



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

45th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

Standing Committee on Natural Resources

EVIDENCE

NUMBER 024

Thursday, February 12, 2026

Chair: Terry Duguid



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• (1605)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.)): I call the meeting to order.

We'll start, as we always do, by acknowledging that we are on the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe nation.

Welcome to meeting number 24 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Natural Resources.

Today's meeting is taking place in hybrid format. We have a couple of our colleagues joining us by Zoom.

I would like to remind participants of the following points, because we are in hybrid format.

Before speaking, please wait until I recognize you. 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 those on Zoom, at the bottom of your screen, you can select the appropriate channel for interpretation: floor, English or French. For those in the room, you can use the earpiece and select the desired channel.

Jonathan Rowe (Terra Nova—The Peninsulas, CPC): On a point of order, Mr. Chair, I just want confirmation that Mr. Hodgson will be staying here for the full hour now that we're starting a bit late.

The Chair: My understanding is that Mr. Hodgson will be with us for the first hour, and then officials will be here for the second hour.

Jonathan Rowe: He'll be here for a full hour, not just—

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources): I'll stay an extra minute.

Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Chair, I think what we're trying to clarify is that, per the schedule, the announcement, the public agenda and the minister's commitment, he will be here for the full hour when we start the meeting, since we are starting quite late due to votes.

The Chair: That is my understanding, unless there are extenuating circumstances, and I don't believe there are.

I just got the thumbs-up from Minister Hodgson. Thank you both for that point of order.

I'll just finish my introductory blurb, as I always do.

For members participating in person or via Zoom, please raise your hand if you wish to speak. I don't think we have any witnesses online, so I think I can dispense with the rest.

As everyone knows, comments should be addressed through the chair.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted on Tuesday, January 27, the committee shall commence.... That's the wrong study.

Shannon Stubbs: Don't worry. What happened to me last time was I read it out, but as I was reading, I realized I was reading the thing you're not supposed to read. These things happen to us, so it's okay.

The Chair: Colleagues, the subject matter today, as you know, is clauses 593 and 594 in division 41 of Bill C-15, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on November 4, 2025. This was sent to us by the finance committee and it is under consideration today.

I would like to welcome our witnesses on your behalf.

We have the Honourable Tim Hodgson, Minister of Energy and Natural Resources. Welcome, Minister.

From the Department of Natural Resources, we have Greg Orensak, deputy minister, and Erin O'Brien, assistant deputy minister of the fuels sector.

Minister, you will have five minutes for your opening remarks, after which we will open the floor to questions. You have the floor.

Hon. Tim Hodgson: Thank you, Mr. Chair and colleagues, for inviting me to the standing committee today.

Hello, everyone. It's my pleasure to appear before you today to discuss elements of the budget implementation act related to my department.

Canada finds itself at a decisive moment. We are facing a trade war started by the United States. We need to build resilience across our economy, as well as deal with climate change. However, these challenges present tremendous opportunities if we are bold, if we are strategic and, most importantly, if we are united. Budget 2025 is about seizing these opportunities to ensure that Canada leads as an energy superpower, with an economy that is strong, sustainable and sovereign.

Canada's LNG sector is essential to our goal of diversifying exports beyond a single market and to solidify our position as a stable and low-carbon superpower and reliable supplier to our allies around the world. As LNG supplies expand to meet demand, Canada is positioned to offer a long-term, low-emission and predictable option to global markets.

The world wants what Canada has to offer. Providing LNG to our allies and partners is key to making Canada an energy superpower that will bring jobs to Canadian communities across this country, bring higher wages to our workers and build the resilience we need as we tackle the unfair and unjustified American tariffs.

This year, with our first exports to Asian markets under way as of last summer, and the referral of LNG Canada phase two and the Ksi Lisims project to our new Major Projects Office, Canada's LNG sector has historic momentum. LNG Canada phase two would double the production of LNG Canada phase one to become the second-largest facility of its kind in the world. The Ksi Lisims project, led by the Nisga'a Nation, would become Canada's second-largest LNG facility, with capacity to export 12 million tonnes per annum of LNG.

The federal budget puts forward two measures that would further strengthen LNG exports.

First, budget 2025 reinstates accelerated capital cost allowances for low-carbon LNG facilities, making these investments more attractive to investors while rewarding top-tier emissions performance.

Second, division 41 proposes to amend the Canadian Energy Regulator Act so that LNG export licences are extended to 50 years—10 years longer than before. This will have a profound impact, as it will mean more time for project owners to amortize the added capital costs of their low-emission strategy. It will allow them to pursue phased investment to expand their facilities and strengthen their returns. Current licence-holders can also apply for longer-term licences if their environmental approvals remain valid and if the Canada Energy Regulator assesses that Canada will still have enough natural gas to meet domestic needs.

These amendments may seem technical, but they have a real impact. They ensure that Canada can compete for investment from around the world and create jobs. We can generate greater royalties and expand government revenues so that we can pay for the things we are proud of as Canadians—our universal health care, our \$10-a-day child care and our public infrastructure.

They also reflect our approach to streamlining regulations, accelerating projects and delivering certainty for proponents and investors so that our communities can prosper. If we consider the work being done by the Major Projects Office, the two LNG projects we referred to it could benefit from these changes.

● (1610)

These two projects alone represent over \$100 billion in investment and will support thousands of good-paying jobs during construction and long-term employment across B.C. and Alberta. Should all proposed LNG projects proceed, Canada could be exporting as much as 100 million tonnes of LNG per annum, creating

massive economic growth, increased international energy security and a strong competitive advantage, thanks to our continued efforts to protect the environment and respect indigenous rights.

The Chair: Minister, we're over time. I'll allow you 30 seconds to finish up.

Hon. Tim Hodgson: Do you know what? I think they'd rather ask me questions.

The Chair: Yes, I think they would too.

Thank you, Minister. I'm sorry for that, but I wanted to be respectful of the committee's time. Indeed, I'm sure they have some good questions for you.

We are going to start with Ms. Stubbs for six minutes.

Shannon Stubbs: Thank you, Minister, for being here today and for your personal outreach and offers for meetings, which we haven't yet had. Of course, I'll say the same things to you privately and publicly. I look forward to this conversation today.

Per clauses 593 and 594 of the BIA, of course, Conservatives support extending LNG export licences to 50 years for long-term certainty. We've pushed for LNG approvals consistently for the reasons you've now articulated.

Since 2015, as you know, the current federal government approved only four of 18 Canadian LNG proposals. Only the one that Conservatives approved—LNG Canada phase one and phase two at the same time—actually operates, while the U.S. approved 26. With 16 being built and operating, the U.S., of course, is the world's lead exporter now. The Government of Canada turned away Europe, so other countries moved to fill the gap. Mexico is poised to beat Canada.

My first question is, how can Liberals claim to want Canada to be an energy superpower when those are the facts on Canadian LNG?

● (1615)

Hon. Tim Hodgson: I think I can say with humbleness and humility that this is a new government with a new Prime Minister, a new Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, new parliamentary secretaries and a different leadership in the civil service, which the Prime Minister has put in place. That has very clearly shown a different approach to energy.

As our Prime Minister has said—

Shannon Stubbs: Thank you, Minister.

Let's move on to the current situation, because you mentioned your referrals of LNG Canada phase two and the Ksi Lisims project, which, of course, could have been done immediately after your election—not so long ago now. I have some questions about this process, since we're going to talk about the future.

In addition to the referrals from November 13, 2025, you also referred the critical tungsten Sisson mine in New Brunswick to the MPO. We support that, of course. What's the target date for completion?

Hon. Tim Hodgson: I don't have that in front of me.

Claude Guay (LaSalle—Émard—Verdun, Lib.): I have a point of order.

The Chair: Proceed on your point of order, Mr. Guay.

Claude Guay: I thought we were supposed to stay on topic, and now we're in mining.

The Chair: Ms. Stubbs, for relevance, perhaps you could stick to the topic of the day.

Shannon Stubbs: Sure. The relevance is that this is a question for the natural resources minister about natural resources projects. He himself just mentioned the new approach, so I'm going to ask him questions about it. It's all relevant.

The Chair: We are specifically discussing clauses 593 and 594 of Bill C-15. If you could at least draw some connection to that, I would appreciate it.

Shannon Stubbs: I did draw the connection off the top according to the minister's answer.

I want to confirm that my time has been paused.

The Chair: Yes, it has.

Proceed.

Shannon Stubbs: Great. Thank you.

We support the referral of the tungsten mine in New Brunswick, as well as the referral of the Ksi Lisims LNG project.

I think the key question is this: What are the targeted dates for completion? I raise this with you only because the same Liberal government promised construction on the tungsten mine in 2018, but it's 2026. When will construction start?

Hon. Tim Hodgson: I am just trying to find the update. On the—

Shannon Stubbs: I think the concern is that.... Even if you're referring projects to the MPO, is it true that projects are being referred without deadlines for construction?

Hon. Tim Hodgson: No.

It took me a little while to find the target. I don't have it all set to memory.

We have regular updates at the MPO, and the update I'm looking at targets the FID for the Sisson mine in 2027 and the construction start date in 2029, with an in-service date of 2030.

