



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature  
Second Session

# Alberta Hansard

Thursday morning, May 26, 2016

Day 34

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

# Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 29th Legislature

Second Session

Wanner, Hon. Robert E., Medicine Hat (ND), Speaker  
Jabbour, Deborah C., Peace River (ND), Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees  
Sweet, Heather, Edmonton-Manning (ND), Deputy Chair of Committees

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Anderson, Shaye, Leduc-Beaumont (ND)  
Anderson, Wayne, Highwood (W)  
Babcock, Erin D., Stony Plain (ND)  
Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (W)  
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Carlier, Hon. Oneil, Whitecourt-St. Anne (ND),  
Deputy Government House Leader  
Carson, Jonathon, Edmonton-Meadowlark (ND)  
Ceci, Hon. Joe, Calgary-Fort (ND)  
Clark, Greg, Calgary-Elbow (AP)  
Connolly, Michael R.D., Calgary-Hawkwood (ND)  
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Dang, Thomas, Edmonton-South West (ND)  
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Ellis, Mike, Calgary-West (PC)  
Feehan, Hon. Richard, Edmonton-Rutherford (ND)  
Fildebrandt, Derek Gerhard, Strathmore-Brooks (W)  
Fitzpatrick, Maria M., Lethbridge-East (ND)  
Fraser, Rick, Calgary-South East (PC)  
Ganley, Hon. Kathleen T., Calgary-Buffalo (ND)  
Gill, Prab, Calgary-Greenway (PC)  
Goehring, Nicole, Edmonton-Castle Downs (ND)  
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Sabir, Hon. Irfan, Calgary-McCall (ND)  
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Smith, Mark W., Drayton Valley-Devon (W)  
Starke, Dr. Richard, Vermilion-Lloydminster (PC),  
Progressive Conservative Opposition House Leader  
Stier, Pat, Livingstone-Macleod (W)  
Strankman, Rick, Drumheller-Stettler (W)  
Sucha, Graham, Calgary-Shaw (ND)  
Swann, Dr. David, Calgary-Mountain View (AL)  
Taylor, Wes, Battle River-Wainwright (W)  
Turner, Dr. A. Robert, Edmonton-Whitemud (ND)  
van Dijken, Glenn, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock (W)  
Westhead, Cameron, Banff-Cochrane (ND),  
Deputy Government Whip  
Woollard, Denise, Edmonton-Mill Creek (ND)  
Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (W)

## Party standings:

New Democrat: 54      Wildrose: 22      Progressive Conservative: 9      Alberta Liberal: 1      Alberta Party: 1

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Margaret McCuaig-Boyd	Minister of Energy
Stephanie V. McLean	Minister of Service Alberta, Minister of Status of Women
Ricardo Miranda	Minister of Culture and Tourism
Brandy Payne	Associate Minister of Health
Shannon Phillips	Minister of Environment and Parks, Minister Responsible for the Climate Change Office
Irfan Sabir	Minister of Human Services
Marlin Schmidt	Minister of Advanced Education
Lori Sigurdson	Minister of Seniors and Housing

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Deputy Chair: Mrs. Schreiner

Cyr	McKitrick
Dang	Taylor
Ellis	Turner
Horne	

**Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future**

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Anderson, S.	Hunter
Carson	Jansen
Connolly	Panda
Coolahan	Piquette
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Chair: Mrs. Littlewood  
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Anderson, W.	Nielsen
Clark	Nixon
Connolly	Renaud
Cortes-Vargas	Starke
Cyr	Sucha
Drever	Swann
Jansen	van Dijken
Loyola	

**Standing Committee on Families and Communities**

Chair: Ms Goehring  
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Hinkley	Rodney
Horne	Shepherd
Jansen	Swann
Luff	Westhead
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Orr	

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Kleinsteuber	

**Special Standing Committee on Members' Services**

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Deputy Chair: Cortes-Vargas

Cooper	McIver
Dang	Nixon
Fildebrandt	Piquette
Jabbour	Schreiner
Luff	

**Standing Committee on Private Bills**

Chair: Ms McPherson  
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Anderson, W.	Kleinsteuber
Babcock	McKitrick
Drever	Rosendahl
Drysdale	Stier
Fraser	Strankman
Hinkley	Sucha
Kazim	

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

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Deputy Chair: Ms Babcock

Carson	Loyola
Coolahan	McPherson
Cooper	Nielsen
Ellis	Schneider
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**Standing Committee on Public Accounts**

Chair: Mr. Fildebrandt  
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Barnes	Luff
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**Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship**

Chair: Loyola  
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Aheer	Kleinsteuber
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Clark	Malkinson
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Drysdale	Rosendahl
Hanson	Woollard
Kazim	

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

9 a.m.

Thursday, May 26, 2016

[Ms Sweet in the chair]

### Prayers

**The Acting Speaker:** Good morning.

Let us reflect. As we conclude this week our work in this Assembly and head back to our constituencies, let us remind ourselves of our responsibilities to the people and the community we represent. Let's continue to focus on bettering our province through hard work, understanding, dedication, and commitment.

Please be seated.

### Orders of the Day

#### Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Ms Sweet in the chair]

**The Deputy Chair:** I would like to call the committee to order.

#### Bill 18

##### An Act to Ensure Independent Environmental Monitoring

**The Deputy Chair:** Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered in respect to this bill? The Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky.

**Mr. Loewen:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We believe that Albertans deserve a system of monitoring that not only provides world-class environmental monitoring but protects the independence and integrity of those involved. Ensuring this is a priority of the Wildrose Party, and to that end there are aspects of this bill that deserve some questions being raised. Of concern would be the autonomy of these members and the chief scientist. While the chief scientist has the autonomy to speak out in a public fashion, it is always a concern that true independence while within a ministry be actually achieved.

AEMERA was not, despite the Boothe report, a three-year failed experiment. Numerous scientists throughout Canada gave their opinion on this, stating that that was not the case. AEMERA had only received the transfer of assets in May 2015, and this review began approximately three months later, hardly giving it time to really get established. Could AEMERA's mandate have been better clarified? Yes, it could have been. Could they have taken steps to alleviate some of the friction between AEMERA, Alberta Environment and Parks as well as Environment Canada? Yes. We could have had clarification that would have fixed some of the turf wars between agencies. We could have had better monitoring coordination between Environment Canada and AEMERA. The Boothe report found that there was a distinct lack of collaboration between AEMERA and Environment Canada, but that could have been fixed and still can be.

Now, AEMERA was initiated as an arm's-length organization for the government to rebuff accusations that the data that was being collected and the direction on environmental monitoring were somehow being influenced by politics. Justifiably, concerns with this government and the opportunity to taint the process with politics is just as much a concern as it was before. Consolidating power in the government's hands could be troubling, especially

given some of the more radical views of this government's caucus and staff. It's more important than ever that we ensure that these scientists are given free rein to operate independently. It is essential that we ensure the credibility and reputation of our environmental monitoring.

Many of the high costs that were brought up in the Boothe report were due to sole-sourced Alberta Environment and Parks contracts that took place even before the formation of AEMERA. Could that be fixed? Of course it could.

We need to also take note that given this government's record on consultation, transparency, and openness we definitely have some concerns with having this brought into government.

Now, Wildrose has been trying, as always, to come up with common-sense solutions to make a better Alberta. We're taking a pragmatic approach. AEMERA can be better. Really, the question is how? Is it in government? Is that the best place to make AEMERA better? Maybe with proper control and consulting. Now, if this would have gone to committee, then people like Boothe and some of the other scientists could come and present, and the members in committee could have listened to many different views on how to make environmental monitoring better in Alberta.

Having a more independent view of this and having the government take control of this and having it being viewed as unaltered or uncontrolled by government seems especially unlikely after hearing the Deputy Premier get up yesterday and say that they had to shop across Canada to find people with NDP world views. I think that's alarming, to think that they couldn't have found Albertans with their same views. So I guess that says something about this NDP government. I guess it's apparent that there are not too many Albertans with their world views, which just shows how out of touch the NDP is with Albertans.

Right from the start we've said that if it's broken, it needs to be fixed. It's critically important to have credible, transparent, world-class monitoring with integrity. The world needs to be able to look at it and say: it's good. There's no room for ideology. There's no room for a turf war, protecting the past. That's why right from the start our minds were open to whatever is best. In fact, that's our default position all the time: be open minded to listen to the ideas of others, listen to our constituents, give our constituents the information we have and have them make informed decisions.

Now, we know that there were issues with the PCs stacking agencies with cronies, and we thought that this was worth hearing out in Committee of the Whole. We've decided that internal reforms are better than disbanding, so I will be voting against Bill 18 in Committee of the Whole.

Thank you.

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

The Member for Calgary-Elbow.

**Mr. Clark:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. You know, as per my comments in second reading I have some concerns about the independence of AEMERA as it's brought into a ministry department. Again, the irony, given the title of the bill. You know, one of the things that I'm most concerned about is that despite assurances that the independence of those would be upheld, the legislation doesn't really address this. There is still an awful lot of power in the minister's hands, and there don't seem to be appropriate checks and balances to ensure independence and transparency, especially around the hiring and appointment of the chief scientist.

9:10

The minister has said that she will follow a robust hiring process. In fact, she and I had a brief conversation in the hallway yesterday

about that. Frankly, I don't have any particular concerns that this minister necessarily would do anything other than that, but I do think that it's important to future-proof this bill. Future ministers may not take such an approach. The legislation simply says that the minister has the power to appoint positions, and that includes the chief scientist.

