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Chair: Salma Zahid



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• (1535)

[*English*]

The Chair (Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre—Don Valley East, Lib.)): I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 21 of the Standing Committee on Science and Research. The committee is meeting to study artificial intelligence.

Welcome back, everyone. I hope everyone had a good break.

Before we start, I would like to make a few comments for the benefit of all witnesses and members.

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

I will remind you that all comments should be addressed through the chair.

With that, I would like to welcome our witnesses for the first panel. We have Dr. Pina D'Agostino, professor, Osgoode Hall Law School, York University; Dr. Arvind Gupta, professor, department of computer science, University of Toronto; and Dr. Gail Murphy, vice-president, research and innovation, University of British Columbia. Welcome.

All the witnesses will have five minutes for their opening remarks, and then we will go into rounds of questioning by members.

We will start with Dr. D'Agostino.

You have five minutes. The floor is yours.

[*Translation*]

Pina D'Agostino (Professor, Osgoode Hall Law School, York University, As an Individual): Thank you, Madam Chair.

[*English*]

Thank you to the committee for inviting me back today.

My name is Pina D'Agostino. I am a professor of law at Osgoode Hall Law School and a tier 1 York research chair. I serve as associate vice-president, research, at York University, and as the scientific director of Connected Minds, a \$318-million federally funded CFREF, Canada first research excellence fund, advancing transformative AI research and technology. I am the board chair at the On-

tario Centre of Innovation, and I am the founder and director of the IP Innovation Clinic, Canada's largest pro bono intellectual property clinic.

When I appeared before this committee on December 1, I argued that Canada can be a global AI leader by supporting homegrown talent and industry, commercializing our world-class research and ensuring that AI development and adoption are ethical and inclusive and respect creators' rights.

Today, I want to underscore these points specifically, in light of AI sovereignty: why Canadian control over AI, IP and other intangible assets matters for our future, why our IP ecosystem requires long-term strategic investment and coordination, and why protecting Canadian creators remains essential to our social and economic well-being. I will focus on my areas of expertise, particularly issues of ownership, access, and control over Canadian creations and inventions, otherwise known as IP and data.

There is a great deal of discussion today about sovereign AI. Policy-makers, business leaders and commentators are calling for stronger domestic AI capacity and adoption so that we don't fall behind in an increasingly competitive global landscape. While I agree with these points, sovereign AI must mean more than capacity and adoption. At its core, sovereign AI must address questions of ownership, access, control and governance.

By this, I don't only mean tangible assets such as data centres or cloud infrastructure. I also mean intangible assets, most importantly IP and data, which are the lifeblood of the AI sector. Ownership, access and control determine who captures value, who sets the rules of use and who ultimately benefits from technological innovation. Here, Canada faces a serious and persistent challenge not limited to the AI sector.

Crucially, much of the IP that our world-class researchers and inventors generate does not remain in Canada. Instead, it flows to large multinational firms based elsewhere. Ceding this ownership has serious consequences, including reduced investment and job creation in Canada and constrained freedom to operate for Canadian entrepreneurs wanting to innovate, scale and grow at home and abroad.

The good news is that we can fix this. As I shared before in this committee during a different study in 2023 and even earlier elsewhere, a made-in-Canada strategy is threefold. We must, one, create and protect the IP and data in Canada; two, keep control of it in Canada; and three, grow and scale it through leading global companies.

Industry, universities and other innovation hubs across Canada need this, and many are already playing a leadership role. Project Arrow is an example of what it means to build in Canada in the automotive sector. It involves Canadians coming together and contributing to a made-in-Canada solution. I am pleased to be involved in these efforts on the IP front as an advisory board member.

Canada has made some important steps through programs such as ElevateIP and via the Canadian Intellectual Property Office. Provincial governments across the country have too. IPON is a case in point. However, demand for accessible IP services continues to outpace supply.

My own work makes this clear. The IP Innovation Clinic has a wait-list of clients from across the country needing assistance. From 15 years of experience here, I can tell you that demand has not diminished despite the expansion of other IP programs. If anything, it has increased as more Canadians recognize the importance of IP. These publicly funded programs, including ISED's IP clinics program, must work together to avoid duplication, maximize efficiency and provide coordinated, national IP education and financial supports that drive IP sophistication.

Finally, as noted in my last visit and from my vantage point of more than two decades of work in this area, I will say that as AI technologies are developed and adopted in Canada, we must protect creators' rights, the lifeblood of our culture and economy. Many AI systems are trained on copyright-protected materials without creators' permission and fair compensation. This practice threatens our creators' livelihoods, risking broader social and economic harms. At Connected Minds, we take this seriously and work to ensure that AI technologies advance in socially responsible ways, not extractive ways.

I will conclude by saying that to truly bolster Canadian AI sovereignty, Canada must take greater ownership and control over the AI systems and the IP and data assets on which it increasingly relies. Our future depends on it.

Thank you again for this opportunity to appear before you. I look forward to answering your questions.

The Chair: Thank you, Dr. D'Agostino.

We will now proceed to Dr. Gupta.

Dr. Gupta, you will have five minutes for your opening remarks. Please go ahead.

Arvind Gupta (Professor, Department of Computer Science, University of Toronto, As an Individual): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good afternoon. Thank you to the committee for having me back. It's a pleasure to appear before you today as part of your study on artificial intelligence.

As a member of Minister Solomon's AI strategy task force, my colleagues and I engaged in extensive and far-reaching consultations with research centres, universities, public institutions, industry, and thought leaders across the country. Much of what we heard informs the federal government's strategy to shape a responsible AI research ecosystem, and I look forward to sharing these insights with you today.

As the birthplace for deep learning, Canada is uniquely positioned to lead in AI research. While it is apparent that AI has the potential to fundamentally transform our economy and society, it is less certain how this will happen. We must remain a leader in developing the underlying foundational techniques, and the mechanisms to leverage these techniques, for the benefit of Canadians, while ensuring that any and all AI systems remain ethical, fair and transparent.

Canadians must see their place in the AI revolution, garnering the skills to navigate the emerging changes in industry, civil society and government. For Canada to harness the potential of AI while managing its challenges, we must demand excellence in mission-driven research and the talent to shape and translate our research into globally competitive technologies, innovations and products.

Today, I'd like to share with the committee a number of observations from my consultations with the Canadian research community and with industry writ large.

Research and talent are the bedrock of our national AI strategy. AI continues to evolve rapidly, and Canada can only benefit if we maintain our AI thought leadership. We cannot be successful without an expansive talent pool, trained to apply the latest AI techniques, helping to implement AI to address our socio-economic opportunities and challenges. This will require taking an inclusive approach to training, from ensuring widespread understanding and appreciation of AI to ensuring that the best and brightest are attracted to Canada, ready to contribute to Canadian AI excellence.

Our AI strategy must ensure that Canadians see that AI can benefit them. The time is now to develop training and skills programs that ensure Canadians have the ability to garner the skills that allow them to adopt and thrive during future AI disruptions. Canadians must have confidence that senior business leaders have necessary AI competencies to navigate these disruptions thoughtfully. Governments must ensure appropriate social safety nets to allow Canadians to adjust to these disruptions.

All levels of government must identify strategic AI priorities and ensure that resources are directed to those priorities. Rapid changes in the AI landscape, combined with geopolitical realities, mean that rather than taking a “peanut butter” approach to policy-making, government must prioritize national strengths in AI while ensuring AI is broadly diffused so that Canadians benefit.

We will need a multidisciplinary, multisectoral approach to develop multi-use AI-based systems that can address multiple socio-economic challenges. We heard that truly inspired AI solutions can be applied across multiple disciplines and economic sectors. For example, privacy-enabling techniques developed for health care can be translated into techniques and applications for public service, education or finance.

We must ensure a national focus on building and deploying AI-enabled technologies for strategic Canadian sectors. There are sectors that are critical for the future of the country, such as national defence. There are sectors where Canada is a world leader, such as resource extraction. There are sectors where Canada is uniquely positioned to succeed, such as health care, and sectors where Canada can become a critical player in the global supply chain, such as microelectronics and robotics. For these sectors to grow and become globally competitive, we must adopt a national focus that enables the development of breakthrough technologies.

We heard that too many Canadian economic strategies mimic those of other countries, especially the United States, rather than build on this country's economic realities and competitive advantages. Getting this right and bolstering our strategic strengths can significantly boost GDP in the near term, allowing for new AI-inspired industries to emerge that build a brighter economic future that benefits all Canadians.

Issues pertaining to AI sovereignty were mentioned by nearly all stakeholders. Some noted that developing sovereign compute strategies is tricky given rapid obsolescence and massive investments by the U.S. and the EU, which make it difficult for Canada to keep pace. Canada will need to be strategic in its compute investments by, for example, investing in sovereign compute for highly strategic needs such as the pursuit of advanced AI research, while utilizing shared compute for day-to-day corporate needs.

• (1540)

Building on this, there is widespread recognition that we need a sovereign data strategy that ensures—

The Chair: Dr. Gupta, could you please wind up?

Arvind Gupta: Yes.

It must ensure that domestic AI models protect Canada against future global threats.

No theme was more consistently raised than the need to build public trust in Canadian policy on the ethical use of AI. Public policy prescriptions that foster fair and transparent AI systems are a must. Success will require foundational research in responsible AI, made especially important because of the fast evolution of AI techniques. Engaging our leading AI thinkers to work with government in addressing these issues will be critical for building this trust with Canadians.

