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# Standing Committee on Natural Resources

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Chair: Terry Duguid





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Tuesday, April 14, 2026

• (1100)

[English]

**The Chair (Hon. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.)):** Hello, everyone.

[Translation]

It's a great pleasure to be here with you this morning.

[English]

I'd like to call this meeting to order.

I would also like to acknowledge, as we always do, that we are meeting on the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe nation.

Welcome to meeting 31 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Natural Resources. Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format.

We have some witnesses online. I would like to remind them and all of you of the following points.

Before speaking, please wait until I recognize you. Those participating by video conference can 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. Those in the room can use the earpiece to select the desired channel.

For members participating in person or via Zoom, please raise your hand if you wish to speak. The committee clerk and I will do our best to maintain a consolidated speaking order. This is a reminder that all comments should be addressed through the chair.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted on Thursday, September 18, 2025, the committee shall resume its study of Canadian energy exports.

I would like to welcome our witnesses. From Enserva, we have Gurpreet Lail, president and chief executive officer, by video conference. From the Indian Resource Council, we have Stephen Buffalo, president and chief executive officer.

All virtual witnesses have conducted a mandatory witness onboarding test.

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

Ms. Lail, you have the floor for five minutes.

**Gurpreet Lail (President and Chief Executive Officer, Enserva):** Thank you very much.

Good morning, everybody. Thank you for having me today, Mr. Chair and members of the committee. I am extremely appreciative of your invitation today to appear.

My name, as mentioned, is Gurpreet Lail. I'm the president and CEO of Enserva. We represent over 200 companies in the energy services, supply and manufacturing sector, and we support hundreds of thousands of jobs.

Our members are the companies and workers who drill the wells. They provide pressure pumping. They complete the wells. They manufacture the equipment. They provide field services. We're the ones who innovate the technologies that help keep production efficient and emissions reducing.

Without the energy services sector, there really is no upstream production. There are no royalties. There's no export revenue, and there's no energy security for our country. We are the companies that help unleash Canadian energy to the market.

As our members have witnessed, we have gone through a lot of issues lately, and we find that Canada has an economic problem. As energy exports are one of the clearest places where we can still act at scale, we just don't see enough action taking place right now.

In 2024, energy products were Canada's largest domestic export category at \$195 billion. That's roughly 27% of all domestic exports. That should tell us something really important. Canada already has the resource base, the workforce and the global reputation to compete. What we don't have is a policy framework that consistently lets us win. It's made Canada one of the least attractive energy investment destinations in the developed world, and we hear this over and over again. The consequences of this are being felt in communities, at the dinner table and throughout all provincial budgets.

In 2024, Canada exported over 80% of its crude oil production and 40% of its natural gas production. This sector is already foundational to our trade performance and to the livelihoods of our communities across Canada.

The global opportunity is real, and it's current. The International Energy Agency expects global natural gas demand to grow by nearly 2% in 2026, with Asia-Pacific demand rising by 4%. The IEA predicts oil demand to also grow from its current record level of 104 million barrels per day by another one million barrels a day just this year. Around the world, governments and buyers are focused on secure, reliable, responsibly produced supply, and Canada is ready at the call to supply it for everyone.

With what we're seeing happen around the world right now, the current blockage of the Strait of Hormuz has created a potential global energy crisis that's playing out in front of us in real time. In this regard, I would say that Canada does not have just an opportunity; we have an obligation to our allies, to our friends and to our customers around the world to provide the resources that are required today.

Canada should be answering the demand with confidence. Instead, we are debating whether we are prepared to build the infrastructure and create the investment and conditions to do so. Nearly a year after Canadians were told that this country should become an energy superpower, industry is still waiting for enabling conditions that will make this possible.

Pipelines and energy export facilities do matter, but they are only part of the equation. We also need the production growth that fills those systems. We cannot move more Canadian energy abroad if policy makes it harder and less competitive for us to produce it in the first place.

This is why the policy stack absolutely matters. It is integral to this. The Impact Assessment Act process remains too long and too uncertain. The oil tanker moratorium that was put in place to block options on the British Columbia north coast and the federal industrial carbon price remain in effect. This is all a cost that no other major oil export nation has and that no customer is willing to pay for.

Whatever the intent behind these policies, the investment signal is clear: more cost, more uncertainty and more delay that chills capital, weakens the business case for new production and makes export infrastructure harder to finance.

From Enserva's perspective, our path is clear-cut. First, we need to set firm and shorter timelines for nationally significant energy infrastructure and the upstream activity needed to support it. Second, we need to remove or materially reform federal barriers that directly constrain export growth, including the tanker moratorium. Third, we need to ensure that industrial carbon policy does not hamstring Canadian production before new projects can even get to a final investment decision.

Canada can be a major and growing dependable supplier of energy in a world that still needs more of it, but that's only going to happen if this country chooses to build, chooses to approve and chooses to compete. We have an opportunity to unleash Canada to end global energy poverty, and we need to take it now.

• (1105)

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Lail.

We're now going to Mr. Buffalo.

You have the floor for five minutes.

**Stephen Buffalo (President and Chief Executive Officer, Indian Resource Council Inc.):** Thank you, Chair and committee members, for the opportunity to speak today.

My name is Stephen Buffalo. I'm the president and CEO of the Indian Resource Council of Canada. Our organization represents over 130 first nations that produce or have direct interest in the oil and gas industry. I'm also the chairman and a founding board member of the Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation, a Crown corporation of the Province of Alberta, which provides loan guarantees for equity ownership. Our mandate is to advocate for policies that improve and increase resource development opportunities for first nations and their members.

This topic, energy exports, is one that we've followed for many years. We hosted our first pipeline gridlock conference back in 2016 to bring indigenous people, government and industry together to discuss long-term solutions to the challenge of getting indigenous support for pipelines.

Unfortunately, the projects we discussed, like energy east, Keystone XL and northern gateway, still got cancelled. I say "unfortunately" because I think a lot of first nations would have benefited from those projects if they have gone ahead, with more jobs and own-source revenue and opportunities. This week it is especially obvious that Canada and its allies would have benefited too.

Nonetheless, we did a lot of work to develop a framework for first nations to have increased economic participation and to gain more benefits in linear infrastructure. I'm pretty proud to say that the work paid off.

In the past seven years, pipelines have gone from being a lightning rod to a model of how economic reconciliation can work. Equity, backed by loan guarantees, has changed the conversation and made first nations partners in pipelines and the creation of wealth for first nations. In fact, the Canada Energy Regulator just put out a brief last month showing how indigenous groups have acquired ownership interest in over 5,000 kilometres of pipelines in Canada.

We took a bad situation and turned it into a huge success story, and now we have industry and indigenous groups from around the world asking how we did it. Well, the Trump threats, the energy shock and the Canada-Alberta MOU have brought attention to export pipelines again.

We hosted another pipeline gridlock conference this past November to bring first nations from British Columbia and Alberta together to talk about a new oil pipeline to the coast. We didn't want to have a discussion about us versus them. Instead, we shared perspectives about what the legitimate environmental concerns were, the negative experiences and polarization associated with northern gateway and other pipelines, the ways in which first nations could be involved in monitoring and the mitigation of risks and accidents, and the economic, social and environmental benefits that could be negotiated.

It became clear that the best way to gain the trust of nations so they know that a pipeline can be safe is to meaningfully involve them in the development and operation of those activities. Now is not the time to convince anyone to accept a pipeline and port. It's time to have discussions and provide as much information as possible. However, let's all remember that the Trans Mountain expansion and Coastal GasLink did ultimately get built with majority indigenous support, and both are now operating safely.

Building a new export pipeline with indigenous support is not some insurmountable task. I'm confident that we can get majority indigenous support for a new northwest pipeline, but it must start with building relationships, having conversations, looking for solutions in good faith and giving everyone reason to trust the process.

At the Indian Resource Council, we will do our part to facilitate that dialogue and find an outcome where everyone can win. I ask the federal government if it can do the same.

I look forward to answering some of your questions. *Ekosi.*

• (1110)

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

We are now going to start our rounds of questions from MPs, starting with Mr. Tochor for six minutes.

Mr. Tochor.

**Corey Tochor (Saskatoon—University, CPC):** Thank you, Chair and witnesses.

In 2022, the Liberals said there was no strong business case for Canadian LNG exports to Europe, even after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Given what has happened since, was there a strong business case for Canadian LNG?

I'll start with Ms. Lail.

**Gurpreet Lail:** Absolutely. When we had countries coming to our country and leaders saying they needed LNG right now, if we had taken that seriously and taken that opportunity and started building then, we would be unleashing our energy resources right now to the rest of the world, and the issues that the Strait of Hormuz is causing right now would be significantly reduced.

