



# DEBATES OF THE SENATE

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Wednesday, November 22, 2023

The Honourable RAYMONDE GAGNÉ,  
Speaker

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## THE SENATE

Wednesday, November 22, 2023

The Senate met at 2 p.m., the Speaker in the chair.

Prayers.

### SENATORS' STATEMENTS

#### CAPE BRETON CAPERS SOCCER TEAM

**Hon. Jane Cordy:** Honourable senators, I rise today to congratulate the Cape Breton Capers soccer team for their win on November 12 at the 2023 U Sports Men's Soccer Championship. They claimed the Sam Davidson Memorial Trophy on their home field, where the tournament took place. This was the second time that they have taken home the trophy, having won the championship in 2017 as well. They faced off against the Montreal Carabins in the final match.

Honourable senators, to win a championship is always a great achievement, but there is something very special about doing it on home turf. The outpouring of energy is quite something. There was a huge crowd in Cape Breton supporting the Capers, including over 100 alumni from six different countries, as well as over 60 of the team's family members who showed up to watch them play. I can imagine how proud they must have been to have such a great turnout, and to be able to celebrate such a win in front of family and friends on their home field.

For any such event, there is also quite an impact on the community. The tournament organizers demonstrated and promoted Cape Breton hospitality to the visiting teams. This was also an opportunity to promote the sport of soccer within the local community. The university and the team worked with local schools so that 600 children could attend their early games. It is inspiring for youth to see this level of sport, as well as the work, speed and skill of the athletes. Sports can certainly inspire people and communities, and this is indeed another source of pride for Cape Bretoners.

Once again, my congratulations to the Cape Breton Capers and to their coach, Deano Morley, along with his staff, on their phenomenal win. Thank you.

[Translation]

#### THE LATE ROSE-AIMÉE BÉLANGER

**Hon. Lucie Moncion:** Honourable senators, what can I say about this humble, talented woman who leaves behind a legacy of beauty and love?

Rose-Aimée Bélanger was born on July 4, 1923, in Guérin, a small town in the Témiscamingue region of Quebec. She studied at Académie Sainte-Marie in Haileybury, Ontario, and then moved to Montreal to complete her studies in social sciences. She dabbled briefly in art by taking some night classes at Montreal's École des Beaux-Arts and worked part-time for the newspaper *Le Devoir*.

She then put away her charcoal and quit her job to follow the love of her life, Laurent Bélanger, who she married on January 2, 1945. They settled in northern Ontario, where she gave birth to nine children, helped her husband with his many undertakings and took care of the household.

Then, after dedicating more than a quarter of a century to caring for her family, she chose to become an artist and a sculptor.

In her workshop, she shaped unique, lean figures that gradually took on more inflated and robust forms. Her favourite subjects were women. Her sculpture of a woman eating chocolate became her best seller, while her life-sized sculpture, *The Gossipers*, located in Old Montreal, is one of the city's most photographed sculptures and one its eight iconic pieces of art.

World-renowned for her work, Rose-Aimée Bélanger put away her clay in 2015 at the age of 92.

The beauty of Rose-Aimée Bélanger's art lies in the feelings it evokes in the viewer. Each piece represents one of life's little pleasures. They are stunningly beautiful, imbued with simplicity, wellness and kindness.

For over 40 years, Rose-Aimée Bélanger built up a remarkable collection of extraordinary pieces.

On the eve of her hundredth birthday earlier this year, a biography of her life was published by author Danièle Carrière-Paris. Reading this literary work is a real pleasure, as it introduces us to the woman behind the extraordinary artist.

Rose-Aimée Bélanger passed away at the age of 100 on November 12, surrounded by her children.

Just a few days before that, I had the pleasure of meeting her son Pierre, his wife and his children at the Ontario Economic Society's Amethyst Gala, where they were presented with the Eco-responsible Entrepreneur Award for what they've achieved with their commercial farm, Bison du Nord, in Ontario's Témiscamingue region.

Pierre spoke of his mother with love, pride and admiration. His mother's passing is a great loss for the Bélanger family, as well as for the artistic community and everyone who knew and loved Rose-Aimée Bélanger.

We extend our deepest condolences to her large family who are grieving her loss.

Thank you for your attention.

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.

[English]

### VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Andrew Black, Mayor of Tantramar in New Brunswick and President of the Union of Municipalities of New Brunswick. He is accompanied by his wife, Katherine Treash. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Quinn.

On behalf of all honourable senators, I welcome you to the Senate of Canada.

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear!

### ANDREW BLACK

**Hon. Jim Quinn:** Honourable senators, I am pleased to recognize Andrew Black who is the Mayor of Tantramar, New Brunswick. Tantramar is a new municipality in the province made up of the former town of Sackville, the former village of Dorchester and parts of the former local service districts of Point de Bute, Sackville and Dorchester. In addition to his responsibilities with Tantramar, Mayor Black also serves as the President of the Union of the Municipalities of New Brunswick, an organization that represents 54 communities in New Brunswick and over 70% of the population.

Mayor Black is in Ottawa this week for meetings with parliamentarians as part of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities advocacy week, where they are all working to establish local priorities as well as national priorities.

I had the opportunity to meet Mayor Black several weeks ago to discuss the priorities in his community, including climate change and the impact on the Chignecto Isthmus, which is a significant concern for the residents of Tantramar and beyond.

Andrew is a graduate of Mount Allison University, and has a background as an entrepreneur and business owner. Currently, he works as a peer mentor with Open Sky Co-operative, an organization dedicated to assisting young adults — who face mental health barriers and social disabilities — in building vocational and life skills. They accomplish this through community building and meaningful skills development on an 11-acre farm located within Tantramar.

Primarily, Andrew is most proud of his family. His wife, Kathy, has joined him here today. They have three wonderful children: Phaedra, Roman and Margot.

• (1410)

Andrew, thank you for your leadership and dedication to your community. At the local level, Canada's mayors and others in leadership positions form the backbone of ensuring that the citizens of Canada are represented — and they are the first step in ensuring that their voices are heard.

On behalf of my colleagues, I would like to welcome you and Kathy to the Senate, and wish you a productive week while you conduct your meetings in the nation's capital.

### THE LATE HONOURABLE STEPHEN OWEN, P.C., K.C.

**Hon. Gwen Boniface:** Honourable senators, I rise to celebrate the life and legacy of the Honourable Stephen Owen who passed away at the age of 74, after a battle with dementia.

Stephen Owen was elected to Parliament in 2000 and represented Vancouver Quadra for seven years. He served as Minister of Public Works and Government Services; Minister of Western Economic Diversification; and Minister of State for Sport. He also held posts as ombudsman and Deputy Attorney General of British Columbia, and finished his career at the University of British Columbia.

Stephen Owen was recognized both domestically and internationally for his expertise in human rights law and public policy. In British Columbia, he steered the Commission on Resources and Environment to resolve land use disputes. He was praised for the leadership, tenacity and humanity he brought to those negotiations.

Beyond his work in Canada, he was one of two civilian advisers appointed to the board of inquiry tasked with investigating Canada's military operation in Somalia. Their findings were a precursor to the Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia. He also represented Canada in a fact-finding mission to investigate human rights issues in Cambodia and examined the work of security forces in Northern Ireland, to name just a few.

His dynamic career working for so many organizations across the globe shaped a unique perspective and a conciliatory approach that won him the respect and admiration of colleagues from all sectors.

I had the privilege to serve with Stephen on the Law Commission of Canada, where he had roles as both commissioner and vice-president.

He was an intellectual and a pragmatist at the same time, and had a brilliant sense of humour. His deep understanding and thorough analysis of complex issues were second to none. Stephen's son Taylor said at the time of his death:

My dad lived his life with an unwavering sense of decency, honesty and optimism, and believing unconditionally in the value and potential of public service — an approach to life that we can all learn from.

I send my deepest condolences to Stephen's family: his wife, Diane; his sons Jason and Taylor; and his three granddaughters.

Dear colleagues, our country has lost a great Canadian.

## VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Kristen Csenkey, a PhD candidate at the Balsillie School of International Affairs, and Greg Dick, Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of Open Quantum Design. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Deacon (*Ontario*).

On behalf of all honourable senators, I welcome you to the Senate of Canada.

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear!

## GREY CUP 2023

**Hon. Larry W. Smith:** Honourable senators, on Sunday, November 19, we were treated to the one hundred and tenth Grey Cup game between the Winnipeg Blue Bombers and the Montreal Alouettes — for the first time in the history of the Canadian Football League, or CFL.

The heavily favoured Winnipeg team was vying for their third Grey Cup title in four years, which would have propelled them to become a storied CFL franchise in modern times. Winnipeg was heavily favoured to defeat the upstart Montreal team, which last won the cup in 2010.

The Montreal club — winner of its last seven games, including a massive victory against the 16-2 Toronto Argonauts — was given little chance to win against a veteran team led by superstar quarterback Zach Collaros.

Montreal began the 2023 season with a new owner, a new head coach and a new quarterback, Cody Fajardo, who had fallen from grace in Saskatchewan with the Roughriders. General Manager Danny Maciocia made two key acquisitions mid-season to strengthen the team.

Montreal surprised Toronto in the Eastern Final with a superb defensive effort with nine turnovers. Some pundits suggested that, in the big game, Montreal would fold under the pressure exerted by the Bombers. Strangely, this never happened. Both clubs went toe to toe with Montreal down 17-7 at the half, after failing to score from the one-yard line with 40 seconds left in the first half.

