



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

Standing Committee on Natural Resources

EVIDENCE

NUMBER 089

Monday, March 18, 2024

Chair: Mr. George Chalal



Standing Committee on Natural Resources

Monday, March 18, 2024

• (1630)

[English]

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

Welcome to meeting 89 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Natural Resources.

Pursuant to the order of reference of Tuesday, October 17, 2023, and the adopted motion of Wednesday, December 13, 2023, the committee is resuming consideration of Bill C-49, an act to amend the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Act and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act, and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

Since today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, I will make few comments for the benefit of members and witnesses.

Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. For those participating by video conference, click on the microphone icon to activate your mic and please mute yourself when you are not speaking. For interpretation, for those on Zoom, you have the choice at the bottom of your screen of floor, English or French, and for those in the room, you can use the earpiece and select the desired channel.

Although the room is equipped with a powerful audio system, feedback events can occur. These can be extremely harmful to interpreters and cause serious injuries. The most common cause of sound feedback is an earpiece worn too close to a microphone. We therefore ask all participants to exercise a high degree of caution when handling the earpieces, especially when your microphone or your neighbour's microphone is turned on. In order to prevent incidents and safeguard the hearing health of interpreters, I invite participants to ensure that they speak into the microphone into which their headset is plugged and that they avoid manipulating the earbuds by placing them on the table away from the microphone when they are not in use.

I remind members that all comments should be addressed through the chair. Additionally, screenshots or taking photos of your screen is not permitted.

I will provide members of the committee with some instructions and a few comments on how the committee will continue to proceed with the clause-by-clause consideration of Bill C-49.

As the name indicates, this is an examination of all clauses in the order in which they appear in the bill. I will call each clause successively, and each clause is subject to debate and a vote.

If there are amendments to the clause in question, I will recognize the member proposing it, who may explain it. The amendment will then be open for debate. When no further members wish to intervene, the amendment will be voted on.

Amendments will be considered in the order in which they appear in the bill or in the package each member received from the clerk. Members should note that amendments must be submitted in writing to the clerk of the committee. The chair will go slowly to allow all members to follow the proceedings properly.

Amendments have been given a number in the top right corner to indicate which party submitted them. There is no need for a seconder to move an amendment. Once you have moved an amendment, you will need unanimous consent to withdraw it.

During debate on an amendment, members are permitted to move subamendments. These subamendments must be submitted in writing. They do not require the approval of the mover of the amendment. Only one subamendment may be considered at a time, and a subamendment cannot be amended. When a subamendment is moved to an amendment, it is voted on first. Then another subamendment may be moved or the committee may consider the amendment and vote on it.

Once every clause has been voted on, the committee will vote on the title and the bill itself, and an order to reprint the bill may be required, if amendments are adopted, so that the House has a proper copy for use at report stage.

Finally, the committee will have to order the chair to report the bill to the House. The report contains only the text of any adopted amendments as well as an indication of any deleted clauses.

With us to answer your questions today are, from the Department of Justice, Jean-François Roman, legal counsel.

From the Department of Natural Resources, we have Abigail Lixfeld, senior director, renewable and electrical energy division, energy systems sector; Annette Tobin, director, offshore petroleum management division, fuels sector; Lauren Knowles, deputy director; Cheryl McNeil, deputy director; and Daniel Morin, senior legislative and policy adviser, renewable and electrical energy division.

As well, we have, as the legislative clerks from the House of Commons, Dancella Boyi and Émilie Thivierge.

At the last meeting, the committee adopted clause 62 as amended.

Now we proceed. There are no new amendments submitted to clauses 63 to 75—

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): I have a point of order.

The Chair: Yes, Mr. Patzer, before we proceed to the vote on that, I will go to you for a point of order.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I have two quick points.

First, I am thankful and grateful that you did allow everybody time to listen to the tributes to former prime minister Brian Mulroney and also to his family. I think it's very important for parliamentarians to do that and be a part of it.

However, I want to comment on a process that I think was flawed. I think there should have been notice given not just to all members of Parliament, but also to the witnesses who are sitting here. Some have travelled great distances to be here and, quite frankly, have had to sit there for an hour doing nothing. They are all experts in their fields and there are other things they probably could have been doing with their time instead of sitting here and staring at the wall.