**Corey Tochor:** The capital that was going to go to those LNG plants on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts mostly flowed to the States, and they expanded their LNG. Is that correct?

**Gurpreet Lail:** Yes, absolutely. The United States benefited from our disregard at that time, and it continues to benefit.

When I was in Syria a few weeks ago, we were talking about how they look at a project proposal and its completion. In the United States, a project can be completed in as little as four years, whereas here in Canada, that same project could take 15 years.

**Corey Tochor:** Speaking to the LNG exports from Canada, I understand that we have one plant in British Columbia, but the vast majority of the liquefied natural gas that we export goes to the States, to their plants. Is that correct?

**Gurpreet Lail:** That's correct. It goes to their plants.

**Corey Tochor:** They will decide which countries, making us more reliant on the American market, not less reliant, as the Liberals claim.

The Liberals also have other disastrous policies for our economy. They still haven't walked back Bill C-69 and the tanker ban. Do you have a comment on that?

**Gurpreet Lail:** When we look at policies such as the tanker ban and the Impact Assessment Act, those are policies that investors also look at, and we can't make it viable for people to come into this country and invest in our product so that we can get it out to market in a reasonably paced way. If we could just start rectifying some of those policies and maybe even pausing them for a short term until another solution is found, it would make a huge difference.

That makes a difference in someone getting food right now. So many people are struggling, and not only with not having energy. My parents came from India, and if you look at India right now, you see that they're struggling with what's happening at the Strait of Hormuz. If we can get rid of some of our policies, we can absolutely unleash Canadian energy to the rest of the world, and we have an obligation to do so.

• (1115)

**Corey Tochor:** Around the world, people are suffering. Millions of Canadians are reliant on food banks because of the disastrous Liberal policies that have made us poorer as a nation and more reliant on other nations. It's been over a year now with Mr. Carney as Prime Minister, and we've heard lots of words, but there hasn't been any action.

Could they easily withdraw Bill C-69 and the tanker ban and rectify their mistakes?

**Gurpreet Lail:** I believe so.

I think there's a glimpse of hope for us in the industry when we look at the MOU being signed, but now the April 1 deadline has come and gone and we're questioning if it is dead in the water. We need to have some kind of signal, and the signal would be rectifying some of the policies that are standing in our way.

I'll give you a prime example. Last week, I was part of a meeting in the United States, and a large energy-producing company said, "Look, we're not even looking at Canada right now." Even though our companies presented that we had the lowest emissions on LNG, it's our policy regulations that are creating instability and making it not profitable for companies to come in and invest in us. To hear this today in 2026 is extremely disheartening.

**Corey Tochor:** Can you tell us about the sentiment in Alberta on this MOU? I'm not even sure why the Alberta government had to get involved in the MOU to get a pipeline built. What are the feelings in Alberta about this latest betrayal?

**Gurpreet Lail:** It was such an exciting time when we signed the MOU, and listen, if the premier did not get involved in doing this, we would not have anything to look forward to. It has been two decades of being beaten down. That's a hard thing to live with.

Right now, everybody is wondering where we're at with the MOU. Is it dead in the water? Are we going to see some traction? A deadline was set out. We haven't heard anything more on the deadline. Was there an extension requested? We haven't seen anything move on the regulatory practices that were hindering us from producing at the levels we can. I would say that now it's very much like we're wondering if this was just another piece of paper that we signed that's getting us nowhere.

**Corey Tochor:** I'm worried that the current proposed referendums in Quebec and Alberta.... I'm from Saskatchewan. I'm a proud Canadian. I want to keep our Canada united, but it's betrayals like this and the inaction from the Liberal government that are leading to growing dissent in some of the provinces. Our country may not survive. That is the most concerning thing about the inaction. It's not just the lost paycheques and the lack of abilities for families to provide for their members. The health of our country is at stake.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Corey Tochor:** I guess I'm getting cut off here.

**The Chair:** Yes, that's your time, Mr. Tochor. We can come back to you a little later.

Mr. Hogan, you have six minutes.

**Corey Hogan (Calgary Confederation, Lib.):** It's always wonderful to hear from witnesses from Alberta.

You are right. Energy provides immense opportunities. As the Prime Minister has said, we want to be a "superpower" for both conventional and renewable energy.

I just want to note that we are at record production. We'll still be expanding on that to help our allies and like-minded countries. In fact, since 2015, energy production is up 34%. Globally, energy production—oil and gas—is only up 6% over the same time. Im-

pressively, we did that while reducing emissions in the country by 6% over the same time.

Of course, we all know that better is always possible. We all know that regulations, for many decades, have begun to stack across and between jurisdictions. There's more work to be done.

I will also just quickly note, on the MOU, that these are not deadlines. It is a timeline. The Prime Minister and Premier of Alberta have both been clear that things continue to be on track. In fact, equivalency was a month ahead of schedule and methane was a week ahead of schedule.

With that table setting done, I want to talk a bit about exports and the focus of this committee's work today. I want to talk about the opportunity that exports might have to address certain challenges that have been long-standing in the sector. Particularly, I think about the boom-bust cycles of the sector.

Ms. Lail, I'm wondering if you can talk about your views on how exports might help us to smooth out what has historically been a very cyclical sector.

**Gurpreet Lail:** It hasn't been a cyclical sector for a long time. There has been more demand than ever before.

When you look at 2018 and 2019, we were in an energy downturn and government was not supporting at that time at all. Then, in 2020, COVID hit. There were job losses at that time. When you layer on government speech and what was coming down from the federal government, which was that this was a dead industry, that there were no jobs to be had and that there was no future in this industry, I would say that caused us a lot of grief. We've worked really hard to attract trades back into our industry.

● (1120)

**Corey Hogan:** I'm sorry to interrupt, but I just want to reiterate that Canadian oil and gas production is up 34%. Globally, in the same period, it's up 6%. Production has never been higher.

When we talk about exports in particular and the opportunity that exports might provide to smooth out some of the employment boom-bust, not the demand boom-bust, I'm wondering if you have comments on that.

**Gurpreet Lail:** I'm sorry—the employment boom-bust?

**Corey Hogan:** That's right.

**Gurpreet Lail:** We don't have an employment boom-bust right now. The service sector is looking for people to come into our industry. We have jobs that are readily available. We just can't find the people to come and fill them.

**Corey Hogan:** That's great.

Maybe we can move, then, to the tanker moratorium. Of course, this moratorium has existed since the 1980s in a voluntary sense, through the Mulroney, Chrétien and Harper years. It was made legislative by the previous government. This current government has said that an exemption will be granted if a west coast bitumen pipeline goes to the coast.

I'm curious. During the 1980s, the 1990s, the aughts and the early 2010s, what was the effect of that tanker ban, voluntary as it was, on exports? Was that a significant consideration for your group?

**Gurpreet Lail:** I'm sorry; I honestly can't answer that. I wasn't here in 2010.

I can tell you where my members are today and what we need today. We need the moratorium to be lifted, because even with doubled production, we haven't even reached our potential. What we can do by lifting the tanker ban to get our product to market would be significant for every Canadian household, not just Albertans.

**Corey Hogan:** I completely agree. That's why the government has said that if there is a project that goes to the northwest coast, that would be something we'd consider.

Mr. Buffalo, I'm going to turn to you.

You mentioned that energy east, Keystone XL and northern gateway were cancelled. I worked on all of those projects, actually. Energy east wasn't cancelled, but it is a difficult problem to work out on pure economics. It is a long way to go if it's going to a place that requires more infrastructure. It is much faster to go west or to Churchill, but that might not be in our national interest. Infrastructure that goes west-east across the entire country is probably what's in our national interest.

Without distorting the market, how do we incentivize the development of such projects, when, frankly, when you're on tidewater it's cheaper to move oil? The basic economics are to get to tidewater as fast as possible.

**Stephen Buffalo:** That's a great question. Of course, the incentive is that first nations are now more actively involved with these infrastructure opportunities. We've seen, through the Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation, that the relationships can be built.

What still plagues our people is the Indian Act. We have to start generating our own wealth, and utilizing infrastructure that can help with national interests will, I think, bring more benefit than anything. We see what the federal government is doing around the world in helping humanity, but in the same sense, we still see the struggles with support here in Canada for clean water and better housing and education systems. That's the incentive right there, in itself.

The discussion of pipelines and where they should go is still another matter that I think we have to look at to see if it makes fiscal sense. Of course, it has the support of the nations moving forward.

**Corey Hogan:** The Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation was an incredible idea by Premier Jason Kenney. I was a public servant in the government when that was introduced in Alberta. Do you think it provides opportunities to address what I mentioned about some of those projects, which aren't necessarily or inherently going to win on economics but could win on national interest? Could indigenous loan guarantees be one of the levers we pull?