Winnipeg had an excellent running game led by the great Canadian running back Brady Oliveira, but went away from this strategy in the second half, with a passing game which failed to generate a positive response.

[*Translation*]

Fajardo played a game worthy of the best in the sport, executing an outstanding offensive short pass and using his four best receivers. Montreal scored the winning touchdown with only 42 seconds of play left in the game.

[*English*]

Winnipeg's dream of becoming one of the great Grey Cup championship teams — like the Edmonton Eskimos of the late 1970s and early 1980s with five consecutive Grey Cup victories — wasn't meant to be.

What's next? For Winnipeg, change must take place with a very strong aging team of veteran players nearing the end of their careers. Montreal has a chance to compete in the East, but must sign the key core players to maintain its position as a top team.

Congratulations to the players who peaked at the right time; to Danny Maciocia, the general manager, for signing key players to help the club succeed down the stretch; to Jason Maas, an outstanding first-year head coach, whose strong leadership helped mould a highly competitive team; and, finally, to quarterback Cody Fajardo, who persevered to become a Grey Cup champion and the Grey Cup MVP after being discarded by the Roughriders.

This one hundred and tenth Grey Cup championship will go down as one of the greatest Grey Cup games in the history of the CFL.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** That was a great kickoff.

**Some Hon. Senators:** Oh, oh.

## VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Michelle Melnyk, a representative from the National Farmers Union. She is accompanied by her daughters. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Simons.

On behalf of all honourable senators, I welcome you to the Senate of Canada.

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

## THE HONOURABLE DONALD H. OLIVER, C.M., K.C.

## CONGRATULATIONS ON WELDON AWARD FOR UNSELFISH PUBLIC SERVICE

**Hon. Percy Mockler:** To talk about a great Atlantic Canadian like Senator Donald H. Oliver in just three minutes is no easy task.

[*English*]

Every year, we proudly celebrate Black History Month. Therefore, honourable senators, even though he has been away from this chamber for 10 years, our friend Senator Don Oliver's legacy is thriving, and his impact continues to be felt across Canada from coast to coast to coast.

His substantive contributions to breaking barriers for people of African descent, and his tireless efforts to teach all Canadians from all walks of life about the value of diversity, equity, inclusion and respect, especially in the workplace, make him a compelling debater.

For example, in 2005, our friend Don Oliver raised half a million dollars to lead the first-ever national study that proved the business case for diversity across Canada. It remains today one of his proudest achievements.

Even though Senator Oliver was a shy, private person, he strongly believed in giving back to his community and helping those not so fortunate. Last month, honourable senators, Senator Oliver received an outstanding recognition from his alma mater Dalhousie University. He received the 2023 Weldon Award for Unselfish Public Service to honour his inspiring legacy. This unprecedented award recognizes law school alumni who have made outstanding contributions to the community and the legal profession. Senator Oliver was deeply touched.

Honourable senators, he is also a member of the Order of Canada for his untiring efforts as a senator, educator, civic-minded community member and leader who promotes inclusion and diversity in Canada.

• (1420)

In my opinion, Senator Oliver represents FLPC: friendship, loyalty, principle and commitment. Throughout his entire life, he has served his fellow Canadians with dignity, integrity and respect. He is a true mentor.

To conclude, Your Honour, there is no doubt in my mind that his outstanding leadership is very deserving of receiving the 2023 Weldon Award.

[*Translation*]

Honourable senators, as far as I'm concerned, he was the obvious choice. His motto has always been to make Canada, his region and his province a better place to live, a better place to work, a better place to raise children and a better place to offer a helping hand to the more vulnerable among us. Hats off to you, Senator Oliver.

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, it is 2:20 p.m. and the Senate will proceed to question period. Once the minister has taken his seat, we can proceed with our business.

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## QUESTION PERIOD

(Pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate on December 7, 2021, to receive a Minister of the Crown, the Honourable Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P., Minister of Environment and Climate Change, appeared before honourable senators during Question Period.)

[ Senator Mockler ]

## BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, we welcome today the Honourable Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P., to ask questions relating to his ministerial responsibilities.

Honourable senators, let me remind you that during Question Period with a minister the initial question is limited to 60 seconds, and the initial answer to 90 seconds, followed by one supplementary question of at most 45 seconds and an answer of 45 seconds. The reading clerk will stand 10 seconds before these times expire. Pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate, senators do not need to stand. Question Period will last 64 minutes.

[*English*]

## MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

### GREENHOUSE GAS POLLUTION PRICING ACT

**Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):** Minister, it won't surprise you that my first question is about Bill C-234, which provides an exemption from the Prime Minister's carbon tax for Canada's farmers. I suspect that's also why you're here before us today: to influence senators regarding how they will vote on this bill.

You say that the Trudeau government doesn't tell senators what to do or how to vote, and then in the next breath, you freely admit to having conversations with senators about the bill, which passed the elected House of Commons with broad support.

Minister, how many senators have you spoken to about Bill C-234? How many have you pressured to vote against or gut this bill and deny our farmers the desperately needed tax relief?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P., Minister of Environment and Climate Change:** Zero.

**Senator Plett:** Yet, you have admitted that you have spoken to them. Now you say you spoke to zero. I asked you how many you have spoken to, minister. You said zero. I sincerely doubt you're calling these senators to talk about the weather. Come clean about what you're doing, minister. You want a specific outcome for Bill C-234, and you're calling senators to make sure you get it. If that's not senators being whipped, minister, what is? How can the Trudeau government think a minister calling up independent senators to talk about a private member's bill that passed the House isn't putting pressure on how they vote? How many did you call?

**Mr. Guilbeault:** With all due respect, senator, there's a world of difference between talking to someone and pressuring or whipping them into doing something or voting in a certain way. You asked me how many I pressured or whipped, and the answer is zero.

**Senator Plett:** We'll check Hansard.

[Translation]

#### ELECTRIC VEHICLE BATTERY MANUFACTURING SUBSIDIES

**Hon. Elizabeth Marshall:** Minister, the Parliamentary Budget Officer released a report last week which estimates that government subsidies to three battery manufacturers — Northvolt, Volkswagen and Stellantis — could reach \$43.6 billion. This is \$5.8 billion more than what your government announced. It's also important to note that these projects haven't really gotten started yet.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer says that about 60% of this cost will be incurred by the federal government. Minister, has your government now revised its fiscal projections to include the Parliamentary Budget Officer's estimate? If not, can you provide the reason?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P., Minister of Environment and Climate Change:** The work of the Parliamentary Budget Officer is obviously very important, and our government is in the process of analyzing last week's report. Obviously, the appropriate minister, which is the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, will respond in the near future.

**Senator Marshall:** Thank you. Minister, I find your government very secretive when it comes to providing taxpayers and parliamentarians with information about government spending. I've raised this matter with Senator Gold on several occasions. There have been many questions raised about the cost of these agreements and their benefits, including jobs. It is simply not possible to find this information in the government's financial and other documents.

Since your government says it supports accountability and transparency, will you release the contracts so we can decide for ourselves whether we are receiving good value for such significant amounts of money?

**Mr. Guilbeault:** There are two things I'd like to say, senator. First, you might have seen data released last week that shows that Canada now ranks third in the world for foreign direct investment. I think this is a clear signal from the international investment community that they like what they're seeing in Canada in terms of the framework we've put in place to attract investors to help us build the economy and jobs in Canada in the 21st century.

In terms of the contract, I would be happy to provide your office with an answer. I will consult my colleague, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, to provide a specific answer to your question. Thank you.

#### CANADA'S EMISSIONS TARGETS

**Hon. Julie Miville-Dechéne:** Welcome, Minister Guilbeault.

The United Nations Environment Programme has just published its latest report on the gap between emission reduction needs and outlooks. The report measures and compares how countries are performing when it comes to meeting their climate targets. For China, the gap is 2%; the G20 average is 4%; for Europe, the gap is 9%; for the United States, the second-worst country, the gap is 19%.

In Canada, the gap is 27%. We have the biggest gap in the world between our actions and our targets, between what we say we are going to do and what our policies actually say we are going to do. I know you're concerned about these issues. What does your government plan to do to reverse the trend and prevent Canada from staying in last place globally when it comes to gaps between its climate commitments and actions?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P., Minister of Environment and Climate Change:** That is an excellent question. You know, when we came to power in 2015, the projections indicated that Canada would exceed its 2005 targets for 2030 by at least 12%. The latest figures show that we are 7% below 2005 levels. We not only reduced greenhouse gas emissions in the past eight years by 7% below 2005 levels, we also eliminated this surplus we were heading toward in addition to cutting emissions by 7%.

In the past year, as the Minister of Environment, I announced a clean fuel standard, or draft regulations on the zero-emissions legislation. We are the first country in the G20 to have eliminated fossil fuel subsidies two years ahead of the 2025 schedule. We presented new regulations for a carbon-neutral electricity grid by 2035. New regulations on methane emissions for the oil and gas sectors will be announced by the end of the year as well as a cap on greenhouse gas emissions in the oil and gas industry.

I'm the first to agree that Canada is playing catch-up, because the Conservatives did nothing to fight climate change in Canada for 10 years while they were in power. Had we maintained the status quo in the fight against climate change, then we likely would have made some progress, but instead we have been moving backwards. So it's true that we are still playing catch-up. The plan that I submitted last year shows that we are three-quarters of the way toward meeting our 2030 targets. There is still work to do, and we need to speed up that work.

**Senator Miville-Dechéne:** There is a discrepancy. According to the Commissioner of the Environment's report, "the measures most critical for reducing [greenhouse gas] emissions had not been identified or prioritized," while other stricter measures for the oil industry have been delayed. What's more, the Government of Canada continues to fund oil and gas projects like Bay du Nord.

