



Province of Alberta

The 28th Legislature  
First Session

# Alberta Hansard

Wednesday afternoon, November 6, 2013

Issue 66a

The Honourable Gene Zwozdesky, Speaker

**Legislative Assembly of Alberta**  
**The 28th Legislature**

First Session

Zwozdesky, Hon. Gene, Edmonton-Mill Creek (PC), Speaker  
Rogers, George, Leduc-Beaumont (PC), Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees  
Jablonski, Mary Anne, Red Deer-North (PC), Deputy Chair of Committees

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Anderson, Rob, Airdrie (W),  
    Official Opposition House Leader  
Anglin, Joe, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre (W),  
    Official Opposition Whip  
Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (W)  
Bhardwaj, Naresh, Edmonton-Ellerslie (PC)  
Bhullar, Hon. Manmeet Singh, Calgary-Greenway (PC)  
Bikman, Gary, Cardston-Taber-Warner (W)  
Bilous, Deron, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (ND)  
Blakeman, Laurie, Edmonton-Centre (AL),  
    Liberal Opposition House Leader  
Brown, Dr. Neil, QC, Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill (PC)  
Calahasen, Pearl, Lesser Slave Lake (PC)  
Campbell, Hon. Robin, West Yellowhead (PC),  
    Deputy Government House Leader  
Cao, Wayne C.N., Calgary-Fort (PC)  
Casey, Ron, Banff-Cochrane (PC)  
Cusanelli, Christine, Calgary-Currie (PC)  
Dallas, Hon. Cal, Red Deer-South (PC)  
DeLong, Alana, Calgary-Bow (PC)  
Denis, Hon. Jonathan, QC, Calgary-Acadia (PC),  
    Deputy Government House Leader  
Donovan, Ian, Little Bow (W)  
Dorward, David C., Edmonton-Gold Bar (PC),  
    Deputy Government Whip  
Drysedale, Hon. Wayne, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (PC)  
Eggen, David, Edmonton-Calder (ND),  
    New Democrat Opposition Whip  
Fawcett, Hon. Kyle, Calgary-Klein (PC)  
Fenske, Jacquie, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (PC)  
Forsyth, Heather, Calgary-Fish Creek (W)  
Fox, Rodney M., Lacombe-Ponoka (W)  
Fraser, Hon. Rick, Calgary-South East (PC)  
Fritz, Yvonne, Calgary-Cross (PC)  
Goudreau, Hector G., Dunvegan-Central Peace-Notley (PC)  
Griffiths, Hon. Doug, Battle River-Wainwright (PC)  
Hale, Jason W., Strathmore-Brooks (W)  
Hancock, Hon. Dave, QC, Edmonton-Whitemud (PC),  
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Horne, Hon. Fred, Edmonton-Rutherford (PC)  
Horner, Hon. Doug, Spruce Grove-St. Albert (PC)  
Hughes, Hon. Ken, Calgary-West (PC)  
Jansen, Hon. Sandra, Calgary-North West (PC)  
Jeneroux, Matt, Edmonton-South West (PC)  
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Kang, Darshan S., Calgary-McCall (AL),  
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Khan, Stephen, St. Albert (PC)  
Klimchuk, Hon. Heather, Edmonton-Glenora (PC)  
Kubinec, Maureen, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock (PC)  
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Leskiw, Genia, Bonnyville-Cold Lake (PC)  
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Olesen, Cathy, Sherwood Park (PC)  
Olson, Hon. Verlyn, QC, Wetaskiwin-Camrose (PC)  
Pastoor, Bridget Brennan, Lethbridge-East (PC)  
Pedersen, Blake, Medicine Hat (W)  
Quadri, Sohail, Edmonton-Mill Woods (PC)  
Quest, Dave, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (PC)  
Redford, Hon. Alison M., QC, Calgary-Elbow (PC),  
    Premier  
Rodney, Hon. Dave, Calgary-Lougheed (PC)  
Rowe, Bruce, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (W)  
Sandhu, Peter, Edmonton-Manning (Ind)  
Sarich, Janice, Edmonton-Decore (PC)  
Saskiw, Shayne, Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills (W),  
    Official Opposition Deputy House Leader  
Scott, Hon. Donald, QC, Fort McMurray-Conklin (PC)  
Sherman, Dr. Raj, Edmonton-Meadowlark (AL),  
    Leader of the Liberal Opposition  
Smith, Danielle, Highwood (W),  
    Leader of the Official Opposition  
Starke, Hon. Dr. Richard, Vermilion-Lloydminster (PC)  
Stier, Pat, Livingstone-Macleod (W)  
Strankman, Rick, Drumheller-Stettler (W)  
Swann, Dr. David, Calgary-Mountain View (AL)  
Towle, Kerry, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (W),  
    Official Opposition Deputy Whip  
VanderBurg, Hon. George, Whitecourt-St. Anne (PC)  
Weadick, Hon. Greg, Lethbridge-West (PC)  
Webber, Len, Calgary-Foothills (PC)  
Wilson, Jeff, Calgary-Shaw (W)  
Woo-Paw, Hon. Teresa, Calgary-Northern Hills (PC)  
Xiao, David H., Edmonton-McClung (PC)  
Young, Steve, Edmonton-Riverview (PC),  
    Government Whip

**Party standings:**

Progressive Conservative: 59      Wildrose: 17      Alberta Liberal: 5      New Democrat: 4      Independent: 2

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Robert H. Reynolds, QC, Law Clerk/ Director of Interparliamentary Relations	Fiona Vance, Sessional Parliamentary Counsel	Brian G. Hodgson, Sergeant-at-Arms
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Thomas Lukaszuk	Deputy Premier, Minister of Enterprise and Advanced Education, Ministerial Liaison to the Canadian Forces
Manmeet Singh Bhullar	Minister of Service Alberta
Robin Campbell	Minister of Aboriginal Relations
Cal Dallas	Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations
Jonathan Denis	Minister of Justice and Solicitor General
Wayne Drysdale	Minister of Infrastructure
Kyle Fawcett	Associate Minister of Regional Recovery and Reconstruction for Southwest Alberta
Rick Fraser	Associate Minister of Regional Recovery and Reconstruction for High River
Doug Griffiths	Minister of Municipal Affairs
Dave Hancock	Minister of Human Services
Fred Horne	Minister of Health
Doug Horner	President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance
Ken Hughes	Minister of Energy
Sandra Jansen	Associate Minister of Family and Community Safety
Jeff Johnson	Minister of Education
Heather Klimchuk	Minister of Culture
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Frank Oberle	Associate Minister of Services for Persons with Disabilities
Verlyn Olson	Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development
Dave Rodney	Associate Minister of Wellness
Donald Scott	Associate Minister of Accountability, Transparency and Transformation
Richard Starke	Minister of Tourism, Parks and Recreation
George VanderBurg	Associate Minister of Seniors
Greg Weadick	Associate Minister of Regional Recovery and Reconstruction for Southeast Alberta
Teresa Woo-Paw	Associate Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations

## STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

### Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future

Chair: Mr. Amery

Deputy Chair: Mr. Fox

Bhardwaj	Olesen
Cao	Pastoor
Donovan	Quadri
Dorward	Rogers
Eggen	Rowe
Hehr	Sarich
Luan	Strankman
McDonald	Xiao

### Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund

Chair: Mr. Khan

Deputy Chair: Mrs. Jablonski

Amery	Eggen
Anderson	Kubinec
Casey	Sherman
Dorward	

### Select Special Chief Electoral Officer Search Committee

Chair: Mr. Rogers

Deputy Chair: Mr. Quadri

Blakeman	Leskiw
Eggen	McDonald
Goudreau	Saskiw
Lemke	

### Select Special Conflicts of Interest Act Review Committee

Chair: Mr. Luan

Deputy Chair: Mr. Dorward

Blakeman	Notley
Fenske	Saskiw
Johnson, L.	Wilson
Kubinec	Young
McDonald	

### Standing Committee on Families and Communities

Chair: Mr. Quest

Deputy Chair: Mrs. Forsyth

Brown	Leskiw
Cusanelli	Notley
DeLong	Pedersen
Fritz	Swann
Goudreau	Towle
Jablonski	Wilson
Jeneroux	Xiao
Khan	Young

### Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

Chair: Mr. Cao

Deputy Chair: Mr. McDonald

Bikman	Leskiw
Blakeman	Quadri
Brown	Rogers
DeLong	Wilson
Eggen	

### Special Standing Committee on Members' Services

Chair: Mr. Zwozdesky

Deputy Chair: Mr. Young

Casey	McDonald
Forsyth	Quest
Fritz	Sherman
Kennedy-Glans	Smith
Mason	

### Standing Committee on Private Bills

Chair: Mr. Xiao

Deputy Chair: Ms L. Johnson

Allen	Goudreau
Barnes	Jablonski
Bhardwaj	Leskiw
Brown	Notley
Cusanelli	Olesen
DeLong	Rowe
Fox	Strankman
Fritz	Swann

### Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing

Chair: Ms Olesen

Deputy Chair: Mr. Lemke

Calahasen	Luan
Cao	McAllister
Casey	Notley
Fritz	Pedersen
Goudreau	Rogers
Hehr	Saskiw
Kennedy-Glans	Towle
Kubinec	Young

### Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Chair: Mr. Anderson

Deputy Chair: Mr. Dorward

Amery	Khan
Anglin	Luan
Bilous	Pastoor
Donovan	Quadri
Fenske	Quest
Hale	Sarich
Hehr	Stier
Jeneroux	Webber

### Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship

Chair: Ms Kennedy-Glans

Deputy Chair: Mr. Anglin

Allen	Hale
Barnes	Johnson, L.
Bikman	Khan
Bilous	Kubinec
Blakeman	Lemke
Calahasen	Sandhu
Casey	Stier
Fenske	Webber

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, November 6, 2013

[The Speaker in the chair]

### Prayers

**The Speaker:** Good afternoon.

Let us pray. Gracious Lord and Holy Creator, may your spirit flood our open hearts. May your wisdom nourish our hungry minds. May your words feed our caring souls as we look after those who sent us here. Amen.

Please be seated.

### Introduction of Visitors

**The Speaker:** The Associate Minister of International and Inter-governmental Relations.

**Ms Woo-Paw:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly His Excellency Nicolas Lloreda Ricaurte, ambassador of the Republic of Colombia to Canada. I'm happy to inform the House that Alberta's relationship with Colombia continues to grow and flourish. In fact, Colombia inaugurated a new consul general in Calgary yesterday. We export nearly \$140 million per year to Colombia, making it our 13th-largest export market. We also import Colombian products such as iron and steel products; electrical; machinery; flowers, especially roses; and ceramics. Like Alberta, Colombia's largest export commodity is oil and gas. These energy ties lead to the sharing of people, knowledge, and opportunities. It's a key component of our building Alberta plan to open new markets and strengthen relationships. I would ask that our honoured guest in the Speaker's gallery – he's already risen – receive the traditional warm welcome of the House.

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Energy.

**Mr. Hughes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. Today throughout Alberta many families are participating in the take your kids to work program. I'm very pleased to be participating in that today. There are many upsides to this. The downside is that the parent actually has to show up at work in order to do that. I'm pleased today to introduce our son Eamon Hughes, who is in grade 9 in the Springbank community high school. He's joined today by his mother, the very talented, clever, determined, hard-working, long-suffering, and wise Denise Savage-Hughes.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, we have a number of school groups and others, over 20. So we'll tighten up our introductions from here on in, please.

School groups. Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock, you're first.

**Ms Kubinec:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you today to all members of this Assembly the Covenant Canadian Reformed School from the Neerlandia area in my constituency, actually the very closest school to our farm. We have their teacher, Mrs. Jessica Vandersluijs. We have parents Maria Hamoen, Katrina Barendregt, Christina Kippers, Alja Helmus, and Darlene Steenberg. Please rise and join me in welcoming this wonderful group.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

**Dr. Sherman:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly among the best and brightest young people in our country, the students of Meadowlark Christian school. They're here with their teacher, Michael Krogen, and parent helpers Michelle Nelson and Janice Kornelsen. These students are here today to watch democracy in action and to learn what actually goes on in this Chamber. I asked them how they would describe themselves. These are the words they used: awesome, trustworthy, dependable, we've got swag. And their special skills? They can speak fluent Vulcan. May they live long and prosper. I would ask them to please rise and ask all members to give them the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod.

**Mr. Stier:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly 23 students from the Millarville community school today. The teachers and adult volunteers with the group are Serena Sanders, Brenda Kruggel, Keith Grusing, Jill Goplen, Shelley Smith, and Russ Fisher. I would ask my guests to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood, I understand your guests have not yet arrived.

**Mr. Mason:** I think at 2 o'clock, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, sir.

Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

**Mr. Saskiw:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly 20 grades 4 to 6 students from Vilna school. The teachers with these students today are Cole Landers, Gloria Sirant, and Kristin Homeniuk, whose father-in-law happens to be a well-known and well-respected Two Hills county resident. It is great that they're here today. They want to let all of the members know that Vilna is an awesome school. I would ask my guests to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Are there other school groups?

Seeing none, let us move on with other guests. The Minister of Human Services.

**Mr. Hancock:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to rise and introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly a constituent of mine from Edmonton-Whitemud – a wonderful place, I might say – Ken Aberg, senior member of Advocis Canada. I understand the group will be introduced later. Ken is here today as part of Advocis's annual Legislature day and is seated in the members' gallery. I'd ask that Ken rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the House.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Education, followed by the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

**Mr. J. Johnson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise with a couple of introductions today. The first one is Patty Ditttrick, president of the Public School Boards' Association. She has served for many years and is finishing up her term as president, just a few more days here now, as she didn't run again. Mary Lynne Campbell is executive director of the Public School Boards' Association. I'd

ask Patty and Mary Lynne to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, my second introduction is Marcus Walter and Viktoria Bradley, who are here today as part of the 19th annual bring your child to work day, which, of course, provides kids in grade 9 the opportunity to come with their parents to work. Accompanying them today is Michael Walter, Marcus's father, who is an assistant deputy minister for strategic services in Alberta Education and from a long line of family that has served this province well, including his father, former Chief Judge Ernie Walter. I'd ask those three to please stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

**Ms Smith:** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly three flood heroes. The first is the president of the Canadian Volunteer Fire Services Association, Troy Mutch, who represents hundreds of volunteer firefighters who served in the southern Alberta floods. He is also a volunteer firefighter himself. Troy co-ordinated the Tide Loads of Hope, which completed 2,400 loads of laundry for High Riverites; the Duracell Power Forward program, which distributed 35,000 packages of batteries; \$1 million worth of Proctor & Gamble cleaning products; and 25,000 gift cards. He is a High River hero.

I would also like to introduce the Salvation Army's divisional director of disaster services for Alberta and the Northwest Territories, Major Roy Langer. Through ongoing flood relief efforts in Alberta the Salvation Army has served more than 10,000 people with food, water, and emotional care. Major Roy was among the first NGO representatives in High River in the last month, and he personally helped over 150 front-line workers in High River heal from their experiences through the critical incident stress management program, including me and my constituency staff. He is also a High River hero.

My last introduction is the president of Search and Rescue Alberta, Daryl Black. Daryl is also a member of Canada Task Force 2, through which he was able to help respond to the High River floods, and he also serves his local Edmonton search and rescue group. Search and Rescue is 100 per cent volunteer organized and run. Many of those volunteers served in southern Alberta and in the floods. They and Daryl are flood heroes.

I would ask Troy, Roy, and Daryl to all rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly. [Standing ovation]

1:40

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, followed by the President of Treasury Board.

**Mr. Olson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my sincere pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly this year's Alberta 4-H Hall of Fame inductee, Mr. Clinton Ziegler. Mr. Ziegler began his association with 4-H more than 50 years ago, and he's been a leader and volunteer at the district, regional, and provincial levels since that time. He's served on numerous boards and committees in his community of Vegreville, from Boy Scouts to the Wheat Pool to the rural fire association. He's joined here today by his wife, Lorriane; his son Sheldon; daughter Fronde and son-in-law Chris; son Nathan, daughter-in-law Tiffany; and grandchildren Molsen, Tezra, Revon, Corbyn and Avery. They're joined by Colleen Prefontaine from the 4-H Council of Alberta. They're in the members' gallery, and I'd ask that they rise and that members give them the warm reception of this Assembly.

**The Speaker:** The hon. President of Treasury Board, followed by Edmonton-Strathcona.

**Mr. Horner:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to introduce to you and through you to all Members of the Legislative Assembly a group of folks who are no strangers to this Assembly. They have been here before, and that's Advocis, the Financial Advisors Association of Canada. Among them is a long-time friend and supporter of mine, Mr. Duane Gibb from St. Albert, with Gibb Financial. Professional financial advisers and planners are critical to the economy. They help consumers make sound financial decisions that ultimately lead to greater financial stability and independence. Advocis works with decision-makers and the public, stressing the value of financial advice and striving for an environment in which we all can save for our future. Financial literacy is important.

They are hosting a reception for members this evening at the Royal Glenora Club. I hope you will attend. Our guests are seated in both galleries today, and as we welcome them to Edmonton, I would ask all members of Advocis to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, followed by Edmonton-South West.

**Ms Notley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have three introductions today. I'm very pleased to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly two of those guests, Emily Douglas and Carolyn Sale. Emily and Carolyn are part of the Coalition for Action on Post-Secondary Education, which last week dropped off over a thousand handwritten messages from concerned students and staff at the U of A. As a result of their work, they are coincidentally here on the day the minister announced putting \$50 million back in, or to put it another way: one-third of the mistake has been fixed. It's not enough for the thousands of students, professors, and programs that have been lost, but I have no doubt that Emily and Carolyn will continue their good work to make sure that this mistake will be completely remedied. Please join me in asking Emily and Carolyn to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

As well, like the Minister of Energy, I, too, have been participating in drag your kid to work day, so my son is also here, also in grade 9, and also observing these proceedings with great interest. I would ask that Ethan Notley stand and receive the warm welcome of this Legislature.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-South West, followed by Calgary-Varsity.

**Mr. Jeneroux:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Iqbal Amiri. He is here today with Advocis, but I wanted to introduce him in his capacity with the Ismaili community. He is a passionate volunteer, and he assisted as a project manager for Prince Hussain and his wife's visit and, more recently, on the Rays of Light exhibition celebrating 50 years of the Aga Khan photographic exhibition here in Edmonton. He's a very successful president and CEO of Amiri Wealth Management and also a very proud constituent of Edmonton-South West. I'd ask him to please stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity, followed by Edmonton-Gold Bar.

**Ms Kennedy-Glans:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly external members of the results-based budgeting panel focused on economic development programs in agriculture,

transportation, aboriginal, and workplace development. I'd invite them to stand as they are named: Martin Kennedy, vice-president, external affairs for Capital Power; Marcel Latouche, president and CEO of the Institute for Public Sector Accountability; and Don Wilson, executive director of the Alberta Motor Transport Association. Please help me to welcome these gentlemen to our Assembly.

**Mr. Dorward:** Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all of the Assembly three tireless workers in my community of Gold Bar and surrounding communities. They are all members of the South East Community Leagues Association, which I'll do a member's statement on later. I'm pleased to be able to have with me Bob Gerlock, Bob Hutchison, and Dave Liles. Unfortunately, Lori Jeffery-Heaney, who does tireless work as well in our community, was unable to be here. Gentlemen, please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

**The Speaker:** The Associate Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations, followed by Edmonton-Calder.

**Ms Woo-Paw:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do have two sets of introductions, please. First, it is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you two very special guests. Mr. Li Feng, who is a former consul with the consulate general of China in Calgary and has been instrumental not only during my last mission to Asia but ever since in helping connect and promote Alberta in the Jiangsu area. He is currently serving as the vice-chair of the Suzhou Foreign Affairs Institute, where he is working vigorously to create educational, cultural, and trade exchanges between China and Alberta as well as the rest of Canada. Please stand.

Also, I'd like to introduce Dr. Xinxin Fang, who is a special adviser of Chinese language and culture to Alberta Education. Both have contributed significantly to promoting Alberta's international relations, especially education development and exchange opportunities. They are seated in the members' gallery, and I ask that they please rise and receive the warm welcome of the House.

It's again my pleasure to introduce to you and through you Dr. Manfred Zeuch, who currently serves as the vice-president international at Concordia University College of Alberta. Dr. Zeuch was raised in Brazil but has lived around the world and is fluent in five languages. Dr. Zeuch is currently leading Concordia's internationalization strategy and through his work is helping to provide Alberta students with important international learning experiences. In the last few years Concordia has done a fantastic job creating a web of international partnerships in more than a dozen countries. He's currently seated in the members' gallery, and I'd like to ask that he please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, we have two introductions left. Let's squeeze them in quickly. Edmonton-Calder, you go first, and Calgary-Currie, you go second.

**Mr. Eggen:** Well, thanks, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to introduce to you and to the Assembly Peter Lee. Peter is the director of the Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition, and the coalition's main goal is the establishment, restoration, and maintenance of environmental protection in the Castle area. Peter is here today to encourage this government to show leadership and create a provincial wildland park in the Castle wilderness area. I would ask him to stand and receive the warm welcome of everyone here today.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

**Ms Cusanelli:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Last but certainly not least, I am very pleased to rise to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly a friend and active member of our community in Calgary, Mrs. Robyn Moser. Robyn serves on her PC Fish Creek board and is a member of the Alberta Real Estate Association Political Action Committee as well as the Calgary Real Estate Board Political Action Committee. May we please all give her a warm welcome here in our House.

1:50

## Oral Question Period

**The Speaker:** Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, your first main set of questions.

## Emergency Management Planning

**Ms Smith:** Mr. Speaker, earlier today I introduced three heroes of the High River flood. They accomplished wonderful things during the flood. Indeed, the only reason they did not accomplish more was because of cumbersome bureaucratic processes in government. The Alberta Emergency Management Agency is supposed to develop a plan that directs an integrated approach to emergency management. It has supposedly been working on this for years, and it was supposed to be released on the website in late 2012. To the Premier: can we expect the Alberta emergency plan to be in place before the next disaster?

**Ms Redford:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I've been waiting for this. I can't believe that the hon. member just made the allegation that she did, that in light of the worst natural disaster in Canada's history, where we were able to respond as Albertans, as a government, as community leaders, and as citizens in less than 10 hours, she doesn't think that's good enough. I think that is an insult to the public servants, the community leaders, the volunteers, and the people that worked their hearts out to make sure that Albertans are safe. I'll tell you, we should celebrate the heroes of High River and Calgary and Alberta, and that's what we'll do.