In the event that something similar happens in the future, since you have the prerogative to let everybody know what the scheduling is going to be, you should inform members of this committee of the schedule. It would have been handy to know that we were going to start an hour late. We could have made the proper arrangements to make sure this meeting would be as effective and efficient as it possibly can be, and it would have done a lot to prevent wasting the time of witnesses and members of this committee.

Again, I think it was important for members to attend and listen to the remarks of the leaders of their respective parties, but I think that the way it was handled could have been better.

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

I believe all whips were advised of the importance of today's events, and all members were invited to be upstairs in the House of Commons to hear the speeches from the leaders of our respective parties. All whips were also advised—as we do for votes—that we would allow 10 minutes for members to join us at committee afterwards, and I believe all of our witnesses also were aware, but I thank you for providing your point of order and I will take that into consideration also as we move forward.

I have a point of order from Mr. Angus.

• (1635)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): To follow up on that, because the notice of motion went out today and we knew we were going to have the tributes to Mr. Mulroney and that his family was going to be there, it was said, from 3:30 to 5:30, are we still ending at 5:30?

The motion said we had two hours. We knew we were going to lose probably that first hour, but we're supposed to end at 5:30. If we're changing that, it should be in the motion in advance, because

as parliamentarians we have to balance a whole bunch of other competing things as well.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Angus.

We do have two full hours, up until 6:30, to conduct today's meeting. I know members may have other items on their agenda. I'm hoping to use the full two hours, unless there's an objection from committee members.

Mr. Charlie Angus: What concerns me is.... I don't want to look like I'm a slacker and I really want this bill to pass, but I saw that when it came out today, we knew what the times were. It said 5:30, so I made other arrangements. I don't like being stuck in a situation where I'm the one who has to leave. If we knew we were going to have it, I think it would have been better to say 5:30 or until 6:30 just so that we could have made those arrangements then, but I'm kind of stuck now.

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

I'll go to Ms. Stubbs for a point of order as well.

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

I support what our colleague Charlie is saying. With all due respect about the start time and the allotment for this meeting, the notice that the meeting would happen between 3:30 and 5:30 came out from the clerk while we were in question period.

While you might talk about agreements among whips and that sort of thing, we are all still members of this committee and you're the chair of this committee and the schedule of this committee is your prerogative. That's why, when you say baloney about how you invited Premier Smith to appear here but there was a scheduling conflict, it was all a farce, because you, of course, control the schedule.

I think the point that MP Patzer is making is to just not waste the time of all the members of Parliament, their staff and these departmental officials sitting here, who came here for that time. When the notice from the clerk went around, it said that our meeting would start at 3:30 and go until 5:30. I really strongly encourage you to take the due consideration of MP Patzer's advice that it deserves and not do this kind of thing again.

Second, for all the reasons outlined, we support MP Charlie Angus and we won't consent to extending the meeting. We'll be happy to go to 5:30, but that's it.

The Chair: I'll go to you next, Mr. Sorbara, but I will once again remind everyone that all whips' offices were aware that we would be starting late today, particularly at this committee. We did not know how long the speeches would be, but it is standard practice, if a committee is delayed, to extend the time for the committee with the allotted resources we have. If there's an objection from members at the regular scheduled time, we can bring it forward at the time, but we do have a full two hours allotted to us, which will bring us to 6:30.

I'll go to you, Mr. Sorbara, on a point of order.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Just very quickly, Mr. Chair, with the passing of the former prime minister, we were asked to remain in the House after question period to hear the speeches by all of the pertinent leaders and so forth, so if we have any qualms about the committees afterwards—all committees scheduled for 3:30 started late this afternoon—we should go back to our pertinent whips' offices and individuals in those offices to speak to them.

I'm not coming to your defence all the time, Mr. Chair, but on this matter, I don't think it's right or even fair to say you were in charge of how that scheduling has worked out for us. I think the quicker we get to work now, the better off we will be.

Thank you.

• (1640)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Sorbara.

I think we've exhausted all points of order. We'll proceed now.

There are no amendments submitted for clauses 63 to 75. Do we have unanimous consent to group them for the vote?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Okay.

(Clauses 63 to 75 inclusive agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5)

(On clause 76)

The Chair: We'll now proceed to clause 76 and amendment G-13.1.

Is there a member who would like to move that amendment?

Mr. Aldag, go ahead.

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): I'd like to provide my support on this one, since it provides clarity to the original text that was there.

The amendment makes it clear that the royalty owners are not party to a unit operating agreement and do not have to approve it. Also, the unit operating agreement is an agreement among the working interest owners and would not involve the royalty owners.