Shannon Stubbs: That wouldn't be building at speeds never seen before in generations, I guess.

On this point, Minister, during the debate on Bill C-5, I tried to entrench the two-year timeline that you said you wanted to achieve by adding an amendment into the law. It was rejected by the Liberals.

Would you consider putting the two-year timeline into the law? I ask because the only thing that matters is what's in the legislation.

Claude Guay: Mr. Chair—

The Chair: Colleagues, this is about LNG, according to the notice of meeting, so Ms. Stubbs, I would ask you to speak to the topic at hand.

Shannon Stubbs: Okay, sure.

Minister, since Conservatives agree with you that LNG projects are in the national interest and since we consistently, for 10 years, have been pushing to fast-track LNG approvals and exports so that Canada can beat the U.S. and we can supply fuel for European allies to get off Russian gas, one concern I have is that your government says projects in the national interest will be approved. I asked your government to define that in the debates on Bill C-5, and also again in the fall. Your government refused both times.

How can proponents or investors in LNG and all other sectors know what will make the cut with your government, since they need clarity and certainty, and you yourself have made that point very compellingly?

Hon. Tim Hodgson: As in both LNG Canada phase one and in Ksi Lisims, there's a regular ongoing dialogue once a referral is made to the MPO. There is ongoing interaction. The commitment is that within two years, you will get a conditions document that will tell you what you need to do to operate.

● (1620)

Shannon Stubbs: For Canadians who don't understand that, it means there's going to be at least a two-year process, and then there will be an approval with conditions, and then it will probably be quite a few years after that before we're actually getting shovels in the ground.

Hon. Tim Hodgson: If we deliver a conditions document in two years, that is the best in the OECD. That is a world-class performance.

Some of our colleagues south of the border will say they'll do it in 30 days. There is no way that a 30-day review process is a sustainable process. It may work for a short period of time—

The Chair: Thank you—

Shannon Stubbs: Those are emergency provisions. They do most at six months, and that's what Conservatives have proposed.

The Chair: Thank you both.

We're going on to Mr. Clark.

Mr. Clark, you have six minutes.

Braedon Clark (Sackville—Bedford—Preston, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Minister, thank you very much for being here today.

You talked about LNG quite a bit in your opening statement. Obviously that continued through the first round, and I think it's a good topic to talk about, because there are a lot of really exciting things happening. As you mentioned in your opening statement, last summer Canada began to export LNG to Asian markets from the west coast for the first time.

I'm wondering, Minister, if you could summarize for us what the LNG sector means for this country in terms of economic opportunities, specifically export-related. As we know, this is a key part of our government's promise to double non-U.S. exports over the next decade.

Hon. Tim Hodgson: What I said to you in my opening remarks is that if we deliver as we hope to, proponents will ultimately increase our production to as much as 100 million tonnes per annum. That would make us one of the largest suppliers of LNG in the world. What is very clear from the economic analysis we do is that the royalty streams, tax streams and good-paying jobs that come with these LNG facilities are among the most significant contributors to provincial budgets in terms of added revenues, and they are major contributors to tax bases.

From a Canadian economy perspective, these are among the most impactful projects we can do. In addition to the LNG Canada and Ksi Lisims projects, we are also tracking Woodfibre LNG, which is under construction. We are tracking Cedar LNG, which is under construction. We are tracking Tilbury, which is near an FID. There are several other earlier-stage projects. From an economic perspective, it is very significant.

From a geopolitical perspective, what I hear everywhere I go—whether it's Germany, the U.K., China, India—and have heard from my colleagues who were recently in Japan or Korea is that all those countries are interested in the energy transition. They view LNG as a very important transition fuel. It gives them a much cleaner alternative to what most of them are doing today, which is burning coal. What we hear over and over again is that with the dramatic increase in electricity around the AI phenomenon, our allies expect to be using a lot more transition fuel for a longer period of time.

When they have a choice in where to get LNG, Canada stands out as a reliable supplier—a country that doesn't use energy for coercion and that is committed to building its LNG exports in an environmentally responsible way, with the lowest-emission LNG in the world. That's what our allies want. If they have a choice between ours and that of some of the other players, they would like to choose ours.

• (1625)

Braedon Clark: That leads me to my next question, Minister. It is related to the environmental aspect of this.

There are obviously huge economic imperatives, which you've touched on. Based on what you just finished saying, is it safe to say that this is not just our own opinion? These are things we hear from our allies, trading partners and potential trading partners around the world. The fact that Canadian LNG is some of the cleanest, most environmentally responsible in the world is a real value added to our partners, both current and prospective. Is that fair to say?

Hon. Tim Hodgson: Yes, it is, in two aspects.

One is that our allies want it because it lets them get off of coal faster. We could not have heard it more clearly from the Chinese and the Indians. I've been in both places in the last month or two. When presented with two choices—one that is produced with a lower carbon intensity than the other—they will take the lower-carbon-intensity fuel.

Two, as the world continues to recognize the importance of transition, our belief is that, over time, people will start paying more for low-carbon-intensity LNG. Today, they don't. Today, if they can get two that are the same and you can give them the low-carbon-intensity one, they'll take it. I think, over time, you'll start to see people pay for that.

Braedon Clark: How much time do I have, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: You have 20 seconds.

Braedon Clark: Minister, you quickly touched on this, but what do some of these projects mean as they relate to relationships with indigenous peoples in this country? You mentioned Ksi Lisims.

I know we're pressed for time.

The Chair: Give a quick answer.

Hon. Tim Hodgson: Look, what Canada has done is figure out how to build LNG in partnership with first nations. That's a credit to this country, and I think it's going to be one of the things that really helps us deliver the economic portion of reconciliation that first nations have been looking for for a long time.

The Chair: Thanks to both of you.

We are now going to move on to Monsieur Simard.

[*Translation*]

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

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

Minister, I would have loved to be there with you in person today, but unfortunately, it was not possible. Nevertheless, I'd like to show you that I'm a model student. I've listened to you before and I've listened to your opening remarks keenly.

You have stated more than once in the past that we need to play our cards right in the current context, that we are at a turning point, and that Canada can be an energy superpower. Professor Pineau and Professor Mousseau testified before the committee recently and they said that based on their assessment, Canada will never be an energy superpower. Perhaps we can put that aside for now.

My concern is to know the conditions under which you'd be prepared to accept a liquefied natural gas, or LNG, pipeline. I'll tell you why. A closer look at Bill C-15 and page 300 in particular—it's a very thick bill—shows that the government is giving the minister the authority to exempt any company from the application of any federal law, except the Criminal Code, for a period of three years.

This is cause for immediate concern for us, because as you know, the LNG project—

Claude Guay: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

[English]

The Chair: What's your point of order, Mr. Guay?

[Translation]

Claude Guay: My point of order is that the Department of Finance has not sent us that provision. The committee has not been asked to look at the provision Mr. Simard is speaking to.

Mario Simard: Simply for the purposes of—

[English]

The Chair: Hang on, Mario. I have to rule on the point of order.

I would ask all committee members to stick to the agenda. We have clauses 593 and 594 of Bill C-15. That is the topic at hand, and the questions should be addressed to the minister in those areas, or at least draw some relevance—

• (1630)

[Translation]

Mario Simard: I don't want this to take my time, Mr. Chair, but—

[English]

The Chair: Your time has stopped.

[Translation]

Mario Simard: —there was some latitude for my colleague earlier when the minister mostly spoke about international markets, and this was not directly related to what we received from the department of finance.

I would therefore ask you to allow similar latitude. Furthermore, there is a direct link with Bill C-15, and we are discussing natural gas.

My question for the minister is as follows: If the government wishes—

[English]

The Chair: Okay. We stopped your time, Mr. Simard. You can resume, but please try to draw a link to relevance.

[Translation]

Mario Simard: Yes, but my time is my time. I can use all my time to speak if I so wish.

[English]

The Chair: Monsieur Simard, there's another point of order.

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

Shannon Stubbs: Just for efficiency, out of respect for the minister's schedule and for all of us, and also to support our colleague Monsieur Simard, I think we have to wrap this up right now so we don't continue to have these interruptions.

The minister is perfectly capable of answering these questions. He's extremely experienced. He's going to have no problem. He doesn't need anybody running interference.

When ministers are at committee, the convention is to allow latitude for the MPs to ask questions. I will quote PROC from Thursday, February 5, 2026, where the minister's predecessor, of whom I used to be the shadow minister, the Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, questioned the relevance of what one of the opposition members said. The chair of the committee, on February 5, 2026, said, "I appreciate the interventions. Generally, when a minister is here, there is latitude.... There is generally more latitude given."

You are a kind and generous chair, as you always are, which is also your personality. I think the minister is more than capable of answering questions. As he has said, Canada is in a crisis. We all agree. We're agreeing on fast-tracking projects, which Conservatives have always pushed for. Why don't we just stop this back-and-forth, get on with the meeting and be efficient for Canadians and for our schedules?

The Chair: Thank you for that point of order, Ms. Stubbs.

Colleagues, you're very skilful politicians. You can make a link to relevance on the issue we are talking about.

I will allow latitude, but please proceed, Mr. Simard. Your time is starting again.

