



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
First Session

Alberta Hansard

Tuesday morning, May 28, 2019

Day 4

The Honourable Nathan Cooper, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 30th Legislature

First Session

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Williams, Dan D.A., Peace River (UCP)
Wilson, Hon. Rick D., Maskwacis-Wetaskiwin (UCP)
Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UCP)
Yaseen, Muhammad, Calgary-North (UCP)

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New Democrat: 24

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Vacant
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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

10 a.m.

Tuesday, May 28, 2019

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Deputy Speaker: Good morning, everyone.

Let us pray. Lord, the God of righteousness and truth, grant to our Queen and her government, to Members of the Legislative Assembly, and to all in positions of responsibility the guidance of Your spirit. May they never lead the province wrongly through love of power, desire to please, or unworthy ideals but lay aside all private interests and prejudices, keeping in mind the responsibility to seek to improve the condition of all. So may Your kingdom come and Your name be hallowed. Amen.

Please be seated.

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 1

An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax

[Adjourned debate May 27: Ms Renaud]

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today to speak to Bill 1, An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax. This bill deals with one of the most important and urgent issues of our time, our society, and our economy: environment and climate change. On this side of the House we believe that climate change is a problem. This issue has been settled quite conclusively, and we as a society, we as owners of these resources, land, and environment have an obligation to hand all this to our future generations in a developed state and without destroying it. We know that Albertans want a plan – a real plan – to address climate issues, and the choice we have as government, as society is that we can either ignore the signs of a changing climate and be dragged along or we can show leadership and make our own choices for the security of our kids, for our environment, for our economy, and for our future generations.

That is why when we were in government, we took action for the future of our province, making sure that we have a cleaner environment for our kids, that we have jobs in renewable energy, and that we were investing in clean technology, green infrastructure, and in innovation in our economy, in oil sands, and in our energy industry. We believe – and that was said many times by our leader – that the economy and our environment can and must go hand in hand. That was the reason we brought forward the climate leadership plan. Essentially, this bill is trying to do exactly the opposite of that, the opposite of taking any action on the environment, and proposes to repeal the changes, to repeal the progress that we made under that climate leadership plan.

Under the Climate Leadership Act we worked with stakeholders, we worked with our industry, and we established a carbon levy on transportation and heating fuels in Alberta. We provided exemptions where needed and necessary, we set out the requirements for exemption certificates and licences, and we set out to set carbon levy rates on different fuels. All this was done with a view to making sure that our economy is up to pace with today's

realities, our industry is competitive, and we are getting the value for our resources.

There is enough evidence that clearly demonstrates the urgency of climate issues, and it requires us to take action. Even the Nobel prize for economics in 2018 was given to two fellows for their research and leadership in this field back in the 1990s. Professors William D. Nordhaus and Paul M. Romer were awarded the Nobel prize for their work in this regard. I think that if we talk about economics, the basic premise of this subject is that it deals with the management of scarce resources, and what it does is that it deals with the constraints on economies that are dictated by nature. Our knowledge and our response deal with those constraints.

One of these professors talked about technological changes – Professor Romer, who demonstrated that that's how our knowledge can function as a driver for economic innovation and change – while Professor William Nordhaus talked about an integrated assessment model, which takes into account the constraint the environment puts on our economy. For both of them the fundamental argument is that while nature dictates the constraints on our economy, we cannot sit on the sidelines. We have to address that, and when we manage our resources, we have to account for those constraints. Both of them argue that climate change is one of the biggest constraints on our economy, and in their research, whether that's the integrated assessment model or endogenous growth theory, they both argue that we should use our research, we should use our knowledge to innovate in a way that helps us address the constraints put forth by the climate on our economy.

We also know that our industry is capital intensive and we get to compete in markets outside Alberta to get the capital to make investments in our market, and when we compete in global markets, markets outside Alberta, we also have to be mindful that the constraints put forth by the environment on economies around the globe are taken very seriously. More and more economies are moving towards addressing this issue, moving towards renewables, moving towards cleaner economies. Another thing is that when we compete to sell our product in global markets, there are also things like the carbon intensity of our oil barrel. That also is a measure that's looked at, and not having any plan to deal with the climate issues leaves the Alberta economy, Alberta industry at a huge disadvantage.

Despite all this evidence, what this UCP bill does is that it proposes to repeal the Climate Leadership Act, eliminating the carbon tax, and it also ends the rebates that two-thirds of Albertans were getting due to that plan. It also takes away the incentive that industry had to innovate, and it also takes the revenues that were collected by the carbon levy, that will no longer be used for the environmental-, climate-related projects or programs. To say the least, all these actions that are proposed in this piece of legislation run afoul of all the evidence available and are completely irresponsible.

A price on carbon exists in 40 different countries and 27 subnational jurisdictions, including California, New York, Washington state, and Mexico. When we brought this climate leadership plan in, we consulted widely with industry, we consulted widely with environmental groups, and there was a step in the right direction. Later on, when the pan-Canadian framework came, the federal government also brought forward legislation that will apply when provinces will not have their own plan to address climate change issues.

10:10

This piece of legislation will leave Alberta without a plan to deal with emissions, thus paving the way for the federal legislation to apply. Somehow, we were told, their bill will magically provide a

\$1.4 billion tax break to Albertans, notwithstanding the fact that it is taking away the rebate money, almost 600-plus million dollars, from two-thirds of Albertans. We were told that it will create 6,000 jobs across the province. However, under the climate leadership plan there were already 7,300 jobs, so it's taking more jobs away from Albertans than it's creating. By ignoring this problem, we are walking our economy into a dead end for our environment and for our future, and we're simply paving the way for Ottawa to come in and use their backstop legislation, the federal carbon tax, which will also risk the approval of our pipeline and our access to markets.

Instead of focusing on what a global trend requires us to do, instead of focusing on more renewable energy and natural gas, this government's plan is to just bring back the same old policies that were responsible for the issues that we are facing today in terms of market access. Instead of funding critical projects like the Calgary green line – being a Calgary MLA, it's an important project for Calgary – and instead of helping Albertans to renovate their homes with energy efficiency programs, we are wasting money on high-priced lawyers for the lawsuits that we know will not lead to the outcome that we were told to believe by this government.

In recent legal developments, Madam Speaker, there was a constitutional question brought forward by the government of Saskatchewan, which asked the court to opine on one question: whether the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act, the federal act which was introduced in Parliament, was constitutional in whole or in part. That was the sole issue before the court in this constitutional reference. The Premier has said that they will also challenge the constitutionality of the same federal act, the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act, and they will file a reference to the Court of Appeal.

In that constitutional challenge what we noticed is that Saskatchewan challenged the federal government's authority to enact such legislation based on section 53 of the Constitution, that it's not within the constitutional authority of the federal government to do so. But the Court of Appeal decided against Saskatchewan, and they also decided that under the constitutional powers, the federal government does have authority to implement such changes with respect to the environment. When they are dealing with any undertakings which are within their jurisdiction, anything they are fully entitled to, it's permissible for them under the Constitution to regulate all matters that fall within that undertaking, and they said that it was well within the scope of POGG authority under the Constitution. If this government was to ask all courts to decide on the same question, we are likely to get the same answer, meaning that what we were told before, that they will repeal this tax and bring a constitutional challenge, that's not open for us. Although a little late, more recently even the editorial board for the *Edmonton Journal* came up with an editorial saying that maybe leaving carbon climate leadership in place is a good idea because if we remove or repeal this, it will be replaced by the federal government's climate leadership act.

Madam Speaker, in closing, what this bill does is that it opts for a federal climate plan instead of a made-in-Alberta plan that was well considered, well thought out, and developed . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 29(2)(a) are there any comments or questions? The Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Member Loyola: Yes. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I was very intrigued by what my fellow colleague was having to say. I would like to ask him specifically about how members in his own constituency were reacting to the idea that the carbon levy would be repealed.

The Deputy Speaker: The Member for Calgary-McCall.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think this bill is certainly a significant and important step but in a completely wrong direction and backwards. It will take away many worthy projects all across the province from my riding. Many of those projects will be in government members' ridings as well. If we look at some of those projects, for instance in Calgary, the green line was funded under revenues from this climate leadership plan. That's one of the most important infrastructure developments in Calgary.

Certainly, this action will put projects like those – and there was another Springbank project that was in Calgary. At a constituency level there were many constituents who have benefited from energy efficiency programs. Not only that, it was helping constituents, helping all Albertans to look after their environment, and this plan was on track to cut more than 50 megatonnes of emissions over the next 10 years. That amounts to taking almost 10.6 million cars off the road. All my constituents, like other Albertans, do have a vested interest in having a clean environment, in having clean water, in having an economy that is more diversified, that creates opportunities for them.