With that as context, I'll be voting in favour of this amendment.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Aldag.

Do we have any other members who would like to speak on this? No?

Shall amendment G-13.1 carry?

(Amendment agreed to: yeas 7; nays 4 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: We'll now go to amendment G-14. Do we have a member to move it?

Mr. Aldag, go ahead.

Mr. John Aldag: This is just a very small amendment to correct a minor error in the bill as it was originally printed. It's changing "regulatory" to "regulator".

I will be voting in favour of this one.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Aldag.

Is there any further debate?

(Amendment agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: Shall clause 76 as amended carry?

(Clause 76 as amended agreed to: yeas 6, nays 5)

The Chair: No amendments to clauses 77 to 106 have been submitted.

Shall clauses 77 to 106 carry?

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: They shall not all at once, no.

The Chair: Okay.

Shall clause 77 carry?

(Clause 77 agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5)

(On clause 78)

The Chair: Shall clause 78 carry?

• (1645)

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Mr. Chair, I have a quick question for you.

The Chair: Go ahead on a point of order.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: I may have missed this in your introduction. If that's the case, please forgive me.

I noticed that, at least on my list, I have BQ-18 to deal with, which was on clause 62. I want to make sure I didn't miss something here with the order I have on my page. I know we did some jumping around in the last meeting and I want to make sure we're not missing things. I do have amendment BQ-18 on clause 62. It should have been after amendment G-14, because we were dealing with that one clause.

Mario, do you maybe have some thoughts on that, in case I'm wrong? I know you withdrew some because something else was defeated previously. I'm making sure that I didn't—

The Chair: Amendment BQ-18 was defeated previously, and the committee did adopt clause 62 as amended.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: All right.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: I must have just missed putting an X on this one, then. Thank you.

The Chair: That's okay. It's good to ask.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: I just wanted to be sure.

The Chair: We were at clause 78.

Shall clause 78 carry?

(Clause 78 agreed to: yeas 10; nays 1)

(Clause 79 agreed to: yeas 10; nays 1)

(Clause 80 agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5)

(Clause 81 agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5)

(Clause 82 agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5)

The Chair: Mr. Patzer, go ahead.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: I would be willing to group clauses 83 to 86 together, if the committee would agree to that.

• (1650)

The Chair: I think we have consent. There are no objections.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I have a point of order. I just want to say how pleased I am by how well we're getting along—and it's Monday. Who knows how well we'll be getting along by Wednesday, but on Monday, I'll take it.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Patzer, for that suggestion.

Shall clauses 83 to 86 carry?

(Clauses 83 to 86 inclusive agreed to: yeas 10, nays 1)

(Clause 87 agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5)

(Clause 88 agreed to: yeas 10; nays 1)

(Clause 89 agreed to: yeas 10; nays 1)

(Clause 90 agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5)

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Patzer.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Clauses 91 through 95 can be clumped together if the committee agrees.

The Chair: Are there any objections?

There are no objections.

Shall clauses 91 to 95 carry?

(Clauses 91 to 95 inclusive agreed to: yeas 10, nays 1)

(Clause 96 agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5)

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Patzer.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: I'm just wondering if I can get consent from the committee to group clauses 97 all the way through to clause 110.

• (1655)

The Chair: Are there any objections?

There are no objections.

We will go from clause 97 to clause 106, because that's the first part of the bill, and then we'll continue on after that, Mr. Patzer.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Okay. That's fair enough.

(Clauses 97 to 106 inclusive agreed to: yeas 10; nays 1)

The Chair: Now we will be moving to part 2 of Bill C-49.

No amendments to clauses 107 to 110 have been submitted. Do we have the unanimous consent to group them for the vote?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Clauses 107 to 110 inclusive agreed to: yeas 10; nays 1)

(On clause 111)

The Chair: Do we have a member who would like to move amendment CPC-9?

Ms. Stubbs, go ahead.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Before I move this amendment, I want to speak to the motion I submitted on March 15. I took your feedback at the last meeting under advisement, so I'm confident that this will suffice for your approach.

I think colleagues around this table will know well that I'm a proud first-generation Albertan, born and raised in Alberta. Like so many Albertans, my roots come from Atlantic Canada, my mother being from Newfoundland and my father and his family being from Nova Scotia.