With that, I would like to propose an amendment to Bill 18 if I may. I have the requisite number of copies. I'll wait till the table gets its copy, and then I will read it out.

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you, Member.

Hon. member, please proceed. This amendment will be referred to as A1.

**Mr. Clark:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I move that Bill 18, An Act to Ensure Independent Environmental Monitoring, be amended in section 2(2) in the proposed section 15.1 as follows:

(a) by adding the following after subsection (1):

(1.1) For subsequent vacancies in the position of Chief Scientist, the Minister shall appoint a person from a list of qualified candidates provided by the panel established under subsection (3).

(b) by adding the following after subsection (2):

(3) The Minister shall establish an independent appointment advisory panel to provide a list of qualified candidates to the Minister for subsequent appointments to the position of Chief Scientist and such panel shall consist of not fewer than 5 members with at least one representative from each of the following:

- (a) industry associations,
- (b) indigenous communities,
- (c) academia,
- (d) environmental organizations,
- (e) regulatory experts.

The rationale here is that although the minister would be asked to appoint such a panel, it adds one more layer of transparency. It adds a layer of rigour around the appointment of the chief scientist, and it provides transparency for Albertans around that process. Further, the panel would be asked to provide a list of candidates to the minister to avoid simply selecting a single person, so the minister may have some choice in terms of who would be selected as chief scientist.

Again, if this agency is going to be brought under the umbrella of the minister, I do think it's very important for a function such as this to have proper transparency, not just in fact but in perception, for Albertans. I think that by creating a panel of experts to choose the chief scientist – it would obviously be an ad hoc panel, struck as necessary. The position of chief scientist, we hope, would not be something that would turn over on a regular basis, which would therefore keep the cost of such a panel reasonable. I think it would add very much to the transparency and, therefore, the faith that Albertans and the world have in the quality of the work done by the agency, which would now be run internally by the minister, and greatly reduces, if not eliminates, the likelihood of political interference or the perception of the same.

With that, Madam Chair, I look forward very much to the debate. I would hope all members of the House would consider and support this amendment.

Thank you very much.

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

Is there anyone wishing to speak to amendment A1? The Minister of Environment and Parks.

**Ms Phillips:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the hon. member's intervention in this matter and his interest in ensuring that we have a good, solid environmental monitoring program in place in this province. Given that I know that he shares our government's view that high-quality environmental monitoring is an important part of public safety, public health, I'm also appreciative of the hon. member's, I guess, appreciation that the previous model was perhaps not the most efficient way to govern an environmental monitoring system.

You know, the role and responsibilities of the chief scientist are enshrined into law in this piece of legislation. The science advisory panel also has a number of different elements that ensure independence already, Madam Chair. The role of the chief scientist really is similar to the chief medical officer of Health, the chief provincial veterinarian, for example, the provincial apiculturist under section 2 of the Bee Act, the director of surveys under section 4 of the Surveys Act. These are all examples of where a professional expert recruited by the civil service in accordance with the merit-based recruitment process of the Alberta public service reports to the deputy minister for employee performance and is an appointment based on, in the first instance, merit and expertise. That is the appropriate role of the chief scientist, and it's the appropriate reporting function, to the deputy minister, in a merit-based civil service, which is, in fact, one of the underpinnings of a functioning democracy.

You know, the chief scientist also has the role of chief monitor, Madam Chair. As a result, the chief monitor is a position that not only ensures rigorous environmental reporting and monitoring but also ensures co-ordination with other government departments and so on. So that is the role of the chief scientist. It is someone who is very much within the Alberta public service, and we would not want other human resources processes interfering with what is already a highly professionalized public service. [interjection] I don't think that's a joke at all. I think it's not funny to deride the Alberta public service. We've had some wonderful examples in the last couple of weeks of the high level of professionalism exhibited by the Alberta public service, not the least of which are the folks in environmental monitoring who have worked day and night to ensure that it safe for the workers up in the Fort McMurray wildfire region. So to laugh at or to deride their professionalism is a very serious charge indeed, and it's certainly not one that the folks in this government caucus engage in at all.

Now, the other piece that's problematic about this amendment – so there are the HR pieces and the pieces on the proper functioning of the Alberta public service, Madam Chair, without interference from outside entities. I think that's really important. It's really something that I've taken very seriously as a minister and that I think all ministers take seriously and that I actually believe the previous government also took seriously. I have had very rare occasion to believe that anything other than the highest levels of professionalism under the previous government also prevailed with respect to the relationships with the public service.

However, this amendment also, in some ways, misunderstands the role of the science advisory panel. These are scientific experts in their fields. Some of them are here in Alberta, and some of them have had academic careers outside of Alberta. They are experts in monitoring. They are not experts in intergovernmental or interdepartmental, within government, co-ordination. The science advisory panel is not necessarily an expert in human resources matters, in reporting structures. [interjection] Is there something you'd like to share with the class?

**Mr. Fildebrandt:** I think she's giving up her speaking time, Madam Chair.

**The Deputy Chair:** Okay, Member.

9:20

**Ms Phillips:** I will go on, Madam Chair.

So the science advisory panel has that role – and that role is protected within the legislation – to speak to the public on matters related to science. However, we do not expect them to provide advice on matters related to recruitment and retention of highly qualified Alberta public service professions.

For that reason, I recognize, Madam Chair, the intent behind the amendment. I believe that the hon. member shares our intent for high-quality environmental monitoring and shares a level of seriousness about the environment and about orderly development in the oil sands, about the partnerships we have with industry, with indigenous peoples, with communities in the lower Athabasca. I know that the hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow also shares our government's view that we must refurbish and repair our environmental reputation, and a world-class monitoring system will help us to do that and to have those respectful and thoughtful conversations with our trading partners. I am aware that that is the intent of the hon. member, and I commend him for it. It is certainly not shared by all members of the House.

Madam Chair, while I recognize the merit of the amendment, I believe that we cannot support it at this time.

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

The Member for Strathmore-Brooks.

**Mr. Fildebrandt:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think that was a bit of a leap now, wasn't it?

Now, the Official Opposition began the debate on Bill 18 with an open mind. In fact, the Official Opposition voted for second reading of this bill in the hopes that we can improve the independence of environmental monitoring in this province. Unfortunately, we've been given no assurances whatsoever from the minister of environment and the government caucus that this is anything but an attempt to limit the independence of environmental monitoring in this province. This is an Orwellian-named bill, Madam Chair. We have serious concerns about the independence of environmental monitoring in this province. Now, there certainly were problems with AEMERA before, but the way to solve it isn't to make it even less independent than it was before.

We do not support this bill, but I will always support amendments that make bad legislation less bad, and that is why I'm pleased to stand up in support of the amendment put forward by the Member for Calgary-Elbow. I still don't think we can support this bill at the end of the day, even if the amendment is passed, but the amendment, if passed, would make this bill less bad than it is in its current form.

Now, this isn't that we don't trust public servants; this is that we don't trust the minister of environment to make the right decisions. I do not trust the minister of environment to appoint independent and objective people to these important positions when she wrote the foreword to a radical eco-extreme leaper manifesto, *An Action a Day: Keeps Global Capitalism Away*. We are trying to give the minister the power here to appoint the fox to guard the henhouse without any oversight whatsoever.

Now, we've seen problems with giving the ministers powers here to appoint important public servants without any oversight. The last one I can recall is when they appointed AUPE's senior negotiator, Kevin Davediuk, to go to the other side of the bargaining table and negotiate with AUPE, his own union buddies, for the government side. That is not a professional public service, Madam Chair. That is not independent. That does not give the Official Opposition and

Albertans any confidence whatsoever that this government has the best interests of Alberta at heart with some of these positions. These are important positions. We have thousands of professional and independent public servants in this province, but some of the senior positions that this government has been appointing have been clearly political.

The chief scientist of Alberta is a critical position. Regardless of where you stand on the debate around how to properly regulate the oil sands and our oil and gas industry, everybody agrees, industry and environmental groups, that that position should be truly independent, independent from industry and independent from the radicals whose book the minister wrote the foreword to. It should be independent from all sides, and that means proper oversight and monitoring. I think that this amendment will go at least some way – some way – to ensuring this. It's important that we have checks and balances on the power of the minister here to make these important appointments.

So I'm pleased to stand up and support this amendment. I'm very disappointed – however, I'm not shocked – to see that the minister does not have any interest in limiting her powers to appoint her friends.

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

Are there any other members wishing to speak on the amendment? The Member for Calgary-Elbow.

**Mr. Clark:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I just wanted to address a couple of the points raised by the Minister of Environment and Parks and minister responsible for the climate change office. You used a few examples: the medical officer of health, the chief veterinarian, those sorts of things. You know, I would just remind the minister that in the past, with the previous government, some of those positions have in fact succumbed to political pressure. In fact, I think that's probably one of the big reasons that the Member for Calgary-Mountain View is here, some of those sorts of challenges in the past.

You know, my concern – and this is a bigger discussion than just this single chief scientist position and something that perhaps the House may want to contemplate in the future in terms of how we address appointments to key positions generally. As I've said before, I think it's very important that at the very least we manage the perception risk around these sorts of appointments if not, in fact, the actual risk that appointments are political rather than merit based, if not in the present then at the very least in the future.

