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• (1100)

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ)): I call this meeting to order.

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

Welcome to meeting number 38 of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. I want to remind everyone in the room about the procedures.

Please follow the health and safety guidelines set out on the cards on the table to avoid any sound issues.

To begin, today we have a budget to approve. Is it the pleasure of the committee to approve a supplementary budget of \$4,500 to cover travel and accommodation expenses for witnesses in the context of the briefing on the net-zero advisory body?

I take it that everyone is in favour, so it's approved.

We will begin, then, the briefing on the spring 2026 reports from the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development. From the Office of the Auditor General, we have Jerry V. DeMarco, commissioner of the environment and sustainable development; Susie Fortier, principal; Marie-Pierre Grondin, principal; and James Reinhart, director.

The following witnesses, who are either sitting in the gallery or participating by video conference, may be called upon to answer questions: from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Cathy Furness, deputy chief veterinary officer, and Carlie Watson, area director general, west; from the Department of Environment, Tara Shannon, assistant deputy minister, Canadian wildlife service, and Doris Fortin, director general, policy, planning and partnerships directorate; from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Alastair Lawrie, director general, real property and environmental management, and Candice Wood, director, engineering and technical services, small craft harbours; from the Department of National Defence, Sarah Evans, director general, environment and sustainable management; from the Department of Natural Resources, Rinaldo Jeanty, assistant deputy minister; from the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Kenza El Bied, director general, policy and outreach, emergency management branch; and from the Department of Public Works and Government Services, Mathew Myre, associate assistant deputy minister, and Howah Lee, acting director general, technical services.

I think I've covered all the witnesses, if I'm not mistaken. I think so.

Mr. DeMarco, I understand that you need a few more minutes for your speech. You have the floor for seven minutes.

• (1105)

[*English*]

Jerry V. DeMarco (Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, Office of the Auditor General): Good morning, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee today to discuss our reports that were tabled on Monday.

I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people.

With me today are Marie-Pierre Grondin, Susie Fortier and James Reinhart, who were responsible for the audits.

[*Translation*]

The reports I am presenting today focus on the federal government's efforts to address global challenges posed by climate change and avian influenza. To better protect Canadians now and in the future, stronger action is needed to adapt to a rapidly changing world.

Our first audit focused on flood hazard mapping, which is becoming increasingly important as Canada's climate changes. We can no longer rely only on present-day data to prepare for floods. We also need to plan for future climate scenarios, including changing precipitation patterns. This is especially timely, given that many regions across Canada experienced or are experiencing major flooding this spring. Flood hazard maps are a tool to inform residents, developers and infrastructure planners of the risk of flooding in a given area.

[*English*]

We found that Natural Resources Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada, and Public Safety Canada were slow to produce and share the flood hazard maps needed to protect communities and support climate change adaptation.

Natural Resources Canada did not ensure that mapping efforts prioritized higher-risk areas. Many maps remain incomplete, and much of the existing mapping information is not practical or usable. The department is also not on track to make all maps currently in production publicly available by the target year of 2028.

We also found that Public Safety Canada's planned flood risk awareness portal did not integrate climate change considerations or allow information to be easily updated as conditions change. This means that information in the portal will not reflect changes to flood risks over time.

Climate change projections and easily available flood maps are needed to reliably inform long-term planning decisions such as where to build homes or develop infrastructure. Canadians face escalating risks and higher disaster recovery costs in the absence of up-to-date information.

[Translation]

In our next audit, we found significant gaps in the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's oversight of the greening government strategy to strengthen the climate resilience of federal services and assets, which are valued at about \$100 billion.

We found that the framework to track progress was weak. Despite repeated commitments, the secretariat did not publicly report on climate resilience in the first eight years that followed the strategy's launch in 2017. These gaps hindered decision-making and accountability.

At the organizational level, the audit examined how National Defence, Public Services and Procurement Canada, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada assessed climate risks. The audit also looked at the actions taken to enhance the climate resilience of their assets, services and activities. Together, these three departments manage more than two thirds of the federal government's physical assets, such as buildings and bridges. We found that they made little progress in translating the risk assessments into meaningful action.

[English]

This lack of progress has clear environmental and financial consequences for Canadians. As Canada warms at twice the global average, accelerating efforts to protect federal assets and services will sustain communities and save taxpayers money over time. For example, some small harbours, which directly support more than 45,000 jobs, are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and require immediate repairs and reinforcement.

Our final audit assessed the federal response to avian influenza. An outbreak of the disease began in Canada in 2021, and there were concerns the virus could mutate and become more easily transmissible.

• (1110)

While Environment and Climate Change Canada, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the Public Health Agency of Canada took action to prevent and manage outbreaks of avian influenza, we found that they need to improve on planning, documentation and the management of human vaccines to better prepare for future threats to public health and vulnerable wildlife.

[Translation]

For example, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency successfully implemented procedures to eliminate the virus from all 47 premises in our audit sample. However, we found some weaknesses in the agency's documentation of its activities.

Environment and Climate Change Canada redirected funding to strengthen its surveillance of migratory birds following the 2021 outbreak. However, without dedicated funding, this activity may not be sustainable over the long term. In addition, the department did not target its surveillance on how the virus impacts species that are or could become threatened.

[English]

Finally, with respect to preparedness, we found that the Public Health Agency of Canada secured vaccines for people at higher risk of exposure, such as farmers and veterinarians, but purchasing decisions were not supported by sufficient analysis. This led to an over-supply, and more than 95% of the purchased vaccine doses expired before they could be used.

Mr. Chair, this concludes my opening remarks. We would be pleased to answer any questions the committee may have. Thank you.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): Thank you, Mr. DeMarco.

We will now begin the question period.

We'll go to the Conservative Party for six minutes.

[English]

David Bexte (Bow River, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, witnesses, for being here today. I appreciate the hard work you've been doing. I hope we inform the Canadian public on shortcomings and what we expect our public servants to deliver.

Commissioner DeMarco, did you take a look at the costs associated with these programs over time and how increased costs to departments may have informed the value proposition? Do we get value for the money, and if so, how much money...? Do you understand what I'm getting at here?

Jerry V. DeMarco: Yes. Thank you for the question.

Perhaps the best place to start would be with respect to the national adaptation strategy, which we audited last year at the general level. These two audits today are more of a deep dive into particular programs.

At the strategy level, Environment Canada estimates that for every dollar invested in adaptation and resilience, up to \$15 is saved in the long run. That's a very global estimate from the national adaptation strategy. In general terms, as the saying goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

David Bexte: I understand that.

What I'm getting at is the next level. We hope these programs identify shortcomings in our national inventory, but they didn't get that survey complete and there are gaps in it. How much money did we spend for that amount of work to get done? How much more money do we have to spend to get the rest of the work done, and what was the original plan?

They've blown their budget, and they didn't get the work done.

Jerry V. DeMarco: It depends on the program we're speaking to, but on adaptation, generally, from the report last year, we found that one of the gaps is directly relevant to your question, which is what the global figure is for Canada's adaptation efforts. There are all sorts of different programs and some of them have multiple benefits, so it is actually very difficult to calculate the total envelope on adaptation.

I can say that on the specific programs today, one example would be the funding for flood mapping for the project led by NRCan, which is \$64 million over four years. The one managed by Public Safety is \$10 million for the portal. Those are some examples of specific program budgets that we've audited.

David Bexte: I appreciate that.

The report found that only 11 out of 26 completed flood-mapping projects are currently available. How much money was spent for the 11, and how much more has to be spent? Maybe this is out of scope, but this is the question: Are taxpayers getting value for money, and why not? Is it mismanagement? Is it misallocation of resources? Is it bad planning? Is it not doing the low-hanging fruit first? Is it poor priorities?

• (1115)

Jerry V. DeMarco: I don't think there's any question that producing high-quality, publicly available flood maps is a worthwhile investment. The question is whether they are spending the money allocated to that wisely. I'll draw your attention to exhibit 6, where you can see what some of the expenditures have been in the first couple of fiscal years outlined there and how much remains unspent.

The question of whether we're getting value for money is premature at this point, because so few maps have been completed and made publicly available. We have seen significant expenditures so far and not a lot of return on that, but hopefully that return will come.

David Bexte: Hope is not a plan.

Could you comment on why they did not reach their objectives? Why did they not reach the targets?

Jerry V. DeMarco: We have the departments here who can directly answer that question. I would probably say that we're equally disappointed by the pace and the public availability of the maps. It's

not for us to make excuses for them. I think you can direct your question to them.

David Bexte: I appreciate that.

I'll put this question to Rinaldo Jeanty of Natural Resources Canada.

Could you comment on why the targets haven't been achieved?

Rinaldo Jeanty (Assistant Deputy Minister, Department of Natural Resources): Thank you, Chair, for the question.

These are the comments I would provide regarding the targets that have not been reached at this point.

We value the commissioner's recommendations. What I would say at this point is that we have completed over 400 maps. The time of the audit was at the very beginning of the program, so you can imagine that there may not have been that much data available at that particular juncture. To date—

David Bexte: Did you reach your time-bound objectives?

Rinaldo Jeanty: We are on track to reach all of our objectives for the program and surpass those objectives. In addition to that, I would add that this is a jurisdiction of the provincial and the territorial...as part of this program, so we work with them.

David Bexte: I appreciate that you're working with them, but Natural Resources Canada has to provide some oversight nationally so that there's a seamless and integrated thing for the provinces and municipalities to use. You need to provide that unifying structure, and that hasn't been achieved. High-risk and vulnerable communities are not getting the protection they need and expect from this program.