**Ms Smith:** I know the Premier thinks she did it perfectly, but I can assure you that not everyone else did.

One of the guests I introduced is with Search and Rescue. These wonderful people are among the best-trained and most capable first responders, yet in High River they were not called in to provide their specialized assistance. Now, I would assume that the Premier is as dissatisfied as I am with existing protocols for calling in specialized resources like search and rescue. To the Premier: will those protocols be improved when we finally see the yet-to-be-released Alberta emergency plan?

**Ms Redford:** Mr. Speaker, the day that Albertans realized that this flood was going to be the worst disaster in our history, in Canada's history, Alberta Emergency Management went into immediate operation. I remember that one of the first questions I was asked was: when are we going to call in the army? It speaks to the magnitude of what we were dealing with on that Thursday afternoon. What I'll say is that the people who came together in those very difficult circumstances did the best that they possibly could, including the people who were introduced today in the gallery. It's important for us to know that we will always strive to do better, but we did well as a province.

**Ms Smith:** Mr. Speaker, we're not criticizing the people. We are asking questions about the management response.

In August the Wildrose caucus put together a report calling for an inquiry into the handling of the flood, which raised 54 important questions where there are no answers. This minister rejected an inquiry. Now, it's almost five months since the floods, and all of the questions in our report remain unanswered. Doesn't the Premier care about understanding what worked and what didn't work in the floods so that we can get it better the next time?

**Mr. Griffiths:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member called for an inquiry, which would cost millions of dollars and take years. That's what an inquiry does. After every incident we have an emergency response in this province, we do a review to analyze what went well and what didn't, but we weren't about to do one in the midst of managing the emergency. We all have questions about what went well and what . . . [interjections]

**Mr. Anderson:** Aw, give it up. Unbelievable.

#### **Speaker's Ruling Interrupting a Member**

**The Speaker:** Excuse me? I have asked for no interjections, hon. Member for Airdrie, and if you wish, we could take this to the next step. If you want to take this to the next step, I'll be happy to do that with you, sir. Otherwise, please don't interject. Your leader has asked a very good question, and we're waiting for a very good answer. The second row as well, I've been hearing you interject, and I've heard a few members over here interject. Let's remember that we have a number of young people here who are looking to you all as role models for a good, high standard of debate and decorum. Let's provide it today if nowhere else.

The hon. minister.

#### **Emergency Management Planning (continued)**

**Mr. Griffiths:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know that when we do that review in the fall or early in the new year, we're going to find out, contrary to the leader's questions, that we had a great response from the water rescue unit in Strathcona and other teams. We'll also find out why the hon. leader was kicked out of the emergency centre in High River.

**Ms Smith:** I'm looking forward to hearing the answer to that myself, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** The hon. leader.

#### **Pipeline Framework Agreement with British Columbia**

**Ms Smith:** Mr. Speaker, after the on-again, off-again, on-again meeting between this Premier and Premier Clark there emerged an announcement of progress on a west coast pipeline. [interjections] On the surface this . . .

#### **Speaker's Ruling Oral Question Period Conduct**

**The Speaker:** You know, somebody made an interesting comment here yesterday. I believe it was someone from the Wildrose caucus who said something about not acting like undisciplined children in a playground. I would like to remind you that I said yesterday that I might have to use that somewhere going down the line. So let's cut the outbursts. Government caucus members, let's cut the

outbursts over here. And let's get on with what question period is all about: solid questions; hopefully, solid answers. Let's try that.

Please start again, hon. leader.

#### **Pipeline Framework Agreement with British Columbia (continued)**

**Ms Smith:** I'll just continue, Mr. Speaker.

On the surface, this would appear to be good news for our economy. However, there remain some significant issues which are still unresolved, particularly how B.C. will gain extra economic benefit from this pipeline. To the Premier: could she clarify what is being considered in providing B.C. with extra economic benefits?

**Ms Redford:** Well, Mr. Speaker, in fact, what we did yesterday was incredibly exciting for British Columbia and for Alberta. Today the differential on a barrel of oil is \$41. What we were able to agree to yesterday ensures that we're making progress to build a pipeline so that that \$41 comes back to the government of Alberta as revenue. As the British Columbia government moves forward and discusses with industry what the options might be, we will all know what they are, and then we'll know what's on the table.

**Ms Smith:** Mr. Speaker, media are reporting that this update came about because the Premier's communication staffer, while apparently drowning his sorrows in a bar, managed to restart these failed negotiations. It is worrying to Albertans that this project, that is so essential to our economic future, hinged on a random encounter in a bar. Can the Premier assure Albertans that future negotiations on this project will be managed in a more professional and less haphazard way?

**Ms Redford:** You know what, Mr. Speaker? I had the opportunity to meet with Premier Clark yesterday to talk about exactly what we need to do as Premiers, and that is to come to an agreement to allow us to build forward. You know, I know that the Leader of the Opposition takes a black-and-white view of the world. As a result of that, it might be difficult for her to understand that in negotiations there are times when you talk, and there are times that you step away from the table. Most importantly, we came back to the table yesterday, and we got an agreement that's going to continue to build Alberta and bring revenue to this province.

**Ms Smith:** That being said, Mr. Speaker, Albertans still need to know which way the government is heading in providing additional economic benefits for B.C. With everything on the table from B.C. taking an ownership stake in the pipeline, special fees, a side agreement with Ottawa as options, this will be setting a significant precedent for future pipeline development. Could the Premier indicate, at least, which options are being discussed, or will her director of communications be working that out in a bar as well?

**Ms Redford:** You know, Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. Leader of the Opposition exactly missed the point. When we sat down with British Columbia, we said that whatever British Columbia decided to do on a go-forward basis needed to be discussed with industry, not with the government of Alberta. Our interest was to ensure that we protected Alberta's assets and that we got the best possible price for our assets. That's what we did. I am very certain that as we move forward, the hon. Leader of the Opposition will have lots of time to question the Premier of B.C. as to whether or not she thinks she's made appropriate proposals.

**The Speaker:** The hon. leader. Third main set of questions.



### Washington Meetings

**Ms Smith:** Mr. Speaker, the Premier is once again heading to Washington next week to pitch the Keystone XL pipeline. Keystone is a critical project for Alberta's economic prosperity, and we applaud the Premier's efforts to convince Americans that Keystone serves their interests, too. My questions are to the Premier. Can she tell us, specifically, the names of the high-ranking Senators, congressional committee chairs, State Department undersecretaries, and senior White House officials that she will be meeting with next week to make the case for Keystone?

**Ms Redford:** Well, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of meetings that are currently in the works, and we're working with the Canadian embassy to make sure that we're meeting key decision-makers. I will have the opportunity next week to meet with Senator Heitkamp, from North Dakota, who's been a strong ally, who's bringing together a group of people, senior Democratic leaders, to talk about our record on the oil sands and about Keystone and why it's important for us to be partners. As I'm sure the hon. leader would know since she went on a field trip to Washington last year, it does take time to develop some of these meetings. I'll tell you that as we move forward, we will be very transparent, very open, and very proud of the meetings that we have that advance Alberta's agenda.

2:00

**Ms Smith:** As you can see, Mr. Speaker, the official itinerary for the Premier's Washington trip next week is a little thin. It names no names other than Canada's U.S. ambassador and a Senator she's met with before and is otherwise entirely absent of specific meeting details, objectives, and measurable outcomes. This concerns us because the last time that she was there, her most publicized meeting was a speech to a room full of interns, hardly the high-level meetings that we need. To the Premier: how can Alberta taxpayers be assured that they are getting good value for this trip given the low-level nature of some of her past meetings in Washington?

**Ms Redford:** Mr. Speaker, I now recall that the first time I went to Washington as Premier, the hon. Leader of the Opposition criticized the trip because I didn't have a chance to meet with the President of the United States, which, to me, actually showed what she understood about Washington politics. As we move forward, the most important thing that we can do in this critical time in Washington is to make sure, before we start boasting about meetings that we might be having, that they're secure and our interlocutors are prepared to meet with us. Her characterization of the last trip, of course, isn't appropriate or actually realistic or even true. As we move forward, we will ensure that we continue to report on progress, and we'll continue to make progress.

**Ms Smith:** Mr. Speaker, Albertans want to see the Premier promote Alberta to the world, but they expect to see results. Increasingly, the Premier's international trips seem to be less about getting things done and more about getting the Premier's picture taken. Albertans want and deserve to see measurable progress on Keystone, not simply more Washington photo ops for the Premier's Facebook page. Meetings with think tanks and interns just don't cut it. To the Premier. When Ralph Klein was in her chair, he met with the vice-president twice. Why is it that she can't seem to get the attention of the real DC decision-makers?

**Ms Redford:** Well, Mr. Speaker, this simply speaks to the fact that the Leader of the Opposition doesn't understand how Washington works. We are working in conjunction with our Minister of Foreign Affairs, with the Canadian ambassador, with the Prime Minister, and with our representative in Washington to make sure that we're having meetings with people that are involved in this decision-making process. I'll tell you that the most unhelpful thing that we could do is to have a meeting, walk out, have a press conference, and jeopardize their position in the process. I'm really disappointed to see that the Leader of the Opposition is taking such an unsophisticated approach to a project that is critical to our being able to go that way.

**The Speaker:** The hon. leader of the Alberta Liberal opposition.

### Privately Operated Seniors' Housing

**Dr. Sherman:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Parkland Institute released a report this morning called From Bad to Worse: Elder Care in Alberta. I'll table that report shortly. It turns out that one of the best ways to make a fortune is to run a private, for-profit assisted living facility. The average rate of return on investment: 9.14 per cent, way better than the stock market but at the cost of inferior care for our seniors and terrible working conditions for our staff. To the Premier: what's more important to you, stellar returns for your private buddies or dignity and comfort for our seniors?

**Ms Redford:** Mr. Speaker, the most important thing for this government is to ensure that Alberta seniors, who are vibrant members of our community, have choices with respect to where they want to live. Let's be very clear. Alberta's seniors have told us that they want to have that choice. Now, that's about accommodation. Health care for seniors is publicly funded, and we're committed to doing more of that. We'll continue to do it. We have the best record in the country from the fact that we have put additional supports of 33 per cent in place since 2009 and that for low-income seniors we brought in special-needs assistance programs, which have added \$27 million this year alone to low-income seniors.

**Dr. Sherman:** Mr. Speaker, all evidence clearly indicates that publicly funded and publicly delivered long-term care is key to providing dignity and comfort and world-class care to our seniors. The Premier once recognized this. In her leadership she talked about publicly funded and publicly delivered care, not privately delivered. In the election she promised to increase long-term care spaces by a thousand in five years. That's long-term care, not continuing care. To the Premier. You promised more long-term care, more publicly funded care, yet your minister is cutting long-term care by making it all privately delivered. Who's running the show here?

**Mr. Horne:** Well, Mr. Speaker, what the evidence indicates is that one of the best places to be a senior in this country is, in fact, Alberta. I challenge that hon. member to deny the fact that the broadest possible range of services for seniors living at home, independently in the community, and seniors who need facility-based care is anywhere other than the province of Alberta. Most provinces can't achieve a 33 per cent increase in home care over three years. Most provinces cannot achieve the building of a thousand additional living spaces, living spaces that accommodate all levels of care, not just long-term care, not just supportive living, and services that we're proud of.

**Dr. Sherman:** Mr. Speaker, that's not what the Parkland report says, and there's a difference between long-term care and continuing care.

Interestingly enough, today's findings reinforce Dr. John Cowell's Health Quality Council report from 2012. His report found that staffing levels and care were best at public facilities and worst at private, for-profit facilities. Today's report says that staffing is sometimes so low that seniors are put in diapers because staff don't have enough time to take them to the bathroom, and it can take up to two hours to answer the call bell. To the Premier. The man hired to administer the health system said something very different than what you say and what this minister says. Why should we believe you and your minister instead of Dr. John Cowell?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Horne:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member is very well known for non sequiturs and trying to draw connections between things that simply don't connect. The fact of the matter is that quality is the common denominator among all services that are provided in this province, whether they're not-for-profit, private providers or public providers. For this hon. member to stand in this House and deny the facts that the hon. Premier has presented, that I presented, that the Associate Minister of Seniors has presented is simply, we can only conclude, a desire to undermine public confidence in services for seniors, a failure to recognize the efforts of front-line staff, and a complete . . .

**The Speaker:** The hon. leader of the New Democrat opposition.

#### Postsecondary Education Funding

**Mr. Mason:** Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Before the election this government promised a 2 per cent increase to postsecondary institutions. Instead, they delivered a 7 per cent cut. There's been an announcement today of \$50 million that is going back into the budget after \$147 million was cut. This comes after thousands of positions have been cut by postsecondary institutions, hundreds of programs have been cut, and countless students have gone elsewhere. My question is to the Premier. Why did you cut \$147 million out of postsecondary education then add \$50 million back after all the damage has been done?

**Ms Redford:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased today that the Deputy Premier could work with presidents over the past six months culminating in today and leading to a 2.6 per cent reinvestment in postsecondary education, and we thank the work that our postsecondary leaders have done to ensure that we are streamlining and having a very effective postsecondary system. I think it's incredibly disingenuous of the hon. member to talk about systems that have been damaged or destroyed. What we know from our dialogue with presidents and leaders is that we now have a system that is responsive to student enrolment programs to ensure that we're supporting students, addressing their demands, and that's what we did today.

**The Speaker:** The hon. leader.

**Mr. Mason:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think the Premier is delusional. This government couldn't run a lemonade stand.

When this government introduced massive cuts to universities, colleges, and technical institutions, they changed the lives of thousands of students and potential students for the worse and

forever. Why doesn't this government care enough about the lives of these young people to do the budget right in the first place?

**Mr. Lukaszuk:** Mr. Speaker, I have to tell you that this Premier is very responsible. She made a very difficult decision with this government that had to be made at a time when we were in financial restraint, but she also keeps her promise. The promise to all postsecondary institutions was that when the first available time arises where we can reinvest, which is what all Albertans want to do, reinvest in advanced education, we will. Today was the first available opportunity. Promise made; promise delivered.

**Mr. Mason:** Mr. Speaker, I think the Deputy Premier just threw the Premier under the bus. I don't know.

This government promised predictable year-to-year funding, and they failed to deliver that. What is the government prepared to do to guarantee that it's going to keep its promises next year and the year after?

**Mr. Lukaszuk:** Mr. Speaker, this member knows more about buses than I do, but I have to tell you this about advanced education. We know that this economy in this province is going to grow based on a knowledge-based economy, and we know that education is a priority for Albertans. This government reflects that. But we also know that we have to make responsible, fiscally prudent decisions. So when the first opportunity arises to reinvest, we will, and we hope that we can continue that in the future.

2:10

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, that's it. The first five leaders' questions have occurred, and no preambles are now accepted after that. I asked you this yesterday. If you're up on the slate, please check and see, because I will shorten your preambles if they exist.

The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

#### Wood Buffalo Seniors' Housing

**Mr. Allen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just this past week Fort McMurray was granted status as a port of entry. This is very exciting news for the citizens of the regional municipality of Wood Buffalo. Another collaboration between the municipality, provincial government, and the federal agency CMHC is happening in my constituency. It's a proposed seniors' village and aging-in-place facility, the site known as Willow Square. This facility has been held up because of a French language clause which increases costs to the project. Can the Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs please advise on the status of the land transfer from the federal government?

**The Speaker:** The hon. associate minister.

**Mr. Weadick:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. First, I'd like to thank this member and the member next to me from Fort McMurray for the hard work they've done on this particular file, and congratulations on the port of entry. That is incredible for the whole province. We are working with our federal counterparts at CMHC to come to an agreement on this piece of property that would allow for the seniors' facility to be built. There are some current obligations in this agreement from the federal government that we're simply uncomfortable with, so we're going to continue to work with the municipality and CMHC to resolve these issues immediately.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Allen:** Thank you. To the same minister: has there been any response from the federal government or, specifically, from CMHC to the Member for Fort McMurray-Conklin's excellent suggestion of September 17 to have land transferred directly to the municipality?

**The Speaker:** The hon. associate minister.

**Mr. Weadick:** Well, thank you. That is a really good question. In fact, there are three different options on the table, Mr. Speaker, and that is one of the options. These members have worked closely with their municipality to come up with options that could be successful. We're looking at whether the land could be transferred to the municipality or leased on a long-term lease that would allow the project to go forward as well. So there are a number of great opportunities, and I think we can resolve this very quickly.

**Mr. Allen:** Again to the same minister: would bodies such as growth management boards be a helpful tool in negotiations and influencing outside bodies such as CMHC on what would be beneficial to citizens and perhaps be another negotiating tool to help push collaborations like this forward?

**The Speaker:** The hon. associate minister.

**Mr. Weadick:** Well, thank you. Growth management bodies are something we've been talking about a lot in the last week or two, Mr. Speaker. Growth management bodies are another tool that will be there for municipalities that want to work together with other municipalities and with other levels of government. This would allow us as regions or as groups of municipalities to come together on important issues like building Alberta, building seniors' housing, and building relationships and the economy. So, yes, these types of boards could be extremely helpful in regions working together.

Thank you.

### Postsecondary Education Funding (continued)

**Mr. McAllister:** Mr. Speaker, there is a book by conservative author Peter Schweizer. It's called *Do as I Say (Not as I Do): Profiles in Liberal Hypocrisy*. I think the advanced education minister ought to have a copy. This week we find out that while he was slashing his department's budget and forcing postsecondary institutions to do the same, he was loading up on the luxuries, brand new matching furniture for his political office in Edmonton. He even tried to say that it wasn't for him but for his staff, and we found out it was for him. To the minister. You are clearly sending the wrong signal. Do you not see the hypocrisy in what you have done?

**Mr. Lukaszuk:** It's interesting that this individual would rise on this point. Number one, he only made one appointment to my office and didn't show up. If he actually showed up to my office more often and discussed advanced education, he would get more factual answers on what is actually going on in postsecondary education.

Second of all, Mr. Speaker, I have been perfectly clear. The furniture has been put into the office. We merged two ministries into one. We have put additional staff in that office. Yes, some of the furniture was for me but the majority wasn't. We have nothing to apologize for. Governance goes on. It simply was necessary to do so, just as, I'm sure, his staff have furniture in their office.

**Mr. McAllister:** Mr. Speaker, I realize the minister is quite sensitive. Perhaps I'll bring him a little bowl of milk tomorrow.

**The Speaker:** No preamble either.

**Mr. McAllister:** Considering this minister's short-sighted and paternalistic approach to his file was already driving away professors from the province and postsecondary students reducing spots [interjections], how will he justify this self-serving disrespect . . .

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, I've asked for no preambles, please, and I meant it. So I'm asking you to shorten yours.

Government members, please cut the interjections. We've tried very hard to elevate everything on all sides of the House. Let's make sure we continue that way.

**Mr. Anderson:** Point of clarification.

**The Speaker:** Point of clarification.

**Mr. Anderson:** At the beginning of our questions that's not a preamble, correct?

**The Speaker:** It would be a wonderful thing if I would have heard it, hon. member.

Chestermere-Rocky View, would you like to start your question again, please?

No interjections, please.

**Mr. McAllister:** Mr. Speaker, thank you. There are times, I admit, we all get lengthy in the preamble. I assure you this is not one of them.

Considering that this minister's short-sighted and paternalistic approach to his file was already driving professors out of the province and shrinking the number of spaces available to students, how will he justify this self-serving, disrespectful decision to students, to faculty, and to taxpayers when he sits down at the table with them?

**Mr. Lukaszuk:** Mr. Speaker, as you know – and I know you know very well – during the estimates for this budget, as a matter of fact, this member is on the record advocating for further spending cuts to my ministry, so I find it rather hypocritical for him to be rising on this particular point.

Let me also tell you, Mr. Speaker, that today's investment of \$50 million in advanced education was to address critical volume growth, student growth in our schools, and that's exactly what we have done, and we will continue to do that.

**Mr. McAllister:** I did advocate for more cuts, Mr. Speaker, to his own ministry and his own office.

There's a difference between wants and needs, and given that Alberta families have to make tough decisions concerning these two things, given that responsible businesses have to make tough decisions concerning this, does the minister recognize that in his role he should be setting a high standard and not a poor example?

**Mr. Lukaszuk:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of everyone that works in my office. They are nothing but dedicated to advanced education and putting in extreme work hours. I'm very, very proud of the entire ministry and all civil servants in our ministry.

As I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, if this member would care to write me the first memo, the first letter, or actually show up in my office to discuss advanced education as he is the official critic for advanced education, I would always welcome him with open arms.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview, followed by Cypress-Medicine Hat.

**Mr. Young:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While we continually marvel at the accomplishments and hard work of Alberta students, this past year has been a very challenging one financially for those in postsecondary institutions that are supporting them. Today we learned of the Treasury Board granting an additional \$50 million to postsecondary institutions. My question is to the Minister of Enterprise and Advanced Education. Certainly, long-term funding is difficult, but we shouldn't be talking such a short term. There were cuts just a few months ago, so why are we spending it now?

**Mr. Lukaszuk:** Well, Mr. Speaker, what responsible governments do is respond to the situation at hand. Every Albertan knows and all members of this House know that our Treasurer and our cabinet and our government were faced with a very difficult financial decision at the beginning of this fiscal year, having a \$6 billion gap because of the differential. By the way, that is why the Premier is working so hard in British Columbia and in Washington to fix that.

Responsible governments, Mr. Speaker, adjust their spending as their revenues diminish, and that's exactly what we have done.

**Mr. Young:** To the same minister. Students and faculty at the University of Alberta, in my constituency, have raised a number of concerns about programs and access. What new funding will the university receive?

**Mr. Lukaszuk:** Well, Mr. Speaker, today we are responding to enrolment growth. This province is growing by a hundred thousand people every year, and we attract a lot of young people that we want to engage in postsecondary education. A lot of adults return to school and readjust their careers. Today the \$50 million will be pro-rated among 20 postsecondary institutions, and as universities and their presidents have agreed, they will be addressing those dollars towards enrolment in their schools.

**Mr. Young:** To the same minister: given that the school year has already started, how will this new money be used on campus?

**Mr. Lukaszuk:** Well, Mr. Speaker, we will not be micromanaging campuses. We have very capable chairs, boards, presidents, and administrators. I can tell you, as I said earlier, that it will be applied towards enrolment growth and no other expenditures. Some schools may have somewhat overenrolled. They will be using that towards offsetting those costs. A new semester begins in January in many institutions. They will be able to bring on additional students in January. They will make those critical decisions at a campus level, and that's where the decision should lie.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat, followed by Calgary-Mountain View.