Certainly, this will also take jobs away from my constituents and other Albertans. There were 7,300 jobs that came with that plan, and there were further jobs that were coming along with this plan. We were told that 6,000 jobs were created, but we lost 7,300 jobs.

Our plan was also responsible for a one-third tax break for small business. That was also funded through revenues from this climate plan. We have major investments, as I said, in transit infrastructures.

Also, over two-thirds of Albertans were getting rebates. Certainly, my constituents were also benefiting from those rebates. Now that \$700 million that was given back to Albertans, that was given back to my constituents has been taken away by this Bill 1.

There were many things that came along with the climate leadership plan, and repealing that will take those benefits away from my constituents and away from Albertans, benefits such as upgrades for schools, universities, and hospitals.

10:20

Along with that, there were energy efficiency programs. It was the first time in the province's history that we developed those energy efficiency plans. Certainly, many Albertans were benefiting from those plans. In Calgary and the neighbourhoods of Calgary there are many indigenous communities. They were benefiting from our climate leadership plan. Across the province there were 65 indigenous communities who benefited from initiatives from the climate leadership plan.

In reality this bill just delivers a huge tax break for wealthy and high-income Albertans and eliminates the revenue stream that supports renewable energy and rebate programs, and it threatens the funding of infrastructure projects like the green line, Springbank, and projects in the cities of Calgary and Edmonton. Essentially, it leaves Alberta at a disadvantage by not having a plan to address the climate issue, that is the most serious existential issue of our time.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, there's been a request to revert to introductions. I will ask one question. It requires unanimous consent. Do you consent to revert to introductions? All those against, say no.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Introduction of Guests

The Deputy Speaker: The Member for Camrose.

Ms Lovely: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am honoured to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Mr. Calvin Strauss, who hails from Camrose. He's a prominent businessman, and I'm honoured that he's able to take some time to be here among us. Calvin, please rise and accept the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: Welcome.

Any members wishing to speak? Edmonton-Glenora.

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 1

An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax (continued)

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'm adjusting to the new practice of not doing introductions. I thought I'd introduce my guests in the midst of my speech, which I'm fine with. Yeah, that's fine. Thank you very much for that.

I want to begin my remarks in response to Bill 1 by recognizing that we're on the traditional land of Treaty 6 First Nations as well as the Métis people of Alberta, who share a very deep connection with this land.

I had the honour prior to being an MLA of having served on the Edmonton public school board. In my time on the school board I grew accustomed to visiting students, particularly grade 6 classes. I am regularly invited to speak to grade 6 classes when they're engaging in democracy. I'm very grateful to have a grade 6 student here today. She's from Westglen elementary school in the riding of Edmonton-Glenora, and her name is Sadie Cor. I want to thank her for being here and for bringing her mom. Sadie is like the students I talk to regularly. When I meet with them, I say: "No matter what age you are, you are my boss. You live in Edmonton-Glenora, and it's my job to represent you and to fight for the things that matter to you and for all of your classmates and for all Albertans." I'm really grateful that Sadie contacted me shortly after the election and wrote: "I am worried about global warming. How can I help so I don't die young?" It's a pretty simple statement from a grade 6 student.

Like many young people they are aware of the impacts that this generation and prior generations have made on our planet, and they are stepping up to make sure that they are being responsible for this generation and future generations. I want to start with step 1, acknowledging that climate change is real. Scientific consensus has been reached on this matter, I would say, as definitive as scientific consensus can ever become. Climate change is real.

Two, it is man-made climate change. It is caused by human action and human activity. There's a recent Bill Maher video that went viral. I won't repeat it because the language isn't very parliamentary, but the thrust of his message is: "I've been talking about this my entire life. Enough is enough. I gave you guys patience and time. When you were kids, I said feel free to question the science – I get it – but we're past the point of being able to question the science." Climate change is real, it's man-made, and it's very damaging. It is leading to significant impacts around the world.

I know that we used to say global warming – and some people still do – but it's so much more complex than the temperature of the earth rising. It is about changing weather patterns. It is about uncontrollable forest fires. It's about rising water levels that are leading to mass flooding. It's about tsunamis. It's about significant climate change that is resulting in devastating impacts for people around the world. I need to say the fact that biodiversity reports that

the collapse of nature here specifically in Canada is warming at twice the global rate. Global warming or climate change is real. There's scientific consensus around it. It's caused by man, and it's really, really damaging, damaging particularly to folks who have lower incomes. But the good news is that there's something we can do about it, and there's something we must do about it while at the same time protecting our major industries.

Of course, when we developed the climate leadership plan back in 2015, it was very clear to us that industry wanted to do its part. Industry wanted to work with us to make sure that they had strong international reputations, that they were able to support good economic diversification and good jobs in their industry and in aligned industries, and that they were willing to do their part as long as other folks were doing their parts, too. That's one of the reasons why when we announced the climate leadership plan in 2015, we had support from industries as well as individuals that weren't typically seen to be standing up at NDP press conferences.

For example, the chair of CNRL:

The announcement is a significant step forward for Alberta. We appreciate the strong leadership demonstrated by Premier Notley and her government. The framework announced will allow ongoing innovation and technology investment in the oil and natural gas sector. In this way, we will do our part to address climate change while protecting jobs and industry competitiveness in Alberta.

Again, CNRL is not typically a validator at environmental announcements, but because this was clearly an announcement about the future of the industry, the future of our province while protecting the environment, CNRL was there in support of this initiative.

Another example. This one was specifically responding to the phase-out of coal, coal being one of the air contaminants, of course, but also a contributor to CO₂ emissions, said by the then president of the Alberta Medical Association, I believe now national vice-president for the Canadian Medical Association, Dr. Carl Nohr:

Physicians know very well the negative health effects of air pollution, including from coal power generation. In the fall [of 2015], the AMA's governing body passed a motion calling on the association to advocate for a phase out of coal power in this province as soon as possible. We are very pleased to learn of the government's plan to expedite this process and seek other solutions that will be healthier for all Albertans.

These were just two of the voices in the very early days speaking to the importance of having a made-in-Alberta climate leadership plan that worked with industry to make sure we addressed the real and very damaging impacts of man-made climate change.

Let's fast forward a year or so because I know that not all members have had a chance to maybe meet with some of their local officials, but here's the mayor of the town of Canmore, Mr. Borrowman, in 2016:

I am pleased to add my support [to the then minister] and the Government of Alberta in implementing the Climate Leadership Plan, which recognizes that all Albertans must take responsibility for protecting our environment. The plan resonates well with the Town of Canmore in our goal of being municipal leaders through our Environmental Sustainability Action Plan, first approved in 2010."

Significant leadership in 2010 from the municipality of Canmore.

I am proud to see Alberta taking on this environmental . . . role nationally and internationally.

Again, a local municipal leader expressing their support of this plan.

One more I want to mention, and then I'll get back to some of my thoughts around climate change, the president and CEO for AltaLink in 2016, Scott Thon:

As we move to a lower carbon future, Alberta's transmission grid is ready to enable Alberta's Climate Leadership Plan. Our transmission system in southern Alberta is already capable of accepting thousands of megawatts of . . . renewable energy.

What I want to say here in response to this quote is that the CEO and president for AltaLink talks about: as we move towards a lower carbon future. That is the reality. No matter what riding or what piece of the world we might happen to reside in, the truth is that the world needs to move to a lower carbon future.

10:30

The other reality is that in Alberta in the 1970s under the leadership of Premier Lougheed we saw the potential that was the oil sands, but we didn't have the innovation to get the oil out of the sand. Through thoughtful government leadership a plan was developed to invest in technology so that we could get the oil out of the sand. Colleagues, what I'm here to say is that through leadership we can get the carbon out of the barrel.

What industry said to us in 2015, 2016, 2017, and forward was: "We're willing to be partners in this work. It's not easy. It's not something that we woke up and all of a sudden decided that we were going to invest billions of dollars in, but we absolutely can do it. But we're not going to do it on our own. We're not going to do it without knowing that the government's got our backs and that the government is going to be pushing our partners in this industry to do the same work as well."

Why is it so important? Well, number one, because there is scientific consensus that global warming or climate change is real and it is very damaging and it is, I would argue, very near, if not past, the point of no return. It is paramount that we address this and that we do so seriously.