Rinaldo Jeanty: I would say to you that's not completely accurate. At this particular juncture, we've worked with 800-plus communities that have been identified and prioritized. All of those areas are coming directly from the provinces and territories that we've been working with. None of the dollars that have been spent to date to actually map and create data.... It's all prioritized based on high-risk areas that are identified by the provinces that we've been collaborating with.

David Bexte: Which provinces—

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): Thank you.

David Bexte: Thank you very much, Chair. I appreciate the extended time.

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): Mr. Grant, go ahead.

[Translation]

Wade Grant (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[English]

You look good in that chair, I have to say.

Thank you to all of the witnesses and those online as well for being here.

I'll start with you, Mr. DeMarco.

Your report, "Flood Hazard Mapping", includes a number of constructive recommendations. Can you confirm that departments have accepted these recommendations and are already taking steps towards implementing them?

Jerry V. DeMarco: With this tabling of reports, we're pleased to say that not only for this report but for all of the ones tabled on Monday, each of the departments, many of which are here, agreed with the recommendations and have provided responses as to their intentions for implementing them. Some of them have timelines and some of them don't, but yes, they have all been agreed to.

• (1120)

Wade Grant: Okay.

I forgot to mention I'll be sharing my time with Monsieur St-Pierre.

I'll move on to my next question.

Budget 2025 commits \$25 billion to housing and \$115 billion to infrastructure across Canada. In your view, does your report establish that accurate, accessible and climate-informed flood hazard maps are a prerequisite for ensuring those investments are sited and built responsibly?

Jerry V. DeMarco: Yes, that's a point we make in paragraph 7 of our "Flood Hazard Mapping" report, with that total expected expenditure of \$140 billion. We also mention in another report the expected expenditures on defence. These are an opportunity, with good flood hazard mapping in this case and good climate resilience efforts in the other report, to make sure that this significant amount of taxpayer money is invested wisely and is not invested in things that will later be subject to disaster because we didn't have the proper flood mapping or resilience plans in place.

Wade Grant: I want to turn to the "Avian Influenza" report. This may be a question more for the witnesses from CFIA.

The audit found that CFIA successfully completed stamping-out procedures at all 47 sampled sites, issued movement controls within one day in 94% of cases and paid \$360 million in compensation. In your view, does that operational record reflect that Canada's overall response to avian influenza was managed effectively on the ground?

Jerry V. DeMarco: We issued conclusions on three different aspects of the avian flu ecosystem: monitoring in wild birds by Environment and Climate Change Canada; CFIA's efforts, which you just spoke to; and the Public Health Agency's efforts with regard to human vaccines.

I can give you a response with respect to CFIA, which is that based on our sample of 47, we found it had successfully eliminated the virus in those premises. There were some gaps in documentation, but the end result in terms of the stamping-out procedures being effective was a positive one.

Wade Grant: Thank you.

I'll turn it over to Mr. St-Pierre.

[*Translation*]

Eric St-Pierre (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. DeMarco, congratulations on your new role today. Thank you for leading the conversation with the 15 or so witnesses at this briefing. There are a lot of us.

Emergency management is often a shared area of jurisdiction with the provinces. To what extent does the flood hazard mapping depend on the work of provincial governments? Can you briefly tell us about the collaboration with the Government of Quebec? I would appreciate that.

Thank you.

Jerry V. DeMarco: I'll start, and then senior director Susie Fortier can add a few words.

Under our Constitution, land management, planning and use fall largely within provincial or territorial jurisdiction. As you know, the federal government launched a mapping program to help the provinces and territories with this.

As Mr. Jeanty said, we need all levels of government—provincial, territorial, federal, municipal and indigenous—to collaborate on this endeavour.

I will ask Ms. Desbiens to discuss the situation in Quebec.

Susie Fortier (Principal, Office of the Auditor General): We certainly don't dictate the provinces' performance directly. However, our audit included reviews. We found that ministries used strategies that varied from province to province to implement the agreements and establish the criteria. We briefly discuss this in paragraphs 25 and 26 of the report entitled, "Flood Hazard Mapping".

We found that Quebec's approach was adapted to its needs. The province's information was used to verify the technical requirements that were in place.

Eric St-Pierre: Thank you, Ms. Fortier.

My next question is for you or for Mr. DeMarco: Can you also talk about how the federal government and educational institutions—mostly universities—are working together to better plan for flooding?

Jerry V. DeMarco: Public Safety Canada could probably speak to that. In its response to recommendation 24 in our report, which addresses the portal's shortcomings, the department said that it had launched a multidisciplinary project in collaboration with universities.

The official from Public Safety Canada may wish to elaborate on that.

• (1125)

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): I'm sorry, Mr. DeMarco. Unfortunately, time is up, but maybe we'll get the answer in the next round of questions. Please stay at the table; you may be called upon.

As my colleagues and I have agreed, even though I'm acting as chair, I'll use my time to ask questions as the Bloc Québécois representative.

Commissioner, there's something I'd like to understand. There are two reports, one on flooding and one on climate change resilience, both of which clearly show that the federal government is lagging behind. The graphs actually show an almost exponential increase in the number of floods and the associated costs.

In your report, you say that, according to Canada's national adaptation strategy, failure to invest a dollar today will cost between \$13 and \$15 later on. Does that mean that the government's failure to produce results and the fact that it's falling further and further behind are already generating additional costs for taxpayers and that, if nothing changes, those costs will be even higher for future generations? Can you put a dollar value on those costs at this point?

Jerry V. DeMarco: I can start with the qualitative aspect.

This certainly is about intergenerational equity. We need to protect the interests and rights of future generations by investing today to avoid higher costs for future generations.

There's an example in paragraph 35. According to the Treasury Board Secretariat report on resilience, not the one on mapping, "climate change was estimated to cost in the range of \$3 billion to \$8 billion annually [...] by 2030 and in the range of \$6.2 billion to \$13.5 billion annually by 2050."

That's why it's so important to invest now not only to avoid disasters and the destruction of federal assets, such as bridges, but also to protect the interests of taxpayers now and in the future.

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): According to a Radio-Canada report this morning, the federal government is working to speed up the approval and deployment of new pipeline projects. As I understand it, these pipelines will increase greenhouse gas emissions because they have to be filled up. That means there will be even more repercussions that will require even more adaptation.

In your view, by increasing emissions, is the government essentially increasing the need for adaptation? Will we therefore be looking at increased risks if these projects produce more emissions?

Jerry V. DeMarco: That's a good question because we talk a lot about adaptation in our report on greenhouse gas reduction efforts. The truth is that one of the best ways to reduce adaptation costs is to invest in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Failing to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions will exacerbate the harmful effects of climate change.

So, yes, if we change the trajectory of greenhouse gas emissions in Canada and worldwide, that will help reduce future costs associated with climate change. If the temperature doesn't go as high as

expected and we keep it to 1.5°C or 2°C, that will be much less costly than a planet that is 3°C or 4°C hotter than it is now.

• (1130)

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): In light of your previous reports on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, net zero and adaptation, it would be somewhat counterproductive for a government to invest in infrastructure like pipelines, which increase emissions, and to accelerate the construction of that infrastructure, because that would increase adaptation costs. That's my understanding.

Jerry V. DeMarco: The government can choose to approve or subsidize the project. All I can say that is that, if we don't manage to reduce greenhouse gas emissions overall, adaptation will indeed cost more.

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): Why do you think the government is so far behind? In 2022, the government was supposed to have climate change resilience plans for its critical assets. Now you're saying that it's pushing that timeline back to 2035, and that it has resilience plans for only 3% of its critical assets. In your view, why is it almost 15 years behind schedule?

Jerry V. DeMarco: Our principal, Ms. Grondin, can answer that question.

Marie-Pierre Grondin (Principal, Office of the Auditor General): Thank you.

Priorities did change in 2024. There have been several iterations of the greening government strategy. In 2020, the focus was on analyses and taking concrete action in the short term. In 2024, priorities changed, focusing on the long term in an attempt to increase resilience. That created a kind of illusion in which we had a lot of time.

However, the important thing to know about adaptation is that it's a fairly long process. It includes understanding risks to the assets, and making and implementing plans. It takes time to move from information to concrete action to improved resilience.

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): Thank you.

Mr. Leslie, you have the floor.

[English]

Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's good to see you, Commissioner. It has been a while. I'm glad we are able to have you here for this report.

This is one of the more damning reports I've seen from your office in my time on the environment committee. It's timely because we just completed a study on flood insurance. At no point during that did we hear bureaucrats or Liberal MPs reveal just how badly the government was doing in terms of its flood mapping. Every witness said the same thing: It is important.

Your report outlines why this is so important. It's so that our communities and families can directly understand the risks, prepare properly and plan infrastructure for communities. To me, this report is a simple failure. The government knew about a threat, tried to address it, had money approved and identified high-risk areas, but it has been unable to provide usable flood information.

I'm hoping you'll walk me through the Public Safety portion, particularly the portal. I think you said that \$10 million was the contract amount. Money was sent to a private company. It was not forward-looking. It was based on current data but not climate modelling for future risks. It's not updatable by the federal government or provinces. Then, magically, a week before your report came out, the government said, "It's done. We have it. It's just not going to be available, and there's no timeline for when."

Is that how this played out functionally, in terms of the portal?

Jerry V. DeMarco: The portal exists in, say, a teaser format. So far, it has some useful information about how to prepare and so on. The main feature is for inserting your address and receiving a map or a visual of flood risks. That is still greyed out in the portal. That's the main feature of the portal, so it's a significant problem that there's no functionality there. It would be a very useful thing for people to have when, for example, making what is perhaps the most important financial decision of their lives: buying a house.