## 2:20 Highway Maintenance Contracts

**Mr. Barnes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So far this winter central Albertans have been enduring poor highway maintenance. Highways like the QE II, 12, 21, and 50 are not being properly maintained, and this is jeopardizing their safety. Obtained documents show that companies contracted to do maintenance on these highways have failed to meet their obligations. Last year alone: 75 financial penalties to only five companies. To the Minister of Transportation: why is this government letting highway maintenance

companies get away with putting Albertans at risk over and over?

**Mr. J. Johnson:** Mr. Speaker, the member raises a question that's, you know, a concern to many Albertans out there who travel on Alberta's highways on a day-to-day basis. Many of my constituents obviously want to make sure that our highways are maintained and in the proper shape that they should be by the contractors we use. That's why our Minister of Transportation has a pretty healthy budget from this Legislature, one that the party across the way would like to cut. They advocated for a cut of about one-third of our capital budget during the last budget discussions. We disagree with that. We think the minister should continue working with his department and try to make sure that these contractors do as good a job as they possibly can.

**Mr. Barnes:** Again, Mr. Speaker, we just wanted to cut administration costs in the minister's office.

Given that over five years 303 penalties have been issued, totalling almost \$1.7 million in fines, and given that two-thirds of these penalties have gone to one company, Carillion, what is the government going to do to crack down on the persistent failure of these companies to live up to their obligations?

**Mr. J. Johnson:** Mr. Speaker, I think the member just emphasized that the minister is doing his job and his administration is doing its job. If they're doing oversight of these companies and they're issuing penalties and they're holding them to account and they're on top of them, you would see these kinds of things happening, and you are. I'm not sure how the minister is expected to cut his administration and come up with the \$1.623 billion worth of cuts that this party across the way has suggested that we take out of our capital budget.

**Mr. Barnes:** I understand the Education office increased 32 per cent.

This government doesn't take road safety seriously as it appears that these companies put the fines into their business plans. Given that Carillion has received almost 200 penalties for its failure to live up to its contractual obligations, will this government take immediate and decisive action to ensure that these frequent offenders do not take on new contracts with the Alberta government until they can prove that they can meet the requirements of the old contracts?

**Mr. J. Johnson:** Mr. Speaker, this government is on top of our contractors all the time, and I think the evidence that the member has brought forward is speaking to that. Obviously, we tender contracts on a regular basis that are open through, you know, the New West Partnership and others to all kinds of jurisdictions and all kinds of vendors, so that's another way that contractors are held accountable. These things come up on a regular basis, and they'll continue to come up. The minister will continue to look at the contracts, and he may be able to give the member a more detailed answer when he returns.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View, followed by Edmonton-Calder.

## Emergency Medical Services

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, seniors' care in Alberta is bad, and it's getting worse. The conclusions of an independent University of Alberta report today: reduced RNs, rushed care, and neglect are now common and are the worst in the

for-profit settings. Overstressed staff put seniors at risk, and when problems happen, the safest thing, of course, is to call EMS, adding to overcrowded ERs and compounding problems in our system. To the minister: when will you face up to these penny-wise, pound-foolish decisions?

**Mr. Horne:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. Premier in answers to previous questions talked about how Alberta is leading in adding seniors' services across the province, both for those living in the community and those who are living in facilities. I will say with respect to the hon. member's comments that we are aware that the system is complex to navigate for many people, not only for individuals themselves seeking placement but for family members who are trying to assist a mother, a father, or other relative. As I said before, we're looking at that question, but we stand by the fact that Albertans want choice. We're delivering choice, and we'll continue to deliver those options.

**Dr. Swann:** We're not talking about complexity, Mr. Minister. We're talking about quality.

Can you be surprised that EMS is overstretched? EMS response times to life-threatening events continue to be unacceptable 50 per cent of the time even to the EMS workers themselves.

**Mr. Horne:** Mr. Speaker, I think what the hon. member is talking about is ideology. I think the problem with this discussion is that the foundation of this health care system is focused on quality standards that apply to all providers: not-for-profit, private, and public providers. We will continue to offer choice within the system. We will continue to do things like adding 33 per cent more funding over a three-year period for home care, and we'll continue to meet the challenges of being the fastest growing province in the country with a hundred thousand people coming here each year.

**Dr. Swann:** Mr. Speaker, the domino effect, according to the Workers' Compensation Board, is that paramedics are injured four times the rate of other health workers. Over the last 12 months the rate of days lost doubled for EMS workers. What can you say about that?

**Mr. Horne:** Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member is now switching the topic to emergency medical services and specifically paramedics, I can tell him that we have the benefit of a member in our caucus who, in fact, is a paramedic, who has been of great assistance to me and to my colleagues in understanding the issues that paramedics face in a system that has growing demands owing to population growth and aging and other issues. We work closely with both individual paramedics – the head of EMS at Alberta Health Services is himself a paramedic – and we have close links to the Health Sciences Association of Alberta. We'll continue to support paramedics in our health system.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder, followed by Livingstone-Macleod.

#### For-profit Long-term Care for Seniors

**Mr. Eggen:** Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Alberta's seniors are suffering due to neglect by this PC government. A comprehensive report released today by the Parkland Institute confirms what Albertans already suspected, that private care facilities distribute less hours of direct care and less regulation of standards at considerably more cost to both the public purse and to an individual's pocket. To the Minister of Health: why has your government handed so

much of seniors' long-term care over to private industry when you know the result is less direct care, higher expenses, and considerably less regulation?

**Mr. Horne:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member wants me to answer a question based on his ideology. The foundation, the tradition of providing health care in this province is based on partnership. It's based on partnership with public-sector workers. It's based in its most historical roots with partnerships with not-for-profit organizations, and it is also based on solid partnerships with private providers. The hon. member's interest in ideology is all good and well. This government is interested in quality and in identifying and enforcing common standards for all providers. We're going to continue to do that.

**Mr. Eggen:** Well, given that seniors who require long-term care are being increasingly diverted to assisted living facilities and given that this off-loading puts more pressure on seniors and their families to pay out of pocket for the treatment that they need, isn't this just another way to shake Albertans down to pay for essential medical services, thus weakening public health and leaving us exposed to private, two-tiered, American-style health care?

**Mr. Horne:** Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the hon. member, if he's still stuck in the 1980s and '90s and that's the foundation for his discussion about health care in something as serious as seniors' issues, that's up to him. The fact is that this is the only jurisdiction in Canada that is building 1,000 spaces a year that accommodate all levels of care. Increasingly, they are supporting people who are entering end-of-life care. The issue around staffing is something that we've discussed in this House before. We design our facilities so that we can adjust staffing levels to meet the needs of residents, not to meet the requirements of someone's particular ideology.

**Mr. Eggen:** Well, Mr. Speaker, given that this PC government's obsession with privatized, long-term care and assisted living is somehow stuck in the 19th century, I would venture to say, and has led to insecurity, lower standards, and a massive rip-off to seniors when they are at their most vulnerable, why won't the minister commit today to improving staffing levels at seniors' care facilities by phasing out inferior, for-profit delivery of seniors' care?

**Mr. Horne:** Mr. Speaker, the way to improve staffing levels in seniors' care or in any other part of the health system is to add more staff, and there is no province in this country that is doing more and has to do more to keep up with the need to increase staff in the health care system by the very nature of our growth. The province is growing by the size of the city of Red Deer on an annual basis. Our health care system continues to grow faster than any other in the country. It remains the best-funded system in this country and, in fact, is ahead of many developed countries. This is a government that is on top of growth in health care in 2013.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod, followed by Lethbridge-East.

2:30

#### Emergency Medical Services (continued)

**Mr. Stier:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Health's heavy-handed approach to ambulance dispatch just doesn't make sense. EMS workers are complaining that they are forced to leave entire regions of our province empty and without ambulances to

flex from region to region on nonemergency interfacility transfers. Currently Calgary has 28 interfacility transfer units, and EMS workers tell me they often find those units underutilized. To the Minister of Health: enlighten me. Why does Calgary have 28 interfacility units and rural southern Alberta has none?

**Mr. Horne:** Mr. Speaker, the obvious answer would seem to be that there are proportionately more people in Calgary who require interfacility transfers on a daily basis than in smaller communities across the province. The hon. member has asked a number of questions with respect to ground ambulance services in rural Alberta, and if there is a specific issue with respect to a municipality in his constituency, I'd be more than pleased to look into it directly. However, in order to do so, I would require that information to be provided to my office.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Stier:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will do that.

Given that recently a teenager in Claresholm was seriously injured in a high school football game and lay on the field for more than 45 minutes before an ambulance arrived due to this interfacility transfer mess and given that a 45-minute wait for an ambulance is now average in certain parts of southern Alberta, is the minister prepared to sit down and rethink this whole thing, or is he going to just let his pride get in the way of patient care again?

**Mr. Horne:** Mr. Speaker, I'd be very interested to see support for the claim the hon. made about people waiting an average of 45 minutes in southern Alberta. That does not marry up with any data that I have available to me. But what I will tell this hon. member is that we made a decision as a government several years ago that EMS is in fact part of the health care system. Now, as I said earlier, if there are particular issues in a municipality that the hon. member would like me to look into, I'd be pleased to do that. But make no mistake: the demand for interfacility transfers is continuing to grow. I have asked Alberta Health Services to look at other options to make sure that units dedicated for that purpose can serve that purpose can serve . . .

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Stier:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to hearing about that.

Given that in the Calgary region an Amber Alert is called when wait times exceed just a few minutes whereas chiefly because of interfacility transfer problems associated with the flex system patients in rural areas are waiting up to and over 45 minutes, can the minister explain what kind of category of alert that is? Is it plaid?

**Mr. Horne:** Mr. Speaker, I'm really not sure I even understand the point of that question, and it's not surprising that I don't understand the point because it's unclear so often. The government is working very hard to keep up with the demand for emergency medical services across the province. That's why we engaged the Health Quality Council to conduct a thorough review of this, an evidence-based review. We've accepted the recommendations some time ago, we began implementing them some time ago, and they will continue to deliver benefits to Albertans in terms of timely service and a higher quality of care.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East, followed by Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

### Health Care Accessibility

**Ms Pastoor:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My constituents have asked these questions. Albertans sometimes wait a long time to see a doctor, and this wait can be even longer if they're looking for a second opinion. Access, in my opinion, is a problem. My question is to the Minister of Health. What is the minister doing to address this that will help to alleviate Albertans' health concerns and certainly their fears?

**Mr. Horne:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question. There are several things that the government is doing in this regard, but first and foremost is a principle that we adopted in October 2011. That is the principle that every Albertan should have a home in the health care system in or near their home community. That means access to a family doctor who can arrange for referrals to specialists. It means access to other professionals like nurse practitioners and dietitians and pharmacists. That opportunity has seen a great expansion in primary health care in the province. It's seen the centralization of wait-lists in some areas and protocols around referral.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Ms Pastoor:** Mr. Speaker, to the same minister: can we expect that AHS will start looking at other ways to meet these wait time lapses?

**Mr. Horne:** Well, Mr. Speaker, they already have begun that work. The hon. member, I believe, is referring to the wait time between referral from a family doctor to a specialist. In that regard we've begun to see the centralization of some wait-lists in the province. Hip and knee surgeries are the best examples, where we've seen a very significant decrease in the wait time because patients are triaged and assessed at central locations across Alberta. We've seen initiatives like here in Edmonton at a primary care network where people are screened for orthopaedic surgery prior to seeing the specialist. The result is that over 80 per cent of those patients have been taken out of the waiting line.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Ms Pastoor:** Thank you. Again to the same minister: what can be done to speed up tests to confirm a diagnosis, in particular for cancer, and to be able to get that second opinion?

**Mr. Horne:** Well, Mr. Speaker, of course, all urgent cases that require diagnostic imaging or some other sort of specialized assessment are dealt with immediately. What I can tell the hon. member is that the example I gave in the last question with respect to centralizing assessment and referral for hip and knee surgeries is something that can be applied and that we are applying to other high-demand elective procedures. What we find, therefore, is that we have an opportunity to do two things: we take people out of the queue who don't need to be there, and we get those who do need specialized assessment and treatment to care much, much sooner.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre, followed by Edmonton-Mill Woods.

### Bioenergy Grant Program

**Mr. Anglin:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the third time now the Auditor General has outlined the growing boondoggle of the biogrant program: \$124 million has been spent, and the grant recipients are not accounting for the money they received. There is

no proof that the program is actually reducing greenhouse gas emissions. With the world looking to us for leadership, this type of mismanagement only serves to hurt our credibility in long-term economic interest. How can the minister claim this program is working when there is no proof or accountability?

**Mr. Hughes:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the hon. member for the question. This is a program that has actually invested in rural Alberta, has helped ensure that there are jobs in rural Alberta, and has helped ensure that we diversify our sources of energy in this province. Yes, the Auditor General has drawn to the attention of the government and to this minister and to, I presume, previous ministers certain shortfalls, and we've taken that advice. I always take the advice of the Auditor General, and we've taken steps to ensure that there is proper accountability.

**Mr. Anglin:** The fall over the cliff is not a short fall.

Given that the Auditor General's report clearly states that the government has no means of telling whether or not this biogrant boondoggle is accomplishing any of its targets or greenhouse gas reductions, doesn't this government care it is handing out hard-earned taxpayer dollars with no idea of how they are actually being spent?

**Mr. Hughes:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is, I believe, expanding on the Auditor General's comments and report in ways that might not reflect what he actually said. I would say that it's quite clear that there are measures in place to ensure that there's accountability for this and that they are meeting the original objective of the program, which is to ensure that there's a diversity of biofuels available in this province.

**Mr. Anglin:** That cliff just got higher.

Given that the companies are not complying with the program and given that the Auditor General has highlighted this problem for the last three years, when will this government finally do its job and implement the Auditor General's recommendations?

**Mr. Hughes:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I can tell the House that since this program came under my responsibility, we've taken steps to ensure that there is full accountability, full responsibility, and that the appropriate steps of oversight are taken.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods, followed by Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

### Travel Insurance for Seniors

**Mr. Quadri:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My constituents tell me there is a gap in policies related to travel insurance for seniors. During family emergencies, for example, a private insurance premium for necessary travel often adds a tremendous financial burden at a time of emotional stress. Seniors should be able to travel without the anxiety of financial hardship as a result of medical emergencies abroad. My question is to the Minister of Health. I don't think we have enough time to answer the question, but what is the government doing to help aid seniors who are experiencing a medical emergency or incur other related medical expenses while they're travelling abroad?

2:40

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Horne:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member should know that insured physician services received

outside Canada are paid at the lesser of the amount claimed and the rate that an Alberta physician would be paid for the same service. For that reason we advise seniors and we, in fact, advise all Albertans to purchase supplementary travel insurance while they are travelling outside the country in order that other costs which may not be covered by the Alberta plan can be covered for them.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Quadri:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that illnesses while travelling in foreign countries can often be sudden and unrelated to any pre-existing health condition, especially with regard to our seniors, why are seniors' emergency-, hospital-, and medical-related expenses incurred outside of Alberta not covered by Alberta Blue Cross in the seniors' travel insurance plan?

**Mr. Horne:** Well, Mr. Speaker, as I explained earlier, in general our health system will only pay for out-of-country physician services at rates that would be paid to an Alberta physician. The Blue Cross coverage for seniors plan does not provide supplementary coverage for out-of-country services. Again, we advise that all Albertans who are travelling outside the country make sure that they have supplementary insurance in place.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Quadri:** Thank you. Finally, I would like to ask the same minister if the government will consider creating a program with a defined set of criteria and parameters that will make travel insurance more accessible to those seniors who need it.

**Mr. Horne:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I would think that would be very, very unlikely for the simple reason that we are focused on expanding the range of services that we provide within Alberta to Alberta residents. There are many recent examples of enhancements. In 2012, for example, chiropractic coverage was raised to \$200 per person per year on the seniors' plan. Emergency travel insurance, as I said, is not being contemplated at this time as part of the plan. We'll continue to focus on the services that we need to provided here at home.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, just before we commence the afternoon proceedings, starting with Members' Statements, please be reminded we are running a bit late. The hon. Government House Leader wishes to ask a question.

**Mr. Hancock:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm mindful of the clock, and in order to ensure that we get through Members' Statements and the other Routine, I would ask that we give unanimous consent to extend the clock.

[Unanimous consent granted]

### Members' Statements

**The Speaker:** Thank you very much. Let us go on with private members and their statements, beginning with Lacombe-Ponoka, followed by Edmonton-Calder.

### Battle of Ortona, Italy

**Mr. Fox:** Each November 11 we reflect on service, sacrifice, and selflessness. Honouring the men and women who serve the rest of us in the military is a privilege. We enjoy the nation that we have today because of their actions on our behalf.

When we participate in Remembrance Day events, when we wear a poppy, we're usually thinking about Canada's participation in some major conflict like the Great War or World War II or we're reminded of one of the recent conflicts like in Afghanistan, Iraq, or Bosnia or one of Canada's many peacekeeping missions. Last year I focused my Remembrance Day remarks on the Korean conflict and the heroism of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. Let me now focus on the 70th anniversary of the Battle of Ortona in World War II and the efforts of the Loyal Edmonton Regiment.

Around Christmas 1943 the western Allied troops got their first unpleasant introduction to house-to-house fighting as Canadian troops attempted to take the Italian port city of Ortona against fierce German resistance. The fighting was so fierce that the Associated Press ran a headline: miniature Stalingrad in hapless Ortona. The machine gun fire was so intense that the Canadians developed a new tactic, mouse-holing. It involved using weapons to blow holes in the walls between the buildings so that you go house to house without having to enter the machine gun paths in the streets below. After eight days of fighting, the Canadians took Ortona.

One thousand three hundred and seventy-five Canadians died fighting in and around the city, almost one-quarter of all the Canadian deaths in the entire Italian campaign. Ordinary Canadian men, many of them from Edmonton, who left civilian life behind because they were needed, had come together as a fighting unit and defeated two of Germany's finest divisions. They put up a sign at the entrance of Ortona. It said: this is Ortona, a west Canadian town. In many ways we are here because they were there. We must never forget.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder, followed by Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

#### Private Health Care Services

**Mr. Eggen:** Thanks, Mr. Speaker. The months after this government's broken-promise budget have shown that the PCs cannot be trusted to stand up for public health care. They plotted to take \$180 million out of seniors' drug coverage, making Alberta seniors pay more for their prescriptions. They subjected home-care recipients and their families to chaos by suddenly ending contracts with nonprofits and co-operatives in favour of huge for-profit providers, who didn't and couldn't get the job done. And they have a new plan now to privatize lab services here in Edmonton to the tune of \$3 billion. On all of these major, sudden, and ill-conceived plans the New Democrats have stood with Alberta families and stood up for public health care.

In some cases this PC government has been forced to back down. They've shelved restructuring the seniors' drug plan. They were forced to reverse as well some of the worst decisions in home care. Now, Mr. Speaker, they've created a confusing mess around their plan to privatize lab services. First, the CEO of Alberta Health Services said that they are putting the changes on hold so that they can consult, and then the Health minister says that they're going full steam ahead. One day the Premier says that it isn't, but the next day she is forced to admit that it is. Most importantly, they're misleading Albertans about the reasons for these changes.

The truth of the matter is this. This PC government has never stood up for public health care, and it never will. They stick firmly to their conservative agenda, which is to cut services and to privatize. They stand up for their wealthy donors and back the plans for the lobbyists who are pushing for privatization. It leaves

the Alberta New Democrats and workers to stand up for better health care, and Alberta families can trust that we will always be there.

Thank you.

#### National 4-H Month

**Ms Fenske:** Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize National 4-H Month. We wear these green ribbons to celebrate the tremendous positive influence this program has on our youth and our communities. This year also marks 4-H Canada's 100th anniversary. Alberta has had 4-H as an integral part of its communities since 1917. Over the years the world we live in has changed, but the simple vision that started 4-H has endured the test of time, making it one of the most recognized and successful youth mentorship programs.

The 4-H motto is Learn to Do by Doing. Mr. Speaker, 4-H members take part in activities that suit their interests, increase their knowledge, and develop their life skills. While the program helps strengthen our connection with agriculture, it has evolved beyond the farm-related activities we are most familiar with to include everything from computers and performing arts to photography and public speaking. Many young people graduate from 4-H and go on to provide strong leadership in their communities, in business, and their country, bolstered by the skills they learned as members of this long-standing organization.

At the heart of the 4-H program's success are the dedicated community volunteers who share their time and their knowledge with our youth, people like Clinton Ziegler, who was introduced here today, this year's 4-H Hall of Fame inductee, who began his association with 4-H more than 50 years ago. The sense of community and interest of many in supporting our youth is why this program continues to thrive. And 4-H members pledge their heads to clearer thinking, their hearts to greater loyalty, their hands to larger service, and their health to better living for their club, their community, and their country. This pledge outlines values I think we can all believe in.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for St. Albert, followed by Edmonton-Gold Bar.

#### International Market Development

**Mr. Khan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize today the innovative Alberta entrepreneurs who are helping to grow and diversify our economy by promoting their products and services on the world stage. In September I had the privilege of attending an informative and enlightening seminar in my constituency co-hosted, I'll note, by the St. Albert and district chamber of commerce. It was one of 18 information sessions the Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations has held in the past six months all across Alberta to promote international market access. These seminars were designed to provide businesses with a clear understanding of the services and resources our government offers to help them become successful exporters in international markets. More than 30 participants attended the St. Albert event, including businesses and representatives from local governments and regional economic groups. Overall, upward of 400 people participated in the seminars during two market access tours.

2:50

Mr. Speaker, opening new markets is a key part of our building Alberta plan. The government has long understood the importance of working internationally to advance Alberta's interests. We know



of the failed and discredited firewall approach of the opposition. We know that it has been hidden but certainly not forgotten. It would be devastating to Alberta's future. Let's not forget that that \$90 billion export sector is the backbone of our economy.

In a global economy promoting our competitiveness in the international markets is critical to building Alberta. We will continue to build partnerships to grow Alberta businesses by expanding their international market access.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, followed by Airdrie.

#### South East Community Leagues Association

**Mr. Dorward:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely proud to rise today to speak about an initiative that over the last 20 years has aimed to promote and foster co-operation amongst several communities in my community. The South East Community Leagues Association, or SECLA, was formed in 1992 by Edmonton city council as a way to implement and help establish viable, community-driven redevelopment plans due to an absence of an area structure plan in our area.