Number two is because we deserve to be known as energy leaders around the world. I think that we have had that reputation for a long time, and I want to continue to have that reputation. Again, as the CEO for AltaLink says, "As we move toward a lower carbon future" – and that's the reality. The world is moving toward a lower carbon future. They'll either do it with us, with Alberta, or they will do it without us, but that's the reality.

I'm not here to relitigate the outcome of the election. I want everyone to know that I accept that there was a very clear proposal to eliminate the climate leadership plan and that it received a majority endorsement from the people of Alberta. But I am here to say that climate change is real, that we need to combat it and we need to do so seriously. If the plan isn't a made-in-Alberta climate leadership plan, so be it, but please do not take four years to decide what the plan will be because it will be too late. Kids like Sadie deserve to grow up in a province that is taking action to ensure their future. All of our kids deserve to grow up in a province that is taking action on our future and making sure that we have clean air, water, and safe land for ourselves and for future generations.

I started by recognizing that we're on Treaty 6 land. It was an elder who once said to me: "You know, in western society a lot of people live their lives hoping to be remembered. We live our lives knowing that we will be forgotten." He also said: "We live our lives knowing that we're not just inheriting what we have from the past. We're borrowing it from the future." So, please, today I ask that all of us reflect on the fact that we're borrowing our time on this planet from the future, from the next generation, and that we owe it to them to make sure that when they say, "Why didn't you act on climate change?" we can say that we did.

Again, I understand that Bill 1 will move forward. It got a significant endorsement from the people of Alberta. I respect that. But stopping something is one part of the solution that I imagine you're proposing. The other part, though, is that we need to act on

climate change. We need to act in a responsible way. We already in the last four years have been able to reduce the megatonne emissions from Alberta by the equivalent to what Manitoba typically emits in a year. That is a significant step moving forward, but we still need to do more because we know that we are past the point of no return, that we can't continue to pretend that the science is still pending and that it hasn't been decided. It has. As my friend Bill Nye – my friend, I wish. As Bill Nye said: we are past the point of no return, and patience is wearing thin by the global community.

I understand that there will be an elimination of the price on carbon. So be it, but my call is: what are you going to do to make sure that we act to protect this planet, that we are borrowing from the next generation, so that it's there for the long term? We are really beyond the crossroads, I'd say. If it's not going to be a price on carbon, which many, many economists, especially conservative economists, say is the most transparent and results-driven way, then what are the other points of consideration going to be? We really can't pretend that this isn't a reality.

I guess those are the main things I want to say at this point. All of the doom and gloom that I said at the beginning is true, but so is the fact that there's something we can do about it. The important part is that I don't believe this bill does anything to address it. I don't think that anyone is pretending that it does. I think that in the press conference it was very clear that this is about repealing something. This isn't about replacing. This isn't about proposing a new way to do things in terms of addressing both the protection of our major industries as well as our planet. That, to me, would be the call to action, I guess, for all members in this Chamber.

Repealing something is step one. It must be replaced though. It must be replaced by something that actually looks forward and acts with confidence and that protects our reputation and protects our environment because, honestly, we all deserve to live on a planet that – we all deserve to live. Full stop. I think that Sadie's message around not wanting to die young hits the nail on the head. This is something that is very serious for young people. There have been many young people stepping up and playing leadership roles in this around the world, and I think it's important for us in this Chamber to hear their advice, act as though we are their employees, which we are, employees of the young and the old, and make sure that we reflect their values and the values that are necessary for the sustainability of life on this planet. Mother Nature always wins, right? Some people say that Mother Nature finds a way. Maybe, maybe not. But Mother Nature always wins. So we can pretend that this isn't happening, but at the end of the day the planet will find a way, with or without us, to continue to win.

I guess those are the thoughts I wanted to share at this point with regard to Bill 1. Thank you for indulging me with your time. I don't make a habit of crying in this House but certainly do when a message is as powerful as that.

Thank you for your presence, Sadie, and to your mom as well for being here. You are important to be heard. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: It's wonderful to see our youth involved in such issues that are important to all of us. It's great to see you here today, Sadie, and your mom for probably taking you out of school, which is okay because I think you're learning lots here today and you have a great, passionate MLA to speak on your behalf. So please feel welcome here in this Assembly.

Are there any comments or questions under 29(2)(a)? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

Member Irwin: Thank you. I really appreciated your introduction of Sadie, the grade 6 student. As a former teacher, a social studies teacher, in fact, it sure makes me happy to see young people taking

action. You know, as someone who, as I said, taught social studies, you're not only sharing your thoughts, learning about climate change; you're also engaged in a very important part of the social studies curriculum, which is learning about government. So thank you for being here.

We're seeing a movement led by young people who are fearful about their future and are not willing to sit back and let the climate crisis worsen. The hon. member talked a lot about the importance of having so many stakeholders on board and the widespread support of our climate leadership plan not just from industry but from people of all ages and backgrounds. I know that she's heard from many people about just how important that is.

In my own riding of Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood we do have some of the highest rates of poverty. I heard from so many people while out at the doors just how life-changing, in fact, the rebate is. And some of you might scoff at that, but those rebates made a big difference in people's lives. I heard from seniors, for instance, and I could share countless stories about how much just that small rebate made a difference.

I was just wondering if the member could talk a little bit more about some of the stories that she's heard and just why it is so important that we hear and heed those voices.

The Deputy Speaker: Edmonton-Glenora.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, and thank you to my colleague for the question. I definitely heard many stories while door-knocking, in particular, or meeting with groups around my riding. I'd say that some of the ones that resonated with me particularly were from families who said, you know, that they'd been hoping that we'd take some kind of action on addressing the climate and making sure that we acted in a way that kept that revenue in Alberta. That was one of the other pieces that I heard regularly.

So if we don't act on this, it will be imposed by another order of government. We may spend a significant amount of money fighting that all the way to the Supreme Court, I understand, but that money, again, will probably leave the province, and then at the end of the day, should we lose those challenges, not only have we lost the time of being climate leaders and innovators in our own province, investing in renewables and investing in other energies that show that we are continuing to be energy leaders, but that money would indeed leave the province.

10:40

I heard a lot of people say, you know: I feel like we send a lot of money to Ottawa and let Ottawa make decisions about how to spend that money, and we would much rather have that money stay in Alberta, come back to many families, about two-thirds of Alberta families, through rebate forms. Or if not rebates, I heard from one teacher who said that she engaged in Energy Efficiency Alberta, one of the last jurisdictions in Canada to bring in an energy efficiency program. I know that at the time that we brought it in, the now Premier – you know, I'm a massive *Seinfeld* fan – put out the video of Kramer with the shampoo not washing out of his hair because the water pressure was so bad from that shower head that was put into his washroom. I had a good chuckle, and then I remembered that that episode aired 20 years ago. Twenty years ago New York was taking action on energy efficiency. Twenty years ago we were laughing at low-flow shower heads, and it took us that long to catch up in Alberta.

I know that with many families there is concern that some of those initiatives will go away. I talked to somebody who was in the process of purchasing solar modules to put on their roof because

they were in a position where they'd saved for the last three years and they had a substantial portion. They didn't want to have to borrow everything up front. Now they're nervous about what the future is going to be of that program and if all the saving that they did to prepare and to not have to borrow so that they could have solar on their roof would be for naught. So they're looking at a few different options, but certainly those rebates were a significant piece, as were the opportunities for investing back in our own province and finding ways to take that money.

Let's remember that we exempted marked fuel for agricultural industry. I know that that was incredibly important, having grown up in northern rural Alberta, that those industries be protected. Of course, when we're talking about economic diversification, you need to protect your major industries in addition to oil and gas, which includes agriculture, forestry, and other sectors as well.

So I know that there are some questions about what will happen to these important initiatives that were funded through the climate leadership plan, like Energy Efficiency Alberta.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any other members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm very happy to rise today to speak to Bill 1 because it's a follow-up to my member's statement yesterday, where I talked about Conservative neglect of indigenous peoples. Here we are again. The very first thing that the Conservative government chooses to do upon entering this House is to take another slap at the indigenous community and hit them hard, neglect them through failure to consult with them, as would be normally expected under the United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples clauses regarding free, prior, and informed consent, and they are now withdrawing a major program that has had a significantly positive effect in the indigenous community without any consultation, without any mandate from the indigenous community to do this.