Even if the portal comes online in a real form soon, it doesn't factor in climate change scenarios. For a long-term investment like buying a house, you want to know not just what's flooded in the past in a neighbourhood but also—given the warming trend in Canada, changes in precipitation and water levels and so on—what it will look like. It is subject to some uncertainty, obviously, because it's not an exact science, but it would be very useful information for Canadians.

• (1135)

Branden Leslie: With that, I'd like to turn to Public Safety.

I'm going to assume that nobody has been held accountable for this project not being on time or available to Canadians.

I'm curious. What was the cost of the program? What was the name of the company procured to do this?

Kenza El Bied (Director General, Policy and Outreach, Emergency Management Branch, Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness): Thank you for the question. I think the commissioner indicated that it was \$10 million we received from the budget.

The portal was built by Public Safety and StatsCan. The company that we have been using said that the data was privately procured. The portal, right now, is available, but it's a basic version. We are working with provinces and territories.

Branden Leslie: The report here says that you can't update the information. Is that inaccurate? Is the commissioner incorrect?

Kenza El Bied: In what sense can we not update the information?

Branden Leslie: This is in regard to the back-end information that will be available to Canadians at some point in the future. The report says that you can't change or update it yourself. That's why I assume there's a third party involved in this.

If it's internal, why is that so difficult for you?

Kenza El Bied: You are completely right. The portal is being built by Public Safety and StatsCan. The dataset was procured by a private sector....

Branden Leslie: Could you table all the contracts, statements of work, licensing terms and invoices for that company with this committee, please?

Kenza El Bied: I can, for sure.

Branden Leslie: Okay.

The commissioner also said, in the report, that the proprietary model "restricted...transparency".

Do you accept that finding?

Kenza El Bied: Can you repeat that, please?

Branden Leslie: The commissioner's report says that the proprietary nature of this restricts transparency. Do you accept that?

Kenza El Bied: I think the information is there. We are not hiding from transparency. We are making the best information available for Canadians to make their—

Branden Leslie: Why would you not provide the back-end information that allows for those assumptions? If I'm going to look at a one, two, three or four risk factor, I'd like to know how you came to those conclusions.

Why hide that information?

Kenza El Bied: We're not hiding information. We are guiding Canadians through that information. What that means is the level of the rating.

Branden Leslie: Did you, at any point, consider an open-source model?

Kenza El Bied: That is in the future. We are working on that being available in 2029.

Branden Leslie: Is this a \$10-million stopgap?

Kenza El Bied: I will take this question and send a written response about it. I would not say it's a stopgap.

Branden Leslie: Are you happy with the way this has turned out so far?

Kenza El Bied: I am. Once we have an opt-in and once we have jurisdictions in, we're going to see the utility of the portal.

As the commissioner indicated, the portal is available, but there is a grey zone, which we are saying is coming soon. Once we have that information available, we're going to be very happy with the outcome. The tool is really going to help Canadians make the right decisions.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): Mr. Malette, you have the floor.

[English]

Chris Malette (Bay of Quinte, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

I'll be sharing my time this morning with Mr. Fanjoy.

My first question is for Mr. DeMarco.

I noted that ECCC's Canadian wildlife service is responsible for wild bird and wildlife surveillance. In my riding of the Bay of Quinte, we've had several reports of die-off H5N1 outbreaks among wild birds. In most cases, it's swans in Prince Edward County that have been reported. Also in Prince Edward County, we have several poultry producers that have, as a result, reached out to my office to express some concerns.

I noted that the audit found that the ECCC, in its study, significantly expanded its surveillance capacity from approximately 3,300 samples annually to an average of 9,550 samples per year, following the 2021 outbreak, and added blood antibody and egg testing methods.

To reassure the commercial producers in my riding of the Bay of Quinte after these wild outbreaks, did you find that sufficient? Was the overtesting of migratory birds a good thing, in your estimation?

Jerry V. DeMarco: The additional sampling, which was essentially a tripling of the sampling capacity, as outlined in paragraph 16, was a good thing, to use your term.

The the main gaps are twofold. There isn't targeted surveillance of species at risk, which are the ones that are already in trouble because of habitat loss and so on. We have the exhibit about the whooping crane as an example of a highly endangered species that is now susceptible to avian flu. That's one gap.

The second gap is, looking forward, will this reallocation of money from other programs be sustainable without dedicated funding? That's a question Environment and Climate Change Canada will have to answer. With the current constraints regarding budgets, will it be able to find money for this program to sustain it? It's not the type of program for which you do the sampling once and then you can rest. You have to continue to do this to find whether the incidents of bird flu are increasing or not and whether it's being found in different species, such as swans, geese or ducks.

Those would be the two problems. There's the uncertainty of sustainable funding and the lack of targeted surveillance for species at risk.

• (1140)

Chris Malette: I have a further question, but owing to time, I'll pass the floor to my colleague Mr. Fanjoy.

Bruce Fanjoy (Carleton, Lib.): Thank you very much.

Congratulations to our chair. I think this is a nice example of how federalism works.

This question is for Mr. Jeanty from NRCan. My riding of Carleton exists within the beautiful Ottawa River watershed. Every spring, we face flooding risks and sometimes very serious floods. Our waterways often form boundaries between jurisdictions. That is the case here in the Ottawa River watershed.

How is the experience of co-operation among the federal government, provincial governments, indigenous communities and municipalities? Can you elaborate on that dynamic? Are there recommendations for how that can be improved upon?

Rinaldo Jeanty: To date, the collaboration has been fantastic with the provinces and territories, including indigenous communities, where flood mapping actually matters.

I think it would be important for me to share some statistics of targets that were set when this program was put in place. We are on track to develop over 1,000-plus maps, which will be produced by 2028. To date, we have 450-plus maps and related projects that have been created.

We talked about high-risk areas. We work collaboratively with the provinces to make sure that they are prioritizing which areas need to be mapped. Every dollar that's been spent to date has prioritized what the provinces have brought forward, specifically for high-risk areas.

Bruce Fanjoy: What are the biggest opportunities for Canada to shift from reactive disaster recovery from flooding towards more proactive, climate resilience planning?

Rinaldo Jeanty: One of the opportunities that exist, which the commissioner has touched on quite a bit, is that we have to accelerate. I think we have an opportunity to act collaboratively to do that. That means sharing data, sharing technical information and making sure that at the federal level, when we have technical working groups, guidelines and documentation, we are doing the best we can to make sure that they're standardized across the board when they're shared by one province with another province.

Bruce Fanjoy: Thank you, Chair.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): You're welcome.

Now it's my turn for two and a half minutes.

Mr. Jeanty, you're an assistant deputy minister at Natural Resources. We talked to the commissioner about how it doesn't make sense to build and finance new pipelines when adaptation needs are increasing rapidly.

Do you think it makes sense to build more oil and gas pipelines given that you're not meeting the objectives set out in the adaptation strategy and that doing so will increase needs even more?

[English]

Rinaldo Jeanty: As you said, I am the assistant deputy minister for geoscience and earth monitoring. Pipelines are not within my area of responsibility. For any questions related to that, I would turn to the commissioner to provide some additional answers.

• (1145)

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): Nevertheless, you're at Natural Resources Canada. Your minister is the one talking about green oil and net-zero oil. Do you have an opinion on that?

[English]

Rinaldo Jeanty: For an opinion regarding what's happening from a Natural Resources Canada perspective, my views are very specific to the work that I do in the geoscience and earth-monitoring sector. While I'm happy to talk about flood mapping and hazards, or any work related to that, additional questions on those would be best responded to by the commissioner.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): Okay.

Help me understand why resilience plans for critical assets have been pushed back to 2035. These are critical assets, after all. This is a \$100-billion undertaking. The year 2035 is a long time from now. Can the government explain why it's postponing this? We're already seeing the impacts. How can the government justify that?

The government is in a hurry to build pipelines, but it's not in a hurry to do basic risk assessments. Can anyone explain to me why it isn't as eager to do that as it is to build things like pipelines? What are the actual short-term impacts of delaying these resilience plans?

Rinaldo Jeanty: Thank you for the question.

I can speak to mapping and the work that was done by and assigned to the department. I can't speak to pipelines. As I said earlier, I think we can ask the commissioner if he has anything to say about that.

In terms of the mapping and the work that has been done to date, I can tell you that another 1,000 maps will be produced by the time the program ends in 2028. We're going to exceed the targets set out in the national strategy. I think the work that Natural Resources Canada has done in collaboration with the provinces and territories is worth mentioning. It shows how we can work with the provinces to achieve the program objectives.

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): Mr. Leslie, you have the floor.

[English]

Branden Leslie: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I missed the name of the company, if you said it earlier. What is the name of the company?

Kenza El Bied: I haven't said the name of the company. We have procured the data from what we were referring to as the FIFRA data. This is what we've purchased. I haven't named the company.

Branden Leslie: Okay. Go ahead.

Kenza El Bied: Go ahead...?

Branden Leslie: Name the company, please.

Kenza El Bied: I will provide you all of the details about the program, as you requested, via a written response.

Branden Leslie: Do you not know right now what the company is?

Kenza El Bied: I don't know what the company is.

Branden Leslie: You mentioned that there was a \$10-million budget. Was that all spent?

Kenza El Bied: In total, it's \$11.5 million over three years that we were provided to build the portal, and yes, it was all spent.

Branden Leslie: It was an additional \$11.5 million on the nose, and you spent it all.

