, waterways, and air".

The interesting thing is that it's just a comment made. One thing I've learned in my nine years as a parliamentarian is this: Just because a Liberal says something is so doesn't mean it is so. Just because the comment is made that—

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I have a point of clarification.

The Chair: Ms. Dabrusin, there is no point of clarification.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I need a point of clarification.

The Chair: You can use a point of order if there's a point of order. However, if there is clarification required, that's something one can ask for in debate. If it is a point of order, I'm happy to....

You can say that it's a point of order, and we can go from there.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I have a point of order.

In the first case, I don't believe I've heard a motion from the members opposite seeking to amend the motion we have here. They've just been talking a blue streak for a very long time. I guess it's about the witness list they would like.

That would be my first piece.

Also, I'm curious as to whether they're taking the position that we should not be studying the impact of these orphaned wells. That seems to be something that's up in the air.

The Chair: Thank you.

I'm not sure, Ms. Dabrusin, if that is a point of order. There are a number of questions you posed there, which the member may get to. The member may bring something forward through an amendment at some point.

We'll listen intently as we hear from the member.

Mr. Ted Falk: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'll try to collect my thoughts again as to where I was going. That's the second or third interruption, by way of a point of order.

I was just saying that just because a Liberal says something is so, it doesn't mean that it is so. The comment is made that these abandoned and orphaned wells are polluting farmland, waterways and air. There's no evidence to suggest that it's actually happening. To make a comment randomly, out of the blue.... To me it's a comment or a point that's made just to create agitation, which it obviously does. We shouldn't, I don't think, include things in our preamble that are intentionally put there to agitate people. I don't think it's helpful or useful for constructive debate and study for a preamble to start off from the perspective of agitating someone. However, I think if there's a legitimate concern, something that's well documented, I think those are the things we should be talking about. Regardless, it doesn't need to be in the preamble; it could be in the actual motion itself.

If we look at the difference between an abandoned and an orphaned well, we can see that abandoned wells actually have lifetime liability for contamination to the environment by the proponent. The company that owns them has a 25-year liability for surface reclamation issues. If there are issues to do with topography, vegetation, soil texture or drainage, the proponent of the well is responsible for those things for 25 years following the abandonment of that well and, in fact, actually has lifetime liability for that well creating any contamination.

It's something I think the industry has taken very seriously. The Alberta Energy Regulator monitors these abandoned wells very carefully and makes sure that the owners of the wells are actually doing their due diligence and that they're actually maintaining their responsibilities and reducing the liabilities to our environment.

I also find it very interesting that, to a Liberal, a scandal is when somebody repays the federal government. In this case, the Alberta government has repaid the federal government \$137 million. I find it interesting that they don't think it's a scandal when there's \$400 million in the Sustainable Development Technology Canada program that's been misappropriated. They don't seem to think that's a scandal. In fact, the House has been seized with, for the better part of the last three weeks, debate on exactly that issue of whether documents related to the SDTC scandal, to their board of directors, to the misappropriation of funds and to the 186 conflicts of interest that existed should not be turned over to the RCMP because it certainly reeks of corruption.

The Liberals, for whatever reason, aren't seized with the scandalous nature of that particular occurrence, but they seem to be seized with \$137 million that's returned to the federal government. Wow...talk about thinking backwards.

Let's talk about that \$137 million. The Government of Alberta was given approximately a billion dollars, which was to be spent in the cleanup, the reclamation, the proper decommissioning of abandoned and orphaned wells. In the time frame that it was allotted, it was not able to complete the expenditures of the full billion dollars, and it asked the federal government for an extension so that it would be able to use the \$137 million that remained unspent. The federal government, this Liberal government, Liberal-controlled bureaucracy, said, "No, send us the money. Send us \$137 million." Because the Alberta government could not responsibly, from a good stewardship perspective, spend the money to achieve the results that it was supposed to achieve, it sent the money back to the federal government.

Instead of commending Alberta for being good stewards of the money, they now want to conduct a study to find out why it gave \$137 million back. "Why didn't you spend it?" Well, I think we should be commending provinces that are good stewards of money and that can responsibly spend money to do this in a way they know they can stand behind, along with the results they have achieved. They issued the money through a tendering process that was fair, open and honest, and that resulted in qualified contractors doing the work. As we heard from Mr. Dreeshen, we know to what extent first nations rehabilitation folks were involved in the decommissioning of some of these wells. They do tremendous work. However, just because money is available doesn't mean it has to be blown out the door and squandered. Yet, this preamble suggests that would have been a better solution than returning the money to the federal government unspent.

I think we should be commending Alberta and saying, "Wow, Premier Smith, you've done a phenomenal job of making sure you responsibly stewarded the money the federal government gave you for a specific purpose. You weren't able to spend the money frivolously and without accountability, so you returned it to the federal government and kindly asked us for an extension to use the money responsibly." We said no. This Liberal government should be praising Premier Smith for the good work she and her government are doing in Alberta.

The next bullet point talks about Saskatchewan. Again, in my earlier comments, I indicated that this government is one of division, seeking to create disunity right across Canada. Why would a preamble swipe at a neighbouring province to try to create some kind of animosity between the two? Only a Liberal would know the motivation behind that. I don't think there's any good reason to create animosity between provinces. We should, rather, be trying to build unity across this country. That's not something a bullet point like this does.

It also says, "Companies who abandon wells and fail to pay for their cleanup negatively impact provincial taxpayers and municipalities". That's true. They should. That's why regulatory bodies, including the Alberta Energy Regulator, seek to monitor this carefully and hold individuals to the responsibility they committed to when they drilled the wells, exploited the resources in them and sent them to market. When they choose to no longer have them as productive resource wells, they also have to follow up. If they don't follow up with the owners of these wells to make sure there has been proper remedial action taken, it costs provincial and municipal taxpayers money. That's why the regulator is on top of these things and, I think, doing a good job. To have that as part of the preamble... I don't think we've been hearing from any provincial or municipal taxpayers who think it's an issue, so why would you put that in a preamble? Again, it's to create animosity among people and to incite divisiveness.

"Orphaned and abandoned wells present an economic opportunity to support energy solutions like geothermal energy." I'm not sure where that bullet point comes from, but it sounds like they want to repurpose oil wells to be geothermal energy sources. That might be worth studying. It could have been part of the motion, but here it is. We see it in part of the preamble. Who knows if there are opportunities there? I'm not sure how geothermal and oil go together. It's

water and oil. I know my experience, Mr. Chair. Whenever I put oil in water, the two don't seem to want to come together very well. In fact, they separate. That is part of the process of oil extraction—sending steam down and having the oil come up. I'm not sure about the validity of that. There could be a business case there. Who knows? It probably would be worth a study.

I think the point I want to get back to, again, is found in the first couple of bullet points. It seems as though the province of Alberta has been unfairly targeted by the Liberal government, instead of recognized for the economic prosperity it gives our entire country.

I think there should be commendation shown to Alberta for the good work that it did do in responsibly using over \$800 million of the funds given to it to actually fund remediation projects for abandoned and orphaned wells. I think it would have been wise of this Liberal government to have granted the extension to Alberta and to have said: "You've got qualified contractors and we want you to continue to use qualified contractors. We don't want you just throwing this out on the market and hiring contractors that, first of all, may not be properly trained and vetted to do this kind of work and may not be competent in this kind of work."

I don't think those are necessarily the types of contractors that we want to award projects like this to, to do completion. As we've heard, there are responsible contractors. There are people who are trained. They have good safety programs. They employ indigenous... Many that complete these remediation projects are actually 100% indigenous-owned contractors. I think that to grant an extension would have been the thing that this level of government should have done, and you know what? It would have been a non-issue, Mr. Chair.

The other problem I have with this motion is that we're currently in the midst of two studies. There's the TMX pipeline project, and Mr. Angus has really promoted studying what exactly happened that took this TMX pipeline project from a cost of what initially was pegged at \$9.7 billion. By the time the federal government took it over or purchased it, that grew to just under \$13 billion and now has exploded to \$34 billion. I think that's a very worthy study and is one that this committee should have been seized with. I don't think we've actually gotten quite to the bottom of it yet, and I think our study will be wrapping up soon as far as hearing from witnesses goes.

We've got a lot of work to do on that study. We've got to give the analysts time to write a report. We've got to give them time to sift through all the data that's being submitted by the witnesses who we've had at committee and those who we weren't able to listen to. They have got to compile all that data and actually put together a report that's going to be cohesive for this committee to study and review. I think it would be important that we get that done before we embark on another study.

Also, then, we've been looking at electricity, at the capacity we have in this country and the grid and whether it's sufficient to meet the demands that, seemingly, right across the country, are increasing for electricity, especially clean electricity. I think that's been a really good study. We've heard from some very good witnesses. They are industry people who understand the situation and understand the economics here in Canada. That's also a report that needs to be written and studied by this committee.

We have a significant workload that we've undertaken at this committee, Mr. Chair. I just think that it would be helpful if you would take some time, together with the clerk, to sit down and prepare a schedule for this committee as to when these different things are going to happen and when we're going to be continuing the study with TMX or jumping back to electricity, rather than having these motions thrown in front of us by Liberal parliamentary secretaries to conduct yet another study when we have two that we're in the middle of and haven't finished.

They're both very important studies, Mr. Chair, and I would really hope that you, as the chair of this committee, would take some time to prepare a schedule that we can review and approve so that at least we know what we're going to be doing here, but I think our plate is full. I think this—especially the preamble—is very sad, and I would question its appropriateness in actually trying to create a cohesive atmosphere around this committee that would lead to doing productive work.