I'm disappointed that I'm here talking about this, but I think it's very important that we spend a few minutes in this House addressing why the climate leadership program was particularly important to the indigenous community. The indigenous people, of course, in this province have a very particular and special relationship to the land. It sustained their communities in this province, or what we now call this province, for some 15,000 or 16,000 years. It has helped them to develop healthy, positive communities, societies that were well known for their generosity, for their trade all across North America over vast distances, for their respect for children, and their desire to pass on a positive world to the children that they brought in, whom they received as gifts from God.

If you do receive a gift from God, you have some responsibility in the indigenous community to make sure that you honour that gift. One of the things that you want to honour is you pass on a world that that child can live in in a sustainable and healthy way. For the Conservatives to come in now and to take a shot at that world and to say that it doesn't really matter if we destroy the world, doesn't really matter if we pollute the Earth, doesn't really matter if we create a climate in which forest fires begin to ravage the land and begin to destroy the forests and kill the animals – it was noted just yesterday by the minister of agriculture that the number of forest fires in Alberta this year is substantially, almost 50 per cent, higher than the number of forest fires that is expected normally in this period of time, but that doesn't seem to matter. It's just indigenous people: that seems to be the attitude.

I want to tell you a little bit about some of the things that the indigenous community has done with the dollars that were set aside for them. Over the last two years approximately \$85 million was set aside in the indigenous climate leadership program. That allowed somewhere in the neighbourhood of about 250 different projects to be implemented in indigenous communities in the province of Alberta.

I can tell you right now that there are 48 First Nations in this province, and I am proud to be the only minister ever to have visited all 48 of them. I can tell you that over 30 of those nations have put up solar panels in the last two years, or have begun the process of putting up solar panels. I can also tell you that all 48, every single First Nation in the ridings of the members sitting across from me now, have benefited from the climate leadership program in some way or another, whether that be through renewable energy projects, through energy efficiency projects, or climate leadership capacity building projects. Every single person who has a First Nations or a Métis settlement or a friendship centre in their community across the floor has just told those people that we are going to take those dollars away from you and we are going to go in and we are going to simply make a change without any consultation and without any care. Back to Conservative neglect again after so many years.

I just want to tell you a little bit about some of the projects that have been developed as a result of the climate leadership plan across this province because I want to tell you about the significance of those plans. Of course, we are concerned about the greenhouse gases. We know that the greenhouse gases have been dramatically reduced through the use of the solar panels and the energy efficiency programs that all of these indigenous communities have put together. But there are other benefits as well, and that's why I want to speak a little bit to some of the particular projects that have happened in this province.

One of the communities that was very much ahead of the game with regard to solar panels was the Montana band down in the Maskwacis-Wetaskiwin riding that is represented by the Minister of Indigenous Relations. They were one of the very first nations to put solar panels up on top of their community building. They told me at the time, when they put those solar panels up, that they saved approximately \$2,000 a month on electrical costs in their public building. This was their very first project. They have added more subsequently. That means that there's now about \$24,000 a year that they can now use not to pay off some utility bill but to actually develop things in their community.

I can tell you one of things that they did develop in their community. They developed a program called the Green Arrow energy program, where they trained individuals from the Montana band in working in the renewable energy sector. They had a very successful program. In fact, at one point they admitted 12 people to their program and graduated 14 because they slipped two in along the way and graduated more people than they originally had been paid for just because they were trying to be as efficient as possible with the dollars. What's happened now is that not only have they reduced their utility costs and therefore have more money for things like schooling and public housing and so on, but they've also generated income in the community through having green employment and creating a company that now moves around the province of Alberta providing green energy projects for the rest of the province. All of the support for those kind of initiatives are gone.

10:50

Just to mention the other three bands at Maskwacis. For example, Louis Bull was one of the very first to put up solar panels in their communities as well, putting them up on the daycare, putting them up on the public buildings, again reducing their utility costs.

Ermineskin did a solar array behind their mall that's free standing and has built one-third of what is possible in that area, with the plans that they were going to add the next two pieces coming along, but that was dependent on the climate leadership plan, so a knife just went in the back of the Ermineskin band.

Samson band has already received a contract for a one megawatt solar field, and have plans with Ermineskin to build a 50-megawatt solar field. All of these are the kinds of things that I think are very important for us to understand. These are community development projects that provide them with some financial security, reduce their utility bills, and help them to build their community in a positive way that's consistent with their value system with regard to the Earth and to their children.

I want to go on and tell you about a few other communities because I think there are a few other points that need to be made. Fort Chip has been mentioned in this House as having developed a brand new company that will seek to build a solar field that will allow them to move off diesel. This is very important. Fort Chip is a fly-in community except for in the winter when you can get there by ice road, but it's very precarious.

One of the problems that they have in Fort Chip is that all of that diesel fuel has to be transported in. It's an extreme waste of energy because you physically have to move all of that energy up there and then use some of the worst form of carbon pollution in diesel fuel to provide some basic heat and lights for the community. They know that that's an inappropriate way to take care of their community, so they have decided that they themselves are going to build a utility so that they can have some kind of energy independence, and that's what's being taken away from them. That's what you're taking when you take away the climate leadership plan.

The other thing that they did in Fort Chip. They have a serious problem with food security in the northern communities, and the cost of food in places like Fort Chip is exorbitant. For example, a four-litre jug of milk often costs \$25. How many of you would go into a store in the neighbourhood that you're in and buy a four-litre jug of milk and pay \$25 for it? I can tell you that most of you would turn around and walk right out of that store. It's a major problem. People need to eat. People need their food.

What they did is they made a decision to build their own grocery store and bring in food so that they could make sure that any profits that came out of the grocery store were returned to the community and that they weren't being overcharged for the food that came in. They then came to our climate leadership plan and said: in order to do this, we would really like to be able to buy the most efficient coolers so that when food is brought in, it can be sustained for a longer period of time and that we're not wasting energy on utilities. Our climate leadership plan was able to provide them with the dollars to build those coolers and to put solar panels on the roof of that grocery store.

We're now not only talking about the Earth and we're now not only talking about children; we're talking about food security. That's what you're taking away when you take away the climate leadership plan. You are punching in the food security in northern communities. You are forcing them to remain on diesel, which, by the way, is problematic in terms of our agreements with other provinces and the national government in this country, where we have agreed already as a province to help reduce diesel use in northern communities. As well as harming the indigenous communities, you're also slapping the face of other governments across this country who we have agreed to work with to reduce diesel.

I think it's really important that we pay attention not only to the fact that the climate leadership plan is consistent in the indigenous

community with their values and ethics but provides them with a stronger financial place from which they can build their communities. It provides them a place in which they can have food security for their families, and, very importantly, it provides them a place in which they can train their members and employ their members to ensure that they have good jobs to sustain their families for many years to come.

One of the other aspects of the climate leadership plan that I think is very important is that monies from that climate leadership plan were being used to help reduce our coal usage in this province. One of those coal plants, of course, that many of you would know about is in Wabamun, which is the location of Paul band. Paul band tells me that they had approximately 87 members who were employees of the coal-burning plant and the electricity generation and that they were dependent on that. So the fact that money was taken from the climate leadership plan to help them transition to a new economy and to retrain those people was extremely important. Paul band is a small band. Eighty-seven people losing their jobs because you're taking away the money from the climate leadership plan is absolutely devastating to that community, and they need those dollars to transition from working in the coal industry to working in other kinds of industries.

Now, we know that those coal plants were going anyways. We know that when the Premier was in Ottawa along with Prime Minister Harper, they were shutting down all those coal plants without any money being given to the communities. Zero dollars were assigned to those communities to help them transition. It was the typical Conservative, "Your business failed. Go find a new job. Too bad. It's not government's responsibility." We came along and said, "Look, we understand. We're doing this for the benefit of all people in this province, so we're going to help you make a transition." We stepped up when we knew that people were going to have a hard time losing those coal plants, and now you have stepped in and said to them, "You no longer will have dollars to help make that transition." It's not just happening in Wabamun; it's happening in Hanna. It's happening in other places in this province, and you have taken money away from all of them.

The story of Conservative neglect of what happens on the ground in the communities in which we live every day is one which I fear is going to be the story of this government. This government is going to spend the next four years simply getting on with its ideological implementation of 1950s policies and thoughts and is going to totally ignore what that means to the people who are living in that community right now.

Let me tell you a little bit more about some of the other communities that have benefited from the climate leadership plan. [Mr. Feehan's speaking time expired]

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 29(2)(a) are there any comments or questions? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

Ms Goehring: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and a huge thank you to the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford for sharing with us the many stories from the communities about the projects that had impacted them based on our climate leadership plan. I know that he spent so much time working with the indigenous community and time across all 48 nations in this beautiful province, and I would like it if he could tell me a little bit more about some of the people and their stories and why this is important to them.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Mr. Feehan: Rutherford, but that's okay.

