



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
First Session

Alberta Hansard

Monday evening, May 27, 2019

Day 3

The Honourable Nathan Cooper, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 30th Legislature

First Session

Cooper, Hon. Nathan, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (UCP), Speaker
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Milliken, Nicholas, Calgary-Currie (UCP), Deputy Chair of Committees

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Amery, Mickey K., Calgary-Cross (UCP)
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Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (UCP)
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Ceci, Joe, Calgary-Buffalo (NDP)
Copping, Hon. Jason C., Calgary-Varsity (UCP)
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Dang, Thomas, Edmonton-South (NDP)
Deol, Jasvir, Edmonton-Meadows (NDP)
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Ganley, Kathleen T., Calgary-Mountain View (NDP)
Getson, Shane C., Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland (UCP)
Glasgo, Michaela L., Brooks-Medicine Hat (UCP)
Glubish, Hon. Nate, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (UCP)
Goehring, Nicole, Edmonton-Castle Downs (NDP)
Goodridge, Laila, Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche (UCP)
Gottfried, Richard, Calgary-Fish Creek (UCP)
Gray, Christina, Edmonton-Mill Woods (NDP)
Guthrie, Peter F., Airdrie-Cochrane (UCP)
Hanson, David B., Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul (UCP)
Hoffman, Sarah, Edmonton-Glenora (NDP)
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Party standings:

United Conservative: 63

New Democrat: 24

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

7:30 p.m.

Monday, May 27, 2019

[The Speaker in the chair]

The Speaker: Please be seated.

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 1 An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax

[Adjourned debate May 23: Mr. Toews]

The Speaker: I see the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar is rising on debate for Bill 1.

Mr. Schmidt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am quite pleased to rise to speak to Bill 1, which should properly be entitled the Implementation of the Trudeau Carbon Tax Act, because that is, in fact, what the government is proposing to do with this bill. I do have to tip my hat to the Member for Calgary-Lougheed as well as the Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti for being able to, on their first act as government, disappoint every single Albertan in this province with one piece of legislation. There is nobody in this province who can realistically look at this piece of legislation and be happy with what the government is bringing forward, nor can they honestly say that this is what they expected when they voted for the members on the treasury benches.

First of all, there is a significant number of people in Alberta who are looking for meaningful action on climate change. At this time I want to offer my thoughts and prayers to the people of High Level and northern Alberta who are dealing with the wildfire emergency situation there, and I am so glad that we have excellent emergency management staff helping them out in their time of need. Mr. Speaker, thoughts and prayers are not a climate change plan. In fact, we know that the wildfires in northern Alberta, that continue to plague northern Alberta, are linked to climate change, and it's well beyond time that Alberta acts to prevent these kinds of things from happening. That's why our government took meaningful action on climate change, because we know that the risks to the people of Alberta are too great to be ignored.

Mr. Speaker, not only will we continue to have more fires, but we'll have larger fires that will put more and more people at risk every single year. We'll continue to have floods, floods like the 2013 Calgary flood, floods in other parts of the province where we usually wouldn't expect to see floods, and the flip side of that is that we will also have increased periods of drought. According to climate science modelling, the prairies will continue to dry out, and, in fact, the city of Calgary and the city of Edmonton are both very concerned about the future of water security for those cities. The city of Calgary, of course, was in the news last week saying that beyond the year 2050 they don't expect to have sufficient water to be able to continue the sustained growth of that city.

There was a similar news article in the *Edmonton Journal*, I believe, that referred to concerns that the city of Edmonton and everyone in the North Saskatchewan watershed have about the continuing decline in the levels of the North Saskatchewan River, something that would not only be helped by meaningful action on climate change, but something that also would help, that is meaningful action on protecting the Bighorn, something that the Member for Rimbe- Rocky Mountain House-Sundre is resolute in his refusal to do.

Mr. Speaker, it's no secret that not only are our major cities at risk of running out of water in the very near future, but our major industries are also at risk of running out of water. Both agriculture and the oil and gas industry rely on significant amounts of water. They need a predictable supply of water in order to be able to undertake their economic activities. If we don't take meaningful action on climate change, farmers will no longer be able to irrigate their crops in southern Alberta, dryland farmers won't be able to continue those kinds of operations, we won't be able to water the livestock, and, of course, we won't be able to conduct the enhanced oil recovery, the natural gas fracking that's going on, or oil sands recovery, in fact. All of those activities rely on reliable, predictable sources of water, and all of those things are being placed at risk because the members on the treasury benches are refusing to act on climate change.

Mr. Speaker, it's not just the economic imperative that we need to protect water supplies; there's a significant quality-of-life aspect to protecting Alberta's water supplies. I expect that many of the members here in this House are avid hunters. They're probably bird hunters, and, of course, wetlands are precious fowl habitat that are highly sought after by hunters from all over the world, and those things are at risk as well.

As a young man, Mr. Speaker, I had the experience of working on a Ducks Unlimited wetland restoration project near Hanna. Ducks Unlimited, of course, is an excellent organization for wetland preservation and restoration, and they have a big job cut out for them because these 28 members here sitting across from me are sitting on their hands and refusing to do anything about climate change.

Recreational properties are also at risk, Mr. Speaker. I know that the levels of Buffalo Lake have receded significantly. Levels at lakes all across the province are receding significantly, Mr. Speaker. I certainly experienced those calls first-hand from recreational property owners when I worked at Alberta Environment, people very concerned about the levels of water in their lakes, and, of course, concerned about the value of their property and their ability to take a decent holiday with their family, that they worked so hard to earn. Those are also being put at risk.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the other risks that comes with climate change, of course, is warmer winters. Now I know that the member for, I believe, Calgary-Glenmore was on the record as saying, "Well, maybe warmer winters aren't necessarily such a bad thing," but, in fact, nothing could be further from the truth. Most of the northern part of the province relies on cold winters for shipping in their supplies for the year on winter ice roads. Much of the industry that happens in the north relies on frozen ground to be able to access their work locations, and, in fact, fighting the mountain pine beetle and protecting our forestry industry relies on cold weather as well. All of those things will be gone if we don't take meaningful action on climate change.

Not to mention the significant health risks that climate change and continuing to use our current methods of generating electricity have. Now, Mr. Speaker, it's beyond a shadow of a doubt. The facts are quite clear that phasing out coal-fired power plants will have a significant improvement on the health of our children. Rates of asthma and other breathing disorders will go down significantly with the elimination of coal-fired power plants. That's why it was very deeply concerning to me when there were reports from the UCP convention on the night of the election that as they were listening to our leader give a speech, she mentioned that the lungs of the children of Alberta will be healthier because of the action that we took through the climate leadership plan – what did the members in attendance at the UCP party do? – they booed that very statement. I think that the members who did that should be ashamed of

themselves because there's nothing more important that we can do as members of this Legislature than to act to preserve the health of the future generations.

It's clear, Mr. Speaker, that all Albertans have a stake in tackling climate change. That's why, when we were in government, we consulted extensively with the people of Alberta to make sure that we had a made-in-Alberta climate leadership plan that worked for the people of Alberta. I need to remind everybody, I think, what came out of that consultation process. We developed energy efficiency programs that helped residential homeowners, commercial owners, and nonprofit members to significantly increase their energy efficiency. We developed programs to enhance renewable energy and energy efficiency initiatives in municipalities.

We developed solar programs for schools. There's a school that is right down the street from where I live, Mr. Speaker, that took advantage of that program, and it reduced their overall annual energy bills significantly, which is very important given that we expect that the members opposite will be cutting the budgets for municipalities and school boards significantly this fall. They need all of the help that they can get to reduce their overall electricity and energy consumption costs. It's a shame that the first act that these people are taking is to cut the very program that will allow those municipalities and school boards to reduce their operational costs.

7:40

Not to mention that indigenous communities will be affected. My colleague from Edmonton-Rutherford has spoken at length in question period about those kinds of programs. Of course, the minister of indigenous affairs, the Member for Maskwacis-Wetaskiwin confirmed that those things would be on the chopping block just this afternoon in question period, which is going to be significantly disappointing to many indigenous nations all across this province.

Mr. Speaker, as the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar I believe that I have to speak out passionately in favour of the energy efficiency programs that we developed through Energy Efficiency Alberta. Of course, as you know, not only is Edmonton-Gold Bar the most humble constituency in all of Alberta, it's also a constituency that is in desperate need of these kinds of programs. Most of the housing that was built in my riding was built in the period between 1945 and the mid-1960s, at a time when energy efficiency wasn't top of mind in the construction of residential homes, so we have a significant number of people who are living in homes that are 50 to 80 years old, that are in desperate need of renovation. They need new windows, they need new doors, they need to insulate their basements. While they're at it, they can add insulation to the walls, insulation in the roofs, and they can also, up until last week at least, take advantage of renewable energy rebates to install solar panels.

Mr. Speaker, I don't need to tell you that those programs were incredibly popular in my riding because those are exactly the kinds of houses that we need to renovate in order to reduce our carbon footprint here in this province. I have many, many constituents who are angry that those programs are on the chopping block. Of course, they will have to fight with the increased power bills and the drafty homes that they thought they were going to be able to renovate under the program that we introduced.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I also want to mention that there is a significant amount of work that these programs generated. In its most recent annual report, rolling up all of the efforts of the climate leadership plan, the government of Alberta estimated that there were approximately 5,000 jobs that have already been created through the investment that we made through these programs. Of

course, with increased investment with these programs, the number of jobs will go up from there.

Now, of course, the Member for Calgary-Lougheed continues to tell the people of Alberta that cutting the carbon tax will create 6,000 jobs. He provides no evidence for this, which is ironic because I was in this Legislature for the entire debate around the climate leadership plan, and I believe that every single member of those parties at the time got up to speak and demand that we release an economic impact assessment of the climate leadership plan and what that was going to do. But now that the shoe is on the other foot, I guess economic impact assessments don't really matter, and we can just make up numbers as we see fit and hope that nobody notices, Mr. Speaker. It won't be true. People will notice.

There are a number of people in my riding who will lose their jobs on Thursday when this tax cut is expected to end, and they can't wait for these fairy-tale jobs to appear in order to put them back to work. They have bills that are coming due at the end of the month, and they need to be able to pay those bills, so promises of some magical jobs at some point in the future just won't cut it, Mr. Speaker. I think it's incumbent upon the members opposite to think about those people that they're throwing out of work at a time when unemployment is very high and to come up with some kind of plan to transition them into other kinds of employment.