At this time, Mr. Chair, I'll cede my time to you. I'm sure there are other speakers who have opinions as well and who will make them known. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Falk.

Now we'll go to Ms. Goodridge, who is online.

Ms. Goodridge, go ahead. The floor is yours.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's been really frustrating sitting here, listening to some of these arguments and these attacks being made. It's really interesting, because one thing that was said was that Saskatchewan managed to spend all their money and Alberta didn't. Well, Alberta got \$1 billion and Saskatchewan got \$400 million. There's a different order of magnitude in those two sums of money.

We're really having a conversation over the fact that the Government of Alberta created a program, and that program had private people then spending that money to do the cleanup. That's not something that happens willy-nilly, or at least not in the case of the province I come from. I actually was an MLA at the time this was being discussed, so I remember some of those conversations fairly in depth. It was a program that initially was very oversubscribed. To be able to do it properly and not have shell companies and companies like Dalian that the Government of Canada decided to use, that qualified for contracts under federal government indigenous procurement but was effectively a shell, one of the big challenges is that the Government of Alberta actually wanted to engage with meaningful work so that these projects could go forward meaningfully. That required indigenous companies to get appropriate equipment and get the appropriate training. That doesn't happen just

overnight, especially in the context of a pandemic. This program wasn't simply about wells. This was about job creation.

The member from Newfoundland, Ms. Jones, raised some really good points. There are lots of ties to the energy industry in Newfoundland. There are many ties between Alberta and Newfoundland. That's part of why we have so much commonality. I have many constituents who go back and forth to Newfoundland. As well, many have retired back home to Newfoundland after having worked their career up here. It's really frustrating; I don't know if most of the constituents I talk to who are from Newfoundland would appreciate the fact that the Government of Alberta, and more specifically the energy workers, are constantly under attack by this Liberal government.

This is the problem we're [*Technical difficulty—Editor*].

The Chair: We'll have to suspend for a moment. I know that Ms. Goodridge does have the floor.

• (1245)

(Pause)

• (1250)

The Chair: We're back.

Ms. Goodridge is not online, so we'll go to the next speaker.

I'll go to you, Mr. Patzer.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Thank you very much.

It's the blessing and curse of technology, I guess, that sometimes these things do happen. It wouldn't matter which party or which individual it was, I certainly wouldn't want to step on someone's privileges as a member. Hopefully, this doesn't create issues going forward with regard to the types of situations that could arise from somebody's technology accidentally restarting on them or an update being forced through when the user didn't actually approve of the update yet. I will happily take the floor for a few minutes until she can return. When she is back online, I'll be sure to turn it back over to her. She was in the middle of some very important thoughts there.

One thing I want to talk about here is I think part of the heart of the motion. We know that it's been a long-standing goal of both the environment minister and the natural resources minister to end the use of fossil fuels. Whether it's the emissions cap, whether it's the—

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I have a point of order, Chair.

The Chair: Ms. Dabrusin, go ahead on the point of order.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: It might be a matter of relevance. Right now we're talking about a motion about wells and orphaned wells, so I am not sure what the relevance is. It is not even correct.

The Chair: Thank you for your point of order, Ms. Dabrusin.

I just would ask members to keep their remarks relevant to the motion at hand.

Thank you, Mr. Patzer. If it's okay, I'll go back to Ms. Goodridge.

Ms. Goodridge, I know that you had a bit of an interruption there. We want to make sure you have the opportunity to continue with your intervention. Go ahead.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Thank you. It's the joy of technology. It's great when it works, and a little challenging when you have a bit of failure.

I don't exactly know where I was when my computer decided to shut down, but where I was going is here: We wouldn't be having this conversation if this was an attack on another province. The Liberals have made comments like, "Well, this isn't"... If we're talking about the main motion, what's the point of having the preamble? The process and procedure are very clear. They recommend against having preambles. Many people choose to put in preambles to give some context, but this context is misleading, not accurate and an attack on the province of Alberta—the province you and I both represent, Mr. Chair. I'm not sure how you can sit in that chair position and allow a conversation to continue that is such an affront to the people you and I have been elected to represent. This is one of those complicated spaces that we're in. This government doesn't see Alberta as a relevant conversation piece, or something.

I'm not quite sure why this Liberal government has decided to continually attack. It's not some backbench member of Parliament who brought this forward of their own volition. It was the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, which means that, if the ministry of natural resources hadn't approved this, we wouldn't still be having this conversation. It means these were marching orders given by the Minister of Natural Resources. This means it was the intention of the Liberal government, under Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, to further attack Alberta, Albertans and Alberta workers.

One of the frustrating pieces is that this entire motion was created to attack an industry and a program that was set up that didn't throw money out the door, like the Liberals did during COVID. Instead, it made sure it was set up in such a way—

Mr. Charlie Angus: I have a point of order.

The Chair: Mrs. Goodridge, we have a point of order. I'll ask you to hold for a second.

Go ahead, Mr. Angus, on the point of order.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Could the clerk read out the motion? I think my colleague has gotten.... Once the thing came back on the screen, she might have thought she was in another committee.

I don't remember where in the preamble it attacks workers. Does it attack workers? Could you read the preamble? I think she's very worried that we're picking on Alberta and all of her friends when we're talking about abandoned wells. They also think it's attacking indigenous people. I don't know if they read it. Maybe there's a different motion out there.

Could the clerk read the motion so that the member isn't so confused?

Thank you. I think it would be very helpful.

The Chair: Mr. Angus, I'll ask you to hold, please. I think you're done with your point of order. You've asked for information or clarity on the motion at hand.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Yes. That's so we're on the same page when talking about something. It's very hard to debate something when

people are talking about something else. I don't know what they're talking about.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Angus, for your point of order.

The clerk, earlier in the meeting, read out the motion to members for clarity. If members choose to have another update on it, we can do that.

However, I have a point of order from Mr. Patzer.

Mr. Patzer, go ahead.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: For Mr. Angus's enlightenment, there was an opportunity for a lot of jobs for Treaty No. 7. They said they were looking for the funding, through the FSNRP in the province of Alberta, so they could use their expertise and workforce. The Liberals, by saying no, directly said no, in effect, to those workers who have the skill set and ability to—

The Chair: Mr. Patzer, I gave you some leeway so we could hear your point of order, but that is not a point of order. That's full-on debate. You're up next on the list, so you can debate away.

Thank you.

Mrs. Goodridge, you had a point of order, but you have the floor. I'm going back to you.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: I'm just going to go right into it, Mr. Chair.

I was going to raise, on a point of order, that I am more than capable and that I have, in fact, read the motion we are debating and the preamble we are debating. I listened when the clerk read the motion and preamble, and I am capable of understanding what those words mean, which frustrates me that Mr. Angus somehow believes that it is not the case. If it was an attack....

Here's part of the problem. Mr. Angus has a private member's bill that is a full-on attack on Alberta's energy industry. He has made no ifs, ands or buts about his dislike for it. However, this is the absolute frustration that we are in right now, Mr. Chair. We have this Liberal-NDP coalition that sees the energy industry and, in turn, the Province of Alberta and the people of Alberta, as "lesser than". It does not support Alberta and our energy industry. It does not support the workers that get their paycheques from this industry. It wants to see less of this industry, and this is where we disagree.

I am proud of our world-class energy industry that we have here in Canada. I think we need to do more to support it. I'm proud of the fact that the Government of Alberta didn't just throw money out the door to get it spent so that it could check boxes to the Government of Canada, and instead, it decided to create a program that was actually robust. It made sure that there was accountability, something that the Government of Canada could learn a lot from.

I know that in the government operations committee, they are currently studying failures on indigenous procurement. Our House of Commons is completely seized and paralyzed because of the government refusing to hand over documents when it comes to a green slush fund. There is such a pattern of abuse of taxpayer dollars from the federal government that it is very frustrating that the Government of Alberta, which was unable to spend all of the money under this program, said, "Do you know what? Let's ask for an extension because we're showing that we are doing credible work." It was actually moving—

The Chair: Mrs. Goodridge, I didn't want to interrupt you because you're in....

We're going to continue in our next meeting with your having the floor, Mrs. Goodridge. We are suspended, as it's one o'clock.

Thank you.

[The meeting was suspended at 1 p.m., Monday, October 28]

[The meeting resumed at 4:34 p.m., Wednesday, October 30]

• (18430)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): I have a point of order....

I'm sorry. Go on.

The Chair: Thank you.

Welcome back, Mr. Genuis, to our committee.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Thank you. It's good to be back.

The Chair: I call this meeting back to order. We are resuming meeting number 111 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Natural Resources.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format. I would like to remind participants of the following points.

Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. All comments should be addressed through the chair. Members, please raise your hand if you wish to speak, whether participating in person or via Zoom. The clerk and I will manage the speaking order as best we can.

When we suspended last Monday, we were debating the motion of Ms. Dabrusin as amended. Mrs. Goodridge had the floor.

Mrs. Goodridge, I will turn the floor back to you.

• (18435)

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's wonderful to be here and to be able to defend my home province of Alberta and Alberta's energy industry, which unfortunately is under attack at just about every single opportunity that this federal government—this NDP-Liberal government—has. They choose to wedge, divide, stigmatize and throw Alberta out with the bathwater.