The Deputy Speaker: My apologies. Edmonton-Rutherford.

Mr. Feehan: Great. Thank you. Thank you very much for the question. I think it's really important that we focus on the people who are going to be impacted by this kind of decision. We have a responsibility as government of course to direct policy, to make changes in this province that will help us to build this province up. We do have a responsibility to build it up economically, financially, but we also have a responsibility to ensure the well-being of people in this province, that we don't built a sports car engine and then put it into a VW bug. It doesn't work that way. It falls apart, and a lot of people get hurt when you do that.

So we need to ensure that when we make our policy decisions, if we are focused on finances and economic outcomes in this province – as we rightfully should be – that it benefits all people, that it's built to fit the vehicle in which all of us are travelling. As soon as we forget that, then we end up in this dangerous place, where the engine becomes the danger to the people in the car. That's exactly what's happening here under this conservative government. They're forgetting the people on the ground. They're forgetting the people who are most vulnerable.

11:00

I can tell you that given the history of oppression of indigenous people in this province, indigenous people are amongst the most vulnerable people in this province. I can tell you that when I go to these communities and I see them devoted to taking care of the Earth and ensuring that they can pass it on to their children, I can see that they are people who deserve and need our support in ensuring that their values and their respect for the Earth and for their children are preserved and that we actually incorporate those values in our way of ruling in this province.

I was up at Little Red River Cree not that long ago, where they put up solar panels all across their public buildings, on their chief and council chambers and on some of their administration buildings. I can tell you a little bit about Little Red River Cree. It has three different sites: John D'Or Prairie, where the council chambers are; Fox Lake, which requires that you drive, first of all, of course, the 75 kilometres on the gravel road to get to John D'Or Prairie, then you take a small road along the river, Peace River, that's basically just hacked through the bush – it's not a road at all; it's some ruts where the trees have been cleared – for maybe half an hour or so until you get to a small place, where a little two-car ferry will take you across the Peace River to the Fox Lake reserve, where many people live and many people live traditional lifestyles, a community that's still rooted in the earth, that still largely survives by hunting, fishing, and trapping. Yet that community decided to take the time to explore climate leadership and made the decision that their dollars were well spent on solar panels, and only through our help were they able to make that final decision to put those up. I go to a community like that, where I see the families gathering every summer at their festival, where they celebrate together and bring the children in and have games and fairs all day long, and everybody camps in these tents around the big field in Fox Lake. I know that on average the incomes in that community are probably less than \$20,000 a year, yet they understood that they need to take care of the Earth that they're going to pass on to their children, and they made the investment in solar panels in their communities.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any other members wishing to speak? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Member Loyola: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Through you to all the members of the House, I just want to wish you all a very good morning and also take this opportunity to wish a very happy Ramadan Mubarak to each and every one of you.

I see that Sadie is on her way out. I just wanted to thank Sadie for coming here today because, like the Member for Edmonton-Glenora, whenever I have the opportunity to meet with children in my constituency, I always remind them that regardless of their age, they are equally as important as any other constituent and deserve to be represented. And I always encourage them to reach out to their elected representatives, whether that be at the municipal, provincial, or federal level, or their school board trustee, and to talk to them, to get engaged in the political process, and that if they have an idea on how to make their community a better place, they talk to their elected representative and make sure that their voice is heard.

I want to take a step back because I want to remind us all about the history that we've lived here in this province, reminding us that we had a Conservative government for 44 years prior to the last New Democratic Party government.

I want to thank the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford for reminding us of the incredible neglect when it came to indigenous peoples here in the province and how important it is that we continue to acknowledge that we are on treaty lands and that we live in this space, this area, this beautiful place, Mother Earth, and we share that with indigenous people.

At the end of the day, I think that a good majority of Albertans really care about the environment and where we're headed. I think it's undisputed that climate change is real. There are a few people that are just holding on to this climate change denial idea, but the vast majority of Albertans really do care about the environment and climate change. It's sad because we see other jurisdictions not only in North America but all across the world who are far ahead of us when it comes to actually addressing what is happening with climate change here on this Earth.

I just want to remind us. I remember when I was younger than I am now – I'm getting there. I'm getting there. You know, I'm 45, so getting up there. I remember being in my 20s when the city of Edmonton actually implemented the recycling program, the blue box recycling program. And I remember that there were a few people who were, like: "Oh, my goodness; now we're going to have to have this blue box, and we're going to have to put it at the curb along with our garbage. Oh, what a fiasco. This is horrible. Why do we have to do this?"

But the reality is that at that time the municipal government made a decision that was going to impact the lives of all Edmontonians with this policy, and not only did it do that, but it actually encouraged this brand new culture of caring more for our Earth through recycling – recycling – it started just with recycling. Now it's expanded to the four Rs – and I may need some help with this one – reduce, reuse, recycle . . .

An Hon. Member: Recover.

Member Loyola: . . . and recover. Thank you very much.

What I'm getting at with this – and people may be, like: well, what's he talking about? Don't worry; that often happens when I get up to speak. You know, the members across the way start thinking about: what's this guys talking about, to begin with? But the reason why I bring this up is because government policy helps drive us towards a new culture, a new way of behaviour that helps us to build the better world that we're seeking to build for everybody. That's why, like the blue box recycling program implemented by the city of Edmonton more than 20, 25 years ago now, that is what the climate leadership plan was designed to do as

well, to help us get further down the road with building a better world for all Albertans so that we can address this reality of climate change that we're all experiencing.

I wanted to take an opportunity to talk a little bit about the climate leadership plan and really stress one thing that's so important. This was a plan that was designed in Alberta for Albertans. By passing Bill 1, An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax, essentially what we're doing is that we're taking this Alberta-made plan where, as has already been expressed by other colleagues on this side of the House, revenue would stay in this province to help us with so many different programs, and now we're going to end up giving it all to the federal government. You know, that to me just seems so odd because the members across the way – I mean, it's no secret – have no love for our Prime Minister, but here they are with their very first bill, taking an Alberta-made plan where revenue would have stayed here in the province of Alberta, and they're just handing it off to the federal government. Congratulations. How ironic. This made-in-Alberta plan was helping so many Albertans.

11:10

But before I go on with that, I want to just talk a little bit about the four main policies that the climate leadership plan had all to do with. It was implementing a new price on greenhouse gas emissions, also known as carbon pricing, and it was going to phase out pollution from coal-generated electricity by 2030 and generate 30 per cent of electricity from renewable resources by 2030.

[Mr. Milliken in the chair]

I just want to take this opportunity to quote Noah Farber, who was the acting president and CEO at the time of the Asthma Society of Canada, where he stated: "There is a direct link between the burning of coal and asthma exacerbation, hospital admissions, and untimely deaths not associated with climate change. The Alberta government has responded to protect the health of all Albertans, particularly those who suffer from respiratory diseases such as asthma. We are extremely pleased with the unwavering commitment the province has made today to ensure that the air we breathe is clean." Is clean.

This is what's so maddening about this bill: we don't know what this United Conservative government is going to do over the next four years to actually address climate change. Instead of proposing, they're just taking away something that the previous government had put in place.

I'm just kind of overwhelmed with sadness, to be quite honest, sadness for children like Sadie, my own children – I have two of my own – and all the children of Alberta who actually care. In schools today, you go to any school – and I'm sure that the members across the way go to the schools in their community as well, and they see young people who actually care about what's happening with the environment. You go to any school, any classroom, and there's some kind of environmental program that those children in those classrooms are talking about. They're doing their piece to address climate change in the classroom, most important being actually taking that information home and sharing it with their parents and their siblings.

I remind the members of this House that government policy is designed to complement and to help us move forward as a people, as a culture, to help us change our behaviour.

The climate leadership plan also was to cap oil sands emissions at 100 megatonnes per year, reduce methane emissions from upstream oil and gas production by 45 per cent from 2014 levels by the year 2025. Alberta was on track to cut more than 50 megatonnes of emissions over the next 10 years. That's the same as taking over 10.6 million cars off the road or nearly half the passenger vehicles

in all of Canada, and this is like eliminating the emissions of the Vancouver metro area three times over.

We were doing our piece. Yeah, it may have been small, but we were doing our part to address climate change. So when you repeal the carbon levy and the climate leadership program, this is essentially what you are taking away. To all the members across the way: what are you going to replace it with? What do you propose?