**The Chair:** Give a quick answer, Mr. Buffalo.

**Stephen Buffalo:** It has to be. A lot of first nations do not have investment capital, so this is a unique way.... Now that there's a national federal program, I think it's a very positive step going forward in helping Canada be a superpower.

**The Chair:** Thank you both so much.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simard, you have six minutes.

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

Before I begin, I want to make sure the interpretation is working.

[*English*]

**Gurpreet Lail:** It's working, yes.

• (1125)

[*Translation*]

**Mario Simard:** Thank you very much, Ms. Lail.

I listened carefully to your opening remarks. You spoke about the shortcomings of the policy framework and federal obstacles. I've been hearing this here for a long time from representatives of the oil and gas sectors.

As the Quebec saying goes, "When you want to put your dog down, you say it has rabies". I get the impression that people in the oil and gas sectors are currently highlighting these bureaucratic hurdles when it comes to infrastructures in an effort to find a way to get the government fund these infrastructures.

Let me explain why I feel this way. The only gas or oil infrastructure built in recent years is the \$34 billion expansion of the Trans Mountain pipeline, funded by all taxpayers. We are still subsidizing every barrel of oil that passes through Trans Mountain today, since exporting companies don't pay the fair price for using the infrastructure.

I wonder whether industry players are willing to invest in this type of infrastructure. Do they feel that, in the long run, it isn't profitable? That's the message I'm getting when I read the media and reactions within the oil sector. In short, let me put it plainly: What I see right now is that people in the gas and oil sectors want the public to bear the risk of their infrastructure, while still wanting to reap the profits. That's the message they're sending at the moment, in my view.

The government has reached an agreement with Alberta, but no one has come forward to say they want to build a pipeline. I really can't make sense of this situation. Perhaps you can shed some light on it for me. I'd appreciate any information you can provide.

[English]

**Gurpreet Lail:** I don't know about dogs and rabies, but from our point of view, I think where you're mistaken is that the energy industry is not willing to pay. If you look at Keystone, we had paid. We were ready to launch, and that was not government coming in alone.

Right now no one wants to invest. Why would we invest if there are no policies that are actually going to help us get to tidewater? Why are we going to invest if we're not creating new jobs for us? There has to be a reason we're investing. That's why we're saying we need to rectify some of the policies and the regulations right now that are handcuffing our industry from getting to market.

It's not just our industry. Look at Nutrien. Nutrien just announced that it's building a major export facility in the United States but not in Canada. If that's not a cautionary tale of how poorer and less competitive Canadian policies are making us in every industry we have, then it is your first signal that there's an issue with policy right now and that there is no investment coming into this country, especially when Canadian companies are going to the States because it's more economical and the policies work well in every industry.

[Translation]

**Mario Simard:** I find that very interesting because you and I have quite opposing views.

There are some government measures that I don't agree with, for example Bill C-5, which aimed to accelerate the start of construction on certain projects. I'm also thinking of measures in the budget, including the accelerated capital cost allowance, which applies mainly to the oil and gas sectors.

I've been here since 2018. I've seen a lot over that time. Even during the pandemic, with the emissions reduction fund, which benefited only the oil and gas sectors, there was no reduction in emissions. It was a direct subsidy.

So when I look at the government's measures as a whole, from my perspective, I see a government that acts as a facilitator for the oil and gas sectors. On the other hand, I hear people from those sectors saying that it's still not enough for them, that more should be done, that the government should be even more of a facilitator. As elected officials from Quebec, that's the disconnect we have difficulty understanding.

The federal government is making significant investments to support the oil and gas sectors. In response, people in these sectors say it's not enough, that they don't want to invest their own money in it, and that the legislative framework isn't acceptable enough for them.

I don't know whether you see that disconnect as well. I understand just how important the oil and gas sectors are to Alberta, but from outside Alberta, it often seems like you're spoiled children. Let me put it that way.

• (1130)

[English]

**Gurpreet Lail:** I would disagree. Obviously I'm going to disagree. We are not spoiled children. At the end of the day, without reliable energy sources for all Canadians, you wouldn't have heat in your homes. You wouldn't have lights on right now. I'm not sure how you travelled into the office today, but you wouldn't be able to do a lot of things that you do in everyday life. Without energy security, you also don't have food security, so it's not a "nice to have". It is a must have for all Canadians.

If you look at the Impact Assessment Act and other regulations that were put on the industry, there was no handout to industry. That was not a carrot by any means. It was put in place to match what was happening in the United States from what Biden had put in place. What Biden did increased investment in the United States at that time, and more Canadians flocked to the United States because it was viable for them to do business there. It was not the other way around.

**The Chair:** Thank you both.

Colleagues, we're going on to our second round, and we are going to start with Mr. Martel.

Mr. Martel, go ahead.

[Translation]

**Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Lail, my riding is in Saguenay, Quebec. We had the GNL Québec project, which aimed to export natural gas to Europe. I still wonder—and I'm going to have to come to terms with this—about the fact that the project was rejected because of our lack of social acceptance. I have a little trouble with that.

I'd like you to tell me about social acceptance. What is your definition of social acceptability? It seems that for certain projects people don't want to move forward with, it's always said that there is no social acceptance. I'd really like to understand the criteria. Is it because someone complains? Is the decision based on a poll? I'd appreciate hearing your views on this.

[English]

**Gurpreet Lail:** Unfortunately, I can't speak to why the community in Quebec went against the LNG, but that would have been a prime opportunity for Quebec. That would have created many jobs.

It puts money back into your province and into communities, so I'm not sure why that resulted—

[*Translation*]

**Richard Martel:** Excuse me, Ms. Lail. I just wanted to know your own definition of social acceptance, for example when something is rejected. What is your definition?

[*English*]

**Gurpreet Lail:** For me personally, in terms of social acceptance in the energy industry, what I've seen around the world is that we have top-of-the-line human rights practices and have great environmental practices. We are working on reducing our emissions exponentially year over year. That was started before ESG even became a thing. As an industry, we are working with indigenous partners across Canada to ensure there's economic reconciliation across the board.

I would say that is social acceptance. Also, those same companies that are providing energy resources are giving back to communities. When you're in rural and remote areas across Canada and you look at ice rinks, a majority of those ice rinks are sponsored by energy companies and the industry as a whole. That is social acceptance.

We not only provide energy; we give back to our communities as well.

[*Translation*]

**Richard Martel:** When the project was on the table, a lot of people said it wasn't worth pursuing because we didn't have a natural gas export contract with Europe. They said it wouldn't be profitable because we didn't have a contract. The project wasn't in place yet, but people were saying that since we didn't have a contract with Europe to export natural gas, there was no point in getting it off the ground. What would you say to them?

[*English*]

**Gurpreet Lail:** I would ask where they are getting it from. Did we even go to Europe and say, “We can help you get off your reliance on Russia”?

We are here today, in 2026, and that's the problem taking place. If we had built that LNG in 2010 and let it go forward, we would not be having this discussion today. I think Quebec would be in a better spot and Canadians would be in a better spot, and we would be helping our allies across the globe right now get out of energy poverty.

There's always a case. Someone just has to be willing and brave enough to make it.

• (1135)

[*Translation*]

**Richard Martel:** Given the recent announcement of the memorandum of understanding for the new pipeline, how long do you think it will be before the first backhoe breaks ground?

[*English*]

**Gurpreet Lail:** That's all going to depend on where we are with our deadlines on some of the points that were outlined in the MOU. This also includes conversations that are taking place with the in-

igenous corporations, which my colleague Stephen Buffalo can answer better than I can.

It's all going to be dependent on where we're at with investment, where we're at with regulatory reform and whether we've gotten rid of any of the nine “bad laws” that Premier Smith mentioned.

[*Translation*]

**Richard Martel:** The memorandum of understanding and Bill C-5 promise to reduce approval times for natural resource projects to two years. In an article published in July 2025, the Montreal Economic Institute argues that an 18-month limit is the maximum time frame that should be proposed. How long do you think it will take to fully restore investor confidence?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Could we have a quick answer, please? You have just 20 seconds.

**Gurpreet Lail:** We need shorter timelines, for sure. If we can get them down to 18 months, we can look at becoming competitive again. As I said, in the United States, they can go from start to finish in four years. It takes us 15. We need to get that down fairly significantly.

**The Chair:** Thank you both.

Mr. Clark, you have five minutes.

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

Thank you to the witnesses for being here with us this morning.

Mr. Buffalo, I want to pose my questions to you, sir.

I want to start by commending you for the approach you outlined in your opening statement, which was one of positivity, of pragmatism and of looking forward to see what we can do to work together to benefit all Canadians and, of course, the people you represent.

In your statement, you touched on the approach you're taking, one that is not based on an “us versus them” type of model. Could you elaborate on that a bit, Mr. Buffalo? How does that work in practice, and what kinds of results have you seen recently by taking that kind of approach when it comes to energy?