Kenza El Bied: That was from the 2023 budget. Yes, it has all been spent.

Branden Leslie: To clarify, you and StatsCan make the website. You look at the data. You analyze. You make an assessment and give it a risk rating for future searching, based on a postal code or whatever your parameter is for how you're going to indicate where the specific location in this portal is that you're looking for, but you don't own the data of this unnamed company you've procured this from. You can't update or change that data with climate change modelling or localized information as it emerges.

Does that company have any obligation to update that data over time, or are they done with their part?

Kenza El Bied: Let me say a few things and provide some background around the climate data that you're referring to.

The federally identified flood risk areas and the current flood ratings are based on present-day conditions and do not currently account for climate change.

Branden Leslie: When did you realize that? When did you become aware that it's only the current data and it's not forward-looking?

Kenza El Bied: The climate science to support flood mapping on a Canada-wide scale is still emerging, and there is no scientific—

Branden Leslie: I appreciate that you can continue reading. I'm asking you a different question.

When did Public Safety Canada become aware that the data is one-time use and doesn't take into account anything changing in the future? When did you become aware?

Kenza El Bied: Let me just finish the response so that I can tell you what—

Branden Leslie: Will you respond to the question?

Kenza El Bied: —Public Safety is doing.

I don't have an exact date. You're looking for an exact date when that—

Branden Leslie: Was it recently? Was it right after you got the money? When did you realize this?

Kenza El Bied: I don't have the exact date.

Branden Leslie: Clearly, you realize this is a problem.

I know you said that it's going to be this great system, but why would you now be working on a new model, an open-source model, if you think this model is going to be so effective?

• (1150)

Kenza El Bied: What we are doing is that we have initiated and, particularly, funded a major project with the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council. That project is with academic partners and is advancing a made-in-Canada flood model that will be open source. That one will be available in 2029.

The data that will be available right now is data that is very important for Canadians to help them to make a decision about—

Branden Leslie: You're aiming for 2029 for this new version that will apparently be better. Will the existing portal stop in 2029?

Kenza El Bied: It will be supplementary information. The information that will be available in the portal will always—

Branden Leslie: Won't it just get more and more stale, year over year, though?

That's the whole problem here. It's a point-in-time set of data that does not take into account any sort of climatic changes or localized data. It is today's data—well, it's actually probably data from a couple of years ago. That's the point of this whole report.

It seems to me that this \$11.5 million is blown. It's not even available to anybody. There's no timeline as to when it is actually going to be available, and you're already working on something because you realize this is a failed program.

Kenza El Bied: It's not a failed program. What we are working on is to complement the work that is going to take place very soon.

We don't have a timeline because we are working with provinces and jurisdictions. We gave them an option to opt in or out. As soon as a jurisdiction opts in, we'll make their information available—

Branden Leslie: How many have opted in so far?

Kenza El Bied: It's not yet.

Branden Leslie: When did they become informed that they should?

Kenza El Bied: They have actually been informed. We have been working with all jurisdictions across—

Branden Leslie: Why are they not opting in, then?

Kenza El Bied: This opt-in and opt-out option became available on April 27. The baseline version of the portal became—

Branden Leslie: Did you launch it just because you knew this report was coming out?

Kenza El Bied: No.

Branden Leslie: It's just a coincidence that they happened a week apart.

Kenza El Bied: It just happened like that.

Branden Leslie: Do you see why this all seems a little bit strange?

Somebody watching, a taxpayer like all of us, sees \$11.5 million for data the commissioner says is placed in time and is not going to be effective in any sort of long term. You're trying to say that it's this amazing program, but it's not actually able to achieve any results. I can't go and search my address and find out if I'm on a flood plain. You're trying to tell me that you've already realized it's going to be a failure, so you've wisely moved on.

Why can't you just accept that the \$11.5 million has likely been a waste of money and, seemingly, nobody's going to be held accountable, unless you can tell me that somebody is?

Kenza El Bied: It's not the case. This tool is going to be a really great tool for Canadians.

Branden Leslie: This sounds like a lot of things the government tries to tell me: "It's going to be great in the future. Everything is just going to be awesome. Just believe me."

Kenza El Bied: It's going to be a great tool for Canadians.

Branden Leslie: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): Mr. Watchorn, you have the floor.

Tim Watchorn (Les Pays-d'en-Haut, Lib.): Thank you very much.

I'll be sharing my time with the member for Victoria.

Ms. El Bied, I want to give you a chance to respond. The member opposite didn't give you much of a chance to respond and talk about how good the program is. How will this program benefit Canadians?

Kenza El Bied: Thank you for the question.

Public Safety Canada put a lot of work into setting up this project. There are a few things to consider, the first being climate change. I should point out that the federal government's existing flood hazard zone classifications are based on present conditions; they don't currently take climate change into account.

The climate science needed for Canada-wide flood mapping is still in its infancy, and there's no scientific consensus at this time. Accurate information does not exist, and the level of uncertainty remains very high.

Given that level of uncertainty, we opted to use the research tool to provide Canadians with climate-adjusted flood risk information. This information may be confusing and may even contradict the record, although climate change is expected to increase the frequency and severity of flooding in many regions, based on current models.

That's why Public Safety Canada launched and partially funded a major research project by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada in collaboration with university partners. The purpose of the project is to develop a Canadian flood model that will be an open source of information for everyone. It should produce a climate-smart model by 2029.

The information that will be available in the portal will also complement the information we'll provide in the future.

• (1155)

Tim Watchorn: Thank you very much for explaining that. I'll give Mr. Greaves the rest of my time.

[*English*]

Will Greaves (Victoria, Lib.): Thank you and good morning, colleagues.

Good morning, witnesses. Thank you for being with us.

I'd like to start with two brief questions for Mr. DeMarco.

Thank you for being here, Commissioner. Just in the interest of time, could you keep your answers brief? A yes or no is fine unless you have more information that you'd like to add.

Given the scale of the federal government's assets—roughly in the neighbourhood of 100 billion dollars' worth of public assets—and the increasing severity and frequency of climate-related extreme weather events and other kinds of impacts, would you agree that investing in climate adaptation and climate-resilient infrastructure is a necessity for the federal government to be a responsible steward of those public assets?

Jerry V. DeMarco: Absolutely...yes.

Will Greaves: Thank you.

In the same vein, then, would you also agree that recognizing the reality of climate change and the scientific basis underpinning our understanding of climate change, including the role of human activities in making climate change happen faster and more aggressively, is also necessary for the government to fulfill its obligations to safeguard the public assets in its care?

Jerry V. DeMarco: Yes.

Will Greaves: That's excellent. Thank you for that, sir.

My next question is for Ms. Wood from DFO. Thank you for joining us online.

I'm very excited, of course, with the government's recent announcement of the investment of approximately \$1 billion in small

craft harbours across the country. This is something that will benefit many communities that are reliant upon access to the water and the harbour infrastructure that supports local jobs, livelihoods, culture and identity, including in my province of British Columbia.

Could you please elaborate on what specific innovations or measures are being taken to ensure those upgrades in small craft harbour infrastructure will be more resilient in the face of extreme weather events and other climate impacts?

Candice Wood (Director, Engineering and Technical Services, Small Craft Harbours, Department of Fisheries and Oceans): Thank you for the question.

What we do within our regular life-cycle asset management is that we always ensure climate resiliency is integrated. This is done simply by using the latest codes and standards, which incorporate climate resiliency measures for such things as pavement and bridge structures that are very similar to the wharves we install.

We also have some internal tools that help us project sea-level rise. Especially as we're building infrastructure such as breakwaters, which have a long life, we want to project what the sea level will be over the lifespan of the breakwater. With that funding, that's how we manage and ensure that things are climate-resilient.

Will Greaves: Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): Colleagues, we're a little ahead of schedule. Would you rather take a short break or continue?

You'd rather continue. Okay.

Shall we start another six-minute round for each party—Conservative, Liberal and Bloc?

[*English*]

Bruce Fanjoy: I have a point of order. I wanted to ask the witnesses if they needed a break.

Is everyone good?

Okay. Thank you.

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): That's very thoughtful of you, my dear colleague.

For the Conservatives, we'll go to Ms. Kronis.

Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

[English]

Ms. El Bied, I want to pick up where my colleague left off.

You were explaining that your department spent \$11 million on a flood risk awareness portal that doesn't work, has data that isn't evergreen and no province has yet opted into. Is that correct?

Kenza El Bied: Yes.

Tamara Kronis: My understanding is that the reason that B.C. hasn't opted in is that it is not sure that your data matches its data. Is that correct?

Kenza El Bied: No, and I can elaborate on that.

We have done a lot of work with B.C. and with other jurisdictions, but for B.C., specifically, the data is meant to be complementary. Our datasets and the provincial datasets are meant to be complementary. I have not heard a reason why it has not opted in, but we are working with all PTs and all jurisdictions to have them opt in on this tool.

Tamara Kronis: Your data isn't evergreen. Is B.C.'s data evergreen?

Kenza El Bied: I don't know.

Tamara Kronis: Okay.

The report indicates that less than half of the mapping projects that are currently under way cover high-risk zones that your department identified in 2022.

Can you tell me how you justify mapping low-risk areas when the most vulnerable Canadians remain unprotected?

• (1200)

Kenza El Bied: I'm going to turn it to my colleague at NRCan.

Rinaldo Jeanty: I'll take that question and thank you for that.