You know, the minister also referenced that perhaps this panel could be perceived as interference in the process. I think, in fact, it's entirely the opposite. It is to manage the risk that there would be undue interference in the appointment of such an important position to a role that is vital to the future of the province both for the environment and environmental monitoring but also for the perception and the overall economic well-being of our province. If the world perceives that Alberta's environmental monitoring is world class, and if, in fact, it is world class, that will only help, I think, ensure that we continue to develop the oil sands responsibly and reap the financial and social benefits from so doing.

The minister mentioned that this panel would not necessarily be qualified to perform a human resources role or do recruitment, you know, the mechanics of how the candidates are actually identified before the panel. I would envision them working with the public service, not purely in isolation, and plugging into those existing public service processes. It does add a layer of another check and balance and a layer of transparency. The goal here is to address that perception risk, and I would obviously hope and encourage the minister to reconsider.

I appreciate the Official Opposition's support for this amendment, and I would encourage all members, please, to support it.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

Are there any other members wishing to speak on the amendment? The Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky.

**Mr. Loewen:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, I'd like to speak in support of this amendment. Now, this amendment doesn't take a lot of power away from the ministry. If we look at this, it says, "For subsequent vacancies in the position of Chief Scientist." So the minister will still be able to appoint the first one, but subsequent vacancies – and correct me if I'm wrong, hon. member – for that position would be chosen from a list of qualified candidates provided by the panel. Again, right off the start the minister gets to appoint the first chief scientist, and then down the road there would be an independent appointment advisory panel to provide a list of qualified candidates. This group would provide a list of candidates for the minister to choose from. That still gives a lot of power to the minister.

9:30

Now, this group of five members will have at least one representative from each of the following: industry associations, indigenous communities, academia, environmental organizations, and regulatory experts. This is a pretty well-rounded group of individuals to be providing a list of qualified candidates for the minister to choose a chief scientist from. Again, this provides just a little bit more independency – just a little bit more – and, of course, that little bit more provides a little bit more transparency to this whole process.

For those reasons, I would like to support this amendment. Again, just like the previous member noted, it will make, you know, a bad bill just a little less bad. Obviously, I think Albertans are the same as us in the opposition in that we have a hard time putting our full trust in the minister based on her history of anti-oil activism.

Thank you.

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

Any other members wishing to speak on the amendment?

Seeing none, I will call the question.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion on amendment A1 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 9:31 a.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the committee divided]

[Ms Sweet in the chair]

For the motion:

Aheer	Hanson	Schneider
Clark	Loewen	Stier
Ellis	Nixon	Swann
Fildebrandt	Orr	Taylor
Fraser		

Against the motion:

Anderson, S.	Hinkley	Nielsen
Babcock	Horne	Phillips
Bilous	Kazim	Piquette
Carson	Kleinstauber	Rosendahl
Connolly	Littlewood	Schmidt
Coolahan	Loyola	Schreiner
Cortes-Vargas	Luff	Shepherd

Dach	Malkinson	Sucha
Dang	McCuaig-Boyd	Turner
Drever	McKittrick	Westhead
Fitzpatrick	Miller	Woollard
Ganley	Miranda	

Totals:	For – 13	Against – 35
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[Motion on amendment A1 lost]

**The Deputy Chair:** We will return to Bill 18. Are there any members wishing to speak on the original bill? The Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky.

**Mr. Loewen:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to talk again on Bill 18, An Act to Ensure Independent Environmental Monitoring. Bill 18 returns the core function of environmental monitoring to the government. Under Bill 18 AEMERA will report to the Deputy Minister of Alberta Environment and Parks through a responsible assistant deputy minister. If passed, this legislation will outline the role and establish the position of chief scientist.

The bill requires that the minister establish a science advisory panel, intended to provide advice to the chief scientist. This panel will also be charged with conducting independent assessments and evaluations on the performance of the overall program. This legislation will require regular public reporting from the environmental monitoring agency. The chief scientist will be responsible for determining the necessity of peer review and has autonomy to speak publicly without permission from the minister. The bill will additionally establish an indigenous wisdom advisory panel to integrate the indigenous perspective.

9:50

Now, there are some good parts to this bill, things that it could do if it's allowed to, being under the purview of the ministry. It could improve relations with the Environment Canada partners. It could consolidate scarce scientific expertise in one location in Alberta. It could find least costly solutions, and it could possibly eliminate some duplications and use public-sector salary comparators. Hopefully, we would have regular public reporting, and hopefully the chief scientist can speak publicly without approval from the minister. The minister must choose the science panel members from a list by the panel.

Now, of course, there are some points about this bill that have us more than a little uncomfortable. We've tried to pass a couple of amendments to this bill that we feel would have made it a little bit more accountable, a little bit more transparent. We asked that it be sent to committee so that we could have this bill looked at and we could get information from a variety of sources. That's the great thing about committees. It opens up an opportunity to listen to more than just the government speak about the benefits of this bill. We could hear the other side of the story, too, from other scientists that have a different opinion on what AEMERA has done and what it can do.

Now, given that the NDP, including the minister, through their association with environmental radicals – it's a little concerning to have more authority for the minister. Again, there have been numerous members of the scientific community that heavily criticized the Boothe study, upon which this government has based its decision to bring the environmental monitoring back in-house, back into the government. While the Boothe review claims that the agency has been a three-year failed experiment, the transfer of resources establishing the agency occurred in May 2015, and the Boothe review was launched shortly thereafter. So this agency, AEMERA, never really had a chance to get going.



Of course, when you start up anything, there are always some growing pains. These growing pains could have been addressed. We've tried to address some of them here, and we'd like to have had an opportunity to hear about some of these things in committee and hear different ideas on how these concerns could have been addressed. Now, there were some accusations of relatively high salary levels within AEMERA – and there's been some disputing of that, too – but that's something that could have been taken care of relatively easily.

Now, much of what the Boothe report identified as the high cost of AEMERA was based on sole-sourced Alberta Environment and Parks contracts before the formation of AEMERA. These were contracts from Alberta Environment and Parks. So now, in order to solve this issue, the government's response is to bring AEMERA back into the government, the same government that sole-sourced these contracts that are an issue. That, you know, brings more uncertainty to this whole issue.

**An Hon. Member:** Perplexing.

**Mr. Loewen:** Yes, it's very perplexing.

Now, clarifying the mandate of AEMERA still remains an option, and doing so would improve relations between AEMERA and Environment Canada and Alberta Environment and Parks. That's something that could still be done without bringing it into government. Bringing the cost of AEMERA in line with the public sector still remains an option, too. That's something, again, that could be done without bringing this into government.

Clarifying AEMERA's mandate would permit increased multijurisdictional co-operation. Now, that's something that's pretty basic, having a clear mandate. Of course, mandates can be adjusted. If there's some portion of the mandate they had that wasn't working, then that could be corrected. It's not that hard. Critics of the decision find it ironic that rather than making this decision using results of independent financial and scientific reviews, the minister based this decision on a sole-authored bureaucratic report that wasn't peer reviewed.

I think there are several things here that could be done without bringing this into government. I think the most important thing is that Albertans are assured of world-class monitoring. We need monitoring that has integrity. We need monitoring that has credibility. We need world-class monitoring because it's fundamental to the reputation of our energy sector and in the eyes of our customers. They need to be able to see this, and that's justified. We need to have this kind of credibility and integrity in our environmental monitoring that will allow our customers to look at us and our energy products and know that we have world-class monitoring.

Our monitoring has always been better than our competitors', but we need to be telling the world that, not telling the world that we're embarrassing cousins. We need to be telling the world about our world-class environmental monitoring. The energy that we produce here is far better than what the competitors bring to the table. You know, the original intent of AEMERA was to create an arm's-length body to conduct environmental monitoring, which is sensible, particularly if the government is lacking in credibility. We see we have this same problem here now. The government is lacking in credibility. There are ways to solve these problems without bringing it into government. We need to have that credibility in the world's eyes.

Just in conclusion, I won't be supporting Bill 18 in Committee of the Whole. Thank you.

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

Are there any other members wishing to speak on the bill?

**Ms McKittrick:** Madam Chair, I rise as a cosponsor of Bill 18, An Act to Ensure Independent Environmental Monitoring. About 47 years ago I graduated from one of the most prestigious universities in Canada, McGill University, with a degree in ecology. I am proud to have been a part of one of the first bachelor of science degrees awarded in ecology. We have come a long way since my graduation in understanding the impact that we have on the environment through our industries and the way we live. We have legislation at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels that ensures that we safeguard our air, water, land, and natural resources. We work hard on mitigating the impact of our dependency on cars; recycle cans, bottles, plastics, and paper; and ensure that we preserve spaces where animals have a place to roam and live. There is no longer a possibility to deny that climate change has impacted our planet and that we need to ensure proper monitoring of the environment and our impact on the Earth.

For my friends opposite who, like me, come from a faith background, I have been delighted to see faith-based groups such as Citizens for Public Justice and A Rocha remind us all of God's love for creation.

The vocation of being a "protector" . . . means protecting all creation, the beauty of the created world . . . It means respecting each of God's creatures and respecting the environment in which we live . . . In the end, everything has been entrusted to our protection, and all of us are responsible for it. Be protectors of God's gifts!

This is from Pope Francis.

**10:00**

As the Minister of Environment and Parks explained in this bill, it establishes the roles and responsibilities of the chief scientist, including developing and implementing an environmental science program to monitor, evaluate, and report on the condition of the environment. It outlines in law that the minister must establish a science advisory panel to provide independent advice to the chief scientist and the minister. I want to point out that this panel can speak publicly when it considers it necessary.