Of course, you know, the other piece that affects my constituency: right now the city of Edmonton is in the process of completing the southeast line of the LRT, funding that was provided in part through the climate leadership program, Mr. Speaker. Of course, the government has offered no plans to replace that funding, so we're not sure if the much-needed public transportation that the citizens of my constituency will rely on to get to work and get to all of their activities with their children will actually be in place. I hope that somebody from across the way will tell us so that I can go back to my constituents and tell them why they're losing their jobs on Thursday, why the much-needed and much-anticipated LRT expansion may not be going ahead or may be going ahead. We don't know. We don't have any answers from the members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, I've covered the significant number of Albertans who believe that climate change is real, believe that Alberta needs to do more to combat this increasingly urgent crisis, and the people who are relying on this kind of investment to make their lives better and pay their bills. But those aren't the only people who are going to be disappointed with this legislation. There's a second group of Albertans who are also going to be very disappointed once the Trudeau carbon tax is implemented, and I want to paint you a picture of the kind of person that I expect will be disappointed and that I expect voted for many of the members who are seated here this evening.

You've probably seen them driving down the highway. They have stickers across the backs of their windows. One probably has a picture of Calvin from Calvin and Hobbes peeing on the letters "NDP." Another one has a slogan that I can't repeat in this House because the language is inappropriate, but it suggests that the drivers of those vehicles would like to have conjugal relations with Prime Minister Trudeau. These are the kinds of people, like the Member for Edmonton-South West, who are avid fans of Rebel media and think that by voting for the UCP, they were getting rid of the carbon tax entirely.

Of course, nothing could be further from the truth, Mr. Speaker. We know that as soon as this carbon tax is repealed, the federal carbon tax will be put in its place almost immediately. Of course, the Member for Calgary-Lougheed goes on about how they're going to fight in the courts and they're going to fight them on the beaches and they'll fight them in the alleys. He's trying to do his best Churchill imitation, but we know that that plan is destined to

lose. Of course, Saskatchewan and Ontario lost their appeals to the Federal Court of Appeal. There's no hope, really, that an appeal to the Supreme Court will yield any different result. You know, I expect that when the Member for Calgary-Lougheed talks about 6,000 jobs, most of those jobs will be for high-priced lawyers to fight a losing battle in the Supreme Court, which is not what the people of Alberta elected us to do. I have not heard from a single constituent who wishes that the government would spend more money on high-priced lawyers fighting losing lawsuits in the courts.

You know, there are a number of coal workers who thought that by voting for the members opposite, they would bring their jobs back, not, of course, recognizing that it was, in fact, Stephen Harper and his crew who phased out coal-fired power plants in the first place and that it was our government who actually used carbon tax money to put a transition fund in place for those coal communities.

I hope that the Member for Drumheller-Stettler and the member for Wabamun can go to their communities and tell the coal workers there, who are going to lose their jobs regardless because the market for coal is not favourable for continued expansion of that work – I hope that those members are looking forward to going into their communities and saying: we're sorry, coal workers, but the money that the other guys had set aside to transition you into new careers and a hopeful future is gone, but please send me \$5 to help us continue the fight against the carbon tax in the courts. I look forward to those members reporting back to us what they hear from their constituents when they tell those coal workers that the money for that transition is out the window and their jobs aren't coming back anyway.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of people who voted to scrap the carbon tax who expect the price of gasoline to go down. I noticed that today in my riding, at least, gas was \$1.19 a litre. If anybody is under the assumption that on May 30, if this carbon tax is repealed, the price of gas is going to go down to \$1.13 a litre, they have another think coming because – here's the thing – gas prices are significantly subject to the wills of the oil companies.

7:50

The Speaker: I'm not sure if the hon. Member for Edmonton-City Centre is rising on the hope of having 29(2)(a), but 29(2)(a) is not available until subsequent speakers.

But perhaps you might like to add to the debate after a brief reminder to all members of the Assembly, particularly new or returning members, that when we are not in Committee of the Whole, it's important – of course, it's the will of the Assembly – that all members be in their seats. Should you like to have conversation with someone other than your seatmate, please feel free to use the government or opposition lounges to continue conversations. Having said that, for the benefit of new members, when we are in Committee of the Whole, of course you're more than welcome to move about the Chamber as you desire.

Are there any other members wishing to speak to Bill 1? The hon. Member for Edmonton-City Centre.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, it's a pleasure to have the opportunity to stand and speak tonight to Bill 1. I think back to 2015, when I was first elected as a member of this House, and I remember that first session we had the opportunity to attend there, at the end of June. I remember the excitement I felt. I remember the nerves that I had. I remember the first opportunity I had to stand and debate a piece of legislation. For me, it was Bill 2. That was when we brought a reasonable progressive tax rate back to the province of Alberta after years of an ideological flat tax.

[Mr. Milliken in the chair]

But I think back to what our Bill 1 was, and Bill 1 for our government was ending corporate and union donations to political parties in the province of Alberta. Mr. Speaker, I had great pride in being able to vote for that as our first piece of legislation, the first indication of who we as a government were going to be, about removing undue influence from our politics, about trying to return democracy a little bit closer to the people of Alberta, trying to rebalance the scales after years of undue influence from those who had more money, from corporate interests, from others. Indeed, we know that previous Conservative governments – there was much abuse of that opportunity. I was proud to vote for that piece of legislation, and I believe it showed who we were going to be as a government.

The bill we have in front of us today: I'm not sure this is a bill to be proud of. I suppose it depends on what perspective one has. But I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, in my view, this bill is not brought forward here today out of integrity. This bill is not brought forward today out of reason and rationality. This bill is being brought forward today because of political opportunism. This bill is being brought forward today after a sustained campaign of misinformation, of theatrics, drama, histrionics by conservatives in this province for the last few years. Indeed, it dates back quite a ways further.

This is not a new fight for the Premier. This started long ago, back when he was in Ottawa. He still gives a sense that's where he would very much long to be. When he was there, that was a favourite talking point at the time of Conservatives in Prime Minister Harper's government. The job-killing carbon tax, that was a favourite point of attack for them. They liked to talk a lot about their intentions. Indeed, they themselves talked about putting a price on pollution. They talked about introducing some form of a carbon levy. Now, of course, they weren't a fan, they said, of the carbon tax. They were going to bring in regulation. They were going to bring in restrictions. They were going to go after large emitters. They made all kinds of commitments repeatedly, over and over again, and followed through on next to none. But that talking point of the job-killing carbon tax was one that they loved to pull out and continue to beat their opponents over the head with. That's what we saw over the last few years.

When our government stepped forward and we fulfilled our campaign promise, much as this government is doing here today, to take real action on the very real and pressing issue of climate change, of global warming, after we struck the panel that sat down and went through and came up with the advice and the prescription that they brought to us in their report, the advice that we took and brought forward, a piece of that being to introduce a carbon levy which would apply to all burning of fuel within the province of Alberta, from the first day we brought that forward, we saw the disingenuous nature of the arguments coming from conservatives in this province. You know, we saw all kinds of, as I said, misinformation and indeed, I say, histrionics.

Let's recall some of the great moments in the arguments against the carbon levy, when the Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction, the members for Lacombe-Ponoka, Drayton Valley-Devon, Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul, and Cypress-Medicine Hat published a scintillating editorial comparing the carbon levy to the Ukrainian Holodomor. That was the kind of quality, reasoned debate we received from conservatives in this province, comparing a price on pollution to a famine caused by the Soviet government's policies in the Ukraine during the 1930s, that killed millions of people. This was the level of debate.

[The Speaker in the chair]

Frankly, I recognize that there probably are some members in this government – indeed, there were when they sat in opposition, either as members of the Wildrose Party of Alberta or the United Conservative Party of Alberta – that genuinely do not believe that climate change is a serious and pressing issue to be dealt with. Indeed, we recall the MLA for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo retweeting a link with the heading: Greenpeace cofounders warn of global climate change scam, global warming hoax. We recall the Member for Drayton Valley-Devon financing a climate change denying film, attending an event as a head table guest of the Friends of Science. With friends like that, Mr. Speaker, this province and indeed our environment need no enemies. Of course, he himself had signed on to that wonderful editorial I referenced earlier. We saw MLAs like the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek attacking academics on Twitter and accusing them of perhaps receiving some sort of surreptitious remuneration for supporting the climate leadership plan.

This was the kind of reaction that we had in trying to address a very real and pressing issue in this province, and that is why I say, Mr. Speaker, that we are not here tonight debating this piece of legislation because of some kind of honest disagreement in views. We are here because of political expediency, because of irrationality, because members of the conservative parties of this province saw this as their ticket to try and get themselves a seat in this place and indeed a seat in government.

Mr. Speaker, in fact, I had forgotten to mention even one of the best examples, which happened most recently, of course, the Member for Brooks-Medicine Hat, who was kind enough to tweet: “Unbelievable. Today at church we learned that the Carbon Tax is going to cost our church \$50,000 this year alone. That’s the cost of one less pastor for the sick and suffering & less help for those who need it most in our community.” Indeed, that proved to be unbelievable. It was 10 times the actual amount.

8:00

See, Mr. Speaker, even the members themselves, even these people who at that time were running as candidates, had inflated the hysteria, the irrationality around the discussion of climate change policy in this province to the point that they themselves were willing to believe figures that were inflated by 10 times. And that’s being charitable, assuming they genuinely believed that.

It’s unfortunate, Mr. Speaker – it’s unfortunate – that, as my colleague the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar noted, the Member for Edmonton-South West felt that this was such an important message that he was willing to stand alongside messaging from the undeniably racist and Islamophobic Rebel media, despite the fact that I know that member is neither of those things. That is the fever pitch to which Conservatives in this province were intent on pushing things in regard to a simple policy for their own political gain.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as the Member for Edmonton-City Centre it is incumbent on me to stand and speak against this bill. I recognize that I’ve heard from some that we should simply let this bill pass, that this was clearly part of the UCP platform, that a majority of the people of Alberta cast votes in support of that, and that we should therefore simply allow this legislation to pass. Well, to be clear, 66 per cent of my constituents who cast a vote did not vote for this bill.