I look forward to your questions and to continuing this discussion.

• (1545)

The Chair: Thank you, Dr. Gupta.

We will now proceed to Dr. Murphy.

Dr. Murphy, you will have five minutes for your opening remarks. Please go ahead.

Gail Murphy (Vice-President, Research and Innovation, University of British Columbia): Thank you for inviting me to join you today.

As you've heard, I'm Gail Murphy, vice-president of research and innovation and a professor of computer science at the University of British Columbia. I currently serve as the vice-chair of the board of the Digital Research Alliance of Canada, which is a national not-for-profit organization with a mandate to provide compute, data and software for Canadian researchers. I recently had the honour of serving as a member of the Government of Canada's AI strategy task force.

UBC is the second-largest research university in Canada, with nearly 80,000 students and more than 17,000 faculty and staff at campuses in Vancouver and Kelowna and sites throughout British Columbia. Today, over 100 UBC faculty members and hundreds of students are focused on fundamental and applied AI research in the vibrant B.C. AI ecosystem, establishing and growing companies, integrating AI into the health system and furthering critical industry sectors like the life sciences, critical minerals and forestry.

AI is a research field that's moving at warp speed with new discoveries every day. Keeping apace is not only imperative; it's essential.

Only three years ago, the power of large language models born from Canadian ingenuity became evident to the public. Already, those at the forefront of AI are thinking about how to move beyond the limitations of these models. We cannot rely on letting others invent the future of AI. We need to keep inventing it here in Canada with Canadian values, but we also need to do more to ensure that these discoveries find their way into applications that benefit Canadians. Moving AI research into applications is challenging, in part because of the many pathways by which AI can be used.

One pathway is through the formation of AI-first companies that place AI at the core of their strategy and operations. For example, Variational AI, a Vancouver-based company working with UBC researchers, is focused on providing a foundational model to speed up drug discovery. AI-first companies often require significant infrastructure to build the models on which they rely.

Another pathway is when AI is embedded into products or services. For example, UBC researchers have shown how diagnosis in rural, remote and indigenous communities such as Haida Gwaii can be improved through the right combination of training, hand-held ultrasound devices, cloud platforms and AI. Making this pathway a reality requires support to bring AI experts together with domain experts.

Yet another pathway is to develop AI solutions for critical points in the supply chains of different economic sectors. For instance, UBC professor Frank Wood has created the UBC spinoff Inverted AI, which is building predictive human behaviour models for autonomous driving. Supporting these companies to be successful can require rethinking how to integrate Canadian companies into global trade supply chains.

There are four key areas in which we can start to better support the continuum and these pathways.

The first is through research. Canada can stay at the forefront of AI discovery by enhancing and expanding the AI institute model. The institutes can be enhanced to serve as hubs that bring talent from universities, colleges, technical institutes and industry together

to address mission-driven, dual-purpose challenges. The institutes should be expanded to fully deploy world-class talent that is currently underutilized, including in B.C.

The second is focus. Canada should aim to focus on and accelerate specific areas of global strength. Focus could be brought through missions or challenges posed to the AI institutes. Potential areas of focus that could broadly benefit Canadians and the Canadian economy include AI for health and AI for robotics.

The third is AI supply chains. Canada should aim to globally lead in critical parts of the global AI supply chain for particular sectors. In selected areas, Canada can establish precompetitive industrial research and development centres based on successful models in other countries for different kinds of technologies. These centres accelerate industry within the country and create new companies and a highly trained workforce.

The fourth is compute infrastructure. Canada lags its peers on AI research infrastructure in multiple rankings. To support discovery and application related to Canadians, large-scale sovereign compute with access to Canadian data is needed for both researchers and SMEs. The Digital Research Alliance of Canada is well positioned to lead on this infrastructure for Canada.

I hope the committee finds these contributions to its study helpful. I thank you for the opportunity to speak with you and look forward to addressing any questions you may have.

● (1550)

The Chair: Thank you, Dr. Murphy.

With that, we will now start our first round of questioning, with six minutes each. We will start with MP Ho.

Please go ahead. You have six minutes.

Vincent Ho (Richmond Hill South, CPC): My first set of questions is for Professor D'Agostino.

Welcome back to this committee. As a fellow Osgoode Hall alum who was a fellow at the IP Innovation Clinic, I think it's very special to have you here on this committee.

Professor, I'm going to start by asking a few questions about the U.S. CLOUD Act.

Could you briefly explain the scope of the U.S. CLOUD Act and how its extraterritorial provisions operate when a U.S.-based service provider such as CoreWeave holds or controls data outside of the United States?

Pina D'Agostino: Thank you for having me back.

I welcome this question because it speaks to the issues I just testified on, which deal with AI sovereignty—namely ownership, access and control of data. It identifies two parts. The first is the data independence that Canada needs to maintain. The second is one that maybe doesn't come to the fore when we talk about these issues. It is technological independence.

In terms of data independence, we need to ensure that Canadians hang on to what is Canadian. Data that is created and stored on Canadian soil needs to stay in Canada, unless there is a strict exception to do otherwise.

With regard to the CLOUD Act, we're not signatories to it yet; we are in negotiations. I would encourage the government to ensure that exceptions are clearly delineated. These would apply so far, it says, for law enforcement and criminal investigations, but they're all rules-based, so the workings are as good as the system they're in. If in the obtaining of a warrant and going to court there is not a solid and robust rule-of-law-based system, that would raise concerns in obtaining data.

Vincent Ho: Professor, you mentioned something about having the data stored in a physical location on Canadian soil. My understanding of the U.S. CLOUD Act is that it doesn't matter where the data is stored. Is that correct? The data could be stored in Canada, as with CoreWeave—it has a data centre here in southwestern Ontario—but it could still be subject to the CLOUD Act. Is that correct?

Pina D'Agostino: With the way it's configured now, it can be. That's why I'm suggesting that we need really robust workarounds to ensure we protect Canadians.

I would add that on the tech side, what is also concerning, in a sense.... I believe we're in a period of transition. We're all talking about how we need to enhance capacity, but this is really where the IP comes in.

Nvidia, I understand, is one of the main providers of GPUs. Arvind, this is your area—both of you. That can be problematic, because it could be that as the dominant player...it is also not a Canadian company. When we talk about ownership, access and control, the ideal would be that as we transit out of the period where we have been or are trying to build up Canadian capacity, we have Canadian suppliers.

Vincent Ho: That's right. We learned in the previous committee meetings that the Liberal government had handed a large \$240-mil-

lion contract to a Canadian company called Cohere. That sounded great on paper, but then it used all of that money to buy data centre operating services from CoreWeave, which is a U.S.-based company subject to the U.S. CLOUD Act.

Although it has committed to building data centres here, it still exposes Canadians' data because Cohere is also a principal AI service provider to the Canadian government. It has access to Canadian government data and potentially even the data of Canadian citizens or residents of Canada.

Do you see that as an exposure...or a lack of government action to protect Canadians?

• (1555)

Pina D'Agostino: I see it as an opportunity for us to do better. I see it as an opportunity, as we are building up AI capacity, to.... It's all about now. We need to build in Canada and have things made in Canada, which I'm a big fan of. The ideal scenario would be that for all of that, Canadian players would be the tech providers, providing the cloud infrastructure and also the services. I would encourage us to move in that fashion.

We are in a transit period. I don't know why they were selected. It seems that perhaps there wasn't the technology or the know-how in Canada.

Vincent Ho: We actually had some Canadian competitors of CoreWeave on this committee, and they said they could have done the job too had they been approached. It does scratch some heads. The Liberal government has touted this buy Canadian policy, which is great, but once again, the Liberal rhetoric doesn't match the reality Canadians are facing.

To close off, are there any other legislative gaps that you see in Canada that could help protect—

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting, but your time is up.

I have to go to the second round.

We will now proceed to MP Deschênes-Thériault for six minutes. Please go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): I thank the witnesses for their testimony.

Ms. Murphy and Mr. Gupta, as you know, the transformative nature of AI creates all kinds of opportunities for Canadian businesses and the economy as a whole.

Would you please talk more about how advances in AI research can be effectively translated into concrete applications and added value for Canadian businesses and various sectors?

What levers would strengthen coordination and synergy among universities, research institutes, investors, the private sector and government?

[English]

Gail Murphy: There are a lot of opportunities to take the research discoveries from our students or faculty at various Canadian institutions and move them to applications. Canadian industry has one of the lowest rates of adoption, as far I know, of AI in the world. We need ways to bridge the high-quality talent that's coming out of universities, to increase that talent and to provide opportunities for Canadian businesses to get their feet wet with different kinds of AI technologies.

As to the ways to do that, we can learn from other countries in how they have set up applied institutes of AI and funded different kinds of projects to give students access to companies to understand their problems. Those companies will need access to infrastructure to then try out the different AI techniques and to know they have a means of moving forward to integrate them into their businesses over the long term.

There are models we can learn from that can bring together different hubs and applied institutes, and that can let us take the fundamental discoveries that exist within Canada and move them into benefits for Canadian industry and Canadians through that.

Arvind Gupta: AI is still a very new field, and we're still learning what types of AI techniques we're going to need in order to be at the cutting edge. Definitely, there are many techniques being developed at the universities that can be rolled into industry.