Why is the government turning a blind eye to the oil industry and why is it not being proactive on this? Such measures would be a first step toward meeting our short- and medium-term targets since the oil industry is a major polluter.

• (1430)

**Mr. Guilbeault:** I don't share your point of view, senator, particularly the suggestion that measures concerning the oil and gas sector have been slow in coming, because carbon pricing applies in this sector. The elimination of fossil fuel subsidies specifically affects the oil and gas sector.

We have already brought in regulations to reduce methane, a very potent greenhouse gas, particularly in the oil and gas sector, which must reduce its emissions by at least 40% by 2025. The Prime Minister has announced that we will be raising this target to at least a 75% reduction by 2030, making it one of the most ambitious targets in the world.

We are the fourth-largest oil and gas producer on the planet. The only specific element of the oil and gas sector that hasn't been put forward — I've only been Minister of the Environment for two years — is the cap on greenhouse gas emissions. We announced that the framework would be presented by the end of the year.

Thank you.

#### AFFORDABLE ELECTRICITY

**Hon. Tony Loffreda:** Thank you for being here today, minister.

[*English*]

In yesterday's Fall Economic Statement, there was a quote from Electricity Canada that supports your government's low-carbon commitments, maintaining that they will make electricity more affordable.

Considering the extent of the tasks before us and the billions of dollars that are needed, how can the federal government ensure that Canadians will continue to enjoy affordable rates as we expand and clean the grid?

Canada has one of the cleanest electricity grids in the world. We have reliable electricity and competitive rates. However, we know that our grid will need to expand considerably to meet future clean electricity demand and transmission needs, especially if we want to achieve Canada's target of generating 90% of electricity from non-emitting sources by 2030.

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P., Minister of Environment and Climate Change:** Thank you, senator, for the question.

You're absolutely right. We have one of the cleanest grids in the world, which is why we have been able to attract companies like Stellantis and Volkswagen, and others, to Canada; they have said so publicly. One of the reasons they decided to come to

Canada is because of our clean grid, which is clearly a competitive advantage that we have and one we want to maintain.

The world is decarbonizing. The electricity sector in the world is decarbonizing. The draft regulations that I have presented to have a clean electricity grid — a carbon-neutral grid — by 2035 are very similar to the ones the Environmental Protection Agency has presented in the U.S.

What we're trying to do is a big undertaking, but we have done that in the last 40 years. We have doubled the size of our grid and cut emissions by about 40% in the last three decades.

We need to continue on this track, accelerate it a little so we can get there a bit sooner than what we expected. We have had fruitful conversations with most provinces and territories on this, a number of companies, system operators, utilities — both public and private — to ensure that we can get there.

**Senator Loffreda:** As announced in Budget 2023, and reiterated in yesterday's Fall Economic Statement, the government will outline a concrete plan to further improve the efficiency of the permitting and impact assessment processes for major projects by the end of the year. How confident are you that this plan will be released next month? How will the work of the Ministerial Working Group on Regulatory Efficiency for Clean Growth Projects influence this plan? We know the government is committed to ensuring major clean projects move forward quickly and effectively.

**Mr. Guilbeault:** Thank you, senator. It's an important question.

What we're trying to do there — as in many things, is to find the right balance. We want to be able to approve projects as rapidly as we can while, at the same time, engaging local communities and Indigenous nations meaningfully.

If we try and go too fast in our project approval, we may find ourselves in a situation where local populations or Indigenous nations feel that we are trying to steamroll them; that's certainly not something we or the private sector want.

That being said, we do believe that we can find efficiencies in our permitting and approval process, and do things in a way where we still meaningfully are able to consult local Indigenous nations and populations.

#### SUPPORT FOR FARMERS AND PRODUCERS

**Hon. Robert Black:** Minister, agriculture has huge economic potential. However, it needs government support and investment that is commensurate with rising inputs, labour, land and transportation costs, and we can't forget about rising interest rates.

Yet, farmers have been early adopters of new technologies and are always looking for ways to further improve their sustainability efforts.



Your government has introduced programs to help farmers adopt new technologies, such as the Climate Action Incentive Fund, or CAIF; this was a popular program. The agriculture industry liked this program so much that it was oversubscribed and applications have been closed since 2019.

Minister, this was a program of your ministry. Funding like this does not exist through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, or AAFC. Therefore, can you let the chamber know what other government programs exist through your department to support farmers? How will your ministry help our farmers continue to transition to cleaner and greener practices?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P., Minister of Environment and Climate Change:** Thank you, senator.

Over the last two years, our government has invested \$1.5 billion in programs to support farmers to reduce emissions on farms and grow their operations. This includes, for example, \$50 million to help farmers buy new grain drying equipment that reduced greenhouse gas emissions. More than 128 grain dryer projects have been approved.

It also includes a \$495 million investment in research, development and adoption of clean technologies; and, last but not least, \$670 million to support the adoption of greenhouse gas reduction practices on the farm.

I agree with you. We need to continue supporting our farmers in this transition to a low-carbon future. They play such a key role in our society. We will be there to continue supporting them.

**Senator Black:** Minister, according to AAFC, between 1997 and 2017, agriculture saw a 50% decrease in greenhouse gas emission intensity, meaning that agriculture emissions have remained static but they are producing twice as much food.

These environmental and economic improvements were made by farmers without a price on carbon. Farmers from coast to coast to coast have shared with parliamentarians that, due to the carbon tax surcharges, they don't have the available capital to continue to make green investments.

Bill C-234 is before our chamber, and would free up capital for farmers to reinvest to continue to sustainably intensify. Minister, will you support our farmers and help provide carbon tax relief so they can continue investing in innovation?

**Mr. Guilbeault:** You probably know, senator, that we have already excluded 97% of on-farm fuels for equipment using fossil fuels. That was from the get-go when we introduced carbon pricing. We have already recognized that there are some applications in the farming sector where there are no other alternatives to using fossil fuel-based equipment.

Where we are putting a price on pollution in the farming sector is where alternatives exist. We're supporting the farmers to adopt those alternatives.

#### CONSERVATION OF NATIONAL PARKS

**Hon. Brian Francis:** Minister Guilbeault, one of the priorities in your most recent mandate letter published in December 2021 was to establish 10 new national parks by 2026 and enter into cooperative management agreements with Indigenous communities.

It is my understanding that the establishment of the proposed national park reserve at Hog Island, P.E.I., would be the first step in fulfilling that commitment, as well as subsequent ones. This sacred area holds historical, cultural and environmental significance. While all the necessary work has been completed, no progress has been made in over a year to preserve it.

On behalf of the Epekwitkewaq, Mi'kmaq and Islanders, I ask: When does the Government of Canada plan to establish and fund the national park reserve on Hog Island, P.E.I.?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P., Minister of Environment and Climate Change:** Thank you, senator, for the question.

We have, in fact, had a very fruitful discussion to move this project forward. As you rightly pointed out, it's part of a number of new national urban parks that we are moving forward. We need to finalize the funding to be able to make this project — as well as a number of others — come to fruition.

I would, however, point to the fact that, in the last month alone, we have announced new protected areas in Canada in collaboration with Indigenous nations that spans more than 1 million square kilometres — that's roughly four times the size of the United Kingdom.

We are moving forward on the creation of new protected areas and new parks, including national urban parks, in collaboration with Indigenous nations, including in P.E.I. as well as throughout the country.

**Senator Francis:** Thank you for that, minister. I look forward to some positive news on this particular project in P.E.I. in the near future.

• (1440)

**Mr. Guilbeault:** As do I, senator. I look forward to it, too.

#### CANADA'S EMISSIONS TARGETS

**Hon. Denise Batters:** Minister, the Trudeau government's clean electricity regulations will cost Saskatchewan \$40 billion by 2035, doubling electricity rates for the people of our province and putting hundreds out of work. The only people we want to see out of work are Liberal MPs, but Saskatchewan has already done that. After eight years of the Trudeau government, you have met your climate targets net zero times. The Commissioner of the Environment just told us your government is also unlikely to meet your 2030 target.

Saskatchewan has a more affordable and realistic plan to reach net-zero emissions by 2050. Why won't the Trudeau government let us use it?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P., Minister of Environment and Climate Change:** Senator, I disagree with everything you just said. One, we haven't missed any of our targets. The target we have is for 2030, and that's not what the Commissioner of the Environment said, senator. The Commissioner of the Environment said that the window of opportunity is closing for us to be able to meet our 2030 target and that we need to accelerate the deployment of measures, which is exactly what we have said. He said we weren't there yet, and I have said it a hundred times publicly that the plan we have doesn't allow us to get there. There are six more years over which we need to deploy measures to ensure we reach our 2030 targets. We have interim 2026 targets, which we're on track to meet.

Frankly, that \$40-billion figure from the Saskatchewan government is not based on any study. They have published no studies to back this number up. It's the same thing for the increase in electricity rates in Saskatchewan. Your colleague earlier talked about the Canadian Electricity Association, who said that they wanted to work with us to make this plan happen. The industry is on board.

We have New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, which have already signed agreements with us to deploy a clean electricity grid in their provinces, and more provinces are coming on board. For ideological reasons, the Province of Nova Scotia has decided they didn't want to take part in this endeavour, but we're still willing to work with them despite that.

**Senator Batters:** Minister, I would have asked why your government is doing this to Saskatchewan, but Minister of Rural Economic Development Gudie Hutchings has already given us that answer: We don't elect enough Liberals. Saskatchewan prefers to keep that number at net zero.