The majority of my constituents with whom I have spoken have told me that they want to see real and concrete action to address the very real issue of climate change. They have told me that they want to see government investing in and supporting green energy, transitioning coal workers into new fields of work even as they were already facing the closure of the majority of those plants by the former government of Prime Minister Harper, of which the Premier

was a member. To the best of my knowledge he voted in favour of that moving forward while providing no support or assistance for those workers, indeed recognizing, as the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar noted tonight, that the coal industry, in and of itself, is dying.

Mr. Speaker, it is incumbent on me, if I am truly going to represent my constituents, to stand in this House and speak against the narrow-minded and short-sighted focus of this bill. One of the realities is that we need to find a way to reduce our emissions. That much is true. I would hope that there is nobody in this House that disagrees with that, that disagrees with the pressing reality of man-made climate change and global warming and recognizes that is something we must actually take action to deal with. I’m hoping there’s no member in this House that would disagree with that fact. So the question is: how do we move forward, then, in addressing those emissions?

The reality, Mr. Speaker, as I’ve previously said in this House when we had debate on a motion regarding rejecting the Paris accords, is that there is no addressing the reality of emissions, there is no reduction of emissions without cost. It is cheaper for us to pollute. For us to stop doing that, to begin to change our behaviour, to find a better way to do things, is going to require investment. It’s going to require some kind of cost to mitigate the very real costs that we are already paying.

The people who live in and around High Level are paying some of that cost this week. The folks in Fort McMurray paid some of that cost. The folks who went through the flooding in Calgary paid some of that cost. The people who are living with very real health effects are paying some of that cost. Insurance companies are beginning to write in and account for those costs. Our energy companies are beginning to factor in and figure out how they are going to account for those costs. Anybody who has any knowledge and is working to predict the way things are going to operate in the future is planning for how they’re going to adapt to that cost. So the question is: how do we address that cost?

The carbon levy that we brought forward was focused on addressing that cost wherever it occurred. Rather than putting it all on a single entity or a single industry, it spread it out so that everybody paid a small piece for what contribution they themselves made. Now, there’s good reason for this, Mr. Speaker. Think about it this way. If we say, as the government currently is of the opinion, that only large emitters, only the worst of the worst, only those who create the largest amount, should be the ones to bear that burden and pay that cost, if that is the argument here within the province of Alberta, what happens when we expand that out to Canada?

Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, Alberta is the largest creator of emissions within Canada. So if we apply that same logic, then we are saying that Alberta should bear the largest burden out of all provinces in Canada rather than each bearing its own share according to the emissions that it creates, recognizing that there is a sizable amount that is created by things other than simply oil and gas, those other things.

I recognize my time is coming up, but I know this will not be my last time speaking to this bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-South rising under 29(2)(a).

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think my hon. colleague from Edmonton-City Centre was raising some very interesting points, and it would really be my privilege and I think for all of the rest of the members in this House to continue to hear some of these important things that his constituents care about, I know my constituents care about, and I’m sure constituents all across this

province in many of the governing members' ridings would care about as well. So I'd give it back to the hon. member here.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-City Centre.

Mr. Shepherd: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Member for Edmonton-South giving me the opportunity just to wrap up a few of my thoughts. Ultimately, as I said, I will have more to say about the overall mechanics and the overall ideas and the things that were all involved in this process, but what I will return to is where I began.

I suppose it is up to members of the government if, when this bill passes this Assembly and we move forward, they choose to feel pride in that moment. I know there are some in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, who fully recognize that this bill is about politics. They are well aware that they will be casting a vote for a bill that is not about making things better, that is not about truly addressing climate change, that is not, in fact, going to create all of the jobs and all of the savings that the Premier likes to claim it will, despite having been corrected multiple times by economists here in this province. They are well aware that this is a bill about political expedience.

I suppose it will be up to them to determine how they feel about that. But that, Mr. Speaker, will be the first bill they cast in this Assembly. That will be the first decision that they have the opportunity to put their names to. I'm pretty sure it will likely be a recorded vote, so it will be the first opportunity for them to have their names written in the book of *Hansard*, the record of this province, as to what they stood for.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, I will be standing and voting against this bill because that is the direction I have received from my constituents here in Edmonton-City Centre and because that indeed is where my own value and ethics lie on this particular matter. I endeavour as much as possible in my work in this Assembly to speak honestly, truthfully. Indeed, as I think we all do in this House, I indulge at times in a bit of hyperbole. Shots are taken, and politics are sometimes about how we frame each other. But I can tell you the potential for the damage that moving forward with this path will cause for our province, indeed for our country, indeed on the global scale, though I recognize, again, that Alberta is not the leading source of emissions in the world, not by a long shot. But we certainly had the opportunity to show some leadership in how we were going to work to address it and work with others to try to get them to continue to work and do the same.

8:10

This is the first bill that the government has brought forward, and they have said that this is going to be their agenda. Perhaps they will demonstrate at some point that they have some sort of a plan that will actually have an impact. Maybe they will demonstrate to us that this is not simply a disingenuous sideshow, that this was not simply their political Wiffle bat to beat the opposition, to ascend to the seats of government. I guess a Wiffle bat doesn't hurt that much. I don't know why that came to mind, but it did. It's comical, at least. It's entertaining.

The reality, Mr. Speaker, is that this is a very specific decision on the part of this government to set the tone on which they are going to move forward, by which they are going to communicate with the people of Alberta. Indeed, I guess they demonstrated that well before this election, and we will see how the people of Alberta come to feel about that as their decisions begin to mount, as the impacts become clearer. I guess on this one they get a little bit of an advantage in that, you know, the real repercussions of some of the decisions that they are making when this piece of legislation passes probably many of them will never really have to live to see.

I look forward, Mr. Speaker, to the opportunity to continue in this debate. Thank you.

The Speaker: Are there others who would like to speak to Bill 1? The hon. Member for Edmonton-North West.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is the first opportunity I have to speak in the 30th Legislature here in the province of Alberta, and it's great. It's great to be back. Congratulations on your victory as well and to all members for their campaigns, too, that got them to this place here this evening.

I'm very interested in speaking on a number of issues around Bill 1, An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax. You know, I think that it's important for Albertans to understand both the local context in which our carbon levy and climate action plan was built, some of the history around that both provincially and nationally and internationally as well.

We know that throughout the world climate change is becoming a more apparent problem, a more apparent threat to the economies of countries around the world, to the health of not just human beings but all living things and, indeed, is a point that can cause great disruption in those same things, in the economy, in human health, but I would say also the potential for social disorder as well. So taking action on climate change, I think, is the responsibility of all people and particularly of elected governments.

We saw just this last week that the Bank of Canada has made it a mitigation risk to the health of our economy nationally, that climate change can undermine the health of Canada's economy. We see insurance companies, again, looking for ways by which to look at reducing carbon dioxide emissions as a way to mitigate risk for underwriting insurance claims. We see countries around the world trying to face up to this head-on, and many businesses are doing the very same thing, right? I saw that Canadian Utilities, a subsidiary of ATCO, has just liquidated their fossil fuel assets, realizing that they need to move to other means of generating power and so forth.

We know as an energy leader here in the province of Alberta that we are and will continue to be an energy leader only if we stay on the edge of what's coming next and what our responsibilities are around being energy leaders. We know that we are very blessed to have a strong nonrenewable energy resource in oil and natural gas and so forth, and we will continue to utilize that as a backbone of our economy. But, Mr. Speaker, if we don't use that nonrenewable energy resource to start to invest in a more renewable, sustainable future, then we are compromising the best chance that we have to stay as an energy leader, to be a responsible steward of our tremendous energy resources, and to make investments for a more sustainable energy future.

Our climate action plan that our government put into place a number of years ago was a start in that direction. Was it the end of what we could do to help to mitigate this challenge? No. But it was an honest, sincere attempt to a very strong beginning. We see our climate leadership plan being studied and utilized in other jurisdictions around the world because it was a good balance of making investments in individuals, making investments in the energy industry, making savings, and helping to educate the population about how we are transitioning to a more sustainable energy future.

[Mr. Milliken in the chair]

I find it a bit disturbing that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre – Edmonton-City Centre I guess it's called now – made a very good point about what a government chooses as their flagship Bill 1 to set the tone for what sort of governance and so forth we could expect in the future. If you look past a lot of the rhetoric and

hyperbole and so forth, if we look at the bare bones of what this bill actually is in terms of repeal, in terms of going backwards, in terms of simply applying a negative action, a reaction to a proactive attempt to help to transition and to build a more sustainable energy future, that's not the best way, Mr. Speaker, to set a tone for not just this bill but for governance in general and the direction of this government over the next number of years. It's a repeal. It's stepping back, and it fails to recognize fundamentally that it's incumbent and important for us to do something around this file. We can't just sit on our hands. We can't pretend that we're living in the past. We need to be proactive, and that's what responsible governments do.

I know that we've heard from this new government that they would talk about impacting large emitters, for example. Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, you don't get nothing for nothing – right? – in this world. If you choose to tax large emitters or put the onus and responsibility on them, then they're going to pass the cost down to consumers anyway. I mean, this is what happens, right? If you are controlling energy, as some of these large emitters do, then they're not just going to do it out of the goodness of their hearts; they're going to take increases on mitigation and taxation on their industries and pass that down to consumers.

So it's not as though you can just pass this along and presume that you're not going to pay. At least the climate action plan that we had in place and were continuing to build – and it was an evolutionary process – was making sure that we were passing on the benefits of making transition to individuals, to businesses, to public institutions, and so forth so that they could actually save money.

One file that I know quite well, for example, was how by helping schools and other public buildings to make investments in energy efficiency in windows, in insulation, in solar panels, and so forth, you could save money, literally hundreds of thousands of dollars, by making an investment in high efficiency heating, in LED lights, in solar panels on the roof and more modern windows. Simple as that. It's an investment. You save money on your utility bills, and you save money, in the case of a school, on the public purse as well, heating and lighting those schools.

8:20

You know, you make those investments, and it's not like a negative tax. It's not like you're taking something out of the economy. Quite the opposite. You are actually creating opportunities for a more diverse economy and jobs associated with that. We know that, for example, through our climate action plan here in the province of Alberta we've become a national leader in renewable energy. When we did those auctions for electricity, for solar and wind and so forth, we had tremendous success, unprecedented success, in helping to drive, I think, Alberta as a renewable energy leader in North America. We're putting all of those things in jeopardy by bills such as this, sending a message that we're going back, sending a message that we're not innovating, and we're sending a message that we're being irresponsible.