**Stephen Buffalo:** Of course, building trust has always been a paramount thing when we talk about the issues we're talking about today. The opportunity to have indigenous oil and gas reach world markets is an opportunity we can't overlook.

As mentioned, our people are struggling under the Indian Act and its funding, and we're seeing cutbacks in certain areas. The “us versus them” thing comes in through different ways. We used to have an issue with industry. Now you're seeing strong partnerships being formed with first nations communities and industry partners. It's come a long way.

Of course, it's about having more dialogue. When we had that last pipeline conference in November, while the MOU was being signed at the exact same time, we talked about certain things that would help put the pipeline forward and convince people that it's something that can work if people are working together. One thing we have to teach our relatives on the coast is what it takes to get a barrel of oil. The one thing they want to learn is where the money goes with a barrel of oil. What does a pipeline produce and where does the money go?

There are certain contexts we have to talk about to really amplify the conversation. I think that once we get through all those things, we'll see a positive result and can move things forward.

**Braedon Clark:** Thank you for that. I appreciate that response.

I want to get your view on something that was mentioned a few weeks ago when the national chief was here presenting at committee. You touched on loan guarantee programs and the value of those. As we know, the national indigenous loan guarantee program has a budget of \$10 billion now, which is wonderful, but there is one thing I'm curious about and would like your opinion on.

You said you represent 130 first nations. Obviously, there would be a spectrum of size and sophistication—I'm not sure if that's the right word—perhaps among the different groups. How do you make sure these programs also work for smaller first nations or groups that may not have the ability to access large-scale projects, so we can see the benefits that flow from them spread more equitably across our country?

• (1140)

**Stephen Buffalo:** Not only is it about first nations in relation to proximity and sharing with each other, but we're all in the same boat when it comes to the sources of revenue that are coming to our nations. Ultimately, as I mentioned, the industry has been very positive in creating consortiums and getting groups together.

What I've seen through the Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation is that the partnership between industry and first nations has brought together nations that would traditionally not work together for some reason. They are participating in deals that we see—23 first nations with Métis settlements. That's unheard of, but it takes that type of initiative. Then the projects move through, and you're seeing wealth generated for the communities.

In the nine investments that we approved at the Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation, you're going to see about \$1.4 billion go back to the communities by 2050. That's a game-changer in itself.

There's still a lot of work that needs to be done. Having more opportunity to find things, to get things lifted.... For example, as you heard mentioned, Bill C-69 seems to be an issue. It's about finding that balance of economic development and protecting the environment. I think that's what we should be striving for.

**The Chair:** You have 20 seconds.

**Braedon Clark:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have one last question, Mr. Buffalo.

You touched on there being, I think you said, 5,000 kilometres of pipeline that indigenous groups may have some level of ownership in. You may not know this off the top of your head, and I apologize, but what does that look like compared to even 10 years ago? From what you indicated, it seems like that's been moving in a very positive direction.

**Stephen Buffalo:** For sure. I think everyone has accepted the Supreme Court rulings that say first nations have indigenous right and title. It's now about working with communities to ensure that they're part of projects that are affecting them, either directly in their own communities or in and around their traditional territory. That's probably the best thing.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simard, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

**Mario Simard:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Lail, I'd like to continue the discussion we were having a little earlier.

In response to one of my questions, you kindly indicated that, without oil, I would have difficulty heating my home and getting around by car. That may be a misunderstanding, because the majority of homes in Quebec are heated with hydroelectricity. Quebec's major industrial projects rely on blocks of hydroelectric power. As for transportation, I use an electric vehicle about 70% of the time. I was also surprised, while going door to door in Terrebonne, by the number of electric vehicles that are now appearing in Quebec.

I'm saying this because I think it's important for you to understand that our interests diverge. Outside Alberta and the western provinces, there are people who view federal government investments in certain so-called strategic sectors very negatively—sectors that, in particular, bring nothing to Quebec.

As for me, I have no objection to Alberta wanting to develop the oil sands and liquefied natural gas sectors and pursue exports. However, when federal government funding is sought to do so, I see it as strategic investments that will not take place in our regions. In that sense, we are competing with one another. As a result, if I had some friendly advice to offer, it would be to find a way to convince people that the industry itself can make these strategic investments.

At present, my impression is that the industry is asking the federal government to assume the risks associated with these strategic investments and infrastructure projects. I've been here since 2018, and I still haven't seen a single oil or gas infrastructure project move forward with industry investment. Nor have I seen—aside from advertising—significant investments in carbon capture and storage strategies. I believe the Pathways Alliance plans to spend more on advertising than on actual carbon capture and storage projects.

If you wish to submit documents to the committee, I remain open to all your proposals. I'm simply waiting to be won over. That's all.

[English]

**The Chair:** Unfortunately, that's our time with you, Monsieur Simard, but one of the witnesses can answer that in a response—

**An hon. member:** Or in writing....

**The Chair:** —or in writing. That's a good point.

We are open to briefs from either of you and from any witness and would appreciate that very much.

Thank you, Monsieur Simard.

We'll go on to Mr. Rowe for five minutes.

• (1145)

**Jonathan Rowe (Terra Nova—The Peninsulas, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have a couple of questions for Ms. Lail.

It's rumoured that Newfoundland and Labrador has more undiscovered oil and gas than Norway. When I talk to people in the industry, there's a lot of excitement about this, but it's been years since we've seen bids from oil companies to explore our offshore oil and gas.

From talking to people in the industry, it seems that there's a lot of red tape, but there's also a massive veto that the government holds. Currently, if a company invests billions of dollars in exploration, the federal government can decide—at any time—that this is a marine protected area and shut down that exploration, leaving that company high and dry.

Have you seen this in other exploration policies, perhaps in Alberta or throughout the world? Do you think it creates too much risk for these companies to make something economically viable?

**Gurpreet Lail:** Absolutely. We don't see that here in Alberta. It's a different province.

We have had companies meet with premiers in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, because they've come to see us here in Alberta to talk about job opportunities, exploration and production and what that means for communities in all eastern provinces.

Federal government policies have hindered us and have hindered investment and companies going into those provinces, but there are resources there. They're resource-rich.

**Jonathan Rowe:** Absolutely, and I think there's a way we can reduce some of that risk to make things more economically appealing to many companies. Thankfully, the new PC government in Newfoundland and Labrador just announced the Bay du Nord project. There are four million barrels of oil in that one project alone.

One of the good things the PCs included in this deal was the ability for Newfoundland and Labrador and Canadian companies to put out tenders on many of the components of the construction of that project. Do you think that reinstalling the 10% tax credit in the Atlantic Canadian tax credit program for capital expenses would give

Canadian companies a competitive edge? Also, how would that impact manufacturing in the Canadian economy?

**Gurpreet Lail:** Oh wow. Unfortunately, I'm not an economist. However, I would say that if there is an investment and there is a carrot, as I call it, for investment to come in, it would flock. Not only is it about investing in infrastructure and investing in exploration and production, but you have to look at the end result. It's about creating jobs. Adding the number of easterners we could employ who would keep jobs in eastern Canada, versus coming out here to Alberta for two weeks on or one month on, would be hugely beneficial.

We just had this whole conversation with the Premier of Nova Scotia last week. His concern was that if we explore and find something, do we have enough people to come and work? We have the expertise and we have the capital and institutional knowledge. We can make it happen, and we want to be competitive with other jurisdictions, for sure.

**Jonathan Rowe:** You've hit the nail right on the head, because I know that in Newfoundland and Labrador we have massive unemployment among trades workers. We have many Newfoundlanders flying back and forth to western Canada, Alberta and up north.

The workers are there, and they want to stay home. Grandparents want to see their grandkids stay in Newfoundland and not go away.

You mentioned the global energy supply and our obligation to our allies. I couldn't agree with you more. Our energy is located within one of the most politically stable countries in the world. Not many energy companies are as politically stable as the ones we have.

I have two questions there. Do you think that over the past 10 years we should have built pipelines and infrastructure offshore to get our energy going east and west, rather than leaving it in the ground and, as we have often heard from these Liberals, shutting down the oil fields by 2035, which to me seems outrageous and unfair to our allies as part of international NATO defence. Also, do you think we should even build more refineries and secondary processing in Canada to process our own resources here in Canada to supply our allies? To me, it seems like a win-win-win, but I wanted to see what your perspective was on that.

**Gurpreet Lail:** Yes, for sure. I think when you look at our supply and what we can do, we should have started a decade or two decades ago. There would have been a business case. There would have been proponents for us to build and to get our product out to market. We can't have a dead industry by 2035.