The association was incorporated in 2001 with the original seven leagues and now includes 11 leagues. In its 21 years the association has worked to provide outstanding support and service and has become an unwavering voice for the communities of southeast Edmonton.

Since 2001 the association has accomplished much, Mr. Speaker, for its 11 member community leagues such as being involved in the city's transportation master plan and Holyrood and Strathearn apartment redevelopments. Other notable endeavours include hosting several volunteer appreciation events in order to thank those whose efforts have created a vibrant and inclusive community in my area.

Recently construction began on the Fulton ravine south park development project, which you can see immediately north of Capilano mall – you may have driven past it, Mr. Speaker – and which, when fully completed, will boast extensive trails, inviting picnic sites, gorgeous landscaping, and a skateboard park that will be enjoyed by the young or the young at heart.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the Minister of Culture for her faith and trust in this project. The government dollars in this grant project have been multiplied many times by these individuals.

The South East Community Leagues Association is a prime example of what can be accomplished when community leagues work together to partner to create something that's greater than each individual community league. That's why I wanted to highlight the great work that they've done.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

**Mr. Anderson:** Mr. Speaker, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, or ADHD, is one of the most common disorders in Canada. ADHD impacts people from all walks of life and backgrounds. It affects more than a million Canadian men, women, boys, and girls of all ages. It is a real condition, often the result of a chemical imbalance that can be complex to diagnose and impacts most areas of an individual's life. In most cases it does not go away. It affects kids at school, students at college, employees at work, and parents at home.

The impairing effects of ADHD also increase costs to health care, education, labour, social services, and the justice system. It impedes the attainment of human and social capital, resulting in increased socioeconomic costs for Canada and Alberta. These costs are further fuelled by the continued underdiagnosis and undertreatment of ADHD. A shocking 90 per cent of adults with the condition remain untreated.

One of my sons has been diagnosed with autism, and his development has been absolutely amazing. That's because thanks to increased awareness, training, and funding for early autism intervention, it is now a very manageable condition that children are able to grow through to adulthood and enjoy the joys of career, independence, and family. Just a few decades ago that was not the case. Health and education professionals didn't understand autism, and millions of children suffered as a result.

Just as autism was formerly misunderstood, misdiagnosed, and mistreated for decades, ADHD still is. I'd like to thank parents and teachers like Airdrie's Bert Church's Tracey Sweetapple for her amazing advocacy on ADHD. It is through people like her that I hope we can not only raise awareness about ADHD but urge governments to invest in better training and treatment for our teachers and health professionals so that these beautiful and gifted children and adults can get the help they need to not only survive in life but flourish.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, just before we go on to Introduction of Bills, could we have unanimous consent to revert briefly to Introduction of Guests?

[Unanimous consent granted]

#### Introduction of Guests

*(continued)*

**The Speaker:** I have the Member for Edmonton-Riverview, followed by the Minister of Culture.

**Mr. Young:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Professor Steven Ming Li and Professor Alan Zhenhua Hao, visiting from China. Professor Li teaches at the humanities and international exchange program within the Faculty of Public Relations at the Shanghai polytechnic university. Associate Professor Hao teaches digital technology at Shanghai Jianqiao University. The professors are accompanied today by their hosts, Dolaine and Dennis Koch from Edmonton. They are seated in the public gallery, and I would ask that all guests rise and receive the traditional welcome of the Assembly.

Very quickly I'd also like to introduce Lorne Zalasky, who was acknowledged earlier today collectively with Advocis. I think that this tireless member of the Glenora community needs to be specifically recognized not only for his prowess as a minor soccer coach. What a great guy to meet on the street. I'd ask him to rise and receive the traditional welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Culture.

**Mrs. Klimchuk:** Merci, M. le Président. Je suis très heureuse de pouvoir me lever devant cette Assemblée et de vous présenter des représentants importants du gouvernement de l'Alberta et de la communauté francophone de l'Alberta. Je demanderais à nos invités de bien vouloir se lever lorsque je les présente, en commençant avec Mme Cindie LeBlanc, une personne de confiance dans mon ministère qui est à la tête du Secrétariat francophone.

En plus de Cindie, je suis honorée de vous présenter Dolorèse Nolette, qui tire sa révérence de son poste comme présidente de l'Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta, ou l'ACFA. Elle appréciera pouvoir se concentrer davantage sur ses fonctions comme directrice générale du Réseau d'adaptation scolaire, un service appuyé par le ministère de l'Éducation, qui s'assure que les enfants et les jeunes dans toutes les régions de la province ont accès aux ressources dont ils ont besoin pour réussir à l'école et dans leur communauté.

Se joignant à Cindie et Dolorèse se trouve Jean Johnson, le nouveau président de l'ACFA. M. Johnson est aussi le directeur général du Quartier francophone, une zone de revitalisation des affaires ici à Edmonton qui célèbre cette semaine son premier anniversaire.

Je vous remercie de vous être joints à nous aujourd'hui et pour tout votre travail avec le ministère de la Culture et le Secrétariat francophone. Je demanderais à mes collègues de vous montrer l'accueil chaleureux de notre Assemblée.

[Translation] Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm also very pleased to be able to rise and introduce to you and through you to this Assembly important representatives from the Alberta government and Alberta's francophone community. If you would kindly rise after I call your names. I will begin with Ms Cindie LeBlanc, a trusted advisor with my ministry, who leads the Francophone Secretariat.

In addition to Cindie, I am very honoured to introduce you to Dolorèse Nolette, who has recently retired from her position as president of the ACFA, the French Canadian Association of Alberta. She will now be able to focus full time on her responsibilities as executive director of the francophone educational consulting service, a program funded by Alberta Education to ensure francophone children and youth have access to the supports they need to be successful in school and in their communities.

Together with Cindie and Dolorèse today is Jean Johnson, the incoming president of the ACFA. Mr. Johnson is also the executive director of the French Quarter business revitalization zone here in Edmonton, which is celebrating its one-year anniversary this week.

I want to thank you for joining us today and for all your work with Alberta Culture and the Francophone Secretariat. I would ask that my colleagues show them the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly. [As submitted]

### Introduction of Bills

**The Speaker:** Let us proceed with Introduction of Bills with the Minister of Energy, please.

#### Bill 34

##### Building New Petroleum Markets Act

**Mr. Hughes:** Merci, M. le Président. I request leave to introduce Bill 34, Building New Petroleum Markets Act. This being a money bill, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

[Motion carried; Bill 34 read a first time]

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Justice and Solicitor General.

#### Bill 37

##### Statutes Repeal Act

**Mr. Denis:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to request leave to introduce Bill 37, Statutes Repeal Act. This being a money

bill, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

3:00

Mr. Speaker, many talk about making our laws simpler or reducing unneeded regulation. This bill does just this. This act will repeal a group of 24 pieces or provisions in legislation that are unnecessary or obsolete. I'll give a few of them: for example, the Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment Act; the Alberta Personal Income Tax (Tools Credit) Amendment Act, 2001; the Alberta Wheat and Barley Test Market Act; the Crop Liens Priorities Act; the Health Facilities Review Committee Act; the Hospitals Amendment Act; the Masters and Servants Act; the Occupational Health and Safety Amendment Act; the Partnership Amendment Act; and the Workers' Compensation Amendment Act.

Mr. Speaker, the act also sets up a mechanism for reviewing and repealing legislation that has been sitting unproclaimed for five years. The proposed mechanism and proposed repeals will promote the health of our legislative system by reducing red tape and helping to eliminate legislative confusion and duplication.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 37 read a first time]

**The Speaker:** The hon. President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance.

#### Bill 39

##### Enhancing Consumer Protection in Auto Insurance Act

**Mr. Horner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today and introduce Bill 39, the Enhancing Consumer Protection in Auto Insurance Act.

This act amends the Alberta Insurance Act, specifically as it pertains to our automobile insurance system. I am confident that these amendments will enhance Alberta's consumer interests through increased oversight in the rate-setting process and increase competition by moving to a more responsive file-and-approve system on a company-by-company basis.

Alberta has a robust and successful auto insurance system, and these changes will help to strengthen it further and improve its efficiency. We are also making other housekeeping changes to the Insurance Act to ensure plain language and consistency.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 39 read a first time]

### Tabling Returns and Reports

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall.

**Mr. Kang:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have five copies of a report, From Bad To Worse: Residential Elder Care in Alberta, that the third-party leader mentioned in question period. I'm tabling five copies of those.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

**Mr. Hehr:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two tablings today, and I think they're mandatory reading for all members of this House. The first is by the Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction, Making Flood Insurable for Canadian Homeowners.

The second is entitled Flood Insurance. It's by Nina Paklina of the OECD. It describes what Europe did after their major flooding in 2002 to make mandatory flood insurance available for all homeowners.

Thank you very much.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, is there someone to table on behalf of Edmonton-Centre? Not yet? Thank you.

Let's go on to Calgary-Bow, followed by the Associate Minister of Accountability, Transparency and Transformation.

**Ms DeLong:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As chair of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta I'm pleased to rise today to table the requisite number of copies of the Seniors Advisory Council annual report 2012-2013.

Thank you very much.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Associate Minister of Accountability, Transparency and Transformation, followed by Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

**Mr. Scott:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to table an article that I mentioned yesterday in question period, which is Michael Smyth: B.C.'s Politicians Should Climb Aboard the Public Disclosure Bandwagon. That's the same article that describes our region, Alberta, as the "new gold standard for openness."

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview, followed by Edmonton-Calder.

**Mr. Bilous:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to table another letter I've received expressing concerns about the deep cuts to postsecondary education that are happening in Alberta. This one is from Michelle Paterok. Michelle is a student at the U of A, and her letter raises some important questions for the minister of advanced education about what kind of society we are aspiring to be and what values this PC government is reflecting by implementing these budget cuts.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder, followed by the associate minister for persons with disabilities.

**Mr. Eggen:** Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I'm tabling the requisite copies for the Parkland Institute's report that they put out today called From Bad to Worse: Residential Elder Care in Alberta. The report highlights growing problems in health care for seniors and how the private delivery model is not working for seniors here in this province.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Associate Minister of Services for Persons with Disabilities.

**Mr. Oberle:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board it is my honour today to rise and table a document that presents a 10-year overview of performance. Despite the fact that insured workers have risen by 38 per cent in that period, claims are down 3 per cent, lost-time claims down 27 per cent, decisions appealed to the commission down 27 per cent, Ombudsman inquiries down 58 per cent, and MLA inquiries down 58 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, it's a story of remarkable performance. I urge MLAs to read it, and I offer my congratulations to Guy Kerr,

president and CEO of the Workers' Compensation Board, indeed to all of the staff at the board for an incredible performance.

**The Speaker:** Are there others?

Seeing no others, allow me to please table with you the requisite number of copies of the 2012-2013 annual report of the Child and Youth Advocate, that is prepared pursuant to section 21 of the Child and Youth Advocate Act.

### Tablings to the Clerk

**The Clerk:** I wish to advise the House that the following documents were deposited with the office of the Clerk. On behalf of the hon. Mr. Horner, President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance, pursuant to the Members of the Legislative Assembly Pension Plan Act the Members of the Legislative Assembly pension plan annual report for the year ended March 31, 2013, and pursuant to the provincial judges and masters in chambers registered and unregistered pension plans regulation the provincial judges and masters in chambers registered and unregistered pension plans annual report for the year ended March 31, 2012.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, there was a point of order, I believe, raised during question period today. Was it withdrawn? Oh, it was just a clarification? Thank you.

I think that concludes our Routine for today, and we can move on.

### Orders of the Day

#### Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

##### Bill 41

#### Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities Amendment Act, 2013

**The Speaker:** The hon. Associate Minister of Services for Persons with Disabilities.

**Mr. Oberle:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour today to rise and move second reading of Bill 41, the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities Amendment Act, 2013.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities works to improve the lives of Albertans with disabilities by engaging the community and advising government on issues that affect persons with disabilities in our province. The council represents people from across Alberta and is inclusive with respect to age and type of disability. However, the legislation that governed the council was enacted in 1988 and has not been amended since that time. The council was initially created in a social context of low public awareness about disabilities, very limited community access for persons with disabilities, and a lack of independent advocacy bodies.

Mr. Speaker, the act needs to be updated to reflect our modern reality, a reality that is, thankfully, more inclusive of persons with disabilities, with a large and complex network of services, service providers, and advocacy groups. We are broadening the scope of the council to give it a role in working more closely with the community and providing strategic advice to government on today's issues that affect persons with disabilities.

There are several significant new roles for the council under the amendments, Mr. Speaker. The council can advise government on the development of policies, programs, and initiatives and their

implementation. The council can review government departments' business plans and advise on any impacts on persons with disabilities. The council may advise government on aligning its policies and programs with the UN convention on the rights of persons with disabilities. In providing advice to government, the council can also work to identify innovative opportunities to improve sustainability of service, and the council will also support the relationship between the government and the community service providers. These amendments will give this council a more strategic and influential role than ever before.

3:10

Mr. Speaker, Alberta's social policy framework guides us towards a new era in social services. We are moving away from traditional government silos towards programs and services that work together to achieve the best possible results for the people that they support. When it comes to disability supports, the Premier's council is in a unique position to help us with that.

While the council's secretariat is part of my department and I sit on the council as the deputy chair, the council members themselves are not affiliated with any particular ministry or program area. Especially with these new amendments, they will have a broader crossministry mandate. This positions them very well to offer us advice on how to take an integrated approach that considers the needs of Albertans with a wide range of disabilities, and especially as they become more experienced in this new role, Mr. Speaker, I anticipate that the council members will have a good perspective on what is happening across government in terms of initiatives that affect persons with disabilities. Furthermore, the results-based budgeting review of disability services identified that the Premier's council should have a more effective role in helping government to address opportunities and barriers for persons with disabilities.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, we are currently working on a number of initiatives to improve disability services in Alberta, including the employment first initiative and the creation of an employment advisory council and the recently announced Bill 30, which will dissolve the regional persons with developmental disabilities boards and the child and family services authorities to form new family and community engagement councils in 2014. I think there will be some great opportunities for the Premier's council to work with these new councils, and I've already spoken to them about this possibility.

So you can see, Mr. Speaker, that we have a lot of excellent reasons for amending the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities Act to give this council a stronger role. We have also recently recruited seven new members to the Premier's council, bringing the total to 14 members. I'm very pleased that we were able to both increase the size of the council and to renew their legislation this year so that we can move forward with a strong council and a strong mandate.

In this current environment, where there is so much work going on in the areas of social policy, employment, and program restructuring, I think there is a tremendous opportunity for the Premier's council to make a positive difference in the lives of Albertans with disabilities. I'm very much looking forward to working with this council once these new legislative amendments pass, and I think we're going to have a really exciting year.

I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to do this.

I now move that we adjourn debate on Bill 41.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

### Bill 43

#### Alberta Economic Development Authority Amendment Act, 2013

**The Speaker:** The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

**Mr. Campbell:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great pleasure to rise today on behalf of the Deputy Premier and Minister of Enterprise and Advanced Education to move second reading of Bill 43, the Alberta Economic Development Authority Amendment Act, 2013.

Simply put, Bill 43 is the next logical step for our province as the hon. Premier's vision for building Alberta's prosperity becomes reality. AEDA has become one of the government's most dependable, enduring, and trusted partners for the past two decades, and it's contributed tremendously to Alberta's growth and development. As we move forward, the Premier and her government are establishing a new role for the Alberta Economic Development Authority which will better support Alberta's efforts to diversify our economy, access and expand markets, and prosper on the global stage.

The AEDA Amendment Act includes a renewed governance structure and will make AEDA an even more efficient and effective organization. A smaller and more focused 12-member board will enable AEDA to better serve the Premier, cabinet, and Albertans.

I'm also pleased to see that the refreshed and re-energized AEDA will incorporate the functions of the Competitiveness Council. This will streamline the number of economic agencies and increase their alignment with GOA priorities. It will also ensure greater client focus and improve the effectiveness and efficiency within the economic development community.

Mr. Speaker, the Alberta Economic Development Authority Amendment Act supports this government's plan to build Alberta and help to ensure our future prosperity. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I now move to adjourn debate on Bill 43.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

### Bill 30

#### Building Families and Communities Act

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Human Services.

**Mr. Hancock:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise and move second reading of Bill 30, the Building Families and Communities Act.

Much of the quality of life that we enjoy in Alberta today has been built by freeing and directing the latent energy of our natural resources. The energy of sun and water provided us with the agricultural foundation upon which Alberta was built. Gas and oil have helped create much of our current prosperity. And today we embark upon a plan for a different kind of energy. This is the energy of our families, our not-for-profit sectors, our diverse communities, the energy of individual Albertans who have the opportunities to succeed. For energy to be put to work effectively in building Alberta's future, we must collaborate and co-operate. We must move in the same direction, and that's what this act will enable families and communities to do.

The why of this act, Mr. Speaker, is every bit as important as the how. This act follows from the extensive discussions with Albertans that created Alberta's social policy framework. Albertans made it clear that they wanted day-to-day decisions about social programs made in the communities that are affected by those decisions. In essence, it's absolutely necessary, to deal

with social issues in our society, that those issues are owned by the communities, that we work together as individuals, communities, and governments to deal with those problems. A one-size-fits-all approach does not meet their needs and their aspirations. Albertans made it clear that they want government to recognize that just as no two individuals are exactly alike, no two communities are exactly the same. Each community has unique social needs and unique social challenges, and communities should have the ability to address those challenges in ways that are keeping with their realities.

Albertans also told government that they want to be partners in the process of developing social policies and programs and supports. They wanted the family and community voice to be heard and to be effective. They told government that they wanted assurance that the programs and services were achieving their intended outcomes. While the social policy framework was being developed, our PDD and CFSA boards were also hard at work evaluating how we could provide the best governance model to get those results for Albertans. A year ago I asked them to come together to look at what that governance model should look like, to serve Albertans under the Human Services ministry.

You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that two years ago the Premier had this vision of putting together into one ministry many of the agencies and programs that serve people, that help individual Albertans overcome difficulties, whether they're sporadic or chronic, help them to achieve the success that they need, to achieve what they need to help contribute back to our communities and our economy.

It was a great idea because we're working much better together, but now we need to look at our regional service delivery model. We need to look at our governance model to say how we can provide the right kind of governance so that Albertans in their communities can have their voices heard in the development of social policy, whether it's delivered locally by not-for-profit agencies, by local government, or by the provincial government. As part of the recommendations that they brought forward, the PDD and CFSA boards recommended that we change the board governance structure. So as part of the act current child and family service authority boards and persons with developmental disabilities boards will be disestablished. These changes are not taken lightly and follow from extensive discussions with both the boards and external stakeholders.

These boards serve some of the most vulnerable Albertans. Government can assure those who are served by the boards and their families and caregivers that there will be no disruption or reduction in services or programs as a result of this change. Their needs will continue to be met. This act is not about meeting budget targets; it is about serving people better. We have a growing province. We need to make the most effective use of our resources. We need to help Albertans achieve their outcomes.

It's about creating consistency and equity across the province and enabling all Albertans to be able to take advantage of the opportunities this province has to offer. We want to ensure that social-based services are effective, efficient, and accessible to all those that need them and that they're responsive and flexible when it comes to meeting the diverse and constantly changing needs of Albertans.

3:20

As part of achieving these goals, Mr. Speaker, this act calls for the creation of family and community engagement councils. Membership on the council will be about engaging the community in the continued discussion of social policy. We'll have an open

recruitment process. The selection of council members will be based on their ability to engage their community in these discussions.

Just as no two communities are the same, no two regions of the province are the same, so all of the councils will not necessarily look exactly the same in terms of size, and regional boundaries are not enshrined in the legislation. That gives us flexibility in terms of how the regions are established. It will allow us to modify regional areas if experience shows us that it's necessary to do so.

Membership on the councils is intended to be reflective of the diversity of the communities in which they function. It's worth noting that the legislation calls, for example, for aboriginal representation to ensure First Nations and Métis concerns and ideas will be thoroughly and properly addressed. In fact, it continues the aboriginal co-chair model that is currently in place with the CFSA authorities.

I can advise the House that I have met in September and October of this year with Treaty 6, Treaty 7, and Treaty 8 representatives as well as having meetings with the Metis Settlements General Council and the Métis Nation of Alberta to ensure that they understand that their voice will be very important both working with these new regional councils and in terms of direct discussion and access with the minister as we go forward. I've made a commitment to continue to engage First Nations and Métis representatives.

The councils that the act will create will work with and for communities to help them identify and discuss their social policy needs as well as opportunities and challenges and solutions, but these councils will not work in isolation. They will extend their reach and effectiveness by collaborating with a wide range of community partners. We anticipate that the regions will be aligned, for example, with the health advisory council regions, because community health is an extremely important issue and the social determinants of health are very much our baseline; with the health advisory council regions' school boards, because Human Services works very closely with Health and with Education; aboriginal agencies; municipalities; social service agencies; and the private sector. Their mandate will be to engage with communities on strategic policy directions related to social-policy-based programs and services.

In essence, their role will be to monitor the social health of the community and the effectiveness of social-based programs and services. In that regard, they will advise, report on, and make recommendations to their communities and to the Minister of Human Services.

As I've said many times, Alberta is facing societal issues that require societal response. When it comes to social issues, the command and control approach does not work. Experience has clearly shown that government cannot legislate away social problems or social issues. We certainly cannot buy our way out of them. It's also been shown that the best way to resolve tough social issues is through the involvement and collaboration of Albertans, their families, communities, the private sector, and their governments, working together, Mr. Speaker, bringing that energy together to create the kind of community we want to have, to create the kind of society that we can be proud of.

The Building Families and Communities Act is about creating that partnership, it's about using our combined energy to drive change forward, it's about investing in our families and communities, and, Mr. Speaker, it's about building a better Alberta.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to stand and rise to speak to this important bill, a bill that affects a

large number of very vulnerable, very crucial people in our society, persons with disabilities and, indeed, those children in care. I commend the minister for looking at this file and, with the massive changes in his own ministry, the amalgamation of so much under one roof, having the foresight to review all of the ways in which we can improve both the efficiency of the way we're spending dollars on vulnerable people and also the organizational structure and the feedback loops and evaluation mechanisms to make good decisions, not just today in a rigid way but to have a process for ongoing reassessment and evaluation and improvements that necessarily have to be part and parcel of the work that we're doing for these most vulnerable of our citizens.

I appreciated hearing some of the comments about returning to the communities. What we heard during a lot of the consultations and the furor this past summer from the PDD community was that these arbitrary, top-down decisions that were looking very, very dramatic, looking very much like the usual government top-down decisions, and that would have very substantive impacts on people's quality of life, their ability to get out, and their ability to maximize their contributions to their own and their communities' lives obviously backfired.