I know that this whole idea of putting a price on carbon is nothing new. We hear it from jurisdictions across Canada. We hear it from different political sources, from conservative politicians, from progressive politicians, and we know that putting a price on carbon can have a very positive organic effect not just on reducing carbon but a positive effect on an economy as well.

We know that, as I said before, you can create a more diverse economy, thus creating different kinds of jobs, right? We know that, for example, in regard to coal plants – I mean, it's a very unfortunate situation, but it's something that we see replicated in many jurisdictions around the world. As you transition from coal,

if you don't have a plan in place for those places, for those towns and for those workers, then you're leaving them high and dry. At least with having a carbon pricing system and having diversity in the generation of electricity, you do at least create an opportunity for jobs and for transitioning to other jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I know that this Bill 1 is a reflection, as we've heard other speakers say, of the election that we have just gone through. I know that elections can sometimes, you know, create some hyperbolic reactions – right? – where people are fighting and looking for that vote in the last moment. But now here we are on the other side, and we have an opportunity to be creative, to reach across, to look for ways by which we can salvage some of the tremendous progress that we've made in regard to the climate action plan. We have an opportunity, I believe, to take a long, second close look at where we can move forward together and not just use carbon and carbon pricing and this bill as a way to further polarize people and polarize the economy that we all depend on here and now. When I think about all of the things that we can do in this Legislature, perhaps the biggest and most important responsibility we have is to make sure that we are always being honest and sincere and being honest and sincere for now and for the future as well.

We know that climate change is real. We know that it is an increasing negative force on all of the things that I have just talked about, and we know that it is increasing in uncertainty and complexity in an exponential sort of way. It's like when you see the ice melting in the spring, you know? You think in January, February that the winter is never going to end, and then suddenly the snow and the ice all melts in a week, right? That's the kind of exponential sort of change that you can see with climate change here now at unprecedented carbon atmospheric levels right across the world. So things aren't going to just say: oh, well; we can just sweep it under the rug and wait till later. We can see exponential change happening very, very quickly right now. We have the examples here in Alberta, but we can see in other examples in other parts of the world as well.

Another one of the arguments that I hear that I find very disturbing – and it has sort of a cognitive dissonance built into it, like, in other words, it doesn't make any sense, right? It's saying: "Oh, well. Other people in the world aren't doing anything about this, so who cares if Alberta has a carbon action, climate action plan of some sort?" Well, you know, if people have that attitude around the world, we would never get anything done, right? We are leaders. We are an energy leader, and we set a tone.

We can be an example that helps export best practices around the world, and – you know what, Mr. Speaker? – you can make money off that. When we did our auction for renewables, we were amazed to see what revenue is there and what is possible. You know, as the world moves into dealing with climate change in a more categorical sort of way, there will be a lot of competition – right? – for producing renewables, help mitigation strategies and so forth, and it's incumbent upon us to make sure that we remain in the lead as an energy leader in the province of Alberta for not just ourselves but for the rest of the world as well.

So for those and many other reasons, Mr. Speaker, I would urge everyone to, you know, consider looking to not support Bill 1 as it's written. We will try to look for constructive ways by which we can perhaps help to come to some resolution. I look forward to both the debates and the conversations that we will have in the days and weeks ahead.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Under Standing Order 29(2)(a), are there any members who wish to make any questions or comments? The hon. Member for Edmonton-South.

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's really my privilege always to hear the hon. Member for Edmonton-North West speak. The Member for Edmonton-North West is the reason, singlehandedly, I think, I got into politics. He picked me up off the steps of the Legislature here one summer afternoon.

He mentioned something in his speech today that gave me some pause. It was that though Alberta is not necessarily the single largest emitter in the world, though Alberta maybe does not have the impetus to suddenly reduce 20 per cent of the world's emissions, we still need to be a leader, and that means that we still can't just pollute because it's so small.

The thought that came to my mind was that when I'm driving down the street back to my riding, which for me feels like it takes hours and hours and hours because I want to be in my riding so badly – but when I'm driving back to my riding, I don't go ahead and throw my bag of McDonald's out the window. I don't throw the bag of chips out the window and just let it sit on the street. There's a really good reason for that, Mr. Speaker. The reason for that is that even though it's just one bag of chips, even though it's just one piece of garbage, that all adds up – that all adds up – and that's why we have large landfills and you can see mountains and mountains of landfills of garbage when you start to add that all up.

I think that's something we really have to drive home here. It's something that's really important because when we talk about the cumulative effects of climate change, when we talk about the things that my hon. colleague was talking about and how it suddenly reaches this exponential point of change and this exponential point of no return, we're talking about issues that add up over time. And, Mr. Speaker, just like that bag of chips that I wouldn't throw out my window, I think that Albertans and we in this Chamber are doing a disservice if we don't recognize that every single time we don't meaningfully act on climate change, we are doing the exact same thing as throwing a bag of chips out the window.

Now, I know, Mr. Speaker, that my colleague from Edmonton-North West was a teacher for many years, and he spent a lot of time educating young people about things they need to know for their futures. I think this is one thing that when we talk about our futures and we talk about the issues that matter to us in our futures, it's really important to remember that these are issues that are generational. They're issues that are generational because somebody who is my age, maybe not the same age as some people across the aisle but somebody who is my age, will be seeing the effects of climate change for years and years and years to come.

Some of the things that my hon. colleague talked about are how important it is that we invest today, how important it is that we invest today in things like the renewable programs that are bidding at some of the lowest prices in all of North America, Mr. Speaker. I think that's something we should be commending and we should be encouraging because it allows for things like more stable, reliable rates of electricity for consumers while also meaning meaningful transitions for employees right here in Alberta, for workers right here in Alberta. I think that that's something that all members of this Assembly should be able to get behind and something that we should all be able to encourage. I know that it's something that I think is really important to my constituents. I know that it's something that is really important to the Member for Edmonton-North West's constituents. I know that it's something that all members should be able to encourage, new jobs that are going to be replacing the types of jobs that we have no control over in this Chamber.

8:30

Honestly – and I think the Member for Edmonton-North West and myself both know this – us standing here and talking about jobs

all day in this Chamber isn't going to create new jobs. What's going to create new jobs is targeted investment and making sure that we create the opportunities to have things like the very, very low prices that were bid in for wind electricity in southern Alberta. I think those are things that all Albertans should be excited about and that especially members in the government should be excited about. Those are large infrastructure projects that are going to be built right in their ridings because of the investment we made in renewables. We should continue to do those investments because I think it's something that these members are going to want to continue to see: good, new jobs right in their towns, right in their counties, right across this entire province, Mr. Speaker.

I think it's something that we should be ashamed if we don't encourage, because it's something that we can see very clearly is the future for Alberta, a clean energy province, where we lead the world, not just Canada but the world, in developing renewable resources. We can lead in these things. We have the resources, we have the innovation, we have the knowledge, and we have the skills, Mr. Speaker. I'm so excited to be able to push for those types of initiatives but only if we are allowed to continue.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Are there any other members who wish to speak to this bill? The Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's been interesting to listen to the speeches from the opposition this evening, and I congratulate them. They seem to be settling into their new roles very, very well. I do think, though, that it's worth having a look at some of the mistakes that I've heard this evening, from my perspective. I think that the opposition members continue to miss the entire point of this bill.

[The Speaker in the chair]

I want to first of all thank my colleague the hon. Finance minister for bringing forward this piece of legislation. I think I speak for all of this side of the House and our friends that are with us on that side of the House on how excited we are to finally have this piece of legislation here. I know I can speak on behalf of my colleagues that were here in this place with me in opposition. We have been waiting a very, very long time for this piece of legislation to be on this floor, and I am ecstatic that it is here.

The reality is that we have talked about this issue, about carbon tax, in this place probably more than any other issue in the last four years. I see the opposition is agreeing with me on that, so we've found some agreement. We're already on a roll tonight: day 1 of night sittings, and we have agreement. We have talked about this a lot. Now, the opposition used to call it – Mr. Speaker, as you would recall, I remember that when we were benchmates, we would laugh about this a little bit – a levy; we would call it a tax. This was back when we still heckled in here. I know you guys one day may join us in not heckling. We would heckle back and forth: “levy” and “tax.”

At the end of the day, that's what this bill is about. It's about taking away the job-killing carbon tax, a tax, by the way – some of my new colleagues who were not around then may not know this – that this opposition party, when they were running to be government in this place in 2015, never bothered to mention or tell Albertans that they were going to bring in, that they hid from Albertans. They then came into this House and brought in the largest tax increase in the history of this province after not telling Albertans about it. That was the core of the argument in the beginning.

My friend the hon. Finance minister is now bringing forward a bill that will bring in the largest tax decrease in the history of this

province. I thank him very much for that. I see that members continue to not want to talk about that very important issue and the consequences of the decision that their policy, their tax policy, had on the people of Alberta; the consequences on food banks, which we heard from, who had to overcome significant issues; on homeless shelters; on our schools . . .

Mr. McIver: The seniors' home in Rocky Mountain House.

Mr. Jason Nixon: The seniors' home in Sundre, actually, hon. member, though the seniors' home in Rocky Mountain House was impacted as well. That's a great example.

What my friend from Calgary-Hays is referring to is a seniors' centre inside Sundre, my hometown, that the then Leader of the Opposition and now the Premier of Alberta and I visited together, that was in danger of being shut down because of the carbon tax, because of the NDP's carbon tax.

An Hon. Member: Table it.

Mr. Jason Nixon: We tabled it many times. Happy to table it again.

They were in danger of being shut down because of the carbon tax. Now, this is not a seniors' home, as you'd recall. It's actually a seniors' centre in our community of Sundre. It's called the Sundre West Country Centre. Seniors in our community come there to recreate. It's a really cool place. Sometimes I drop by to have a visit. It is basically completely self-funded by the seniors in our community. They pay a minimal membership every year, they maintain the facility, and it provides a place to recreate inside the community of Sundre for our seniors.

They're in a position where they're about to have to shut their doors because of the NDP carbon tax, and when they'd bring it up – and we'd bring it up on their behalf as their representatives – do you know what the opposition members across the way from me who were then members of Her Majesty's Executive Council on this side of the House said to the people in my community about that carbon tax? They told them to go and have a fundraiser to pay for their carbon tax. They told seniors in my community to have a fundraiser to pay for their carbon tax.