I'll just use one of my examples here in health care. There have been huge strides made in physician-assisted diagnostics. Whether it's on the imaging or clinical side, we need to find regulatory ways to encourage these kinds of techniques to be deployed in Canada. Health care costs in Canada are skyrocketing. AI has some potential. I think there are a lot of regulatory hurdles for trying out these techniques in Canada, and we should be looking at whether we can actually take a lead there.

The flip side of this is that because AI is so new, we don't actually know all the use cases. I'm a fan of figuring out how to build a meeting ground between industry and universities so we can see new kinds of data and challenges. We have not built those kinds of meeting grounds very effectively in Canada. In Germany, they have a number of institutes—the Fraunhofers, the Max Plancks—to create a place where people can work on these problems.

It has to be both ways: Take the techniques coming out of the universities and figure out how to more rapidly deploy them in industry, and also understand problems in industry and what kinds of research can be spawned from them to develop new techniques.

• (1600)

[Translation]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Thank you.

Ms. D'Agostino, I looked at your online biography and noticed that you serve as an intellectual property expert with the First Nations Information Governance Centre.

Would you please explain how Canada can ensure that the perspectives and knowledge of minority groups, such as first nations or francophones in Canada, are adequately taken into account and respected in the development and deployment of AI models?

[English]

Pina D'Agostino: What a great question and one that's very close to my heart. In terms of the indigenous communities, the first principle that we really need to take to heart is we don't want a re-colonization to happen. Whatever we do with AI, we cannot embark on an extractive approach.

I'll give you an example. Even when we're putting grants together, we often want to be engaging with indigenous communities. It's not sufficient anymore to just have a throwaway line in a grant application that says that we are going to consult with indigenous peoples. That ticking of a box just doesn't cut it anymore; we need to go way beyond that. I'm proud to say I'm living this now with Connected Minds. We have an indigenous advisory circle where anything indigenous has to go by this circle. It's an inclusive approach where they are involved in actually setting the question as opposed to projecting what we mean to study on them.

I'm really grateful for Connected Minds and the impact that we're making based on this funding, so that we now have many projects that have come to the fore, in a sense, with their own pain points. We talk about indigenous data, cultures and knowledge, which merit a special understanding and treatment that goes beyond the conventional ways that we've been used to.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Thank you.

The Chair: MP Blanchette-Joncas, please go ahead for six minutes.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'd like to welcome the witnesses who are with us today.

Ms. Murphy, the government announced \$1.7 billion in funding to attract foreign researchers. I certainly saw how the University of British Columbia responded: It seemed to welcome the news quite enthusiastically.

In contrast, however, the government is cutting funding for its own research centres. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada is closing seven research centres, including the ones in Quebec City, Guelph and Lacombe. It is eliminating 665 positions, and over 1,000 WFA notices have been sent out.

What I'm trying to do is understand your institutional perspective. How are we supposed to attract and retain the best talent when we're dismantling public research infrastructure right here in Quebec and Canada? Some of this research infrastructure has over a century of expertise, particularly in long-term trials.

[English]

Gail Murphy: I believe you're referring to the Canada Impact-plus+ research chairs and the ability of that program to help recruit faculty, post-docs and students into Canada. The response at UBC has been great. We've had over 900 expressions of interest from around the world to join our faculty. Those expressions of interest come from many different countries, and people are representative of a broad section of fields. From the viewpoint of interest in coming into the country, it is great. UBC is responding to that interest. I can't speak to government decisions on where they're putting their money, but we know we are reacting to the opportunity that is put in front of us to bring great researchers into our community and have Canadians benefit from that.

• (1605)

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Still from your institutional point of view, what are your thoughts on the fact that research being abandoned in federal research centres may have to be sent to universities? Unless you tell me that you have plenty of money to invest in new labs and new infrastructure, that's my fear. If researchers no longer have places to conduct research, where will they go? Are you ready to take them on board right away? Will the government close all of its research centres, and will those researchers end up at universities? Is that what you see happening?

[English]

Gail Murphy: We're reacting to the opportunity that's been put in front of us. The program carries infrastructure funding that can be applied for, along with faculty and students who come. That allows us to create greater areas of research strength and build upon the research strengths that our institution has. Those are, as I said, across a broad number of different fields. We're looking forward to being able to attract these researchers and have them come and collaborate not only with researchers within the university but with those in the ecosystem around us and with industry.

Universities undertake a lot of collaborative research with different industry sectors, and we're looking to places where we can build upon those collaborations to be able to further them within Canada.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Okay.

There may be a language barrier, so I'm going to make my question more direct: Do you have an opinion on the fact that the government is dismantling research centres?

[English]

Gail Murphy: I'm not aware of the centres you're referring to. It would take further investigation to be able to answer that directly.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Thank you.

Mr. Gupta, Canada dropped from fourth to eighth place in the world in AI capacity between 2021 and 2024, according to the Toronto Media index. In your opinion, is this a structural symptom of the way we support research and innovation?

[English]

Arvind Gupta: It is both a concern and an opportunity that our AI adoption has been slipping.

I've been asked this a lot. I would say that we're still at the very early stages of understanding AI adoption. There's a huge opportunity in front of us, if we can get this right, to disproportionately benefit from this AI revolution.

I'll remind everyone on the committee that many of the foundational techniques were invented by Canadians, in Canada. Even when I look at generative AI, much of the training of the people who invented LLMs was done in Canada, so we are really at the forefront of AI research.

I would encourage the committee in their study to think about the infrastructure we need to build to fully benefit from this research that's being done. It's true that some countries have moved more quickly than we have—I don't think we can deny that—but we're just at the early stages of this race. It's not lost.

Most industrial sectors have not adopted AI. Even in the tech space, people are trying to figure out how to use AI. The university system at large is very interested in helping build industrial AI ecosystems. We want to deploy our students into the system. We want to understand the kinds of challenges businesses face.

I think this is a good conversation for us to have with all of you about what we can do so that we can more rapidly invent and, just as importantly, adopt AI into society.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Thank you, Mr. Gupta.

Ms. D'Agostino, the rise of AI threatens Quebec creators and culture. In your opinion, how should Parliament intervene to protect the creative sector in response to these technologies?

[English]

Pina D'Agostino: Do you mean in the creative sector?

The Chair: Give a quick eight-second answer.

Pina D'Agostino: First and foremost, clarify author-centric legislation to protect creators,

The Chair: Thank you.

The time is up for MP Blanchette-Joncas.

We will now start our second round of questioning with MP Vis for five minutes.

Please go ahead.

Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC): Thank you so much, Madam Chair. It's a real honour to be here today.

In the last Parliament, I was on the industry committee, and we extensively studied Bill C-27. I believe some of you may have appeared in the first attempt of the government to pass some form of AI legislation.

I know you can't speak to the specifics or the recommendations you might have made to the new Minister of AI, but you can speak to what other people said in the community and across Canada.

One of the big concerns that we had as Conservatives in the last Parliament was that the Government of Canada was prioritizing commercial interests over human rights. I'm wondering whether, in its consultations across Canada, the task force heard directly from people that the privacy, freedom from discrimination, democratic participation or even protection against exposure to biometrics in certain cases—like monitoring in the public sphere—should always be weighed more strongly than the commercial interests of companies that want to conduct those activities.

• (1610)

Arvind Gupta: Thank you for that.

We definitely heard that the government needs to set up mechanisms to protect privacy, to ensure fair use of data and to ensure fair use of these systems.

I would argue that having those mechanisms in place actually helps commercial adoption of AI. More people will be willing to use systems that they trust.

Brad Vis: I agree that the last legislation didn't have that, so that's what I'm pushing for.

Arvind Gupta: I would say that this is also an emerging area. We don't quite know what privacy-protecting tools are needed in a lot of these areas. We didn't expect, until recently, the question around fair use. This is a very recent emerging trend. Six months ago it was a huge issue, and now we're beginning to understand that fair use of creative licence, but definitely we're going to have to keep up legislatively as we learn these things.

Brad Vis: My second question relates to risk classification and prohibited uses.

Minister Solomon has acknowledged the need for safety and guardrails in AI deployment with the new AI bill that will be forthcoming.

In the last Parliament, there was AIDA's reliance on regulatory definitions of high-impact systems to create clear statutory prohibitions for unacceptable risk uses, such as biometric surveillance in

public spaces, consistent with international best practices. Did the task force recommend any such exclusions from the committee, from what you heard from the public?

Arvind Gupta: I don't think we can speak about....

Gail Murphy: I think our part of the task force was very focused on research and talent. There were discussions that we were a part of that talked about trust and the low trust of Canadians in AI systems, and hence the need to pay attention to privacy, safety and other responsible uses of AI to up that trust.

Brad Vis: In the consultations, though, were there many recommendations for such exclusions?

Gail Murphy: I don't think we have the scope of view on the other task force members' reports to answer that question.

Brad Vis: Okay.

Minister Solomon has described the task force as a focused 30-day sprint with recommendations feeding into a strategy expected very shortly. Given the civil society warning that rushed AI legislation creates long-term democratic risks, how will the recommendations embed mandatory parliamentary review? Did any of the people who fed into this sprint talk about mandatory parliamentary review of any future legislation?

Arvind Gupta: I think these questions are beyond the scope of our study. We didn't discuss how our recommendations would be rolled into any kind of legislative—

Brad Vis: I'm asking all these questions because you might recall with Bill C-27, it was such a gong show. The now finance minister had to come back to the committee multiple times with new versions of the legislation before it had even been tabled in Parliament. It was all on fundamental questions related to consultation: What is acceptable risk? How do you balance human rights versus commercial interest? What type of independent oversight—civil society or Parliament—would there be over AI? How do we define risk appropriately in the legislative framework in this new and emerging field?