[Translation]

Mario Simard: I think we are squarely within the subject at hand.

What I was asking the minister is whether, if a gas project is not in the interests of a province, the federal government would be willing to press forward even if a province refuses to have a gas project go through its territory.

[English]

Hon. Tim Hodgson: As I've said, we've been clear. We work with provinces. If there is an LNG project in a province, we will certainly take in the input of provinces and first nations. I don't think it's productive to have hypothetical conversations. I talk about actual projects from actual proponents.

[Translation]

Mario Simard: I would just like to point out that we have hypothetical debates in Parliament throughout the day. In this regard, we would be unproductive on a regular basis.

I am telling you that because your government announced that it wanted to launch the construction of gas and oil infrastructure. I've not seen a proponent so far, but I know many provinces and many people in indigenous communities have expressed some reservations on that front.

I also know that industry people who have appeared before us have told us that what bothers them the most in infrastructure projects are the standards and the policy framework, which prevent them from moving forward with construction. I therefore have the impression that if you want to accelerate the construction of gas infrastructure, you will inevitably have to address the standards.

In short, my question for you is this: Is the government ready to set aside standards, as we have seen in Bill C-15, to ensure gas and oil pipelines are built?

• (1635)

[English]

Hon. Tim Hodgson: What the act says is there are five criteria we will use when a proponent brings a project forward:

- (a) strengthen Canada's autonomy, resilience and security;
- (b) provide economic or other benefits to Canada;
- (c) have a high likelihood of successful execution;
- (d) advance the interests of Indigenous peoples; and
- (e) contribute to clean growth and to meeting Canada's objectives with respect to climate change.

When a proponent brings a project forward, we will evaluate it against those criteria. To the extent that it meets those criteria in the way of a net benefit to Canada, we consider referring it to the Major Projects Office. If required, we consider designating it, but that is a case-by-case situation.

Every single project will have a unique combination of those five criteria, and it will be the job of the build Canada committee and ultimately the Privy Council to decide whether those five criteria are met and whether it warrants a referral and potentially a designation under the act.

[Translation]

Mario Simard: You're alluding to the law resulting from Bill C-5, Minister. I'm talking about Bill C-15.

Page 300 of Bill C-15 states that the government will empower the minister to exempt any company from the application of any federal law for a period of three years.

That means that if you wish, you have the power under Bill C-15, which we will be voting on, to exempt the construction of pipeline infrastructure from the application of any law. I would like to know whether you plan to use that—

[English]

The Chair: Give a quick answer, please. There are just 20 seconds left.

Hon. Tim Hodgson: I think you're referring to the so-called sandbox provisions. Is that correct?

[Translation]

Mario Simard: Yes.

[English]

Hon. Tim Hodgson: I was the chair of the Canadian Investment Regulatory Organization. The use of sandbox provisions is a very common and normal practice of any regulatory body. It is a way to experiment in a time-limited manner to try new things and get things done. One uses the sandbox when one thinks they—

The Chair: Thank you.

Hon. Tim Hodgson: It's quite a normal process.

The Chair: Colleagues, we are going to our second round. Thank you for at least sticking to the topic of LNG and energy, which we're here to discuss today.

[Translation]

Mr. Martel and Mr. Malette, you have the floor for five minutes.

[English]

You're going to be splitting your time.

[Translation]

Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Yes. I will be splitting my time with Mr. Malette.

Minister, thank you for joining us.

Despite the expanded eligibility for the mineral tax credit in the budget, phosphate is yet to be added. Given its strategic importance, will you commit to working with the Minister of Finance to have it added to the list of eligible critical minerals?

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Martel, is this about LNG?

[Translation]

Richard Martel: I asked that question because the minister has a very good understanding of critical minerals. Would you like—

[English]

The Chair: Colleagues, this is degenerating a bit.

We can invite the minister back on these general topics, but we have a very specific job that the Department of Finance has given us.

[Translation]

Richard Martel: All right, Mr. Chair, if that is your wish.

Minister, as you know, the northern regions of Quebec have a lot of critical minerals. It is also no secret that some northern parts of Quebec don't have access to natural gas. Are there plans to connect some northern parts to natural gas, given that the region has a lot of critical minerals?

For instance, building processing plants in Chibougamau would cut transportation needs, and critical minerals wouldn't have to be shipped long distances for processing. Do you have a strategy or plan to take natural gas to these northern regions, which are well endowed with critical minerals?

• (1640)

[English]

Hon. Tim Hodgson: We respond to private sector proponents. If a private sector proponent brought a project to take LNG to that region of Quebec, we would obviously chat with the affected province and understand its desire for that project. We would talk with affected first nations, and we would look at the five criteria in Bill C-5. We would evaluate it against them.

If the conclusion was that we had support from the province, we had support from first nations and, in going through the five criteria, which are strengthening Canada's economy, providing economic and other benefits, having a high likelihood of successful execution, advancing the interests of indigenous peoples and contributing to clean growth.... If we concluded there was a net benefit there, we could look at that.

I'm not sure it's terribly productive to think in hypotheticals. We really need to look at real projects that you can evaluate in a real way against the criteria.

[Translation]

Richard Martel: Minister, what would it take for a critical minerals project to be designated in the national interest? As you know, many countries are likely to be our customers if things go well on the critical minerals side.

If a project is in the national interest, would it be possible to pursue this kind of natural gas infrastructure without having to deal with all that the regulations involve?

[English]

Hon. Tim Hodgson: I'm sorry, but can you repeat the last bit of your question, please?

[Translation]

Richard Martel: Yes.

What would it take for critical minerals to be designated in the national interest for us?

We are endowed with significant critical minerals. We have an abundance of these minerals. What would it take for these minerals to be designated in the national interest so that instead of having all these conversations, we could—

[English]

Hon. Tim Hodgson: Canada has a series of minerals that it has designated as critical minerals. Each of our G7 allies has a series of minerals that have been designated as critical minerals. Our NATO allies have laid out a series of critical minerals.

As we look at Canada's need for secure and sovereign access to critical minerals and our allies' needs, we would be looking at rank ordering projects. We would be looking at which projects are going to meet that critical need for us and which projects are going to meet that critical need for our allies. Then we would start talking, often with our allies, because we have a finite demand here in Canada. Many of the mines and processing facilities we would bring on are typically going to meet our needs and often our allies' needs, and we look for where our allies are willing to help us.

We did 26 of those in October, and we're going to do more at PDAC.

The Chair: Thank you both.

Unfortunately, Mr. Martel, that's your time. Perhaps Mr. Malette can share his time later with Ms. Stubbs. We'll see.

Mr. Danko, you have five minutes.

John-Paul Danko (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, Minister, for joining us this afternoon.

We've heard in the House several times members of the opposition say that they would use the federal government and leverage the authority of the federal government to override indigenous rights in order to move projects forward.

You started an answer talking about building LNG in partnership with first nations and the importance of economic reconciliation. I want to give you this opportunity to expand on how our government is working with indigenous peoples and indigenous rights holders as we develop the LNG sector. Can you share more about the opportunities you see with building these collaborative relationships?

• (1645)

Hon. Tim Hodgson: I like to say that we're all prisoners of our own history. In my history, I was the chair of the largest publicly traded transmission and distribution company in the country. When I took over as chair, we had not built a new transmission line in 10 years. We had not built them because we were trying to build around first nations and in spite of first nations, and it clearly wasn't working.

The history I know is that we decided at that corporation to change our approach and proactively engage with them at the start of the process—to not view first nations as a risk factor, but to view them as a strategic opportunity to advance projects. When we chose to partner with them at the front end of projects, what we found is the projects started going ahead of schedule as opposed to behind schedule and under budget as opposed to over budget, because our partners, the first nations, had the same objectives we had.

In my history, we went from, as I said, being a corporation that hadn't built a new transmission line in 10 years to building more transmission lines than any company in North America, and that's because we were doing it in partnership with first nations, not in spite of first nations.

If you look at what's happening specifically in LNG, there were false starts before. MP Stubbs referred to some of those false starts. What you see today are things like LNG Canada, which is in full partnership with the Haisla Nation; Ksi Lisims, which is in full partnership with the Nisga'a Nation; Woodfibre, which is in full partnership with the Squamish Nation; and Cedar LNG, which is actually the first majority-owned indigenous LNG facility in the world.

We've come from a place where LNG was not getting built—because in many cases, we were building around or trying to go through first nations—to a place where, today, we have their support and we are getting things built.

I come back to what I tell any proponent I know, which is that in my experience, if you do the right thing up front and you engage early, first nations can help you accelerate projects and get them done on time and under budget. In my view, first nations engagement is an opportunity, not a risk.

The Chair: You have 40 seconds, Mr. Danko.

John-Paul Danko: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, up front, we heard a desire from our side, and also from the opposition side, to get major projects moving forward as quickly as possible. Obviously, the first step for that would be to get the budget implementation act passed. In the short time I have, would you be able to share any further steps that we are taking to accelerate energy and natural resources projects?

Hon. Tim Hodgson: In the case of both LNG Canada's train two and the Ksi Lisims project, the MPO is working on a daily basis to make sure that all of the different requirements to build are being coordinated from a permitting perspective across the various ministries. There can be as many as 16 different ministries touched. The MPO provides a one-window approach to those.