The examples of that go on and on. There was a swimming pool in Sundre – now that we're on Sundre, we'll talk about Sundre for a little bit; I'm always happy to talk about Sundre, aren't I, hon. member? – that was in danger of shutting down because their carbon tax went up drastically. I don't have the number in front of me; it's been so long. But we were going to lose the swimming pool inside our community. That's what their carbon tax did. But why it was even made worse was – I see the hon. Opposition House Leader wants to pipe up. I'm sure he's probably ashamed that at the time he was part of a government that told seniors to fund raise for their carbon tax. I would be ashamed of that. He should be ashamed of that.

But the reality of it is that the now Leader of the Opposition, when she was Premier, did an interview and acknowledged that she did not even know how much emissions went down as a result of that tax increase. All pain, no gain: that's what the carbon tax did. It doesn't improve the environment. It hurt the social safety net of our communities. It hurt our municipalities. It cost our school boards more money to get kids to school. It cost significantly more money for each household as they had to pay their bills. It cost more money for our agriculture communities. They had to dry things like grain and participate in that. All of that because they said that we'd have an impact on the environment, and then they admitted that they had no positive impact on the environment.

Shockingly, they continue to still stand inside this House and try to defend that, try to defend the fact that they didn't tell Albertans about the largest tax increase in Alberta – they hid it from them

when they brought it forward – try to defend the fact that they continued down that path, forcing that carbon tax on Albertans even though it wasn't impacting the environment. They continue to want to defend that. Well, I will tell you, Mr. Speaker – and I know that your constituents in Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills, who I get to talk to quite a bit, think this as well – that we are excited about the opportunity to finally be able to get rid of the job-killing carbon tax and the consequences that have happened to Albertans as a result of that tax.

The opposition should recognize that they have found themselves on that side of the House, on the opposition benches, because of many other issues but largely because of the carbon tax. Albertans rejected it on April 16. The idea that you will continue to stand in this House and attempt to try to block this legislation from making it out is disappointing and shows, Mr. Speaker, that the opposition still has not learned their lesson. It's time for them to accept that their carbon tax did not work. It was all pain and no gain.

Now, if they don't want to do that, I can tell you this, Mr. Speaker. This side of the House, the government, is going to keep our commitment to Albertans – keep our commitment to Albertans – follow through on the promise that we made to them during the campaign and before that, and follow through on the instructions that they gave us April 16 with the largest vote count of any government in the history of this province. We're going to stand with the Minister of Finance, and when you finally stop trying to block a reasonable bill, we're going to get this bill through the House, and the carbon tax is finally going to be gone in this province.

The Speaker: Any members under 29(2)(a), questions and comments?

Are there any other members wishing to speak? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview, I see, is rising in debate.

Mr. Bilous: Yes. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I couldn't help myself. I wanted to give some of my colleagues or some of the newly elected government members the opportunity to speak. As for yourself, I already congratulated you on your election, not your appointment, as you so aptly pointed out.

You know, it's my duty to rise and speak to this bill. Now, I'm not going to contest the fact that when we introduced the carbon levy, it did place a financial burden on some Albertans. I will say some, because two-thirds did receive a rebate for the carbon levy, so it did not impact everyone equally. But I will speak to the various reasons why we introduced our climate leadership plan, a robust climate leadership plan, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, and about my concerns with the fact that this government wants to repeal it.

8:40

Now, they can talk about wanting to save Albertans some money, but what needs to be understood, Mr. Speaker, is that every single penny that was collected from the price on carbon was reinvested in the economy, whether that was through two-thirds of Albertans getting a rebate, whether that was through businesses, not-for-profits, seniors' centres having the opportunity to apply for rebates to install solar panels, higher energy efficiency windows, doors, furnaces. You know, what I think the opposition, or the government – it's going to take a little getting used to being over here, or being back over here – fails to grasp is that investments that you make, whether in solar or wind, in energy efficiency, give you savings every month for the lifetime of the asset. Yes, there may be an upfront cost to it, but that upfront cost is paid off over subsequent years, and then there is a significant saving to be achieved.

You know, I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the government wanting to punish large industrial emitters by only making them pay is something that I'm sure industry will have something to say about in the coming weeks.

What I can tell you is that through our climate leadership plan we created a \$1.4 billion innovation fund. At some point I'm sure one of the government members is going to talk about their new idea to have some kind of fund to help with innovation. Well, you know, you're about four years too late. That fund existed. Actually, to be fair, it existed long before we were government. It existed long before several governments through entities like Alberta Innovates, that has funding available for industry to find innovative solutions to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, to reduce their environmental footprint, and, you know, from an industry point of view, maybe most importantly, also to reduce their costs, meaning that they are making better profits. So, really, this was a win-win. We sat down with industry to design this innovation fund, which has had a significant impact, quite frankly, on the province, Mr. Speaker.

There are a number of different projects that have been announced in the oil and gas sector in the past two years that are using innovative technologies, some that were codeveloped with Alberta Innovates. You know, it's quite exciting to see different projects in either the reduction of water usage or their use of cost savings through innovation.

Now, the other point I want to mention, Mr. Speaker, is that, really, my biggest frustration is that the Premier and this government are once again not only inviting Ottawa into Alberta; they are trying to ram Ottawa down Alberta's throat. When I say that, I mean that in a number of senses. One, we're about to have a debate tomorrow on standing orders. In this place there's been a history of desk thumping to show solidarity, to show appreciation, to support our members. In fact, those that have sat in this House for the past few years or longer know that both sides of the House will show their support for speakers when they're talking about challenging issues or impacts to them, their lives, their constituents. It's really a show of support. I think, on the one hand, the Premier has missed the boat on this. But the other is that by repealing Alberta's, you know, price on carbon and really gutting our climate leadership plan, this government is paving the way for the Prime Minister to ram a federally imposed carbon tax down the throat of every Albertan.

Now, the Premier can puff out his chest and talk about how he's going to fight this along with the other Premiers who are failing in their fight against Ottawa, spending millions of taxpayer dollars. The very same people that are arguing that they're saving money are actually spending money in a futile attempt to try to stop – quite frankly, you know, if the federal government decides to impose this on the provinces, the provinces will have to pay. We preferred a made-in-Alberta solution; the Premier prefers a made-in-Ottawa solution. I think it's interesting. I think his left foot is just itching to get back there, Mr. Speaker.

What I can tell you also is that the repeal of our price on carbon is going to have a significant impact on the investment that was coming to Alberta in renewables. Let's talk about numbers and investments, okay? We can talk about the one argument as far as Alberta doing its part and showing the world that we are seriously taking action. I get that a lot of members will say, "Well, let's look at China; let's look at some of these other countries and how much more they pollute" although I will challenge any member that says that or thinks that. Go do your homework. China is investing billions, tens of billions of dollars, in renewables, in innovation and technologies, and in reducing their footprint. If you think for a second, "Let's wait until China catches up to us," they are going to leave us standing in the dust because when that country decides to

move, the whole country moves, and they have the power behind them.

You know, I guess what I was happy to see was that Alberta was the number one destination for renewables investment in Canada. Thank you, Premier Ford, for ensuring that investment fled Ontario and came to Alberta. Now investment is scratching its head, not knowing where to go. It's interesting. The government may talk about stability, but actually when you go out and talk to investors, this creates instability. They liked the fact. They want something that's predictable, that's long term. It's similar down in the United States, where the U.S. President has said, you know, back to the Wild West with coal-fired electricity, with removing some of their federal initiatives on climate. Investors don't say yee-haw. They say: "Great. Now we have uncertainty for at least a period of two years, maybe another six years, but future governments will take this seriously and take meaningful action. Just show us stability."

For us, I mean, we saw the amount of investment that was coming into the province. We actually had a number of different req auctions for wind-powered electricity, which were lower than what we had thought they would commit at. In fact, I think they broke records as far as how cheap the energy was to create. Again, you know, this government is saying: "Okay. We're not going to phase out coal-fired electricity." I really wonder if the Premier struggles with himself every night when he tries to sleep because it was him under Prime Minister Harper that shut the doors and turned their backs on communities, on communities in Alberta, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker. Twelve of 18 coal-fired electricity plants were closed down because of Prime Minister Harper's regulations, and the Premier was a senior cabinet minister. I'm sure you're dying to know: what supports did they have for these communities, for these workers, the very people that they claimed to protect? Guess what? Not a single support. Not a dollar of support for transition. No retraining. No bridge to retirement for those that did lose their jobs. There was nothing. It was silence. Crickets.

When we brought in regulations to phase out six of the 18 coal-fired plants, we – well, I – toured the province talking to communities and workers. We listened and asked them: what do you need to help you transition? So we introduced a coal community transition fund to help the municipalities and communities look at ways to diversify their economy. We brought in, I think, \$30 million or \$40 million for the worker transition fund. That included funds to help bridge retiring workers or those that are only a couple of years from retirement. A lot of them said to us: "You know, I'm 58. I'm 61. I'm only a couple of years from retirement. Who's going to hire me? I don't want to go back and retrain." Fair enough. The point is, Mr. Speaker, that we had supports for them; there was a plan. I can tell you that, again, there is no plan for these current communities under this current government.

We haven't spoken a lot at length about the indigenous communities around the province that are hungry to participate in the renewables market and came not only with ideas and dollars but were very interested in participating and had been and were excited at the fact that previous governments for decades talked the talk but didn't walk the walk when it came to true engagement. Now, of course, the government is going to talk about this corporation that they're creating, but what are they saying to the indigenous communities who were ready to move forward on these significant investments, that are now at a standstill, and who are completely at a loss for words?

8:50

Mr. Speaker, I think it's not only disrespectful but disingenuous to talk about a price on carbon as something that is killing jobs. I

think that, if anything, again, the government needs to take a look at the fact that we had a historic collapse in the price of oil in this province, from which the province is still reeling. But where we had a plan to work with industry, to work with the private sector to create jobs – I mean, we'll have ample opportunity to talk about I believe it's Bill 3 when it comes. But I can tell you from talking with a number of industry players – and we have examples especially just south of us, down in the United States – that simply reducing the corporate tax rate does not immediately lead to an increase in jobs nor investment.