This is my home province and this is your home province, Mr. Chair, yet they must really not like you, bringing forward a motion like this and putting you in a really tough spot, because I know that

you have many constituents who work in Alberta's energy industry. I often talk to them when I'm travelling to Ottawa.

I almost always travel through Calgary and actually have an opportunity to consult with many different Albertans who work in Alberta's energy industry and live in places like your riding, Mr. Chair. I don't think they would like a motion that is so overtly anti-Albertan. To many of them, this is very frustrating.

To many Canadians, Alberta has always represented a beacon of hope, prosperity and a fresh start. To the world's leading oil producers we're a tough competitor that refuses to lie down in the face of adversity, but for far too many elected officials across the country, Alberta is simply a cash cow. That's how we're treated.

Unfortunately, to go one further, to the fringe eco-activists we're point-blank the enemy, and to the environment minister, the Liberal-NDP environment minister, who has made no bones about how much he dislikes this industry, we very clearly are the enemy. However, to me—

The Chair: Mrs. Goodridge, I'll just ask you to hold for one second. We have a point of order from Ms. Dabrusin.

Go ahead, Ms. Dabrusin.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: It's just that I thought this motion was about the challenges and the opportunities with orphaned and abandoned wells. I'm just wondering if the clerk could reread the wording of the motion, because I don't.... The debate doesn't seem to be quite lining up for me. I'm just confused.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: On the same point of order, Chair—

The Chair: Hold on, Mr. Genuis, before I recognize you on the point of order.

Thank you, Ms. Dabrusin. If members require clarity on where we are, and for the new members here today, that's something we could look at doing, but I'm now going to a point of order by Mr. Genuis.

Go ahead.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: When I first got here, I asked the clerk to email me the motion, which is a service that I think is available to all members. It doesn't require a point of order or an interruption if you want to see the motion.

Points of order are regarding alleged violations of the Standing Orders, and Ms. Dabrusin hasn't even alleged any such violations. I would suggest that in the future she simply allow the speaker to speak without undue interruption.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I have a point of order.

The Chair: Yes, I see you, Mr. Angus.

Thank you, Mr. Genuis, for your point of order.

Mr. Angus, go ahead on your point of order.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you.

I asked a similar thing the other day, because I find that what's concerning is that the Conservatives keep going down into very paranoid rabbit holes and making claims that have nothing to do with the subject at hand. Maybe they're playing for the cameras back home, but I think that, as far as our committee goes, it's very important.

Maybe they aren't and I could be misreading that entirely. If we read the motion and if we were actually talking facts, then I could sit and listen to them all day, but right now I really am wary about having to go down these rabbit holes with them.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Angus, for your point of order.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Just on the same—

The Chair: I am going to Mrs. Goodridge on a point of order.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard: I also have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: I'll recognize you in one second, Mr. Simard.

I have Mrs. Goodridge on a point of order.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This is another opportunity by the Liberals, and the NDP in coalition, to try to silence us. I was very clearly speaking about how Alberta is under attack by this government on numerous occasions. It is very much relevant given the section in the motion that was proposed by Ms. Dabrusin, who is in fact the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, which mentions only the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. Therefore, it is very relevant.

• (18440)

The Chair: Monsieur Simard, I will go to you on your point of order in a moment.

Colleagues, you have the opportunity to debate. Please do not use points of order for debate. I can put you on the speaking order. You can have all the time you need to debate the points and merits you'd like to, but not through points of order.

Monsieur Simard, go ahead on your point of order.

[*Translation*]

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

Today reminds me of the theatrics we experienced during our study of Bill C-50. I have a lot of respect for my colleague, Mr. Genuis, but there are currently five Conservative Party members here instead of the usual four. That happened during the study of Bill C-50, too. There were five or six Conservative members, and non-permanent members of the committee took the liberty of raising points of order.

For the committee to function as it should, and to break the current impasse, I would like to get a ruling from you, Mr. Chair, about which members of the Conservative Party, and which members of the Bloc Québécois and the Liberal Party, may speak. Can only permanent members of the committee speak and raise a point of order, or can anyone do so? If anyone can, my colleague, the member for

Lac-Saint-Jean, has nothing to do this evening, and I would be happy to invite him to come spend his time here with me.

Thank you for clarifying that. I think it's critical.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Monsieur Simard.

I think you're asking in your point of order for clarification on voting members and speaking members. All members are able to come to committee and participate in the committee hearings, but only certain members are allowed to vote. Our clerk has a record of the members who are able to do so.

I hope that clarifies it for all committee members.

Committee members, I hope we will have a productive meeting, be able to get through this motion and maybe get to a vote today. Most importantly, I hope we can have a good debate amongst colleagues around the table and proceed forward. I've had a number of requests, maybe for clarification or from a misunderstanding of where we're at, on what the motion at hand states. Just to make sure all members have the motion that was brought forward by Ms. Dabrusin and amended by Mr. Simard, perhaps I can ask the clerk to go through it before I turn it back to Mrs. Goodridge. This is to ensure that our colleague who has joined us today and the others at home are all in the right place and have a good understanding of where we're at.

Before I go back to Mrs. Goodridge, I will ask the clerk to read the amended version.

Go ahead, sir.

The Clerk: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The motion as amended reads as follows:

Given that:

There are 1,600 abandoned and orphaned oil wells in Alberta polluting farmland, waterways, and air;

The number of abandoned wells in Alberta are set to increase by an additional 1,800 to 2,000;

These additional abandoned wells will cost more than \$200 million to clean up;

The Government of Alberta sent back \$137 million because they failed to use the funds provided by the Government of Canada to clean up abandoned wells and create jobs in the pandemic;

The Government of Saskatchewan used their allocated funds in their entirety to clean abandoned wells and create jobs;

Companies who abandon wells and fail to pay for their cleanup negatively impact provincial taxpayers and municipalities;

Orphaned and abandoned wells present an economic opportunity to support energy solutions like geothermal energy.

The Standing Committee on Natural Resources begin a five-meeting study on the impact of this failure to clean these wells, the impacts of the pollution from not cleaning up abandoned and orphaned wells, the costs of cleaning up abandoned and orphaned wells, the federal regulations to hold companies to account for well cleanup, and the potential opportunities associated with cleaning up abandoned wells, and report its findings to the House of Commons.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

I hope that clarifies that.

Ms. Goodridge, it's back to you.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Thank you, Mr. Chair. After all of that drama, it is wonderful to get back to this motion.

It's interesting how the preamble is so anti-Albertan. You, the chair—a fellow Albertan—have been given an opportunity to read this twice and have refused. I think that's partly due to how anti-Albertan the sentiment is in this very motion. Frankly, Mr. Chair, I don't blame you. I wouldn't be reading this if I were you, either. This is part of the frustration Conservatives have with this motion.

It would be different if this had been brought forward by someone who wasn't the parliamentary secretary. However, it is very clear, because it came from the parliamentary secretary, that it came by edict from the minister. It means it came by edict from the Prime Minister. This is what they want discussed. This wasn't some random person sitting on this committee who decided to bring this forward. This was the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources.

We know this is one of the most centralized PMOs in Canadian history, so it isn't something that just happened by haphazard. They decided to attack Alberta because they didn't know any better. This is a deliberate attack on Alberta, Alberta's energy industry and Albertan workers.

This program put forward by the federal government was to get energy workers to work during the challenging time of the pandemic. One of the complicating factors the members probably don't understand is that most of the workers who perform oil well cleanup are contractors. During the pandemic, the contract workforce had some struggles, because they normally don't own their own equipment. They lease it. They were in these struggling spaces where, oftentimes, their leases were in challenging circumstances. They had to retool and get new equipment, so this couldn't be operationalized with a snap of the fingers: "Go and clean up a well."

This required a little more planning because of the dire situation and how long it took the federal government to come up with the money. It wasn't something that was rolled out in the first weeks or months of the pandemic. It was something that came in after a bit of a delay. Frankly, it saved many contractors. It was an opportunity for many contractors who were unemployed to rehire their employees, get their contracts for equipment back and save chunks of this space.

However, it didn't happen at a time when it was absolutely needed. It happened after a little delay. Because of its scope, the program was rolled out. Unlike the federal government, the provincial government that I was a member of at the time decided they weren't going to allow shell companies to do the work and perhaps, at some point, give some crumbs to indigenous partners. They wanted to engage them in meaningful work and make sure indigenous communities benefited in material ways.

There are a number of examples of these programs having massive impacts on a variety of different indigenous communities, whether it be directly in jobs or in different financial impact benefit agreements. It's more complicated than just snapping your fingers

and saying, "Here's a whole bunch of money—get this out the door as quickly as possible." That's not generally the best way to get value for a dollar. However, this government doesn't seem to always abide by getting the best value for Canadian dollars.

One of the pieces that gets to me, as an Albertan and as someone who was very proudly born and raised in Fort McMurray—a community under attack, at every possible opportunity, by this NDP-Liberal government, and one that is at the forefront of not only Alberta's energy industry but also Canada's energy industry... Many of the benefits we have are the direct results of the amazing and hard work done every single day by the people who put on hard hats and steel-toed boots and go to work in -40°C or 30°C weather. Day in and day out, they miss Christmases, Easters and Thanksgivings. They miss children's dance recitals and hockey games, and they do that to keep the lights on. This NDP-Liberal government continually attacks them.