Do you have any comments on that?

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting, but your time is up, MP Vis.

Brad Vis: Thank you.

The Chair: We will now proceed to MP Rana for five minutes.

Please go ahead.

• (1615)

Aslam Rana (Hamilton Centre, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you very much to all the witnesses for spending their valuable time with us today.

Dr. Murphy, AI is a top priority of our government, and our government is doing a lot in focusing on AI research. Do you think the current funding for AI research is meeting the demands of the AI researchers?

Gail Murphy: Absolutely. The AI research funding that exists has been a good starting point, but there are many researchers both in fundamental AI and those who are looking to apply AI, as well as those who are looking to understand how AI can be applied fairly and what rules need to be there who are eager to see more funding in the area to be able to make this transition from the techniques that are coming out into applications.

Aslam Rana: How can we ensure the research being done in universities on AI is not only available for the industry, but also available for the public?

Gail Murphy: Researchers within the university sector are interested in health care, as Dr. Gupta was mentioning, which can not only be for commercial good, but more importantly for the public good within the country.

There is a lot of interest in bringing data assets together that come from different governmental levels, whether they're federal, provincial, municipal, to be able to look at really important questions from geographical regions, from understanding how we can bring data together. All of those require an ability to fund students. They require an ability to have infrastructure available to use and an ability to collaborate across the country, so that the questions are able to consider differences across geographical regions, to consider differences in diversity, and to be able to look at them from the whole view that we can get across the country.

Aslam Rana: What barriers exist when trying to move AI research from universities into real-world applications?

Gail Murphy: There are challenges sometimes in first getting a breadth of data available to be able to answer a question of interest. For instance, sometimes with an economic question, you might want to have workers' compensation data together with health data. That's not always easy for researchers to bring together at this point.

There's a real need to be able to fund the talent we're developing from a student perspective and have them available to look into the questions, and then to also fund the projects that bring industry or governments together with the university personnel. That intersectionality of being able to bring the people together and have them work collaboratively on a project requires funding to be there to bring in people from different kinds of technical backgrounds, and ideally not only from the university sector but also people from colleges and other areas who have different technical backgrounds to be able to work on the problems together.

Aslam Rana: Thank you.

Dr. Gupta, what do you think we'll see in the next five to 10 years regarding the AI scope in Canada and the ecosystem?

Arvind Gupta: I'll say again that we're at the very early stages of this technology.

One thing I'm thinking about is that AI will not only impact industry; it'll impact our civil society writ large, it'll impact the way we provide social services and it'll also impact other science and research areas. I don't think we're paying enough attention, for example, to the impact of AI on inventing new materials and the potential for AI to impact our understanding of biological systems.

When we talk about funding, we're currently putting funding into developing new AI techniques. I think we should be thinking about how we can support the proliferation of AI across disciplines, because if we can more rapidly develop new materials, that will impact industry in a pretty profound way.

To think that my students are going to do the materials science research is probably a little naive. To make sure the materials science students have the AI tools to impact that field will have much more impact.

What I would encourage you to think about is proliferating AI research across the academic enterprise as a way to build an AI ecosystem writ large across the country. We want medical schools to understand AI techniques deeply so that they can train a new generation of doctors who feel comfortable with these systems, understand issues of privacy and safety, and feel comfortable then developing these new systems and adopting them more rapidly.

• (1620)

The Chair: Your time is up, MP Rana.

With that, we will proceed to MP Blanchette-Joncas for two and a half minutes.

Please go ahead.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Mr. Gupta, you were a member of the minister's AI strategy task force. What is your position on the fact that hundreds, if not thousands, of participants were able to intervene anonymously during this consultation? Are you concerned that some of that input might have been foreign interference attempting to influence the pan-Canadian AI strategy? The government allowed anonymous input, so foreign interference is possible.

[English]

Arvind Gupta: To be honest with you, we were not involved as task force members in collecting or collating individual responses, so I can only take responsibility for my own consultations and the written submissions that I received. Those were not read by anybody other than me and they were very carefully considered in my recommendations.

I would very much hope that the broader public intake was looked at carefully with that jaundiced eye and that these are genuine submissions by Canadian stakeholders and not by foreign actors, but I wasn't involved, unless Gail knows something else.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: So, what is your opinion?

According to Matt Hatfield from OpenMedia, the government is being cavalier about this. It isn't really interested in what Canadians think about AI; it's more interested in business opportunities and innovation in the sector than it is about the risks this new technology poses to society.

As an expert, what are your thoughts on secret interference by anonymous groups that could potentially influence something as important as Canada's AI strategy?

[English]

Arvind Gupta: Again, I'm not aware of how that was handled. I will say that I personally receive many written submissions and many requests for people to speak with me directly. I conducted at least 30 in-person interviews. I'd hate to guess how many submissions I received, but there were maybe somewhere between 50 and 100. I can assure you that all those I read helped inform the recommendations in my report.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: An international study conducted by KPMG earlier this year concluded that Canadian society is among the most distrustful and least informed with respect to AI. Are you concerned that this jeopardizes the country's leadership role? The minister is literally allowing people to come and—

[English]

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting. Time is up for you, MP Blanchette-Joncas.

Now we will—

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Madam Chair, I would be pleased to request a written response from Mr. Gupta.

[English]

The Chair: If you can, Dr. Gupta, submit a response to this, that would be really great.

Arvind Gupta: Do you mind writing the question for me, just to make sure that I have it in writing?

The Chair: Okay. The clerk will send it to you.

Thank you.

With that, now we will proceed to MP Mahal for three minutes, and then we will end the panel with MP Noormohamed for three minutes.

MP Mahal, please go ahead.

Jagsharan Singh Mahal (Edmonton Southeast, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Madam Chair, I'll be splitting my time with MP Vis.

Brad Vis: No. I'm good.

Jagsharan Singh Mahal: It will be Tony, then.

Thank you.

I will start with Dr. D'Agostino.

We heard that there is a big concern about the CLOUD Act being a U.S.-controlled act, and that allows U.S.-based companies—even though they have their offices here in Canada—to still control the data. They have access to those data.

You mentioned in your earlier questions that data can be very sensitive data, like indigenous data, their records or the private data of other citizens. How crucial is it that, as a sovereign nation, as a country, we should have parallel, if not better, legislation that would force those companies, if they want to come to Canada and invest in future Canadian AI...? Do you think we need to have a parallel legislation right away? How crucial is it?

• (1625)

Pina D'Agostino: In terms of the whole AI landscape, what we do need are rules of engagement and clear boundaries. I would say that sensitive data—and you were talking about indigenous data—would fall into a category that would be very high-risk data. For anything that can help clarify or identify the harms and that can ensure that something like the CLOUD Act would pertain to it, we would need to have clear exceptions and would have to ensure that the processes in place would not expose that sensitive data.

Right now, we haven't signed on to the CLOUD Act. We should look at stakeholder interests and have widespread knowledge and consultation as to what the harms are to ensure that those don't take place, if there were some type of legislation of that sort.

Jagsharan Singh Mahal: Thank you for the answer.

I'm raising that question because, as you heard from my colleague, the Liberal government just gave over \$240 billion to CoreWeave, which then hired U.S.-based companies to do their own analysis in the AI sphere. Therefore, if we don't have that kind of legislation, does our sovereignty come into question?

Pina D'Agostino: We have a robust legal-based mechanism right now in Canada, absent the CLOUD Act, to be able to respond in kind.

In Canada, the rule of law is alive and well, and we have mechanisms in the law to protect us.

Now we're talking about potentially new AI legislation, and in that, there can be something that governs such a scenario. We're not there yet, but we have the ability to act now and to ensure that we do protect Canadian data.

Jagsharan Singh Mahal: Do you agree with me that we need to act on it right now?

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting, MP Mahal. Your time is up.

Jagsharan Singh Mahal: Thank you.

The Chair: With that, we will proceed to MP Noormohamed for three minutes.

Please go ahead.

Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to you all for being here again.

I will start with Dr. Murphy.

One assumption is that there is going to be substantial long-term growth that's going to come from AI adoption. Could you talk a little bit about how AI can change Canada's growth model, especially if we look outside frontier tech sectors?

Gail Murphy: If you think about, let's say, the automobile industry in the past, Canada did very well having parts that it made available to the global supply chain. If you think about how software is built, software also exists in different layers. If you take something like health, in order to be able to create new health applications with AI, you can either work on real data all of the time or you can create synthetic data on which to work, so there are opportunities to identify places in the new supply chain for different industries—let's use health as an example—and be able to own something like the synthetic data production that you would then allow companies to grow in Canada that provide that. Just like we have been an important part of automobile supply chains, you can imagine being an important part of AI applied to different sectors in the future.

Taleeb Noormohamed: If you were then to extrapolate the opportunity that comes from the public sector as a growth engine, how would you see the public sector playing a role in terms of potentially accelerating the adoption and giving folks tangible ways in which to do exactly that, creating AI playbooks, for example, sector by sector?

I'll leave this for you, Dr. Murphy, and then Dr. Gupta can jump in as well.