What you'll see in the report is that the commissioner has identified a list of preliminary analyses that were done at the federal government level to enable conversations to happen with our provincial colleagues. There is absolutely no map that has been produced that has not been prioritized by the provinces or that does not reflect a high-risk area.

That preliminary list was meant to be used as a piece of analysis to help us begin conversations. With the local data and information that our provincial colleagues have at their disposal, we create the maps on that basis so, to date, every dollar spent has been based on high-risk maps and prioritized areas identified by our provincial and territorial partners.

Tamara Kronis: You're saying that dollars are well spent, but we've just established that the portal isn't usable. Commissioner DeMarco noted in his opening statements that government departments have collectively spent more than \$230 million to produce tools that aren't useful, usable or produced in a timely manner.

As a result, the report concludes, "Canadians face escalating risks and higher disaster recovery costs".

Do you know who bears these costs in British Columbia?

Rinaldo Jeanty: I would say that, yes, there is an opportunity for us to accelerate.

Tamara Kronis: However, do you know who bears the costs? When this government and your department spend money and produce things that aren't useful, usable or produced in a timely manner, as the commissioner and these reports have pointed out, do you know who bears the actual results?

Do you know who bears the outcomes of those risks and those costs?

Rinaldo Jeanty: I could certainly tell you about the benefits from the work that's been done for flood mapping to date.

Tamara Kronis: It's not the people who die in atmospheric rivers in British Columbia, the people who lose their homes or the people who can't get flood insurance.

What we're facing in British Columbia is an increase in the intensity of atmospheric rivers. We're seeing more of these atmospheric rivers on a yearly basis than we've seen in previous decades. What's happening is that we're paying for this twice. First of all, we're paying for it as taxpayers, and we're paying a second time with the losses that result from the floods that affect our homes and communities.

You may want to come to these committees and talk about the benefits that accrue in theory, but I can tell you that, in practice, the implications of the failures of these government departments on our communities are measured in dollars, lives and loss of homes. What do you have to say to that?

Rinaldo Jeanty: I will actually separate that into two things.

We have the tools in terms of the public portal that has been created, and we have the work that's been done collaboratively with B.C.

Tamara Kronis: Is anyone using those tools?

Rinaldo Jeanty: I would say yes, absolutely, the tools are being used.

Tamara Kronis: What homeowners in British Columbia are able to use tools for a risk portal that we've just been told the province hasn't opted into?

Kenza El Bied: We are working very closely with them to make that happen as soon as possible.

Tamara Kronis: You said that's 2029.

Kenza El Bied: No, that is the open-source data. The portal is available right now. The reason why you are not finding the information for B.C., for example, is that we're still working with them to opt into the portal. As soon as they opt in, the information will be available 10 days right after, and it will be publicly communicated to all Canadians.

Tamara Kronis: What I'm hearing from you is that this is a great program, and it's going to do great things for British Columbians. What I'm hearing from the commissioner is that \$230 million has been spent on something that's not usable, not useful and not delivered in a timely manner. How do you reconcile that?

Since neither of you is going to answer the question, I do have one question for the commissioner.

You've produced this report. It is very informative, and it displays quite clearly for taxpayers what value we aren't getting for our money in British Columbia and across the country. Are there any enforcement mechanisms that you have? Is there anything you can do about this, or is the best you can do to put the data out and hope that something better happens?

• (1205)

Jerry V. DeMarco: As an audit office, we can access government information and provide reports and recommendations to Parliament. That's our job. We're part of the accountability ecosystem, along with this committee, so we can help provide information for committees such as this to hold government to account. We don't have an enforcement power, no, and that is typically something that's not found in an audit office, given its nature.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): Thank you, Commissioner.

Mr. Watchorn, the floor is yours.

Tim Watchorn: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I will once again be sharing my time with the member for Victoria.

Commissioner, I'll continue in English.

[English]

The defence department has a strategy called the defence climate and sustainability strategy 2023-27. We're making historical investments in the defence department right now. One of the measures that we're putting in place is building new barracks. These barracks should be climate-adapted and, hopefully, what I'm hearing from the department is that they are going to be energy-efficient. Is that the case in your findings?

If not, what are your recommendations to the defence department to make sure that our investments are going to be climate-adapted?

Jerry V. DeMarco: Thank you for the question. We have an exhibit for a text box about the Canadian Armed Forces. There are two aspects, of course. We're drawing on them for assistance in dealing with emergencies such as fires and so on, which was beyond their normal work. With the 2025 budget earmarking over \$80 billion to rebuild, rearm and reinvest, this presents a future opportunity for national defence to invest in prevention and actions to enhance climate resilience, including the protection of its assets such as buildings and barracks, to your point.

There's an opportunity there. It would be a shame if the money goes out too quickly before the data is available to build in a resilient way. The whole point of that part of our report is to look before you leap. This is a big leap in terms of \$80 billion, so don't

build things that will then get washed away several years later, simply because you didn't have the mapping available and just went ahead and built something without that knowledge.

Knowledge is very useful. Good data is useful, and that's been a theme throughout today's deliberations. The more we can plan for the future Canada, which is a warmer Canada with different precipitation patterns and different fluvial conditions than we have now, the more likely we will avoid disasters rather than just respond to them.

Tim Watchorn: Being a member of the Order of the Engineer, I've participated in many classes.

[Translation]

I've taken many classes about how climate change adaptation is necessary and we have to do it.

[English]

Have you seen collaboration, as my colleague Eric St-Pierre said, with academics, professional orders and government officials to make sure that the right information is being passed on?

Jerry V. DeMarco: I'll turn to Director Grondin to inform you about whether that came up in this audit specifically.

Obviously, I'm aware of government academic projects, but I'll ask Ms. Grondin to answer this particular one.

Marie-Pierre Grondin: Thank you.

For this one, as you can imagine, with \$100 billion in assets—30,000 buildings and 20,000 vehicles—it's impossible to look at all aspects and how academics have been integrated. We have seen it through our previous work on the national adaptation strategy and how that builds into the system, but not specifically for the work that we've conducted on resilience.

Tim Watchorn: Thank you.

I pass my time over to Mr. Greaves.

Will Greaves: Thank you very much.

Hello again, colleagues.

Thanks to all of our witnesses. My question is for Dr. Furness.

Thank you for joining us today to discuss some of the report's conclusions around avian flu and the government's response.

I wonder if you could give us a high-level synopsis of what the best practices are that help to ensure that a single reported case of avian flu doesn't turn into a wider outbreak or a national crisis.

• (1210)

Cathy Furness (Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer, Canadian Food Inspection Agency): Thank you very much for the question.

Responding to the outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza is really a shared responsibility that involves participation from the federal government, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, but also industry as well as the producers themselves.

From the CFIA's perspective, the first thing we do is make sure that we identify infections early and put the appropriate control measures in place, so we prevent animals, equipment, feed and manure from moving off the premises while we conduct our initial investigation. We apply stamping-out procedures as quickly as possible to make sure that we are containing and eliminating that virus, which includes depopulating all susceptible species on the premises, cleaning and disinfection, and making sure that the carcasses are disposed of appropriately.

From the producers' side of the fence, biosecurity is the key tool that we need to use to prevent the introduction of the disease in the first place. That is making sure that domestic poultry doesn't have interaction with wild birds and wildlife. It is making sure that, when people are entering and exiting the barn, they are taking appropriate purging procedures and are not accidentally tracking manure into the barn or out, and it is making sure that we have the appropriate records and documentation in place.

Will Greaves: Thank you very much.

I have only a few seconds left. Could you also speak to whether it is considered best practice to secure vaccine supplies early, even when the eventual severity of the outbreak is not yet known?

Cathy Furness: I think this question is best addressed by my colleague from the Public Health Agency of Canada if we are referring to human vaccines.

Will Greaves: My time is up, but thank you.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): Can we get a quick answer?

[English]

Kerry Robinson (Director General, Centre for Foodborne, Environmental and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases, Public Health Agency of Canada): Good morning. I'm Kerry Robinson, the director general from the Public Health Agency of Canada.

I apologize. Could you repeat that question?

Will Greaves: Thank you very much for your indulgence, Mr. Chair.

The question was simply whether it is considered a best practice to secure vaccine supplies early, even if the eventual severity of an outbreak is not yet known.

Kerry Robinson: This is a very important and complex question.

We do have a pandemic influenza vaccine strategy in Canada that involves readiness contracts so that we can secure both through a domestic supplier, which would be a primary supplier, as well as an offshore supplier in the case of a pandemic influenza.

In this case, for vaccines, we felt that it was important to have some modest supply, given the very high uncertainty of a spillover from the U.S. to Canada, as well as the need to protect human health.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): It's my turn to speak.

Commissioner, my questions are for you. In your report, you mentioned that the government has announced significant investments in buildings and housing, among other things.

You suggested that there's a problem because mapping is not available, so apartments, buildings and infrastructure could be built in flood-prone areas that have not been mapped. Can you comment on that?

Jerry V. DeMarco: Yes, of course.

In paragraph 7 of our flood hazard mapping report, we talk about the \$25 billion for housing and the \$115 billion for infrastructure. We say that these financial commitments highlight the need for evidence-based climate change information to effectively adapt and guide land-use planning and infrastructure development. All decisions must be informed and based on the best science and information we can get to avoid destroying investments in the future.

I think everyone agrees with that concept in general, but, as we've said before, we need to accelerate these efforts to save money and save lives in the future.

• (1215)

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): Do you think the government is actually lagging behind?

The government is making announcements. It says it has a lot of money, but the mapping hasn't been done, has it?