One of the arguments brought forward by the parliamentary secretary is that they only talk about Alberta and Saskatchewan because only Alberta and Saskatchewan got the money. Fact check: that's not true. Actually, B.C. also got the money, but they casually decided to leave out the NDP government in British Columbia when it was deciding to do their attack on the energy industry because it doesn't serve their narrative.

• (18445)

This is something that Albertans know all too well. This is part of the absolute frustration that so many Albertans come to my office with to share their frustrations—that the government cherry-picks. It comes here saying, "Oh, we only mention those two provinces because those are the only two provinces." No, there are abandoned oil wells across the entire country. This isn't just an Alberta-Saskatchewan thing. This isn't just an Alberta-Saskatchewan-British Columbia thing. There are wells in Ontario. There are wells in Quebec. There are wells throughout the country. Again, this NDP-Liberal government likes to have its whipping boy be the province of Alberta.

This is something that is exceptionally troubling. It is something that I don't think we can continue doing because this tells Albertans that, to this NDP-Liberal government, they just don't matter. After all of these conversations and all of this space, I hope that this common-sense amendment that I'm going to bring forward will be accepted by the members of this committee because I believe that I and my colleagues have given a number of relevant pieces to this. I would like to amend this motion. I'm going to amend it as follows.

I propose removing the preamble in its entirety and adding this:

Given that:

The Chiefs of Treaty 6, 7, and 8 have all asked for an extension of time for First Nation communities to properly utilize federal funds allocated for orphan wells;

The Chiefs ask the federal government to return the money to the Alberta government so it can be distributed back to First Nations for the use of cleaning up orphan wells;

It is the legal and jurisdictional responsibility of the federal government to ensure the proper clean up of orphan wells on First Nations land;

The federal government revoked the funds which would be used for remediation and reclamation of more than 3,000 orphan wells on First Nations lands and territories.

Then after “the Standing Committee on Natural Resources”, I suggest striking the following:

begin a five-meeting study on the impact of this failure to clean these wells, the impacts of the pollution from not cleaning up abandoned and orphaned wells, the costs of cleaning up abandoned and orphaned wells, the federal government regulations to hold companies to account for well cleanup, and the potential opportunities associated with cleaning up...wells, and report its findings to the House....

Then replace it with “report to the House that the federal government should return the money allocated to Alberta for First Nations to use to clean up wells on reserves, which are the responsibility of the federal government.”

Mr. Chair, I think it is incumbent on us to realize that we should not be dividing Canadians. We should be working to provide hope. We shouldn't be continuing to attack the industries and the people who work in those industries, and we shouldn't be pitting one region against another. After nine years, we have, hopefully, learned that pitting one Canadian against another doesn't work long term. It creates hardship. It creates pain. It creates frustration.

I really do believe that this is a very common-sense amendment that shows that this natural resources committee respects Alberta, respects its jurisdiction, respects the jurisdiction of the Government of Alberta and, most importantly, respects having true reconciliation with first nations and indigenous communities when it comes not only to these well cleanups but also to being partners in prosperity.

Mr. Chair, I would urge every single member to consider this motion and to vote in favour of it. I believe that it has been sent to the clerk, and it should be distributed to all members here shortly.

• (18450)

The Chair: Thank you for your amendment, Mrs. Goodridge.

I know the clerk has received a copy, but we do not have a copy in French at this point. I'm going to go to the clerk in a minute.

Mr. Angus, I have you also with your hand up. Are you on a point of order, or do you just want to add your name to the speaking list?

Mr. Charlie Angus: I would speak to the amendment, but if it's not in French, I don't think it's possible. I don't think she can bring this forward if she hasn't done the work to make sure it's done properly.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: On a point of order, that's obviously false.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Genuis, I'll ask you—

• (18455)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Genuis is not the chair.

Chair, I would like to speak on the motion, but if the motion isn't proper—

The Chair: Okay. I have you on the list, Mr. Angus. I wanted to see if you were on a point of order or not.

You have a point of order, Monsieur Simard. Go ahead.

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mario Simard): I have a point of order.

Right now, I have full confidence in the interpretation service. The interpreters are doing a fantastic job, and I thank them. That said, if I don't have the French text in front of me, it's difficult for me to comment on the amendment, and to follow the debate as it unfolds. I would therefore prefer to have the French translation of the amendment.

My colleague seemed prepared to move this amendment. She certainly could have had it translated.

I think it would be a violation of francophones' privilege to debate this amendment at this time. I, personally, would never move such an amendment in French only and expect my unilingual anglophone colleagues to comment on it.

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay. Thank you, Monsieur Simard. I'm sorry. I was waiting for the translation to come through fully. The translators are doing an exceptional job, as always.

Mrs. Goodridge, you had the floor. I know you've presented in English. Do you have a copy in French, or have you just submitted it to the clerk? If you could, continue on.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: I apologize to my colleague. I just drafted the amendment. We're trying to get it translated into French as we speak. It should be ready in a few minutes.

As such, I would ask that we take a short five-minute break.

[*English*]

We will have it in both official languages.

The Chair: Colleagues, we will suspend.

• (1655)

(Pause)

• (1720)

The Chair: I call the meeting to order.

We are back. Colleagues, you should have received the translated motion. Thank you to our Conservative colleagues for putting that translation together—

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: I'm sorry for the delay.

The Chair: No problem. Thank you for sending it over.

Monsieur Simard, you should have a copy of it. Hopefully it has been translated well. I'm sure it has been.

Upon further review and discussions with the clerk, based on the reading of the book on page 541, the motion is inadmissible. As for the amendment, the book states:

...it is irrelevant to the main motion (i.e., it deals with a matter foreign to the main motion, exceeds its scope, or introduces a new proposition which should properly be the subject of a separate substantive motion with notice);

Based on my review, the motion is unfortunately inadmissible, so we will go back to the main motion as amended, which we previously had on the floor.

Mrs. Goodridge still has the floor.

I hope that clarifies things. I apologize for taking everybody's time, because it took some time to make sure that we had the appropriate translation for members, and then this arose as well.

That's the decision we've made.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We appreciate your ruling after doing the work to ensure that the amendment was presented in both official languages.

I therefore move that you ask if there's unanimous consent to accept the amendment as moved.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus: No.

Can we move on now?

The Chair: We do not have unanimous consent, so we are back on the motion, once again.

Mrs. Goodridge, you have the floor.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Of all the people to say no.... It's ridiculously frustrating. This just goes to show that this NDP-Liberal coalition does not respect the province of Alberta. This falls back—

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Or indigenous reconciliation.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Yes. Whether it's to do with indigenous reconciliation or provincial jurisdiction and actually taking time to stay in their own lane....

This motion, as it's currently written, does not actually respect the jurisdiction of the provinces and it doesn't acknowledge federal jurisdiction. That is the jurisdiction of these wells that exist on first nations land. It does none of this.

As I've said before, it doesn't acknowledge the fact that British Columbia also received money. They decided to cherry-pick and attack Alberta because they'd prefer to attack Conservative provinces. That has been the modus operandi of this Liberal-NDP government for the last nine years. It's ridiculously frustrating.

I don't really understand the speed of my colleague from the NDP to so quickly say this is not admissible. I don't understand how we can go forward with a preamble that is such an overt and open attack on the population and the energy industry in Alberta. This is frustrating.

Based on local, recent news, British Columbia had to return \$12 million in oil and gas well cleanup funding, and more than \$12 million from the investment in the cleaning up of inactive wells in

British Columbia has been returned to the federal government. However, that's not identified in this because it wasn't part of the agenda that was brought forward by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, who reports directly to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources and through him, his representation and his office's representation on this committee.... The Minister of Energy and Natural Resources clearly only does things that are in lockstep with the Prime Minister; otherwise, he wouldn't actually still be the minister.

This falls into this unique category, where this is very clearly an edict that's come down from Justin Trudeau himself. It's yet another attack on the home province of the chair; on the home province of my colleague, our shadow minister for natural resources, Shannon Stubbs; and the home province of my good friend Earl Dreeshen. This is why we have Albertans here at this committee. It's because this is egregious.

• (18525)

Mr. Charlie Angus: I have a point of order.

I don't want to interrupt this fascinating discourse.

Am I on the list to speak? I was two meetings ago. I'm just waiting.

The Chair: Yes, you are, Mr. Angus. You are the next speaker.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Mrs. Goodridge, go ahead. You have the floor.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I understand that the member from the NDP would really like an opportunity to continue his continuous attacks on Alberta's energy industry. In fact, he's proposed a private member's bill that's absolutely lunatic. It is such a clear attack on Canada's energy industry; it is insane. If his bill were to ever come into law, it would actually make it illegal to say that natural gas is cleaner burning than coal. This is a true, verifiable fact. Under his piece of legislation that he is pushing forward—

Mr. Charlie Angus: I have a point of order.

I know that the Conservatives think that they're all going to get locked up in little vans by people who think that they're bad, and that's false. We're not discussing my bill. I would love to be discussing my bill. Rather than pushing falsehoods and calling me a lunatic, she should stick to the facts so that we can get on to other speakers so that she just doesn't continue to waste our time.

Can she stay focused on the issue at hand?

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Angus, for your point of order.

Colleagues, we do have a motion on the floor that was presented by Ms. Dabrusin and amended by Mr. Simard. I would ask colleagues to focus on the motion at hand and to make sure that their debate and discussion revolves around the motion that we are speaking about.

Mrs. Goodridge, the floor is yours again.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This is actually very relevant to the motion on the floor because the motion on the floor is an attack on the Albertan energy industry. It is an attack on Alberta energy workers, and it is seen as such.