Let me tell you something. When our government came in – and I want to remind the members across the way that for 44 years we had an antagonistic relationship with all the different types of stakeholders that existed within our society: the environmentalists, the corporations, indigenous people. Everybody was out kind of competing for their own interests, and there was an antagonistic relationship. We brought everybody to the table, and we sat everybody down and said: let's work this out. That's the way that we truly move forward. As long as an antagonistic relationship exists, we're never going to be able to move forward, because we're all going to be fighting with each other.

Mr. Speaker, I want to remind us all that we need to bring everybody to the table and keep talking about real solutions to address climate change. Again I want to ask the members across the way: what do you propose so that we can continue to move forward with making our environment more clean, more safe, better so that along with our children we're leaving them a world to look forward to, where we're taking care of the environment?

I also want to address the issue of the climate leadership plan and how it was supporting more than 7,300 jobs in just the first two years and how it was designed to have thousands of jobs and projects come in. I want to remind the members across the way that through the climate leadership plan and the money that was being collected here, the revenue would have stayed here in the province of Alberta. That was not going to general revenue; it was actually going to specific programs to help us diversify the economy.

I want to say that, you know, it is so important – it's so important – that we continue to diversify the economy. I'm sure that the members across the way have ideas of their own on how we can continue to do that. It's very important.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Under Standing Order 29(2)(a), are there any members with questions or comments? I believe I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Ms Pancholi: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees. I want to thank the Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie for his comments. I shared a lot of them.

I do want to confirm that I believe the fourth R is "recover": reduce, reuse, recycle, recover. I believe there's some thinking that it should be "reform" as well, and I think that probably those go hand in hand.

I, too, recall the days in the city of Edmonton when the blue box recycling program came out and everybody complained about how much extra work it would be to sort the recycling from the garbage. Now we just realize that it's part of what we do. It's just habit to us now, because we know it's important. We know we're getting greater use out of our materials by recycling, and we just get used to doing it, right? It's part of what we do. In fact, there are many municipalities across this country and even within Alberta who do a lot of other things such as compost collection and such. You know, there are ways that things that seem difficult at first can then become something we're used to, and we all become more conscious of how to use our resources more responsibly and appropriately.

Thank you to the Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie. I'm wondering if you could share a little bit. I'm interested in knowing a little bit more about maybe some of the feedback you received when you were on the doors, not just on the doors during the campaign but in the last few years, when the climate leadership plan was introduced. If you could tell us a little about the comments you were hearing from your constituents and perhaps the impact of eliminating the climate leadership plan and the carbon levy and what sort of impact that could potentially have on your constituents.

11:20

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Member Loyola: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. Resoundingly, when I was out on the doorsteps of Edmonton-Ellerslie, I can't tell you the number of people that were really excited about solar and the potential for introducing more solar. There were already constituents in my riding, even before we were government, that had solar panels upon their roofs. People were excited about the possibility of doing this on their own home as well.

I want to get back to diversifying the economy because a big part of that was solar. I mean, if this bill goes through, I don't know if we can count on that anymore. I just want to remind us all about that. Just since the climate leadership plan was initiated, the solar industry has grown by 500 per cent. Installed solar capacity has increased from six megawatts in 2015 to 35 megawatts in 2018, about 3,100 solar installations have been completed, and more than 300 certified companies have installed solar projects across the province. Alberta has conserved enough energy to power a city the size of Leduc.

I just wanted to quote from John Gorman, president and CEO of the Canadian Solar Industries Association. In 2015 he said that Premier Notley's made-in-Alberta – stress "made-in-Alberta" – climate plan opens the door for billions of dollars in renewable investment. For too long, discussions about climate change have focused on what we can't do, but Alberta has tremendous renewable energy resources, technology. Costs keep falling, and it's time to focus on what we can do. Solar energy is ready to be a big contributor to a strong and clean Alberta economy.

You know, I want to take this opportunity to also even mention that I remember a couple years ago I was visiting with members of the Palestinian community here in the city of Edmonton, and one of the members from the community had come to me and said: okay; well, we've started our own small business where our plan is to help Albertans actually make these solar installations and put them on their homes. Of course, there are a number of things that had to be worked out between municipalities and the province, and those were on their way. I hope that this government will continue to work towards that because there are business interests, small-business interests out there that are very much interested in moving this forward because everybody sees how important it is as their way of dealing with climate change.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Are there any other members wishing to speak on this matter? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning.

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to stand and to speak on Bill 1, An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax. I have a few concerns and a few thoughts around this, especially when it comes to looking at the economic impact. I know this government has been very clear. When they campaigned, they campaigned on the economy, and they campaigned on jobs, and they campaigned on pipelines, which is all great when you want to just focus on the oil

and gas industry, but the reality of it is that we have to diversify in this province. Part of diversifying is looking at green energy, and it is looking at how in Alberta, with the plan that was created, we were able to start looking at the green energy diversification options. We were looking at wind and solar and hydro and other aspects of the energy industry outside of the oil and gas industry.

Yes, oil and gas is very, very important. I mean, it's one of my biggest drivers for my riding. I have the heartland, that I am partnered up to, so of course I recognize how important diversification even in that area is around, like, the petrochemical diversification projects, that we were also looking at when we were government.

But the key part of this, from an economic analysis, is the fact that we had a whole bunch of great start-ups that were happening in the province. We had a whole bunch of people that were working in the different trades that, due to the economy, were laid off or were not able to find the jobs in the oil and gas industry that they had normally had, so they were looking at diversifying, and they were looking at going back and getting education around how to look at green energy. A lot of that was paid through the Alberta carbon tax.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

So my question to this government would be: when you get rid of the Alberta carbon tax and you replace it with the federal carbon tax and you take revenue streams that are being created by Albertans to pay for resources within Alberta and that money goes federally, how does that help drive the economy in Alberta? What is the economic impact around all of those green energy jobs, around all the different diversification and the different options that we were looking at when we were government? Where do they go? What happens to those people? What happens to those jobs? Are those people just supposed to magically have a new job? Has this government looked at the other options around how you're going to transition the people you have now taken this resource from, and have you offered them or discussed with them or consulted with them around what kind of training they're going to need or what other options there are going to be?

You can't just decide that you're going to remove something and not have a plan to replace it. I haven't heard what that plan is. All I've heard is that this is going to be great for – it's a \$1.5 billion tax cut. It will remove the rebates for low-income families or middle-income families, which will also impact those families and those working people of Alberta. We've heard that the money that was being used from the Alberta carbon tax to pay for LRTs, to pay for retraining in green energy, for energy diversification projects will no longer be provided to those programs and will actually go into general revenue, which maybe makes your bottom line look really good, but it sure doesn't help the working people of this province. So I'm very concerned about the economic impact. I'm very concerned about how this is actually going to impact working Albertans.

Because of that, I would like to introduce a referral amendment and move that the motion for second reading of Bill 1, An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax, be amended by deleting all the words after "that" and substituting the following:

Bill 1, An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax, be not now read a second time but that the subject matter of the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future in accordance with Standing Order 74.2.

I have the appropriate number of copies. I'll just wait until you have the original, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: This will be referred to as amendment REF1.

Please proceed, hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning.

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Again, just to clarify for all the new members in the House, because this is a referral amendment, it will now, if passed, be referred to the committee for economic futures. The reason behind that is, again, that this new government has been very clear that they want to hear from Albertans, that they're open to listening, that they're open to consultation. Because of that, I think it's extremely important that this bill get referred to committee so that we can hear from our green energy sector, so that we can hear from our indigenous brothers and sisters around how this is going to impact them, so that we can hear from working Albertans, our low-income to middle-income Albertans who will no longer get the rebate, so that we can actually see from an economic analysis what the impact of getting rid of this carbon tax will actually be on the working people of Alberta.

11:30

The government has been great about talking about how it means that, you know, it will help Albertans not have to pay taxes, but the reality of it is that the federal tax is going to come in. I understand that this government has plans around that as well, but right now there are some very important infrastructure projects that are currently being paid by the Alberta carbon tax.

It is paying for critical transit. It's paying for infrastructure projects. That includes the Springbank project, which I believe is very important to people in Calgary. There's also a \$400 million promise to the city of Calgary and the city of Edmonton for transit projects beginning in 2027. So my questions would be: are all of those projects going to be eliminated? Are you going to cancel construction? Are you going to put all of those people out of work? We've already seen projects and contracts that have been put on hold by this government, which has also contributed to significant economic impacts for many of the people living in Alberta, specifically the superlab.