You know, I've spoken with a number of companies already, and I asked them: "Hey, what are you going to do with the extra dollars that you're going to have when the corporate tax rate decreases? Are you going to reinvest it? Are you going to hire more people? Are you going to invest in training, buy new machinery and equipment?" They said: "No. We're going to do none of that. We're going to pocket it. It's extra profits." So it's not actually going to help do what, I believe, the government thinks it's going to do.

You know, Mr. Speaker, again recognizing that there were Albertans that weren't happy about paying this carbon levy, I think that part of the challenge, quite frankly, was that a lot of Albertans weren't aware of the number of programs that were available to make their homes, their businesses more energy efficient, that this really was showing the world that you can take meaningful action on climate and on the environment while at the same time supporting industry. I mean, I think that if we went back five years and we were to say, "You know what; the Premier of Alberta is going to stand on the stage with a number of some of the largest oil sands company CEOs, alongside indigenous leaders, beside environmental NGO leaders, and they're all going to say that this is the right thing to do," I don't think people would have believed it. But that's what happened. That was a historic day when we brought together different players to say that we can take meaningful action while at the same time supporting our economy.

I mean, maybe unbeknownst to some government members, ExxonMobil, you know, this really tiny company that dabbles in oil, has a fund that they are going around lobbying U.S. governments to keep a carbon tax. They want to keep a price on carbon. You know why, Mr. Speaker? Because they're investing hundreds of millions of dollars to reduce their GHGs, to reduce their environmental footprint. They're saying: "If you go around and remove this, do you know what you're doing? Do you know who you're rewarding? You're rewarding the biggest laggards, the biggest polluters in the world, and you're saying, 'don't do anything; don't bother upgrading your technologies, and don't bother trying to find innovative solutions.'" So they're of the mindset: we want to be a world leader. Go talk to Shell. Go talk to Exxon. Go talk to Husky, to a number of companies that are making significant investments. They will actually say: "You know what? With this government's plan, they've got it wrong; they've got it backwards." They'll say that we should be doing something about this, that we should be taking the money that's collected and reinvesting it.

You know, I'd love to ask – I'm trying to look around for a number of members that were former Wildrosers who were here talking about . . . [Mr. Bilous's speaking time expired]

The Speaker: I see the Member for Edmonton-Decore rising under Standing Order 29(2)(a).

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yeah, it's a pleasure. I want to thank the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview for sharing his thoughts. I was hoping I might have the opportunity to tap into his experience as the former minister of economic development and trade. He mentioned several times the investments within the

province through the carbon levy. I know that specifically in Edmonton-Decore, which is known as the shopping district, we had a major company, Simons, make an investment over at Londonderry Mall. For those that don't know about Simons: a very, very successful company throughout history. As a matter of fact, it has a history dating back I believe it's 180 years now. You don't hang around that long without making smart investment decisions. One of the decisions they made was around a solar array program through there. I was hoping that the member might be able to talk a little bit about how investments might be affected should the carbon levy be removed and how they may not make decisions about making investments in our communities.

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I'll thank the Member for Edmonton-Decore for his question. Where I was going with this – and I see that there are a number of members that were around a few years back. I know that over and over again the question and – I don't want to say accusation; that's quite a harsh word. There were claims that the carbon levy would be some kind of slush fund. Again, we answered and laid out exactly where every single dollar went. I find it very ironic that what the government is proposing is that funds that were being collected under the Climate Leadership Act are now just going to get funnelled into general revenues. You know, just put it over here; don't worry about reinvesting it back into creating jobs, back into supporting the economy, back into ensuring that Albertans who couldn't afford the increase in the cost of living would get a rebate. I mean, that's the other thing, Mr. Speaker: two-thirds of Albertans did not have to pay the carbon levy. They got a rebate. For me, I can only shake my head at the fact that what we were accused of is the very thing that the government is doing or proposing to do by creating this fund.

Now, to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore's question, undoubtedly, when supports for an industry that is getting up and going – we're seeing the costs come down every year, whether it's for the components for solar or for wind. When this government repeals the carbon levy and takes us backwards, it will have an effect on investors. In fact, it already has had on investors and investments in Canada. We're not being world leaders. We are not being Albertans, innovators and entrepreneurs. We are putting our head in the sand and in the ground and hoping that the rest of the world will come up with a solution. Well, you know what I say, Mr. Speaker? We're missing out on opportunities because Albertans are world leaders, but at times we need the government to introduce the right policies to help spur that along.

Quite frankly, what we are seeing is regression. This government can say that they are helping the province. For those that are paying it, that have had their margins squeezed a little bit through this price on carbon: yes, that will bring about a little bit of reprieve for them temporarily, until the federal government imposes the carbon tax on them and then decides what to do with that money that they collect. Again, Mr. Speaker, I think that it sends the wrong message to investors around this globe as far as Alberta taking meaningful action, being climate leaders, being leaders in this country, being leaders internationally. I know that my colleague the Member for Lethbridge-West can talk about the number of calls and invitations that she gets on a regular basis to talk about what was done here in Alberta and how excited legislators around the world were to hear what we did and how we did it. Again, the majority of Albertans did not pay that. They got a rebate, and the rest of it was reinvested.

The Speaker: Are there other members wishing to speak to Bill 1? The hon. Member for Lethbridge-West.

Ms Phillips: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. “Nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in human history – and the rate of species extinctions is accelerating, with grave impacts on people around the world now likely.” Such is the warning from a landmark new report from the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services released in early May.

9:00

Here are some quotes from one of the lead authors from that report. From the chair: “The health of ecosystems on which we and all other species depend is deteriorating more rapidly than ever. We are eroding the very foundations of our economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of life worldwide.” “‘Transformative changes’ [are] needed to restore and protect nature,” says the report. This is the “most comprehensive [natural world] assessment of its kind.” We have “1,000,000 species threatened with extinction” world-wide.

There were 145 expert authors from 50 countries over the past three years, with inputs from another 310 contributing scientific authors. The report assesses changes over the past five decades. That’s in biodiversity alone.

On climate change Canada’s climate is warming rapidly and faster than the global average. We are warming at twice the rate of the rest of the world. Northern Canada is warming even more quickly, nearly three times the global rate. Three of the past five years have been the warmest on record.

One of my friends is the president of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the political voice for Canada’s Inuit. His name is Natan Obed. Every time he goes home, he notices the changes to way of life, to food, to availability of berries, for hunting, gathering, and species. Everything is changing as the permafrost melts and as life changes in Canada’s north.

The 2019 Saskatchewan Court of Appeal decision: the Conservatives were really happy about the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal reference until the decision came down a couple of weeks ago, which upheld the constitutionality of the federal carbon pricing act in both its parts. Its economy-wide price and its output-based allocation system, both parts 1 and 2, were found wholly constitutional, Mr. Speaker.

That decision that Premiers Ford and Moe and our own Premier were very excited about before the decision came: here are some quotes from that decision. They quote from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which is the global authority on climate change established by the United Nations environment program and the world meteorological association. Here are some quotes.

Climate change will amplify existing risks and create new risks for natural and human systems. Risks are unevenly distributed and are generally greater for disadvantaged people and communities in countries at all levels of development.

In other words, failure to act, Mr. Speaker: disproportionately, that burden is felt by disadvantaged people around the world and in this country among indigenous people, like I just described.

Without additional mitigation efforts beyond those in place today, wrote the IPCC,

and even with adaptation, warming by the end of the 21st century will lead to high to very high risk of severe, widespread and irreversible impacts globally.

They state this with “high confidence.”

[Mr. Milliken in the chair]

It’s important to note that in section 16 of the Saskatchewan court’s decision they say, “None of these conclusions were challenged or put in issue by the participants in this Reference.” The

UCP participated in that reference, Mr. Speaker. None of these facts, including that the risks of climate change will be disproportionately felt by the disadvantaged among us, was put in question by the UCP’s own high-priced lawyers.

So we know that Canada must do its part. Canada is in fact a signatory to a number of international conventions on this matter, Mr. Speaker – the Kyoto protocol, then the Copenhagen accord, and then, of course, the Paris agreement – that commit us to varying levels of greenhouse gas emissions reductions.

Well, what does this have to do with carbon pricing? Once again, Mr. Speaker, I commend to you page 42 of the Saskatchewan court reference, in which the court looks at the broad starting point concerns of whether this matter is something of national importance and the idea of minimum national standards of price stringency for GHG emissions and finds that “there is widespread international consensus that carbon pricing is[, in fact, that] necessary measure” that will bring minimum national standards of price stringency for GHG emissions. They are not a sufficient measure, writes the court, to achieve the global reductions in GHG emissions but “a well-designed carbon price is an indispensable part of a strategy for reducing emissions in an efficient way.” That, from the foreign-funded radicals at the High-Level Commission on Carbon Prices report prepared by the World Bank.

As the court writes, “There is a widespread trend in favour of carbon pricing . . . Overall, 67 jurisdictions . . . are putting a price on carbon.” And then, affirmed by Nicholas Rivers, who is an economist that the Wildrose used to quote before he told them to stop, “The existing literature is highly convergent in finding that carbon prices that have been implemented around the world have been successful in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.” It is also of note, Mr. Speaker, that none of these concerns were contested by the intervenors in the Saskatchewan court case, including the UCP’s own lawyer. If the UCP is going to spend all kinds of money on lawyers to agree with those facts, it defies logic why they would stand in this House right now and disagree with them.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the world has questions, too, and I have spoken at length about this with reference to my previous role, both on the record in the media and in this House in terms of what oil companies and others were asking us to do to make Alberta resilient in a carbon-constrained future. As I just enumerated, we are on the verge of dramatic – dramatic – change in our climate, in climate change, climate variability, and severity of extreme weather events. That is for sure. Yes, it is real. Yes, it is happening, and it’s us. Yes, it is bad. But the good news is there is something we can do about it. That was the message that companies like Suncor and CN Rail and Cenovus brought to us in 2015, and we acted.

My former deputy minister recounts a story of having hotshot investors, as he calls them, come to meet with him a couple of years ago indicating that they were being swamped, quote: more than 10,000 e-mails, letters, and phone calls with demands from their own shareholders that the company stop investing in the Alberta oil sands. For their companies to continue investing, they needed answers. These hotshot investors’ questions, according to my deputy, were tough, detailed, and demanding. So our officials, competent as they are, went about the case of enumerating exactly what Alberta was doing in terms of its climate leadership plan: its approach to conservation, its approach to reinvestment, to energy efficiency, to clean technology, the \$1.4 billion that my hon. colleague spoke of earlier, and to meaningful action on renewables and diversification.