I was just home in my riding over the weekend, and I had an opportunity to talk to people who, when I brought forward the fact that a motion was brought forward at the natural resources committee that only talked about these wells in Alberta's context and failed to talk about the wells in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Quebec, Ontario.... It's very frustrating, and I can appreciate the fact that the parliamentary secretary is probably a little embarrassed right now that her department set her up by telling her that the only two provinces that got money were Alberta and Saskatchewan, and that's why those were the only two named in the preamble. They conveniently left British Columbia off, and they conveniently left out the fact that British Columbia also had to return some of its money. However, that's semantics, and that clearly isn't an intentional attack.

If the Department of Natural Resources didn't know, it failed you, Ms. Dabrusin. It failed you by giving you this motion to put forward.

That is the fact. If this is what you think you should be bringing forward as the parliamentary secretary of natural resources, shame on you. This is absolutely not okay. This does not send a signal to anyone that Canada is somewhere to invest. It doesn't show or support that the Government of Canada believes there should be any investments in the natural resources industry, in the energy industry or in Alberta. It just continues on. What else can we expect from a government that has very clearly decided to put a fringe eco-activist as its environment minister, someone who is very well known in Canada from the mug shots when he got caught scaling the CN Tower? Ironically, he was also arrested at one point while chaining himself to a coker on its way up to the Fort McMurray oil sands. This is a man who made his entire living on—

• (18530)

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

I'm just fascinated because, again, we were talking about abandoned and orphaned wells, if I read the motion that was amended by Mr. Simard correctly.

On a point of relevance, I do not know how the member opposite's feelings about the Minister of Environment are relevant to the motion that we're studying.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Dabrusin, for your point of order.

I would just ask the colleague who has the floor to continue on with debate but make sure that it's relevant to the motion at hand.

Thank you. I'll turn it back to you.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: I'm kind of excited by the fact that they continue to do points of order, because they don't want to hear about how this is an actual problem and an attack on the province of Alberta. Based on my very rough math here, British Columbia returned about 11% of the funds it was allocated under this pro-

gram. Alberta returned 13% of the funds. We're talking about the difference between British Columbia getting a total, at the beginning, of \$120 million and Alberta getting a billion dollars. It's orders of magnitude different, yet they're not to be looked at in this study.

This just goes back to the fact that this government doesn't respect Alberta. That is the relevant point here. I tried to bring forward what I thought was a very common-sense amendment to very cleanly deal with this and make it clear that we understand and respect indigenous reconciliation. This is part of the struggle. The government doesn't want to hear about any idea that isn't their own. They don't want to realize that, perhaps, there are more people who need to be looked at than just the Government of Alberta.

They don't even want to acknowledge that this is some of its own jurisdiction—oil wells on first nations lands. Those are the Government of Canada's responsibility. They don't want to acknowledge the fact that Treaty No. 6, Treaty No. 7 and Treaty No. 8 chiefs have all asked for an extension of time for first nations communities to properly utilize the funds allocated through the orphaned wells program. They don't seem to understand that this is a very big problem.

I'm not here filibustering. I'm not here just to be here. I'm here trying to let this committee realize that this is a very serious issue. I would appreciate it if there were some kind of opportunity to make an amendment in order to make it clear that we're not trying to attack the Government of Alberta, the people of Alberta and the energy workers of Alberta. Frankly, as this is written, it is an attack. Whether you think it is or isn't, I'm telling you, as a proud Albertan, that it is.

Mr. Chair, I would love for you to try reading this motion as amended and see how your constituents take it. I don't believe your constituents are terribly different from the constituents I talk to on a regular basis. I know many of your constituents work in the energy industry, and they would not like Alberta to be singled out while letting B.C. get off with a free pass and letting every other orphaned well be fine: "Let's pick on Alberta, because Alberta is an easy one to pick on." You've looked at the polls. It's pretty clear that Liberals aren't doing very well in Alberta. They're okay throwing it all out. This is the frustration. This is what Albertans are sitting there thinking, that this must be part of the problem here. I will not continue on this path. I don't think it is reasonable and responsible.

I am trying to get through the fact that this isn't something we can willy-nilly propose and it's just going to be okay. This is part of what the Government of Alberta did when it came to having meaningful engagement with first nations communities. It was about creating lasting impacts for first nations communities, at least from the Government of Alberta's perspective. Not only did it provide a very good environmental piece, it also, very clearly, created meaningful jobs and gave people good training. For instance, the Cold Lake First Nations trained people to have the skills needed to do this work long term.

In 2020, shortly after this was announced.... In Alberta's case, we didn't just give it to first nations communities. The first nations site rehabilitation program was also opened up to the Métis communities in Alberta. Alberta is the only province in Canada to recognize Métis and the Métis settlements. We have a whole structure on that. It was \$85 million to first nations and \$15 million to Métis communities. This Alberta allocation period ended with 163 first nations submissions that totalled \$118 million, which is pretty spectacular. To receive 163 real, wonderful submissions totalling \$118.4 million from first nations partners is spectacular. These were first nations or partnerships with indigenous contractors. They cleaned up 2,145 individual sites.

• (18535)

Not all wells are the same. The government in this motion treats them like all of these orphan wells are somehow exactly the same, which just goes to show how little it understands about the industry and how little is actually realized. You can have an orphan well that could still be a producing well. It's not currently being utilized as a well, but you could turn the taps back on and it would be operational. Wells exist in a variety of states for a variety of reasons, and there are a variety of different reasons for that, including the fact that prior to 1978, I believe, they weren't required to do this remediation.

As a country and as a society, we've realized that this is incredibly important and the rules have dramatically changed, but there was a point in time when it wasn't a requirement and that is something that needs to be recognized. It's not that these bad-actor oil companies are skirting their responsibilities. There are many of these wells that existed long before there were ever rules about having to do these cleanups. Companies in Alberta—actually, across the entire country—have been doing this reclamation work because it's the right thing to do. They've been doing it because they know they need to do it to be good stewards of the resource they're extracting.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard: I would just like to ask for a clarification, Mr. Chair.

I would like to know where my colleague is going with this thought. Maybe she can explain it to me.

She's telling us that this is an all-out attack on Alberta, but the things I see in the motion are factual.

It is a fact that there are 1,600 abandoned oil wells. If that's not true, maybe she can tell us. It's a fact that there are going to be between 1,800 and 2,000 more abandoned wells. If that's not true,

perhaps she can present some evidence at the next meeting to prove it. It's also a fact that the Alberta government sent \$137 million back to the Government of Canada because it didn't use that money to clean up those wells. If that's not true, maybe she can provide some evidence to prove it. Otherwise, I don't think we can move forward and reach a consensus on this motion.

I would therefore like my colleague to show us that the facts laid out in the motion are not accurate. Once we have that information, we can come up with an amendment that will satisfy everyone. Otherwise, this is simply rhetoric, which my Conservative friends will be entirely free to engage in if they so desire, once we've voted for or against the motion. However, in the meantime, we need to clarify what parts of the motion my colleague considers inaccurate. Otherwise, this won't move our work forward.

Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

I'm just going to address Monsieur Simard's point of order, and then I'll go right to you on your point of clarification—relevance is what I got in the translation. I was listening very intently to make sure I didn't miss anything.

Thank you for bringing that forward, Monsieur Simard. I would just ask our colleague to focus on the relevance to the motion of the information being provided and to make sure that it's factual and accurate with the information that's provided in your debate.

I see Mr. Dreeshen on a point of order.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: The point of order has to do with Mario's statement. I'm not sure whether or not.... You said it was a point of clarification, in which case it probably shouldn't....

The Chair: The translation....

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Okay, but one of the things mentioned was that these are facts. They are not facts. It states and goes into the preamble that, "There are 1,600 abandoned and orphaned oil wells...polluting farmland, waterways, and air". That is not a fact. There might be 1,600 abandoned and orphaned oil wells.

That is the whole argument, and that ties into the end.

• (18540)

Mr. Charlie Angus: I have a point of order.

The Chair: Mr. Dreeshen, I'm going to cut you off there.

Mr. Angus, before I go to you on a point of order, I'll rule on the point of order.

Mr. Dreeshen, you were getting into debate. If you would like to debate and provide those facts, we can put you on the list and you can fully provide the facts according to the motion at hand.

Do you know what? I know you're referring to Monsieur Simard. Unfortunately, I'm not fluently bilingual and I need to listen carefully to the translation to allow the member to be able to fully participate and so that I have a clear understanding of what he is stating as it comes through translation. I want to give all members the leeway to be able to be heard at this committee, but I also want to rule when there's a ruling to be made.

I have Mr. Angus on a point of order.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you. You pretty much summed it up.

Mr. Dreesen had the floor. Other people are waiting to get the floor, so he can't use his point of supposed interruption to engage in debate.

The Chair: Thank you for your point of order.

Mr. Charlie Angus: He has nothing to say. If he wants to say something, he can do that down the road.

The Chair: I aim to please, and I want everybody to have an opportunity to—

Mr. Charlie Angus: You do an excellent job.

The Chair: Thank you.

Everybody has an opportunity to participate. If you do want to participate, put up your hand. I'll put you on the speaking order.

Thank you, Mrs. Goodridge. We're back to you.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Thank you.

It's wonderful to have a little bit of an opportunity to further gather my thoughts on this. It actually raises something that's quite important.