That being the case, and given that this is the last sitting week before April 1, and because of the common-sense leadership of our leader Pierre Poilievre, Conservatives are doing everything we can to try to get the NDP-Liberals to reverse course on their cruel carbon tax. This week we are using every tool we can in Parliament to call on the Liberals to spike the hike and axe the tax for good.

I think this motion is timely and should be a high priority of the natural resources committee, given that seven out of 10 premiers are calling for the NDP-Liberal costly coalition to, at the very least, stop their plan to quadruple the carbon tax on all Canadians on April 1.

Conservatives would axe the tax for all for good.

This particular motion does focus on the challenges that Albertans and Alberta families face in paying the NDP-Liberals' carbon tax. We should note that Alberta joins six other provinces calling for this change that, to date, the Prime Minister and the radical anti-energy minister Steven Guilbeault have in turn dismissed, derided and ignored. They have claimed that elected representatives who are calling to axe the carbon tax or to spike the hike are immoral or short-sighted. I would suggest to all members here that what is in fact immoral is the Liberals' tax-and-spend agenda and their inflationary deficit spending.

Mostly and quite directly through the imposition of their carbon tax 1 and their carbon tax 2, it is immoral that more Canadians than ever before are forced to go to food banks and more Canadians than ever before can't afford the essential basics required for daily life in any part of this country, and that these NDP-Liberals are willing to ignore those struggles, ignore that pain, ignore that hurt and impose their tax-and-spend agenda, which is what the carbon tax is. It's only a cash grab, not an environmental plan.

The proof of the failure of the carbon tax, as we know, is that there have been none of the promised emissions reductions that its proponents asserted; it is not revenue-neutral; and the vast majority of Canadians pay more into the carbon tax than they ever have a hope of getting back from this government's carbon tax rebate scheme and scam.

That being the case, my motion is the following. I move:

That, given that,

(i) Alberta is 1 of 7 provinces that oppose the Prime Minister's 23% carbon tax increase on April 1st, 2024,

(ii) the Prime Minister's carbon tax will cost Alberta families over \$2700 per year once the carbon tax is quadrupled, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer,

The committee call on the Liberal Government to immediately cancel the 23% carbon tax increase on April 1st, 2024, and that this motion be reported to the House.

I want to read some comments recently made by the Premier of Alberta. They are among many. She wrote:

I'm joining my provincial counterparts in writing to reiterate our concerns that Albertans and Canadians have faced incredible pressures due to crippling inflation and high interest rates.

That's why, on behalf of Albertans, I urge you to scrap the punitive carbon tax. If your government is unwilling to listen to the millions of Canadians calling for this, we're insisting you provide a uniform exemption on all forms of home heating including natural gas for all provinces.

• (1700)

Also, of course, her comments back up and align with the words of the PC Premier of Nova Scotia and the Liberal Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Premier Houston of Nova Scotia has said:

On April 1st Nova Scotians fuelling their cars will pay 3.3 cents more per litre in a carbon tax at the pumps, meaning Nova Scotians will pay a total of 17.6 cents in a carbon tax on every litre of gas they buy. This is unfair and misguided.

Isn't he right? The last thing Nova Scotians and Canadians need right now is more tax. The cost of living is top of mind for people as we experience some of the highest increases in inflation in 30 years.

The number one ask by Nova Scotians in this year's provincial budget consultation, says Premier Houston, was for tax relief. Rather than imposing a punishing carbon tax that will hurt Nova Scotians, Premier Houston says:

...I am asking that you cancel the carbon tax before any more financial damage is done and work with us to focus on the most beneficial path for the environment, that would mean a more self-reliant (and cheaper!) path for Nova Scotia.

Of course, those same concerns, that same advocacy for the escalating struggles that everyday Canadians face in every province and territory of this country, are echoed by Liberal Premier Furey of Newfoundland and Labrador. He said:

Workers and families in Newfoundland and Labrador, throughout the country and indeed around the globe, continue to face the most significant cost of living crisis in a generation. For the past two years now, Canadians have endured persistent and punishing inflation, coupled with the most aggressive upward interest rate trajectory in the history of the Bank of Canada...

The coming almost 25 percent increase...in the federal carbon tax on April 1st is causing understandable worry as people consider how they will manage the mounting financial strain.

...I respectfully request that you consider pausing the implementation of the April 1st carbon tax increase—at least until inflation stabilizes, interest rates lower and related economic pressures on the cost of living sufficiently cool.