The government, in spite of perhaps some of the values that the framework established, seemed to have forgotten that there needed to be a lot more connection to the grassroots. There needed to be a lot better connection to those who are caregivers and the PDD community itself. They've taken a step back, and I think we applaud that. There's no question that this was going to be a disaster in the making, in reality, by the anxiety and disruption that it was creating in some of these families and individuals themselves. So I think the minister has taken a good step there, and this new act, I think, has some good elements to it.

Again, the danger here is a government that is out of touch with the grassroots community, a government that hasn't really been listening very well to the concerns and issues in the communities and is now certainly rearranging the management of this service to people with disabilities but isn't necessarily any better connected with communities. It will take many months through these family and community engagement councils to establish some bona fide and trusted relationships with the decision-makers at the top in government.

Some of the concerns that we have on this side relate directly to this decision-making power at the top and the disconnect with the grassroots and the community people. These have been raised consistently by the PDD community themselves. With the new amendment act that was announced even today with the Premier's council for PDD, again a question arises as to: how is that council going to relate to the new community councils? Who's going to have the most influence? Who trumps whom? Whom are we going to listen to at the government level? Well, it's pretty clear that the Premier's council is going to have a tremendous amount of influence. Many at the grassroots don't feel that their councils will have nearly the influence, and they are much closer to the real world of PDD.

I want to raise that flag for the minister, to make sure that we give due influence to those who are saying that we have not had the influence of the grassroots and that has created the problems over the last decade with a lack of responsiveness, a lack of timely reassessments. These folks are changing every day in terms of their capacities and their abilities and their needs. If we don't have a timely and responsive way to reassess needs and reassess the supports that are there for people, if we're listening to different levels of organizations throughout the province, especially at higher levels of organization like the Premier's council, and not listening to the people at the grassroots, we're going to get into

exactly the same problems that we've been facing, where people at the bottom feel totally disconnected with the services, not respected, and are fighting for their day-to-day well-being and quality of life.

Again, I appreciate the minister talking about the importance of looking at opportunities and barriers for people. These are people who are on the margins of our society, struggling to keep alive, to keep any quality of life, to keep a sense of self-esteem. We do need to have an ongoing, dynamic relationship with these folks and their caregivers through our service providers and through the government decisions that are made at various levels that translate into what resources they're given and what capacity they have, then, to address their opportunities and their barriers. I hope that the minister will hear that loud and clear.

I appreciate, again, the minister's sensitivity to aboriginal issues. These are, again, the marginalized of the marginal, and if we don't include them in a very meaningful way and listen to their input and address some of the outstanding and extraordinary challenges they face, whether it's on-reserve or in the urban setting, some of our First Nations communities, we are going to deal with many more problems in our hospitals, in our criminal justice system, in our addictions services. We must do a better job of hearing them, understanding them and their needs, and responding in a timely way to those needs.

3:30

Mr. Speaker, we'll have a few recommendations, amendments to make as we go along, but I think the minister is in good conscience making the necessary changes that needed to be made at the governance level. He's put in place some of the basic principles and frameworks that I think we can all hold the results accountable to.

Again, I would simply want to reassert the need to have influence at the grassroots level on these councils, or we will once again begin a progressive divide between what is really happening at the grassroots and the decisions that are being made at higher levels, which may be based on efficiencies at that level, may be based on budgets, may be based on many different things but not on the needs and not on the values and not on the quality of life for these folks that we should be doing our utmost to improve.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

Hon. members, there's a long-standing tradition in the House where we usually recognize the opposition critic right after the mover of a bill at the various stages, and at that particular moment, when the Government House Leader moved his bill, I looked around quickly, and the man who was standing on his feet was from Calgary-Mountain View, so I recognized him. However, in deference to the situation and to the official critic, who is from Calgary-Shaw, I will allow you your full 20 minutes, should you need it. I ask the House to please accept my oversight in that regard.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Shaw.

**Mr. Wilson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that. Member for Calgary-Mountain View as well, thank you. It is indeed a pleasure to rise and speak to Bill 30. I think it's a very important piece of legislation, and I thank the minister for his comments earlier.

Overall, based on the legislation tabled so far, it's actually kind of refreshing to see a bill that I'm generally in support of.

**Ms Calahasen:** No.

**Mr. Wilson:** Yeah. I know. Isn't that unbelievable? It's actually quite exciting that, you know, we walk in here and have a cautiously optimistic tone as we enter this phase of debate on legislation.

**An Hon. Member:** So far.

**Mr. Wilson:** So far. It's refreshing. Almost.

**Ms Calahasen:** Come on. Anything before the "but" is pleasant.

**Mr. Wilson:** I appreciate your comments, Member for Lesser Slave Lake. Unfortunately, I can't quite hear them.

I would just like to make some comments around the actual bill itself. I noticed that this minister in particular is quite fond of the preambles, and I do appreciate that in the bill. I see much of what is in the preamble to the Building Families and Communities Act is directly pulled from the social policy framework, and I do understand why that would be the case; for example,

Whereas all Albertans share the opportunity and responsibility to contribute to and benefit from Alberta's prosperity and quality of life;

Whereas achieving desired quality of life outcomes requires the involvement and collaboration of Albertans and their families, communities, the private sector and their governments.

Straight from the final report of the social policy framework. Duly noted. Again, I can understand why the minister would want that in there.

One thing I find interesting, though, Mr. Speaker. What's noticeably absent from the preamble is where the accountability lies. One of the principles of the social policy framework was accountability, and it was noted as a guiding principle. I do note that the word "accountability" is in the fourth section of the preamble. But it's rather interesting that as you go further into the bill and you look at some of the amendments that are being made to the Persons with Developmental Disabilities Community Governance Act, it's been amended in the removal of just one section of the preamble that places the accountability – and I will read the section that is being struck from this act as an amendment:

Whereas statutory programs, resources and services are best provided to adults with developmental disabilities in a manner that acknowledges responsibility to the community and accountability to the Government through the Minister.

So it's quite odd that this would be struck in a bill that is essentially taking away community governance and sucking all of that up into the ministry, that we're taking out a line that specifically says that the accountability rests with the minister and the government. For me that's a little bit counterintuitive, Mr. Speaker, and in light of the case that I spoke of earlier this week with Betty Anne Gagnon, one would like to think that the minister would want to do everything to ensure that he is accountable and that a disaster, a tragedy of that magnitude never happens again. So I really do encourage the minister in helping me to understand this move, and I'm sure we'll have that discussion later on as we move forward through the debate of this bill.

Talking about the dissolving of the PDD boards, I think this is a very wise move, certainly something that we can be in support of. If you reflect back on the KPMG report that was commissioned by the minister at the time, some of the reporting that we got back from that was that there are "no formal provincial standards or guidelines to establish what an appropriate level of funding that the PDD Program should cover for either service delivery expenditure or administration." That's found on page 6. Even though each region has similar needs, the cost to administer the

program between the six boards varies, the time to manage intake varies, the caseloads for co-ordinators vary, and the levels of capability with the program and service provider network vary. There's very little consistency.

Again, that's why I say that we are supportive of this. We want to see some consistency in the system. I think that the clients that this network serves deserve it as do the families and the service providers providing that. There is no constant messaging. Clients cannot accurately find out what services are available or access them in a consistent way throughout the province, another problem that this will hopefully solve. The program is not formula driven. It relies on staff making difficult decisions about funding and support.

The report also noted that there's a complex delivery system, with many stakeholders, multiple reporting relationships. There is a lack of comprehensive information on the PDD programs. Individuals and families told the auditors from KPMG that they have a difficult time finding out what services are available across the province and accessing those.

That report had a series of recommendations, the majority of which were accepted by this government. Notably, two were not, and the two that were not are actually being corrected in this act. Those two were to "dissolve the six (6) Community Boards and create one organization under the direct authority of the government" – so now we can check that off; we seem to be there – and to "establish an Advisory Council to provide for community governance."

You know, it's interesting how we saw this in a report, and we have another example of the government believing that they know best and dismissing independent reviews or opposition criticism and putting blinders on. Now, it's good to see, a little bit late but better than never, that they've come around on that.

**An Hon. Member:** We cajoled them.

**Mr. Wilson:** Well, maybe a little.

I think that the end result of that is that you're starting to reform the system as a basis from that report, but you've poorly communicated the approach. That's something that we saw quite clearly this spring when the associate minister for persons with developmental disabilities went on what we like to call his apology tour.

You know, I was at a number of those town halls that the minister hosted, and we heard quite clearly that there was a disconnect between the families and the PDD boards in each region regardless of where you were across the province. The attempt to standardize the system, the SIS assessments, the rollout with that wasn't communicated very well. It created a lot of confusion and fear amongst that community. This transition that this apparently was always going to be part of, that was so poorly communicated, was the result of weekly protests.

There is some backtracking that we've noticed. They've gone back and looked at reassessing where those cuts were going to take place and how they were going to take place. I would like to, you know, give the minister credit. The minister for persons with developmental disabilities, Mr. Speaker, listened at those events. He responded. He genuinely looked like he cared and wanted families to leave those meetings feeling better than they did when they walked in the doors. For that I would like to thank him. This act is a step in the right direction, and I'm hoping that we can somewhat turn the page on some of what we saw this spring.

The dissolving of the CFSA authorities is another interesting element. I'm not entirely sure how that's going to play out in terms of how these councils will function. I think that's one of those areas where it's going to be a wait-and-see scenario, and it

really comes down to what I believe is trust. I do believe that the minister and the minister's team trust the people on the front lines that are working within that system. They are great people. They are incredibly passionate about the work that they do. They have to be in order to work in that field. At this point in time I believe that through regulation or other ways, the minister will always keep the children and the families that are impacted on this side of this ministry top of mind.

3:40

The move to these new councils, Mr. Speaker, is in theory a good idea and, as I stated earlier, cautiously optimistic. It does certainly seem to have the support of the community. There's not a single stakeholder or service provider that's directly involved in the PDD system that has come out saying that this is not a good idea. I think that they, too, had been asking for it for a number of years because even, for example, organizations that operated in different regions throughout the province had different regulations and guidelines and funding models. It was a system that was broken, and I think everyone recognizes that. I'm very pleased to see this moving forward in the direction that it is now.

The intention to identify social policy issues and the way in which these councils are going to be somewhat of a conduit of information between the community and the minister to advise, report, and make recommendations to the community, to inform the minister on strategic policy directions: it all sounds a little smoke and mirrors. It sounds like a really good idea in theory. How it's going to actually work and what benefit that's going to provide directly to either the minister or the communities in question remains to be seen. We do need to allow this process to play out, but part of me feels – and this is possibly because I'm innately cynical on this side of the floor – that this is a bit of a smokescreen to just be able to say that the government is out: we're listening and we're being part of the community.

That being said, we recognize that this move, regardless of how the councils are applied, will standardize the services and the delivery of those services across this province. That's something that I know I'm very happy to see, I believe everyone I've spoken with about this is very happy to see, and is something that we all recognize the various boards were quite terrible at doing.

Now, we have long supported the idea of local decision-making, so again, some trepidation around how these communities fit into a decision-making role because all of that authority has been taken up into the minister's office. Again, these are advisory councils. They're not actually making decisions. The PDD had an incredibly complex delivery system. The KPMG report stated, "We could not explain why there should be different operating models." These councils can be a great addition to understanding our social system if they're used properly, or they could be a major failure. Again, we need to go through the process, find out how it works, and see how it works. I hope that there will be appropriate measures in place to be able to measure the outcomes, which is another word we hear this minister use all too often.

The PDD boards and CFSAs were operating at a more regional, local level. This may be lost in the transition or trade-off to departmental control. I worry that there is a chance that this may end up being a bit of an AHS-like bureaucratic system, where we just put everything up into a central system in Edmonton and it balloons and it doesn't stop. I'm hoping that the minister will be open to some dialogue and potential amendments around controlling that.

Now, I do passionately agree with the designation of an aboriginal co-chair and continuing that model from the CFSAs. The

cheeky side of me would maybe suggest, you know, what race is the other co-chair going to be, but I do believe that it is . . .

**Ms Calahasen:** Oh, that is cheeky. That's terrible. I take exception to that.

**Mr. Wilson:** It was an attempt. I really do think that this is a fantastic idea.

**The Speaker:** Hon. member, just continue speaking through the chair. Lesser Slave Lake, you'll have your chance, I'm sure.

Calgary-Shaw, please proceed.

**Mr. Wilson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I passionately agree that we continue this model.

I'm actually going to be putting forward an amendment to – I would like to discuss this with the minister as well – increase the frequency of the number of times that the aboriginal co-chairs meet. I believe that the unique scenarios and the unique social challenges that that community has – it's fantastic that they're going to be mandated to meet at least once per year. I think that that could be more productive and we could get more work done more quickly if that was happening at least on a biannual basis. I look forward to, again, having that discussion with the minister at the appropriate time.

There are concerns that I have about what seems to be a line in the act about IQ requirements. We heard the associate minister talk quite often about how having the arbitrary intelligence – I'm looking for the exact wording, Minister. I will find it for you if you like. But it seems odd to me that we would keep this specific part of the act intact after all that we heard the associate minister speak to in the spring when we were talking about an arbitrary IQ of 70. Why would we have this cutoff that if you have an IQ higher than 70, you're unable to require or have services? I see the minister is looking at the bill. I hope that perhaps I've misread that or that that clause does not specifically speak to that. But we will cover that, I'm sure, in Committee of the Whole.

Now, in closing, Mr. Speaker, this government has tied its horse to the social policy framework. I think that most people who are in the social sector, the nonprofit side of our province – we recognize it on this side of the floor without question – are able to do things that government can't do in a more effective and more efficient manner right on the ground level. They're very supportive of the outcomes of the social policy framework. I think this bill is a step in the direction that that framework called for and what the over 7,000 individuals that participated in the discussion called for.

I'm hopeful that the minister is open to amendments. I'm more than happy to share them with him prior to getting to the committee phase. I do look forward to a fulsome debate on this very important bill.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Are there others?

Standing Order 29(2)(a) should be available here because we've now had three speakers. Are you rising to speak on 29(2)(a)? No.

Let's proceed, then, with Medicine Hat.

**Mr. Pedersen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 30, the Building Families and Communities Act, put forward by the hon. Minister of Human Services. As the government has witnessed over the last number of months, the PDD portfolio has had its challenges, and making changes to the services or the structure of the ministry needs to be done in full consultation with clients, family members, caregivers, service providers, and all other stakeholders. Not doing so ends up in what



we witnessed all across the province this past spring and summer, a huge outcry and push-back when cuts to front-line service care were announced in this year's budget.

What is evident is that at this time it appears that government has done a better job of reaching out, of consulting, of communicating, and perhaps – just perhaps – even listening to those at the ground level and on the front lines. I stand today to thank everyone who participated in any and all PDD events and rallies here at the Legislature and around the province to bring the attention that was due to the government. It was a job well done and noticed.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

The information I have been able to gather from the Medicine Hat area is that this appears to be an improvement as the existing PDD legislation no longer suits the needs of the system. When PDD was originally organized into each of the six regions, they were fairly autonomous, having their own infrastructure and policies. Each regional board was part of the hiring process for their PDD CEO, with the support of the government, but without a clear overarching goal with measurables and deliverables each region began operating differently.

To try and compensate, new processes and policies were brought in by the PDD Provincial Board throughout the province, having the effect of diminishing the role of the PDD boards to little more than an advisory panel. The outcome of these changes is that the PDD boards have basically become another layer of ineffective bureaucracy as they have had no authority to develop regional policies and/or services for the last three to four years.

Mr. Speaker, the concerns around replacing the current boards with the advisory councils are: will their regional input have the ability to actually create action, or will it only be lip service in a one-way dialogue? How will people be appointed to these councils? Will staff from the regional boards be part of the new councils? Will the positions be paid, or will they be volunteers? If the government is bent on ruling by decree from a centralized position of power in PDD, as they have with other ministries, then what purpose is there in any type of local representation that has no ability to propose change and then be empowered to enact change?

This will be the litmus test for this bill and this government. As the government knows, they have blown this relationship already once this year. They cannot afford to do it a second time. There are major concerns around how government in PDD continues to expand its number of employees in the belief that Big Brother knows best whereas most parents or guardians want adequate government support but less bureaucratic interference. Around this issue PDD is trying to insert itself into the role of service provider, but since PDD is also the fund provider based upon a standardized assessment tool and the monitoring of outcomes, they must be careful not to be conflicting in their interests.

3:50

Mr. Speaker, the idea of creating employment councils might sound positive and constructive to the masses, but the work our local service providers have engaged in is already seeing success. Placing 85 out of 100 clients, as an example of one local agency, by building relationships with employers and employees is a clear success. If other areas in the province are not seeing successes, possibly the government could look at the opportunities allowed through the Medicine Hat operations, utilizing or adapting what is already showing excellent results rather than trying to reinvent the wheel.

With the government stating that up to 60 per cent of individuals with developmental disabilities could handle some sort of employment, the solution may already exist in some of the best-in-class service providers already exceeding these numbers such as those in Medicine Hat. Please don't overlook service agencies that are leading and exceeding these government goals. Please talk to them and learn from them, and please implement the positive results already occurring on a daily basis rather than interfering with their record of great work and great results.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, there is an opportunity to create improvement in services and support with this bill. Please do not use this bill to create more layers of government bureaucracy that will eat up valuable resources and keep those resources from getting to the front-line service providers who interact with their clients on a daily basis. If the outcome of this legislation does not improve the client's life in any way, shape, or form, then there is no need for change for the sake of change just to make the government look busy.

In saying that, I do look forward to supporting this bill with some proposed amendments from my colleague from Calgary-Shaw to help strengthen this bill into legislation that really respects and reacts to the needs of the client.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available.

Seeing none, I'll recognize the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

**Mr. Bilous:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise today and speak to second reading of Bill 30, the Building Families and Communities Act. Before I get into some of the positives that I see in this bill – because I do see this bill as a step in the right direction – I think it's important to reflect and recall what happened this spring and summer when the PDD community was quite outraged at the government's handling of this portfolio and how families and people with developmental disabilities were treated.

To start, the government introduced two pieces of legislation today related to persons with developmental disabilities, Bill 30 and Bill 41. Now, this is their response to the confusion and mistrust that was created this spring. When the March budget was released, it was clear that the government wanted to cut \$42 million in community services to persons with developmental disabilities. Now, that created much confusion and havoc, and I attended numerous rallies that were held here on the steps of the Legislature. Mr. Speaker, the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona emceed several of those, which saw thousands of families, service providers, organizations, volunteers, and persons with developmental disabilities show up at the Legislature in order to voice their outrage at the fact that so many millions of dollars were cut and supports were going to be literally knocked out from under them. There were tears. There was outrage. There was frustration. There was confusion.

Again, appreciate the fact that for many of these adults with developmental disabilities, not understanding how this cut was going to affect their caregivers or their service providers outraged their families, who didn't know what would happen to their children, to their families. It was a mess that was created by this government in a conscious decision to cut a significant amount of dollars, millions of dollars, from a budget that works with some of the most vulnerable Albertans, Mr. Speaker. That caused an outrage.

I think it's important to note that I honestly believe, Mr. Speaker, that that's the reason we are here today, where the government has recognized its short-sighted budget cuts and folly by tabling a bill that attempts to address some of the very confusion and chaos that they created. I think there are some good ways to encourage work within the community, and again there are also ways that aren't so positive and that create that confusion. Dumping a surprise funding cut on the backs of service providers quite clearly falls into the category of a bad way to deal with budget cuts.

Again, many service providers were quite taken by surprise and frustrated because these folks do their jobs because they care and they choose to. This is a career and a choice that comes from the heart. This isn't one that's motivated by dollars. Nobody gets into working with adults with developmental disabilities to make it rich. They're there because they care and they want to give back to their community. So the move that took place this spring in the budget was one that was not only cold and callous but sent a message to many service providers that they weren't respected and that their jobs were not important enough. I personally spoke with several service providers and families who have family members that have been affected by developmental disabilities, and they were quite outraged, Mr. Speaker.

I'm happy to see that the government is trying to take a step in the right direction. This legislation that's in front of us, I'd like to point out, Mr. Speaker, was recommended by the Alberta NDP years ago. This legislation does address an issue but in some ways doesn't get to the heart of the matter. The challenge that we're facing is that this PC government still wants to make cuts to the persons with developmental disabilities program, which, I must add, is still cause for concern within that community to this day.

Again, many of the cuts were delayed, but there is no certainty as to what will happen in the near future. I mean, part of the concern is that the Associate Minister of Services for Persons with Disabilities has only committed temporarily to pulling back as far as cutting less deep into this area and that changes are going to be made slowly. But there's still a concern on exactly what those changes will bring and how they will affect and impact persons with developmental disabilities and their families.

The Alberta NDP will have some amendments to try to improve this bill, to get some clarity. Again, there are concerns with the way the government has to be forced to listen to people. I truly believe, Mr. Speaker, that had agencies, organizations, families, the Alberta NDP – and I'll also recognize members from the other opposition parties who were in attendance at these rallies – not forced the government to listen to persons with developmental disabilities, their families, and service providers, I truly believe that this bill would not be sitting in front of us. So, you know, on the one hand, kudos to all opposition parties, but the sad reality of it is that it shouldn't have to come to a public outcry.

We saw another example of that today with postsecondary cuts, where what the government needs to appreciate and understand is that the confusion and the frustration that is caused when budget cuts are first introduced doesn't suddenly disappear months later when either the cuts are lessened or, magically, some money has been found. They've already significantly impacted service providers and their families and created and caused stress and problems.

4:00

A couple of concerns I'd like to highlight with respect to this bill. Section 2(3) does not actually require the minister to appoint

members who are persons with developmental disabilities or who have extensive experience in the PDD community. There is a concern that there could be members appointed who don't represent the community or come from the community or have enough experience or background to ensure that those folks are represented. That's one of my concerns. Having said that, I do want to acknowledge one of the successes that I see in this bill, and I have no problems with giving the Minister of Human Services credit for this. I'm very appreciative that one of the co-chairs must be aboriginal. I think that that is a very important step. I think it's very important that we have diversity on these boards and representation. I will be the first person to acknowledge this and to thank the minister and express my appreciation for that.

Another concern that I have is that the current bill eliminates the articulation in the act of the role of the minister, which is currently section 9 of the act. I think it's important that a minister's powers are expressly described or defined within legislation.