It is also true that companies are disclosing their climate action. Individually, many of them are already doing this. Suncor and others have been doing this for some years, Mr. Speaker. It is also true that the Bank of Canada has now joined a financial reporting

and climate transparency initiative, an initiative first pioneered by the Bank of England and former Governor Mark Carney, who have done a number of different reports and guidance documents to other central banks around the world around the disclosure of climate risk, transparency, reporting and so on.

It is distressing, to say the least, that our Premier has dismissed those actions on the part of the central banks around the world as the flavour of the month. This is deeply concerning to investor confidence in this province, that now we have a Premier that would thumb his nose at the international financial community, at the central banks, as if he knows better. I know that I would rather carefully review the advice coming from the governor of the Bank of England, from the Bloomberg group, and all of their work that they are doing on financial transparency and reporting and risk. I would rather look carefully at what the Bank of Canada is signalling with respect to its role in maintaining monetary and fiscal policy. Mr. Speaker, that is deeply concerning. It's deeply concerning to the future of this province, and that is one of the reasons why I do not support Bill 1.

9:10

Another one of the reasons I do not is because this bill takes away all of the fences around the use of the funds. Mr. Speaker, part 2 in the Climate Leadership Act – maybe it was part 3; I think it was part 3 – enumerates the permitted uses for the funds. The funds collected were either to go to tax cuts or rebates, which is why 65 per cent of Albertans got a cheque, which is why we cut the small-business rate by a third. After that, a permitted use was in climate change mitigation, in reducing greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change, climate variability, and severe weather that are in fact imperilling the future of humanity. So we did that. The third piece is around climate adaptation. This was also a permitted use.

I notice that the Member for Livingstone-Macleod is in this Chamber. I have met with many of his constituents – ranchers, fourth- and fifth-generation Albertans in this province – who have made a spirited case for carbon offsets from soil carbon sequestration, for ensuring that we keep our native grasslands and our foothills intact, which not only sustains their way of life as ranchers, their historic way of life, but also sustains the environment and also allows us to sequester carbon and ensure that there is something to pass on to future generations.

The hon. member's constituents are very concerned about this, Mr. Speaker, and now there won't be any funds for those climate adaptation initiatives. Why? Because this government turned those funds into a slush fund. Because this government turned around and gave any hope and any possibility of those kinds of conservation initiatives, that are deeply Albertan, that are written into our DNA, saving the family farm and ranches – for what? – to turn around and try to paper over a hole in the deficit that you blew from a 4-and-a-half-billion-dollar tax cut. That is another reason why I do not support Bill 1.

Now, I also don't support Bill 1 because some of those programs that we invested in, with their winding down, are going to put insulators, electricians, boilermakers, power engineers, and others out of work. We invested significantly in industrial energy efficiency programs, Mr. Speaker. This was a key priority. It is not just about residences, and it is not just about large emitters. We have a lot of light manufacturing and light commercial activity that goes on in this province, and we made sure we had a good, solid suite of programs that were available to them for that. Those programs will all disappear, and every single one of those people is going to be thrown out of work.

Every postal code in this province had accessed energy efficiency programs in some way. Every First Nation in this province had

accessed those programs in some way. You know, I worry about the people of Fort Chipewyan, who have made their future plans in terms of making their community resilient, in terms of redirecting funds that they spent on diesel generation into being the largest off-grid solar project in Canada. That is what this climate leadership plan built: three First Nations co-owning it, technical expertise coming from ATCO. That project may collapse. I worry about those programs, Mr. Speaker, and I worry about others, too. I worry about indigenous people who wanted to move forward with the indigenous equity participation in future renewable energy rounds, and with some of the equity participation funds that are no longer available to them, they may not be able to do that.

Finally, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Acting Speaker: Under Standing Order 29(2)(a), are there any members who wish to have any questions or comments? The hon. Minister of Transportation.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I just heard was fascinating. I just heard the hon. member the former environment minister stand up and talk as if she was the champion of investment right after her government chased \$80 billion out of Alberta that may never come back unless there's a better government with better policies that is more business friendly. Eighty billion dollars. Yet the hon. member would stand here in this House on the record and claim to be a champion of investment. That is the most incredible, amazing thing that I've ever heard. I guess I'm not speechless because I'm talking, but the fact is that I can't imagine a more ridiculous statement that was read into the record in this House than the one that just finished right before I spoke.

[The Speaker in the chair]

Mr. Speaker, there are people whose jobs, whose businesses were going to close, if the election went the other way, because of the policies of the previous government that were taking those businesses and the jobs out, not just the carbon tax but the combination of the carbon tax and the minimum wage, that was killing small businesses and restaurants and reducing jobs and reducing jobs for young people. We are at record levels of unemployment in Alberta for young people, yet the former minister would stand up like a champion of investment. I can't imagine anything more ridiculous than what we just heard.

Mr. Speaker, even on the other end we all should care about the environment, and I believe we all do. In that way, we should all care about what that does, but – you know what? – we learned during the last four years, through mechanisms and through experts, that through carbon leakage the carbon tax is probably a net environmental negative, not a positive but a negative.

Yes, indeed, the former government got some company from Ontario to come out and put in light bulbs. In fact, Mr. Speaker, they made two trips to each home to put in light bulbs, one to count them and then to come back and put the other ones in. To make sure they were environmentally friendly, they took out the light bulbs that were working and took them with them because you don't want to fully use the working light bulbs; you want to take them with you when you leave. Yet they couldn't find somebody from Alberta, a company from Alberta to make two trips to every home and change light bulbs.

This is really fascinating. Mr. Speaker, talk about stability, when we had – I don't know – a massive number of major energy companies leave Alberta in the last four years for, I guess, more stable investment environments like Nigeria and many other countries and Iran. The fact is that to hear this attempted revision of history is fascinating to me, and it's courageous. You know what?

If somebody, you know, got caught doing something and then came there the next day or the next minute and said, "I didn't do that," everybody would say, "Well, everybody saw you." "No, I didn't do it." That's what we just heard, an absolute denial of the track record of the previous government over the last four years, that leaves us with 183,000 or so Albertans out of work, that leaves us with record high unemployment for young people, that leaves us with a deficit of \$6 billion to \$8 billion to \$10 billion per year, heading for \$100 billion, not by our numbers but by the previous government's own numbers. That's what they would admit to. Who knows how bad it would be if they were given another four years to unleash these policies on Albertans and Alberta jobs and Alberta families. It is scary.

Fortunately, Albertans saw through that, Mr. Speaker. Fortunately, Albertans saw no social licence. Fortunately, Albertans saw the disconnect between people, like the former speaker, writing books against the oil sands or writing the forewords for books against the energy industry and then claiming to stand up the next day and be a champion. Albertans saw the hypocrisy. Albertans saw the inconsistency. Albertans made their choice, and they made their choice with their eyes wide open.

The number one thing in our platform that Albertans voted for in droves – and by "droves" I mean the biggest number of voters in the history of an Alberta election. They voted against the carbon tax, which is why I support this bill, that removes the carbon tax.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

9:20

The Speaker: Are there any members wishing to speak in debate on Bill 1? The hon. Member for St. Albert.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was just looking through a few articles, and there was one that caught my attention. It's an American article, I believe, from Vox, October 2018, and the title of the article is Why Conservatives Keep Gaslighting the Nation about Climate Change. The article begins, "In recent years, leaders of the Republican Party have become aware that denying the existence of global warming makes them look like idiots." Well, you know, we seem to follow suit with the United States. I'm hopeful, but I just listened to the member go on and on about light bulbs ...

The Speaker: Thank you. I just might provide some caution. I recognize that you're quoting from an article.

Ms Renaud: I was.

The Speaker: It's okay. I'm speaking. Thank you.

I recognize that you're quoting from an article. We need to be careful that we don't do indirectly what we can't do directly. I would just advise some caution, with respect, and I also expect that we'll see the article tabled tomorrow.

Ms Renaud: Absolutely. I will table the article.

I listened to the previous speaker talk about light bulbs. That's fine. We heard them talking about it for months and months and months and months because that's what they latched on to, that and their little slogan about axing the tax or whatever that was, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure you'll remember.

But what it's about is our future and our children's future. When it comes right down to it, all of the things that we do and that we talk about in this House will be remembered not just because it's in *Hansard* but because we actually create laws and regulation and we set the tone, we set the stage for our future. What you're doing by scrapping this work that we brought in is that you're making a

statement that the science that we know to be true is not important enough for you to pay attention and to do the things that we need to do to ensure that our children and their children have the same future that we enjoy now, because they won't.

Ninety-seven per cent of the world's scientists – and you can laugh if you like; it's not funny. These are peer-reviewed scientists that are telling us that this is happening. They've been telling us for decades, but we have not been listening. But it is happening. We know that a million species are at risk of extinction. I can't even comprehend what that means for us. It's beyond even understanding what losing a million – what does that mean for us and our future, for our children? We've been told by scientists that we have 12 years to act until it's too late. That is not the world that I want for my children and their children, not at all.

My son is a scientist, and his fiancée is a scientist as well, and that's probably the closest I ever got to science because I am not a scientist by any stretch. We talk a lot, obviously, about climate change, and when I talk about some of the things that I hear in this place, do you know what their response is? They actually laugh. They laugh at the denial that goes on. They laugh at the fact that politicians, whatever your background, can sit in places like this and create laws, vote for laws, or speak against laws, legislation, bills that actually are based in science and fact. They give me examples that in meetings, their scientific meetings, whether it's their department or when they go to conferences, it's virtually impossible for that many of them to ever agree on anything, but what they do agree on is this science, that man-made climate change is going to cause problems that we will soon be unable to fix or mitigate. Yet we're sitting here, and we're discussing getting rid of a strategy in a larger plan that looked at taking us to a place where we could start to make a difference.

It's not just our scientists that study climate change that are telling us this. Here's an older article, that I also found, from the Canadian Medical Association.

Climate change is increasingly recognized as a significant threat facing society and has the potential to be one of the greatest threats to human health in the 21st Century.

I don't think they wrote this lightly.

Possible impacts could include ...

and I'm going to read some of them for you because they need to be on the record and you need to listen to this stuff. You need to think about this when you vote.