From what I've been able to gather on the number picked, the 1,600 abandoned and orphaned wells, it's based on a news article that was put out. It's actually not the factual information that came from the Government of Alberta. The Alberta Energy Regulator is the place you would go if you wanted to get an accurate assessment. The fact that we're actually talking about a whole bunch of things grouped together is challenging.

This is part of where this becomes a problem:

When an energy company ceases its operations without having properly closed its infrastructure, we will order anyone with a legal or beneficial interest in that infrastructure to close it. These companies are known as working interest participants.

If there are no working interest participants, we—

Ms. Yvonne Jones: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to know who the member is quoting and reading from. Can she table that document, please?

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Jones.

I think your point of order is not on relevance but on clarification, which is not a point of order. However, I think the members have heard your request.

I will go back to the member, and hopefully she'll be able to provide further insight into that.

Go ahead.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: a Thank you.

If the member would like, all she has to search in Google is "AER orphaned wells". The first website that pops up explains a little bit about what "orphan" means in this. AER is the Alberta Energy Regulator. That is the source to go to for all the facts and information on this.

Part of why I was reading this is that I actually don't think there is a full understanding from members of this committee that there is actually a difference between abandoned and orphaned wells. About the 1,600 number, we're not quite sure, and then you say, "The number of abandoned wells in Alberta are set to increase by an additional 1,800 to 2,000". Well, you're saying that there are 1,600 in Alberta, and then it says that the number in Alberta will increase from 1,800 to 2,000. Is it 1,600? Is it 1,800? Is it 2,000? Where are they getting these stats from? It's not from the Alberta Energy Regulator.

It just falls into this space. It doesn't actually recognize the fact that, according to the Government of Alberta and from what I've been able to see, the program that was put forward during COVID to clean up orphan wells actually did clean out orphan wells. According to the Orphan Well Association, in 2023-24 they actually closed—fully closed, not partially closed—622 sites, which was up 44% from the year prior.

I share this because it's important to look at and not assume something based on a news article. This is something that a lot of people who work in the energy industry continually get frustrated with. This is something that has a real impact in my community and I know in the community of my neighbour to the south, Mrs. Stubbs. We have a number of first nations communities. There is heavy oil in the basin that surrounds Lac La Biche and the Municipal District of Bonnyville. Shannon and I actually share the MD of Bonneville. Our riding splits it. I represent part of it and she represents the other part. This is where a large part of the original wells were being drilled when they were trying to find wells.

This isn't something that is so complicated. Back in the 1920s, when they were finding oil just by putting a pipe in the ground in Texas and oil was coming up *Beverly Hillbillies* style, a whole bunch of speculation and prospecting went on. Some of these wells don't have quite as complex a system as others. Some wells are actually really easy to clean up. They actually require a limited amount of work. Some of these wells do actually exist on first nations land, which has complicated the cleanup process, because the federal government has created layers of red tape that have not necessarily benefited the indigenous communities.

For one of the programs, the way the Government of Alberta chose to roll out its program was to actually consult with first nations, listen to them, listen to the chiefs and pick sites that were of importance to them. It wasn't just "let's clean up the easiest wells to clean up first, and we'll get to the harder ones later." This was actually a noted point in making sure that what they were putting forward was something that would actually be able to serve communities now and in the long term into the future.

The chiefs wrote very clearly that they were united. The chiefs of treaties 6, 7 and 8, which are rarely united in writing to a government, wrote that they were:

...united in calling for Government of Canada to transfer the \$134 million held by Alberta to the [first nations site rehabilitation program] in order for us to continue the extraordinary work and economic benefits to Treaty 6, 7 & 8 Nations in Alberta. We ask that you set political considerations aside to rekindle the spirit of collaboration, and to do the right thing for the environment, for First Nation economies, and for the lands that our Nations hold sacred. We implore your government to work with Alberta to ensure that the \$134 million dollars is made available to First Nations who require these funds to continue this work.

We are happy to address any specific questions you might have and if you require any additional information, please contact us. We look forward to an immediate resolution to this matter.

This letter was signed by Chief Roy Whitney from Tsuut'ina Nation, Chief Aaron Young from Chiniki Nation, Chief Darcy Dixon from Bearspaw First Nation and Chief Clifford Poucette from Goodstoney First Nation.

• (18545)

This was dated December 20, 2023, and sent to the Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources. It was copied to the Minister of Finance, Chrystia Freeland, Patty Hajdu, the Premier of Alberta and my colleague on the provincial side, the Honourable Brian Jean, Minister of Energy and Minerals for the Province of Alberta. It's worth noting that Brian Jean is also the legislature member for Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche, which is an area with a large number of the first nations cleanups that happened on the territory. This was something designated as important.

That is part of the frustration with all of this. Just a couple of weeks ago, when the very first meeting on this came forward, the minister wrote a letter saying that the committee on natural resources is basically wrong. However, it doesn't say, "basically wrong". He actually writes, "factually wrong and frankly nonsensical". That is incredibly damaging.

The members opposite in the Liberal Party can continue—

The Chair: Mrs. Goodridge, we have a point of order by Ms. Dabrusin.

Ms. Dabrusin, go ahead on the point of order.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: This has been fascinating, but we don't have much time left for this meeting.

I am curious about whether you could help clarify what the plan is for the Monday meeting. Perhaps that might give us some perspective as to where we go and what we should be doing.

• (18550)

The Chair: I was hoping to do that at the end of the meeting, Ms. Dabrusin. Thank you for your point of order.

The ministers will be attending on Monday, so it will be an exciting opportunity to have a lovely conversation with them about the TMX study.

Thank you.

I'm going back to Mrs. Goodridge.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: I have a point of order.

As you know, since this motion was moved on Monday, I've asked a number of times whether you could let us know the schedule and plan for the meetings from last Monday out to Christmas. Depending on how late we go, there are between 10 to 13 meetings left. What I said was that this is so members are able to make an informed decision on where this all parks in the business, given that we also have two unfinished reports—clean electricity and clean energy studies. I find it curious that you could immediately answer the question about what we're doing on Monday, but, to my knowledge, still haven't provided that sketch-out for the remaining meetings.

Since you are aware of what's happening on Monday, are there other dates you could let us know about, so we could all make an informed vote about how it would fit into our work?

The Chair: I know what's happening on Monday because the departments provided the clerk with the information that our ministerial colleagues are able to attend on Monday.

Your question was asked and I'm giving you the answer. I was going to do it at the end of today's meeting in order to make sure members are fully aware of what is happening at our next meeting. We will work to hopefully coordinate on further information related to other requests, as well, for meetings after that.

That's all I can provide you with today. Thank you.

It's back to you, Mrs. Goodridge. You have the floor.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This is another part of how this is so frustrating, in that it is factually inaccurate, and that is part of the challenge with the preamble as written. The fact that the money.... It wasn't just that this was sitting in some slush fund of the Government of Alberta, gaining interest and just sitting back.... Every single dollar of this federal funding to the site rehabilitation program was actually committed to be spent. They had programs in place, they had worked with the backing of 17 different first nations chiefs to be able to do this and they were working on trying to get an extension. I'm sure that, had it been a different province, perhaps, the answer as to whether they would have been able to get an extension might have been different, depending on the political backing of that particular province. This is part of the frustration.

It's also curious that the decision to have first nations involvement was the decision of the Government of Alberta. This wasn't something where the Government of Canada was like, "Oh, cool, let's do this. This is a great idea." This was from the amazing and spectacular leadership of one of my good friends and former colleagues, the Minister of Indigenous Relations for the Province of Alberta, Rick Wilson. This was something that Rick actually brought forward because he knew how important it was, how sacred some of these lands were, and he had heard conversations not dissimilar to the conversations that my colleague Mr. Dreeshen, my colleague Mrs. Stubbs and I have all heard when engaging with indigenous communities in our regions, understanding that some of these lands that have been disturbed by these wells are lands that were sacred for a variety of reasons and that this was something of importance. This isn't something, when you're creating something brand new, where you can just snap your fingers and this happens.

It is factually inaccurate, yet there's been no attempt from the Liberals to correct this. We're in a space where it's almost like Schrödinger's cat: Either it's alive in the box or it's dead in the box, and we don't really know until we open the box.

We're sitting here where either the Department of Natural Resources and the Prime Minister's Office directed the parliamentary secretary to bring this forward at this committee, or she decided that she didn't actually care about doing what's right for Canada and brought this forward on her own volition as an affront to Alberta, as a political weapon, and thinks that this is somehow okay. I don't know which one's worse, so this becomes a challenge.

We know that there are at least 24 MLAs who do not support the Prime Minister. Perhaps Ms. Dabrusin has outed herself—

An hon. member: MPs....

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: That's members of Parliament—sorry—that do not support the Prime Minister and his leadership. Perhaps this is something they are doing to try to undermine the leadership of the Prime Minister. I'm not quite sure at this point—I'm just throwing spaghetti at the wall—but it would explain a few things.

• (18555)

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Chair, I think the admission is that, literally, spaghetti is getting thrown at the wall to see if something sticks. Nothing's sticking, but you know what we could do? We could actually put this to a vote, and then we could just be done with it. If the Conservatives oppose it, that's fine. They can vote it down. That's the way these things work.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Dabrusin. I think you're talking about relevance.