My third concern is that at the moment the bill allows the minister to establish appeals panels and processes by regulation. Now, the PDD appeals process is quite problematic and quite confusing, and I'm not sure if this bill goes far enough to cut through some of that tape and give an opportunity to folks who do need to appeal. I know, for example, there's a lot of confusion around appealing the SIS assessments, which is the supports intensity scale. These undefined changes will most certainly cause further uncertainty amongst individuals, families, guardians, and service providers. I truly hope that the minister is open to amendments that will be put forward by the Alberta NDP in order to improve and strengthen this bill and to ensure that we are bringing forward the best possible legislation.

The other concern I have, Mr. Speaker, is that there is no provision within the bill as it currently reads that there will be meaningful consultation. Again, I've often stood up in this House and spoken about consultation, which I think is crucial when we're discussing legislation that is going to affect Albertans. The very Albertans that are directly affected by this legislation should be consulted through a variety of means. At the moment it is possible – and I look forward to hearing the minister's response to this – that there may be the intention for consultation, but there's no provision or guarantee within the current bill as it sits.

A question that I will have for the minister is about how the government has talked about how they'll continue to look for ways to improve work and volunteer rates among persons with developmental disabilities. That's something that we certainly support where appropriate.

Some questions that come to mind. Will this government commit to putting the brakes on community access funding cuts over the long term, funding which helps ensure that people with developmental disabilities can participate in this capacity? Will that commitment come with a clear position that it won't take families and service providers rallying outside the Legislature to be heard as, I believe, it did for us to get here today? And even with a greater workforce participation rate this government needs to make a commitment that community access will not be slashed just for the sake of making cuts and that this government will not continue to place the burden of budget cuts on the backs of some of the most vulnerable Albertans.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I do think that this bill is a step in the right direction. I look forward to the discussion that will be coming and the amendments that we'll be putting forward in order to strengthen this bill and ensure that we are putting forward the best legislation and taking care of the most vulnerable Albertans.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available for questions to the hon. member.

Seeing none, I'll look for other speakers. The Member for Edmonton-Calder.

**Mr. Eggen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am happy to help to reinforce and elaborate on some of the comments that my colleague had just mentioned in regard to Bill 30. Again, the Alberta New Democrats are generally, globally, quite pleased to see this as a synthesis of many concerns that the PDD community had been expressing over these last few months and in some cases years. We will be working carefully to make sure that with some small modifications Bill 30 does come to pass here during this session.

As we know, this bill proposes to dissolve both the persons with developmental disabilities board and child and family services authorities. I think this is a reasonable evolution of this authority here across the province. A director will now establish assessments for disabilities and decide on the provision of services with full powers of delegation to the staff.

As well, this idea that councils are expected to work with the communities to find social policy issues and to work with a variety of groups and service providers to come up with solutions for the community, to engage the larger community, to inform the minister, and, finally, essentially split the role of PDD boards into the director and then family and community engagement councils: I think that this is a direct reflection, as I said, of what was being widely criticized previously in regard to PDD boards. We're talking about a significant amount of people and some of our very most vulnerable people, Mr. Speaker, more than 10,000 Albertans.

I think that if we can just look back in history a little bit, the beginning of this was from that 2011 report from KPMG that did recommend dissolving the boards. Finally, more than two years later, we see it come to pass. I think, having said that, this idea of making the \$42 million in proposed cuts to the PDD community-based programs really was the blow that helped to precipitate, finally, Bill 30 now coming to the table. It's unfortunate that we sometimes have to have so many negative things happen to finally produce something positive.

The government did back down on these cuts in the end, but not without quite a lot of distress, not just amongst PDD recipients but also amongst workers as well. There was originally meant to be, just to remind everyone, a 15 per cent increase to wages this year. In fact, we had quite the opposite happen, much to the chagrin and I think the overall weakening of the PDD community across the province, by not paying the workers an adequate wage.

A couple of things that I would like to ask about, specifically, around the KPMG report. I'm just curious to know what's really changed since the government's response to the 2011 report that originally suggested removing the PDD boards. The original response didn't suggest that the government was going to do the consulting before evaluating this recommendation. Instead, it was a straight-out rejection. Why wasn't that recommendation fully considered and consulted on at the time? I just always am curious to know what the political considerations are. Why did we have to wait so long, basically?

4:10

Another thing that I was very curious to know when Bill 30 came forward here was why this bill removes the requirement for notice of the right to appeal a decision from starting the clock on the appeal process. Clearly, this makes sense, to ensure that individuals are aware of their right to appeal. These are some

things that I see coming across my desk in my constituency, and I just want clarification on that because it causes a lot of problems. Under the previous bill you'd have to be told that you had a right to appeal before the appeal window would start running. With this one the clock starts running once you've been notified of the decision. I realize this might sound a little bit obscure, but for the people that actually do require an appeal, this change is very significant to their benefits.

Going forward, I hope that we can find Bill 30, Building Families and Communities Act, enshrined during this session and that we build something that everyone can be proud of and use moving forward.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available.

Seeing none, are there other speakers?

The hon. Minister of Human Services to close debate.

**Mr. Hancock:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have five minutes, but I did pick up a few things that were asked. The relationship between the Premier's council and the regional councils I think is an important question. It's important for people to know and understand that the regional engagement councils are just that. They're about engaging the public. It sort of answers the question that came from New Democratic members as well with respect to consultation. The full mandate of these councils is to engage their communities in discussions of social policy issues in their areas and to work with the Health Quality Council, with the school boards, and with the FCSS boards to have that robust conversation, to keep that conversation going and alive.

One of the problems we've had, I think, in the past is that people have left social policy discussion to a small group of people in the community and abdicated that to them to take care of. These councils' full role and mandate will be that engagement process, to keep social policy at the forefront of discussion in our communities and have a good understanding in our communities about what the community solution is and then what our roles and responsibilities are in achieving those solutions each as individuals, communities, not-for-profit organizations, and governments. So the role is there, the consultation role.

The role of the Premier's council on persons with disabilities is slightly different. It's, first of all, got a provincial mandate, and it's to look at government policies, government business plans across the board to make sure that the status of persons with disabilities is taken into account in those policies. It's not about an engagement process so much as about keeping on top of the latest developments world-wide with respect to persons with disabilities and the UN charter on persons with disabilities and to take a look at government legislation and policies as they come forward, to look at business plans to make sure that we're in tune and attuned to those requirements. So the specific role continues for the Premier's council with more of a mandated role of continued consultation and discussion for the regional councils.

There was a question raised about removing the preamble piece in the PDD act about accountability resting with government. Well, of course, the reason why that preamble was in the PDD act was because there were board-governed operating authorities. So it had to be clear in that act that notwithstanding that there were board-governed operating authorities, responsibility and accountability still rested with government. If you don't have the board-governed authorities, accountability is clearly with government. You don't actually need to put it in the act. It's there. There is no intervening authority that you can say that we delegated it to or sent it to.

So it's just a question of – really, the amendments to the PDD act were only doing two things. One was restructuring to take away the board-governed aspects of it and amending sections that deal with that, and then, secondly, making the appeal process more aligned with other appeal processes and more robust, allowing for administrative reviews, allowing for mediation and arbitration, and then making for a better appeal process.

So those are really the only two. There are other things, as the Official Opposition critic pointed out, with respect to the regulation-making authority that was carried forward. All that was done in the regulation-making authority section, again, was removing the references to boards.

There may be other work down the road relative to the issues that he raised relative to who and how people are determined, whether they're in PDD and those sorts of things, but we were not attempting to do that here, so the rest of those regulations are just a bring-forward. But there is work to be done in terms of what the parameters are relative to people getting PDD, how we ensure that PDD is available, for example, to persons on-reserve. All of those issues still remain to be done. There's lots of work happening, but this was not an attempt to fix those particular issues.

The role of the minister. Again, that comes back to exactly what I was saying before. When there was a board in place, it would need to be clearly defined what the role of the board was and what the minister's was. Without a board in place you don't need to set out what the role of the minister is because, of course, the responsibility is clearly, fully vested in the minister and in the government, so you don't need to make that distinction.

I mentioned the appeal mechanism.

I do want to say, with respect to the comments made about community access, that we have made it clear and the associate minister has made it perfectly clear through the summer that in working with persons with developmental disabilities, one of the things we're trying to ensure is that there's a clear communication between the PDD division and the families and individuals, that we're working with them to ensure that they get the service they need from the appropriate service provider. That's very important work.

The budget issue is not the driving force here. There is not a budget issue – I shouldn't say that there's not a budget issue. There's always a budget issue, but that's not what we're trying to do here. We're not attempting to balance a budget in this particular piece. What we're trying to do is to ensure that people get the right services, that they get access to help, assistance in getting employment if that's what they want, to being in the right kind of activity for their development. That is continuing to be the work that we're doing. That work goes on and goes forward.

With those few comments, Mr. Speaker, I hope I was responsive to the questions that were raised. I'd be more than happy to deal with other questions as they come up in committee. I would encourage the House to vote for this bill in second reading.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister.

[Motion carried; Bill 30 read a second time]

### Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Mr. Rogers in the chair]

**The Chair:** Hon. members, I'll call the Committee of the Whole to order.

### Bill 27

#### Flood Recovery and Reconstruction Act

**The Chair:** We have dealt with amendment A3, and we are now back on the bill. Speakers on the bill? The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

**Mr. Rowe:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to table an amendment.

**The Chair:** Would you just have that circulated, hon. member? Please send me the original. We'll maybe just pause for a moment till that gets distributed.

Hon. member, did you send the original? These seem to be copies that I've got.

**Mr. Rowe:** I have the original.

**The Chair:** You need to send me the original. Keep a copy for yourself. Thank you.

For the record, then, hon. members, this will be amendment A4. Proceed, hon. member.

4:20

**Mr. Rowe:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. This amendment is to strike out section 1(3) and substitute the following:

- (3) Section 18(4) is struck out and the following is substituted:
  - (4) Upon receipt of a formal request to extend the state of emergency from a local authority, the Lieutenant Governor in Council may renew the declaration for 14-day intervals to a maximum of 98 days.
  - (4.1) Unless continued by a request under subsection (4) or by a resolution of the Legislative Assembly, an order under subsection (1) expires at the earlier of the following:
    - (a) at the end of 14 days, but if the order is in respect of a pandemic influenza, at the end of 90 days;
    - (b) when the order is terminated by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

This is a fairly straightforward amendment. It puts a little more power back into the hands of the municipality and lets more of the decision-making happen at that level. They're the best people who can make the determination on whether they need the period extended or not.

I would strongly urge acceptance of this amendment. It doesn't alter the structure of the bill, which I for the most part will support. I'm asking for your support for this amendment.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Are there others speaking to the amendment? The hon. Member for Drumheller-Stettler.

**Mr. Strankman:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, would like to speak to this amendment because I believe that it allows more power to be mandated with the local municipality. They are the people that are on the ground and are well aware of what the local conditions are. It's been apparent in the recent situation in Drumheller, where the community was not specifically affected by flooding similar to other municipalities throughout the province, that different conditions and attributes apply to those areas that have mitigation. It's an interesting situation. In the town of Drumheller in the constituency of Drumheller-Stettler we were not afflicted by the emergency measures similar to those that were in other areas like Sundre, High River, et cetera.

It's my feeling that this amendment is well worth while, and I would urge members from the government to give it due consideration.

**The Chair:** Are there others on the amendment? The hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

**Mr. Fox:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I rise to speak in support of this amendment. I think this is a great amendment. This is one that puts forward the idea that the people that know best, the form of government that knows best is the one that is closest to the people. In this case, it's the municipal governments, the ones that are closest to the people. It gives them the opportunity to ask for the extension at 14-day intervals to a maximum of 98 days so that we don't have to rely on something coming back up to Edmonton and having to be deliberated here in the Legislature. We'll actually be able to have that petition come from the local authority and extend the state of emergency and extend them the help that they need when they need it.

I think this is a great amendment to this bill. I think it's something that you really should give good consideration to. I do urge this government to have a close look at this amendment and to pass this amendment. This is a great addition to your piece of legislation, and it will go a long way in helping municipalities deal with emergencies like the flooding that we had over the summer.

With that, I would like to thank the Legislature for the opportunity to stand and speak to this amendment.

**The Chair:** The hon. Minister of Human Services.

**Mr. Hancock:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm interested in this amendment, but I'm a bit troubled by the confusion that it causes for me. Maybe the hon. member who moved it can clarify it. I think he's mixing up local emergencies with provincial emergencies. The section that was being amended, section 18(4)(a), changing the 14 days to 28 days, deals with provincial states of emergency, of which there's only actually been one, I think, ever declared in this province, and that was this summer.

That's the one where a provincial state of emergency requires us to come back to the Legislature after 14 days to request an extension. The 14 days is too short. You need about three days to recall the Legislature properly even in an emergency. You could do it faster than that, but to give people notice to get back and that sort of thing, the 14 days was too short. Now, a provincial state of emergency actually puts some significant powers in place. The question is: well, if not 14 days, what's appropriate? That's when we went to the 28 days. We want to be able to say that the Legislature has authority to determine whether you still need that provincial state of emergency.

But, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. member, that has nothing to do with local states of emergency. Local states of emergency don't come to the Legislature for renewal. If this is the local authority, the local authority would not be coming to the Legislature asking for renewal of their state of emergency. In fact, what happened this summer is that the provincial state of emergency was put in place with respect to the specific situation in High River because additional authorities were needed beyond what the local state of emergency could accomplish. Then when it expired, it went back to the local state of emergency, and the local state of emergency stayed in place for a period of time.

I think there's some confusion in your amendment. If that's the case, certainly I would encourage people not to adopt this amendment simply because it does confuse the issue between local states of emergency and provincial states of emergency. Section 1(3), which amends section 18(4)(a), is about provincial states of emergency.

**Mr. Rowe:** If I could just respond to that, Mr. Chair, basically all we're asking is: rather than 28 days, make it 98 days. We know

that 28 days was not sufficient in the High River circumstance because that went on for three or four months. We're just asking that we don't have to go through all that heavy process to extend it for that period of time in the future. It could be cut off at 14 days, but if the municipality says, "Hey, look, we can't handle this yet" even after 30 days, 28, 56, or whatever – it makes the process simpler. That is our intent.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Are there others on amendment A4?

Seeing none, I'll call the question.

[Motion on amendment A4 lost]

**The Chair:** We're back to the main bill. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

**Mr. Bilous:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have an amendment.

**The Chair:** Okay. Same process. Please circulate. We'll pause for a moment. Thank you.

**Mr. Bilous:** It's on behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

**The Chair:** So your amendment is on behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona? Thank you.

For the record, hon. members, this will be amendment A5.

Please proceed, hon. member.

**Mr. Bilous:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. With your indulgence I'll read out the amendment that I'm putting forward on behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona. She moves that Bill 27, Flood Recovery and Reconstruction Act, be amended in section 2(2), in the proposed section 615.1(3), by striking out clause (b) and substituting the following:

- (b) specify a date on which the order or any provision of it expires, such date not to exceed 3 months from the date the order takes effect.

Now, Mr. Chair, in the event of an emergency or disaster the section allows the Minister of Municipal Affairs to modify the application or to exempt a municipality from any provision of the MGA, the Municipal Government Act, as well as provide the municipal authority with specified authority. What we're asking through this amendment is that we need to have clearly defined and legislated time frames on how long such an order can be in place. The way the bill is currently written, ministers could theoretically extend these orders as long as they want.

With this amendment we're respecting that municipalities need to be able to return to governance of their own affairs. Emergencies and disasters, as we've seen, require speedy responses, and it's understandable that the provincial government may need to co-ordinate these efforts, and doing so may for a short period of time or a period of time require the suspension of some municipal authority.

4:30

But at the same time, Mr. Chair, we can't allow the powers of the minister to continue on indefinitely, which is the way the legislation is currently written. I can appreciate that that may not be the spirit or the intent of the legislation. However, as all legislators in this Chamber recognize, we need to be very careful and precise with the language that we use and how it can be interpreted and will be interpreted for decades to come. Therefore, there needs to be a limit on the minister's ability to suspend local governance, and there should be a focus, once the emergency

aspects have been dealt with, on shifting to empower municipalities and helping them through the rebuilding process.

I think this amendment is quite straightforward. I encourage all members of the Assembly to support this amendment. Really, it comes back to restoring municipal powers or the ability for municipalities to get back to what they were elected to do, which is, well, to get on with municipal governance and whatever that entails. This will give a specified, laid-out time frame on how long the provision continues. Again, we are calling for three months, which seems like a reasonable amount of time.

I encourage all members of the Assembly to support this amendment.

**The Chair:** Other speakers on the amendment? The hon. Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

**Mr. Anglin:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I rise in support of this amendment. It's not a complicated amendment. I think it tries to achieve what the previous amendment might have failed to achieve, which is to just cap the date when the authority is deemed to expire. Now, it still allows for the minister to set a date any time prior to that three months, prior to that 90 days. But what it does is that it just lays out in a very linear fashion that regardless of when the minister takes the authority, he or she has a cap on where that authority will end.

That's an extremely important aspect of any type of legislation. Where does the authority begin? Where does authority end? The authority begins under section 615.1(2): "Where it appears to the Minister . . . the Minister may." That's where the minister gets the authority, and if this amendment is adopted, we show where that authority ends. It allows the local authorities to make their decisions, plan to retake their jurisdictional responsibilities, and it doesn't prevent a continuation of the disaster response. So it just gives some more legitimacy, in the sense of transparency, to how the authorities are going to not just be declared but where those authorities will be terminated and turned back to local municipal authorities. It just caps that at that 90 days.

Now, if the hon. members across the way are not inclined to support this amendment, I'd like to hear where they would like to cap that so we can bring the proper authorities back to the table and make these decisions. The number, three months, 90 days, is arbitrary, but clearly it seems to me that there needs to be a point in legislation where the local municipalities have some sort of idea, some sort of expectation of where the declaration is going to basically terminate and the authority will revert back to the municipal authorities.

With that, I hope that my members and certainly the members across the aisle would support this amendment. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, hon. member.

Are there others speaking to the amendment?

Seeing none, I'll call the question on the amendment.

[Motion on amendment A5 lost]

**The Chair:** We're back to the bill. Speaking to the bill, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder.

**Mr. Eggen:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have an amendment that I would like to put forward in regard to Bill 27 on behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

**The Chair:** Please proceed. We'll distribute the amendment and just pause for a moment. Thank you.

**Mr. Eggen:** Mr. Chair, can I just tell everybody that it's two pages?

**The Chair:** It's a two-page amendment.

Proceed, hon. member.

**Mr. Eggen:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I just want to let the members know that they shouldn't be intimidated by this two-page amendment – there were several elements that needed to be covered here – and the essence of it is just to have a good, solid definition of what a floodway is. I think that speaks to the essence and the central idea of Bill 27, so it's worth while.

**The Chair:** For the record, hon. member, this will be A6.

**Mr. Eggen:** A6. Okay. Amendment A6 is amending section 2(3) by striking out proposed section 693.1 and substituting the following:

Development in floodways

693.1(1) In consultation with municipal authorities and experts, including, but not limited to, engineers, hydrologists, geologists, meteorologists and climate scientists, the Minister must, at a minimum interval of every 5 years or after each disaster, as defined by this Act, whichever is earlier, develop the following:

- (a) comprehensive maps of floodways and flood zones, and
- (b) detailed reports of risk assessments and climate conditions as they relate to water management.

(2) The Lieutenant Governor in Council, on the advice of the Minister who has consulted with the appropriate municipal authorities, may make regulations that provide for the following:

- (a) controlling, regulating or prohibiting any use or development of land that is located in a floodway within a municipal authority, including, without limitation, regulations specifying the types of developments that are authorized in a floodway;
- (b) exempting a municipal authority or class of municipal authorities from the application of all or part of this section or the regulations made under this subsection, or both;
- (c) modifying or suspending the application or operation of any provision of this Act for the purposes of giving effect to this section;
- (d) defining, or respecting the meaning of, "floodway" for the purposes of this section and the regulations made under this subsection, which must take into account any maps and reports prepared pursuant to section 693.1(1).

4:40

(3) Unless the contrary is expressed in regulations made under subsection (2), those regulations

- (a) operate despite any statutory plan, land use bylaw or other regulations under this Part, and
- (b) are binding on any subdivision authority, development authority and subdivision and development appeal board and the Municipal Government Board.

(4) If a municipal authority is affected by a regulation made under subsection (2), the municipal authority must amend any relevant statutory plan and its land use bylaw to conform with the regulation.

Finally,

(5) Section 692 does not apply to an amendment pursuant to subsection (4).

Yes, it's quite a long and elaborate section that we're replacing here, but this amendment does ensure that we have a good definition of what a floodway or a flood zone actually is. We've seen that this can't be left to discretion or to the whim of the minister or even to reports that have been tabled years before, that would have saved millions of dollars of destruction during June of this year if we had followed the plan that was laid out back in 2010. People need to know, then they need to be able to make decisions about where to buy property and whether to repair existing property, and they will not be able to do so unless they have clear direction as to where the government-deemed floodways and flood zones lie.

We need to have a government that is, in general, transparent and accountable in defining floodways because we've had a very poor record on protecting Albertans on this issue in the past. We simply can't trust this government given their track record on flood prevention and mitigation prior to June 2013, so you need to lay it out in the law. Even if you have the best of intentions and you have the most transparent and benevolent government and all of those things, you still need to lay these things out in law. That's what we do. We put the process in place for future generations to interpret this as well.

Furthermore, Mr. Chair, we need to have maps drawn up that are independent and that use scientific advice. We're dealing with real estate here, we're dealing with the very land that defines the province, and you simply need to make it crystal clear what areas could be affected now and in the future by floodways in order for this bill to work.

I submit to you, Mr. Chair, and to all of us here today that this is a very, very essential amendment to Bill 27. Thanks a lot.

**The Chair:** Are there others to the amendment? The hon. associate minister for reconstruction.

**Mr. Fawcett:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. While I think the intention of this amendment is very honourable, I actually don't think it's very practical for many different reasons. One of the reasons, as I mentioned in second reading of this bill, is that the flood maps are a planning tool to allow us to do long-term planning around mitigation, around where we want to develop our communities and our cities and our towns and municipalities. The problem with doing this every five years is that, first of all, it becomes, very obviously, resource intensive, and the other problem is that if you're doing it every five years, you would be doing so, I would assume, with the intention that it would be changing every five years. Certainly, it could, but the case is, you know, that we want to provide long-term stability for communities around these policies so they can develop.