Jerry V. DeMarco: Regarding the themes addressed in the two reports today—namely, mapping and federal assets—the reports state that the government has been too slow so far and that it has to speed up its efforts. I still agree with that.

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): These new reports are on top of your report from last year on the national adaptation strategy, in which you did discuss some problems. You said that the strategy was incomplete and poorly structured and that elements hadn't been prioritized in relation to climate risks.

After many months and these two new reports, do you still maintain that there are problems with the national adaptation strategy and that the government has to quickly fix the situation?

Jerry V. DeMarco: Yes.

In one part of our report from last year, we state that Canada was very slow to simply publish an adaptation strategy, in comparison with G7 countries. We're now seeing the effects of that. The programs we're analyzing, which are the subject of our performance audits, aren't very advanced. However, that isn't surprising, since Canada was very slow to produce its first strategy; the other G7 countries already had a second or third strategy when Canada published its first strategy.

When it comes to the programs, the strategy that it has implemented, there's certainly work to be done to catch up.

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): Okay.

I believe this strategy ends in 2027. Do you recommend that the government update this strategy quickly to address the gaps—I'm putting it nicely—since Canada was one of the last, if not the last, of the G7 countries to produce this kind of strategy?

Jerry V. DeMarco: I can start answering your question. Ms. Grondin can give more details afterward.

Only one of the three elements of the national strategy is currently in place. The government has work to do, even if only to finish the other two elements.

Ms. Grondin can speak to that and provide further details.

Marie-Pierre Grondin: In fact, I would add to what the commissioner said.

Yes, there are three essential elements.

There's the Government of Canada's adaptation action plan, the climate-focused indigenous leadership fund and the bilateral action plans between the federal government and the provinces. Two of those three elements are missing. It's important to implement both of those elements and to address the major gaps in the Government of Canada's adaptation action plan.

This report includes several recommendations. If the measures are in place to respond to the recommendations, I think that will already be a major step forward.

We have people from the Department of the Environment here with us today. They plan to develop a next strategy. I think it will be important to address the gaps that were mentioned in our report in preparation for the next iteration.

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): I'd like to talk about defence briefly.

Your report states that the number of events for which the armed forces were asked to intervene has nearly doubled every five years since 2010, and that this number will continue to rise.

Of the extra \$81 billion that the government has earmarked for the armed forces, do you anticipate more resources for interventions by the army? Do you think there won't be more interventions in the future and that you won't need to add money?

Marie-Pierre Grondin: I think that's a better question for national defence.

There was basically a major opportunity. It's important to understand that not only does the federal government manage the largest asset portfolio in Canada, but it's also the largest buyer in Canada. That means the investments that are going to be made are a great opportunity to look at resilience.

In terms of how those amounts will be used, I think it would be up to national defence to talk about that.

• (1220)

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): I'll come back to that later.

Mr. Bexte, the floor is yours.

[English]

David Bexte: Thank you, Chair. I appreciate it.

Again, I thank the witnesses.

I'm going to change tack here a little bit and go to the CFIA and Dr. Furness.

The community of Taber, in my riding of Bow River, had a case of avian flu at a poultry farm last fall. The case has since been resolved, which is fantastic. I wonder how much of a threat you perceive avian flu to be, moving forward, for producers in southern Alberta and across the country.

Cathy Furness: Thank you very much for the question.

The CFIA has been responding to cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza in domestic poultry since late 2021. Right now, the transmission of high path AI to domestic poultry premises is often through wild bird or migratory bird introductions.

At this point in time, we know that high path AI is continuing to circulate in wild bird populations, and therefore that risk remains for our domestic poultry population.

David Bexte: May I interject, Dr. Furness?

We're familiar with the mechanisms. We want to know the risk. Going forward, is the risk normal, below or elevated, in your assessment?

Cathy Furness: There was always an ongoing risk. Biosecurity will be our key tool to prevent the introduction of disease to our domestic poultry populations.

David Bexte: Dr. Furness, again, is your assessment, looking forward, that the risk is elevated, normal or below normal?

Cathy Furness: The risk is ongoing.

David Bexte: I understand that, but do you expect the trend to go up or down?

Cathy Furness: We expect the trend to continue over the course of the migration seasons. It's particularly elevated in the spring migration, which we are in now, as well as in the fall migration.

David Bexte: Okay. We didn't get anywhere with that.

From the number of cases of avian flu in the past five or six years, are you at all concerned that the CFIA doesn't have the capacity to tackle future outbreaks? How do you plan for what capacity to have if you don't understand...? Do you use the eighty-twenty rule or some guideline on how much effort to put into preparation based on what the risk level is, with the risk level changing over time based on surveillance?

Cathy Furness: The CFIA embarks on a continuous cycle of planning, preparedness and response. As we are continuing to go through this outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza, we are consistently and constantly updating and revising our plans, and ensuring that we have the appropriate response capacity. This involves collaborating with our provincial partners, as well as our industry partners.

David Bexte: Dr. Furness, again specifically, I'm getting to the details and not so much to the mechanism. Is the planning going up, or is the planning going down?

Cathy Furness: The planning is going up, sir.

David Bexte: That gets to the point.

Do you agree with the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association that with limited access to central drugs—antimicrobials and antiparasitics, among others—that have already been approved and trusted in international jurisdictions, veterinarians often lack the tools necessary especially for preventative care, in addition to acute care?

Cathy Furness: For today, the scope of our discussion is the OAG audit and highly pathogenic avian influenza. I'd be pleased to address questions pertaining to those areas.

David Bexte: Well, it goes to that area—disaster preparedness and preparing for outbreaks.

H1N1 is an example today. If veterinarians across the country don't have the tools they need available to them so they can address or prevent an outbreak—tools available in other jurisdictions—we have a problem. We're not preparing to the best of our ability.

I wonder if you could comment on this from that perspective.

Cathy Furness: Thank you very much for the question.

Today, the scope is the OAG's findings on highly pathogenic avian influenza. I'd be pleased to address questions pertaining to that issue.

David Bexte: Are there any products in other jurisdictions, internationally, that would be of use in addressing H1N1 outbreaks here and that are available in Canada?

Cathy Furness: At this point in time, some vaccines for H5N1 have been licensed in other jurisdictions. We also have three vaccines licensed for emergency use here in Canada, for H5N1.

However, internationally, a vaccination for high path AI is being incorporated into response plans. Canada is a country that is looking at trialling a high path vaccination as a tool.

• (1225)

David Bexte: Thank you, Dr. Furness.

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): Mr. Grant, the floor is yours.

[*English*]

Wade Grant: Thank you so much, Mr. Chair.

I'll be sharing my time once again with Mr. St-Pierre.

My first question is on the avian influenza report, and it is for Ms. Robinson.

Your department accepted recommendations that have implementation timelines in October, November and December 2026.

Regarding PHAC's vaccine procurement and distribution tracking processes, can you speak to what has already changed, since the audit period closed, to meet those recommendations?

Kerry Robinson: Thank you for the question.

For the first recommendation, which was around supporting further procurement decisions, we are finalizing the development of a framework in the interpandemic period to help us systematically support decision-making on any potential future procurement of H5 vaccines for humans.

That framework will include considerations such as the availability of vaccinations from manufacturers and production timelines; ongoing monitoring of other potential suppliers and international partners in terms of their procurement plans and supply readiness; consultation with our expert panel on avian influenza regarding needs and evidence, including an epidemiological review of risk conditions and the stage of our preparedness as a whole; and consultations, obviously, with provinces and territories on their potential needs or objectives from a public health protection perspective. That's the first response.

Regarding the second piece around recommendations related to improving the management of vaccine distribution and monitoring, there are a couple of things.

First, we have already transitioned away from using Vaccine Connect, the previous system for vaccine supply monitoring, which was federally procured. We integrated that functionality into our agency's warehouse management IT system. This enables us to track, in near to real time, integrated information on pandemic vaccines from manufacturers in terms of full visibility of supply distribution and wastage in the context of suppliers. We are continuing to work on improving vaccine distribution and monitoring, and onboarding pandemic vaccine manufacturers and vendors into this system so it will be ready if we need to use it. That's if we have additional supply.

The second most important piece here is the recommendation related to information sharing with provinces and territories. We're in the process of finalizing a public health information-sharing agreement with provinces and territories that scopes very much beyond vaccines. However, one of those areas is vaccines. That's obviously key to supporting information sharing.

Thank you.

Wade Grant: Thank you.

Mr. St-Pierre.

[*Translation*]

Eric St-Pierre: Thank you.

Ms. El Bied, during the questioning from my Conservative colleague Mr. Leslie, you spoke very enthusiastically about a tool that would be useful to all Canadians. Could you elaborate on why you're excited about this new tool?

Kenza El Bied: Thank you very much for your question.

The purpose of the flood risk finder is to make Canadians aware of the flood risks that they face. It will provide Canadians in participating provinces and territories with accurate information on their location, flood hazards and flood risks in the form of a low-to-extreme flood score, along with interactive maps to visualize data. In general, the tool will also direct users toward advice on ways to reduce the impacts of flooding on their homes and communities. It will enable Canadians to better understand flood risks, and it will help make it easier for homeowners and tenants to implement flood risk reduction measures.

Eric St-Pierre: Thank you.

This tool sounds very useful for all Canadians, and I believe all members of Parliament should be really happy to know about it. Thank you for sharing that information with us.

I have one minute left, and I would like to ask Mr. DeMarco or Ms. Fortier some questions about the work being done together with the governments, particularly the Government of Quebec, as well as with academic institutions.

Does Quebec have any particular collaboration with the Ouranos group or other civil society groups in Quebec? If so, can you share your opinion on that collaboration?

