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The 31st Legislature
Second Session

Alberta Hansard

Monday evening, March 23, 2026

Day 36

The Honourable Ric McIver, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 31st Legislature

Second Session

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New Democrat: 38

Progressive Tory: 1

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

7:30 p.m.

Monday, March 23, 2026

Committee of Supply

[Ms Pitt in the chair]

The Chair: Hon. members, the committee is back.

Supplementary Supply Estimates 2025-26 General Revenue Fund

The Chair: We left the Committee of Supply with members of the government asking questions with 12 minutes, 40 seconds remaining. I will ask a member of the government who wishes to speak – okay; sit down right now if you're not speaking. Hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod, which minister would you like to ask questions to?

Mrs. Petrovic: To the Minister of Arts, Culture and Status of Women.

The Chair: Would you like block time, or would you like to share?

Mrs. Petrovic: I'm hoping for shared time if she's agreeable to it.

The Chair: Yes, she is.

You may proceed, hon. member.

Mrs. Petrovic: Well, thank you, Madam Chair. I know sometimes it's difficult to see when I'm standing. Some of my colleagues like to joke that I'm the same height whether I'm sitting or standing, so I appreciate you recognizing me. [interjection] I am currently standing. Yes. Thank you to the minister from Drayton Valley for that commentary. Appreciate it.

Madam Chair, I just want to jump into page 46 of the supplementary supply estimates. It's also noted that the Ministry of Arts, Culture and Status of Women is transferring \$13,196,000 to several other ministries to support initiatives under the national action plan to end gender-based violence. I just want to say that this is extremely important to me. I have two women's shelters in my riding, which is quite unique. I have one in Pincher Creek and one in High River, and I know that they do astronomical work in helping prevent gender-based violence, and they help prevent it before they start.

I'm hoping that this co-ordinated approach will highlight the importance of crossministry collaboration and addressing complex social issues that require comprehensive and integrated responses. By working across departments such as Justice, Indigenous Relations, and Children and Family Services, the ministry is helping to ensure that programs and supports are aligned and delivered effectively to those who need them most.

Can the minister through the chair provide more details on how these interministry transfers are being co-ordinated and how success will be measured across participating ministries?

The Chair: The hon. Minister of Arts, Culture and Status of Women.

Ms Fir: Thank you. The interministry transfer supports specific actions under the 10-year strategy that fall within the mandates of partner ministries, including Justice, Children and Family Services, Indigenous Relations, Advanced Education, and Jobs, Economy, Trade and Immigration. Each ministry is responsible for implementing specific actions aligned with their core services while

overall co-ordination is guided by the shared outcomes of the strategy. Success will be measured through improved co-ordination, increased access to supports, and strengthened prevention efforts across government.

Alberta has committed to public reporting on progress on the actions in the strategy, recognizing that reducing gender-based violence requires sustained long-term effort rather than short-term results. Initial results will be released later this year. However, gender-based violence is complex and certainly cannot be solved overnight. Our strategy addresses root causes to reduce violence over time, and a key part of our strategy includes specific actions to raise awareness and encourage survivors to access supports.

As such, we expect records of violence to increase in the early years as more people are reporting instances of violence, and this data will help us learn and better understand when, where, and how supports are needed across the province so we can continue to adapt and respond to Albertans' needs effectively throughout the implementation of the strategy.

The Chair: The hon. member.

Mrs. Petrovic: Well, thank you, Chair. I appreciate the insight. I was just hoping that the minister through the chair could outline how this collaborative approach is improving outcomes for individuals and families impacted by gender-based violence in Alberta? I know there is a significant number of programs, especially in Livingstone-Macleod, that work within all of the ministries, and I'm just hoping that, through you, Chair, the minister can touch base a little bit further on that.

Thank you.

Ms Fir: Well, the collaborative approach is improving outcomes by ensuring services are more connected, accessible, and responsive to the real-world needs of survivors and families. By aligning programs across ministries, survivors are better supported as they navigate health care, justice, housing, income supports, and community services. Prevention efforts are being strengthened through co-ordinated public awareness, early intervention, and programs that engage men and boys while front-line services are being modernized and expanded. While meaningful reductions in gender-based violence take time, this integrated approach lays the foundation for safer communities, stronger prevention, and better long-term outcomes for Albertans.