The Trudeau government's clean electricity regulations plan is a lot like electing Liberals: It is brutally expensive, it misses the mark, and you get net-zero return. Saskatchewan can address the emissions issue in a way that provides reliable power and is sustainable and affordable for our people. Why is it you think that Ottawa always knows best?

**Mr. Guilbeault:** As I said, we already have agreements with companies and with provinces on clean electricity. If there is a plan in Saskatchewan to reach net-zero emissions by 2050, I haven't seen it. Trust me; I have looked long and hard, and there is no such plan.

[*Translation*]

#### IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

**Hon. Claude Carignan:** Minister, this past summer was disastrous in terms of forest fires. From coast to coast, thousands of blazes ravaged millions of hectares of woodland. In fact, there were 6,650 fires across the country.

According to government sources I consulted, it is estimated that the cost generated by forest fires is between \$3 billion and \$4 billion in Quebec alone.

How will your government help support the provinces grappling with this environmental catastrophe? In addition, will you support the provinces financially or help them with reforestation?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P., Minister of Environment and Climate Change:** Thank you for the question, senator. I'm pleasantly surprised to see that a Conservative senator recognizes the impact climate change is having on Canadian society. These forest fires are unparalleled in our country's history.

Canada has had a federal disaster assistance fund since 1970, and 75% of this fund's expenditures have been made in the last six years. There has been a significant increase in the costs associated with natural disasters. The federal government is currently assessing the impact of the forest fires with the provinces and territories, as it is clear that we will be helping them absorb a good portion of the costs caused by these disasters.

We already have the 2 Billion Trees Program, with the goal of planting two billion trees by 2030. We have agreements with several provinces and territories. We don't have one with Quebec yet, but I'm confident we will soon.

**Senator Carignan:** Still on the issue of support for the provinces, you also announced a new program to help Canadians purchase heat pumps. What budget is being used to fund this program, minister? Are funds being syphoned to it off the greener homes program, which supports initiatives by the Government of Quebec, like Rénoclimat? Are these provincial programs being jeopardized because of the new program you announced? Are we robbing Peter to pay Paul?

**Mr. Guilbeault:** No, not at all; these programs are being led by Natural Resources Canada, which places them under the leadership of my colleague, Minister Wilkinson.

There are two programs at the Department of Natural Resources. One is the energy retrofit program that you were talking about. It provides grants of up to \$5,000 to install a heat pump. The other is a program specifically for heat pumps. The heat pump program, which is very popular in Quebec by the way, is the program that we enhanced, but not by taking funds away from the energy retrofit program.

[English]

#### CLIMATE PLAN

**Hon. Mary Coyle:** Thank you for being with us today, minister. This morning, Canada's new Chief Climate Negotiator, Michael Bonser, spoke with our Senators for Climate Solutions group. He reminded us that according to the latest global stock-taking, we, Canada, and the world are not tracking well against our Paris Agreement commitments. Clearly, increasing ambition and having viable plans to meet that ambition will be key.

As you head into COP 28 in Dubai next week, minister, can you tell us what Canada's top priorities or must-achieve items are, and also the biggest challenges you expect to face at COP 28?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P., Minister of Environment and Climate Change:** Thank you, senator. As Mr. Bonser might have told you, Canada has been asked by the COP 28 president to serve as co-facilitator for COP 28. We are one of 8 countries out of 194 that have been asked to do that. I was on a call at six o'clock this morning with the COP 28 president, along with a number of other ministers from around the world, to start looking at what is absolutely needed to come out of COP 28 in Dubai with a successful agreement.

It's a combination of more ambition when it comes to mitigation. How do we continue and accelerate reducing our emissions globally? We need to do a better job of supporting the Global South on adaptation to climate change. Many of these countries are feeling the impacts, and they are on the front line of climate impacts.

We also need to support financing. As you may have seen recently in the news, under the supervision of Germany and Canada, we have been working for the last three years to ensure that developed nations achieve the \$100-billion goal that we set in Copenhagen in 2009. According to the OECD, we have reached that goal. We reached it last year, and we've reached it this year. We were supposed to reach it in 2020. This is a fundamentally important element of the negotiations going into COP 28. In fact, the COP 28 president, Dr. Sultan Al Jaber, publicly saluted that achievement by countries. These are some of the issues we will need to tackle.

**Senator Coyle:** You didn't get to the issue of challenges.

At COP 28, you'll be sitting down with some large emitting countries like China and India, countries critical to the global climate equation and countries with which Canada has strained relationships. In this context, can you speak about the importance of climate diplomacy and how Canada will approach this work?

**Mr. Guilbeault:** Thank you. I think our environmental diplomacy is an integral part of our overall diplomacy. In fact, the United Nations turned to us last year to host COP 15, which we did in close collaboration with China despite some of the tensions we have had with this country. Nevertheless, we were

able to come to what many consider a historic agreement to protect nature, which is what led me to go China this summer so that we can continue this collaboration.

It is now the largest emitter of greenhouse gas on the planet. We can't ignore a country like China, nor can we ignore a country like India. We need to find ways to work with them and find solutions, and that's exactly what we're doing.

[Translation]

#### CARBON TAX

**Hon. Rosa Galvez:** Welcome to the Senate, minister. I would like to keep talking about the price on carbon and the exemptions being granted. Some exemptions have been around since the carbon tax was created, including for farmers and oil producers.

Can you explain the reasoning behind these original exemptions, including on certain fuels in agriculture or even on oil production? What percentage of emissions tied to the production of oil and gas is subject to the carbon tax?

• (1450)

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P., Minister of Environment and Climate Change:** As I was saying to your colleague earlier, we looked at the applications in agriculture. There were alternatives in the agricultural sector. We looked at the applications for which there was no alternative.

The purpose of carbon pricing is to change behaviours in the industrial sector and among individuals. In the agriculture sector, we realized that some applications have no alternative. We therefore didn't apply carbon pricing in those cases.

In the case of grain drying, for example, there are alternatives that we support with farmers. We applied the carbon pricing and we have brought in programs to support the transition in this sector.

[English]

**Senator Galvez:** Specifically for farmers, the technology to transition away from fossil fuels for drying grain exists around the world. How long will it take to implement in Canada this technology that exists around the world? Will it take eight years? Thank you.

**Mr. Guilbeault:** I don't have a time frame for you, but as I was telling your colleague earlier, we have already supported the installation of 128 grain-dryer projects that have been approved and supported by the federal government. I don't have the total, but we can get that information to your office.

#### CONSERVATION OF NATIONAL PARKS

**Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson:** Seven of Canada's largest national parks are, in my view, disproportionately found throughout the North. Additionally, the Northern Coalition Corporation, a federally incorporated non-profit representing

Indigenous-owned firms throughout Nunavut, Nunavik, Nunatsiavut and southern Labrador, stated in a written brief to the House of Commons committee in December 2017 that:

. . . the Eastern Arctic and Labrador Sea region (all areas adjacent to Northern Coalition members) are expected to contribute well over 50% of Canada's 2020 commitment to protect 10% of its marine environment. . . .

My question is this, minister: As Minister of Environment and Climate Change and Minister responsible for Parks Canada, how are you and your department balancing your desire to achieve biodiversity and conservation targets with the need to stimulate and support strong economies in the North?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P., Minister of Environment and Climate Change:** Thank you for the question.

First, there are no new conservation projects being done on Indigenous or Inuit land without their consent and full participation. The agreements I was talking about earlier regarding Nunavut or the Northwest Territories, or the agreement between the federal government, the Government of British Columbia and the Indigenous nations of British Columbia, are clear signs that this is the only way forward when it comes to conservation, whether in the North or elsewhere in our country.

We are looking at different models; for example, many of the models of conservation will allow for a certain number of activities, including some industrial activities, ecotourism, fisheries. That is something we co-developed with, in your case, Inuit in the North. We have an agreement, for example, with Qikiqtani Inuit Association, or QIA, on the establishment of a very large new protected area, but it's done in true partnership with the Inuit.

**Senator D. Patterson:** Thank you for that. Yes, minister, I know about that deal, but two different premiers have asked Canada to slow down establishing new protected areas in Nunavut until devolution. On November 8 of this year, Nunavut Minister of Environment Daniel Qavvik stated that barren ground caribou should not be listed as threatened under the Species at Risk Act and called upon the federal government for action.

You talked about collaboration with Indigenous partners, but I would like to know this: How are you and your government working with the Inuit-led Government of Nunavut to ensure that you are aligned on how to balance protection and development?

**Mr. Guilbeault:** Thank you for the question. I met with Minister Qavvik the day before yesterday, and I met with the Premier of Nunavut in March when I was there.

The idea for us is not to impose new projects upon a jurisdiction. They have to be done in partnership. For the QIA project, the Government of Nunavut is not a signatory to that agreement, but it is in the case of the Northwest Territories. Although they didn't sign, we know they support the project.

So it's important to us to ensure that these are done in collaboration.

[ Senator Patterson (Nunavut) ]

[*Translation*]

#### GREENHOUSE GAS POLLUTION PRICING ACT

**Hon. Pierre J. Dalphond:** Welcome to the Senate, minister.

We're studying Bill C-234, which seeks to grant exemptions for the heating of farm buildings for a minimum of eight years. On one hand, we have the government, which, a few weeks ago, announced a three-year exemption for families who heat their homes with oil. On the other, we have a House of Commons that refused to generally extend the heating exemption to homes where children live.