• (1230)

Susie Fortier: The group you mentioned is a very well-known group in Quebec. When we do audits, we work with them to access their expertise, and they help us with our work. We also turn to them when we review the technical standards that have been applied. However, we haven't audited or examined the collaboration between the groups and organizations. That's part of the group's mandate, so it would be up to the group to answer.

Eric St-Pierre: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): Commissioner, you have issued many reports over the past year and a half, and we haven't had a chance to go through them. I'm going to take this opportunity to come back to your report on protected areas and the fact that Canada had protected barely 15% of marine and terrestrial areas,

while the objective was to protect 25% by 2025, I believe, and 30% by 2030.

Obviously, you said that we weren't on the right track and that things had to change.

Have you had a chance to look at the 2030 nature strategy that the government recently announced? Do you think it will make it possible to meet the 2030 targets? Does it address the concerns raised in your report?

Jerry V. DeMarco: Thank you for your question.

It would be our pleasure to come back to discuss the other reports. There are many of them in our library from last year. We have four reports on protected areas, one for the Government of Northwest Territories and three for the federal government.

One of the concerns raised in our report was that we had reason to believe that the 2025 target would not be met. We knew that, but we also had reason to believe that it would be possible to meet the 30% target by 2030 if the funding for these initiatives didn't end in March of this year. I saw that it was renewed on March 31, which will help us meet the 2030 targets. Without that funding, it would be almost impossible to do so.

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): [*Inaudible—Editor*] and that didn't put them on track to meet their target. How does the presence of new money, which likely isn't enough, reassure you? The previous strategy also provided for money, yet governments are missing the target.

Please answer quickly.

Jerry V. DeMarco: Renewing funds doesn't guarantee that the target will be met. We want to see results in the audits, not just money. I can tell you that the absence of a program and funding would make it almost impossible to meet the targets. However, the presence of those funds isn't a guarantee. This work has to be done in collaboration with the provinces, territories and indigenous communities for the 30% target to be met by 2030.

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): Thank you.

Mr. Gill, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Amanpreet Gill (Calgary Skyview, CPC): My question is for Mr. Rinaldo Jeanty.

The Auditor General found that Natural Resources Canada is not on track to publish a flood map by 2028.

Does the department still believe that the 2028 target is achievable, and if so, on what basis?

Rinaldo Jeanty: Absolutely. Natural Resources Canada believes that we are on target to achieve the goals and objectives of the program by 2028.

Since the audit has been completed, I will also tell you that we have over 450 maps that have been completed and published at this particular juncture. We are also on track to publish well above the target of a thousand-plus maps at this point. I will also reiterate that with every single province and territory that we've worked with, we have prioritized and ensured that every dollar spent has gone toward the priority areas from those provinces, specifically high-risk areas.

In addition to that, I've heard about value for money. I would say that everything we've received from the provinces and territories to date gives us an indication that there is value for money for the work that's currently being done. This is on the basis that we've received a number of letters from provinces at this point, telling us that they want these programs to be renewed.

When we look specifically at the work that's been done in B.C., we see that there are 11-plus projects, and we expect to have 28-plus maps completed. By the end of the program, we certainly will have a number of maps completed for B.C.

• (1235)

Amanpreet Gill: Yes, but the Auditor General also found that Natural Resources Canada did not track whether the flood maps it funded covered any high-risk areas identified in the 2022 prioritization exercise and that only 49% of projects overlapped with those areas.

Why was the department unable to ensure that funding aligned with its own flood risk prioritization?

Rinaldo Jeanty: Maybe what I could do is explain a bit in terms of what was put in place and how it was done. The commissioner's report indicated that, in 2022, the federal government did put in place an analysis, which was the baseline information that we collected to be able to work with the provinces.

Since that time, given that the jurisdiction is at the provincial and territorial level, we have worked individually with each province, on the basis of agreements and projects that have been established, to make sure that the list is updated and reflective of the local areas, priority projects and priority areas that those provinces want to map. That is specifically based on the high-risk areas and priority areas.

When it's looked at from that perspective, I would say to you that we are fully on track at this point. We have published 450-plus maps at this juncture, and we are on track to surpass the targets that have been set by the national adaptation strategy of mapping 200-plus high-risk areas Canada-wide.

Amanpreet Gill: Natural Resources Canada told the Auditor General that it viewed the 2022 prioritization list only as a preliminary decision-making tool.

If that list was not intended to guide actual funding decisions, what was its practical purpose?

Rinaldo Jeanty: I'm sorry. I'm not sure I fully heard the question. I think you're still asking about the list and the prioritization that was put together by the federal government. Is that correct?

Amanpreet Gill: Yes.

The question is this: If the 2022 prioritization list was viewed only as a preliminary decision-making tool and was not intended to guide actual funding decisions, what was its practical purpose?

Rinaldo Jeanty: The practical purpose of the analysis that was done in 2022 was to help us begin a conversation with the provinces to at least identify, based on the data that we had available at the federal government level, what we thought the high-risk areas were going to be.

I will remind the committee that jurisdiction for flood mapping is at the provincial and territorial level. Based on that, we have to make sure that we are prioritizing based on information that the local communities and local areas put forward, and that's what we've done.

Amanpreet Gill: That's good.

How can Natural Resources Canada claim its flood mapping program protects vulnerable Canadians when the department did not track whether mapping investments reached the communities it identified as most at risk?

Rinaldo Jeanty: I will repeat the same thing I've said.

The preliminary list that was done was based on data that the federal government collected. Jurisdictional responsibility is at the provincial and territorial level. Every dollar spent to date has been based on what the provinces have prioritized and on the high-risk areas that have been identified collaboratively with the provinces and territories. We intend to continue doing that.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): Mr. Malette, you have the floor.

[English]

Chris Malette: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll be sharing my time with Mr. Fanjoy.

My question for Ms. Robinson refers to the H5N1 vaccines in particular.

Now that we've experienced the 2021 outbreak, gotten through it and seen our procurement of vaccines, what improvements have already been made to procurement tracking and distribution processes since the audit period closed? Are we on track to implement system-level updates at any point in the coming year?

• (1240)

Kerry Robinson: One thing I want to start with is that certainly we've seen, from a global zoonotic perspective, that H5N1 has been a significant issue since 2021, as you noted and as my colleague Dr. Furness spoke to, in the animal context. The risk for humans does continue over time, and the risk for animals, as she noted, obviously wildlife, poultry and other mammals, continues over time. Therefore, we have to be vigilant, and we have to have a lot of proactive preparedness, which is the approach we've taken with our partners across different departments.

We're speaking about vaccines, but vaccines are one part of the preparedness package. You need to have six different pillars of preparedness, including surveillance, laboratory diagnostics and modelling, risk assessment—and not a “one and done” risk assessment, but ongoing and updated risk assessment—guidance for health professionals and resources, medical countermeasures including vaccines but also antivirals, for example, for humans, as well as scientific evidence, research gaps and readiness for outbreaks if they were to occur.

We've made significant progress, especially since 2024, when we saw the novel spillover, which was unexpected—highly unexpected and the first globally—from birds into dairy cattle in the U.S. Dairy cattle was a brand new host, if you will, of the virus and that obviously resulted in significant impacts in the dairy industry in the U.S., but there were also human cases. I think there were up to 66 human cases in the U.S. Again, they had been in very low numbers prior to that.

As part of that readiness, we did, obviously, advance our work on vaccine procurement in 2024, and we made that decision for a modest supply.

I want to highlight some of the objectives of that modest supply. It's important to know the context. The primary objective, in fact, was for pandemic readiness. As you may know, multiple countries in the world have purchased a stockpile of H5 vaccines for readiness, not for broad deployment, and that is our primary objective: for use in the event of a pandemic. We had a potential across the border from our neighbour, our friendly neighbour across the way, for avian influenza to rapidly move into Canada through dairy, poultry or humans, so we needed to have those vaccines there. Our secondary objective was to provide a small supply for potential, targeted use for those populations most at risk.

We had two objectives there, and the primary one was readiness. In terms of those doses, from our learnings and improvement over time, we purchased 870,000 doses. In a best-case scenario, you would have high vaccine uptake and little to no wastage, but that is very challenging when you have 10 doses in one vial. Someone might need to be vaccinated in a rural area of Saskatchewan and someone else in a city, and you might have to use one vial for one person.

All that is to say that 870,000 doses would allow you to vaccinate a maximum of 435,000 people in Canada. That represents 1% of the Canadian population, and our decision was to procure a supply that was quite modest. We need to have some kind of insurance policy. If we were to have a pandemic on our doorstep and no vaccine, it would be at least 14 to 20 weeks before we could get access to a pandemic vaccine.

That is why we took that readiness approach.

Chris Malette: Thank you very much, Ms. Robinson.

I'll pass it on to my colleague.

Bruce Fanjoy: Mr. Jeanty, in 2024, severe weather cost insured damages of \$8.5 billion in Canada. Uninsured damages would have added considerably to that total.

Could you elaborate on the outcome of not making these investments in flood mapping on the consequences of disasters we would face?

Rinaldo Jeanty: I think the chair has given me not so much time to respond, so I'll respond very quickly.

I would say that it's tremendously important for us to continue working in this space. Our provincial colleagues have indicated to us how important it is for the federal government to continue investing, and certainly we've seen the result in how many communities are now better informed as a result of all the mapping that has been done since the program began.

• (1245)

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): Thank you.

Colleagues, I see that we have 15 minutes left on the regular schedule. Do you want to continue and do another round of questions, or would you prefer a shorter meeting today?