This bill establishes an indigenous wisdom panel to provide advice to the chief scientist and the minister on how to incorporate traditional ecological knowledge into the environmental science program, and this is so important at the moment.

In addition, there are some transitional provisions to ensure a smooth transition of monitoring functions and AEMERA back into the department. Madam Chair, I believe that our government has taken a thoughtful and measured approach in accepting the recommendations from the Boothe report to bring these core functions of government back into the Department of Environment and Parks.

The new model is the best option moving forward because it ensures that the government is directly accountable for environmental monitoring and that issues or gaps in monitoring are responded to immediately. The new model also eliminates fragmentation of scarce scientific capacity and will eliminate costly administrative duplication. Those two things were identified in the Boothe report as issues to be solved.

As a government we have a responsibility to the public to ensure that we are providing the best possible monitoring and reporting system and that this information is shared with the public regularly. It is for this reason that I support the specific duties of the chief scientist to establish and make public a schedule for reporting on the state of the environment in our province and to report on it.

I also believe, as does my caucus, that the indigenous wisdom panel has an extremely valuable role to play in ensuring that traditional ecological knowledge is included in environmental

monitoring, and I'm so delighted that we take this seriously now. Maintaining this panel, now the indigenous wisdom panel, recognizes that our indigenous peoples have lived in harmony with the land for thousands of years and that we have an opportunity to learn from their wisdom in matters of the environment.

A key focus of the indigenous wisdom panel will be to identify significant outstanding gaps in cumulative effects management and guide the work of the chief scientist to ensure that appropriate prioritization and focus is placed by the government and the division to support increased monitoring science and the public reporting of cumulative effects. This panel will provide advice not only about traditional ecological knowledge and how to integrate it with western science programs but also will advise on how best to engage indigenous communities.

Now, Madam Chair, I want to talk about this whole issue of peer review for the Boothe report. I have had papers that have been peer reviewed, and they're usually papers of primary research, therefore journals, or maybe you can be peer reviewed because you're going to be presenting a report at a conference. The Boothe report has nothing to do with an academic report that needs to be peer reviewed. I have gone through the experience of a peer review, and I'm wondering how many of the members opposite understand the concept of a peer review for an academic journal versus a report that has been written for a specific purpose such as providing advice to government.

Madam Chair, the Boothe report was very clear in its recommendations to bring environmental monitoring back into the department. Page 12 of the report states:

Like many complex system failures, the failure of this experiment had several causes. The first was the erroneous belief that the lack of public credibility attached to environmental monitoring in Alberta at this time (in particular, for the oil sands) was related to its close link with government rather than the weakness of its scientific underpinnings. The second was an inability to clearly articulate the relationship between AEMERA and AEP and to recognize the role of the department in coordinating portfolio activities on behalf of the Minister. The third was a failure to appreciate the public sector management impacts of stripping AEP of the scientific capacity it needs to fulfill its mandate of environmental stewardship.

We believe that the measures we're taking will not only improve front-line delivery of monitoring in Alberta but will ensure that scientific independence is maintained and even improved. Madam Chair, I support Bill 18 because I believe that it will provide the foundation for the most transparent, accountable, and scientifically sound environmental monitoring system.

Thank you.

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

The hon. Member for Calgary-South East.

**Mr. Fraser:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It's always an honour to rise and speak in this House to the hon. members. You know, I was just thinking that there was a film, I believe in 1986, a movie called *A Time to Kill*. It's about this southern girl – she's an African-American girl – who gets brutally raped. She's raped by these white what they would call, I guess, country boys. As the movie goes on, it is a commentary on race relations in the United States and obviously very contentious.

One of the pieces that was moving in that film, if you've seen it, was towards the end, when Matthew McConaughey, playing the lawyer for the father who goes out and avenges his daughter's rape, is articulating what happened. He asks the jury to close their eyes, and as he articulates what happened on that day, towards the end he

says: now, I want you to imagine that this happened to a white girl. For me in that moment it said something: imagine that.

On this particular piece of the bill – and I see the chair thinking: where are you going with this? – imagine if it was our government who was now pulling AEMERA back into the ministry. Imagine the protest from what would have been the fourth party back then and the outcry that now it's coming into the minister's control.

Now, I'm not going to ask you to close your eyes, but let's start a little bit with the narrative. In the beginning the minister wouldn't meet with AEMERA's leadership, to start, and then starts to make decisions without doing that. Then as the minister's office and the ministry are doing that, there's an outcry from chief scientists right across the country in disagreement. Now, imagine all of that going on, and it was our government. There would have been this huge outcry based on perception.

Originally when we did it, when we moved and created the world-class environmental monitoring in 2013, it was because there was this perception that the governing party of the day was perhaps too close to the oil and gas industry, so we put it at arm's length to remove some of that conspiracy, to remove some of that perception. Now here we are in a new day, and the government of the day is doing something that they would have vehemently opposed if it were us.

The minister has an opportunity here to do some things. One of those things would be to send this bill to committee – right? – to have more dialogue on this, on exactly how it's going to work.

**An Hon. Member:** Why did you mention rape? It's not really appropriate.

**Mr. Fraser:** Then you weren't listening. However, it was perception. And I have the floor, hon. member.

**An Hon. Member:** What's your point?

**10:10**

**Mr. Fraser:** The point is that it's perception, and the point is that if the shoe was on the other foot, there would have been this huge outcry.

Members, we can't support this simply because there is a perception. It's already out there, and the minister now has the task of separating that out. We already have a challenge in the world today of making sure that we're doing everything we can on a social licence basis, but to pull the monitoring agency back into the minister's office is creating some concern for industry. We're hearing it from scientists. That's why I won't be supporting this bill. I think the minister has an opportunity to maybe refer this bill to committee to do some extra work on it. That's an opportunity. That's my suggestion.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

Are there any other members wishing to speak to the bill?  
Seeing none, I'll call the question on Bill 18.

[The remaining clauses of Bill 18 agreed to]

**The Deputy Chair:** On the title and preamble, are you agreed?

[The voice vote indicated that the title and preamble were agreed to]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 10:11 a.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the committee divided]

[Ms Sweet in the chair]

For:

Anderson, S.	Ganley	Miller
Babcock	Hinkley	Nielsen
Bilous	Horne	Phillips
Carson	Kazim	Piquette
Connolly	Kleinsteuber	Rosendahl
Coolahan	Littlewood	Schreiner
Cortes-Vargas	Loyola	Shepherd
Dach	Luff	Sigurdson
Dang	Malkinson	Sucha
Drever	Mason	Turner
Feehan	McCuaig-Boyd	Westhead
Fitzpatrick	McKitrick	Woollard

Against:

Aheer	Jansen	Schneider
Clark	Loewen	Stier
Fildebrandt	Nixon	Swann
Fraser	Orr	Taylor
Hanson		

Totals: For – 36 Against – 13

[Title and preamble agreed to]

**The Deputy Chair:** Shall the bill be reported? Are you agreed?

**Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**The Deputy Chair:** Opposed? Carried.

### Bill 16

#### Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2016

**The Deputy Chair:** Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered with respect to this bill?

We have amendment A4, that was adjourned yesterday. Is there anyone wishing to speak to amendment A4? The Government House Leader.

**Mr. Mason:** Thank you very much. Speaking as Minister of Transportation, I'm not sure what to do right now, Madam Chair. The hon. Member for Calgary-Greenway had submitted to my office three amendments, which included the one that's before us now. While I'm not prepared to accept the one before us now, I am prepared to accept two other amendments that he provided to my office. Unfortunately, I don't think we're in a position to deal with this right now. I don't know whether we should just put this back, adjourn again, and hopefully we can come back to it later today.

I'll move to adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

### Private Bills

#### Committee of the Whole

##### Bill Pr. 1

#### Bow Valley Community Foundation Repeal Act

**The Deputy Chair:** Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered with respect to this bill?

**Mr. Westhead:** Madam Chair, I'd like to advise the House that this bill was reviewed by the Standing Committee on Private Bills and that the committee has recommended that the bill proceed.

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

Are there any other comments, questions, or amendments on Bill Pr. 1?

Seeing none, are you ready for the question on Bill Pr. 1?

[The clauses of Bill Pr. 1 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

**The Deputy Chair:** Shall the bill be reported? Are you agreed?

**Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**The Deputy Chair:** Opposed? Carried.

Government House Leader, would you like to rise and report?

10:20

**Mr. Mason:** Madam Chair, I move that the committee rise and report Bill 18 and Bill Pr. 1 and report progress on Bill 16.

[Motion carried]

[Ms Sweet in the chair]

**Ms Woollard:** Madam Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain bills. The committee reports the following bills: Bill 18, Bill Pr. 1. The committee reports progress on the following bill: Bill 16. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

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

Does the Assembly concur in this report? Agreed?

**Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker:** Opposed? So ordered.

### Government Bills and Orders

#### Third Reading

##### Bill 10

#### Fiscal Statutes Amendment Act, 2016

[Adjourned debate May 24: Mr. Mason]

**The Acting Speaker:** Any members wishing to speak to Bill 10? The Member for Strathmore-Brooks.

**Mr. Fildebrandt:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. We're still debating Bill 10 in the House right now because we have not seen any reasonable justification from this government for the legislation before us here. We have not yet seen the Minister of Finance stand up in this House and explain why it is that he needs to repeal the debt ceiling that he imposed in legislation just four and a half months before introducing this. We have not yet seen any good reason provided by the government for why it is that they believe they will exceed 15 per cent of debt to GDP in just a few short years.