Minister, don't you think that returning Bill C-234 to the House of Commons would give MPs an opportunity to clean this bill up a bit and make the exemptions more consistent?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P., Minister of Environment and Climate Change:** It's not up to me as a member of the House of Commons to tell the Senate how to act or how to vote. The Conservative Party did that with the Conservative senators, but we don't work that way.

You have the freedom to decide what you want to do with Bill C-234. It is common knowledge that my party and I voted against that bill in the House of Commons.

When it comes to the announcement that was made a few weeks ago regarding home heating oil, we didn't apply the carbon tax because there were no other alternatives available. The same parallel can be drawn with agricultural applications. We realized that families who are still heating their homes with oil can't afford to make the transition to heat pumps, even with the help of the programs that we put in place. These families can't afford to pay the difference in cost.

That is why we reached an agreement with three provinces to make heat pumps free for that segment of the population. I think the Prime Minister was very clear about the fact that no other exemptions to the carbon tax will be granted.

**Senator Dalphond:** If the bill were to go back to the House of Commons, would the government commit to working with the opposition parties to come up with solutions that more adequately meet farmers' needs and are part of a more coherent carbon pricing policy?

**Mr. Guilbeault:** Of course.

**Hon. Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu:** Welcome, minister.

Last week, you said the following about Bill C-234:

. . . we've already excluded 97% of fuels used on farms. Because at the time when we put in place carbon pricing in Canada, the price on pollution, we realized that there was no alternatives . . . .

So the price on pollution in the agricultural sector only applies to 3% of fuels that are being used, where alternative technologies are available.

Farmers were very surprised by this statement, because the 3% doesn't seem to have any scientific basis, and even if it were accurate, for farmers who use propane to heat their buildings, the carbon tax applies at 100%.

The testimony we heard on Bill C-234 was all pretty similar. There's no affordable alternative to propane and natural gas, or to gasoline or diesel.

Where did that 3% figure come from? What affordable alternatives do you know about that farmers and scientists don't know about?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P., Minister of Environment and Climate Change:** I disagree with your characterization of this question. What you initially quoted is the same thing I said here earlier. It comes as no surprise. I would be pleased to submit the information we used to create carbon pricing and its specific application in the agricultural sector.

Earlier on I listed a series of measures that we introduced, amounting to more than \$1.5 billion, to support the agricultural sector's transition to a low-carbon economy. We are also going to keep working with this sector to help lower its greenhouse gas emissions.

**Senator Boisvenu:** When you throw out a percentage like 3%, you should know where it comes from.

You also said that \$500 million was available for upgrading grain dryers.

On June 16, 2021, your colleague Marie-Claude Bibeau, who was Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, announced a \$50-million program for grain dryers. That is quite a big discrepancy.

Did you add one too many zeros to the funding amount for upgrading grain dryers? That is 10 times less money.

Minister, who is telling farmers the truth, you or your colleague Ms. Bibeau?

• (1500)

**Mr. Guilbeault:** You know it's 2023 now. Ms. Bibeau made that statement two years ago. Earlier, I listed a series of measures. I did it in English, I can do it in French: \$495 million for research, development and adoption of clean technologies in the agricultural sector; \$12 million to reduce methane emissions in the beef sector; \$670 million to support the adoption of greenhouse gas emission reduction practices on farms.

These are some, not all, of the measures we've put in place to help farmers reduce the impact of greenhouse gas emissions in this sector.

[English]

**Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):** Minister, you have said several times there will be no more exemptions or carve-outs to the carbon tax as long as you are the environment minister. The majority of Canadians — and, indeed, the majority of the premiers of our provinces — want the carve-out that Bill C-234 brings.

Minister, will you keep your promise and resign if Bill C-234 is passed in its original form? Isn't that, minister, why you are calling senators to talk against this bill — because you've threatened to quit if it passes? Is your job more important to you, minister, than the livelihood of Canadian farmers and affordable food for Canadian families?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P., Minister of Environment and Climate Change:** There are a lot of questions in your question, senator.

I haven't said I would be resigning. The Prime Minister of Canada has also said that there would be no exemption to carbon pricing in this country.

We have, indeed, fought two federal elections — in 2019 and 2021 — where Canadians had the opportunity to decide what they wanted, and twice they decided that they supported carbon pricing.

**Senator Plett:** Well, in fact, in both of those elections, the Conservatives got considerably more of the popular vote than the Liberals did, so I wouldn't quite take that as solace. You got a minority government last time, minister. You must really take Canadians for fools, minister, on this and many other issues.

You made a clear promise: no more carve-outs as long as you're the environment minister, and that's why you're desperate to avoid Bill C-234 becoming law.

You said in a recent interview, "I'm confident that there will be no more exemptions to carbon pricing."

And then you say you don't whip. Why would you say that if you don't already know how senators are going to vote on this bill?

**Mr. Guilbeault:** I would point out, senator, that in 2019 or 2021, the majority of members of Parliament who were elected to the House of Commons are from parties who believe in climate change, which the Conservative Party of Canada doesn't even have as an official position.

**Senator Plett:** Answer the question.

**Mr. Guilbeault:** You spoke about the elections, senator, and I'm answering your question on the election.

The majority of parties present in the House of Commons and the majority of MPs believe we should be fighting climate change and support putting a price on pollution.

[Translation]

#### SYSTEMIC INEQUITIES AND DISPARITIES

**Hon. Marie-Françoise Mégie:** Hello, minister. Your mandate letter stipulates that you are to address systemic inequalities and disparities. Could you share with us how our environmental policies meaningfully improve the quality of life of vulnerable people?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P., Minister of Environment and Climate Change:** Thank you, senator. Earlier, the example I gave of heat pumps clearly showed that we realized that it was only people who use home heating oil, whether in Quebec — where, in fact, there are more people using oil heating than in all the Atlantic provinces — because of their economics, who don't have the means to make the transition.

That's why we brought in a program where the federal government, in collaboration with participating provinces, will pay 100% of this transition. This will allow an average family to save nearly \$2,000 a year on their energy bill on average, in Canada. There are regional variations. That is one of the measures we brought in.

We're also doing this on climate change adaptation, where there's a concerted effort being made with the provinces and municipalities to focus our efforts on urban areas where the populations are more disadvantaged and more at risk of feeling the impacts of climate change, such as heat waves, for example.

[English]

#### GREENHOUSE GAS POLLUTION PRICING

**Hon. Yuen Pau Woo:** Good afternoon, minister.

The government is committed to a review of the greenhouse gas pollution pricing mechanism in 2026. It will assess, among other things, whether "... pricing stringency is aligned across all carbon pricing systems in Canada."

Can you tell us what that means and why it is important?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P., Minister of Environment and Climate Change:** Thank you, senator.

It comes down to the fact that when we instituted carbon pricing in Canada, there were already a number of jurisdictions who had their own systems. British Columbia was one of them; Quebec was another. Certainly, they were two leaders in North America when it came to putting a price on pollution. We didn't

[ Mr. Guilbeault ]

want to impose a federal system on those provinces. Other provinces had some initiatives. Even Alberta had a pricing system for large emitters.

What we decided to do was to give the option to jurisdictions in Canada that wanted to have their own system but have the federal government act as a benchmark so that between jurisdictions there is some equivalency in terms of efforts when it comes to fighting climate change.

We did a review last year and we will do another one in 2026 to see whether or not that equivalency or that benchmark, if you will, is still in effect.

**Senator Woo:** Will this 2026 review also look at the use of natural gas and propane on farms, including in barns and grain dryers, and assess if exemptions may be needed at that time or, conversely, if such exemptions are already granted under Bill C-234, whether those exemptions should be reconsidered at that time, in three years?

**Mr. Guilbeault:** I think what we're seeing is a global and rapid adoption of clean technologies in all sectors.

You spoke specifically about agriculture. I'll give you another example, just to illustrate the pace at which technologies are being adopted.

Just three years ago, in 2020, according to the International Energy Agency, 1 in 25 cars sold in the world was an electric vehicle. In 2023, it was 1 in 5 globally. We're not talking about Norway or Sweden.

The pace of technology adoption in all sectors, including agriculture, is accelerating. I anticipate that there will be very little fossil fuels left in the agricultural sector in the coming years.

#### GREENHOUSE GAS POLLUTION PRICING ACT

**Hon. Pamela Wallin:** Governments have a responsibility, minister, to legislate within their own lane, but twice — first with Bill C-69, the "no pipeline bill," and now with the so-called toxic single-use plastics bill — you have violated that. The court agreed that you were out of your lane and that the science is flawed, but you insist you will appeal, which would be a huge cost of tax dollars to fight this in court.

Should you not first do your homework more diligently and stop fighting with provinces in court and billing the public for your errors?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P., Minister of Environment and Climate Change:** Thank you, senator.

You seem to forget that just two years ago we won in the Supreme Court of Canada on carbon pricing.

On the Impact Assessment Act, it was not a ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada, but an opinion. That opinion did say that some of the Impact Assessment Act was unconstitutional, but they also confirmed that parts of the act were entirely constitutional.

In terms of plastic pollution, I will make no excuse to fight to protect the health of Canadians. We are finding plastic substances in our brains. We are finding it in our fetuses. We are finding it in our kids. We are finding plastic pollution in our environment, and I will continue to fight to protect the health of Canadians, and I will make no excuse for that.

**Senator Wallin:** I have a very simple follow-up question on another matter raised by so many of my colleagues here today. Why exactly do you oppose giving a small bit of help to farmers and food producers with some small relief from the carbon tax?