Mr. Bexte, you have the floor.

[*English*]

David Bexte: Let's keep going with another round.

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): The floor is yours.

[*English*]

David Bexte: Thank you very much, Chair. I appreciate the time.

I appreciate the witnesses' and testifiers' patience and the time they have spent here at the committee.

Ms. Robinson, regarding the H5N1 bird flu virus or avian influenza vaccines, you stated that 870,000 doses were acquired. The AG's report mentioned that 95% of the doses were left unused. You gave some description about that and the justification. The AG's office found discrepancies in the data used in the procurement process.

What steps have been taken to ensure that there's going to be less waste and that, moving forward, the procurement process is going to properly reflect that demand? How do you calculate the demand?

Kerry Robinson: That's an excellent question. Thank you very much for that.

It's a complicated process. As I mentioned, there were two objectives. One was for readiness in case the virus were to evolve and we were to have human-human transmission, which would need a rapid response. Those are basically pandemic or pre-pandemic conditions. We were trying to balance that out and not wanting to procure vaccines for a large portion of the population. That's why we ended up going with that low number that would cover a maximum of 1% of the population. The second one was around the targeted use for at-risk populations.

It was never our assumption that we would get to a very high level of uptake because the primary purpose was readiness—just in case. That being said, we did learn from Finland, which is an example of a country that did modest deployment of vaccines for at-risk populations like veterinary workers and vets, wildlife workers, and lab workers working directly with the virus or working in areas where they're exposed to contaminated environments or animals.

We are taking our due diligence with our forward-looking approach. We are developing a new decision-making framework to guide on us on decisions for a future potential procurement of vaccines.

David Bexte: That's in process, then, and you have new guidelines.

Do you have data from similar jurisdictions? You talked about Finland. Would you consider the 95% rate an outlier, or is it similar to Finland's case?

Kerry Robison: No, it's very similar. Finland had an uptake of less than 5%. The majority of countries that have purchased the H5N1 vaccines have not used them at all. They've had 100% non-use.

David Bexte: What efforts were made to educate the human population, the at-risk population?

Kerry Robison: We do that work as a federal government agency with animal health partners like CFIA. Dr. Furness spoke about engagement with industry associations. We work with provinces and territories. It's a careful balance in terms of the risk of avian influenza, which can change dramatically.

Overall, the risk for the general population of Canada is low, with higher risks for those exposed. The risk-benefit analysis in terms of vaccination is not high for the majority of the population. Obviously, it is for those most at risk. There were targeted efforts, especially through provinces and territories and local animal health leadership.

David Bexte: What company provided the vaccine?

Kerry Robison: We used our primary pandemic influenza vaccine supplier, GSK.

David Bexte: It was GSK. It was not domestically produced.

Kerry Robison: It was domestically produced, yes.

David Bexte: Okay.

Will the costs for that program be tabled?

Kerry Robison: No, they will not. The reason is that the cost of the vaccine—the cost per dose and the overall cost—is proprietary information through the contract. It's my understanding that we're not in a position to share that.

David Bexte: We should be able to get it from public accounts—the money spent on different programs.

Kerry Robison: That could be a remit we could take back.

David Bexte: I would appreciate your tabling those details about the program.

Taxpayers are concerned because 95% of something has not been used and has expired; it's no longer useful. They want to ensure there's value for the money. It is a complicated circumstance when

people don't understand all the nuance, much like an insurance policy.

I'll cede my time to the chair. Thank you very much.

• (1250)

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): Thank you very much.

Mr. Fanjoy, the floor is yours.

[*English*]

Bruce Fanjoy: Thank you, Chair.

Ms. El Bied, a lot of our rivers in Canada have hydroelectric dams. While there are lots of factors we don't control with respect to flooding, there are some things we do control, for example, the timing and the levels of reservoirs behind our hydroelectric dams.

I'm curious, in the context of emergency preparedness, about the role the federal government has in conversations with Ontario Power Generation Inc., Hydro-Québec and other major utilities that are operating these dams. How is that used to mitigate flood risk.

Kenza El Bied: To respond to your question, it is a shared responsibility between the federal government and each.... For example, if we are talking about Ontario, we would be working with the Province of Ontario. We would not be working directly with the municipality.

We have to go through and work with the province. There is work happening on an ongoing basis with each jurisdiction across Canada on how to address emergency management for floods or wildfires. It is an all-hazards approach. There is ongoing planning and conversations with jurisdictions across Canada on that front.

Bruce Fanjoy: Just to follow up, is that work throughout the calendar year, or is that just when a flood is anticipated?

Kenza El Bied: It's during the year. For example, right now, we have been doing some work with all jurisdictions around preparedness for the wildfire season. We do that during the whole year.

Bruce Fanjoy: I will share my time with Mr. Greaves.

Will Greaves: Thank you to the hon. member for Carleton.

Thank you, once again, to all our witnesses for indulging us in this extra long meeting today.

I do not believe we have anybody from the Department of National Defence. If we do, perhaps the director general could come forward.

Thank you very much for joining us. I appreciate it.

One of the pieces that jumped out at me from the commissioner's report was about the large share of federal assets that are the responsibility of the Department of National Defence, which really underscores the necessity for DND to take climate resilience and adaptation seriously for its infrastructure and other assets.

Could you speak to the future planning, perhaps, at DND in terms of the kinds of actions that will be taken to ultimately ensure the effectiveness and operational readiness of those assets going forward?

Sarah Evans (Director General, Environment and Sustainable Management, Department of National Defence): Certainly. It is something we take quite seriously at the Department of National Defence. The \$80 billion over five years that was announced as investments for national defence include \$19 billion over five years for our infrastructure portfolio. In order to help ensure that we are investing in our infrastructure portfolio while thinking about the future and incorporating climate resilience, we have, as was previously mentioned, the defence climate and sustainability strategy.

We are also working on putting together master real property development plans, which are done on a regional basis. Each of those regional base plans include consideration of climate resilience and information from climate change vulnerability assessments, which we have prepared.

In addition, we have the green building directive and associated standards. For each individual building, when we are developing a new asset, we are incorporating considerations around climate resilience into the design of those assets to ensure that these dollars we are investing are taking into consideration climate as we invest these dollars.

• (1255)

Will Greaves: Thank you very much for that answer, Ms. Evans.

In the final minute remaining, could you maybe expand on the greatest climate-related risks that DND assets and operations face at this time?

Sarah Evans: In 2024, we completed a climate change vulnerability assessment in which we looked at 34 of our main defence sites, as well as five north warning systems. Through that study, we identified a number of high risks, including, in particular, erosion at our coasts and rising sea levels as well as a high level of rainfall. Those are some of the key risks for our assets.

Will Greaves: Thank you very much, and thank you, Mr. Chair.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): Thank you.

It's my turn.

Ms. El Bied, you talked about provinces. You have often said that it's the provinces' role to do certain things. Was it a request from the Government of Quebec to develop this mapping and this portal?

Kenza El Bied: Thank you for the question.

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): Did the Government of Quebec ask you to develop mapping and a portal?

Kenza El Bied: Quebec, the Government of Quebec, didn't ask us to do that. However, this mapping tool will be available to all Canadians.

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): Okay, but that wasn't my question.

It didn't ask you, then. Did you ask it whether it needed that?

Kenza El Bied: I'll answer quickly.

Since the federal government gave us the funding to develop this, we have worked with Quebec and had discussions with it over the past three years. We have been working on this together. I can't say that the Government of Quebec asked for it, but we shared the federal government's vision.

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): However, to my knowledge, the Government of Quebec already maps flood-prone areas. Are you duplicating the work, or are you letting Quebec do it and taking its maps?

Kenza El Bied: That's a good question.

The maps are complementary. That means it isn't a duplication of work. In the portal, you'll see what we have done. We refer to the provinces that have maps.

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): Are you mapping places in Quebec?

Kenza El Bied: In fact, if Quebec opts into the portal, there will be information.

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): Does the federal government produce maps for Quebec?

Kenza El Bied: The federal government produces them for all the provinces in Canada.

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): Do you make maps for Quebec?

Kenza El Bied: The information exists, but it hasn't been disclosed, because we're waiting for Quebec—

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): My question is simple. I'll repeat it.

Do you produce maps of flood-prone areas for Quebec? Do you make them yourselves? Quebec does, but does the federal government as well?

Kenza El Bied: Yes, the federal government does as well.

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): Okay.

Could you tell us how much the federal government spends on mapping in Quebec, out of the \$64 million, compared to the other provinces? Could you give us a proportion?

Rinaldo Jeanty: Thank you for the question.

We have agreements that were signed directly with Quebec. Those agreements include the amount of money that comes from the federal government to support Quebec in terms of mapping.

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): What amount has the federal government allocated to Quebec?

Rinaldo Jeanty: We can provide the committee with the agreements that state the amounts allocated to Quebec, in writing.

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): Okay.

Was there, for example, a proposal for Quebec to withdraw from this program with financial compensation?

Rinaldo Jeanty: In terms of mapping and the federal support for that, every province we have had discussions with has asked for support, including Quebec. We give them our geospatial data to support them, and we provide them with science and our expertise to assist them in their work.

Across the country, right now, all the provinces that have the opportunity to work with us have asked for federal assistance.

The Vice-Chair (Patrick Bonin): Thank you for your answer.

Mr. DeMarco and you, the officials, the committee thanks you for your contribution and participation in today's meeting.

The committee's next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 26, 2026, at 3:30 p.m.

The meeting is adjourned.

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