You have to understand that whether you're drilling for lithium or extracting minerals, you need to keep the energy industry moving. It's not just oil and gas. It is everything in between. We need to power up geothermal. You can look at provinces that rely on wind and solar, and someone just talked about hydro. Everything has a role to play.

In Canada, we had the most successful emissions reduction when we took away the reliance on coal and moved on to natural gas. That is huge. We shouldn't forget about that. You have countries like India and China doubling down on coal. We don't live in a bubble. The atmosphere is the same.

• (1150)

**Jonathan Rowe:** Absolutely. It's helping the world lower emissions through our green energy. I like it.

**The Chair:** Thank you both.

Finally we're going to Mr. Danko, who's going to wrap up this panel.

Mr. Danko, you have five minutes.

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

Canadians elected a serious, pragmatic government, and I'm hearing lots of positive momentum this morning in the oil and gas industry, in particular focusing on Alberta production, as my colleague mentioned, being at record highs. I'll also note the record highs of foreign direct investment in the Canadian energy industry. That's lots of good news for Canadian workers and for Canadian industry. You've heard the Prime Minister say many times, "Canada has what the world wants."

Ms. Lail, you mentioned some of the current geopolitical challenges, highlighting the need for energy security in Canada when you have an administration, the Trump administration in the United States, that starts a foreign war and drives up the cost of oil exponentially. I think it's the single highest increase in the price of oil and gas in history. There's no exit plan and no idea of how to extract themselves from that.

It just drives home the point that Canada does, indeed, have what the world needs, and we need to find ways to get that to market. I'm in total agreement there.

You made a really interesting point early on about the labour market in the Alberta oil and gas industry and the fact that, with the increase in production and the momentum we're seeing in the industry, it's difficult to fill those positions. I'd like to give you the opportunity to expand on that. What can we do as a federal government and as a country to make sure we are attracting the best and brightest to Canada and have the labour available to fill the jobs that are available in the energy industry?

**Gurpreet Lail:** I think the federal government needs to start talking about the fact that there's a bright future for young people in trades and skilled labour in this industry now and moving into the future. They're a part of innovation technology. There's a lot of artificial intelligence being used, and people don't know that. For the last two decades, they've heard that this is a dead industry, that it's

going nowhere and that we've burned the environment. That's simply not true.

We need to start switching to a more positive narrative, full of facts on where we are headed as an industry and on the kind of talent we need. In order for us to be best in class, we need younger talent coming into this industry.

**John-Paul Danko:** I'm from Hamilton, the heart of the Canadian industrial centre with the steel industry. A lot of steel produced in Ontario, in Hamilton in particular, is used in the oil and gas industry, so there's a lot of momentum for the buy Canadian policy.

I want to extend the question about skilled trades to Mr. Buffalo. That's something I'm particularly interested in, having worked in construction.

How can we make sure that indigenous communities are directly benefiting, are participating in training and are part of the labour market when it comes to these large energy projects?

**Stephen Buffalo:** We can't help but notice the activity in and around our communities. Of course, we want our young people to achieve some sort of designation to continue their livelihood and to have the opportunity to collaborate with industry and maybe be provided with federal resources for more training.

During COVID, we had the site reclamation program here. Unfortunately with COVID, we were only allowed to do 20 students per classroom, but we educated over 300 students, and they were hired walking right out of the door to help with site reclamation in their communities. That's where the support should be.

Gurpreet and I are part of an organization called the Canadian Energy Executive Association. We've gone to post-secondary institutions and talked about how important it is that they take their place in the natural resource sector and energy sector. At one time, there was fearmongering about oil and bitumen, which were villainized somewhat, and about how bad pipelines are for the country, but we've realized that's the strength of Canada and of what we do here, so advocating in those spaces is very important.

We had some good outreach in all forms of energy, be it nuclear, hydro or whatever you talk about. It's important that the dialogue continue among the parties of government, industry and our communities to ensure that we take advantage of what we have in our areas.

• (1155)

**John-Paul Danko:** Thank you.

I'm not sure how much time I have left, Chair.

**The Chair:** You have 10 seconds.

**John-Paul Danko:** Okay. I'll just wrap up by saying that, obviously, we have some ongoing challenges in the energy industry, but our government is there to provide the world with what Canada has.

**The Chair:** Thank you, colleagues, and thank you to our witnesses in particular. It was a lively round of questions, answers and comments.

I'll repeat what I said earlier. We welcome briefs. We welcome additional information from your organizations.

Really, thank you very much for spending time with us today.

Colleagues, we're going to suspend for about five to seven minutes while we get the next panel set up.

• (1155) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1200)

**The Chair:** Welcome back, colleagues. We'll resume the meeting.

I would like to welcome our witnesses for this second hour.

We have with us, from the Canada Energy Regulator, Darren Christie, chief economist, and Mike Johnson, technical leader.

From the Department of Natural Resources, we have Kimberly Lavoie, assistant deputy minister; Drew Leyburne, assistant deputy minister, energy systems sector; and Erin O'Brien, assistant deputy minister, fuels sector.

I'd like to make a few comments for the benefit of the new witnesses. Please wait until I recognize you before speaking. As a reminder, all comments should be addressed through the chair.

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

Mr. Leyburne, we're going to start with you. You have five minutes.

**Drew Leyburne (Assistant Deputy Minister, Energy Systems Sector, Department of Natural Resources):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, members of the committee, for the invitation to appear today.

I'd like to acknowledge that I'm speaking from the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe nation today.

In a world marked by rapid change and shifting trade patterns, Canada's energy resources across conventional, clean and emerging sectors give us a competitive advantage. Energy exports in fuels, uranium and electricity already represent more than \$200 billion in value and almost one-third of the goods we export.

Today, nearly all those exports flow to a single market. Expanding our global reach strengthens Canada's resilience and creates new opportunities for workers, communities and industries across the country. Canada is stepping up as a reliable partner on the world stage. It has committed to producing an additional 140,000 barrels per day starting this month—a clear example of the role Canada can play when our allies face uncertainty.

To respond to that uncertainty at home, the federal government announced earlier today that it is providing relief to Canadians through the pausing of the excise tax on fuel.

• (1205)

[*Translation*]

However, our long-term ambition goes well beyond responding to crises. Canada's energy exports can advance global energy security, accelerate climate change progress and create good jobs here at home, while deepening partnerships with indigenous communities and expanding opportunities in every region.

The memorandum of understanding with Alberta is one way for the government to develop Canada's full energy potential and expand access to global markets. Under that agreement, the government anticipates new applications for a privately funded east-to-west pipeline by July 1.

[*English*]

Both governments agree on the importance of the pathways plus carbon capture project and industrial carbon pricing, reflecting a shared commitment to responsible development. Alberta has also committed to working with British Columbia to ensure that benefits reach communities in that province.

Taken together, these steps show how Canada can modernize approvals, strengthen infrastructure and expand market access, delivering more Canadian energy to global customers. These actions form part of a broader shift to show how Canada is positioning itself for the future not only by expanding the energy we can deliver abroad, but also by ensuring that what we deliver is cleaner, more reliable and able to compete in a rapidly changing world.

[*Translation*]

The government's climate competitiveness strategy lays out a clear objective to make Canadian energy products more competitive in a world that values low-carbon, reliable and responsibly produced energy. To that end, budget 2025 includes measures that strengthen Canada's ability to expand energy exports, in particular the \$5-billion trade diversification corridors fund. Budget 2025 also invests \$4 million to maintain Natural Resources Canada's capacity to promote nuclear energy exports and engage with priority markets.

[*English*]

Moreover, the budget reinstates accelerated capital cost allowances for low-carbon LNG facilities, making new investment more attractive and rewarding projects with strong emissions performance.

Amendments to the Canadian Energy Regulator Act extend LNG export licences to 50 years, giving project owners greater certainty for long-term planning, phased investments and competitive returns.

These changes directly benefit the two LNG projects currently before the Major Projects Office, which plays a central role in unlocking export opportunities. Together, these two projects represent tens of billions of dollars in potential investment and thousands of good-paying jobs during construction and long-term operations in both B.C. and Alberta. If all planned LNG projects proceed, Canada could export up to 100 million tonnes of LNG a year by the 2040s, which would be a significant opportunity for workers, industry and our national economy.

Exporting energy only matters if there is global demand. That's why the government is also building strong international relationships.

In early March, Canada and India signed a new strategic energy partnership focused on LNG, petroleum, uranium, solar energy and hydrogen. Through other recent international engagements, agreements and memoranda of understanding, the government is expanding market access, building new partnerships and ensuring that Canada's energy industry and the communities that depend on it are positioned to succeed in the long term.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

Now we will go to Mr. Christie for five minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Darren Christie (Chief Economist, Canada Energy Regulator):** Good afternoon. Thank you for inviting the Canada Energy Regulator, or CER. In my opening remarks, I'll briefly describe the CER's mandate and discuss our recently published report entitled "Canada's Energy Future 2026".