Gail Murphy: That's a challenging question to ask and answer in a limited time, but if you imagine the public sector being able to say let's make Canada the best in AI for robotics or AI for science, as Dr. Gupta was describing earlier, there would be abilities to fund missions, for instance, in particular kinds of humans-meet-robotic interactions and build up the expertise in the country of how we can take that and then apply it to different kinds of manufacturing sectors. These are opportunities to fund projects that are very directed and allow Canada to build up an expertise that the rest of the world sees as best in class and bring other countries into buying those goods and capabilities from us.

Arvind Gupta: I'll just build on what Professor Murphy said.

There are areas where Canada is really considered a world leader. I'll just use finance as an example. We are looked at as a model for safety in finance. We're looked at as a model for building a robust government-funded health care system. We are a world leader in robotics. There are various places where we really are some of the best. I mentioned material science earlier. Definitely there are pieces of chemistry where we are really at or very close to the top.

The question then becomes how we bring AI to the fore in these areas, because first mover advantage is huge.

• (1630)

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting.

The time is up for MP Noormohamed, so could you quickly wind up?

Arvind Gupta: Sure.

First mover advantage is very important. We have to find a coalition of the willing. We have to find industries that want to work with our universities to figure out how to rapidly adopt AI so we can be first to market.

The Chair: Thank you.

With this, this panel comes to an end.

With a very heavy heart, I would like to let everyone know that the Honourable Kirsty Duncan has passed away. She was the first chair of this committee. This committee came into existence after her private member's motion. She was a great member of Parliament for Etobicoke North, a minister and an amazing person. She was a mentor for me. When I got elected, she was there to provide support to make sure that, as new MPs, we could stand on our feet. She lost her life to cancer. I'm a cancer survivor, too. She was one of the first two or three colleagues who called me when I was diagnosed. All the support she provided me will never be forgotten.

I think in her honour, we should have a moment of silence.

[A moment of silence observed]

The Chair: Thank you to all of you. She will be really missed.

With that, this panel comes to an end.

I really want to thank our witnesses for appearing before the committee today.

We will suspend the meeting so that the new witnesses can take their place. The meeting is suspended for a few minutes.

• (1630)

(Pause)

• (1635)

The Chair: I call this meeting to order.

Welcome back.

I would like to make a few comments for the benefit of the witnesses and members. Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. For those participating by video conference, click on the microphone icon to activate your mic. Please mute yourself when you're not speaking.

For those on Zoom, at the bottom of your screen you can select the appropriate channel for interpretation: floor, English or French.

All comments should be addressed through the chair.

With that, I would like to welcome our three witnesses for this panel.

From the Canadian Nuclear Association, we are joined by George Christidis, president and chief executive officer; from Electricity Canada, we have Francis Bradley, president and chief executive officer; and joining us by Zoom from Ontario Power Generation, we have David Donovan, vice-president, corporate business development and strategy.

All of the witnesses will have five minutes for their opening remarks. After that, we will proceed to a round of questioning.

We will start with Dr. Christidis.

• (1640)

George Christidis (President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Nuclear Association): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

For the record, I'm not a doctor though. I would have liked to be a doctor, but I didn't have that opportunity.

The Chair: I'm sorry for that.

George Christidis: Thank you very much for the opportunity. I'm very happy to be here today to talk about a very important topic.

Madam Chair and members of the standing committee, it's a privilege to appear with you again to discuss this important issue on behalf of the Canadian Nuclear Association.

I appear before you at a moment of changing dynamics. Since the last time I was here, geopolitical relationships have intensified, and discussions around key sectors such as artificial intelligence and data centres have taken on another feature.

A key message today is this: What do you need to enable the artificial intelligence sector and other sectors to proceed with electricity and energy that's non-emitting, secure and reliable? Here we will talk with colleagues who represent the electricity industry, but I represent the nuclear industry. I'm here to tell you it's a very important part of what we do.

For over 60 years, the Canadian Nuclear Association has been the voice of Canada's nuclear industry, and today we represent 120 members, from coast to coast, from world-leading utilities and multinational mining companies to small suppliers, innovative start-ups and the like. We really are an innovation-intensive and technology-intensive industry.

It is critically important that the nuclear sector be involved in any discussion about the future of technological growth in artificial intelligence and data centre strategy because our sector is foundational to the strategic national industry and is a national asset. Nuclear contributes not only to energy production, but to Canada's economic competitiveness, long-term energy security and environmental sustainability.

This strength is rooted in our world-class domestic capabilities, from Canada's vast uranium resources, which are among the most trusted, robust and responsibly produced in the world, to a robust end-to-end nuclear supply chain, domestic reactor technologies, cutting-edge R and D expertise and vital contributions to areas such as nuclear medicine.

We are actively demonstrating this capacity today through the successful refurbishments at Bruce and OPG's Darlington—which my colleague, Mr. Donovan, will speak to, I'm sure—as well as the planned next chapter of Pickering and the construction under way of small modular reactors at Darlington, which is really leading in the G7. At the same time, provinces such as Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and others are looking at how new nuclear technologies or developments could meet common objectives. This includes large reactors, but there are small reactor discussions as well.

Canada is demonstrating global leadership at a time of rapid change. A renewed interest in nuclear energy is being observed across the globe, driven by energy security imperatives, the need to create jobs and the need to enhance investments and innovation in an era of geopolitical uncertainty, which need the acceleration of electrification across key sectors and the development and deployment of key infrastructure.

Today, a powerful new driver is emerging. That is, again, the phenomenal growth of artificial intelligence and data centres that require a lot of electricity and power. Non-emitting electricity and power are always, of course, the preferred option.

The rapid expansion of AI will add to what we already forecast to be an unprecedented pressure on our electricity systems. Modern AI models and the data centres they rely on can require up to five times the energy required from traditional facilities, demanding constant, 24-7 power with zero downtime.

This is where nuclear power really shines. Nuclear energy provides the predictable, carbon-free baseload power that advanced digital infrastructure requires. This positions Canada, along with its nuclear industry, as an attractive destination for hyperscale data centres and advanced computing investments.

The race to host this infrastructure is fundamentally an economic development race, and clean, reliable, affordable power will be decisive. This is why supporting the deployment of new nuclear power across Canada is so important. Timely regulatory processes, supportive federal-provincial co-operation and collaboration, and sustained investment in nuclear innovation are all essential to ensuring that Canada can meet this rising demand while strengthening our energy security and economic resilience.

Let me be clear: The momentum behind Canada's nuclear expansion is not dependent on the AI boom alone. Our industry must and will continue to grow regardless, driven by electrification, the need to replace aging infrastructure, and rising demand for more clean power. The AI imperative simply reinforces the urgency and adds on to this demand.

Finally, we are also exploring not only what nuclear can do for artificial intelligence, but what artificial intelligence can do for nuclear. The sector is investigating how AI can enhance efficiencies across life cycles, from predictive maintenance and digital twins to improving operational planning and regulatory processes, always with safety and regulatory integrity as paramount.

Let me assure the committee that this work remains at an early stage and that our industry is fully committed to Canada's rigorous safety culture and regulatory framework.

• (1645)

Thank you, again, Madam Chair. I look forward to the conversation.

The Chair: We will now proceed to Mr. Bradley for five minutes.

Please go ahead.

[Translation]

Francis Bradley (President and Chief Executive Officer, Electricity Canada): Thank you very much.

My name is Francis Bradley, and I am the CEO of Electricity Canada.

Electricity Canada is the association that represents the companies that produce, transport and distribute electricity across every province and territory in Canada.

[English]

I would like to thank you for inviting Electricity Canada for a second time to speak to the science and research committee on the study of artificial intelligence.

I'll take this opportunity to explain further why we need to support the electricity sector if we're to be successful at deploying AI.

Electricity, simply, is essential to artificial intelligence. To put it bluntly, using AI means computing and computing uses electricity. We cannot have one without the other. For example, a query on a tool such as ChatGPT can use 10 times more electricity than a traditional web search. To put it in context, global electricity demand from data centres is projected to double by the end of this year, reaching 1,000 terawatt hours. That is enough power to power Japan.

In Canada, electricity demand is projected to double by 2050, driven by economic growth, electrification and the growth of data centres. This will require our sector to build more generation, transmission and distribution infrastructure in the next 25 years than we have in the last century.

Tomorrow we are launching our 2026 state of the industry report, which shows a path for enabling economic growth with data centres. The report will emphasize how the federal government has an opportunity to support the electricity industry in building a new grid that helps secure Canada's place as an energy superpower. What's needed is more investment, fewer delays and, of course, more ambition.

To achieve this, we have four key recommendations.

First, we cannot scale up AI and data centres without growing our grids. Canada must eliminate barriers to building critical electricity infrastructure. For example, we welcome the government's efforts to streamline approvals, such as the creation of the Major Projects Office. Additionally, the memorandum of understanding between the Government of Canada and the Government of Alberta, which will begin a path to the suspension of the implementation and management of clean electricity regulations in the province, shows a path for better intergovernmental coordination. Provincial electricity system operators are best positioned to ensure a reliable and affordable grid.

Second, the government needs to facilitate investments in expanding electricity infrastructure. This includes addressing critical funding gaps and barriers to investment, such as the EIFEL rules.

Third, the government must include the electricity sector in AI conversations and policy design from the start. Currently, no representative from the electricity sector is on the federal AI task force. We cannot have a successful AI strategy without the electricity sector.