That's just a selection of comments coming from the premiers, who are advocating on behalf of the people they represent—which are also all the same people we represent—knowing that without a shadow of a doubt the vast majority of Canadians cannot afford the carbon tax as it is, never mind actually being able to figure out where in the heck they're going to get any more money to pay for a quadrupling of this carbon tax on April 1, skyrocketing even more in less than six years from now. That is what is immoral. That is what is short-sighted. That is what is repugnant. That is unacceptable. It's reprehensible.

I hope committee members will welcome this opportunity to demonstrate to the people who elected them that they will fight for their cost of living, fight for their livelihoods, fight for them to have more affordable lives and actually listen, after nine years, to Canadian after Canadian and elected representative after elected representative saying that this is the wrong course.

The carbon tax is a cash grab. It's not an environmental plan. Canadians cannot afford it, and the carbon tax is not worth the cost.

I do hope that all members will support this motion today.

Thanks, Chair.

• (1705)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Stubbs.

Now we'll go to our identified speaking order here.

We'll go to you, Mr. Aldag. Go ahead.

Mr. John Aldag: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would just like to say that what I find repugnant and reprehensible is the continued obstruction we see from our Conservative colleagues as we are trying to move forward this piece of legislation. We've heard from Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia that the provinces are waiting for us to get this work done.

We had a discussion at the beginning of the meeting about taking time away from the work of this committee to pay tribute to former Prime Minister Mulroney, yet we can go on these filibusters about motions to disrupt the work of the committee. I just find that this is another attempt to obstruct the work this committee needs to do, particularly on this piece of legislation, and therefore I move to adjourn debate on this motion.

The Chair: We have a motion, Mr. Clerk, to adjourn debate. Could you please call the roll?

(Motion agreed to: yeas 7; nays 4)

The Chair: That motion carries. Debate is adjourned. We'll now go back to where we were on CPC-9.

Ms. Stubbs, you were going to move CPC-9, I believe.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Thank you, Chair, yes.

I move that Bill C-49, in clause 111, be amended by replacing line 26 on page 85 with the following:

or 45(7), section 67, subsection 70(2), section 98.2,

The Chair: Thank you.

Shall CPC-9 carry?

An hon. member: Yes.

An hon. member: No.

The Chair: Clerk, please call the roll.

(Amendment negated: nays 6; yeas 5)

(Clause 111 agreed to)

The Chair: There are no amendments submitted for clauses 112 to 114. Do we have unanimous consent to group them together?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Clauses 112 to 114 inclusive agreed to)

The Chair: We have new clause 114.1 and we will proceed to BQ-19.

Monsieur Simard, would you like to move BQ-19?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Chair, given that the changes in BQ-19 to BQ-26 were not retained in the first part of the bill, I assume they will not be retained in the second part of the bill either.

As a result, I will not be moving these amendments.

• (1710)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Simard.

[*English*]

We'll now proceed to—

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Mr. Chair—

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Patzer.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Which numbers are they again?

The Chair: Mr. Patzer and colleagues, Monsieur Simard has said that he is not going to be moving BQ-19 to BQ-26. We'll now go to clause 115.

(Clause 115 agreed to)

(Clause 116 agreed to)

The Chair: We'll now go to clause 117.

Shall clause 117 carry?

Mr. John Aldag: Just as a point of order, Chair, are we able to propose any grouping now that there are no amendments to a number of these?

The Chair: Okay.

Shall clauses 117 to 122 carry?

Please call the roll.

(Clauses 117 to 122 inclusive agreed to: yeas 10; nays 1)

The Chair: We will now proceed to clause 123.

Shall clause 123 carry?

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Why did we stop it there?

The Chair: We can group clauses 123 and 124. Do we have consent to do that?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Shall clauses 123 and 124 carry?

Please call the roll.

(Clauses 123 and 124 agreed to: yeas 10; nays 1)

(On clause 125)

The Chair: I will now proceed to clause 125. Do we have a mover for CPC-10?

Ms. Stubbs, go ahead—or Mr. Falk, did you want to move it?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: I think he just told you that he was speaking next.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Thank you, Chair.

I will be happy to move this amendment in a second, but right before that I want to move the other motion for which I gave notice on March 15. I know, Chair, that you saw that Mr. Falk wants to speak immediately after me.