These are the people who feed not only us but the world. You have already had carve-outs and help for others in need. Why is it that with farmers and food producers you seem so hell-bent on just saying, “No, no more help for you”?

• (1510)

**Mr. Guilbeault:** Maybe \$1.5 billion is pocket change for you —

**Senator Wallin:** No. That’s not what I asked —

**Mr. Guilbeault:** — but I think for most Canadians that’s a lot of money. That’s the money we’ve provided to farmers, and we will continue supporting farmers.

**Hon. Andrew Cardozo:** Welcome, minister, to the Senate. Thank you for being here with us.

On the matter of ministers talking to senators, my view is that if the whole world — that is, every lobby group and every individual Canadian — can talk to us, I don’t know why the federal government and cabinet would not talk to us. As the new independent Senate evolves, I would say you have an obligation to step up two-way communication with us.

On the matter of Bill C-234, can you remind us again of some of the details you mentioned in terms of the \$1.5-billion carve-out that already exists?

**Mr. Guilbeault:** Thank you, senator. I believe that we are better off as a nation now that we have independent senators in the Senate. Having conversations is very different from trying to lobby people. In fact, I have senators coming to me to talk about things that they care about. I think that’s a very good thing for Canada.

As I was saying earlier, we’ve put in place more than \$1.5 billion of support for the agricultural sector. I could give you the example of Barlow Farms, a 180-year-old family-operated cash crop farm in York, that received more than \$170,000 under the adoption stream to purchase and install a new mixed-flow grain dryer. As a result, their use of propane in the

drying process will be reduced by 46%. That’s the type of support we are providing to farmers across the country to help them reduce their carbon footprint and reduce their energy bills.

**Senator Cardozo:** The second part of my question takes us back to why we have concerns about carbon footprints. Sometimes, I think we are so far along in the discussion on the environment that we forget to remind people why it started.

What is wrong with carbon? Why are we concerned about it? Further, regarding the carbon tax, why are you taxing us if you’re just going to give us the money back?

**Mr. Guilbeault:** If representatives of the Insurance Bureau of Canada were here, they would tell you that the cost of climate change to Canadians has gone up 400% in the last 40 years. This is a cost that all Canadians are paying. Just in 2021, climate impacts cost the agricultural sector in Canada \$500 billion.

The purpose of our pollution pricing system is to make this revenue-neutral, so there’s no money left in the government coffers. We return 90% of the revenues to households and then people are free to decide what to do with this money. They can continue the same habits in terms of consumption of fossil fuels, or they can change their habits and then start saving money that they can do other things with rather than continuing to pay for fossil fuels.

[Translation]

#### PLASTIC WASTE

**Hon. Claude Carignan:** Minister, I’d like to come back to the issue of plastic pollution. Your initiatives in this regard are disastrous. The Canadian Press has reported that poor communities, particularly in Myanmar, are highly polluted by tonnes of plastic waste from Canada. However, Canadian authorities haven’t granted any permits authorizing the export of this waste to that country. Environment Canada inspectors make virtually no inspections of the cargoes of ships exporting waste. What’s more, the Federal Court has ruled that your proposed regulations on single-use plastics, including plastic straws, are unconstitutional.

Minister, don’t you think that your government should first tackle plastic pollution by exercising its powers within its own jurisdiction, rather than in a provincial jurisdiction? It seems to me that you’re looking at the mote in your neighbour’s eye rather than the beam in your own.

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P., Minister of Environment and Climate Change:** It is rather ironic that, on one hand, you’re criticizing us for not doing enough to fight plastic pollution, while on the other, you’re also saying that we shouldn’t do too much to fight that type of pollution. I think we need to make a choice.

The Federal Court ruling overturned the list of plastics but not the regulations that we put in place. There’s an important distinction between the two. As I said publicly, we’re going to appeal the ruling. Since that ruling was made public, I’ve received messages from scientists across the country, including some at the INRS in Quebec, saying that they want to testify

about the impact that plastic pollution is having on the environment and on the health of Canadians. These scientists also support our efforts to combat plastic pollution.

**Senator Carignan:** Minister, that is smoke and mirrors. Plastic is exported to developing countries. Here in Canada, roughly 90% of plastic is buried. It is smoke and mirrors. It is not by regulating plastic straws, which fall under provincial jurisdiction, or by claiming these are hazardous materials that you're going to solve the problem of plastic pollution and the problem of plastic waste that we're sending to developing countries. It is embarrassing. You should be ashamed.

**Mr. Guilbeault:** Again, senator, you're talking out of both sides of your mouth. You say that we need to do more to fight plastic pollution, but that the federal government shouldn't do too much. We decided to take action. The Federal Court made its ruling. We will appeal the decision and we will go to the Supreme Court if necessary. Our approach to plastic was celebrated by many experts in the country, by NGOs, by researchers and by several countries internationally.

#### CARBON CAPTURE TAX CREDIT

**Hon. Julie Miville-Dechêne:** I have another question on Bill C-234, a bill that is sparking a rather difficult debate.

I'm trying to understand the numbers. You introduced a refundable tax credit for farms in 2021. I'd like to know if you have any calculations showing that this refundable tax credit is offsetting the costs of the carbon tax on average per farm. What does it represent? I can't do the math. I'm no accountant. Could you give us some figures to help us understand what we are discussing? Is it a refundable tax credit that offsets the entire carbon tax or not?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P., Minister of Environment and Climate Change:** I don't have those figures on hand but we can certainly provide them to you, senator.

**Senator Miville-Dechêne:** A quick response would be appreciated since we're examining the question now. Thank you.

#### CLIMATE PLAN

**Hon. Jean-Guy Dagenais:** When you were an environmental activist, I didn't approve of all your actions, but I recognize that you were committed and made few compromises. However, to play along with Justin Trudeau's politics, you had to accept the purchase of a pipeline, you had to swallow your personal ideals and let the Bay du Nord project go through, and now you have to accept that your government is taking a step backwards on the carbon tax — which I see as electoral considerations.

My question is this: Are you willing to further compromise your environmentalist ideas to remain in cabinet?

[ Mr. Guilbeault ]

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P., Minister of Environment and Climate Change:** Our government has done more than any other government in the fight against climate change. I already listed several of the measures that I myself have put in place over the past two years, including the Clean Fuel Standard, reducing methane emissions, the incentives for purchasing zero-emission vehicles, the Clean Electricity Regulations and the elimination of fossil fuel subsidies.

No G20 country has eliminated fossil fuel subsidies. We are the first country to do so, even though we are the fourth-largest oil and gas producer. It's easy for countries to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies if they don't produce natural gas or oil. However, oil and gas production are essential in Canada, and yet we are still the first country to eliminate those subsidies, and we did so two years earlier than planned. Do we have a perfect track record? Of course not. I'm the father of four children and I don't win all of my battles at home, so I don't expect to win all of my battles in a country of 40 million people.

We're making unprecedented progress in the fight against climate change in Canada, and we're on track to meet our 2040 targets, but I'm the first to admit that we need to keep working on this and never give up, as the Conservatives would have us do. There is no on-off switch to stop climate change. It's going to take a lot of hard work on our part as a society over the next few years, if not decades. That said, I think we can do it, but we have to keep working.

**Senator Dagenais:** There have never been so many environmental regulations and laws as there are since you took office, and never so much investment, to the tune of \$200 billion. Despite all of this, officials who measure Canada's record have found that you never meet your targets.

• (1520)

The Climate Change Performance Index ranked Canada 58 out of 63 countries on its performance. When we look at the overall picture, what is not working? Could you set attainable targets?

**Mr. Guilbeault:** I share your frustration. It takes time for measures to be implemented after they are adopted. I suspect that some organizations, like the Climate Change Performance Index, will change Canada's ranking for the better when they see all the efforts that we're making and that those efforts are starting to reduce climate pollution in Canada.

We had the best record in the G7 in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from 2019 to 2021. Some will say that that was because there was a pandemic, but all of the G7 countries were dealing with the pandemic. It is called a pandemic because it wasn't just happening in Canada.

Despite everything, our performance in that regard is becoming more and more respectable, but I'm the first to admit that a lot more needs to be done.



## CARBON TAX

**Hon. Clément Gignac:** Thank you for your political commitment. Before you entered politics, you were an internationally recognized expert. It's not always easy to maintain credibility when you're a minister. I know all about that, because I've been there.

I'd like to talk about the carbon tax, a measure I support. It's recognized by economists as the best approach. I've heard the reasons why you exempted diesel in Bill C-234, but not natural gas and propane.

I'll think about your answers, but I'd like to come back to the announcement made in Atlantic Canada on October 26, which I found troubling. The focus is on the Atlantic regions, but there are low-income people in Ontario and in Indigenous communities across Canada who could really use the support. Why are these measures limited to Atlantic Canadians? Are low-income households in Atlantic Canada more important than those in the rest of Canada? I'd like you to comment on that.

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P., Minister of Environment and Climate Change:** Thank you very much for your kind words. I'll make a small correction. I know there's a perception that the exemption for home heating oil only applies in the Atlantic provinces, but it applies across the country, just as the heat pump program is offered across the country, where the provinces are willing to go the extra mile with us.

Right now, there are three provinces with which we have agreements, but in the next few weeks or months, there will be a lot more provinces that will be part of the program to make heat pumps free for low-income households.

**Senator Gignac:** So that means we're waiting for the provinces to be able to join the program, the same as it was for the Atlantic provinces? That is what I understand from your answer? Thank you, minister.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Do you want to answer the question, minister?