We've yet to hear a reasonable case put forward by the minister as to why the taxpayers of Alberta should believe anything he has to say about their plan to get us back to balanced budgets. We have yet to hear anything from the Minister of Finance or the Premier that would give an iota of comfort to our lenders, the people lending money to this province, to ensure that we are sufficiently credit worthy.

The last time that the Minister of Finance attempted to reassure the creditors of this province and our credit-rating agencies, he flew out east to meet with some of the credit-rating agencies. What did they do after seeing the minister? They downgraded the credit rating

of the province. They had such little faith in the ability of the minister to put this province back on a path to balanced budgets that they figured, after a conversation with him, that the province clearly had no plan, that we are no longer worthy of our triple-A plus credit rating.

Literally less than one day, less than 24 hours, after the government introduced its budget, the credit rating of this province was downgraded, and that had nothing to do whatsoever with the price of oil. All they can do is blame the price of oil. But if it had to do with the price of oil, our credit would have been downgraded on the day of or a few days after a significant drop in the price of oil. Instead, they waited to see this government's budget. They brought down a budget, and it was so clear that they had no plan whatsoever to address the significant shortfall between revenues and expenditures here that they downgraded the credit rating of this province.

There was no significant change in the price of oil between the time of our last downgrade and the downgrade that happened the day after the budget. There was no significant change in the price of oil. In fact, during a lot of that period the price of oil actually went up. The price of oil is the only excuse that this government can banter about, hoping that Albertans actually aren't paying attention. But Albertans who are paying attention to this know that their excuse just doesn't hold water. They've blamed the price of oil for everything here.

Then they bring forward Bill 10, a bill that is extraordinarily reckless and irresponsible. While we were debating Bill 10, a bill that would remove any limit whatsoever to the ability of this government to borrow, while we were debating that very bill last Thursday, we got another credit downgrade by Standard & Poor's. Standard & Poor's downgraded the credit of this province while we were debating a bill that removes any limits whatsoever on the government to borrow. They didn't downgrade the credit of this province with a drop in the oil price. In fact, oil has had a significant recovery since Bill 10 was introduced.

Now, knock on wood, Madam Speaker, I'm not relying on that to bail the province out. Governments for a long time have relied upon the price of oil to bail us out of our problems, and we shouldn't rely upon that. The price of oil has actually gone up significantly since Bill 10 was introduced in this House, but the credit rating of the province has been downgraded significantly since Bill 10 was introduced in this House. Do you see the cognitive dissidence of this government? They will speak out of one side of their mouth and tell us that oil is the only reason for the fiscal problems of this government – the only reason – while oil prices are actually increasing and our credit rating is going down.

Our credit rating is going down for one reason, Madam Speaker. It's that the government has no darn plan, NDP. They have no plan whatsoever to get us back to balance. They have no plan to close the gap between expenditures and revenues in this province. Now, there are two ways to do that. They can increase taxes even more, or they can reduce spending. Albertans have had enough tax increases in this province. They have increased personal income taxes by up to 50 per cent for some earners. They've increased business taxes by 20 per cent. They've increased gasoline taxes, diesel taxes, home heating taxes.

They've introduced a massive ND PST carbon tax that is going to slam families and small oil drilling companies in this province with \$3 billion of new taxes without coming anywhere close to compensating taxpayers for the cost of this. Their rebate is an absolute sham. It doesn't come anywhere close to rebating middle-class families for the actual cost of this carbon tax. The carbon tax has nothing to do with their stated goals around the environment. It is a tax grab, pure and simple. If it wasn't a tax grab, it wouldn't

appear on page 22 of the fiscal plan under the table titled Tax Revenue. If it wasn't a tax grab, they wouldn't be spending it. They wouldn't be spending this money on new corporate welfare programs.

You know who is going to be here later today, Madam Speaker? The illustrious Premier of Ontario, who has bankrupted that province with these same kinds of so-called green energy subsidy programs, building a windmill on every corner, cancelling gas plants. They're now actually even talking about banning natural gas for home heating in Ontario. Period. The Premier of Ontario is going to be here today, and I'm sure she's going to impart her wisdom about fiscal responsibility and good spending programs on the environmental side.

I am terrified that some of this is going to rub off although we shouldn't be because the real crusaders for this are already here. We have an environment minister who helped write the foreword for a book, *An Action a Day: Keeps Global Capitalism Away*, radical environmentalists here who are bent upon imposing a huge green subsidy program in this province, paid for by taxpayers.

If this had anything to do with the environment and it wasn't just a big tax grab, they would have made the carbon tax revenue neutral. They would have cut business taxes. They would have cut personal income taxes the way British Columbia did. It would have been revenue neutral, and it wouldn't have brought the government one new penny to spend on subsidy programs like Kathleen Wynne is conducting in Ontario. But it's not, so they brought in a massive tax grab so they could increase spending even more on some of their pet projects.

**10:30**

It has done nothing to actually close the gap between expenditures and revenues in the province because all of the new taxes, the \$3 billion of new taxes that this government is going to capture from Albertans in that carbon tax, all \$3 billion there is going to be spent. They're not even going to take the revenue from this towards the deficit, nor should they because we should be cutting expenditures in this province.

Our creditors are looking at this province and saying that there is no realistic plan whatsoever to get back to balance, and that is why we have suffered our fifth credit downgrade. It's our fifth credit downgrade.

You know, a lot of us have seen a great video that was posted on YouTube about this guy who went to his bank. He's pretty broke. He makes about \$30,000 a year, and he spends about \$45,000 a year, roughly the size of the deficit, proportionately, that the Alberta government is running. He has no concern. All he does is to go to the bank, and he asks for an increase in his line of credit. The banker says: "We can't give you this money. You're no longer good for it. You're not good for this money. You're earning \$30,000. You're spending \$45,000. You already owe \$30,000 on top of that. You already owe a lot of money, and you've got no plan to either bring in more money or to reduce your expenditures." The guy is dumbfounded: "Well, what do you mean? I need these things. These are great things. I like to do fun things with this money." The banker says: "Well, at the end of the day, we're not going to lend you money if you're not creditworthy for it." So what does he do? He carts in his kid and makes his kid sign a loan.

That's what we're doing here. We are making our children sign the loan for us. That is the advantage that government has over individuals when it comes to borrowing. I can't borrow more than I'm worthy for on my credit rating because at the end of the day I'm responsible for my own debts. We are not responsible personally for the reckless actions that we are taking here. Madam Speaker, if the politicians in this Chamber had to personally be responsible for

the debts we are taking on, I guarantee you that we would never see Bill 10 before this House. We would never bring something as reckless and shameful as Bill 10, to eliminate any debt ceiling whatsoever, before this House if we actually had to put our own money on the line.

Instead, we're here for a good time, not a long time, aren't we? We're here for four years. Hopefully, you don't stretch it to five. We are here for four years. The worst thing that could possibly happen to the government is that they lose an election and have to get a job in the private sector. That's the worst possible thing that could happen to a politician. You lose your seat, and you move on with life. But you're not responsible afterwards for the decisions that you've made here. This is a short-term contract that we are on. We're on a four-year contract, and we don't have to live with the consequences of our actions, but the rest of Alberta does. Future generations have to live with the consequences of our actions.

We can do anything we want here. We can be as reckless with people's money as we like because at the end of the day not a single one of the 87 members of this House is going to be held personally responsible for those actions. I know – I know – for a fact that if at the end of this legislative term, if in the spring of 2019 all of us when we leave here had to take a share of the debt that we've taken on, I guarantee that they would never do anything like this. They would never do anything like this, but they're happy to kick the can down the road and let somebody else pay for it.

As I said, at an earlier stage of debate here I quoted Frédéric Bastiat, who said that government is the great illusion in which everyone tries to live at everyone else's expense. Well, that doesn't just go between regions of a country or regions of a province. It doesn't just go between classes of wealth or position in a society. It also goes between generations. What we're doing here, Madam Speaker, is that we are trying to live at the expense of future generations. We are trying to accumulate wealth for ourselves right now, paid for by our children and our children's children.

Of course, in the 1980s, when the Alberta government was on its last big borrowing binge, the government of the day said: "We owe this to ourselves. We need to borrow this money to diversify the economy and spend it on all these programs that we like." They weren't willing to pay the piper for what they were spending that day. They weren't willing to either raise the taxes or cut spending and actually balance their books. They were living at the expense of the next generation, and that's what we are doing here today. We are trying to live at the expense of our children and our grandchildren. It is irresponsible, and it is morally repugnant, Madam Speaker, and that is why the Official Opposition will vote against this bill.

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

Anyone wishing to speak to the bill?

The Member for Strathcona-Sherwood Park.

**Cortes-Vargas:** Thank you. I'm standing to adjourn debate on Bill 10.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

### **Bill 18** **An Act to Ensure Independent** **Environmental Monitoring**

**The Acting Speaker:** Are there any members wishing to speak to Bill 18? The Minister of Environment and Parks.

**Ms Phillips:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Of course, I rise to move third reading of Bill 18, which is an Act to Ensure Independent Environmental Monitoring.

You know, the reason for that, Madam Speaker, is that environmental monitoring really must be the core business of government, just like public health and public safety. We have always said that we need to do a better job of monitoring the environmental impacts of resource development because Albertans demand it. The communities demand it. Certainly, our trading partners demand it as well, and industry demands it of themselves. That is why we accepted the recommendations conducted under the agencies, boards, and commissions review, the expert analysis provided to us by Dr. Paul Boothe to bring front-line monitoring functions back into the department and introduce this bill.