Related to my last intervention, I want to give the NDP, Liberal and Bloc members on this committee another opportunity to vote in favour of their constituents' being able to afford the basics that are necessary to live in this big cold northern country and being able to afford groceries and being able to provide for their families and for their own daily lives.

Therefore, I would like to move the second motion for which I gave notice on March 15. I move:

Given that,

i) 1 in 5 Canadian households are living in energy poverty,

(ii) Energy poverty means that households cannot afford to pay for energy costs that meet their daily needs and maintain healthy and safe indoor temperatures,

(iii) the Liberal government's 23% carbon tax increase on April 1st, 2024, is going to make household energy use even more expensive, making it even harder for those already living in energy poverty,

In order to help the 1 in 5 Canadians living in energy poverty, the committee report to the House its recommendation to immediately cancel the Liberal Government's 23% carbon tax increase on April 1st, 2024.

I hope the members of the other parties will find some sense of compassion and of common sense and will listen to what Canadians are saying.

The willingness to ignore the vast majority of Canadians who are also being represented through their provincially elected representatives—like the seven out of 10 premiers calling to “spike the hike”—is mind-boggling but also perhaps instructive, when the Prime Minister many years ago said he admired the basic dictatorship in Beijing and refuses to listen to the people crying out, with more Canadians going to food banks than ever before, people with skyrocketing power bills and now unreliable sources of power because of this government's anti-energy, anti-private sector, anti-resource development agenda.

There are Canadians who can't afford to fill up their gas tanks but who also have no other options for getting around; Canadians who live in remote and rural and northern regions where the basics are already more expensive, with the situation made even worse by the carbon tax and a government hell-bent on quadrupling it on April 1; and Canadians who are the working poor, the most vulnerable among us, the people who can least afford it, nine years into this costly coalition's refusal to back away on the carbon tax, despite all the evidence and all the harm that it is causing.

It is mind-boggling to think that those Canadians—the working poor, the vulnerable people—as Conservatives have warned for nine years, would be hurt the most. The facts today show exactly that—that the carbon tax hurts those people the most—because when you hike the cost of energy, you hike the cost of everything. You hike the cost of everything required to live in this country, including, at the top of the list, groceries. The costs at grocery stores are skyrocketing, and more Canadians than ever before have to visit food banks. Food banks are sounding the alarm this early into 2024, saying they anticipate that across the country a million more Canadians will be forced to go there to feed themselves, to feed their families and to help out their loved ones.

This is not acceptable in 2024 in Canada, but it is particularly immoral and short-sighted and unacceptable because the NDP-Liberal costly coalition have all the power in their hands to solve this problem. They caused the issue in the first place with their inflationary spending and by hiking taxes on nearly everything and plowing ahead with this carbon tax despite the warnings that Conservatives have given for nine years—all of which have turned out to be true—and despite the majority opposition of premiers representing seven out of 10 provinces across the country.

The Prime Minister and the NDP-Liberal costly coalition are ignoring all of those Canadians, ignoring the hurt and the harm and the pain they have caused, ignoring the stress and the anxiety and the unprecedented worry that Canadians of all ages in all areas of this country are experiencing because they can't afford the basics anymore.

• (1715)

I mean, that is truly immoral, isn't it? It's truly short-sighted and it's actually anti-democratic.

Once again, I hope that members around this committee will demonstrate right now that we all know and we all remember what we're here for, which is to represent the people who elected us, and the vast majority of Canadians who elected us say they can't afford the carbon tax. It is more blindingly obvious than ever that the carbon tax is not worth the cost.

Giving this immediate relief to Canadians is in the hands of the NDP-Liberal costly coalition. The NDP-Liberal costly coalition, after nine years of being the Government of Canada, wasn't some innocent bystander while all of this has happened, and the results are what they are today: more Canadians struggling in more communities across the country than ever before, young people losing hope that they can afford to buy homes or pursue their dreams, parents and grandparents telling their kids that they probably shouldn't try to make a go of life in rural Canada because they can't afford to do it any more, and more Canadians than ever before moving into multi-generational homes to try to get by and make ends meet.

Meanwhile, in turn, for these NDP Liberals who have been in power for nine years, and for the NDP, who prop them up now and act like they've been kind of hanging out while all of this has occurred in front of them, first, that's not true, and second, you have the power right now to stop this madness, to stop this insanity and to stop this cold-hearted, cruel April Fool's joke.

At least, at the very minimum, spike the hike for April 1 and, obviously, axe the tax for all for good.