**Mr. Guilbeault:** The senator answered his own question.

[English]

## GREENHOUSE GAS POLLUTION PRICING ACT

**Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):** Minister, again, regarding Bill C-234 — I keep coming back to the same thought — you are asking the unelected Senate to do what you couldn't do in the elected House. This bill passed in the House of Commons with wide support. The vote wasn't even close. You keep on referring to it as Conservatives against the world. The Conservatives, the NDP, the Bloc Québécois and the Green Party supported this bill unanimously. Even some of your own Liberal MPs, including the Chair of the Agriculture and Agri-Food Committee, supported it. We don't often see consensus like that anymore, and it was good to see MPs coming together to support our farmers.

Now you're asking unelected senators to do what you could not do in the House: kill or gut this bill. Why should senators do what you want them to do instead of respecting the will of the majority of the other place?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P., Minister of Environment and Climate Change:** Senator, as a senator, you should know that the Senate is a recognized institution as part of our parliamentary system. I'm not telling anybody how to vote in this institution. I'm having conversations with some of them about my position on this bill, which is no surprise. I publicly stated that I was against it, so it shouldn't come as a shock to anyone.

I believe that the Senate is a very important part of our parliamentary system, and senators should be able to make the decisions that they want without being pressured by the House of Commons. I'm not pressuring anyone, as opposed to the Conservative Party of Canada, who has launched a campaign against senators who don't agree with them. I find that very troubling.

**Senator Plett:** Minister, I find very troubling your accusations here instead of answering my questions. One day, we're called bullies, and the next day, we're called whipped. It has to be one or the other.

Minister, I asked you at the very outset a question that you did not answer — so let me ask that question again now.

How many senators have you called in the last two and a half or three weeks to speak to them about the weather, or tell them your ideas about this bill? You say that where you stand on this is public knowledge. Why would you need to call a senator to talk about the bill if it's already public knowledge regarding where you stand? Why did you call them? How many have you called, minister?

**Mr. Guilbeault:** In answering the first part of your question, I'd say it's both in the case of what we're seeing here, senator.

**Senator Plett:** How many have you called? Answer the question.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, the time for Question Period has expired.

[Translation]

I'm sure you will join me in thanking Minister Guilbeault for being with us today.

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.

[English]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### 2023 FALL ECONOMIC STATEMENT

DOCUMENT TABLED

**Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the document entitled *2023 Fall Economic Statement*.

ADJOURNMENT

NOTICE OF MOTION

**Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That, when the Senate next adjourns after the adoption of this motion, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, November 28, 2023, at 2 p.m.

### 2023 FALL ECONOMIC STATEMENT

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

**Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, I give notice that, two days hence:

I will call the attention of the Senate to the *2023 Fall Economic Statement*, tabled in the House of Commons on November 21, 2023, by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, the Honourable Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P., and in the Senate on November 22, 2023.

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## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR RECONCILIATION BILL

THIRD READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Audette, seconded by the Honourable Senator LaBoucane-Benson, for the third reading of Bill C-29, An Act to provide for the establishment of a national council for reconciliation, as amended.

**Hon. Marty Klyne:** Honourable senators, coming from Saskatchewan, Treaty 4 territory and the homeland of the Métis Nation, I rise in support of Bill C-29, An Act to provide for the establishment of a national council for reconciliation.

As you know, this bill would establish a national council for reconciliation as an independent, non-political, permanent and Indigenous-led organization. Its purpose is to advance reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

• (1530)

I understand through the usual channels that I may be the last speaker. Therefore, I trust that we are ready for the question imminently. Thank you to Senator Audette for her leadership on this bill as sponsor. Thank you as well to Senator Francis and our Indigenous Peoples Committee for their hard work on Bill C-29 and to all senators who have worked to advance and improve this legislation since the bill arrived in our chamber nearly one year ago.

It's also worth mentioning this bill passed the House of Commons with unanimous support. Heartfelt thanks as well to the senators who have provided constructive advice on Bill C-29 in whole or in part, including our colleagues Senators Anderson and McCallum and our critic, Senator Martin.

When it comes to reconciliation, good enough is never good enough. Indigenous nations and federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments and legislatures must constantly be working to strengthen relationships and achieve the best possible results. Honesty, courage and criticism are essential to progress in society, as was illuminated in this chamber yesterday.

Bill C-29 acts on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action for a national council for reconciliation, being Calls to Action 53 to 56. Many senators have pledged to do their part to answer these calls, including in response to the recurring discovery of unmarked graves of Indigenous children at residential school sites. I believe we must always measure our commitment to truth and reconciliation through their eyes, imagining their perspective. Today we have an opportunity to make headway on this sacred journey.

As Senator Audette told us, with Bill C-29:

Every bead that we [weave] is precious and helps us along the path of healing and reconciliation, but also along the path to building a new relationship and maintaining the existing one, a relationship that is, of course, built on respect, partnership and the recognition of rights.

She said the bill:

... will create a national council responsible for monitoring progress on reconciliation in Canada, publishing reports and making related recommendations.

In addition, Bill C-29 will enable the conduct of research in accordance with a multi-year plan. Research is important; data is important. Integrating Indigenous and western knowledge and thinking is crucial to advancing reconciliation in the hope of developing new approaches and new programs to support understanding among people outside the government apparatus.

Senator Audette also noted that this bill's journey has been very long. It is time to conclude the Senate's process. Many of us recall the highly regrettable circumstances of 2019 when a Senate filibuster prevented votes on three House of Commons private members' bills answering the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Those were MP Romeo Saganash's Bill C-262 respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, MP Georgina Jolibois' Bill C-369 to establish a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and MP John Aldag's Bill C-374 to require Indigenous representation on the Historic Sites and Monuments Board.

The first two initiatives subsequently passed as government legislation with greater priority and different procedures within our Senate processes. The third initiative, regarding the Historic Sites and Monuments Board, is now at second reading before the House of Commons with the government's Bill C-23 introduced by Minister Guilbeault. However, valuable time has been lost.

I raise this matter not to throw stones. Rather, my purpose is to remind our chamber that our actions are consequential to national efforts for truth and reconciliation. For example, our Legal Committee has before it another Call to Action with Senator Kutcher's Bill S-251 proposing to end the use of corporal punishment on Canadian children. If the Senate does not pass that bill, or another iteration, Call to Action 6 will never be fulfilled.

As I said, I may be the last speaker to Bill C-29 unless an adjournment is taken today. I know legislation in this chamber sometimes becomes interrelated in our processes and dynamics. However, I trust all senators will agree reconciliation must never be conditioned on anything, save the truth. Speaking for myself, and I presume for many in this chamber, I am ready for the question. Thank you and *hiy kitatamihin*.

(On motion of Senator McPhedran, debate adjourned.)

## CANADA EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE BILL

### THIRD READING—DEBATE

**Hon. Rosemary Moodie** moved third reading of Bill C-35, An Act respecting early learning and child care in Canada.

She said: Honourable senators, as the Senate sponsor of Bill C-35, An Act respecting early learning and child care in Canada, I am proud to begin on third reading of this bill.

I want to begin by thanking my colleagues on the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology for their robust study of the bill. As a member of this committee for several years, I am always struck by the insightful questions, collaboration and consensus-based approach of our committee. I am grateful to have the opportunity to serve with all of you and look forward to continuing our work together.

It's especially meaningful for me on this occasion that the focus of this committee study was children.

To our colleagues Senators Burey, Seidman, Cormier, Mégie, Petitclerc, Osler, Dasko, Cardozo, McPhedran and Bernard, as well as to others who joined, thank you for your hard work on this bill. I also want to thank our chair, Senator Omidvar, for her admirable handling of the process and for keeping us in order. Special thanks to you, Senator Cordy, for stepping in at the end of our study. It is my understanding this was your first time chairing, although it was no surprise to me how well you led us through the clause by clause and how fitting it was to have a teacher lead us through the finishing steps of a study on early childhood learning.

In addition to my thanks to the committee members, I want to thank every single witness who took the time to appear before us or to provide us with additional information. We value and appreciate your insight.

Colleagues, as I noted in my second reading speech on Bill C-35, this is a significant commitment to a crucial dimension of Canada's social fabric. It will immensely impact all children, women and the economy for generations to come. It is a commitment by our federal government to ensure the growth of an accessible, affordable and inclusive child care system that will provide a firmer foundation on which all Canadian families can thrive.

I will briefly remind us of the journey that brought us here, of the benefits of national child care and of the current landscape, before returning to the bill and the committee's work.

As you heard from me in second reading, the journey to a national early learning and child care program was a long one. The ambition originated during the Royal Commission on the Status of Women and through numerous developments resulting in the 2017 Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework with provincial and territorial governments. This agreement between Ottawa and the provinces was for \$7.5 billion over 11 years. The purpose was to “. . . increase quality, accessibility, affordability, flexibility, and inclusivity in early learning and child care . . .” with consideration for families that needed care the most.

• (1540)

Colleagues, we are all familiar with what came next. The COVID-19 pandemic was a significant shock to our society and our economy. Women were displaced from the workforce, and the progress we had made on equality in the labour force threatened to be entirely erased. The response to this crisis was a national child care program.

In Budget 2021, an investment of \$30 billion over five years and \$8.3 billion ongoing were committed to build and sustain a national child care system. Through this investment, the government significantly expanded the multilateral agreements and set about building something new. Their goal was a 50% reduction of average fees by the end of 2022 and an average fee of \$10 a day by 2026.

You have heard me say this before: This investment in child care is a transformative project on the scale of the establishment of Canada's public school system and public health care system by previous generations. This is a legacy investment for today's children, who will not only benefit from it but will also inherit it for their own children.