I would encourage every single member in this Chamber to really consider that if you're going to be an open and transparent and listening government, you refer this to committee, similar to some of the information we've been hearing around standing orders with private members' bills. If you're so open to doing that in committee, why wouldn't you be open to having further dialogue here on this bill at Economic Future?

In saying that, I will sit down and allow other members to respond. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any comments or questions under 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, are there any other members wishing to speak? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Member Loyola: Yes. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's a pleasure to be able to rise and speak to the amendment because, of course, as I was expressing in my own response to the bill, I'm very concerned. I'm very, very, very concerned because, of course, we have not heard from this government what they propose to do in order to actually address climate change and the effects that it's having on Albertans. I mean, it's wonderful that they've come in and they want to do this, but without actually proposing what they're going to replace it with, this just seems maddening to me. I'm really hoping that we can pass this amendment because I think it's absolutely essential.

I can't tell you the number of times that I personally was in this House over the last four years – you know, I see the Minister of Transportation looking over here with a bright smile, like he always does, and even from his own lips he was saying how important it was that we refer this important matter to committee, that we get more feedback, and that we hear from Albertans. Now, that's not a direct quote, of course, but more or less.

Madam Speaker, through you to all the members of this House, this is just not ready to move forward. I understand the Premier is really excited about getting this bill here passed. I get it – I get it – but we're just not ready. Albertans aren't ready. Future Albertans aren't ready. Indigenous communities are not ready. It's imperative that this here government takes this opportunity to actually hear from all communities, not just the few stakeholders that they choose to represent.

Now, I see some faces on the other side, and I'm sure that they know people in their own constituencies that actually agree with the climate leadership plan. You can't deny me that – you can't deny me that – the same way I can't deny that people in my own constituency weren't very happy about the climate leadership plan. But it's fair that we hear from all Albertans, all of our constituents. More importantly, if you're going to repeal the climate leadership plan, then have something to replace it with. It's our duty, our responsibility to actually propose, to build a better future, not just repeal what the previous government has done.

Members of this House, I ask you to please support this amendment. Let's send it to committee. Let's keep working on what we're going to do to address climate change here in the province of Alberta.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any comments or questions under Standing Order 29(2)(a)? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker and to the member for his comments and to the mover of this referral amendment for proposing it. You know, I hadn't actually thought about referring to committee, but upon reflection on this, I think it makes good sense. I think we – I'm going to guess about a hundred times, maybe more – heard arguments for referring to committee because members then in the opposition had great ideas on how we could engage and consult with Albertans on a variety of issues, and I imagine that this would be an excellent opportunity for them to be able to do that.

So my question to the hon. member or, actually, I guess, to other speakers on the other side after we're done with this exchange on 29(2)(a) would be: what other types of consultation might be possible through this engagement around coming with a replacement model? Given the feedback that we heard over the last several years, the hon. member and myself, with regard to referral to committee and the importance of community engagement, what does he expect that government and committee members could engage in should this referral motion be accepted? What would that potential engagement look like, hon. member? Through you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Member Loyola: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Well, you know, having had the experience of being on standing committees here for the last four years, this would be at the design of the committee, which I think is quite appropriate, democratically speaking. Rather than one group of people deciding on how we are going to do this, it would go to committee, where the committee would decide who they would like to engage, who they would like

to invite to actually speak to the committee, to take the opportunity to come and get more research and understanding, of course, and then if they so choose, they could then decide on what kind of consultation process they would like to engage in in order to actually hear from Albertans.

Maybe they would do visits to a number of communities throughout the province. I would suggest that they even visit with indigenous communities. As we heard from my colleague here from Edmonton-Rutherford, they are desperate for their voice to be heard by this government, you know. Then at that opportunity we would be able to actually hear from Albertans, really, not only on just, "Okay; well, we are going to change the climate leadership plan," but then, "What are we going to replace it with?" Then the government would have a better footing to actually come into this House and propose something new.

At the end of the day, as I remind the members and as I said in a previous statement, this is about working together. If this government is going to sit here in front of us and just return to the old ways of those 44 years of Progressive Conservative government here in this province, where people, stakeholders, and communities had antagonistic relationships, then we're in for a very poor future. I want to beg the members across the way: if anything, please, please, don't do that. Let us not return to those antagonistic relationships, where we're all just fighting with one another.

11:40

Bring people to the table, and there could be no better way to do that than by sending this bill to committee. You could then invite stakeholders from all across the province if you wanted to, people from all different kinds of communities, hear from them all. I can't tell you the number of times we heard this from members across the way. This is your opportunity now to do what you wanted so desperately to do with so many of the bills that we introduced.

So what's going to happen, Members? Are you going to follow through with the things that you used to say, or are you going to shut this down?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise on this amendment. The opposition is unfortunately out of gas already, fairly early in this term. It's kind of sad to see. The words that we heard from across the aisle just now about bringing people to the table actually resonated with me. We just had an election where the largest number of Albertans in the history of our province came to the table, and they elected a government whose main promise was to get rid of the carbon tax. Albertans in every riding, in every municipality across this province heard that message and gave a huge mandate to this government to get rid of the carbon tax. Now, that was a pretty big consultation. That was two years. Almost no one was unaware of what we are going to do.

Let's just for comparison contrast that to what happened four years ago when the previous government told the biggest political lie in the history of Alberta by bringing in the carbon tax without mentioning a word about it before they did. So, yes, we are different than what they were doing. We actually told the truth. We put it in black and white. We put it out there for the whole world to see. We talked about it. I'm sure the folks across the aisle were tired of us talking about it. I'm pretty sure that I heard them say in this room how tired they were of us talking about getting rid of the carbon tax.

Albertans have rendered their decision. They disagree with the carbon tax. They want it gone. It was an overwhelming decision by the people of Alberta. Yes, we brought people to the table all right, and they came out in droves. Again, the largest turnout in the history

of Alberta for an election. What was the main promise that they came out for? To scrap the carbon tax.

It was exactly the opposite of what happened four years ago. You know what? That's probably the reason why the first one-and-done government in the history of Alberta just finished, because they brought in the biggest political lie in the history of Alberta and made it a centrepiece of their government. They called it the climate leadership plan, that does nothing for the climate.

There are 183,000 Albertans out of work right now, the highest unemployment amongst young people, an abysmal record of governing this province. The folks there talk about what happened before they arrived. Frankly, over the average of the 40-odd years, I'll tell you that what we had in Alberta was prosperity. I'll tell you that what we've had in the last four years is unemployment, people leaving the province instead of coming, businesses closing, \$80 billion worth of investment going out the door.

Madam Speaker, the folks there are trying to revise history, but the problem is that the history is so recent, everybody still remembers. People couldn't wait to get a new government in this time. In fact, I would dare say that they started shopping for a new government about two, three years ago because they could see the direction that the previous gang was taking us, and it wasn't a good direction. It was a direction where 183,000 people are now out of work.

Now, I don't know. Probably in some cases there's more than one in a family, but that's over a hundred thousand families without a paycheque and up to 180,000 families missing a paycheque. In some cases it was the only paycheque, in some cases it was one of two or three, but either way it hurt the family. It made it harder for them to support themselves. It made it harder for them to send their kids to university. It made it harder for them to buy the groceries, and if that didn't add insult to injury, the carbon tax made those groceries more expensive because the grocery store got taxed on keeping the cold things cold and the warm things warm. The grocery store paid more for the cold things and the warm things because most of them arrived on the back of a truck, which is more expensive because of the carbon tax.

And when the people weren't at the grocery store paying more for their goods because of the carbon tax, they were at home paying more to keep warm in the winter for the carbon tax. The carbon tax treated Albertans like staying warm in the winter was a luxury rather than a necessity. They treated Albertans like driving to work was a luxury rather than a necessity. I remember the leader of that party telling Albertans: walk or take the bus. I'm sure that went over really well in rural Alberta. I'll tell you what: it didn't go over very well in urban Alberta, where I live, and there are some buses there. But I can tell you that in rural Alberta there is no choice.

Yet the government treated Albertans with disdain, with the lead of that attitude being the carbon tax. They told Albertans that they were the embarrassing cousins in Canada, and that's why they had to be punished with a carbon tax. They told Albertans that they weren't as good as other energy-producing jurisdictions and ignored the fact that Alberta has the highest environmental standards, the highest human rights standards, the highest quality of living amongst energy-producing jurisdictions in the world. Yes, we did consult. We brought people to the table, and, Madam Speaker, they came to the table, and what they said is: we choose the political party that promises to get rid of the carbon tax.