• (1720)

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Well said.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Stubbs.

We'll go to our speaking order.

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

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank my colleague Ms. Stubbs for providing this opportunity to this committee. We have a unique opportunity today, and that's to send the House of Commons the message from this committee, as a natural resource committee, that they need to end the increases to the carbon tax—and better yet would be to axe the tax completely.

As a committee, we have that opportunity here today. The Liberals and the NDP refuse to even debate it. They always move to adjourn debate as soon as they get the floor, and I think it's reprehensible: to not even willingly debate this issue that's costing every single Canadian thousands of dollars every year.

I want to talk a bit about exactly what this motion does.

It asks the House to stop the proposed increase to the carbon tax on April 1, when an additional 23% hike to the existing carbon tax will take place. We know the carbon tax has already crippled many households. A 23% increase to that tax is going to push them over the edge.

I don't think people fully understand the carbon tax when they hear the words "carbon tax", thinking that it's just like the GST or it's like the HST or the PST. No. The carbon tax is very different. The HST, the PST and the GST are all end-user taxes. The carbon tax is a compounding tax. It's taxed on everything from the point of origin until it hits the consumer, and it's tax on tax on tax.

In the case of food—and this applies to whole goods as well—the producer pays the carbon tax. The transport company pays the carbon tax to get it to the processing facility. The processing facility pays carbon tax on the energy they use to process the product. Then the transport company again pays carbon tax on top of that to get it to a distribution centre. The distribution centre, whether it's a cooling or heating facility, pays carbon tax on what it does. Then, again, a transport company picks up the product and takes it to the retailer, and again pays the carbon tax. The retailer gets it, and he pays the carbon tax on his energy costs.

At every step along the way, for everything that consumers purchase, the carbon tax is compounded, Mr. Chair. That's important to note, because it's not a one-time GST. For that, all along the process there are input tax credits; this is a compounding tax. Canadians are wondering why everything costs so much, and it's because of this compounding tax. It's not a single end-user tax like the PST, GST or HST; it's a compounding tax, right from the grassroots to the end user.

People think, "Well, why is there such inflation?" That's because everything costs more. That's because this Liberal-NDP coalition has broken everything and then they've whacked every Canadian with this carbon tax.

Let me tell you what the Canada Gazette said about the clean fuel regulations and how they would apply to everyday Canadians—and the carbon tax is exponentially worse than the clean fuel regulations—but let me tell you what the Canada Gazette says:

...according to Statistics Canada, single mothers are more likely to live in lower-income households, and may be more vulnerable to energy poverty and adverse impacts from increases to transportation and home heating prices.

Seniors living on fixed incomes may also face higher transportation and heating costs resulting from the proposed Regulations. This may be the most acute for seniors living in the Atlantic provinces, where they account for a higher share of the total population compared to other Canadian provinces and are also more likely to experience some of the highest energy expenditures in Canada proportional to income.... It is possible that there could be other socio-economic groups that may have disproportionately lower income, may be at an increased vulnerability to energy poverty, or may be adversely affected by the proposed Regulations. However, these groups may not be fully captured in this analysis due to [the] lack of [available] data...scarcity of research, or under-representation... [available in other] studies.

That's what the Canada Gazette printed in response to the clean fuel regulations, and the carbon tax exacerbates that. We know that lower-income households, seniors and single moms trying to get by are exponentially impacted by the carbon tax. We know that it hits them the hardest. They are disproportionately affected by a carbon tax increase, unlike middle- and upper-class Canadians or higher-income Canadians. We know that. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure that out. The carbon tax disproportionately affects low-income families.

• (1725)

It's interesting, because on my ride from the airport yesterday to the centre of Ottawa, my taxi driver said that in the last two weeks he's taken two families back to the airport that were moving away from Canada. They came here as immigrants in the last 10 years but decided to go back to their respective countries—one being in Africa and one in the Middle East—because they couldn't afford to live here.

Mr. Speaker, Canada used to be the country of promise. This used to be a place where people had hope, where people could afford to live, and that's no longer the case. Now this Liberal-NDP coalition wants to whack Canadians, and whack low-income people the hardest, with another 23% increase to this carbon tax.

Colleagues, today we have an opportunity to send the House of Commons a clear message that as the natural resources committee, we're asking the government to stop the proposed increase to the carbon tax, to spike the hike, to axe the tax. I'm asking, colleagues, that you support my colleague Mrs. Stubbs in her motion.