Of course, this bill enshrines a number of things into law that were not previously there, including the role and responsibilities of the chief scientist. The science advisory panel was there previously, but not the indigenous wisdom panel, and it enshrines in law that the science advisory panel can speak publicly when it's deemed necessary. These were really thoughtful and measured inclusions, Madam Speaker, that ensure the independence of the scientific data while being accountable to Albertans with respect to the analysis and reporting of data.

Madam Speaker, I believe, having been minister of environment now for about a year, that, you know, the previous government recognized that they had a problem with environmental monitoring. There were so many criticisms being levelled at their approach, and that was why they constituted AEMERA. I believe that the intentions were good, and I believe that they were trying to get it right and had come around to this idea that they had to get it right, that our international and national reputations depended on it. However, I believe that the governance model was a bridge too far. It was unnecessary, and it was administration duplication.

**10:40**

It pains me that some members of this House don't want to see this province efficiently expend environmental resources and scientific resources. In my mind, you know, our focus needs to be on those front-line monitoring services. So that's unfortunate, Madam Speaker. But what we've done with this, I would argue, is to keep the good start within the previous government's approach, with the science advisory panel and the appointment of the chief scientist and ensuring more regularized reporting. We've taken out the pieces that got in the way of achieving those objectives.

There were pieces of the agency that got in the way of an ongoing nation-to-nation relationship with indigenous peoples, for example. It's so crucial in the oil sands region in particular that we maintain and foster those relationships with the indigenous peoples for their traditional land use and the cumulative effects and so on. So the agency, despite, I think, very good intentions, quite frankly, had trouble navigating that relationship because it wasn't government to nation; it was agency to nation. It was awkward. It was tough to get off the ground.

But the traditional ecological knowledge panel was finally sort of lifted off the ground eventually under AEMERA. What we've done here is to not make it discretionary, whether that panel exists, but we've enshrined it into law. The minister shall ensure that those voices are heard, and that's really important.

You know, having spent quite a bit of time up there discussing development in the oil sands region, I think that there is a real desire for that nation-to-nation relationship and that really careful cultivation of an actual relationship and communication and to go beyond just ticking the box of consultation, that is required. So I think that through the establishment of the indigenous wisdom panel within this legislation, that requires this government and subsequent governments to engage in that respectful way – and that is a change, Madam Speaker. I think it's unfortunate that that piece

and that respectful relationship will be opposed by some members of this House.

Finally, Madam Speaker, I think that some of the pieces that were contained within the Boothe report really speak to our government's desire to make sure that we are investing in front-line services, whether those services are to protect our public health through our public health care system or public security through, for example, emergency management response, which, of course, we have seen the results of very recently. Thank goodness, particularly in the lower Athabasca, we have all those folks working in environmental monitoring and all the folks working in the environment department in particular, that I know I can speak to, and their high level of professionalism and so on. Thank goodness those folks were not cut in Budget 2015 last fall or in this one so that we had the capacity to respond. It's so important that we be able to shore that up and that every extra dollar that we have within environmental monitoring is going towards just that. That's what this legislation does.

To conclude moving third reading, Madam Speaker, I do want to underline that there were some good parts of the previous government's approach around AEMERA. However, what it did was that it established a governance model that we don't see in other jurisdictions. It just didn't really stack up to an evidence-based approach to the matter, with an appropriate interjurisdictional comparison, with an actual careful eye to how we govern environmental monitoring and how we speak to the public about it. That's another really big piece. We need to make sure that that reporting is timely, that it contains an appropriate analysis. It is no good to just dump a whole bunch of data on the public and just say: here; look at these spreadsheets. There must be analysis. What are we looking at? What are the trends? Are we measuring the appropriate things?

The chief scientist will have to give those reports to the public, Madam Speaker. In addition, the science advisory panel is able to say to the public and to the chief scientist, you know, "Look, you need to examine this part" or "There is this monitoring for this particular emission that needs to be done now that we now have the technology to do," and so on. The science advisory panel can undertake that and can speak to the public about it. I think it's unfortunate that some members in the House would oppose such an approach and would oppose such an open conversation about science with the public. This is about ensuring that we have a robust, public approach to public science. Certainly, Environment Canada has quite a few boots on the ground, and they now are able to speak to the public, scientists as well, which is fantastic. We have allowed that same freedom through this legislation.

As I move third reading, I just want to underline for the House that, you know, when we were sworn in a year ago, we took a very methodical approach to some of these questions of governance. After 40 years, for better or for worse, for good intentions or for maybe not-so-good intentions, you end up with some frayed edges around governance, Madam Speaker. That's what we're looking to clean up here.

We're just really looking to make sure that when we go and speak to the public and we speak to our trading partners and we speak to those who have questions about orderly development in the oil sands, we have real answers, that we have evidence-based answers, that we don't have answers that are simply based on rhetoric or on thumping one's chest or on stomping one's feet or whatever other toddlerlike behaviour we think might get us to acceptance of our heavy oil products on world markets, that we are taking a substantive approach, a careful and thoughtful approach to the development of our energy resources, Madam Speaker.

With that I move third reading.

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

Any other members wishing to speak? I will recognize the Member for Lacombe-Ponoka first and then the Member for Calgary-South East.

**Mr. Orr:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this bill. The challenge here, of course, is multipronged. Part of the issue why this bill is not acceptable is because it just continues to add to the problem of big government in our province. In many cases big government is not the solution and, in fact, is the problem. It just adds to spiralling budgets and to continually making a bigger and bigger and bigger bureaucracy that just interrupts what the people in our province need to do.

The other problem is, of course, that independent boards are independent for a reason. Independent boards need to have some independence. Of course, when the employees have to answer to the boss, they're no longer completely independent. The way it's being set up now – while there were problems before, this isn't the right solution. Big government, loss of independence is not a solution.

What we've got now is setting up a situation, a particular strategy of operation whereby the likelihood of manipulation and influence and control is extremely strong. In short, this is a conflict of interest. Now, I realize this government doesn't seem to understand the nature or the concept of a conflict of interest, but most of the independent boards and agencies and commissions in this province were set up with only three requirements to the government. The first was, of course, that they would receive their mandate from the government. The second is that they would receive a budget from the government. The third is that they would make an annual report to the government. Beyond that they were to operate with independent boards and independent decision-making and freedom from political influence and manipulation in the process.

**10:50**

I think this leads to secrecy. I think it leads to reports being vetted, a loss of transparency. The issue isn't the science. It's the fact that the science is being paid for by the government. It's the issue that science is being muzzled by the boss. Whistle-blowing will be squelched. I just think that in the end the reality is that the environment will suffer. This isn't about protecting the environment; it's about destroying the independence and the freedom of an independent monitor. Thank you.

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

The hon. Member for Calgary-South East.

**Mr. Fraser:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The minister makes a very interesting case, which I can agree with, that the environment is no different than any other front-line service like health care, like policing. But when we look at public safety – and we can use the Alberta Emergency Management Agency, that's arm's-length, to make decisions that are made by professionals. Police departments – city of Calgary police, city of Edmonton police department, RCMP and the detachments around the province – are funded by governments in some form but are independent to make decisions in the best interests of their citizens that don't necessarily have that political pressure or political oversight, that may be real or even perceived manipulation.

I guess the question for the minister as we move forward is – and I would agree that not everything in AEMERA was perfect; however, there were good things. I would also say that a good thing about the particular bill is the indigenous advisory council. I mean, I do believe that kings should be speaking to kings and queens speaking to queens, using that reference.

So there are some good parts of this, but, I think, going back to what I was saying before, it is the perception that now it's in the minister's office, particularly trying to initiate things like the carbon tax. You can see the perception from people that maybe the science can be manipulated by the minister's office. That's the problem. Again, it's not that there's any malintent; however, it's the perception. Now the minister's office is going to be tasked with that. You know, how often will the minister and this particular part of her ministry be in front of committee so that all members of this House, again, can see what's going on and fight for their constituents?

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Are there any members wishing to speak under 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, any members wishing to speak on the bill? The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

**Dr. Turner:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today as I'm a cosponsor of Bill 18, An Act to Ensure Independent Environmental Monitoring. I'd like to provide the House with some context of how we arrived here today, debating a bill that will bring environmental monitoring back into government. As you know, our government committed to reviewing all agencies, boards, and commissions that fall under our purview. We undertook these reviews to improve services and ensure value for taxpayers. We also undertook these reviews to consider the role, mandate, board members, and governance structures of ABCs and to identify areas of duplication and potential savings.

As part of this process AEMERA was reviewed by Dr. Paul Boothe, who's a former Environment Canada deputy minister and currently the director of the Lawrence National Centre for Policy and Management at Western University's Ivey Business School. Dr. Boothe's report clearly identified some key issues, including that the private model diverted overhead costs away from monitoring, led to confusion around roles and responsibilities, and limited resources. The report stated:

Considering the body of information gathered through interviews and a review of key documents, it is hard to escape the conclusion that AEMERA is a failed experiment in outsourcing a core responsibility of government to an arm's-length body.

That's on page 12.

AEMERA's operational model is also more costly than public-sector models. I would think that that should appeal to those across the aisle, that we want to use governmental resources very efficiently. In part the high costs come because its governance and administrative structures duplicate structures that already exist at a lower cost in the public sector. In addition, costs are high because AEMERA has chosen private- rather than public-sector salary and benefit comparators despite the fact that many staff were previously performing similar functions at lower costs when employed by AEPEA.