The last thing. I could tell you from many of the meetings that I've been to over the last four months in flood-affected communities that the concern – you know, yes, there are some concerns with current flood maps – is that if they're not in a flood-mapped area, will they soon be? Is the anticipation that the map is going to keep flipping back and forth? One year they're in a floodway; five years later they're not; the next year they're not. It doesn't provide stability for the type of investment that we want people to make in our communities, the development.

I think what we want to do is make sure that we get the flood maps right, and we want to put them in place, and then we want to build and plan our communities around that. I think that this amendment provides, frankly, a heck of a lot of instability for communities, and that's really what I'm concerned about with this amendment.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I'll recognize the hon. Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

**Mr. Anglin:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I rise in support of the amendment, and I'm going to disagree with the hon. associate minister. It does just the opposite. It provides the stability.

Now, here's the deal. You do not have to expend all the resources if nothing has changed. If nothing has changed, if you look at it and the flood maps are accurate, they're accurate, and you don't have to do anything else to it. But if you do not look at it, you don't know to remap or to re-examine. That's what's really important.

If you tell me that nothing changes, please come to Sundre and come with me to check what that river does even out of the flood season, when it changes channel and can move over a mile.

That flood mapping has to take place. In order to build, it is important to understand how that whole ecosystem is working. That is really imperative. What we have, particularly in my area – a lot of what we've been talking about is High River and Calgary, and justifiably so, because that's where we suffered the major damage in 2013. But we suffered a lot of damage in Sundre at that time. Plus, just last year we suffered a lot of damage in Sundre and, of course, back in 2005.

Without accurate flood mapping we cannot make good decisions. We have to have accurate flood mapping, that has to be kept up to date. What this proposes to do is to set out a manner in which we keep these up to date. But if you tell me that we have to absolutely remap everything again – if you look at it, you don't have to redo it. You don't have to reinvent the wheel. Basically, you have to verify the data as it exists and verify that it's accurate. You've now redone this.

By looking at your mapping and double-checking, you may have to update just a small portion. You may not have to update any. You still and you're supposed to have these experts already here anyway – we do have these within the government – who are supposed to be looking at this stuff on a regular basis, and they do. I know because I'm working with some bureaucrats now on some issues, particularly with flood-related issues, in the Sundre area. The problem we have, particularly coming from the 2005 flood, is that we don't eight years later have accurate mapping. It's not there anymore. If this passes, then that is an issue that can now be resolved.

We need continual mapping. This is something that has to be dynamic. It cannot be static. These river systems are always changing. However small, however large, they are forever changing. Particularly, as we develop, we will influence, whatever the influence is going to be, depending upon the development.

There are many different things we can do to change the mitigation and the flooding of these rivers when we apply mitigation procedures or methodologies to control flooding. It's one of those issues that, based on particularly the whole caveat system, which we haven't even gotten into yet – if we put in the proper dredging procedures, whether that has to take place annually or whether that has to take place every three years, depending on the river system you're dealing with, depending on where you are in the river system and dealing with that, if you're putting in spurs, if you're putting in berms, if you use a dam to create a floodway to hold water back, then those are the all the tools that are available to the ministry, to this government, to use. If the government makes the choice to use that, that will change the system. You have to take that into consideration.

4:50

What we've been looking for here consistently – and we'll consistently continue to try to look for it – is accurate mapping. It is absolutely essential. The key is to get much of the work done now, as soon as possible, and as accurate as possible and then keep it up to date. That's what this – you can read both pages, but in essence what this is saying is that we want to keep it up to date. To keep it up to date, it's not that difficult. I suppose it would be difficult if we had the 500- or 1,000-year flood next spring. That would be a terrible thing. I'm not anticipating that, and I hope no one else is, but that would change things dynamically. The fact of the matter is that if we get our mapping up to date, to keep it up to date on a continuous basis, on an ongoing basis, would easily fall within this five-year time frame that the hon. member has offered up.

Some of the rivers in particular – I would probably say safely all of the rivers – at various points along the rivers have very little opportunity to change. The Red Deer River, which is the one that goes through Sundre, is a perfect example. You get down towards that Drumheller area: the width of where the river can flood into is actually quite small compared to my area just on the upriver side of Sundre, where the plain itself is probably 20 to 30 miles wide. That river can change dramatically in a very short period of time without having a flood, just by having a high water runoff and having the river carve a new channel. So these are all the things that need to be taken into consideration.

Most of the focus here in this Assembly so far has been on property, and justifiably so, for many reasons, but the fact is that flood mapping is not isolated just to the communities. You have to look at the whole river basin without doing it scientifically. We may be able to do all the mitigation measures necessary up in the headwaters to hold back water, to prevent massive flooding – and that's much like what they've done on the Mississippi with the corps of engineers – without having to do a lot of mitigations downriver, because we're controlling the flow. Again, it all comes down to, really, two pieces of data, the quantity of water and the speed at which it travels. That's it. It may sound simple, but it is actually quite complex when you try to do the planning, and you have to plan based on accurate data.

By the way, the flood mapping – and I think some of the members tend to think that we're just talking about maps. We're not. It's talking about data. We measure this stuff so that data is available. Our data for the actual flow of the river, the height that the river rises to, and the speed that it rises: we have that data, we track that data in real time, and we know how these rivers behave. We just have to translate that into accurate mapping so that we can come up with how we want to manage development anywhere along that river basin that may be affected by flooding in any future flood.

To project is not that difficult. I suppose economists will use statistical data to say, you know, "The 100-year flood versus the 500-year flood," but really what they want to look at is the amount of water and the speed of the water and say: "Based on if we had this amount and it travelled at this speed, what would it look like downriver? If we had X amount of water versus this speed, what would it look like?" They can model that fairly well, and depending on the development and the mitigation measures, we would be able to have a mapping system of what was fairly accurate on the floodways and the flood plains and the flood fringes that we have not actually identified yet in definition very well. We will. At least, that's what the minister is telling us we're going to. But it's not in legislation.

The key is accurate flood mapping, and accurate flood mapping is more than just the map of the river and describing where the flood plain is. It's all the supporting data that goes with it, that accurate data that's available to us, knowing how fast a river crests. We have records of 2005 – that I know; I've looked at those records – and 2010 on how fast, how many cubes of water came down, the time frame it came down in, where it peaked, where it subsided, how fast it subsided. Those are the things that make flood mapping accurate. That's the data that actually helps us project.

If we're going to put caveats on people's property, give us some sort of probability. It all does come down to that. Where you draw that line is going to be significant. Where you draw the line where you're going to compensate people for loss, where you draw that line where you're not going to compensate people cannot be arbitrary. It's got to be scientific. It's got to be based on accurate data because there's going to be a tremendous amount of investment that's affected by it.

Where I would disagree with the member is: this idea of mapping is not something that is repetitive from the ground up every time. Once you have accurate mapping, you have to constantly update and adjust. You have to look at the maps once they're created. Five years may be too long, in my view, but it may be just right. This is arbitrary in the sense that they picked five years. You absolutely need to make sure that if it's the Red Deer basin, if it's the Blindman River – name any river basin you want. Clearly, if you're looking at one of our major seven river basins, that could be significant if you're going to do the entire basin, but I don't think you have to. At some point we put the entire basin together. Certainly, any creek, any river that flows into the main tributary might have to be adjusted, depending on what happened during the runoff in the spring, depending on what happened in a flash flood from a massive thunderstorm.

These things happen, and they alter the mapping. They alter what's going to happen to the system. If we keep track of that, then the mitigation measures can cost us less in the future because we can actually act on the changing data to make sure it doesn't cause more damage or force us to expand the flood plain further, which would affect more properties, more investments.

When you get down, particularly into the Calgary area, the Lethbridge area, and places like that, you have bigger communities than I'm dealing with in my constituency, but I will tell you that the human tragedy is no less whether it's one or whether it's 1,000. If you're the one, the human tragedy is no less when that flood hits.

Again, it's paramount that everything comes back, comes full circle, to accurate mapping. Now, if the members across the aisle will not support this, what I would ask is: how do we ensure that accurate mapping is always available? That's key. That's key to disaster management.

I'm going to give you an example, and it's based on a dam in the Little Bow constituency. Hopefully, maybe the Minister of ESRD will get up and correct me if I'm wrong, but we were told that with the water flowing into the retaining lake, pond, whatever you want to call it, behind the dam, they would only allow the same amount of water to flow out. That might be prudent in a time of nonemergency, but in a time of emergency, I would argue, there might be times – and this has been done in the past in other jurisdictions – that you release as much water out of the dams prior to an event because you see the weather patterns coming.

We know the spring runoff is coming, and we make sure there's room behind those dams to retain as much water as possible to keep the actual flow and volume of the river, particularly in those areas – every river has the rapids, they have the runs, and they



have the shallows. You want to make sure that the run of the river doesn't rise too fast, that the volume doesn't rise too fast. If you manage your flow rates using the dams – we already have dams in place – that management system works differently than when we're actually in an emergency. If we allow that to happen, we can actually reduce the area where we need to have caveats. That's significant when we are looking at putting caveats on titles. If we create a system where we can retain as much water as the watershed allows by creating these systems to hold back water and if we manage it properly by dredging, putting in spurs, and putting in berms, we may find that we do not have to compensate many of the investors. We may find we will need very little in the form of caveats because we can manage the floodways and we can manage the ecosystem so that we can protect not just human lives, but we can protect investments, and we can protect the property. We could save the government money in dealing with natural disasters, and that's key.

5:00

There's a benefit all around by doing accurate mapping, and I think that seems to have been missed. When you look at the billions of dollars in damage that has occurred as a result of this flood, had we had certain measures in place – one of the models that I've not seen and I would hope the government would ask for at some point is: what could we have done had we instituted or implemented the measures from the former report? Would we have prevented some of the damage?

Now, I can't speak for Calgary. I haven't looked at that at any great level, but I have looked at the High River situation, and certainly there were areas there where we could have taken preventive measures in advance, which would have significantly reduced the amount of damage. The residents there know that; the people involved know that. I'm not asking anyone to have a crystal ball, but accurate mapping allows us to do the projections properly. Accurate mapping allows us to plan properly. That will give us what I call the most effective tool to implement flood mitigation measures.

I disagree with the hon. associate minister on that assumption. This is absolutely paramount to what we want to do on flood mitigation, to reduce the costs to this government. Yes, it will cost money to do the initial update of the flood mapping, and it will always be an ongoing process to keep the flood mapping up to date. It is, I think, at this point in history for this province, at a population of 4 million people, a fact of life that we're now going to have to deal with this issue in all our river basins because our population is not decreasing; it is increasing. Unfortunately, people like living next to rivers and lakes and everything else. They seem to put a higher value on that property even though they get flooded out. It's just the way it works. It is part of not only our recreational system and our parks system – I mean, we have some of the most incredible parks – but it's part of what we value, what we call the Alberta advantage.

Without proper mapping we can't make informed decisions. We're guessing, and we don't want to guess. We want to be as accurate as possible. The benefits of accurate flood mapping go beyond just protecting property. It actually does a great service by putting in mitigation measures when these scientists, when these geologists, when these hydrologists see a situation that could be affected based on the projections they've done in the past. When they update these projections, they have a better look at the basin. Just by putting out those proper recommendations that such and such takes place, we can prevent massive flooding. I think we would want to do that.

Again, given the overall cost of what this 2013 flood has so far totalled, the cost of flood mapping is almost insignificant if it would help us prevent multibillion-dollar damage due to flooding. There is a system in place where we actually have the ability – it didn't happen, that I know of, in this flood – that we're monitoring the rivers, and we know what's coming because we have a general idea of what the runoff is going to be, what the rainfall is planned to be, so we can get information out quickly to evacuate where it's probable that we're going to need to evacuate and to be ahead of the curve on our emergency management measures. There are all these side benefits to doing proper flood mapping to protect property.

With that, I disagree with the hon. associate minister, and I would ask the members to support this or offer up another solution for how we can have accurate mapping to base all of this on. With that, Mr. Chair, I would ask the members to support this.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** I'll recognize the Member for Calgary-McCall on amendment A6.

**Mr. Kang:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I was listening to my friend from Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre, and he literally covered everything I wanted to say. You know, this amendment will go a long way to bringing stability. Had we had the flood maps updated, we probably wouldn't have gone through the disaster we've been through, because the flood maps are 20 years or older. This amendment will go a long way so that we will have the flood maps updated.

We had a flood in 2005, and in 2013 we had another one. Had we been updating our maps every five years, we probably could have mitigated lots of damage, you know, created in the 2013 flood. Had the recommendations from the 2006 flood mitigation report been implemented, that could have probably gone a long way to mitigate the flood losses, too. If we keep on updating our flood maps, even with all the billions that it's cost us, it will probably not cost us as much or be equal to the cost of the damage.

I know lots of damage has been done. I was trying to bring a delegation from India during that time to come and visit us here. It's not only the property damage, it's not only the lives lost, but it has cost us lots of money in tourism.

I'd ask all members to support this amendment. If you accept it, this will help us a long way towards mitigating future flood losses.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

**Mr. Bilous:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I do want to thank the Member for Calgary-Klein for getting up and engaging in conversation. I'd like to address some of his comments. I think what's necessary is that a baseline is created. There are many reports from other areas across the country that demonstrate the value and importance of flood mapping in order to have a much better understanding of floodways, flood zones, and flood risks.

As opposed to the Member for Calgary-Klein, who is saying that this is going to provide instability for folks by reviewing the flood maps every five years, I don't think there's necessarily going to be extreme changes every five years. What we want to do is just ensure that we don't do the flood mapping once and then forget about it. I mean, the reality is that floodways do change depending on the development. It's not just spurs, berms, and dams, but the development of municipalities, of industrial sites can alter the direction and flow of water.

We're talking about developing a comprehensive water management strategy that doesn't just deal with issues of flooding,

although that is included. We're talking about having our fingers on the pulse as far as river systems go and being able to respond. I actually think that reviewing the flood maps every five years would provide more stability for folks. Again, I do honestly believe that they aren't going to necessarily change so significantly every five years unless there is a major disaster. I mean, this disaster that we saw in June, I think, has significantly altered our floodways and waterways, so now would be the time, after the disaster is taken care of, obviously, to look at mapping and remapping. I'm convinced that that expense would be fairly minimal once that baseline is first established.

I think what's really important about this amendment as well is that the first sentence talks about "in consultation with municipal authorities and experts" and lists them. Again – at least I'll speak for the Alberta NDP – we value and feel that the first priority is consultation with others and with other orders of government. It's significant to work with them as opposed to coming in and imposing different decisions on them.

5:10

We need to have defined floodways. Honestly, I know that there are members on the other side of the House that have downplayed the importance of it. By putting this into the bill and legislating it, it ensures that once this government does flood mapping, we're not going to wait another 15, 20 years or more to get the maps updated. This puts in a process so that all Albertans can be assured that this will be reviewed and changed if needed. I honestly feel that this isn't going to create new maps from scratch every five years.

The other thing, too, is that we need to have maps that are absolutely independent, based on scientific advice and the best advice that's available.

Again, I appreciate the associate minister's concerns. Hopefully, in my comments I've addressed his concerns, and he'll see that this actually creates stability for all Albertans.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

**Mr. Rowe:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I rise in favour of this amendment. I agree with the statement that the associate minister made when he opened his comments. We need long-term planning. My question to him back is: how on earth can you do long-term planning when you don't have proper flood maps? You can't do long-term planning on development, on residential property or commercial property, or anything else unless you know what's going to happen with that mapping.

As the hon. Member for Calgary-Bow said quite rightly yesterday, these darn rivers just don't want to follow the flood maps. They're ignorant. They just don't know how to do that. Until we can train the rivers to follow the existing flood maps, we've got to do new flood maps. And training the rivers is not such a humorous statement. We can do that. It's called mitigation. It's called berms. It's called dredging. It's called storage ponds and so on. But without flood maps, again, we can't do that.

I believe that we've seen the results of not keeping our maps current. Of the 18 recommendations that were in the 2006 flood report, I believe 15 of them, as I said just the other day, dealt with flood mapping, and absolutely nothing has been done since 2006 on the flood maps. Here we are in 2013 with Canada's biggest natural disaster from flooding. How much of the damage that was done this spring could have been avoided if we had gotten proper flood mapping and prevented development in those areas that were at risk?

To again put the cart before the horse – let's do the proper flood mapping. Then we can do the proper long-term planning. We can order municipalities – and I love the opening statement here: "In consultation with municipal authorities and experts, including . . . engineers, hydrologists, geologists, meteorologists and climate scientists," everybody, to get this right. Let's do it right this time.

I can't emphasize enough that we've got to do the flood mapping, folks. These two pages. That's all that is. You boil it all down, and it's: let's just do the proper flood mapping and try to prevent as much of this as we can in the future. With that, I'll pass it off to my colleagues.

Thank you.

**Mr. Fawcett:** I'll just be very brief. What's heartening is that I think, frankly, all of us are on the same page. We do want to have accurate flood mapping so that we can create long-term mitigation plans for many of our communities. That's really what we're talking about here.

I get the assumption that some members over on the other side somehow think that I and the associate minister over here just one night took a pencil and drew some lines on maps. While you might think that, it's furthest from the truth. There are experts in the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, many of which are named in this piece of legislation, that do this flood mapping. We could sit in this Legislature all day and debate whether those maps are accurate or not accurate.

I can stand up here and honestly say, Mr. Chairman, that I'm not an expert in this – I'm not somebody that you want drawing these flood maps – and I would suggest that probably many of us in this Legislature are not. I think some of us, you know, can be perplexed by why certain flood maps said one thing and you had an event that looked completely different. I know that when I go to communities, it's sometimes hard to explain. In second reading I talked about the plausibility of why some of those things might happen.

The last thing I just want to say is that the challenge with flood maps – and I very much agree – is that, you know, the river is constantly changing. That's really at the crux of what we're talking about here. The river does constantly change. If tomorrow we were to flood map an area, the next day that map is a little bit inaccurate because overnight the river has decided to do what it wants to do. Again, what I want to say is that the flood maps aren't the be-all and end-all when it comes to this. It's a planning tool. It's to give us a guideline to create long-term planning.

The worst thing that we could do, frankly, is to go out and constantly be changing this on landowners and communities. I can tell you – and I know that this has come up in some of the meetings that I've been to – that landowners constantly would have their property going in and out of the floodway, particularly if we're putting restrictions on floodway development. I know as a landowner that I'd be frustrated, and I know many across the way that care passionately about property rights would probably say the same thing. That type of instability for landowners is not something that we want to purvey here in the province of Alberta, Mr. Chairman.

Again, I think, as I said at the outset, the intent is laudable on this, but we need to be very careful. Like I said, is it one year? Should we review it every year? What we have is a process in place where, if there are significant events, the Ministry of ESRD does go out and do the remapping. We have since, as a result of the flood, put additional resources into it and prioritized areas where there have been significant changes in the watercourse to do that flood mapping. We know we need to do that to plan our future mitigation. They're constantly updating those maps. I

believe 70 per cent of sort of the habitable areas along rivers in this province have been flood mapped, and we'll continue to make progress on that, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chair:** The hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod.

**Mr. Stier:** Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good evening to everyone. It's good to see you all again. In response to the associate minister's recent comments, I'd just like to take a couple of moments if I could to add to this.

First of all, I'd like to say that I do support this amendment, and I do support much of what has been said on both sides of the House, in fact, regarding flood mapping. It does have to be done. I believe the associate minister was concerned at one time about costs and so on and so forth. I'd just like to bring to the discussion a couple of things that I've noticed on that that may be of use here.

First of all, I'd like to journey us back in time to 2006, to a former member of the Legislature and Member for Highwood, who had put together the flood study at that time. I'd like to take a moment just to outline for you, in case you aren't aware, what the first two points were in that plan. I think it's important because it relates to what we're talking about.

5:20

The very first recommendation was:

We recommend that Alberta Environment coordinate the completion of flood risk maps for the identified urban flood risk areas in the province.

He went on to say:

Alberta signed a cost-sharing agreement with the federal government to map flood risk areas . . . in 1989. This agreement was terminated before all the identified communities could be [done].

They recognized that in 2006, I think, and they realized that they had to do more. They actually tried to, in case you haven't looked recently – and I don't blame you if you haven't; it's been too busy on this one. They had thought that a budget of over 2 and a half million dollars, roughly, could possibly address most of this. Over five years: that was what was said. It would look to me as if the five-year increment was something that was recognized before. It was recognized to obtain the baseline data, that that could be considered as a number possibly to address it.

The second thing I'd like to add into it if I could is the second recommendation, in fact. It says:

We recommend that Alberta Environment develop a map maintenance program to ensure that the flood risk maps are updated when appropriate.

Assuming that one is done at 2 and a half million dollars and we've got some baseline data, then they recognized that there could be situations that might arise – and I'm reading again – where

an existing flood risk map no longer adequately represents the flood risk for a location. This may result from changes in the river or immediate area, updating a rural flood risk map or errors in the original study. [The maps] should also be reviewed regularly particularly after extreme flood events when public and municipal government interest is high.

Again, we see where in 2006, when the study was put together and the plan was implemented, there was recognition of exactly what we've experienced several years later.

If you have a chance over there to look at those two points, folks, they had actually put together \$50,000 annually – \$50,000 annually, Minister – only to maintain these baseline maps and the baseline data. So we have a cost. Although you had worried about that earlier in the conversation, those costs at 2 and a half mil plus \$50,000 annually they estimated could work in maintaining the

database and upgrading it and looking after details that they needed. We can add in a few per cent for inflation, I suppose, since that time, but it would seem to me, as compared to what costs we have looked into in the past four months, when you and I were out in the field together and so on, these are minimal costs. If they are even out a few per cent, it's still not bad.

I think that the idea that has been presented by the hon. member here to my left has merit. It should be something that we can do. Perhaps if you wish to suggest a subamendment to this amendment, to change a time frame, I don't see a problem with that – I would support you on that, by the way – but I see nothing wrong with going with what they have here. They haven't changed that much of this, by the way, from the original. They've just put in the time factor and a couple of changes in the preambles and so on.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to get that conversation in. I'm going to yield my time for the moment, but I do support this bill, and I hope that that has been of use tonight, for what it was worth.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Chestermere-Rocky View.

**Mr. McAllister:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I said initially, when I spoke to this bill, that I would support it, you know – and that would be depending on some of the amendments that come forward from our critics and, I guess, everybody in the Legislature – and I still feel that way. To the associate minister across: I still feel we've got to do all we can to support this bill and get it through. There can't be anything more important right now than flood recovery and reconstruction so that we don't get into this situation again.