Lastly, as we build out our infrastructure, we need to ensure that critical infrastructure is protected. The government should ensure that we are prepared to protect critical infrastructure from the new cyber-threats posed by AI. This was evident in reports of cyber-attacks using independent AI agents such as Claude code to hack into a variety of organizations at a low cost and in a fast manner. Every new technology brings new challenges and we need to be prepared for them.

To conclude, significant growth in electricity demand will come as AI use continues to increase. Canada must be ready to meet the growth and build for the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to join you today.

The Chair: We will now proceed to Mr. Donovan. He is joining us through Zoom.

Please go ahead. You will have five minutes for your opening remarks.

• (1650)

David Donovan (Vice-President, Corporate Business Development and Strategy, Ontario Power Generation Inc.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I apologize for not being there in person today. The travel gods were not with the people of Toronto this morning.

At Ontario Power Generation, or OPG, we see significant potential for AI to drive growth and innovation across Canada. What I hope to contribute today, though, is the perspective of an actual electricity generator, highlighting what's required from our energy sector to support this ambition.

Similar to some of the comments mentioned by the other panelists, no AI strategy can succeed without clean and dependable around-the-clock power. We see this lesson playing out globally today in many jurisdictions in the United States, for example. The rapid rise of AI and data centres has led to a huge surge in natural gas generation, locking in higher emissions across the United States.

Now, tech giants are looking for cleaner solutions and are turning to things like nuclear power. We've seen Google and NextEra trying to restart the Duane Arnold nuclear plant. Meta and Constellation are extending the life of the Clinton Clean Energy Center. Microsoft and Constellation have an agreement to reopen Three Mile Island unit 1. These are decisions that reflect a growing recognition that clean baseload or 24-7 power is a foundation of AI.

Ontario already has what others are scrambling to build—a grid that's over 80% non-emitting, primarily powered by nuclear and hydro—positioning us and Canada to lead in the global AI economy. Seizing this opportunity requires significant proactive planning and decisive action.

As one of North America's largest electricity generators and the operator of a major nuclear fleet, OPG is preparing to support more energy-intensive sectors, including AI. This challenge is pretty significant. As an example, Ontario's peak electricity demand last year was 24,000 megawatts, and Ontario's Independent Electricity System Operator projects a 65% increase in electricity need by 2050.

A major driver of this growth is the rapid expansion of data centres. Unlike traditional industry, data centre loads arrive in massive increments. While a mine or auto plant in Ontario might peak at 400 megawatts, individual data centres proposed in the United States are coming in at up to 1,000 megawatts each, nearly two and a half times larger and much faster.

In Ontario, the IESO projects that data centres alone will require about 1,600 megawatts by 2040, nearly double the output of two of our Darlington units, or enough to power 1.6 million homes. Globally, the International Energy Agency estimates that 10% of electricity demand growth over the next five years will come from AI data centres. While there's uncertainty around exactly where and when this demand will materialize, we know that baseload nuclear and hydro are well suited to meet this demand.

With the support and foresight of the Ontario government, at OPG we're already taking action. At Darlington nuclear, we're building Canada's first small modular reactor, adding 300 megawatts by 2030, leading the G7, with three other units to follow that one. We're refurbishing Pickering nuclear, returning 2,200 megawatts to the grid in the mid-2030s.

Early planning is already under way for a large nuclear at Wesleyville, and we're exploring two new generation opportunities at former coal sites at Lambton and Nanticoke, in southwestern Ontario. In northern Ontario, we're partners with the Moose Cree and

TTN in assessing new hydro opportunities in the Moose River Basin, which could add another 430 megawatts.

With long lead times for nuclear and hydro projects—often a decade or more—it's essential to advance planning today, as well as engagement and regulatory processes now, so that these projects are ready when and where the demand materializes.

Early federal support so far has been instrumental. Investment tax credits, low-cost financing from the Canada Infrastructure Bank and support for indigenous participation have enabled real progress so far. As we continue to advance large, long-lead projects, ongoing partnerships with the federal government will be essential to getting these projects completed.

By learning from other jurisdictions and building new partnerships, we can ensure data centres become an asset, both to Canada and to Ontario, providing the load certainty that helps de-risk major energy investments and protect ratepayers.

• (1655)

As Canada advances its digital and AI ambitions, we look forward to continued collaboration with the federal government and neighbouring provinces, especially as we seek guidance on the types of data centres and the amount of compute power that will be needed to support these key sectors. With a strong track record in clean power, nuclear innovation and major project delivery, OPG is ready and willing to help power the next generation of AI and, in turn, Canada's future economic growth.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

With that, we will now start our first round of questioning of six minutes each. We will begin with MP Baldinelli.

Please go ahead.

Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls—Niagara-on-the-Lake, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you to the witnesses for being with us this afternoon.

Just going to the comments that were made, I jotted this down: “no AI strategy can succeed without clean and [reliable]...power.”

Then in your testimony, Mr. Bradley, you indicated that no one from the electricity sector.... Specifically, one of your recommendations was that they must include the electricity sector in moving forward with their discussions.

Have you had discussions with the government with regard to any of its AI strategies moving forward?

Francis Bradley: We have been talking, certainly, to a variety of people within the government and within the office of the relevant minister. We have been making the recommendation now for a couple of months that we see some kind of participation. As you noted, and as I said in my introductory comments, this is a significant gap. If there is a conversation and a federal task force in this space, the only way this is going to be successful is if we ensure we move forward with input from the people who are going to be powering this sector in the future. That is currently a gap.

Tony Baldinelli: Yes, it's just the perspective of needing to understand what the requirements are.

David, you talked about the IESO reports that have come forward. I can go back to the one that talked about getting a clean grid by 2050. It talked about taking the 42,000 megawatts from the system capacity of the day to 88,000 megawatts in 20 or 25 years. It was going to cost \$400 billion in Ontario alone. That report said that it would take six times the 14,000 workers in the field today to get there. From that standpoint, the lack of any involvement of the sector in the AI strategy documents and discussions precludes the government from having that information and developing a plan that I think would succeed. Would you not agree?

I'll go with you, Francis, first.

Francis Bradley: I would agree, and that's why it's the first of the recommendations we put forward—so that there is input from the electricity sector as the task force moves forward with its work. We believe it's essential that this takes place.

Tony Baldinelli: David, can you comment on that?

David Donovan: I think it's pretty essential that the power sector is involved in the AI strategy. The growth that's going to come from this part of the sector particularly is astronomical. We've been living in an economy where large mines or large auto companies take five to eight years to come online, and now we're looking at AI data centres that can do that in three years or less. It's very challenging to build any type of generation or electricity infrastructure in that speed.

Tony Baldinelli: David—and to George's point—do we know what the megawatts are going to be for the small modular reactor that's currently being built at Darlington?

David Donovan: It's just over 300 megawatts each.

Tony Baldinelli: I was talking to someone in the field, and they were talking about a data centre being built in Montreal that would be 300 megawatts on its own. That would be the size of the entire baseload of that SMR.

I come from Niagara Falls and clean hydroelectric power. I think surrounding that generation station is only about 2,200 megawatts.

That's the largest hydroelectric generating station in Ontario. If we're not beginning to plan now, it's going to take years to get the capacity that's required not only for the AI centres, but for the growth that is going to be needed to get the economy moving forward. Would you not all agree?

Francis Bradley: I wouldn't want to leave the committee with the impression that conversations are not taking place on a regional basis, a provincial basis, among current operators of the system and proponents of data centres. These conversations are taking place on the ground. Our concern is at a national strategy level. There is, of course, very active conversations at a local level on how these individual projects are going to be deployed. Our concern is that, when talking about a strategy from a national perspective, the critical voice that should be at the table is not there.

• (1700)

Tony Baldinelli: David, I have a question for you. From a regulatory standpoint in working with the federal government, are there approvals that can be acquired quickly, and have they been, with regard to the plans the Province of Ontario has put in place to move forward with the expansion of the grid? I mean, for example, not only the SMR. I'm glad to see... I have a local company in Niagara Falls, E.S. Fox, that is involved not only in the SMR project but also at both Darlington and Bruce Power.

What can we do to help speed up the regulatory process?

David Donovan: I think George can add to this.

We've seen some increase in funding to the Canadian nuclear regulator, the CNSC, which has been very welcome. The number one concern we have is in regard to the timelines involved in the Impact Assessment Act. The provincial government has signed an MOU with the federal government. We're still waiting to see how that plays out. The unknown timelines in the Impact Assessment Act are definitely a concern for getting some of these projects online on time.

The Chair: You have six seconds.

Tony Baldinelli: I cede my time.

The Chair: We will now proceed to MP Noormohamed for six minutes.

Please go ahead.

Taleb Noormohamed: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you to all of you for being here.

It's heartwarming to hear my Conservative colleagues talking about a clean grid and clean energy. These are important pieces for us to consider as we have this conversation.

Mr. Bradley, you've rightly identified the fact that there are provincial issues here at play and provincial jurisdictions that are responsible for the grids. If only the federal government had a magic wand to wave to create a national grid—which, of course, we don't.

One of the concerns that many have is the downstream impact on ratepayers of AI data centres and these types of new centres. Obviously, we need to be building, and we need to be thinking about that.

What is the impact of, let's say, Alberta putting a halt on renewables, putting a halt on solar and wind projects? They provide support to grids in different ways, of course, notwithstanding baseload power and so on. They are important contributors to the grid and to cost efficacy for consumers. What is the impact of pulling that stuff out of electricity production?