The Chair: I'm sorry to cut you off there. We're a little over time, but thank you both.

[Translation]

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

[English]

I want to thank the first two speakers for making links to LNG, which is the subject of today's meeting.

• (1650)

[Translation]

Mario Simard: Minister, earlier, you said you don't like to think in hypotheticals.

If I look at the construction of a gas pipeline, and I know this because I followed an LNG project back home, it takes a minimum of 10 years before a gas pipeline can be built. The fact is that the gas market is likely to have changed from its current state over the next decade.

I understand that some European countries have told you they will need Canadian LNG. Perhaps they need it now. However, in 10 years' time, knowing full well that some superpowers, such as China, are changing the energy landscape considerably through electrification, LNG prices will probably have changed. Will the projects still be as competitive?

Aren't the large corporations that are ready to build these projects doing this math? Are they not going to ask you for tax dollars for this type of construction?

I can see a lot of hypotheticals in the construction of a gas pipeline. Perhaps you can provide us with more information.

[English]

Hon. Tim Hodgson: If I understood your question, it was that some pundits don't think there's going to be demand for LNG, so why should we build? I love pundits who have no skin in the game and who produce lovely reports that have zero economic impact on anything.

As a business person, my experience is that I like to talk to customers. If a customer tells me they're willing to pay for something and provide a long-term contract for it, I look at that as a lot more valuable signal than a pundit's opinion.

I believe you were a professor previously. There is a wonderful place for professors to talk about things, but if someone is going to pay me to do something and provide me with a long-term contract to do it, I will value that signal far greater than a pundit's opinion.

[Translation]

Mario Simard: You know—

[English]

The Chair: I'm sorry, Mr. Simard, but we have to move on to Ms. Stubbs.

[Translation]

Richard Martel: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

[English]

The Chair: There's a point of order.

What is your point of order, sir?

[Translation]

Richard Martel: Mr. Simard is a lecturer, not a professor.

[English]

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

[Translation]

Richard Martel: That's important.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Simard.

Hon. Tim Hodgson: I consider him a full professor.

The Chair: We're going on to Ms. Stubbs for five minutes.

Shannon Stubbs: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, you have outlined precisely the—

[Translation]

Mario Simard: Mr. Chair, I just wanted to make a point of order to say that Mr. Martel is a trainer, but in the minor leagues, rather than the national league.

[English]

The Chair: Colleagues, these are not points of order. We are spinning out of control.

An hon. member: Get a grip, Mr. Chair.

Shannon Stubbs: I'm glad we're all in a good mood, but can I start from the top?

The Chair: I know that Ms. Stubbs has some good questions for the minister, and we have stopped her time, so she can start over.

Shannon Stubbs: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, you have clearly outlined the catastrophic, tragic loss of those 16 LNG projects that, in fact, have been cancelled over the last 10 years of this Liberal government, with billions of dollars lost. The story that you've told about indigenous people and partners on LNG Canada is, of course, exactly the story of the development of Alberta's oil sands, which I know you know well.

I just want to put on your radar that in the debates on Bill C-5, I raised the point that judicial decisions say the decision-makers must be at the table in a two-way dynamic with indigenous communities. I proposed amendments to safeguard this issue in Bill C-5. The Liberals defeated my amendments. I fear that decisions that are going to come out of Bill C-5 will be challenged in court, precisely because the Crown is not taking on its duty to consult to get these projects done in a good way. I just want to flag that for you.

Since you mentioned real proponents and real projects, I need to get back to the issue we discussed before that you raised. The trouble for Canada, which is urgent, is that 21 real projects are stuck at the Canada Energy Regulator right now, eight projects are stuck at the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission and 43 real projects with real proponents are stuck at the Impact Assessment Agency.

You said during the debates in June on Bill C-5 that this bill “allows us to do all the things we need to do in one centralized place, under one set of timelines, and to take those learnings to go back and deal with the other acts over time.” Since 72 projects are in limbo right now with only 11 referrals and no clear path to construction in sight, when will the laws and regs that are listed in Bill C-5, which you've designed to do a workaround, be fixed for every-

one—all proponents in all sectors—to attract investment and jobs to Canada and give confidence in Canada as a place to invest and build in?

• (1655)

Hon. Tim Hodgson: From the homework I did in advance, my understanding, from an export licence perspective, is that there have been 3,600 export licences issued by the CER. The vast majority of them are regular export licences, and they get approved, on average, within two days.

Shannon Stubbs: That's not referring to the projects and proponents that I am, but—

Hon. Tim Hodgson: There are 35 major projects that have been put forward through the CER. They take, on average, 180 days. What I was told is that 100% of them cleared within 180 days.

Shannon Stubbs: Here's my concern. I know that every Liberal at this table is new. I've been here since 2015, and I led the debate on Bill C-69. There were claims that there were concrete timelines in that bill. There were none. I tried to put concrete timelines in Bill C-5, but there are none. This is why Canadians and Conservatives who agree with you that Canada faces a crisis are very concerned about this clarity.

To that end, and since you're mentioning new projects, in December you announced an MOU to work towards a Pacific pipeline. I think most Canadians and Albertans expect this work is happening. Can you update us on the federal Crown's indigenous consultation to date?

Hon. Tim Hodgson: The MPO is waiting for the proponent to come forward. When the proponent comes forward and says they want to move forward, then the consultation will start from the MPO perspective.

Shannon Stubbs: This is exactly the challenge—

Hon. Tim Hodgson: What I can tell you—

Shannon Stubbs: —because judicial precedents and your own law say that cabinet is the decision-maker. It can't be the MPO's job.

I need to move on, Minister, with my limited time.

Hon. Tim Hodgson: Okay.

Shannon Stubbs: You mentioned competitiveness with the United States, which Conservatives have been pushing Liberals to pay attention to for the last 10 years. Conservatives want Canadians to beat the United States, but of course, now the U.S. is both Canada's biggest customer and competitor.

I have a question for the long term that I think all of us should be grasped with.

What Canadians should be focusing on is what Canada can control, not unpredictable or hostile actions from anyone else. Here's the issue. Your government has the ability to allow Canada to compete by removing the federal costs and red tape placed on Canadian workers and businesses, like the oil and gas cap, the federal industrial carbon tax, drilling and tanker bans, gas and diesel vehicle bans and innovation censorship laws. The United States—our biggest customer and competitor—does not impose any of these costs or red tape on their private sector proponents, entrepreneurs and investors.

When will you actually deal with all of these issues—some of which are also in Bill C-5—so that Canadian entrepreneurs and business owners can compete with the United States and we can be self-reliant, affordable and secure?

The Chair: Minister, give a short answer, if you can.

Hon. Tim Hodgson: We are controlling what we can control. We've set two years to a conditions document. We're doing “one project, one review”.

The Americans, in my opinion, are taking an unsustainable approach. Capital providers look at the U.S. going from the IRA at one extreme to the One Big Beautiful Bill Act at the other extreme. You cannot allocate capital when you have that kind of see-sawing in regulatory frameworks.

We've provided, I think, a far more—

Shannon Stubbs: Right now, the United States is the world's leading exporter of LNG, so they figured something out.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

Thank you, Ms. Stubbs.

We have to move on to Mr. Clark, who's going to be wrapping up this second round.

Go ahead, Mr. Clark.

Braedon Clark: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Minister, you touched on this a little in some of your previous answers. I believe you said that up to 16 departments could potentially be touching on a major LNG project. In your view, the MPO and “one project, one review”, which you just cited.... I know the government has signed agreements with about half the provinces so far, with more to come, simplifying that process.

If you could, give us your view on how significant that is from a government standpoint and, in many ways and more importantly, from a proponent standpoint, as they're making investment decisions running into the tens of billions of dollars in some cases.

• (1700)

Hon. Tim Hodgson: “One project, one review” is incredibly impactful and powerful. What it says is that we're not going to ask the proponent to face two sets of regulatory gates when there is an equivalency between the two. What the federal government has said is that where there is equivalency between federal regulations and provincial regulations, the federal government will stand back

when we have a “one project, one review” agreement and we've worked through it and concluded that there is equivalency.

What does that mean in real life? Back in the late fall of last year, the Ksi Lisims project—the one I referred to earlier, which will be the second-largest private investment in the history of this country—was approved by the Province of British Columbia, I believe at four o'clock Pacific time on a Monday. The federal approval came in at 4:30 the same day. When you are a proponent on a project of tens of billions of dollars, that's worth hundreds of millions of dollars in saved duplication, extended timelines, incremental cost of construction, saved interest on construction and the sheer pain of getting something done. It has been incredibly impactful.

B.C. is the farthest advanced. We saw the same thing on the Red Chris mine, and I think we're going to see it on some other things coming down the pike.

As you correctly pointed out, we made it a priority in our One Canadian Economy Act to try to bring down barriers between the federal government and the provincial governments. This is one of the most impactful ways we can do that.

Braedon Clark: I agree completely.

About 10 years ago, Minister, I worked for the natural resources minister in Nova Scotia. At that time, there was a proposal through Goldboro LNG to export LNG to Germany. One of the issues I was dealing with at the time was mismatching regulations on the provincial side. I saw that a decade ago. To see what we're doing now—that you can have a 30-minute window between provincial and federal approvals—is a quantum leap, to be honest. I appreciate that answer.