Madam Speaker, the Boothe report recommended to transition monitoring back into the department under the guidance of a chief scientist. Our government has accepted these recommendations, and Bill 18 puts the recommendations into action. I urge all members to support it.

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

Are there any other members wishing to speak on Bill 18? The Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky.

**Mr. Loewen:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Bill 18, An Act to Ensure Independent Environmental Monitoring. Ensuring that Alberta has world-class environmental monitoring is a Wildrose

priority. Upholding the integrity of Alberta's monitoring systems is vital not only for our environment but for our industry. World-class monitoring secures the longevity and reputation of Alberta's energy sector. This is critically important. So we'll be watching what the government does to ensure that political interference does not damage the quality or credibility of our monitoring.

Now, this move will reconsolidate Alberta's scientific knowledge base, thus allowing Alberta Environment and Parks to better fulfill its monitoring mandate. So there are some good things about this. But we are wary of consolidating the power in the hands of government. Now, this government's history of environmental radicalism concerns us. We're most concerned about ministerial interference. If they are spared interference, we trust Alberta scientists will deliver the world-class environmental monitoring that we rely on and that our energy sector relies on. Dr. Wrona is a highly reputable scientist, and we were pleased to see that he will continue to lead this monitoring.

Now, even with operations taken in-house, it is vital to ensure that the scientists are given freedom to operate independently. Without world-class monitoring the reputation of our energy sector is at risk, and we can't afford to lose that. The oil industry is fully invested in seeing that Alberta has world-class environmental monitoring. They know tracking their impact is a priority because, for them, mitigating their impact is a priority.

It is crucial that we defend the integrity and credibility of our environmental monitoring. We appreciate that the minister cannot appoint board members directly but wonder if the board selecting nominees will make it too much of an insiders' clique. Co-operation between federal and provincial monitoring bodies is important to ensure we maintain world-class standards in Alberta. The Wildrose is committed to that.

Thank you.

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

Are there any other members wishing to speak to Bill 18? The Minister of Advanced Education.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased to rise in support of Bill 18, An Act to Ensure Independent Environmental Monitoring. I'm sure that many in this House are aware that I worked for seven years as a groundwater specialist at Alberta environment, so I have first-hand knowledge of the process that the department went through in setting up the Alberta monitoring agency that we're now dismantling.

I have to say, Madam Speaker, that a number of our staff were concerned with the process. A number of environment staff were of course concerned with the quality, the integrity, the independence of the monitoring that our department was doing back when this was a function carried out by Alberta environment, and certainly many of us in the civil service were quite relieved when Dr. David Schindler pointed out some of the holes that existed in the monitoring program at that time and, of course, prompted the government of the day to undertake a review of how monitoring in the oil sands area, in particular, was undertaken and suggested some changes.

I think many in the civil service, it's fair to say, thought that perhaps the government of the day went a step too far, that rather than ensuring taking measures to just reform the way Alberta environment was set up to ensure the independent monitoring that we're trying to establish, they resorted to an old trick, let's say, of setting up an arm's-length agency because that seemed to be the solution to any problem that government faced at the time, that if you had a problem with something that was going on with government, you'd take that function out of government and you'd

set up an independent agency, and magically the problem would be fixed. Of course, we see now, after three years of this experiment, that that didn't actually fix the problem, that the work that needs to be done wasn't actually getting done because there were so many problems with setting up the agency.

**11:00**

Madam Speaker, I saw first-hand the trouble that people had deciding whether or not they should work for Alberta Environment anymore or work for AEMERA because they weren't sure where their job naturally fit, right? I worked side by side with hydrologists, with limnologists who loved their job passionately and wanted to continue on doing the job in the organization that was going to continue doing that kind of work, but they were never sure whether that work was going to be continued under Alberta Environment or the monitoring agency. As a result, some of our monitoring staff were moved over to the monitoring agency; some of the monitoring staff stayed at Alberta Environment. They were often working on the same projects, just across different agencies, and it took a toll on the quality of the work that was undertaken by those two agencies as well as on staff morale.

The staff who did move over to AEMERA were never really sure how long they were going to be there. The budgetary questions that were asked about the certainty, the predictability, the sustainability of the funding of the agency had never been answered satisfactorily, so my friends who went to work for the agency were never really sure whether or not their next paycheque was going to come from AEMERA or from Alberta Environment or whether their jobs were going to be cut altogether.

Madam Speaker, I'm quite relieved that our government is taking action to establish the certainty in the role of Alberta Environment in carrying out this monitoring work. You know, the Member for Lacombe-Ponoka talked about big government, and if he gave this any more than just a passing thought, he'd realize that we're actually shrinking government because we're taking the work that's being done by two agencies now and shrinking it into one agency. That only makes sense. That's what the civil servants that I worked with wanted from day one. We warned our political masters of the day that by establishing this agency, we would be duplicating functions, that we would be delegating responsibility so that we weren't sure who was responsible for what. When you have those kinds of situations, it turns out that nobody is responsible for anything, and no work gets done.

I'm glad that we're proceeding with dismantling AEMERA and rolling those functions back into the environment department because now we know who's responsible for environmental monitoring all across the province. It's the government of Alberta, and our civil servants will know who they're working with, who they're working for, what their job is. I'm certain that as a result the work that will be done will be better than it has been over the past two or three years, when civil servants have been trying to do their job in spite of the chaos that's been happening at the management level.

I want to address a couple of points that have been raised by our friends from across the aisle here in this debate. You know, they have concerns about political interference, Madam Speaker, and I have to say that when AEMERA was set up, we had concerns about political interference. Of course, we know that Dr. Lorne Taylor was the chair of AEMERA, and we also know that Dr. Lorne Taylor is a confirmed climate change denier – right? – much like many of our friends from across the way. The Member for Calgary-Mountain View, in fact, lost his job because he had the courage to stand up and say that climate change is a real problem, that it's caused by human activity, and that the government needed to do

something to fix it. [interjections] Thank you, Calgary-Mountain View. And the Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood is causing me to doubt myself. I don't do that very often.

When you set up a confirmed climate change denier in charge of the agency that's tasked with monitoring the environment, of course you're going to have concerns, right? In fact, there will always be concerns around the political leadership and their ability to undertake scientific endeavours in the province, whoever the leader is, Madam Speaker. I think that the advantage of this bill is that we have one agency responsible for carrying out the monitoring.

I also want to address some comments made by our friends in the Wildrose Party about the fact that they don't trust the minister. I think that it's a convenient talking point for them, and they want to deflect from the reality, Madam Speaker, that they don't trust government at all to do anything. You know, in his response to a maiden speech in the last session of the Legislature the Member for Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock actually said that government was a negative force – I'm paraphrasing – that government was by its nature a destructive force. Of course, that reflects the Wildrose's view of government, that there is nothing that the government can do well because the government isn't supposed to do anything.

They like to say that they don't trust the minister, but what's at the heart of their argument, Madam Speaker, is that they don't actually trust government to do anything, and of course this is one of the many reasons why that party is not fit to run this province. We are certain that the people of Alberta see that, especially when it comes to the issue of environmental monitoring. There are no people in this country who are more concerned about the environment than the people of Alberta, and they don't want a bunch of people who don't understand science and don't believe that government has a role in protecting the environment running this province.

I want to touch on another subject that the members opposite have raised a number of times in this debate, Madam Speaker, and that is the fact that they are afraid that the minister will somehow politically interfere in the science that's involved, as if the minister herself is going to run around the Athabasca River and collect samples and then throw the ones that disagree with her preconceived notions out of the boat so that only the ones that support her hypothesis are the ones that are run in the lab, which is ridiculous.

Of course, if these people had any idea how government functions, which they don't – right? – they would know that our environment department is staffed from top to bottom with professional scientists, who abide by a code of ethics and will not let their work be meddled with by any political masters, Madam Speaker. One of the reasons that we have one of the best public services in the whole country is because we are staffed top to bottom with professionals who carry out their work without respect to what the desires of their political masters are.

On the issue of trusting science, Madam Speaker, of course, we know that there are a number of people in the Wildrose Party who frequently tweet about whether or not climate change is real, so of course they don't believe in evidence even when it's been presented by thousands of scientists who have been working on this for years and years.

Also, Madam Speaker, I recall a particular incident last summer, when Alberta Environment released air quality reports focused on Red Deer, on air quality issues in Red Deer. Of course, this was work that was undertaken by professional scientists, professional air quality monitoring, who have worked in the department for a number of years. The samples, I believe, were collected between the years 2011 and 2013, long before this minister was even present in this Chamber. The air quality results were quite concerning.



There were levels of PAHs, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons for people who probably don't know what PAH stands for, that were concerning. These are air quality concerns that, if they continued on, would have legitimate health impacts. The Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky's response to the release: oh, this is political interference from a minister who's committed to phasing out coal. What was the Member for Chestermere-Rocky View's response? The same thing, that we can't trust the minister to present science.

11:10

Of course, what they don't say, Madam Speaker, is that they don't understand the science that was presented to them. It is human nature to fear what you don't understand, so out of fear they automatically attack the minister of the environment as somehow politically interfering with the independent work that's being undertaken by our air quality monitoring in the department. It's absolutely ridiculous that these people are even in this Chamber to talk about the quality of . . . [interjections]

**The Acting Speaker:** Hon. members.

I'd just like to caution the members in the House about the language that we use when we're speaking of members.