Now they want to relitigate the last election, that they just got thumped in, frankly. They lost it with prejudice. They were, after one term in office, for the first time in Alberta, thrown out, and they think that they want to relitigate that election with this amendment. Madam Speaker, they should be ashamed. Now, I appreciate that they have to hold on to some shred of dignity, because they put all

their hopes and dreams for their political futures in a program that Albertans rejected severely. So I understand them voting against the repeal of the carbon tax, because they have to have some pride. They have to be able to go home and tell people: I believe some of what I said in the last four years. I get that. But to try to delay this after Albertans, in such a resounding way, have endorsed it with their vote at the ballot box? They should be ashamed. I mean, they've been doing this – they were in government for the last four years. They should be able to come up with something a little more creative than this.

I agree with the hon. member. There are times when you're in opposition when things should go to committee. You know what things should go to committee? Mostly here it's when the government doesn't tell Albertans about it before they do it. Greatest example: the carbon tax, that that government brought in without telling anyone about it. Here's another good example: Bill 6, that they dropped on Albertans without warning last time. Yeah, that stuff we talked about going to committee, and it sure should have gone to committee because Albertans weren't warned about it. They were frankly taken by surprise. They didn't like it. We had thousands of people in front of this building when they brought in Bill 6. Yeah, that would have been a great example to send to committee, but they didn't do it.

Madam Speaker, the comparisons that the good folks across the aisle just tried to make are in no way legitimate. This was the subject of the last election. There were many subjects, but this was a top-line message from the United Conservative Party in the last election. Albertans said: yes, please become government; please get rid of the carbon tax. That was a promise we made, and we're going to keep it.

The Deputy Speaker: Under Standing Order 29(2)(a), any comments or questions? The hon. Member for Calgary-West.

11:50

Mr. Ellis: Well, thank you very much. I'd just like to thank the hon. Transportation minister for his comments. Certainly, I along with him and, I'm sure, all of my colleagues do not agree with this notice of amendment, sending it to committee. I think it was pretty perfectly clear in the last election that the people of Alberta, through consultation that we, of course, have had, rejected this carbon tax, rejected the penalties that were being imposed upon working families, rejected the extra cost to heat homes, to drive kids to hockey practice, the extra cost to live your lives in winter, that we do have here in Alberta.

You know, I think I'd like the hon. Transportation minister to maybe expand a little bit upon the challenges that many families have: having to pay extra to heat their homes, having to pay extra at the grocery store, having to pay extra for, really, the cost to live their lives. What we had found is that people that were on fixed incomes had less in their pocket. They had to make challenging choices because the carbon tax was affecting them in a way that was unprecedented. It was the largest tax grab in Alberta's history. If this group in the opposition cannot see that, then they're going to certainly be in that position for a long time to come. I'd like the hon. minister here to maybe touch a little bit on the struggles that families have been facing in his constituency, the stories that he has heard on the struggles about this carbon tax, and how it has affected those constituents.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Madam Speaker. What the hon. member is asking about really points to the fact that this has made life more

difficult, more expensive for Albertans, not only directly through everything they buy being more expensive but through the government services they get. After imposing the carbon tax, the biggest tax increase in history, the government has actually run \$6 billion, \$8 billion, \$10 billion a year deficits. Frankly, the biggest threat to the ongoing delivery of public services to Albertans is the added burden of paying the interest on that debt besides the cost of providing those services.

The government, after putting in place the biggest tax grab in the history of Alberta, still spent all of that and another \$6 billion or \$8 billion or \$10 billion, depending upon the year, on top of that, which now burdens Albertans with in the neighbourhood of \$2 billion a year. Certainly, if they would have got re-elected, it would have become \$4 billion a year in interest payments, and that's without paying any of the principal. That's before you hire your first teacher, your first nurse, your first doctor, before you provide your first social service for Albertans, all services which they deserve and demand and need. This previous government has put all of that at risk with the reckless financial track record that they've had.

Yet now they want to delay getting rid of some of the damage that they've done by getting rid of the carbon tax. You know, they're asking us to delay what Albertans have asked for. They're asking for us to delay what Albertans have said quite clearly that they want. They had a clear choice. I will give the opposition credit for one thing. In the last election they gave Albertans a clear choice: work on the jobs, the environment, the economy, and have a responsible environmental plan, instead of one that doesn't do anything and makes everything more expensive, or let's get back to common sense, starting with scrapping the carbon tax.

Albertans asked for it. The folks across the aisle, in this clear, clear question in the last election, had their chance. Albertans chose differently. Now today, amazingly, they come in here, frankly disrespecting that choice that Albertans made. Again, if they want to vote against scrapping the carbon tax, well, then that would just confirm in most Albertans' minds that Albertans made the right decision at the ballot box, because it would be really disrespecting not a close decision but a very wide decision in the last election on a very clear question, and a key part of that clear question was to keep or get rid of the carbon tax. Albertans chose to get rid of it.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any more members wishing to speak? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Ms Pancholi: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased today to rise on this, and I'd like to pick up on some of the comments from some of my colleagues. I think they spoke very eloquently and very well to some of the issues that were raised here, particularly on this issue of going back to the committee. I'd like to actually echo the comments from my colleague the Member for Edmonton-Glenora, who said that we are actually not here to relitigate the issue of the carbon tax. I agree that, you know, that was clearly an election issue. It was probably the most clear policy platform position that the members on the other side took. There was a lot of other stuff that was very unclear, but that one was very clear.

But I think the question that has not been put to Albertans yet is the question of: what is the plan to replace it? You know what? We can talk all we want about: oh, yes, the election decision was very clear, and Albertans want to revoke the carbon tax. You know what? I can't disagree that that was the outcome although I do want to highlight that that was not the outcome for the constituents in my riding or for the constituents in the ridings of my colleagues here. In fact, the constituents in my riding very much understood that we

have a responsibility to take some action. While nobody likes to have to pay more in a tax, they understood that we are part of a collective, we're part of a society. We have obligations to do things looking to our future.

My constituents actually did not vote against the carbon tax, so I do have a responsibility when I am standing in this Assembly to represent their interests as well. To say that just because the members on the other side's constituents voted to scrap the carbon tax – I have an obligation as the representative for the constituents of Edmonton-Whitemud to stand up and represent their views, which were actually to not scrap the carbon tax but to move forward with the climate leadership plan. So I am going to take my opportunity and my responsibility when I am in the Assembly very seriously, and I'm going to advocate for my constituents. I want to say that.

But I do want to talk about, again going back to the point that perhaps – we're probably going to be voted down on this. We're pretty sure. It's pretty clear that, you know, the carbon tax will be repealed if you ask the Premier. He seemed to already know that a couple of weeks ago. He even seemed to know when we were going to make that decision, which is quite remarkable. That's probably going to happen.

The question that lingers and, if the members on the other side had been listening to the eloquent comments from my colleagues, the question that keeps coming up and the one that I'm going to keep talking about is: what is the plan? If we are talking about repealing a carbon tax, that's one element – that's one element – of the climate leadership plan. That was a tax, absolutely. Albertans did have to pay for it, and a lot of low-income and middle-income Albertans received a rebate because of it. But it was part of a plan.

It was part of an investment in our future, in our future generations, and in our children. It was part of a decision to say: if we want to make renewable resources available, an option for Albertans to use, we're going to have to invest in them. Investing in them, as the members from the other side will know, takes money. How do you do that? Well, you have to invest in green energy, green resources, and green renewable sources, and we have to do that by spending some money. You know what? That has to come from a commitment by all Albertans as a whole, as a collective, that we are going to make a decision about planning for our future.

When we're talking about referring to a committee, I think it is very important to refer that question to the committee: "Okay. Let's hear from Albertans. If we're going to scrap the carbon tax, what are we replacing it with? What is our commitment to the future? What is our plan for the future with respect to climate change?"

I want to go back to the fundamentals. It seems to me sometimes a little bit disappointing that we still have to talk about the fundamentals of climate change. I actually don't subscribe to the theory that people who object to the carbon tax are climate change deniers. I don't think that's the case. But I think that there's an unwillingness, which we all tend to have, to not want to do the difficult things we have to do to invest in our future. Hey, I have a hard time getting up every day and committing to working out. I don't do it every day. It's not the most fun thing I have to do, but I know it's important for the future of my health. This is something that we have to do. It's a pain that we have to . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. member, I hesitate to interrupt, but the House is now adjourned until 1:30 this afternoon.

[The Assembly adjourned at 11:59 a.m.]

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