Here's the last thing, in the time I have—a little over a minute. As you said in a previous answer, LNG is a tremendous bridge or transition fuel between where we've been and where we're going. How can LNG, in particular, help Canada become an energy superpower and become net zero by 2050, which is something we talk about quite a bit?

Hon. Tim Hodgson: There are two ways. There's domestically and there's internationally.

How much time do I have? I have to calibrate.

The Chair: You have 37 seconds.

Hon. Tim Hodgson: Okay. This is way too complicated.

The reality is that we'll need to spend \$1 trillion between now and 2050 to grow our grids. We'll have to do that with a whole bunch of different technologies. We're going to do it with renewables, we're going to do it with nuclear, we're going to do it with hydro where we have the opportunity to do it with hydro, and we will do it with abated natural gas wherever possible. In that context, it will help us get to where we need to go.

The Prime Minister has said we are not going to get to net zero by denying people economic lives; we're going to get to net zero by growing our economy and by using new technologies like CCUS—both pre-combustion and post-combustion—as well as all the other renewable technologies and green hydrogen.

If we have more time, we can talk about what we saw in China and India and what they're doing today. There is absolutely a place for natural gas in that stack of generating options.

● (1705)

The Chair: That brings your time to an end, Mr. Clark, and this panel to an end.

I want to thank the Minister on your behalf. It was a spirited exchange—Minister, I think you'll agree—with good questions by members. I tried my best to keep us on the topic of LNG, and I think we got there in the end.

Thanks to the department for coming to see us. You didn't get a big workout, but I'm sure we'll have you back.

Colleagues, we're going to take a short break while we change panels.

● (1705)

(Pause)

● (1710)

The Chair: Colleagues, we are back in session. Welcome back. We'll resume the meeting.

We have before us, from the Canada Energy Regulator, Ms. Tracy Sletto, chief executive officer, who is accompanied by Jonathan Timlin, vice-president, system operations, and Darren Christie, chief economist. Welcome, everyone.

From the Department of Natural Resources, Erin O'Brien joins us again. She is the assistant deputy minister, fuels sector.

Folks, I think you know the routine. Ms. Sletto, you will have five minutes for your opening remarks, after which we will open the floor to questions.

By the way, colleagues, just before we start, we did give the minister a full hour and we'll give these folks a full hour.

Ms. Sletto, please proceed for five minutes.

Tracy Sletto (Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Energy Regulator): Thank you very much.

Good afternoon, members of Parliament. Thank you for inviting the Canada Energy Regulator, or CER for short, to appear as part of your study of Bill C-15, and specifically the proposed change to the Canadian Energy Regulator Act that's included in division 41 of part 5.

My name is Tracy Sletto, and I'm the CEO at the CER. I'm joined today by Darren Christie, our chief economist, as the chair pointed out, and John Timlin, our vice-president of system operations.

In my opening remarks, I thought I'd briefly describe the CER's mandate and discuss how we regulate natural gas exports. I will also touch on how the proposed change to our act, which would increase the maximum duration of export licences for liquefied natural gas from 40 to 50 years, could impact our regulatory responsibilities.

Before going further, I would like to acknowledge that I am on the unceded, ancestral and traditional territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe nation, which has lived on and cared for the land now known as Ottawa since time immemorial.

● (1715)

[*Translation*]

The CER's mandate is clear. We regulate energy infrastructure—specifically international and interprovincial pipelines, international power lines, and offshore energy projects and power lines—in a way that prevents harm and ensures the safe, reliable, competitive and environmentally sustainable delivery of energy to Canada and the world.

The CER is also responsible for advising and reporting on energy matters. One way we do this is through our energy futures series, where we explore how possible energy futures might unfold for Canadians over the long term. In addition to the energy futures reports, the CER develops provincial-territorial energy profiles, produces market snapshots that highlight key trends in Canada's energy sector, and publishes oil and gas production statistics.

The CER's mandate also includes the regulation of hydrocarbon and electricity exports from Canada. Our role in regulating these exports, including for natural gas, is set under part 7 of the Canadian Energy Regulator Act.

For the exportation of natural gas, the commission of the CER currently has authority to issue licences for up to 40 years, subject to approval by the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, and to issue short-term export orders for up to two years.

[*English*]

The maximum term for natural gas export licences was extended from 25 years to 40 years in 2015 through amendments to the National Energy Board Act. This change was carried forward under the CER Act in 2019.

When assessing applications for long-term natural gas export licences, the commission of the CER applies a surplus test that is set out in section 345 of the CER Act. This test establishes that the proposed exports must not exceed the amount of natural gas expected to be available after meeting the “reasonably foreseeable” needs of Canadians, taking into consideration the “trends in the discovery of...gas in Canada.”

Applicants for natural gas export licences must provide supply and demand projections and demonstrate that exports will not compromise Canada's domestic energy requirements. The commission of the CER reviews these applications through a written process, including a public comment period, and must decide within 180 days, followed by a ministerial decision.

Currently, there are 24 valid export licences linked to LNG projects, with 18 of them for 25-year terms and six for 40-year terms. Companies apply for export licences in advance of construction and operation, so even though there are 24 valid licences, only one is currently in use: the 40-year export licence for LNG Canada, a natural gas liquefaction facility and marine terminal for exporting LNG in Kitimat, B.C.

Other than the licence for LNG Canada, all of Canada's natural gas currently being exported is under what are called export orders rather than export licences. These orders are generally for a maximum of two years, and given their technical and administrative nature, they typically receive CER commission approval within two working days after being submitted through our online application system. The CER receives approximately 100 new applications for these orders every year.

In terms of impacts for our regulatory responsibilities, this potential change to our act would only apply to export licences for LNG and not to the other exports we regulate, such as oil or electricity.

The change proposed in Bill C-15 would not automatically extend the term for existing export licences. Companies with existing licences would have the option to reapply to the CER to receive a 50-year licence. This is similar to when the maximum term for natural gas licences was increased from 25 to 40 years.

In closing, I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak with you today about the work of the CER. My colleagues and I very much look forward to your questions.

• (1720)

The Chair: Thank you so much for that testimony.

We are now going to colleagues for questions.

I'm going to start with you, Mr. Gunn, for six minutes.

Aaron Gunn (North Island—Powell River, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair, for having me here.

As I'm sure you all know, in Powell River, in the riding that I represent, two hydroelectric dams were built over 100 years ago to provide power to the local pulp mill and create thousands of good-paying jobs. Just over 10 years ago, that mill fell into financial trouble and was forced to sell the dams as a distressed asset to Bermuda-based Brookfield Renewable, a company that has since applied to the Canada Energy Regulator—to you—for an unprecedented

30-year export permit to send this electricity directly to the United States, with almost no benefits to the people who live in Powell River, my province of British Columbia or our country. It is doing this at a time, I might add, of aggressive and totally unjustified U.S. trade action against us.

On December 18, the Canada Energy Regulator made a recommendation to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources to reject this electricity export permit request from Brookfield, operating under PREI, or Powell River Energy Inc., and to instead proceed with a full licensing process, which would allow for further inquiry, public hearings and any other conditions that the commission sees fit.

First of all, I'd like to applaud that decision you made. I'm hoping you can confirm whether the minister has accepted that recommendation and whether a full licensing process is now in place.

Tracy Sletto: Thank you very much for that question. I will turn this over to Mr. Christie, our chief economist, as he's more familiar with the specifics of this case.

As you described it in terms of the time frame and the application that came to the commission, I'd concur that the time frame makes sense.

Darren, is there anything you would like to add?

Darren Christie (Chief Economist, Canadian Energy Regulator): I'll just add that December 18 was the decision date. To my knowledge, there's not yet been a decision taken by the Governor in Council, which is what the recommendation is with regard to. I don't have any update on that.

Aaron Gunn: It's been almost two months now. Do you have any idea what's taking the minister so long to accept your recommendation?

John-Paul Danko: I have a point of order, Chair.

What does this line of questioning have to do with the budget implementation act? If the member has specific questions, perhaps he could take them off-line and not waste everybody's friggling time.

Aaron Gunn: Excuse me, Chair. We're talking about LNG exports in British Columbia.

The Chair: Hang on. I have the chair.

Thank you, Mr. Danko.

Again, relevance has been a bit of an issue today, Mr. Gunn, so if you could steer your questions toward the matter at hand, I would appreciate it.

Aaron Gunn: Just to be clear, for the member's benefit, electricity in British Columbia is used to electrify LNG export terminals, so it's very relevant.

The Chair: Okay. You've at least made a tenuous link. I appreciate it.

Thank you, Mr. Danko.

Thank you, Mr. Gunn. You may proceed.

Aaron Gunn: Going back to my question, do you know what would be taking the minister so long to accept your recommendation? What options would he be considering that are available to him? Is it about simply axing the deal, or is it about ignoring your recommendation and allowing the permit?

Darren Christie: I don't have any insight as to what has been occurring since the recommendation from the commission of the CER was made by the letter you referenced.