I want to speak to this amendment specifically if I could for a minute, Mr. Chair, and tell you why I like at least a portion of this. As the member who brought the amendment forward said and to revisit it for those that have lost where we were:

693.1(1) In consultation with municipal authorities and experts, including, but not limited to, engineers . . . et cetera, et cetera, et cetera,

. . . the Minister must, at a minimum interval of every 5 years or after each disaster, as defined by this Act, whichever is earlier, develop the following:

I'll go through (a) and (b).

- (a) comprehensive maps of floodways and flood zones, and
- (b) detailed reports of risk assessments and climate conditions as they relate to water management.

The idea of trying to develop flood mitigation before we have proper maps is nonsensical. We have communities that are using maps that are 20 years old in some areas. I talked to a fly fisherman, a guy that has called the Black Diamond-Turner Valley area home his entire life, on a night when the province held one of their information sessions. Actually, it was the territory of the minister who spoke previously. He wasn't there that evening, but the other minister, the Member for Calgary-South East, was there on his behalf and spoke and listened to some of these stories. This gentleman from Turner Valley was just pointing out that he's on that river, you know, all year every year and that it hasn't changed just a little bit in the last little while, that it has changed remarkably. This is somebody who's on it every day. His point, as he raised it to me that evening, is very good. As we go through the recovery process and develop the proper mitigation infrastructure, we had better have the proper mapping in place before we do it. I think we're all on the same side with that.

I'm looking at this, seeing "every 5 years," and saying: you know, maybe it makes sense. Maybe five years isn't the timeline, but I bet this minister is open minded enough to find a way for a subamendment, to debate the timeline if you like but revisit it so that we don't wind up in the situation again where someday something happens and we see that our maps are 20 years old. That's a major problem.

I mean, even Dora the Explorer knows you need an appropriate map, Mr. Chair. I don't think Dora goes anywhere without the map. It's like, in this case, Swiper has taken the maps. This is the situation that we're in. You know, a little levity never hurts. It seems to me like we're all saying the same thing, and we all want what's best for Alberta, but we had better make sure that we have the proper maps before we do anything, before we determine what the mitigation infrastructure is.

Redwood Meadows is another classic case of why I would support this. I have stood on the berm and walked the berm at Redwood Meadows half a dozen times in the last few months. What a wonderful success story that community is, that they managed to keep the water out. But the river has changed easily – easily – the width of this room, probably times two. If you stand on the berm and see where it was and where it is now, there's no way that they're not going to run into some serious problems next time around if the infrastructure doesn't reflect where that river is now. Really, what Redwood needs – and I hope the minister will be open to this, and we can discuss it another time – is to push that river back where it was before it's too late, because if it happens again, they're in big trouble.

The point I'm trying to make is that these rivers change substantially, particularly after the high water flow that we had this year and that we have had in other years. Even when they don't flood, they change.

I would suggest that we support this amendment, and if we don't, I would certainly be open to supporting an amendment or a subamendment from the minister on what he thinks is reasonable so that we make sure, going forward, we're using the appropriate data so that we can protect our communities and rebuild them for Albertans.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm waving to you, too. Very nice.

**The Chair:** The hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

**Mr. Fox:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I rise today to speak to this amendment put forward by my colleague from Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview. It's an interesting amendment, and I'm going to read it out for the Legislature here.

**Development in floodways**

693.1(1) In consultation with municipal authorities and experts, including, but not limited to, engineers, hydrologists, geologists, meteorologists and climate scientists, the Minister must, at a minimal interval of every 5 years or after each disaster, as defined by this Act, whichever is earlier, develop the following:

- (a) comprehensive maps of floodways and flood zones, and
- (b) detailed reports of risk assessments and climate conditions as they relate to water management.

Now, this is interesting. I kind of like this. In fact, I've seen something similar to it before. I think it was in the 2006 Groeneveld report. What it reads here:

Municipal participation is a key element in a flood mitigation strategy. Municipalities are the front line in delivering many important aspects of flood mitigation because they are ultimately responsible for approving development in their communities. In addition, municipal governments often have

[an] idea of potential flood mitigation measures that are appropriate for their local areas and the relative costs of such proposals . . . failure to communicate and equip municipalities with the resources that they need to make responsible decisions has been a major downfall of many flood mitigation programs.

5:30

So here we are with an amendment that specifically adds municipal participation into the consultation of developing the maps around floodways. Mapping these floodways is important. I mean, when we look at our neighbours to the east and to the west, specifically around the Assiniboine River, the Red River, and the Fraser River, do you think that their flood mitigation strategies were done without up-to-date flood mapping? I can tell you that it probably wasn't done that way. Even way back when Duff Roblin did the ditch around Winnipeg, I guarantee you that there was a lot of mapping done to make sure that they were picking the right points to pull water out of the Red River and then put it back in north of Lockport.

It's astounding that we're not going to update these maps and that we're not going to put it in legislation. Not to belabour the point, but in recommendation 1, as my colleague from Livingstone-Macleod pointed out,

we recommend that Alberta Environment coordinate the completion of flood risk maps for the identified urban flood risk areas in the province.

It goes on to say:

It is important to know the areas of the province that are at risk from flooding so the extent of risk can be determined. Accurate mapping that defines the extent of flood risk areas forms the foundation of the Flood Risk Management Action Plan. Once the flood risk area is identified, steps can be taken to protect existing and future development. Failure to act on the information may expose local governments to liability from affected landowners.

It probably would have been nice for them to have some updated maps prior to this flood so that they could have built some mitigation around it and reduced the costs that are now being incurred.

Alberta signed a cost-sharing agreement with the federal government to map flood risk areas in the province in 1989. This agreement was terminated before all the identified communities could be mapped.

So there are still communities out there who don't even have maps.

As of 2006, there are 36 communities . . .

Like I said, 36 communities.

. . . that require flood risk studies. This recommendation refers to new studies and does not address map maintenance issues.

Even back in 2006 they knew that there were map maintenance issues. So what's happened since 2006? I don't think there's really been much for updates on those maps. I can tell you that I have family that has property along the Red Deer River. That river has changed course a couple of times just in the few years that I've been visiting it.

Well, it does say here that map maintenance issues will be dealt with in recommendation 2. Now, when they did look for community response,

ninety-nine out of 100 responses either supported or strongly supported this recommendation. Flood risk mapping was recognized as an essential planning tool. There were questions about terminology and other issues related to flood risk maps indicating a need for ongoing education for local governments. There were also several communities and locations that suggested to be added to the list.

What did it say back then, in 2006? The budget required was \$2.5 million over five years. Now, correct me if I'm wrong, but this was at a time when I think we were running budget surpluses here in the province, back when we could actually pay for this without borrowing for it. But, you know, if debt is hope, back then I guess we were a little bit hopeless.

I'm going to move on to recommendation 2 because it also deals with the first part of this amendment. It deals with

- (a) the comprehensive maps of floodways and flood zones, and
- (b) the detailed reports of risk assessments and climate conditions as they relate to water management.

So what was recommendation 2 in this document that was put out by the Alberta government – albeit six years late, but it was put out by the Alberta government – on flood mitigation? Recommendation 2:

We recommend that Alberta Environment develop a map maintenance program to ensure that the flood risk maps are updated when appropriate.

Situations may arise where an existing flood risk map no longer adequately represents the flood risk for a location. This may result from changes in the river or immediate area, updating a rural flood risk map or errors in the original study.

I talked about the Red Deer River. Just in the few years that I've been visiting it, I have seen it change course. In fact, when I go fishing in it, I'm always looking for where the deep holes have moved to so I can try and catch some goldeye.

Back to this report here.

Flood risk maps should also be reviewed regularly particularly after extreme flood events when public and municipal government interest is high.

Do we have some interest in this? Well, at least my friends over here on the opposition side have some interest in this. I don't understand why the government doesn't. Maybe if we go back to our communities and ask for some response from them, they might give us some direction on this one.

What did it say here in this report about the resources required? Well, back in 2006 this was one full-time employee from Alberta Environment, and it says: "an estimated budget of \$50,000 annually." Fifty thousand dollars annually: that's not very much. In fact, it's less than one of the Premier's trips to China. We could actually update our maps for less than one trip to China per year. That's amazing. I can't understand why we wouldn't want to put this in a piece of legislation, why we wouldn't want to continue to update these maps, because it does provide some long-term planning ability for local municipal governments, and it's done very cheaply. I mean, that's one full-time employee per year. Now, I'm not sure what that would cost today. I'm not sure how far those salaries have risen at Alberta Environment, but I would assume that it's still probably close to that dollar figure. Again, I think this is rather cheap.

When I flip the page again, what is recommendation 3? This one deals with flood mapping, too. Amazing. This was visionary in 2006, and it sat on the shelves for six years. Can you believe it? Six years. Six years. We could have been working on some of this stuff six years ago. Well, I guess we can add this to one of the reasons why I was looking to get elected. It's time we actually addressed some of these issues and that they be heard in the Legislature and that we get some of these reports out on a timely basis so that we can mitigate damages prior to them happening rather than having to now look at flood mitigation again, in 2006 terms, after the last major flood. I mean, we've done nothing for flood mitigation over the last few – well, I shouldn't say we. The government has done nothing for flood mitigation over the last six years.

We even had the Canadian economic action plan. I'm sure we could go back and with a quick Google search find a number of key mitigation programs that were put forth in other jurisdictions here in this country, again probably along some of the major floodways, which would be the Assiniboine River, the Red River, the Fraser River. In fact, I think that in 2011 they did use some of the Canadian action plan dollars to address some of the flood mitigation projects that they needed to do. So we had access to federal dollars at those times, and, well, we didn't use them for flood mitigation, I can tell you that.

Back to the recommendations here. Recommendation 3 is still dealing with the first half of this amendment to this proposed legislation.

We recommend that Alberta Environment identify priority rural flood risk areas that require flood risk mapping and develop a program to prepare the maps.

It is recognized that rural flood risk mapping is a concern. Gee, it was a concern in 2006. Wow. Six years ago. There was a concern six years ago, it was actually identified by this PC government, and they didn't even act on their own report in the last six years. Amazing.

Anyway, it goes on:

There is intensive development occurring in rural areas that may be subject to flooding. It is also clear that rural flood-risk mapping cannot be to the same standard as the urban mapping . . .

They do identify some of the issues that the associate minister across the way did identify about the dollar figures, so that does correlate.

. . . as it would be prohibitively expensive to provide studies for large areas. A rural flood-risk mapping program was envisioned to be one whereby existing information such as aerial flood photos and high-water marks would be used to delineate a map.

5:40

They actually had a solution for this back in 2006, so we actually wouldn't have to spend a whole lot of money on this.

There would be no division of the flood risk area as occurs in the current flood risk maps. Also, mapping would be based on an historic flood event rather than a theoretical event. Areas identified as requiring flood-risk mapping, but not having any flood information would not be mapped until such information was available.

We are saying that, yes, it would take a flood. Hopefully, there was some aerial photography done during this last flood so, you know, we can update those maps.

In 2000, about 50 rural areas were identified as requiring flood-risk mapping, but only 25 had any existing information on flooding that could be used. Undoubtedly there would be more areas requesting mapping if the list were to be updated.

Now, when we kind of move down the page here, it shows the community response in this report. The community response, what it says here, is:

There was strong support for this recommendation with no significant reservations about the lower level of accuracy.

So even in those communities they understood that, yes, you did have to trade off the kind of mapping that an urban area would get, but they were amicable to that situation. They did understand the limitations of the budget on those matters.

What were the resources required in 2006 to do this? It reads here that

an FTE position . . .

That would be a full-time position.

. . . is required for designing a rural flood risk program. Until the technical aspects of a rural flood risk program are defined, it

is difficult to estimate the required resources; however initial estimates suggest that this program could exceed \$1,000,000.

A million dollars back in 2006 to start developing some of these maps and strategies. Again, back in 2006 where were we? We were in a budget surplus. Wow. A million dollars, not very much money. We could have actually done some of the work and understood what was going to happen so that we could maybe notify some of these property owners back then that they needed to get out of their homes prior to the flood.

Now, that did happen, but it didn't happen as quickly as it could, and we didn't actually know where in some of these communities the water was going to end up. But when you look at historical mapping or if you'd have had some of this historical mapping, you might have actually been able to get out there and notify. Maybe some of these houses in rural areas wouldn't have been built where they were built had they had access to some of this stuff. [interjection] My friend from Calgary-McCall pointed out that in some cases they didn't even know the flood was coming. [interjection] In Sunnyside. Thank you, my friend. I mean, that's kind of egregious – isn't it? – that they didn't even know the flood waters were coming. [interjection] You had to phone them?

**The Chair:** Hon. member, through the chair.

**Mr. Fox:** I'm sorry, Mr. Chair. My friend over here was giving me a little bit of information about what was going on in his riding.

When we move on to recommendation 5, we're still talking about the collection of mapping information. You know, this is another good recommendation that was put out six years ago. Six years ago. Hopefully, some of this stuff was actually done. Let's read this one.

We recommend that Alberta Environment continue to collect high-water elevation, aerial photography and other appropriate data whenever a significant flood occurs.

Hopefully, they did do this. Now, let's hope that some of this translates into a map. That would be recommendations 1, 2, and 3. Hopefully, that full-time employee, that would cost us less than a junket trip to China, will actually get some of this work done.

We can continue on here. It says here that

Alberta Environment should continue to explore and evaluate other methods of collecting flood data such as satellite imagery.

Well, I hope that they've started utilizing satellite imagery for some of this, as this recommendation states. But, I mean, there's been nothing from the government on this to tell us what they've actually been doing in relation to this. Let's just hope... [interjection] Oh, is that debt? Yeah. I'm trying to find the right word here because if hope is debt...

**Mr. Rowe:** Wish.

**Mr. Fox:** Okay. I wish that the government is getting this done. We'll put this on the wish list.

**Mr. Rowe:** Fair enough.

**Mr. Fox:** Okay.

During flood events, Alberta Environment collects high-water marks and aerial flood photography to document the extent of flooding. This information can be used for future flood risk studies and to review existing studies.

So I am wishing – hope just doesn't carry the same weight that it used to because debt is hope. I mean, I don't know. With the mortgage on my home I guess I'm trying to pay that thing down until I have no hope. Just an interesting quote. I still can't quite wrap my head around "debt equals hope." We'll continue in that vein.

When they put this recommendation out to the communities that were consulted in this flood report by the members that took part

in this in 2006, it said that there was unanimous support, especially in the absence of a flood risk map. Oh, but there are those communities that don't have access to a flood risk map because it doesn't exist. Six years ago it didn't exist. Well, I guess that's something that still hasn't been done. Maybe before the next flood we'll have a flood risk map for those areas, but I don't really see anything in Bill 27, the Flood Recovery and Reconstruction Act, that actually addresses developing maps for those 36 communities that still don't have flood risk maps.

Resources required. Well, this is interesting. It says: "Alberta Environment collects flood data as a part of its mandate and will continue to do so. This information will be made available to local authorities." So maybe had this report not sat on the shelf somewhere for six years gathering dust, that information would be out to the local municipalities now. We might actually have some flood mitigation maps for those 36 communities.

You know, for the members listening here, I think it might be interesting to know which 36 communities it is because they aren't identified in this report. I'd hate to think that to find out which communities it is, I'd have to FOIP it. I mean, I'm going to ask that that information just be made available. I really shouldn't have to go through the Associate Minister of AT and T to try and get information that, really, all Albertans should just have in hand so that they know whether or not they live in a community that actually has this information. I mean, I would sure like to know if a community that I'm about to buy a home in is on a flood plain or a floodway or if there's any hazard of having my assets flooded out because the government just didn't want to make that information available to me as a homebuyer. I mean, I feel for those homebuyers there.

This is stuff that really does drill down to accountability and transparency. Heck, if we had that information easily, without having to file FOIPs for it, boy, that would be transformative. It really would. You know, maybe that'll come out in the FOIP review – maybe – that we'll go back to the original intention of that legislation, which is that FOIP was to be the last resort, not the only way to get information out of our government.

You know, it's interesting as an opposition member to look at people's faces when I tell them that the only way for me to get information in most cases, well, pretty well in all cases, from this government is through a FOIP request. They think that we should actually have access to this information and that they as Albertans should have access to a lot of this information without having to pay \$25 to go through FOIP.

**The Chair:** Thank you, hon. member.

Are there others? The hon. Member for Drumheller-Stettler.

**Mr. Strankman:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much. I'd like to go back to some comments made by the hon. Member for Calgary-Klein, I believe it was. In my constituency of Drumheller-Stettler they basically took their own initiative, and they did do mitigation in the community and above it at the Dickson dam. Mitigation also was done many years prior to that. In the case of Drumheller the same minister that's bringing this legislation forward – and I do have concerns that this legislation may turn into some form of recyclable legislation, not unlike Bill 28 that's following this. It gives me some concern that there's no more sincerity to legislation, that it won't stand beyond 36 hours.

5:50

With that, to the Member for Calgary-Klein: this same minister did make a special designation because of what did not happen in Drumheller as a result of the flood mitigation and the mapping – unfortunately, I might want to again use that word "mapping" – that was done by the community. The community had their own

set of mapping standards that were brought forward by the Groeneveld report, and the community then went out and hired a secondary contractor to get a second opinion on the levels that were used. They spent considerable sums of money and went forward and did mitigation in the community.

As a result of that, in 2005 they didn't receive any significant damage, and this year, 2013, Drumheller was not on the map. As a result, the minister made a special recommendation that the communities, including Fort McMurray, not necessarily be included in the flood mapping area to the same extent as those other areas throughout the province. So the mapping and the judicious use of that is significant.

Now, how this mapping will be obtained and brought forward on an ongoing basis will be a living thing, not unlike the maintenance that we do annually to our highways. Every year we know that the maintenance to our highways is something that's significant and that changes every year. We'll get a different snowfall this year as opposed to last year. Each year is different.

I think that the management of these facilities is significant. The management of the living thing called a river and the river body and the floodways is significant. Even with the minister's special designation for the community of Drumheller the real estate agents and the people that live there have been complaining to me that they don't know what the direct designation for that community is going to be and how that's going to affect their property values. It's simply not amenable or friendly to the value of their property.

We need some form of standard. If that was developed over time, based off mapping – and the minister has made a designation of that. To me, it would appear just by his simple actions that he recognizes that there's something different that needs to be done. The communities of Drumheller and Fort McMurray are responsive to that.

With that, I think it's imperative that the members opposite give this amendment some consideration. It's a significant amendment, a significant piece of legislation that will continue throughout the years in this province. It's something that needs to be done in a proactive and professional manner. It's something that needs to be done. I'd like to say that I support the amendment to this legislation. I also support the legislation, but it needs small amendments. It needs to be adjusted for timeliness such that it maybe won't see a situation of retraction by the government.

With that, I'd like to relinquish my position and allow other members who may wish to speak to the amendment.

**The Chair:** I'll recognize the Member for Livingstone-Macleod.

**Mr. Stier:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to supplement some of the remarks that I made earlier and also add to the remarks that were just made by the adjoining members here, who I think did a fabulous job of speaking to this amendment.

You know, when you look at the situation we've got here this week in dealing with this, we have a disaster that was a national tragedy, and we have amendments to two acts, one being the MGA, the Municipal Government Act, and we have amendments to the Emergency Management Act. Both of those documents are significant documents, but the act and the amendment are only a very few pages long. It was a huge, enormous thing that happened this year, yet in the Municipal Government Act in section 551 there are only about four clauses regarding emergencies. When you look through the act, no matter where you look, you can't find a mention of flooding virtually anywhere that I can see. I've

scanned it over the years for various reasons, including when I was on council in 2005, when we had a flood in High River, and I see nothing there as a guide.

So we come to this amendment act, Bill 27, after having such an enormous disaster happen across Alberta, particularly in southern Alberta, and we have a very minor document amending both of those acts but only to a very minor extent. After the bell rings here in a few moments, we're probably going to be adjourning, and I just want you to know right now that we have some amendments to bring forward ourselves here in support of this and tied to this. It will include some of the things that I feel are missing in these two acts that we're talking about right now, the MGA and the Emergency Management Act, to try to address some of the stuff that we feel is missing. But I think we could probably go on and on and on with a whole pile of different things.

First of all, we're going to be looking at some definitions, just to let you know. We need definitions. I went to the flood symposium earlier this year and I've gone to some of the other meetings that have been held throughout the area. I've been in receipt of many of the forms and documents that we've had throughout those meetings. Thankfully, the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development and also the associate minister of southern Alberta disaster recovery – I can't remember the exact words – included in those meetings an awful lot of good material that really is more substantive and more important than what we see in this. It seems to be a little bit lacking. It seems to me that the reverse should be happening.

So, Mr. Chairman, I would just like to let everybody know that I hope you can come back after the break we're going to have here in a few minutes. We have some great amendments, I think, that will tie to this amendment we have and will carry on with this same line of thought. Hopefully, we can get down to the meat of this and make some good legislation that will help Albertans with the changes that we're going to propose.

With that, I only have just a couple of minutes to go, Mr. Chairman. I hope that the members here will be able to return, as I said. I look forward to seeing you afterwards.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you, hon. member.

Hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka, you've got a couple of minutes before we need to rise.

**Mr. Fox:** All right. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm trying to remember where I left off, but I think it was something in the vein of access to information, you know, access to flood maps that don't exist. Sitting here, I was thinking for a minute that it's kind of interesting. Maybe if somebody filed a FOIP request for this information and you had to actually compile it, we might actually get it. Although I hate to think what the photocopy document access fee that you usually get charged when you do a FOIP request would be on that since they'd actually have to create them. According to that report we were reading from, probably about \$300 million. Maybe the government is just waiting for some nice property developer to step up and do a FOIP request on this and pay for it so that they actually get the flood mapping information that the developers so desperately need, that our municipal governments so desperately need, and, really, that Albertans so desperately need.

We actually need to know where the floodways are. We need to know where the flood plains are. We need to know which developments are going to be underwater, where we should and

shouldn't be developing. The municipalities need to know this. The developers need to know this. When Albertans go to actually purchase a home, they need to know whether or not they're buying on a flood plain or in a floodway or if they're actually going to be touched by water, if they're in a backwater area.

In the case of Hampton Hills in High River, apparently, according to these current maps, they weren't in a floodway. They weren't even on a flood plain. So I guess that goes back to – what

was it? – recommendation 2, that said that we needed to update our flood maps so that municipalities would actually know where to . . .

**The Chair:** I hesitate to interrupt you, hon. member, but it's 6 o'clock, and pursuant to Standing Order 4(4) the committee stands recessed until 7:30 p.m.

[The committee adjourned at 6 p.m.]







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