Before going further, I would like to acknowledge that I'm on the unceded, ancestral and traditional territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe nation.

The CER's mandate is clear. It regulates energy infrastructure—specifically international and interprovincial pipelines and power lines as well as offshore energy projects in areas not covered by a federal-provincial agreement—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 regulating the export of hydrocarbons and electricity from Canada.

[*English*]

Pipelines are, of course, critical for accessing export markets. The CER understands that regulatory efficiency, clarity and predictability can affect project viability and timelines. The CER's ongoing commitment to regulatory improvement and efficiencies supports timely decision-making while maintaining strong protections for the environment, the rights of indigenous peoples and all Canadians.

The CER is also responsible for advising and reporting on energy matters. This includes developing a range of energy information products, such as provincial-territorial energy profiles, market snapshots that highlight key trends in Canada's energy sector, and oil and gas production statistics. This work also includes our energy

futures series, which is our flagship energy information product in which we provide evidence-based analysis of how possible energy futures might unfold for Canadians over the long term.

Last month, the CER released the latest edition of the energy futures series, "Canada's Energy Future 2026". The report explores four possible scenarios for Canadian energy over the long term.

Our baseline case, called "Current Measures", uses only policies that were in place in November 2025 and applies moderate assumptions for factors like energy prices and economic growth. Our higher scenario and lower scenario vary some key assumptions to create a range around the baseline "Current Measures" scenario. Lastly, we include a scenario that shows a net-zero emissions pathway for Canada. All scenarios span every energy commodity and region across the country, using economic and energy models.

Our scenarios show that where Canada's energy system ends up depends heavily on factors like economic growth, international energy prices, climate action, technology and investment choices. The report highlights different outlooks for oil and natural gas production, which drives significant exports from Canada. In the case of Canadian crude oil production, it grows in the short term across all scenarios, but longer-term outcomes diverge, mainly due to oil price assumptions. By 2050, production spans a wide range, from 12% below 2024 levels to 18% above.

Canadian natural gas production increases from about 19 billion cubic feet, or Bcf, per day currently to between 21 and 32 Bcf per day in 2050 depending on the scenario. This growth is driven largely by assumed LNG export levels, which account for a growing share of total natural gas production by 2050.

With regard to trade diversification, the report finds that under all four scenarios, Canada continues to send most crude oil exports to the U.S., if existing pipeline infrastructure is used much like it is today.

● (1210)

[*Translation*]

Lastly, in the case of electricity, although generation is growing significantly across all our scenarios, exports to the United States are falling modestly, while flows between provinces are more than doubling.

Overall, the report entitled "Canada's Energy Future 2026" reinforces that, while the future is uncertain, the direction of Canada's energy system will be shaped by the decisions made over time. The CER's role is to provide the analyses that will help to inform those decisions.

In closing, I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak about the work of the CER. I look forward to your questions.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Leyburne and Mr. Christie.

We are now going to start our rounds of questions and comments.

We're going to start with Mr. Tochor for six minutes.

**Corey Tochor:** Thank you to our witnesses for being here today.

What effect would the energy east project have had on our economy if it had been completed?

**Darren Christie:** From the CER's standpoint, that's not something we've taken under study. In our energy futures report, we don't—

**Corey Tochor:** You're the economist for the regulations. The Liberals have changed the regulations, which has hurt our industry, and you're saying that no one did the math on what happened when we killed energy east.

**Darren Christie:** The CER would have reviewed the application. It would have had processes in place to review the application and would have made the—

**Corey Tochor:** I'll keep it simple. It's not just about how much the economy has been hurt.

Do you think energy east would have strengthened Canada's sovereignty and reduced our dependency on the United States, yes or no?

**Darren Christie:** In the recent energy futures report, we highlighted that central Canada obtains a significant amount of oil that is produced in the United States or, to the extent that it's coming from western Canada, that transits through the U.S.—

• (1215)

**Corey Tochor:** Regarding the energy east project, which would have taken energy from western Canada and helped eastern Canada, you're not able to say that it would have strengthened our sovereignty and made us less reliant on the United States.

**Darren Christie:** To the extent that the barrels used in central and eastern Canada would come from western Canada and stay north of the Great Lakes rather than go through the United States as they are today, there's an energy security difference that would come from that, given that right now so much—

**Corey Tochor:** Then we're less sovereign because of the decision to kill energy east.

**An hon. member:** [Inaudible—Editor]

**Corey Tochor:** Now we have heckling from the Liberals. The track record of the Liberals is that they changed the regulation and killed that project, and there is no calculation of what that cost us in dollars by the chief economist for the regulator.

The simple question that no one is willing to answer truthfully is, are we less of a country because of it? No one at the regulatory body has an opinion on this.

**Darren Christie:** A crude oil pipeline from western Canada to eastern Canada would clearly provide the opportunity for central Canada and eastern Canada to receive barrels produced in Canada without transiting through another country for consumption in Canadian refineries.

**Corey Tochor:** When oil goes through the United States, do we pay a premium?

**Darren Christie:** I'm sorry. Would you repeat that?

**Corey Tochor:** It's the old story. We ship oil to the United States, and then we buy it back. There's a premium paid on it, so we're poorer as a country because the Liberals changed the regulation to kill energy east.

I'll shift to the international side. How could it have affected international relations given issues like the energy crisis in Europe? Would energy east have strengthened our position in the free world? Anyone?

I'll switch projects. Another pipeline that was killed because of a regulation fully paid for by the private sector was northern gateway. Has a calculation ever been done on what northern gateway would have added to our economy if it had been completed?

**Darren Christie:** As part of the regulatory review process, there would have been information submitted by the project proponent. The report from the regulator would have relied on that evidence, which would have included economic impacts as part of the overall study from the proponent.

**Corey Tochor:** Can you endeavour to provide that number?

**Darren Christie:** We can find what was submitted to the regulator.

**Corey Tochor:** This is another important project for our sovereignty and for the strength of our country.

Would the northern gateway project have strengthened Canadian sovereignty and reduced our dependence on the United States if the Liberals hadn't killed it through regulation changes?

**Darren Christie:** At present, there is some amount of spare capacity available, including to coastal markets. Where we would be right now if a pipeline that wasn't built had been built is a difficult counterfactual to talk about.

**Corey Tochor:** I'm from Saskatchewan. We are about to enter seeding, and we're all hopeful for another bumper crop. There's deep concern that because the Liberals have killed energy east, northern gateway and a number of other pipelines, once that bumper crop gets off, the rails are going to be full with oil, as that's the only way we can get that energy to market. With a spike in prices, it will bump that crop off.

There are serious concerns in western Canada that because of not even the inaction of the Liberals, but the purposely blocking of pipelines, there will be families who won't be able to feed themselves because that crop is not going to get to markets. It won't be any family in this room, but around the world, families will be starving because of the effects of the regulation changes the Liberals have enacted that killed projects like northern gateway.

• (1220)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Tochor. That's your time.

We're going to Mr. Guay for six minutes.

[Translation]

**Claude Guay (LaSalle—Émard—Verdun, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think that we can discuss more than just oil and gas. I would like to talk about electricity, for example. Mr. Leyburne, I think that my question is for you.

The Prime Minister and Minister Hodgson recently spoke about the need for a national electricity strategy that applies across the country and that reduces barriers between the provinces. We'll need to double the country's power grid to keep up with demand.

How can the Government of Canada improve Canada's ability to meet its domestic electricity generation needs, which would also help to export that electricity? We currently export electricity, but we face challenges. If the government helps to overcome them, we can export more electricity. How can our government help?

[English]

**Drew Leyburne:** Yes, you're correct that electricity plays an important part in Canada's energy export story. While not as big as some other commodities, it does represent billions of dollars in exports every year. Canada is the world's third-largest exporter of electricity, and for obvious reasons of geography, it would be the United States' largest producer of imported electricity.

There are multiple opportunities to increase those numbers. They have actually decreased from time to time in recent years because of issues like drought that affect the ability of hydro projects to produce and export electricity. The more that Canada is able to get electrons moving between provinces and territories, the more that frees things up and provides flexibility for exports. Efforts like energy efficiency to reduce Canadian domestic demand also free up electrons for future exports to markets where often they can reach higher prices in the U.S.

Those are, I would say, the main areas that we're looking at right now.

[Translation]

**Claude Guay:** Another aspect is nuclear power generation. If we strengthen this industry, I think that it will help stabilize the power grid. This could also help Canada export other types of energy.

Is that right?