My understanding of the options available, as laid out in the CER Act, is that either the commission's recommendation is accepted and there will be a further process, as you described, or the direction could be made to the commission to issue what the company asked for.

Aaron Gunn: Do you know or could you speculate on what considerations might be holding up this decision? I can appreciate what this uncertainty can do for the local economy in Powell River.

Corey Hogan (Calgary Confederation, Lib.): Chair, I have a point of order.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hogan.

Mr. Gunn, this does not relate to LNG and the matter before us. I will pass it on to the next speaker.

Shannon Stubbs: I have a point of order, Chair.

The Chair: What is your point of order?

Shannon Stubbs: My point of order is that we've already established, by convention and at the PROC committee meeting this very month, it is absolutely within the latitude of members of Parliament to ask questions of the regulators, who are more than—

• (1725)

Corey Hogan: I'm sorry, Chair, but I never—

Shannon Stubbs: No, I'm going to finish my comment.

We're in front of professionals who are here and prepared to be accountable to Canadians. We're asking questions and they're well capable, and the member just explicitly explained how his questions are directly related to LNG.

The entire topic of this meeting is also related to a larger study on the budget. Every single one of these regulators requires major budgets, and there are major budgets in the MPO.

He is asking about the Canada Energy Regulator. He has tied electrification to LNG. He is advocating for his local community. The Liberals are trying to stop him, but I bet these guys are well prepared to answer the questions, as they've already shown, so why don't we stop this anti-democratic interference by the Liberals?

If you guys are at all serious about collaborating, getting along and hearing from all Canadians, including those of us who represent regions that you do not, let us just stop this and get going.

The Chair: Thank you.

Corey Hogan: Thank you, Chair. I never rose my point of order.

The Chair: Hang on. I haven't recognized you yet.

Shannon Stubbs: Also, I'm never going to be the person who brings up an issue about language, but I think “frigging” is unparliamentary.

The Chair: Hang on. Excuse me.

We're suspended for a moment.

• (1725) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1725)

The Chair: We're back in session.

Before I recognize Mr. Hogan, I'll note that I have just ruled on relevance.

Mr. Gunn, I would ask you to relate your questions to the matter at hand. We've invited folks who are prepared to speak to the subject matter before our committee today, clauses 593 and 594 of Bill C-15, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on November 4, 2025. If they were invited on the matter to which you're speaking.... I'm not sure it's fair to the witnesses, so I would ask you once again to stick to the matter at hand, or I will pass it on to the next speaker.

Before that, Mr. Hogan, you had a point of order.

Corey Hogan: Thank you, Chair.

I didn't get an opportunity to say my point of order. There was an assumption that was relatively correct, but I was just going to flag that the member explicitly talked about electricity's effect on his local economy. We are talking about an export provision, and I appreciate the latitude.

I'm sensing that there's some energy for an electricity study in our future, and I'm down for that, but today we're talking about LNG.

The Chair: Okay.

Go ahead, Mr. Gunn.

Aaron Gunn: Mr. Chair, literally a big part of why the Canada Energy Regulator made this decision comes from a submission from BC Hydro opposing it. One of BC Hydro's goals is the electrification of LNG projects, of which there is one right next door to Powell River in Squamish, so there is a direct correlation on this.

Your letter states that BC Hydro indicated that it was willing to purchase this electricity on comparable terms, perhaps to help with the electrification of LNG projects. How can the energy regulator be satisfied that fair market access criteria were truly met in this case if you go forward with the licensing process?

Darren Christie: I'm not going to speak to how the commission might rule, just out of fairness for the process and the application—

Aaron Gunn: How do you determine that?

Darren Christie: If the recommendation is accepted, that gives the commission the ability to make determinations about process, which could include evidence submitted from parties. It would be determined based on the evidence put before the commission.

Aaron Gunn: You mentioned earlier surplus tests for LNG exports. Would you also consider a surplus test when it comes to electricity if, for example, British Columbia will need this electricity to electrify LNG export facilities? Will that be a factor in your decision on whether to grant a licence?

Darren Christie: The test in the act for electricity is different from the test for hydrocarbons, including LNG. It's not the net surplus test that Ms. Sletto described.

• (1730)

Aaron Gunn: As part of the test, do you have to consider, or are you able to consider, what's in Canada's broader national interest or in the interests of workers, jobs and the local economy, in this case Powell River, or is it more narrow, where you're only looking at fair market access criteria?

Darren Christie: First, I'll say that this is the first time the commission has recommended that this type of application be moved to the additional process, so I'm not confident in giving a firm answer on what the commission can consider.

Aaron Gunn: Can you commit that if you do get the go-ahead from cabinet to proceed with this, there will be public hearings in Powell River as part of a future licensing process?

Darren Christie: I cannot, because that is a decision of the independent commission of the CER.

The Chair: Thank you both.

Mr. Gunn, I want to thank you for connecting your comments and your questions to LNG. I really appreciate it.

Mr. Guay, you have six minutes.

Claude Guay: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank the witness for being present and for being ready to answer questions.

We heard a few weeks ago that a potential issue in the funding and raising of capital for oil and gas exports comes from a lack of certainty. Do you feel that the new 50-year export licence for LNG will increase certainty, making these projects more financially viable, de-risked and likely to be seen to completion? From an economic standpoint, maybe you can then link it to job creation and actual projects moving forward. That would be helpful in helping us justify this amendment.

Tracy Sletto: I may start the response, but I'll turn the question over to our colleagues from Natural Resources Canada. As a regu-

lator, of course, our responsibility is with the safety and economic regulatory mandate.

Claude Guay: It's just to implement.

Tracy Sletto: The policy rationale for the legislative change we would ultimately implement, if it were approved, would be better answered by the policy lead in the department.

I'll turn it over to Ms. O'Brien.

Claude Guay: Ms. O'Brien.

Erin O'Brien (Assistant Deputy Minister, Fuels Sector, Department of Natural Resources): As you've implied with the question, the rationale behind these amendments is to ensure that we have a more competitive regulatory system for LNG projects. Indeed, the rationale behind the amendments came out of the many discussions we've been having directly with project proponents. We have engaged in economic modelling with a number of proponents. This had come up as a measure that would support the economic competitiveness of LNG projects going forward.

I would note this is one of two measures included in budget 2025 that would support the development of LNG projects. The other is the extension of the ACCA, or the accelerated capital cost allowance, treatment to these projects. We are still developing that amendment with the Department of Finance and expect to be in a position to legislate that shortly.

Claude Guay: Thank you for that answer.

You mentioned the feedback you received from project proponents. When we take feedback like that, what kind of consultation is there, and with which stakeholders, to get to a final outcome that says we're going to put it in the BIA?

Erin O'Brien: A lot of our work was done directly with project proponents. We had conversations with provinces as well. In fact, we engage in a lot of that economic work collaboratively with my provincial colleagues.

In addition, we appreciate that this is a legislative amendment to fulfill the government's responsibilities under UNDA. We engaged with indigenous groups, indigenous nations themselves and indigenous associations. That was also an important consideration as we were bringing this amendment forward.

• (1735)

Claude Guay: Ms. O'Brien, I don't know if you're the best person for this, or who on the floor would be, but I'm also curious about what the global position is, because this is a global capital investment game for these proponents. Well, it's not a game; this is serious business. They make decisions on where to invest around the world.

What position is that going to put us in versus other countries or geographies, if you don't mind helping us on that?

Erin O'Brien: That's a great question.

We have looked at regimes in other countries. The United States, for instance, has a very different approach whereby export licences are pretty much automatically approved if exports are going to any country with which the United States has a free trade agreement. More recently, under President Trump, export licences for projects that are exporting product to countries without a free trade agreement are also going forward.

Australia, which is another major LNG-exporting country, has a very different approach whereby it largely does not have regulations in place. It's seeing dynamics in its gas markets largely as a result of a lot of production being diverted to export opportunities. It's seeing significant spikes in domestic gas prices.

As such, we feel that this regulation really balances different needs—the need for Canada to diversify market access for its LNG and the need to be responsible in ensuring that it has long-term domestic supply so it can meet domestic needs as well.

The Chair: Thank you.

[Translation]

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

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Sletto, I'm trying to understand how to reconcile targets to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 with export licences, which would basically be for 50 years. How do you explain that? I can't.

[English]

Tracy Sletto: I may turn the question to Ms. O'Brien for the policy rationale behind the change.

Erin O'Brien: Just to ensure that there's an understanding of the scope of this measure, this measure only impacts the length of time a project can export LNG. It does not impact the volume of LNG that they're able to export. That is approved under a different regulatory process.

This measure in and of itself should not have an adverse impact on the emissions profile of LNG projects. If a proponent wishes to increase the volume it is exporting under the project, it can apply to change a different approval that it receives as part of its environmental assessment process.

[Translation]

Patrick Bonin: I don't think you understood my question.

Canada has targets to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, does it not? However, here you are saying you want to issue 50-year export licences. We're now in 2025, so the licences will take us to 2075. Gas will still be produced, transported and exported in 2075.

How can Canada's targets to achieve net-zero emissions in 25 years' time, or in 2050, be reconciled with the fact that you are issuing licences that mean we will be producing and exporting gas up until 2075? I don't understand how that can be done without compromising the net zero targets.