Francis Bradley: You would have to talk to somebody in Alberta in the Alberta market who would be able to give you an assessment of that. We look at these issues from a national perspective, not from a province-by-province perspective.

Taleb Noormohamed: My question is, if you take out renewables, if you take wind and solar out of the power mix, what does that do? What does that mean for consumers writ large?

Francis Bradley: Well, the only way we're going to be successful in the future is with an all-of-the-above approach. I spoke earlier about the need to meet a doubling of demand by 2050. The only way we will be able to do that is if all of the non-emitting options are on the table and we pursue each and every one of them to the absolute max. The ability, frankly, to double our system in 25 years suggests we're going to need every opportunity for wind, solar, tidal, nuclear, hydro and any kind of technology that is non-emitting. We are going to have to double down on each and every one of them if we're going to be successful. Otherwise, the impacts, as you note, will be on customers and affordability.

The bigger concern I have is with respect to reliability—whether or not we'll be able to meet the demand as we go forward. Today, and this past weekend, certainly brought a focus on reliability. We saw many jurisdictions in this country, because of the very cold weather we had, come very close in terms of meeting all of the reliability demands of customers.

Taleb Noormohamed: Absolutely.

Mr. Christidis, I know you wanted to jump in on this, so please go ahead.

George Christidis: I can't but agree with what I just heard from Francis and Mr. Donovan, but I want to be a little sharper, if you don't mind.

We're at a moment now where we have to act. Each provincial government is going to be taking a look at what's right for itself in terms of economic and social development, its grid, etc.

The discussion here is very important and is obviously around artificial intelligence, data centres and the new economy, but I think we're at a stage, quite frankly, where we have to act to enable the deployment of energy infrastructure, certainly nuclear energy infrastructure, but beyond. As for the debate on what type of technol-

ogy versus another, it is really about enabling choice, from our perspective, where provinces and key sectors will be able to look at what's right for them. We feel that nuclear is actually very competitive. We moved from a space where nuclear was not on the table—it took a lot of years but we got there now—to where it is fundamental, along with other technologies.

The point now, and I think others may agree, is to act. We need certain moves to enable investments. We need certain moves to enable the right regulatory environment. We need certain movements to enable the workforce and other key, critical items. In an environment that is not only about clean energy and not only about economic development, we may be talking about economic stimulation in the context of a national security issue. It's not a Canadian language. We are a bit uncomfortable to talk that way, but all these items around developing infrastructure now have a heightened lens, which I'd argue this committee has a very important role to discuss and encourage as much as possible on a bipartisan or multipartisan basis so we can proceed with these very critical discussions and decisions that have to be made for our country.

I'll leave it there.

● (1705)

Taleb Noormohamed: I want to thank you for making that point because I don't think any of us is under the illusion any longer that these are not national security matters. Our ability to have a secure grid and our ability to provide reliable power to ensure that our industries can work under extreme circumstances while looking at external pressures.... The need to have that kind of stability here at home to ensure that workers and the workforce have what is required is certainly paramount.

In that process, we all recognize that getting new power to grid, reliable power to grid, doesn't happen overnight. It takes time. It takes effort. It takes strategy. It takes commitment, and it takes work.

In the short term to medium term, what are some of the safeguards that governments—and I say governments at all levels—should be putting in place to ensure that as we are building data centres and as we are doing this work to ensure that Canada can lead globally on AI, ratepayers are not taking the downstream impact of it?

Francis Bradley: I can begin.

The biggest action that we could take is to facilitate the building of the infrastructure that is going to be required and do so in a timely manner. The more we delay, the more expense piles up, and the more expense lands on the customer in the end.

There are certainly things the federal government can do to facilitate that. We saw the introduction of, for example, Bill C-5 last year—

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting. The time is up for MP Noormohamed. Maybe you can come back to that in the second round of questioning.

We will now proceed to MP Blanchette-Joncas for six minutes.

Please go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'd like to welcome the witnesses who are with us for the second hour of our study.

Mr. Bradley, according to several analyses, AI data centres could account for up to 14% of the country's total energy demand by 2030. In your opinion, what energy sources in Canada can actually meet that demand in the short term without increasing greenhouse gas emissions or undermining the stability of the current grid?

Francis Bradley: Thank you very much for that very important question.

[*English*]

Ensuring that we meet the demand in a manner that does not increase our carbon footprint is critical. To be able to meet some of these challenges in the medium term as opposed to the much longer term out to 2050 really is the trick here. Because a lot of infrastructure takes a long time to build, in the medium term it's going to require looking at a large variety of non-emitting sources. It isn't simply a matter of gambling on non-emitting nuclear or gambling exclusively on large hydro, which also takes a long time to move forward with. We're also going to require renewables, and we'll have to require storage as well.

In the medium term, we will certainly be looking at more wind. We'll be looking at solar. We'll be looking at storage opportunities. On the coast in Atlantic Canada, we're looking at opportunities with respect to tidal and to wave. There's a large variety of non-emitting technologies that are going to be important over the short term, medium term and long term.

• (1710)

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Thank you.

Quebec already has clean, stable and immediately available electricity, which is exactly what AI and data centres need. We actually have a wonderful data centre in Rimouski, the region I am proud to represent. That data centre is now owned by Telus.

So, in terms of energy and grid efficiency, do you think it's realistic to develop a pan-Canadian AI strategy without relying on Quebec? Is Quebec one of the best places in Canada to develop AI, given its stable, clean and immediately available energy sources?

[*English*]

Francis Bradley: I would agree that Quebec is one of the regions in this country that are going to be critical. Every region has a different opportunity. The opportunities we see in Quebec are critical and critically important. They are very similar to the circumstances that one would find in British Columbia, for example. Many regions in this country have massive opportunities to take advantage of these already existing massive non-emitting resources.

In the particular circumstance of Quebec, we're also seeing a marrying of wind and hydro, which work extremely well together. We're seeing that deployed in other jurisdictions as well.

When we look to the longer term and into the future and project out beyond 2040 to 2050, if we see greater interconnection among the regions, I could see a future in which Quebec could become the battery for northeastern North America. I don't think they're going to be able to fully take advantage, for example, of offshore wind unless we're able to connect it into this jurisdiction. The same will be true of the west coast; there will need to be interconnections into the B.C. hydro system, for the same reasons, because those reservoirs are incredible resources.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: That answers my question.

To respond to the rapid increase in electricity consumption for AI and productivity, do you think the sustainable solution is to expand fossil fuel development in the west or look to clean, available hydroelectricity in Quebec? You talked about opportunities, but there are also societal choices. What we're talking about right now is a societal choice.

[*English*]

Francis Bradley: It probably will not be surprising to members of the committee, given that I represent Electricity Canada and the electricity sector, that my belief is that the future prosperity of this country is going to reside in expanding the electricity sector and using the electricity sector as a motor for growth in the future.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Can we even have a conversation about digital sovereignty in AI in Canada if we don't control the energy that powers our digital infrastructure?

[*English*]

Francis Bradley: I couldn't agree more.

I think we're very well placed. Canada is a net exporter of electricity. As a country, we produce sufficient electricity for our own needs, but as we look to the future, we need to be able to ensure that we continue to have that level of sovereignty.

When people talk about the opportunity for Canada to become an energy superpower with respect to electricity and clean energy, Canada already is a superpower in this space. How can we build that? It is going to be the backbone, and needs to be the backbone, of any AI strategy in the future. I keep coming back to the same point, which is that the electricity voice should be at the table when we're developing that national strategy with respect to AI and have an advisory task force on it.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

We will now proceed to MP Mahal for five minutes.

Please go ahead.

Jagsharan Singh Mahal: Thank you, Madam Chair.

My question is for both George and Francis.

I think we all have consensus that AI data centres are enormous power users. They use a lot of power. Right now, there is a huge gap between the supply—the power generation—and the demand for it. It will take a long time to build the infrastructure to produce the power that we need. If the demand goes up, what will happen to the price of electricity and what would that mean for average families in Canada?

• (1715)

Francis Bradley: In every jurisdiction in this country, there is some form of price regulation. For example, we're here in Ontario. The Ontario Energy Board regulates the price of electricity. It determines what goes into the rate base at any point in time, and it determines how many cents per kilowatt hour are going to be charged to customers. This isn't a completely open, free market where the price will go completely off the rails. There is a level of control in jurisdictions across the country.

The gap that one sees between supply and demand is not one that exists today or tomorrow, but it's going to exist in the very near future. Later this week, there will be the release of the North American Electric Reliability Corporation's annual long-term reliability assessment. That will point to concerns about meeting the demand for electricity in quite a few regions across North America, particularly in periods of extreme weather. For example, today we're meeting all of our electricity needs across the country, but it is not -35°C today. On Saturday, many jurisdictions were pressed and challenged. The gap we're talking about is a gap that will be in the very near future.

The increments that people are talking about—and there's been mention of that already—are concerning when we're talking about increments not of 50 or 100 megawatts, but 300 megawatts or 600 megawatts. Somebody mentioned 1,000 megawatts, which is almost the entire output of Site C dam in British Columbia, which took 25 years to build.

When you're talking about large increments like this, it is very concerning. It isn't a tomorrow issue, but it's an issue within the immediate future.

Jagsharan Singh Mahal: Do you want to add anything?

George Christidis: I would only add—I think we're all saying this, and Francis alluded to this as well—that the importance of the electricity sector in general and the nuclear sector specifically, which is my mandate, is in what it means as an economic foundation point for the country and the number of jobs it creates. It is a significant employer that will create a significant number of jobs: in our case, for large and small nuclear reactors, the ecosystem, the supply chain, uranium mining and the like.