In my view, this is one of the most significant bills you and I will deal with in this august chamber. Why? Because child care has clear and powerful impacts on Canadian society.

For children, early access to education can set them on a very strong path to future success and productivity. We know that child care better prepares children to learn in elementary school. It also provides an opportunity for them to be around professional educators who may help families identify specific needs their children may have or to address those needs early on to ensure they have support early on to be successful and to resolve the issues that may arise. By providing upstream supports, we not only help kids to be successful, but we lower costs for our education system down the line.

For women and families, access to affordable child care means the opportunity to return to work, build on their own education or to start a business. It means that both parents can now use their gifts and their skills to the benefit of their communities and to Canadian society as a whole. It means that parents — specifically mothers — don't have to decide between their child's well-being and their own ambitions. They can build a life they want for their families with the assurance that their children are not just taken care of but that they are thriving.

For our economy, child care represents an investment with significant returns. This is why many sectors of our society, such as private business, unions, economists, academics and many others, supported the government's investment into a pan-Canadian child care system. Studies have shown us that for every dollar invested in early childhood education, the broader economy receives between \$1.50 to \$2.80 in return. The federal government's own estimate predicts that the Canada-wide system will raise GDP by as much as 1.2% over the next two decades.

Finally, falling child care fees means that families individually are saving more on child care and can use those savings to pay bills or to invest in their own futures.

Simply put, national early learning and child care is an investment in our families. Access to affordable child care means resilient and successful families and communities. This is what Bill C-35, along with the agreements already in place, represents. It represents a commitment not only to achieve the government's short-term goals, but it also represents an ongoing investment to Canadian families. It will benefit all Canadians.

In my remarks during second reading, I spoke about the three pillars of the child care system today — the agreements with provinces, territories and Indigenous peoples; the investments into infrastructure; and this bill, Bill C-35, the legislation.

I want to remind us first of the agreements. The fact that all of the agreements are already in place is a crucial consideration for us as we debate this bill. Unlike other framework bills, we don't have to imagine what Bill C-35 will look like and how it will be applied. We can see it. Every province and territory has a bilateral agreement with the federal government that is tailored to the needs of their jurisdiction. Each differs in its specific details, but all have similar broad lines and themes.

First, there is a general commitment to the vision of child care set out in the multilateral framework agreements: high-quality, affordable, accessible and inclusive child care.

All of the agreements include a list of objectives, committing to fee reductions, space creation and workforce development. All have a stated priority for investments to go into not-for-profit and public care over private and unlicensed care.

Finally, every agreement has appended to it an action plan, created by each province, that outlines how they plan to meet their commitments under the agreements.

More specifically, Canada-wide early learning and child care agreements with provincial and territorial governments include a number of commitments, such as the number of new regulated spaces to be created; the timeline for achieving the goal of \$10-a-day, on average, fees for regulated child care; and the actions to support valuing the early childhood educator workforce, providing them with training and development opportunities. They also commit to equitable access to child care for communities with barriers to access, such as for children from official language minority communities, children with disabilities, racialized children, children of newcomers and Indigenous children and their families.

Funding agreements with Indigenous partners support Indigenous governance, while partnerships in this sector support program delivery and expand access to culturally appropriate early learning and child care for Indigenous children across the Canada-wide system.

I want to highlight that the very nature of the agreements is a positive step. As Senator Arnot pointed out just yesterday in this chamber, Western alienation and Northern alienation are real. To me, this emphasizes the value of cooperative federalism in the context of national child care.

These agreements should be viewed as a positive development for our country because they allow for the customized approach that meets the needs of each jurisdiction.

All together, these agreements are the basis for the creation of a strong, Canada-wide early learning and child care system based on the vision proposed by our federal government. It is important to note that the provinces and territories are accountable to these agreements and must respect them for a few reasons, and I will walk through these.

First, I would argue that the provinces do not want to lose the significant financial support from the federal government that makes possible this very impactful, popular and valued program. The politics of child care is a motivating factor for respecting agreements in and of itself.

Second, as mentioned, every province and territory has prepared an action plan which acts as the road map outlining how they will deliver on their commitments within their agreements. This allows the provinces and territories to implement their commitments in line with their respective child care priorities, for their respective community needs, while providing the federal government with a clear idea of the targets and outcomes they hope to achieve.

• (1550)

For every jurisdiction, there are round tables where the action plans are and will be regularly discussed and reviewed to ensure there is progress. Where there is not progress, the federal government can engage its partners on those issues.

Finally, every agreement has a dispute resolution and termination clause. This is important because, whereas the politics of child care motivates provinces and collaboration and dialogue at implementation tables drives the monitoring of action plans, it is dispute resolution and termination clauses within the agreements that are important last resorts that must be and remain available.

Canada's early learning and child care, or ELCC, system is built on the principles of high-quality, affordable and inclusive care that is available for all families and children through public and not-for-profit providers who prioritize the quality of services and affordability, rather than profits. It must be care that supports cultural identity and is available to linguistic minorities from coast to coast to coast.

This program is not about bolstering private businesses or adding to their profits. It is about investing in quality, affordability, space creation and workforce development.

Yet, to be candid, colleagues, although this program has received wide support from all sectors of society, and although the government has received a democratic mandate to continue it based on these principles, we have seen that many of the provinces' current political leadership might not be totally aligned. They might have a preference for for-profit care or might not prioritize the expansion of spaces for specific groups, such as official language minority communities or Indigenous peoples. Should those provinces be willing to go against the

political tides and refuse to meet their commitments in their action plans, these dispute resolution and termination clauses become more important as tools of last resort.

I want to specifically place on the record part of the agreement regarding dispute resolution and termination. I will use my home province of Ontario as an example. Subsection 8.1 of the Canada – Ontario Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement — 2021 to 2026 states:

Canada and Ontario are committed to working together and avoiding disputes through government-to-government information exchange, advance notice, early consultation, and discussion, clarification, and resolution of issues, as they arise.

Jumping forward, subsection 8.3 states:

As the Parties take stock of progress as outlined in section 6 —

— regarding long-term collaboration —

— should there be challenges, Canada and Ontario agree to work together to explore workable solutions, including proportional adjustments to targets. The responsible Ministers for Canada and Ontario agree to consider all reasonable approaches put forward by officials to address challenges.

Subsection 8.4 states:

If at any time either Canada or Ontario is of the opinion that the other Party has failed to comply with any of its obligations or undertakings under this Agreement or is in breach of any term or condition of the agreement, Canada or Ontario, as the case may be, may notify the other Party in writing of the failure or breach. Upon such notice, Canada and Ontario will endeavour to resolve the issue in dispute bilaterally through their designated officials.

The agreement goes on to explicitly lay out the process. It is clearly defined in the agreement. Canada can terminate the agreement at any time, according to subsection 10.1:

. . . if the terms of this Agreement are breached by Ontario by giving at least 6 months written notice of Canada's intention to terminate the agreement. . . .

Subsection 10.2 states:

After the date of termination of this Agreement under section 10.1, Canada shall have no obligation to make any further payments to Ontario after the date of effective termination.

Colleagues, the cost of non-compliance is loss of money. It is a significant and powerful driver for compliance.

This might have been a bit tedious to listen to — my apologies — but I think that reading all of that into the record is important to assure us and all Canadians listening that there is, in a very real sense, accountability from the provinces, and between the provinces and the federal government.

We actually got to see this accountability take place, in one form, just recently. I encourage you to read your own provincial agreement, as they are easy to access online.

But referring to the recent example, on October 27, CBC News reported that New Brunswick's education minister had told reporters that the province “. . . needs to renegotiate its 2022 child-care agreement with the federal government to address a long wait list for spaces in the province.” The article goes on to explain that the province was asking for more flexibility to expand the for-profit sector rather than the not-for-profit sector.

On October 31, another report was published, this time with the Honourable Minister Sudds stating quite clearly that New Brunswick will be held to the terms of the agreement in place. This was a clear and important statement from the minister, and I believe it will relieve fears that Ottawa would compromise and be less effective.

Of course, this is true for this current federal government, but what about future governments that might not share the same ideological penchant as this current government? That is where Bill C-35 comes into play.

Bill C-35, as you heard me state at second reading, builds upon these agreements by enshrining the federal commitment to build Canada-wide ELCC into law. The bill imposes conditions on Ottawa regarding its engagement with the provinces, territories and Indigenous peoples through the vision and principles of the

Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework. Its adoption will provide significant assurance for those partners, the child care sector, the child care workforce and families that Canada-wide ELCC is here to stay.

I want to focus my remarks here on clause 7 of the bill, because that is where the money is. Clause 7 lays out the guiding principles for funding. These are the rules of engagement for Ottawa. These are the conditions by which the Government of Canada makes investments into child care. To put it differently, these are the essential principles that must be included in every agreement going forward.

This clause ensures the accountability of the federal government going forward. It is the stake in the ground that holds Ottawa accountable, and it is how, along with the agreements, Ottawa works with the provinces and keeps them accountable.

Subclause 7(1) of Bill C-35 reads:

Federal investments respecting the establishment and maintenance of a Canada-wide early learning and child care system — as well as the efforts to enter into related agreements with the provinces and Indigenous peoples — must be guided by the principles by which early learning and child care programs and services should be accessible, affordable, inclusive and of high quality . . . .

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, debate on this item will continue at the next sitting of the Senate.

*(At 4 p.m., pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate on September 21, 2022, the Senate adjourned until 2 p.m., tomorrow.)*

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