• (1740)

[English]

Erin O'Brien: What I would add to my very technical answer previously is that Canada has among the cleanest LNG product globally. For LNG Canada phase one, for instance, its emissions profile is 35% better.

[Translation]

Patrick Bonin: Producing gas generates emissions, doesn't it? Even if you're telling me about carbon neutrality in a plant, a plant with a 50-year licence will still be producing gas. This means Canada will have greenhouse gas emissions until 2075.

How can we allow that and still say we will be carbon neutral by 2050? That's my question. I'm not talking about plants. I know you're going to say they are carbon neutral.

[English]

Erin O'Brien: There will certainly be emissions. New projects that are being developed, particularly on the west coast, are required to be net-zero-ready in B.C.

[Translation]

Patrick Bonin: I'm not talking about liquefaction plants. That's not what I'm talking about.

You can't look at one pipeline only. You have to look upstream and look at the big picture. There is gas production. You have to look at the big picture. Canada has emissions associated with oil production. The emissions are going up, you know. I'm not even talking about what is going to be burnt on the other end.

Canada has a target to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. What are you doing to justify 50-year export licences? There are greenhouse gas emissions. What are we doing to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 if you grant 50-year licences?

[English]

Erin O'Brien: I think net zero is an important commitment. The government remains committed to reaching that target. There are many measures that will have to come together in order for that target to be met. While LNG does emit, it also contributes to the global reduction of—

[Translation]

Patrick Bonin: I'm talking about Canada. Canada has a target to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

[English]

Erin O'Brien: There will be increased emissions in Canada as a result of a growing or increasing of Canada's LNG ambitions.

[Translation]

Patrick Bonin: In that case, what are we doing to be carbon neutral by 2050?

[English]

Erin O'Brien: Canada's projects, those that are currently under construction and development, particularly on our west coast, have a requirement to be net zero. Those that are coming forward—for instance, Woodfibre, Cedar LNG and other projects—are going to be electrified. There's a commitment.... Well, it's more than a commitment; there's a requirement that they be net-zero-ready.

[Translation]

Patrick Bonin: You're talking about plants. I understand that clearly, but let us get down to brass tacks. Let us talk about emissions in Canada, not just in plants—

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bonin. That is your time.

I want to thank you both.

We're now moving on to Ms. Stubbs.

You have five minutes.

Shannon Stubbs: Thank you, Chair, and thank you to all of the witnesses here today for your challenging public service. I appreciate you being here.

My questions will relate to indigenous participation and consultation, primarily with respect to the north coast transmission line, which will feed 600 megawatts to the Ksi Lisims LNG project. Hopefully we can have an efficient discussion in the short time available to us.

Has the Canada Energy Regulator had any contact with the Major Projects Office since the minister referred the north coast transmission line to the MPO?

Tracy Sletto: Certainly, in the context of any projects that are under the review of other regulators, either under the purview of the Major Projects Office or regulated by provincial entities or other regulators, they'd be in a much better position to speak to specific projects. I can tell you that as part of the family of federal regulators, we are speaking often and closely with our counterparts to ensure we have those relationships and that the communication lines are open.

Shannon Stubbs: I'm going to take from your answer that the CER has not had any contact with the MPO related to the north coast transmission line that will feed the Ksi Lisims LNG project.

• (1745)

Tracy Sletto: We have not.

Shannon Stubbs: Okay. The MPO isn't actually one of the regulators; the three regulators are. The MPO, according to its own website, is an office that's supposed to direct proponents to the various regulators, which is why we called on the Liberals to fix the laws and regulations they're trying to work around in Bill C-5 for all proponents in all sectors across the country.

Your organization has announced the possibility of having indigenous ministerial agreements between the natural resources minister and indigenous governing bodies. To that end, can you confirm that the coastal first nations will not be integrated and given formal roles in the regulatory process?

Tracy Sletto: You're speaking about the regulatory development under way for indigenous ministerial arrangements regulations. That regulatory development initiative is currently being led out of Natural Resources Canada, not the CER, so questions around that specific piece of regulatory development would best be handled by Natural Resources Canada. I'm not in a position to speak to the specifics of what's being contemplated under that piece of regulatory development.

Shannon Stubbs: I think these answers are illuminating. A year after this government was elected, and five years after Bill C-69 was declared unconstitutional, which it hasn't fixed and which is the mandate that governs your board.... It is proving that a year in, there is no clarity or certainty. Certainly, checking out the MPO's website process map would confirm that for any normal Canadian.

Thank you for confirming that there's still uncertainty and a lack of clarity. When you're the top regulator...the government has a lot of work to do, obviously.

To your point, though, NRCan has offered to engage with the Assembly of First Nations, but you'll recall—because I was there and questioned her—that the national chief, Cindy Woodhouse, said at committee in June that she doesn't have the right to speak for rights holders. The Supreme Court has made it very clear that the federal Crown must consult with them.

Given that you just said you are in the family of regulators attached to this process and all of these projects, how will the CER ensure that consultations with rights holders are adequate?

Tracy Sletto: I very much appreciate the opportunity to speak about that, because in our approach to Crown consultation, both in the consultation necessary under CER decision-making processes and as the Crown consultation coordinator for projects that are regulated by the CER, we take the duty to consult very seriously. We appreciate the distinction you're making around the importance of that consultation with rights holders.

Since 2019, we have been the Crown consultation coordinator for projects that are regulated by the CER, and we have, I would argue, quite a disciplined and intense process for ensuring that the consultation duty is met, including—and I would focus on this—ensuring that we have relationships built with communities over the life cycle of the infrastructure we regulate. It's more than having relationships during the hearing process; it's thinking about those relationships early on in a project—

Shannon Stubbs: You are so right, and that is exactly the story of successful natural resource and energy development, certainly in my backyard in northern Alberta, which has gone on for decades. This is always a best practice.

You have illuminated precisely the problem, because consecutive judicial decisions.... In Bill C-5 and Bill C-69, the government designates the minister and cabinet as the final decision-makers, but judicial decisions have said that decision-makers have to be at the table with a two-way dynamic and demonstrate accommodation to end up doing this process in a good way. The problem is that they rejected my amendment to ensure that the federal Crown, not the regulators, which, as you've just explained, are absolutely punching beyond their weight in this regard.... Legislators have to fix the law to ensure that the federal Crown can meet its duty.

Thank you for clarifying that.

Do any CER staff come from banks or the private sector on secondment?

The Chair: That's your time, Ms. Stubbs. Perhaps Mr. McLean can pick up that question in a few moments, but we are now going to Mr. Danko for five minutes.

Go ahead, Mr. Danko.

John-Paul Danko: Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, all of you, for being here. Of course, as Canada's energy regulator, you have a very important role to play in the development of Canada's energy sector and our goal of being a global energy superpower.

The big change in the budget implementation act, as you said, is the licence time frame from 40 to 50 years. I believe that in the introduction, you spoke about there currently being one export licence in operation, but there are 24 valid licences.

I'm not sure what you can share about those other licences, but what stages are they at in the process before they get to exports? Maybe there's a little more detail about any of those projects that you could share.

Tracy Sletto: Thank you for that question. I will call a friend on this one. I'll turn it over to our chief economist, Mr. Christie.

• (1750)

Darren Christie: All of the holders of those licences and the licences themselves are public. I won't rhyme them all off, but I'll speak to them, and just for context, I don't have to withhold at all.

A lot of the licences that are still valid were issued in the 2016 time period. That was the first wave of heightened interest when global LNG prices were a lot higher. That is a bit of context for the situation with a lot of the projects that are associated with those licences. I'll say we don't hear about some of them anymore. They're projects that are no longer actively being pursued.

Then there's another camp of projects that are most commonly discussed today as either the ones under construction, or projects like Ksi Lisims that are approaching the possibility of a positive FID. They also hold their licences. In the context of those ones, they're the 40-year licences, whereas a lot of the projects that are dormant hold the 25-year licences and never came back in to increase them to 40 years.

John-Paul Danko: Are we expecting that this change will help accelerate interest in LNG exports, especially from some of the dormant projects that perhaps originally applied for a 25-year li-

cence and are seeing much more favourable conditions? How are we gauging the interest currently in moving forward?

Darren Christie: That's probably a question best answered by Natural Resources Canada, other than to say I think some of those projects are truly dormant and are certainly not coming back.

John-Paul Danko: I wanted to pick up on Mr. Bonin's theme about net zero by 2050 and the licence being granted to 2075. I think it is an important point that the Prime Minister and our government has made a commitment to net zero carbon by 2050.

Can any of you comment on how Canadian LNG compares to other global LNG exports? What other options are there for LNG—for example, blue hydrogen as part of natural gas production? How are our exports going to achieve net zero carbon? You mentioned that they are required to. What are the mechanisms they use to actually do that?

Erin O'Brien: As I had started to say in one of my previous answers, Canadian LNG is widely recognized as having one of the lowest emissions profiles globally. That's due to a number of reasons.