[English]

**Drew Leyburne:** That's correct. Nuclear will certainly result in a major increase in electricity generation in Canada if some of the forecasted reactors in Ontario, New Brunswick, Saskatchewan and Alberta move forward. It's also worth mentioning that the nuclear industry in its own right is a major source of exports for Canada as well. In uranium in 2024, we reached an all-time high, with nearly \$4 billion in exports just in uranium, and an equal or greater amount in nuclear technology and services. It's a pretty significant

export opportunity that will continue to grow as Canada establishes itself even further as a tier one nuclear nation.

**Claude Guay:** Thank you, Mr. Leyburne.

Ms. Lavoie, the Government of Canada has identified the port of Churchill, in close co-operation with Manitoba's Crown-indigenous corporation, which is helping spearhead the project, as key to Canada's energy export future and an opportunity for indigenous equity ownership. Can you speak more to us about that?

**Kimberly Lavoie (Assistant Deputy Minister, Nòkwewashk, Department of Natural Resources):** The port of Churchill is on track to becoming more of a four-season port, which increases opportunity for exports to Europe and elsewhere.

As we look at the opportunities ahead of us—the port of Churchill, as a strategy, has been referred to the Major Projects Office—there is an opportunity to partner with the Province of Manitoba, as well as with a multitude of indigenous nations. There are first nations in Manitoba that are interested in potentially being part of a natural gas pipeline that might export out of there. There's interest in having an equity stake in the railway. There is also interest in the transportation system that might take things from the port of Churchill elsewhere.

There are numerous opportunities from both a first nations perspective and an Inuit perspective. The Inuit of Nunavut as well as Nunavut—as we look at where boats may go along that route—are very much interested in the opportunities this provides. Certainly, there have been discussions with the Canada Infrastructure Bank around some of those opportunities, because they allow for indigenous equity, and there's the indigenous loan guarantee program, which is operated out of the Canada Development Investment Corporation, or CDEV.

Conversations are ongoing around what these opportunities may be, but the opportunities are there, and there is interest.

• (1225)

**Claude Guay:** Thank you.

Ms. O'Brien, this is probably a quick one.

We just announced a 50-year export licence for LNG in budget 2025. This increases certainty and makes gas export projects more financially viable and de-risked.

Am I correct about that? What have you observed that would support this measure?

**The Chair:** It will have to be a quick answer, please.

**Erin O'Brien (Assistant Deputy Minister, Fuels Sector, Department of Natural Resources):** The short answer is yes. The expectation is that the measure will make a number of LNG projects developing across our country more competitive.

In addition to that measure, budget 2025 also included the extension of an accelerated capital cost allowance—a measure to support the competitiveness of LNG projects.

**The Chair:** Thank you both.

[*Translation*]

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

**Mario Simard:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Leyburne, you said earlier in your opening remarks that Canada was an energy power that could contribute to global energy security and respond to uncertainty. This brings to mind two witnesses, Professor Normand Mousseau and Professor Pineau, who appeared before us. They came to tell us that, in their opinion, Canada wasn't an energy superpower that could influence energy prices around the world.

We understand the current geopolitical situation, which is creating major distortions. However, I think that efforts are currently being made to mislead people by claiming that producing more oil in Canada could result in lower prices at the pump. I would like to hear the CER officials' opinion on this matter, as well as your view, Mr. Leyburne.

If I go by what the experts say, I don't think that producing more oil in Canada would lower the price at the pump. As you know, oil prices are managed by the stock market. Canada's production would have almost no effect on the stock market.

Can you dispel the myth that pump prices would be lower if Canada were to produce more oil?

[*English*]

**Drew Leyburne:** Mr. Chair, I'm going to pass this question to my colleague Erin, who's dealing with oil and gas more directly.

**Erin O'Brien:** With respect to Canada's standing in oil and gas markets, I'm sure the committee is well aware that Canada is currently the world's fourth- and fifth-largest oil- and gas-producing country. This affords us many economic benefits across the country.

That being said, despite being one of the world's largest oil producers, we remain tied to global oil pricing, especially for refined fuels. As such, the increased pricing due to the current conflict is translating into increased prices at the pump. Even if we increase our domestic oil production, we are still subject to global pricing, so we will see the effects on our economy through that vector.

[*Translation*]

**Mario Simard:** Thank you. This myth has endured for ages. I think that some of my colleagues have a vested interest in spreading it. So Canadian oil production, which is reportedly on the rise, bears no relation to the price that we pay at the pump. Thank you for that clear answer.

As part of this study, we're also trying to look at infrastructure. If Canada wants to export more energy, we'll need infrastructure. Yet I

have a nagging sense that people in the industry aren't ready to take on the financial risk of infrastructure.

When it comes to the work of our analysts, I think that you could do something helpful. I imagine that you could provide an overview of the industry's investments in infrastructure over a period of 20 or even 30 years. I wonder whether you could submit this overview to the committee. It would be quite useful to us.

By infrastructure investments, I don't mean the maintenance of the current infrastructure, or the investments that most industries must make to maintain our infrastructure. I'm talking about investments in new infrastructure. It seems that, over a period of 20 or 30 years, the industry hasn't invested much. We're currently trying to put the monkey on the back of the government by saying that the lack of investment stems from its regulatory environment.

Could you give the committee data on the industry's investments in infrastructure?

● (1230)

[*English*]

**Erin O'Brien:** I'm sure we could provide that information.

Just for clarity, are you seeking information on all infrastructure investments, or did I hear that you are only looking for greenfield?

[*Translation*]

**Mario Simard:** A breakdown of the information would be helpful. You know, when it comes to the major industries, I've often been told about the millions of dollars invested but mostly directed towards infrastructure maintenance. These investments don't necessarily seek to boost production or increase marketing. I understand that companies must invest in infrastructure maintenance. If you could provide some type of breakdown of these investments to show how much the industry has actually invested in infrastructure to boost exports, I would be curious to look at this over a period of 20 or 30 years. I think that this would provide a good overview of the situation.

I think that Mr. Leyburne would also like to respond.

[*English*]

**Drew Leyburne:** I'll supplement my colleague's response.

NRCan has worked for over a decade with provinces, territories and stakeholders to develop a major projects inventory that actually lays out—and this can be looked at retrospectively—all of the investments that are made across natural resources, including in energy. It does not include maintenance. It's more for newbuilds, or the creation of new infrastructure.

We can certainly share that information. I believe our colleagues at the CER do this, but Statistics Canada and the Canadian Centre for Energy Information also track a number of those data points.

**The Chair:** That's your time, Monsieur Simard.

Colleagues, we're going to our second round.

We have some committee business at the end. As you're aware, we have a committee report to approve.

I'll have to reduce our final two spots, for Mr. Martel and Mr. Clark, to two and a half minutes each. We'll do the regular round with the first three speakers.

We're going to start with Mr. Malette for five minutes.

**Gaétan Malette (Kapuskasung—Timmins—Mushkegowuk, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Leyburne, the federal government's announcement to increase the size of protected land to 30% of the country's land base is of concern. This initiative could hinder resource development particularly in the region I represent, one of the big ridings in this country.

I'll mention a few names. You start near the Quebec border in Kirkland Lake, which is a gold mine producer. You move on to Matheson and Val Gagné, which have very strong agriculture. It's probably one of the country's fastest-developing areas in agriculture. You continue on Highway 11 to Cochrane, which has gold mines and forestry. Smooth Rock Falls, Kapuskasing and Hearst have strong forestry. Then you go to Hudson Bay and Peawanuck, and back to Moosonee. Then there are gold mines around Cochrane again and lumber. In going to Timmins, you go through one of the largest nickel deposits. There are gold mine producers in Timmins. There is Chapleau and forestry.

Now, where is this 30% of the land base going to come from? What measures are being taken to ensure that the resources of these communities are not going to be affected by this new designation?

I named a few communities, but there are 300 forestry communities across this country. There are probably as many in mining and thousands in agriculture. What measures are being taken?

• (1235)

**Drew Leyburne:** To be honest, I'm not able to speak specifically to the commitment and how the processes for protecting those lands are being managed, because they're done through other departments in the federal family. However, I can say from the Natural Resources Canada perspective that we contribute to an assessment of the resource potential of the areas that are being considered for protected areas, to make sure that a natural resource—whether energy, mines or other natural resources—is considered in the decision-making processes about where those protected areas will be.

**Gaétan Malette:** Was Natural Resources Canada consulted prior to this?

**Drew Leyburne:** Do you mean prior to the announcement of the 30%?

**Gaétan Malette:** Yes.

**Drew Leyburne:** Yes, I'm sure that through cabinet and other processes NRCan was involved.

**Gaétan Malette:** I ask because there's a very grave concern. All of these communities live off the land base, so we'd like to know where it's going to come from. We know today where the gold mines are, but we don't know where tomorrow's gold mines will be or where rare mineral deposits are.

Could you come back to the committee with some further information on that?