- Increased mortality, disease and injuries from heat waves and other extreme weather events ...

Add to this the people that are marginalized, that are even more impacted by these things, whether it's our seniors, whether it's people with disabilities, whether it's people that live in poverty. They don't have the ability to get out of the way of these massive events.

- Continued change in the range of some infectious disease vectors ...
- Effects on food yields – increased malnutrition;
- Increased flooding in some areas and increased droughts in others ...

as already mentioned,

- ... along with other impacts on freshwater supply;
- Increases in foodborne and waterborne illnesses;
- Warming and rising sea levels adding to displacement and also impacting water supply through salination;
- Impaired functioning of ecosystems;
- Negative effects on air quality associated with ground level ozone, including increases in cardio-respiratory morbidity and mortality, asthma, and allergens;

- Displacement of vulnerable populations . . .

We know this. Just look at what's happening around us. Any disaster that happens, whether it's a flood, whether it's a fire – certainly, our first responders are incredible and get people out of the way and to safety, but it's the people that are at risk that are most in harm's way.

You know, I think it was last week I heard one of the UCP – well, I don't want to call them talking heads – radio supporters, I suppose, making fun of the student movement. I don't know. I think that having over a million students in 125 countries all around the globe saying the same thing, that you need to pay attention – this is serious. This isn't about politics. This isn't about a bumper sticker. This isn't about you getting re-elected. This is about our future. This is about our children, and it's about their children. They're turning up every single Friday, and they're saying the same thing: politicians, decision-makers, pay attention, pay attention to the science, pay attention to what's happening to our planet. Is it really worth it, a little, tiny short-term gain, your platform promise so that people are saving \$100 a month, maybe, on the carbon tax, so you can say, "Yay, look what we did; we lived up to our promise"?

In the meantime, what is happening? We're being warned. We have 12 years to act until it's too late. A million species are at risk. It's happening. Look at the fires in northern Alberta. I'm not saying that we haven't had forest fires, but our scientists have been telling us again and again and again for decades that they will get worse, they will happen earlier, they'll be more intense. The same with flooding, the same with drought and all of the things that are impacted: you understand it when we lose a species. I'm sure you've all heard the science around our bees.

It's all interconnected, so by ignoring this, ignoring the warnings that our scientists have been giving us for decades, you are putting our planet at risk, our country, our province, our cities, but most importantly you're putting our children's future at risk, their future, their children's future. Is that something that you can be proud of? In a few years from now, when all certainty is gone and there is nothing else that you can possibly cling to and you hide your bumper stickers because you're embarrassed, can you say, "I did everything I could"?

I'd like to close debate, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. member, I just might remind the member to address your comments through the chair, if you might, in the future. Thank you.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Consideration of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor's Speech

Ms Glasgow moved, seconded by Ms Rosin, that an humble address be presented to Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor as follows.

To Her Honour the Honourable Lois Mitchell, CM, AOE, LLD, the Lieutenant Governor of the province of Alberta:

We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

[Adjourned debate May 27: Mr. Jason Nixon]

The Speaker: I see the hon. Member for Airdrie-Cochrane is rising on debate of the throne speech.

9:30

Mr. Guthrie: Thank you. I rise today, Mr. Speaker, as the proud MLA for Airdrie-Cochrane, the son of Winston and Barbara, the brother of Jeff and Glenda, the husband to Tracy, and the father of Mitchell and Camryn. This is a new electoral district northwest of Calgary encompassing the southwest of Airdrie, Bearspaw, a portion of Rocky View, and Cochrane. It's a unique region, on Treaty 7 land, that combines urban communities with that of acreage living and rural farmlands.

There's a long history of cattle ranching in the area, with family establishments like those of the Hansons west of Airdrie and the Harvie family, who in conjunction with the Alberta government in 2006 created Glenbow Ranch provincial park. I must admit that I look forward to the bull and cattle sales that take place at Soderghen ranch each year. In fact, every February Stan and Jane Grad, the owners of Soderghen, host a large bull sale that attracts buyers from across this province and beyond. I'm no longer in the cattle business, but I must say that the steak sandwich they provide is pretty, pretty okay and the conversation even better. Farmers and ranchers always have great stories to tell, and I'm always interested to hear about those.

Although not in our constituency but a positive influence, I'd like to mention the Stoney Nakoda Nation to our west and the Tsuut'ina Nation to the south as we share many of the same values, resources, and infrastructure. I look forward to learning more about the First Nations' traditions and developing a long-standing relationship with them.

In 1992 I obtained a chemical engineering degree from the University of Alberta. My first field of work comprised eight years in sales and marketing in the pulp and paper industry, travelling throughout Alberta, western Canada, the U.S., and abroad, including three memorable trips to India.

But sometimes life doesn't always go as planned. In 1998 my brother-in-law Arlen Dumaresq was 25 years old and was destined to take over the family ranch in Consort, Alberta. The Dumaresqs are known for their hard work and work ethic, and Arlen fit that definition perfectly. He was not a man of many words, but he had a wit about him that was very enjoyable. In May of that year he was involved in a tragic farming accident. This accident left him paralyzed, and in December of 1998 he passed away.

After the birth of our son, Mitchell, a few months later my wife, a school teacher, and I set aside our careers, and in the spring of 2000 we moved to Consort in order to help on the family's ranch. Now, for a townie this was an eye-opening and humbling experience, managing and working in a 3,000-head feedlot with 450 cows to boot. However, over time I gained invaluable life and business experiences, including some wonderful times calving in the spring, but also turbulent ones, having to deal with both drought and BSE. The two-year time horizon we gave ourselves turned into 10 and saw the birth of our daughter, Camryn.

Along our travels on family trips away from Consort, we made many stops for ice cream at MacKay's in Cochrane's historic downtown. We fell in love with the community, so when we purchased our small business in Calgary, we made Cochrane our home. I've been a Cochrane resident for 10 years, with eight of those as a small-business owner in Calgary. My wife, Tracy, and I owned and operated a successful franchise business. In 2015, with changes to the political landscape both provincially and federally resulting in taxation and policy changes that we felt were detrimental to small businesses and to the vast majority of Albertans, we decided to make a change in our lives, so in 2017 we sold our business and entered the political realm. I felt that I had a background that, although it did not include politics, was one that

was well representative of Alberta and especially the constituency of Airdrie-Cochrane.

Our electoral district has over 51,000 residents, and as Airdrie and Cochrane are two of the fastest growing communities in Canada, this area is bound to continue growing at a strong pace. This region is a corridor for transporting goods, and due to its picturesque views overlooking the Rocky Mountains, it is desirable for both tourism and for those wishing to escape life in the big city.

Naturally, this growth comes with its challenges, from health care and urgent care demands to senior living and palliative care concerns. Transportation infrastructure is at its limit. Cochrane, for instance, has no major interchange in a town approaching 30,000 people, so with the Bow River separating the town from north and south, with single-lane traffic on both highways 1A and 22, it creates high traffic congestion and is a safety risk for all travellers on these roadways. The small-town western motif that residents take pride in can sometimes be lost waiting in long lines. A solution to these traffic woes is desperately needed.

It should be no surprise that when I first began my door-knocking campaign, I started with visits to the small-business community. I found some pretty interesting and unique establishments. For instance, from Cochrane we have Krang Spirits, a distillery serving up some pretty tasty vodka, I might say, and Half Hitch Brewing Company: great food and I'd recommend trying the Fire N' Fury. That's my favourite ale that they have on tap. From Airdrie we have Sorso lounge and espresso bar, very popular, serving up some great eats. I should also note that our constituency hosts two vibrant weekend farmers' markets every summer, with one in Cochrane on Saturdays and one in Bears paw on Sundays.

Our electoral district also has attracted business from the high-tech sector as a home base for Garmin, which has its Canadian headquarters in Cochrane, and 4iiii Innovations, supplying various technology-based products with a focus on athletics.

The largest private employer and contributor to our community is Spray Lake Sawmills. This upcoming year they will be celebrating 76 years of operations in Alberta. Chester Mjolsness founded this company in 1943, and it is still a family-run business, owned and operated now by his son Barry. The mill operates on a 200-year forest management plan and utilizes every part of the tree, including shavings and bark. In fact, they created a thriving business called Top Spray from this product once considered waste. Spray Lake understands that having a healthy forest is the centrepiece of maintaining a viable, prolific business. This is why they take great pride in conservation efforts for this renewable resource.

Over 40,000 Albertans make their living from forestry, approximately \$7 billion in annual economic activity for this province. Alberta is recognized as a world leader in forest stewardship, and by managing our forest sustainably, we can have a healthy industry and help control the effects of fires and pest infestations.

I hear a lot about diversifying the economy in this province, but it is impossible to have your core sectors such as agriculture, forestry, and energy suffer and think that other industries will want to invest here. Economic diversification does not occur because a government decides it should occur. Diversification happens off the strengths of your core industries, and the government has to put those conditions into place for both core industries and diversification to prevail.

Many of the companies I spoke with identified several issues as barriers to doing business in Alberta. Those included high taxation, a stifling regulatory regime as well as increasing costs of goods and labour. I believe that many of these hurdles have been addressed in the Speech from the Throne, including, first, the carbon tax repeal act, which will make life more affordable for all Albertans. Next, the job creation tax cut, which will provide Alberta companies with the lowest taxes in Canada. Next, the open for business act: this will play a key role in creating jobs and alleviating recent cost burdens placed on employers. And the Red Tape Reduction Act will allow business and government the ability to focus outside of a suffocating regulatory jurisdiction that has been created in this province. All of these initiatives are being done with the main goal of creating good-paying jobs for Albertans.

9:40

In order to do that, we must create an environment that is positive for investment. By increasing revenue and developing a strong economic base, we can as government look forward to reducing our deficits and putting us on a path to a balanced budget. The challenges that lie ahead over the next four years are great, but I believe we have a terrific team with a new philosophy that will rise to the occasion.

Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to be here in Alberta's Legislature representing the new riding of Airdrie-Cochrane. I will do my utmost to serve its constituents, respect this House, and assist my colleagues in achieving our goals.

Thank you to the Assembly, and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move to adjourn debate on the Speech from the Throne.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

The Acting Speaker: The House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at . . .

The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll help you with that. I will move to adjourn the House till tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 9:42 p.m.]

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