Would you like to continue? Okay.

**Mr. Schmidt:** I would just like to sum up, Madam Speaker, by saying that this bill improves the efficiency of government, it ensures clear lines of responsibility, and it enhances the work that our civil servants will do. This will significantly improve the quality of the work that the Alberta government will be able to do in the area of environmental monitoring.

I encourage all of our members to ignore what the other side is saying. They've demonstrated clearly that they don't trust government, that they don't understand science time and time again, and that they don't really know what they're talking about when they're debating this bill.

I look forward to this House passing this bill and our environment department getting to the work of protecting the environment for our future generations. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Is there any member wishing to speak under 29(2)(a)? The Member for Banff-Cochrane.

**Mr. Westhead:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I think the member has a lot of unique experience and knowledge that he has shared with our Chamber today. I just wonder if he had anything more that he wanted to add to edify us here today.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Well, no. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the Member for Banff-Cochrane asking me the question. I believe that the lecture has ended for today. But I would offer my services as a professional scientist to any member opposite who would like to understand what science is about. I will provide them remedial tutoring so that they actually have the base level required to participate in these kinds of debates.

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

Under 29(2)(a), the Member for Calgary-Hawkwood.

**Mr. Connolly:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and thank you very much, Minister. I really appreciated your lesson. I'm sure it was very helpful to many people in this Chamber on both sides of the House. We don't often get a scientist talking to members of the Official Opposition about exactly what climate change is. As some of them have said, science is really middle of the road or somewhere in the middle of the road. They're not really sure if it's real or not.

Could you kind of expand on maybe a couple of the things that members opposite have expressed recently about whether or not they might believe in climate change?

Thank you.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Thank you to the Member for Calgary-Hawkwood for that question. I believe that this is perhaps not the right forum for debating those things. I am sure that when the debate on Bill 20 progresses, the members opposite will have plenty of opportunities to shoot themselves in the foot, Madam Speaker. I believe that that will be the appropriate time to hold them to task, to illustrate to the people of Alberta how they fundamentally fail to understand the science of climate change, so I will refrain from making any of those remarks right now.

Thank you.

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

Hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View, would you like to speak under 29(2)(a)? No? Okay.

**Mr. Nixon:** I would like to move to adjourn debate.

**The Acting Speaker:** Well, are we finished with 29(2)(a) first? Are there any more speakers under 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, there is a motion to adjourn debate on Bill 18.

**Some Hon. Members:** Question.

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

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Unfortunately, the question has been called, so I'll put the vote forward first.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion to adjourn debate lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 11:16 a.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[Ms Sweet in the chair]

For the motion:

Aheer	Loewen	Schneider
Fildebrandt	Nixon	Stier
Hanson	Orr	Taylor
Jansen	Pitt	

Against the motion:

Anderson, S.	Ganley	Nielsen
Babcock	Hinkley	Phillips
Carson	Horne	Piquette
Connolly	Kazim	Rosendahl
Coolahan	Kleinstauber	Schmidt
Cortes-Vargas	Littlewood	Schreiner
Dach	Loyola	Shepherd
Dang	Luff	Sucha
Drever	Malkinson	Swann
Drysdale	Mason	Turner
Ellis	McKittrick	Westhead
Feehan	Miller	Woollard
Fitzpatrick		

Totals: For – 11 Against – 37

[Motion to adjourn debate lost]

**The Acting Speaker:** We are back on the main bill.

**Mr. Mason:** Madam Speaker, I have a point of order.

**The Acting Speaker:** A point of order has been called.

**Point of Order  
Admissibility of Motion**

**Mr. Mason:** Madam Speaker, I'm looking at *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, pages 454 and 455. You know, I think the tactic that we just saw employed was new to me and, no doubt, to the chair as well. I just want to bring this forward so perhaps it can be ruled on tomorrow. It says under Guidelines:

The Chair has consistently ruled that the Government House Leader should be the one to introduce any motion pertaining to the arrangement of House business, and that the motion may be considered under "Motions" or under Government Orders, depending on where the Minister giving notice has decided to place it. The Chair has also ruled that while the rubric "Motions" usually encompasses matters related to the management of the business of the House and its committees, it is not the exclusive purview of the government, despite the government's unquestioned prerogative to determine the agenda of business before the House. Accordingly, the Speaker accepts certain motions put on notice by private Members for consideration under the heading "Motions", such as motions of instruction to committees and for concurrence in . . . reports. When private Members give written notice of other substantive matters, these motions are placed under Private Members' Business on the Order Paper.

Madam Speaker, I would ask that you take this under consideration, and hopefully we can have a ruling sometime early next week with respect to the use of this particular tactic by the opposition.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you, Government House Leader. I will take it under consideration.

The Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

**Mr. Hanson:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I can only assume that we're referring to the opposition whip calling for an adjournment. It's happened many times in the House before where members other than the Government House Leader have called for adjournment, so I don't see this as a point of order.

Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

**Mr. Nixon:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's not the exclusive purview of the government to call those motions. It's also in the Government House Leader's agreement that it says that, so I don't think that there's a point of order here. Maybe some confusion but not a point of order.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you, hon. members. Thank you, Government House Leader.

However, at this time I will not be deferring the motion as an adjournment is always in order, so at this time there is no point of order.

**Debate Continued**

**The Acting Speaker:** We will return to Bill 18 for debate. The Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will be brief. I think I've come some distance on this bill since listening to the discussion, very healthy, robust debate, I must say. A little historical perspective might be helpful. When I started in this Legislature 12 years ago, it was, in fact, as a result of one environment minister, Lorne Taylor, who ensured that I got fired back in 2002 for the temerity to speak out on the importance of climate change to health, not only in violation of free speech, I guess I would say, but also disrespectful of a professional acting in a professional capacity on behalf of all the medical officers in the province, let me say, at a resolution of our association.

My only problem with this bill is the name. Clearly, like with George Bush's clean air policy back a decade ago and his momentum to bring coal higher and higher on the energy scene and call it clean coal, I see this kind of Orwellian disconnect between the name and the purpose of the bill. I can get over that given that for over at least 15 years I've watched the creation of an environment department get diminished in terms of its scope, its authority, its funding, and its stability from Ralph Klein, who was the first environment minister, through Lorne Taylor, through Rob Renner, Diana McQueen, Robin Campbell, who is now head of the coal lobbying group in Canada.

There was obviously clear conflict of interest in the kind of mandate that they were given. In fact, when I asked Rob Renner, then environment minister, what he thought his role was, he said: "It's not to protect the environment. It's to develop with a minimal environmental impact." I said: Oh. Okay. Well, who is acting for the environment, then?" "Well, it's up to the public." I think that was his comment. Well, frankly, it's government's responsibility to act on behalf of the public. I don't think any of us want big government or small government. We want the right size of government to do the job for Albertans for the long-term public interest.

The conflicting mandates that have come through this government, the neglect of the environment for at least a decade, very much a second-class order in terms of funding, the separation of sustainable resource development and forestry initially – and then, to their credit, they moved it back under environment and sustainable resource development, one of the last iterations before the change of government. I was, frankly, disappointed to see forestry taken out of environment again and put in agriculture. Be that as it may, environment needs a strong, clear, cohesive mandate and funding. I know that the organization internally has been struggling with the varying demands on it, the lack of resources, this new AEMERA, that's now sharing environmental responsibilities not only with environment but with the Alberta Energy Regulator. This cannot be sustained in terms of efficient and effective environmental monitoring and enforcement.

I've come full circle and will be supporting this bill. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

11:40

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

Are there any members wishing to speak under 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, would any members like to speak to Bill 18?

Seeing none, I will recognize the hon. Minister of Environment and Parks and minister responsible for the climate change office to close debate.

**Ms Phillips:** Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise, of course, to close debate on Bill 18. This has been a very good debate, and I think we've been able to hear some very thoughtful interventions, certainly from this side of the House and also on the other side of the House. I think we all, you know, through this debate can recommit ourselves to understanding the science that goes into

monitoring and the conversation with the public that has to happen with robust monitoring. Data is one thing, but understanding that data and how it relates to our daily lives, to the cumulative effects on the landscape, and ensuring the best possible protections for our air, land, and water really must be a shared goal of this House.

What this act will do is ensure that all of the monitoring capabilities within Environment and Parks are properly aligned, that there is no overlap or crosstalk between an agency with a governance model that is not necessary and monitoring efforts that are overlapping efforts already happening in the department. We've eliminated some of those duplications, Madam Speaker. I'm very proud of that.

With that, I will move the bill for third reading.

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

[The voice vote indicated that the motion for third reading carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 11:43 a.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[Ms Sweet in the chair]

For the motion:

Anderson, S.	Ganley	Nielsen
Babcock	Horne	Phillips

Carson	Kazim	Piquette
Connolly	Kleinsteuber	Rosendahl
Coolahan	Littlewood	Schmidt
Cortes-Vargas	Loyola	Schreiner
Dach	Luff	Shepherd
Dang	Malkinson	Sucha
Drever	Mason	Turner
Feehan	McKittrick	Westhead
Fitzpatrick	Miller	Woollard

Against the motion:

Aheer	Hanson	Pitt
Drysdale	Loewen	Schneider
Ellis	Nixon	Stier
Fildebrandt	Orr	Taylor

Totals:	For – 33	Against – 12
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[Motion carried; Bill 18 read a third time]

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you, hon. members. Seeing that it is now 12 o'clock, we will be adjourning until 1:30 this afternoon.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12 p.m.]







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