We have a unique opportunity. Let's exercise it.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Falk.

We'll now go to Mr. Aldag.

Mr. John Aldag: Thank you.

Mr. Falk said it himself. He used the term "reprehensible", so let's talk about reprehensible.

I want to indicate once again that the Conservatives' only climate plan is to let the planet burn. B.C. is already breaking temperature records in March. Communities are already working to impose restrictions on water and the use of water because of low snowpacks. Climate change is real. It's upon us, and the Conservatives have absolutely no plan. That's just been identified and called out by the B.C. premier, who indicated that Poilievre's campaign office and baloney factory request about cancelling the tax and spiking the hike....

I can't even keep up with the bumper-sticker slogans that they're coming up with for these false solutions to absolutely existential problems facing our planet.

With those as my comments, I now move to adjourn debate.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Aldag.

We have a motion to adjourn debate.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 7; nays 4)

The Chair: Debate is adjourned.

We'll now proceed back to where we were. We were on CPC-10.

I believe, Mrs. Stubbs, that you were moving CPC-10.

• (1730)

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Sure, if we'd like to do that. I just felt that it was 5:30, Mr. Chair, but of course, that is your prerogative and your call, as always.

I will move this amendment. It is that Bill C-49, in clause 125, be amended by adding after line 25 on page 89 the following:

(5) Any evaluation of offshore renewable energy projects should be done similarly to evaluations of offshore petroleum projects.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Stubbs.

Ms. Jones, go ahead.

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

I'm not supporting this particular amendment because the members know that the bill has already leveraged the expertise of offshore regulators. They've had sound regulatory practices to establish known and reliable processes. The regulator has the same mandate to evaluate all aspects of safety and environmental protection for proposed projects for offshore renewable energy as it does for petroleum projects, even recognizing that the technologies used will be different.

I think it's similar to CPC-5, which was previously defeated. To ensure consistency between Newfoundland and Labrador versions of the bill, I oppose the motion, and I suggest that we vote against it.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Jones.

Do we have any other speakers? No.

We'll now vote on amendment CPC-10.

(Amendment negated: nays 7; yeas 4)

The Chair: Shall clause 125 carry?

(Clause 125 agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5)

The Chair: No amendments have been submitted for clauses 126 to 130.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Chair, it is after 5:30, and I have another meeting to go to—

The Chair: It's my understanding—

Mr. Charlie Angus: —and Ms. Dhillon refused to sit in for me. She left.

The Chair: Oh. Maybe we can bring her back. We do have resources until 6:30.

If there is a motion to adjourn for today, we can entertain that, but I do need a motion from the floor.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Mr. Chair, on a point of order, the notice that was given to this committee said 3:30 to 5:30. It was not 4:30 to 6:30. The official notice on the record says 3:30 to 5:30. You do not have unanimous consent from multiple parties in this committee to continue this meeting.

If you want to extend past 5:30, you need UC to do so, but you don't have it. It's done.

The Chair: So—

Mr. John Aldag: Just as a point of order, you don't need UC to extend.

The Chair: Yes, we don't need UC to extend, Mr. Patzer, if you'll listen to what I have to say, but it was advised—and all the clerks were aware of what was happening today in the House—that meetings would start late and we would have resources to continue.

I will ask members whether they would like to end at this time. If there is a motion from the floor and somebody would like to bring forward a motion to end our meeting at this point, we can entertain that. I'm happy to have committee members determine whether we want to continue or whether we want to end.

I'm giving it to you to make that decision at this point. That's a vote we will have, if that's what happens.

Now, Mr. Angus, I'm going to go to you.

• (1735)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you, Chair.

It happens once every third St. Patrick's Day, or the day after, that the Conservatives support me, so this is that day. I'm going to take advantage of it. I do want to thank you for your excellent chairing, but I move that we end the meeting.

The Chair: We have a motion by Mr. Angus to adjourn the meeting for today.

Could you please call the roll, Mr. Clerk?

(Motion agreed to: yeas 8; nays 0)

The Chair: The motion is carried.

Thank you, colleagues, for a great day of work at committee. See you next day.

The meeting is adjourned.

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the Copyright Act. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the Copyright Act.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <https://www.ourcommons.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la Loi sur le droit d'auteur. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre des communes.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la Loi sur le droit d'auteur.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante :
<https://www.noscommunes.ca>