**Drew Leyburne:** We could endeavour to work with the other federal departments to see how much detail they have on where those areas will be.

**Gaétan Malette:** Here's my other question. Most of the area I've described is provincial Crown land, so, again, how will that be worked out?

**Drew Leyburne:** I can see if we can also provide more information to the committee about the process that will be used to define the protected areas.

**Gaétan Malette:** I have another question, for Mr. Buffalo.

**The Chair:** He's gone.

**Gaétan Malette:** Oh, he's gone. All right.

We'd appreciate receiving some information on this, realizing how important it is to thousands of communities in this country and how complex this can be.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Hogan, you have five minutes.

**Corey Hogan:** Thank you, Chair.

It's wonderful to see you all. I always say it's good to have Canadians on every panel. I'm glad to see that this study has been good for continuing a really strong streak of that, Mr. Christie.

I'm grateful to our professional public service. You are non-partisan professionals implementing the agendas of elected officials. I was a senior official in the governments of former premiers Notley and Kenney, and I know first-hand that it is not always fun to be treated like a tennis ball being smashed between nets. I will endeavour not to do that, but I am going to ask you a question that many witnesses have been asked.

We as a country have an interest in east-west connections. We have an interest in energy sovereignty. We have an interest in optionality. The market, being rational, will not always default to long routes because there are shorter routes to tidewater.

Energy east was withdrawn by TransCanada because of economics—not because of government regulations—and because this is a north-south continent and supply chains have developed to reflect that reality. If you're in Ontario, it's cheaper to get energy from Pennsylvania than Alberta; that's the simple reality. That's just geography.

When we think of exports, that's also true. It is cheaper to export over short distances to neighbours than long distances across the globe.

Profit is always going to be the driver in the free market, but we're not finding that entirely in our interest as a nation. How can the government incentivize these public priorities—energy sovereignty and optionality of markets—without significantly distorting the free market upon which we rely and under which we operate?

**Erin O'Brien:** You've raised a number of really critical issues that we're currently thinking about and trying to solve.

You're right that Canada's pipeline infrastructure in particular—but this isn't unique to oil and gas—has for the past 50 or 60 years been developed according to a north-south route, and that has served Canada very well over these years. That is a relationship that we will need to continue to nurture, but we've realized that this dependency has created some vulnerabilities, and we're looking to address those vulnerabilities by increasing market diversification and expanding opportunities with allies in other markets, particularly facing Asia.

As you noted, commercially speaking, it makes a lot of sense for Canada to look at increasing our egress opportunities to tidewater. In terms of transportation and shipping distances alone, Canada is unparalleled in the competitive advantage we have there, so we are working constructively with provincial counterparts, as well as industry, to ensure that we are setting the proper conditions by which industry will be incented to make these critical investment opportunities.

In addition to tidewater, we are actively exploring other opportunities. There was a previous question looking at opportunities from our Arctic tidewater, and there are energy projects under development in central and Atlantic Canada. That's done in partnership, ensuring that the government creates the right conditions for industry to make those investments. A lot of those initiatives are under way.

In terms of setting up the Major Projects Office, for instance, I've made reference to some measures that were present in budget 2025 to incent LNG production and the work we are continuing to pursue with Alberta in advancing the MOU to ensure that, collectively, we see these important investments for Canada's energy sovereignty, as well as our continued economic growth.

● (1240)

**Corey Hogan:** Thanks very much.

To follow up, if you can provide any further details on how the government might be able to incent this kind of optionality with minimal market distortion, that would be helpful for our report.

**The Chair:** Thank you both.

Monsieur Simard, you have two and a half minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Mario Simard:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Christie, I recall the testimony of the Parliamentary Budget Officer. He appeared before the committee to tell us that, in his opinion, the Trans Mountain infrastructure would hardly be profitable over a 40-year period. We know that, even today, we're all forced to subsidize this infrastructure. The industry isn't paying the price that it should for the use of this infrastructure.

I'm wondering about the fluctuations in oil prices. We know that oil prices are quite high owing to the geopolitical situation. However, electrification is making headway, particularly in China, a major consumer of gas and oil. China wants to significantly reduce its gas consumption, not because the country is nicer than the others, but because this approach provides a strategic advantage. I'm guessing that this will affect the price in about 10 or 15 years. I'm also guessing that, like the proponents of this infrastructure, the Canada Energy Regulator figures that this infrastructure may not be profitable over a 40-year period.

Do you have any data on this?

[*English*]

**Darren Christie:** I'll say a couple of things.

First, long-term prices are tied, of course, to demand, whether it's in China or in other nations. The approach we take when we look into the future in our energy futures report is to have scenarios, because our expertise is in Canadian energy supply and demand. When it comes to global demand, we look at what other agencies and forecasters are seeing, and suffice it to say, they don't all agree. There's a fair amount of uncertainty.

We take an approach of looking at a range of prices in the future. The low range is not as low as one might expect, because even in the scenario where demand peaks and falls off globally, the expectations are generally that there's not a really sharp decline in demand. Further, in global oil production, the cheap barrels have been produced, so when you factor in the cost of producing around the globe and the expectation that even if demand falls, it's a moderate decline, the prices are fairly strong long-term.

● (1245)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Our last two speakers, Mr. Martel and Mr. Clark, have two and a half minutes each.

Mr. Martel, we'll start with you.

[*Translation*]

**Richard Martel:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Leyburne, I would like to know how many people work at Natural Resources Canada.

[*English*]

**Drew Leyburne:** It's approximately 5,000. I think it's closer to 4,500 over the longer term.

[*Translation*]

**Richard Martel:** Natural Resources Canada is proposing to set up indigenous ministerial arrangements between the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources and indigenous governing bodies. I want to know whether you can confirm that the Coastal First Nations alliance won't be part of the regulatory process and won't be given a formal role.

[*English*]

**Kimberly Lavoie:** The indigenous ministerial arrangements regulations under the Canadian Energy Regulator Act have not yet been put into effect. The regulations have not yet been created. We are in the process of gathering information. We had over 30 engagement sessions over the last fiscal year. A discussion paper was written, from which we got information from both industry and indigenous groups on what those regulations could potentially look like and what some of the impacts of those regulations, if put into place, might be.

There are no regulations for these arrangements at this particular point in time. A decision has not been made as to whether those regulations will be put into place, but if they are, it will be up to indigenous governing bodies to determine whether they want to be part of them.

[*Translation*]

**Richard Martel:** Given that Natural Resources Canada is responsible for the majority of projects submitted to the Major Projects Office, is this department in regular contact with the Major Projects Office?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Give a quick answer, please.

**Kimberly Lavoie:** Yes, the minister works with the Major Projects Office quite closely.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Wrapping up, Mr. Clark, you have two and a half minutes.

**Braedon Clark:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to all the witnesses for being here this afternoon.

Mr. Leyburne, I believe this is most likely a question for you, but if it's better referred to someone else, feel free to do that.

Electricity is a huge issue in my part of the country, particularly in Nova Scotia. As I'm sure you know, we have the highest power rates in the country, generally speaking, and the highest rates of energy poverty in the country as well. However, we have a lot of optimism and hope for the future as it relates to electricity generation and the Wind West project, which, in a full build-out, could generate up to 60 megawatts of offshore wind. Hopefully, we can then intertie that into the rest of the country for export, which is, of course, the point of this study.

Could you give me your thoughts, generally speaking, on that project and the importance of having interties across the country in the east-west way, as opposed to the traditional north-south way?

**Drew Leyburne:** I probably won't go into too many details about the specifics of the Wind West project, but what is most interesting about it is that it has so many parts. It's not just one wind project. It's looking at storage, transmission, new interconnections and the way hydro could be integrated into the model, and it brings together a sense of Atlantic Canadian unity around electricity that we haven't seen for a long time.

NRCan has done its part to try to help with those conversations with the Major Projects Office in putting more bounds around what Wind West represents. In the last year, it's funded things like the New Brunswick-Nova Scotia intertie to help some of the calculation move along.

Generally speaking, the benefits of interties within Canada are that they allow for better coordination between provinces and territories, they improve system reliability and grid reliability generally, and they play to the respective jurisdictions' strengths so that a hydro jurisdiction can be supported by a variable renewables jurisdiction and we can make sure that we're making the most of all the assets we have.

● (1250)

**Braedon Clark:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think I'm out of time.

**The Chair:** You had a bit, but thank you for being generous and offering it back.

Colleagues, let me thank, on your behalf, the witnesses from the Canada Energy Regulator and the Department of Natural Resources. Thank you so much for appearing before us today.

We are going in camera, colleagues, to deal with committee business. I would ask our witnesses to make their way to the door quickly so we can get on with our committee business.

Thank you again to our witnesses.

We are suspended.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]







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