One is the very nature of Canadian natural gas being generally of a low-emitting profile. It's also due to government requirement that new projects, particularly on Canada's west coast, be net zero. Many of them are advancing that due to the electrification of the liquefaction facilities. For instance, LNG Canada, which is currently the only export facility in operation, has an emissions profile 35% lower than the world's best performing LNG facilities and 60% lower than the global weighted average.

The Chair: Thank you.

We're on to Mr. Bonin for two and a half minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

Patrick Bonin: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. O'Brien, I would like to know what you have to say to the environmental groups that have called for an amendment to that section to restrict the validity of licences to 2050 so that Canada can meet its climate commitments.

• (1755)

[*English*]

Erin O'Brien: In the measures we put forward, we've tried to balance different public policy objectives. One was clearly environment and climate change objectives, but that balanced against energy security and the need for economic growth. We feel that the 50 years appropriately balances these different public policy objectives.

[Translation]

Patrick Bonin: Did the private sector ask for the time frame to be increased from 40 to 50 years?

[English]

Erin O'Brien: I think those views are likely shared by the private sector—

[Translation]

Patrick Bonin: Did these people ask you for that?

[English]

Erin O'Brien: —but not solely.

[Translation]

Patrick Bonin: Did companies ask you for that outright?

[English]

Erin O'Brien: As I indicated earlier, the genesis of this measure came from conversations we've had with project proponents—

[Translation]

Patrick Bonin: Okay.

[English]

Erin O'Brien: —and what would be helpful to them to increase the overall competitiveness of Canada's LNG sector, but it isn't solely in response to that demand.

[Translation]

Patrick Bonin: Then it was a demand.

Ms. Sletto, I would like you to tell us how to balance the International Energy Agency's zero-emission scenario, which you're no doubt familiar with, with gas pipelines that may be in operation up until 2075.

How do you reconcile the fact that the International Energy Agency has told us that we need to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 with the fact that the infrastructure will be in place for 50 years?

[English]

The Chair: There's time for a quick response, Ms. Sletto, please.

Tracy Sletto: I wouldn't have much of an answer to that question given our role as a regulator. I think what you're asking about are some of the considerations that might be put to a commission to consider in the context of a specific project that might be brought forward, as opposed to having the regulator opine on those kinds of broad policy matters.

[Translation]

Patrick Bonin: [*Inaudible—Editor*] can it be sued if it withdraws the licence in 2050, for example, if it feels—

[English]

The Chair: That is your time, Monsieur Bonin.

Thank you both.

We're on to Mr. McLean.

Mr. McLean, welcome to the natural resources committee. It's perhaps a little spicier than the environment committee that you and I sat on together.

Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Yes, Mr. Chair, it's much calmer these days than it was when you and I were members of this committee together. Thank you for the welcome; it's nice to see you.

I have a question, and I hope the chair will give me some space for relevance because it is relevant. Sometimes, whether it's 40 years or the 50 years you're expanding to, those are years when the exporters of LNG are actually making money, so that's what they build their financial plans around. However, the main problem with getting these pipelines, this necessary infrastructure for Canada's prosperity, in the ground is the holdups they have with the Canada Energy Regulator.

If you're measuring yourselves on how badly you're performing in meeting your own guidelines in the legislation to get the timelines met that industry can depend upon, do you know what percentage of the time you're late?

I'll give an example with the northern corridor expansion in Alberta. When you miss by two months, you miss by a year because there is a very short building season. That, of course, is built into the cost of capital that everybody has to account for. The cost of capital goes up, the cost of the project goes up, the timing obviously takes a big hit and the Canadian economy suffers.

Is there some way you can start meeting your own targets for the regulatory deadlines the country and proponents of projects count upon?

Tracy Sletto: We expected there might be some conversation around service standards and legislative time limits, and we're pleased to report to the committee. We're actually quite proud of our ability to meet service standards and our legislated time limits.

Since 2019, when the Canadian Energy Regulator Act came into force and the CER was constituted in the way that it is now, we've had more than 4,800 applications brought before us, and those could be from a variety of different kinds of requests that would come to us. We adjudicate toll and tariff matters. We adjudicate compensation matters. We think about export permits and authorizations, and we not only think about but also adjudicate facility infrastructure applications. We've had over 500 applications since 2019.

We have legislated time limits in our act that are very clearly assigned to the work we do. We meet those time limits. We have service standards that we establish very clearly in terms of the types of decisions we make, and as the minister alluded to in his remarks, some of those decisions, such as an export order, we make in two days. For a larger-facility major pipeline application that comes before us, we have, under the legislation, 15 months to conduct that assessment. We meet those time limits.

In totality, we meet our service standards and our legislated time limits, and measure them and report on them publicly 99.7% of the time. We are very transparent about that too. In every departmental results report, we report on our service standards and the ability of the organization to meet them, and we're very much driven by wanting to meet those commitments, both in our act and in the service standards we set for ourselves internally.

● (1800)

Greg McLean: My experience is otherwise. I hear from major proponents all the time about how you miss your legislated timelines. As I said, when you miss by two months, you miss an entire construction season, so you miss by a year at that point in time. I will challenge the 99.7%.

Let me give an illustration of what we're talking about and what it means to the Canadian economy.

We had TMX. I know it's not a gas pipeline, but it's an oil pipeline, and the infrastructure is the same. TMX went from a \$7.5-billion project to a \$35-billion project. With that \$35-billion project, supposedly the tolls of the shippers on the pipeline would have to pay for the extra capital. It was capped at around \$21 billion or \$22 billion. The excess of that was borne by the Canadian taxpayer at the end of the day, because you can't ship the oil.

It now costs less to ship by train than it does to ship by TMX pipeline, which is ridiculous. We can get to the northwest coast of B.C. at less cost per barrel than we can get along what's supposed to be an efficient pipeline. The issue of delays and the issue of extra costs incurred through your process jacked up the cost of the pipeline by five times.

There are going to be some times when you have excess costs going into the construction of a pipeline like that; let's acknowledge that, but five times is ridiculous. We'd like to find out exactly where that money went, through your organization, and who should bear the cost of that at the end of the day.

Can you help us in that respect, in finding out where that money went? It is indicative, for any proponent that's going to build a natural gas pipeline going forward, of what costs they'll have to incur in building their financial case.

The Chair: I'd like a quick answer, please. I'll allow it. Go ahead.

Tracy Sletto: In response to your question around those costs, I will say that the tolls associated with the Trans Mountain pipeline are a matter that's currently before the commission, and the commission is considering those costs and will make a determination. That toll and tariff adjudication is part of our economic regulatory mandate, of which I spoke earlier, so there are absolutely considerations on the public record right now before the commission, and information is available about the nature of the costs associated with that project.

The Chair: Thank you both.

Thank you, Mr. McLean, for your efforts at relevance, which you did a very good job on.

We're now on to Mr. Clark, to wrap up.

Braedon Clark: Mr. Chair, I understand that colleagues are up against hard departures to other parts of the country, and I don't want to be the reason anyone misses a plane, so I have one quick thing before I cede my time.

I have a motion. I believe all members are aware of it. I'm seeking unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, notwithstanding the usual practices of the committee concerning access to and distribution of documents,

(a) up to three associate members of the committee per party be authorized to receive the notices of meetings and notices of motion and be granted access to the digital binder;

(b) that the associate members be designated by the offices of the whips of each recognized party and sent to the committee clerk; and

(c) that the provisions of this motion expire as of Friday, September 25, 2026, unless otherwise ordered.

The Chair: Colleagues, you've heard the motion. I see consensus around the room.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Clark.

Colleagues, I have a couple of things before we adjourn.

First of all, I want to thank the witnesses for appearing before us.

Thank you, colleagues, for your questions.

In terms of dealing with the matter we've had before us—clause 593 and clause 594 of Bill C-15—my understanding is that there was unanimous consent at the finance committee. The clerk will assist me in writing a letter back to the finance committee to say that we have discussed this matter. Unless I hear from any of you on amendments, we will indicate that we heard the matter and no amendments were proposed.

Do I have your agreement?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Thank you for that.

I have one last matter. Colleagues should expect to see the first version of the draft report on the critical minerals study tomorrow, so you'll have your homework over the break week. When we come back after the constituency week, our first meeting will be devoted to the consideration of that draft report.

Mr. McLean.

● (1805)

Greg McLean: I have a point of order.

Is that an update to the critical minerals report that was published by this committee in 2021?

The Chair: That's not a point of order. That is a piece of information. Thank you, Mr. McLean.

Mr. McLean will remember that we were very efficient on the ENVI committee. We asked colleagues from all sides of the House for their proposed amendments so we could deal very efficiently with going through the report, instead of using the line-by-line method some committees have used. We would again ask all parties to submit amendments.

Mr. Clerk, when would you suggest we receive them?

The Clerk of the Committee (Jean-Luc Plourde): I will talk with the analysts about that.

The Chair: What would be helpful, Avalon? Is it by next Friday?

Avalon Jennings (Committee Researcher): If it can be done by the time we discuss the report...

The Chair: Next Friday is a proposed option for us. We have the break week to delve deeply into the report. This way, we can get

our first report out the door. I detect that we're going to have a fair bit of alignment but obviously some differences of opinion. That's my suggestion.

With that, colleagues, I will bid you a good break week. Thanks very much for the good discussion today.

We're adjourned.

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