On that, I will just ask my colleague Mrs. Goodridge to be relevant with the motion at hand and speak to that.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Back to being relevant to the motion at hand, this is part of how there are some factual inaccuracies in the preamble as written. It's worth noting that over 30 first nations and all eight of Alberta's Métis settlements were able to be part of the site rehabilitation program, which cleaned up 2,145 sites across thousands of acres. In total, over 12,000 applications were received by the 104 different indigenous contractors that were approved during all the funding periods.

I remember being an MLA at the time and getting phone calls from indigenous contractors that were like, "I have always wanted to get into this, but I didn't know how and I didn't think I'd be able to compete with the big guys at doing some of this work. This is really amazing that my very small company can do this." We allowed a variety of sizes of companies. The Government of Alberta decided to open it up so that it wasn't just giant contracts to spend the money quickly. This was about doing meaningful work that was meaningful for the people of Alberta and meaningful for the land, doing the right thing by the environment as well as creating meaningful jobs. That is part of the absolute challenge.

Mr. Chair, if you would give me some opportunity, I believe the clerk has already received the newest amendment, which I believe should be in compliance and is in both languages. In amendment second option, I would propose that we strike the preamble as writ-

ten and make the following changes: "The Standing Committee on Natural Resources begin a three-meeting study on abandoned and orphaned wells in Canada," and actually, it'll be easier if I just read the final motion as it would read, rather than trying to include all the cross-outs and cross-ins.

The final motion would read that "The Standing Committee on Natural Resources"—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

I'm sure my colleague will have no trouble understanding that, if she herself is having a hard time reading the motion in her mother tongue and if she doesn't have the translation, it will be difficult for me to express an opinion on it.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Mr. Chair, we sent the motion to the clerk of the committee in both official languages. We took out the whole preamble. To make it easier for me, I will read the motion with the proposed changes.

[*English*]

It is that:

The Standing Committee on Natural Resources hold a three-meeting study on abandoned and orphaned wells in Canada, the federal regulations to hold companies to account for well cleanup, and the potential opportunities associated with cleaning up abandoned wells, and report its findings to the House of Commons.

Very simply, I think I've laid out every single argument.

The Chair: Mrs. Goodridge, I'm just going to suspend to make sure that we've received it and everything's in order, and we'll be back.

The meeting is suspended.

• (1755)

(Pause)

• (1805)

The Chair: We are back. Members have received the motion in both official languages.

Thank you, Mrs. Goodridge.

I will now go to you, Mrs. Goodridge. Your amendment to the motion is on the floor.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think that this has found a way whereby I hope we can provide some support for everyone around this. I do mean to have unanimous support for this.

I will cede to hear what other colleagues say, and I hope we can get this passed before the meeting finishes at 6:30.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

I'll now go to Mr. Dreeshen.

Go ahead, Mr. Dreeshen. You have the floor.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I have a point of order, Chair.

The Chair: Hold on, Mr. Dreeshen. We have a point of order from Mr. Angus.

Mr. Angus, go ahead on the point of order.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Dreeshen spoke many times. I thought I was next on the speaking list.

The Chair: Mr. Angus, it's because we have an amendment on the floor that was just sent to all colleagues.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I didn't put up my hand because I thought I was on the list.

An hon. member: Too bad, so sad.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Am I at the bottom of the list now?

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Do you want us to filibuster with it, like your own?

The Chair: Hold on.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Can we just call the vote?

The Chair: I have a point of order.

Mr. Angus, on your point of order, we do have an amendment on the floor, and we had a number of members with their hands up. I can put you on the speaking list on the amendment, which you should have received.

Members online, you should have received it in your inboxes.

We have a point of order from Mrs. Goodridge.

Mrs. Goodridge, go ahead on the point of order.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

While I am not a regular member of this committee, I have attended this committee often enough to understand that the speaking order does reset, typically, in this committee when there is an amendment or a subamendment brought forward. It's not like Mr. Angus is new here, so he should understand these rules. Therefore, I would argue that his point of order is very much not at a point of order.

The Chair: Thank you for your input and advice. I'm not sure if that's a point of order, but it's for clarification for me and for members.

I'm going to go back to the speaking order at hand. Mr. Dreeshen had the floor.

Did I miss anything else? I didn't.

Mr. Dreeshen, go ahead. You have the floor on the amendment to the amended motion.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

There are a couple of points, I believe, that are important for us to discuss.

First of all, I don't want us to get into a situation later where someone says, "We said five meetings, and now we're talking three." That's the first substantial change that has taken place here. The rationale that I would use.... Perhaps the government might

look at this from the perspective of not having to go through every one of the preambles and adjudicate on those if we are simply dealing with a straightforward motion.

That is not to say that this may not come up, but I am suggesting that we should be staying strictly on this. Therefore, it's two fewer meetings, meetings that perhaps might not need to have the technical experts come in to explain the difference between abandoned and orphaned wells, so that might minimize that.

Because it has a lot to do with wells that are on first nations land, it will be important to hear from them to understand what they do, and how they had tried to get up to speed in order to make this happen. I believe that will be important. That was never in the preamble, but it was, certainly, from my interventions, the main sticking point. The only money they wanted to take back was that which was given to first nations, so maybe we won't have to worry about that quite as much.

Therefore, my belief is that dealing with a three-meeting study on abandoned and orphaned wells in Canada would be significant. I know we've been attempting to get a bit of a schedule to see what we would have before we break for Christmas. Most likely, it would be easier for us to bring that into the schedule. That might be out there somewhere. I'm not 100% sure.

It is, of course, important, according to federal regulations, that companies be held to account for well cleanups. In addition to that, of course, and because it's a federal responsibility, no doubt we will get into the discussions about what the provincial regulators do and what we expect from them. That is the point I have for that.

There are also opportunities associated with cleaning up abandoned wells. We had spoken about one of those opportunities with first nations industries, and the fact that they have been able to get to a critical mass to do a lot of work. However, there are other types of things that can be done with these wells as well. It depends on where they are, and it depends on the infrastructure that is associated with them. I think that is important.

Of course, we have to report the findings to the House. I believe we already have two studies that we need to tidy up, but that can be fairly straightforward.

Some people look at the amount of money set aside to do their projects. I just want to give an example of well cleanups and what is expected.

Basically, in many cases, the actual site of the well, while it is being used, is about the distance that we have in this circular area between us here. That's about how big the well is. However, people may have had a four- or five-acre plot that they needed to have in order to do the construction. That is the part that is being cleaned up. It's not just the little patch that you have.

With that, there are numerous things, depending on the state of the well that they have. Some of it can simply be cutting it off and cementing it all the way down to the bottom to make sure that there are no chances.... With smaller wells, they might even use different techniques in order to sort that out. However, it isn't just a well. You have to get to it.

• (18610)

Therefore, in many cases, there's a massive road that has been built. That, too, is part of the cleanup of the site. That is something that one should be aware of. I've seen them working in our area. There would be trackhoes, caterpillars and massive trucks coming in and out for two or three weeks. When you think about what the cost is to the oil companies—in that case it was oil companies—or to the groups that are going to do this, you find that there's a lot of detail there. That's why getting the expertise is so critical; it's so that they're able to manage that.

Those are the things that I wanted to point out. If you do the math, it could easily be \$100,000 to clean up that site.

Somebody mentioned the Clampetts earlier. Not everybody in Alberta who owns the land is in the situation where they have mineral rights. It is just surface rights that you are looking at.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

The parliamentary secretary of natural resources brought this motion forward last Monday.

Here's an Albertan speaking about his communities and his province, where all of these things happen, including the indigenous communities that are impacted—

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I have a point of order.

The Chair: Hold on.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: She's laughing, talking and not paying attention at all.

The Chair: Mrs. Stubbs, on the point of order—

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Can we just engage seriously here at this committee on this serious issue for once—

The Chair: Mrs. Stubbs—

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: —since the parliamentary secretary of natural resources brought this motion forward herself?

The Chair: Mrs. Stubbs, I'm not sure because it's not stated what the point of order is, but that is getting into debate. It's also getting into personal attacks on members of the committee.

I would ask committee members to refrain from—

• (18615)

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: It's not a personal attack. I'm simply asking if the parliamentary secretary of natural resources could listen to this Albertan talking.

The Chair: Folks on all sides of the table have conversations. I've asked, respectfully, for everybody to respect each other's time on the committee, members.

Please use your time for debate and raise your hand.

I will ask the member to continue on.

Mr. Dreeshen, that's you.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

As I said—I was about to close on that—I do think it is important that people understand. When you have \$100,000, which would be the average amount that it would cost to be able to

claim these, the people who are making the money on that are the guys driving the trucks, the trackhoes and everything else that is working, and the labour that is there. That is part of it.

The point I was simply trying to make is that, if you only own surface rights, you might be getting \$4,000 or \$5,000 per year. That would be the total amount. Meanwhile, you have to go around that. You have to go around the roads that are there. It's much better than having a windmill on your land because those structures that are required there do not—

Mr. Ted Falk: They're much more invasive.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: They're much more invasive. That is one of the advantages that you have with oil and gas. I just wanted to mention that.

The way it is read, I believe it covers everything. Again, making it a three-meeting study, I believe, will allow us to get back to some meaningful work and go through from there.

I cede the floor.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dreeshen.

I'm waiting for Mrs. Stubbs because, Mrs. Stubbs, I have you on the speaking list.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Thank you, Mr. Chair, for coming to me now.

Certainly, we do look forward to the comments on this topic from the parliamentary secretary of natural resources.

Let me briefly also add my support for this amendment.