At this critical time, one thing we've learned collectively is that when there is a delay in terms of how to move forward on industrial policy, there's a consequence. We need to move forward to create

these jobs and create long-term planning for our infrastructure to meet the needs we know are coming very shortly.

As part of the cost discussion, there really needs to be an understanding of the types of highly skilled jobs that our sector creates. It's everything from skilled trades to universities and the like. They're foundational to the health of the country as we move forward.

Jagsharan Singh Mahal: Building on that answer, from an investment standpoint, how unattractive has the federal regulatory and permitting environment become for private investment in the nuclear and energy projects needed for AI support?

George Christidis: If I understood, the question is about the level of investment that's needed for artificial intelligence.

Jagsharan Singh Mahal: How well planned is it right now, considering the regulatory framework we have?

George Christidis: Thank you for the clarity.

I think Francis alluded to it. It's hard to speak from the electricity or nuclear sector to how well we're prepared, because from the strategy discussion we've not privy to where that thinking is. I can tell you from the discussions at the provincial level—provincial governments with proponents of projects—there is an ongoing conversation with regard to what that could look like.

In terms of small reactors—

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting. The time is up for MP Mahal.

With that, we will proceed to MP McKelvie for five minutes.

Please go ahead.

Jennifer McKelvie (Ajax, Lib.): My first question is for Mr. Christidis.

Getting back to AI research and innovation, what are the big gains we can make? How is this a game-changer, for example, around fusion magnets and other things like that? What is the real potential we have here?

• (1720)

George Christidis: With regard to AI as a tool for research or innovation, I think it's very similar in all sectors. It's a means by which...whether it's material research, planning or looking at regulatory processes, whatever it may be, it does represent a significant tool that could enhance and add to a lot of the processes that are used, whether it's university research, etc. I think that, as a tool, it is definitely something the industry is starting to look at, like a lot of different sectors.

If I understood your question correctly, this sector, which is critical, will be an important piece of the electricity and nuclear market as we proceed, as well.

Jennifer McKelvie: Is there anything more we need to do to fully unleash the potential of AI in the energy sector, in the research space? What should we be pushing the university setting to explore further to make sure the energy industry is ready to update this?

George Christidis: Certainly from a nuclear perspective, those conversations within the university network are occurring. We have a nuclear university network called UNENE, for example. It's made up of universities across Canada, so that is very much happening.

It goes back fundamentally to what we were talking about earlier, which is how, as we set up a national strategy, these pieces come together: the electricity infrastructure piece, the research piece and universities. I'd even argue that other spaces need to be part of the conversation.

One of the take-aways here, which I think my colleague alluded to, is the inclusion of these conversations inside the development of an artificial intelligence strategy and data centre strategy for the country.

Jennifer McKelvie: Thank you.

Mr. Bradley, I did take note of your four recommendations, and one of those was to ensure that the energy sector is at the table in this discussion.

I'm wondering if you could comment on the potential for grid improvement and smart grids. How much extra electricity can we unleash with the grid as it is today, for example, by adopting AI? Yes, we could grow the grid and put more energy in it, but just with the energy we have available right now, how much more efficient could we be with smart grids?

Francis Bradley: That is a fantastic question. There isn't an easy answer to it, because we're just starting to get an understanding of the use cases of AI and we are beginning to get an understanding of what the potential will be as we get out the other end of this.

There are massive opportunities, when you start calculating. For example, I drive an electric vehicle. It spends 95% of its time plugged in and fully charged and just sitting there. There are hundreds of thousands of electric vehicles across the country. Without even talking about what the future could look like, we could harness that as a storage medium today. The only way we're going to be able to do so, because it's so incredibly complex, will be through tools such as AI.

There are a lot of people who are working in this space. I couldn't tell you exactly how much we would save, but it will absolutely be transformational. We will be able to maximize, in a way that we can't even imagine today, the value of what we currently have in the system, not to mention what we're going to be able to build in the future.

Jennifer McKelvie: It sounds like we need AI to calculate the full impact of AI.

My next question is for Mr. Donovan.

You mentioned 1,600 megawatts by 2040 for data centres, which is the equivalent of 1.6 million homes. I toured and was absolutely fascinated by nWave and the ability for cooling. One of my questions was what they do with this cold water in the winter. They said the demand in the winter is just as strong because of the cooling of the centre.

Do we have calculations or do we know what potential we have or what requirements we should be bringing in when a new data

centre is sited? Should we be requiring X, Y and Z so that they're minimizing the impact in the draw on the energy production system?

• (1725)

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting, but your time is up.

Jennifer McKelvie: I think I'm up in the next round, so you'll have six or seven minutes to come up with your answer.

The Chair: We will now proceed to MP Blanchette-Joncas for two and a half minutes.

Please go ahead.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I just want to inform you that I wish to give a notice of motion. Following the committee's unanimous adoption of the motion about access to data from granting councils on December 3, we received a joint response from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. This response raises some important questions about how to establish a data governance protocol and a secure data transfer process to enable the assessment of funding equity.

As such, I give notice of the following motion to invite representatives of the three granting councils to appear before the committee so that it can fulfill its oversight role and hear directly from them about concrete ways to move forward:

In light of the response transmitted to the Committee by the three federal granting councils following the motion adopted unanimously on December 3, 2025, namely the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, and pursuant to Standing Order 108(1), that the Committee invite representatives of the three Councils to appear in order to question them on the concrete means of establishing a data governance protocol and a secure data transfer process to enable the assessment of funding equity, no later than February 12, 2026.

I just wanted to give notice of this motion. I will continue with my questions now.

[English]

The Chair: Yes, please start.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Bradley, I have some more questions for you. Is it energy efficient to build data centres in provinces that still need to burn gas to stabilize their grid, when Quebec already has clean, available energy?

[English]

Francis Bradley: From my perspective, decisions that are made in terms of where different sites are operated and what source of electricity is going to be used are decisions for provincial governments and provincial regulators to determine. I don't think those are things that should be dictated from a national perspective.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Please share your expertise with me.

You know that AI-related data centres require abundant, stable, low-cost electricity. Efficiency and cost are obviously important. From an energy and economic standpoint alone, does it make more sense to power this infrastructure with existing, already-amortized hydroelectricity of the kind Quebec produces, or to create new, more expensive capacity elsewhere in the country?

[*English*]

Francis Bradley: That, of course, will depend upon what is available in different jurisdictions. The member is quite right that Quebec, for example, and other hydro provinces have certain advantages from a resource standpoint. However, there are data requirements in every jurisdiction across this country. Decisions have to be made at a local and provincial level about how they're going to be able to supply those centres. Again, those are decisions that I believe should be made by the people closest to the system and the people who are actually running the system—that is, the individual system operators in different jurisdictions.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: I just want to make sure I understand what you're saying as an expert who manages hydroelectric networks across Canada.

In terms of energy and economics, is Quebec the most efficient option for developing energy-intensive technology such as AI?

[*English*]

Francis Bradley: There are definitely advantages in Quebec and other jurisdictions that have a massive baseload of hydro resources. This is definitely an advantage. It is also an advantage in other jurisdictions that have, for example, a non-emitting and massive baseload of nuclear resources. Each jurisdiction has different opportunities, but there are definitely some advantages with very large hydro resources.

• (1730)

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Thank you.

[*English*]

Francis Bradley: By the same token, that's why we increasingly see wind and other intermittent resources married up with that—to have the ability to use that baseload.

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting. Time is up.

With that, we will have to end our round of questioning.

We have to pass the budget for this committee before we end this panel. The committee needs to adopt a budget for its study on AI. We have sent committee members a draft budget for consideration in the amount of \$40,050.

Is the committee in agreement to adopt this draft budget?

MP Baldinelli.

Tony Baldinelli: I just have a point of clarification, Madam Chair. It's with regard to the specific wording of the motion on our study.

If you notice, at the end we say, “That the committee report its findings and recommendations to the House.” If I may indulge my committee members, I would suggest that we say, “That the committee report its findings and recommendations to the House and that pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee request a government response.”

The government response is not included in the current wording.

The Chair: Is everyone in agreement with that?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: We can add that edit.

Is the committee in agreement that we adopt the draft budget?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Okay. That is adopted.

I want to let everyone know that the committee will not meet this Thursday, January 29, because of the agreement among the whips. Next week, on Monday, February 2, we will have the Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation along with department officials for two hours. We will have the Minister of Industry on Thursday, February 5, for one hour. Department officials will remain for the second hour. That's the plan for next week.

MP Baldinelli.

Tony Baldinelli: Just before we break, Madam Chair, I want to express my condolences and those of my Conservative colleagues to not only you but also Liberal members of the committee on the passing of our former chair, Kirsty Duncan. I had the pleasure, in a previous Parliament, of sitting on the science committee when Kirsty was the chair. She was a fabulous chair, an impartial and fair chair, but she was a better human being. Everyone who got to know her knew how fabulous she was.

My condolences to you all.

The Chair: Thank you, MP Baldinelli. Yes, she will be missed by everybody. She touched a lot of lives.

With that, this panel comes to an end. I really want to thank our three witnesses for appearing before the committee and providing their important input on this study.

Is it the will of the committee to adjourn the meeting?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: The meeting is adjourned.

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