As my colleague, Earl, pointed out, we have reduced the number of meetings, given that there are 10 to 13 days left before Christmas, and we do have incomplete reports. Hopefully, that would suffice for the purposes of this motion, if the parliamentary secretary accepts it.

Of course, what would be important, as Earl said, is to have actual experts at the table, first nations leaders and entrepreneurs, as well as the different representatives from the provincial governments. I suppose if the parliamentary secretary of natural resources was extremely serious about this issue, she would include B.C. as well—as one of the three recipients of the federal funding—but that would be up to her.

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: I have a point of order, Chair.

The Chair: Mrs. Stubbs, we have a point of order by Ms. Lapointe.

Ms. Lapointe, go ahead on the point of order.

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: The member would have no ability to determine the degree of the parliamentary secretary's commitment to this motion, or to any other motion, for that matter.

I suggest that was an inappropriate comment.

The Chair: Colleagues, once again, I ask that we focus on debating the motion at hand, not on personal attacks against anybody in this committee room. Have respect for each other. I'm asking all colleagues to think, before they debate, about whether their debate is focused on the motion at hand—and not on personal attacks against any individual here at the committee.

I will go back to Mrs. Stubbs, who had the floor.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Thank you.

Certainly, it is a fact that B.C., Alberta and Saskatchewan were recipients of the federal funding. Therefore, factually, if this motion—

The Chair: Mrs. Stubbs, we have a point of order on the floor by Ms. Dabrusin.

Ms. Dabrusin, go ahead on the point of order.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: My understanding is that the amendment we are talking about right now refers to all of Canada and, in fact, does not make any reference to any province. I think the issue Mrs. Stubbs is addressing has been dealt with in the proposed amendment.

I don't think we need to debate that further.

● (18620)

The Chair: Thank you for that.

We're on the amendment—just to clarify for folks. We had an amended motion on the floor. Now we have another amendment to that.

Thank you for that.

I have a point of order by Mrs. Goodridge.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Thank you, Mr. Chair

That was not a point of order.

This was brought forward by the parliamentary secretary. My colleague was simply highlighting the fact that the original motion needed to be amended to be more inclusive. It's frustrating that they're weaponizing points of order.

The Chair: Mrs. Goodridge, I've given leeway to members, particularly Monsieur Simard, because of my inability to...or need for translation.

I see other members engaged in using points of order for debate. I encourage members to focus on points of order that are points of order and not to use them for debate. We have a lot of time.

We have a speaking order. You can put up your hand. I can put you on the speaking list, and you can debate away. Focus on relevance to the motion at hand—or to the amendment, in this case. I hope that's clear for everyone.

I will go back to you, Mrs. Stubbs.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Thank you, Chair. I appreciate that.

Maybe I'm buoyed a little by the parliamentary secretary's interjection there, if it seems like she would be amenable to this amendment, to this common-sense solution that Conservatives have offered

to the motion she brought forward last week. Now she's saying not to put words in her mouth, and I wouldn't dare, but I'm just—

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: She said to put it to a vote.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: I think we'll do that right after I make my argument. Thanks.

As we have been arguing now, at length, for three of these meetings, I hope that three days would be possible for experts to come to the table. For example, there are many facts that would need to be clarified, like exactly what the government means by orphan wells and whether it means inactive, suspended or terminated wells, and like what it means by abandoned wells and whether it actually means decommissioned wells. Those are the kinds of facts that every single Canadian concerned with these issues, right across the country, I think, would want to see our committee able to clarify with individuals at the table who know what they're talking about and who are experts in the field. Perhaps they can provide some clarity to this motion, given the wording in it that colleagues have, at length, litigated as being misinformation and disinformation.

I certainly support the removal of the preamble that way and support the amendment as suggested by my colleague.

Of course, I would hope, if colleagues are amenable to this solution, that we would prioritize hearing from indigenous contractors, indigenous communities and indigenous workers, who long throughout energy development have been partners, employers, employees and contractors. They are, in ever-increasing numbers, becoming equity owners in resource development and of course right across the supply chain as, by and large, small and medium-sized companies and contractors doing this work.

It seems to me that if the federal government is serious about this objective, then it would support representation by experts and regulators and by the provinces in which this work is being done, primary among them due to the federal failure here, the revocation of the money and the refusal to participate in terms of the extension of time and funding that the Treaty 6, Treaty 7 and Treaty 8 chiefs and the Albertan government asked for.

Given that there are 32 communities among which more than \$100 million has been split, and given the opportunities available in the future for additional contractors and for indigenous communities to be engaged through the facilitating work by the Indian Resource Council, I think it would behoove members on this committee to hear about the kind of work going on in provinces right across the country, given that this is a reality across the country.

Those are the reasons I support my colleague's amendment, and I hope, in good faith, if every member of this committee is serious about environmental remediation and reclamation, and about indigenous economic opportunities, that this amendment will be supported. Hopefully, we can have an actual productive, informed and fact-based assessment at this committee, again, still knowing that we actually have not yet completed work on two previous studies. That is something I cautioned about from the very beginning—just moving to this work immediately—but I guess every individual member can account to their constituents when they feel they are not doing their jobs on committees and we can't seem to get reports out the door but are being moved on to different topics.

• (18625)

Mr. Ted Falk: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: I support the amendment—

The Chair: Mrs. Stubbs, we do have a point of order from Mr. Falk.

Mr. Ted Falk: My colleague is doing a wonderful job of explaining why this is probably a good motion, but I'm just wondering, when we get to the vote on it, where this would fit into the work schedule.

The Chair: Thank you.

I've talked about that, but on a point of order, procedurally, this isn't something we'll deal with now, Mr. Falk. However, you've identified what's happening in our next meeting.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I have a point of order.

The Chair: Yes, Mr. Angus. I'm going to come to you on a point of order.

Thank you, Mr. Falk.

Go ahead, Mr. Angus, on a point of order.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I'm just going to pick up on my colleague's thing about good faith. I've seen no good faith. I haven't been allowed to speak. There's a motion. They're talking the clock out.

I will not be voting for any motion the Conservatives are bringing forward unless we have a chance to talk about it. I'm not going to sit here and be their sock puppet. They have not allowed us to speak. There are good-faith motions we could bring forward, but since the clock is ticking and they've decided they're going to talk the clock down, I just want to know that, when you adjourn the meeting, we will have the ministers and we're not going to have to put up with this at our next meeting.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Is that correct?

We're now down to two and a half minutes left.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Angus. As mentioned, the ministers will be coming on Monday, as scheduled. I think that clears that up.

Now I've forgotten where we were.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Mr. Chair, I'd like to support Mr. Angus in his comments—

The Chair: Do you have a point of order?

Ms. Yvonne Jones: I'm speaking to his point of order.

The Chair: We can't support points of order with points of order, but thank you for your suggestion.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: I just want to support him, please.

The Chair: I'm going to go back to Mrs. Stubbs.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: I really want to support Mr. Angus in his motion.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Jones.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: You can't do a motion on a point of order.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: It is a point of order. I'm sorry.

The Chair: Mrs. Stubbs—

Ms. Yvonne Jones: I want to put it on the record that I support Mr. Angus—

The Chair: When you have your turn, Ms. Jones, and you have an opportunity to debate, you can put it on the record.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: That will be three weeks from now.

The Chair: Thank you.

Go ahead, Mrs. Stubbs.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate it.

Maybe Mr. Angus wants to litigate the speaking list with you, but I think you called it out for this amendment, per the rules, and that's what's actually happening right now.

Mr. Charlie Angus: On a point of order, now that we're down to one minute, no, I'm not litigating. I'm just saying that if I don't get a chance to speak, the Conservatives can't figure that they're just going to get to push this through by bullying us.

Since we're down to a minute, Mr. Chair, I ask you to make a decision. We're not being given a chance to speak to this, so will we just run out the clock?

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Charlie Angus: We're now down to one minute, and none of us are getting a chance to speak. We have to listen to the Conservatives bully their way through committee yet again.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Angus, for bringing that to my attention. I have you on the list and other members on the speaking order on the amendment. Hopefully, whether it's today in the next minute or so or at a future meeting, you'll get an opportunity to speak on this.

Mrs. Stubbs, you have the floor.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Our colleague is calling time, but I guess that's ostensibly up to you, Mr. Chair, so I'll wait until you call that time. Certainly, I will take every opportunity I can to advocate for the people who elected me in Lakeland, the people of Alberta and the people across Canada, just as my Conservative colleagues—

Ms. Yvonne Jones: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: We have a point of order.

Mr. Charlie Angus: It is 6:30—

The Chair: Everybody, I can only do one point of order at a time. I'm going to ask everybody to silence their mics until I recognize them.

Ms. Jones, I have you first on a point of order.

• (18630)

Ms. Yvonne Jones: I see that the clock is at 6:30, Mr. Chair.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: You can't move that on a point of order.

The Chair: I'm aware. I am monitoring the clock, folks, and I will, at the appropriate time—

Ms. Yvonne Jones: You are an exceptional chair, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Angus, you had a point of order. Does it have anything to do with anything procedural?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Chair, are you saying you're going to run this meeting past 6:30?

The Chair: Once I'm done with your point of order, I'm going to turn to all of you to have that conversation.

Thank you for your point of order.

Mr. Charlie Angus: You can put me down to adjourn.

The Chair: Colleagues, it is 6:30 p.m. As I look across the table, I see that it looks like folks are in agreement to adjourn.

We will maintain the speaking order.

We are adjourned.

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