Mrs. Petrovic: Madam Chair, am I able to cede my time to another member?

The Chair: You may not. But we will go to members – actually, no. That will conclude – no. You can. Just have a seat, and we'll see who stands up on the government side for the remaining seven minutes.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Lougheed.

Mr. Bouchard: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have some questions for the Minister of Assisted Living and Social Services if I may.

The Chair: Do you want to – well, block time or going back and forth?

Mr. Bouchard: I'd prefer shared time if he would like.

The Chair: Minister, you're amenable to shared time?

Mr. Nixon: Absolutely.

The Chair: All right. You may proceed.

Mr. Bouchard: All right. Thank you, Madam Chair. On page 50 of the supplementary supply estimates the Ministry of Assisted Living and Social Services presents two items, \$15,174,000 in new expense for enhanced health care for seniors, fully off-set by the Canada-Alberta aging with dignity agreement, alongside a \$721,289,000 expense transfer from Hospital and Surgical Health Services for the provision of continuing care through Assisted Living Alberta. That \$721 million figure deserves plain-language clarity for Albertans watching these proceedings. This is not new spending. It is not a reduction in acute care. It is budget authority following program responsibility to its new home, a provincial health agency now accountable specifically for continuing care. The \$15 million in new seniors' care funding costs Alberta taxpayers nothing. To the minister through the chair: can you explain how this transfer reflects the government's commitment to an organized, accountable health system and what Albertans should understand about how continuing care is now being managed?

The Chair: The hon. minister of community, social services, and seniors.

Mr. Nixon: Well, thank you, Madam Chair, and through you to the member for the question. The member is correct. Supplementary supply for my ministry includes two different areas, the biggest of which is \$721.3 million, which will be transferred from the Ministry of Hospital and Surgical Health Services to my ministry for continuing care. The member is also correct that it has a net-zero impact on the government of Alberta's budget. It's an adjustment, as I will lay out in a moment, that takes the last portions of the continuing care aspect of both Alberta Health Services and the former health care ministry and moves them fully over to either Assisted Living Alberta, our organization now responsible for continuing care, and our ministry in one way or another.

The breakdown of that \$721.3 million is as follows: \$362.8 million to support the alignment of ALA's resources required to deliver our mandate for continuing care and to meet our legislative obligations underneath the provincial health authorities act. The next number is \$310.5 million, which represents ALA's portion of the transition services agreement to pay off services provided by Health Shared Services organizations. Lastly is \$48 million for the ratification of the United Nurses of Alberta agreement under the Q1 approval, which is transfers from HSHS for staffing that ultimately moved over to our division. I will reiterate, as the hon. member said, that this has a net-zero impact on the government of Alberta and just fits within the realignment of budget spaces with ministries underneath the desi regs and underneath the mandate that's been given to us.

The second area that the hon. member referred to is the \$15.2 million of operating funding for '25-26 along with \$33.9 million, which was made available for enhanced health care for seniors, which are fully off-set by the federal aging with dignity funding from the federal government. Our department is also receiving \$1.6 million for supplementary capital investment funding for our portal that was developed in this fiscal year.

The member also asked if I could lay out how this change of funding works underneath the health refocusing. The minister of hospitals did a great job earlier today discussing how this money will not, one, impact his ministry and, second, about some of the great results that we're seeing as a result of this repurposing of investment between the ministries to make sure that we can continue to focus on each of our areas in health care. I do want to reiterate – and I know he would agree with me, Madam Chair – that, at the end of the day, this is still a global health budget that the four

health ministers manage together to make sure that we can impact each of our organizations simultaneously.

7:40

Some of the great results that we now see the minister referred to, and I will reiterate some of them, which is over 20 per cent reduction in ALC numbers since the health refocusing took place, over 30 per cent reduction in the largest cities since the health refocusing took place, and 65 per cent reduction of those waiting for continuing care inside the hospital, showing, again, that this was the best thing to do. It continues to clean up the NDP's mess, and it brings all that focus into the right area.

Mr. Bouchard: No more questions from me.

The Chair: No more questions.

Any other members from the government side wishing to speak? Seeing none, that will conclude the 20-minute block for the – you can move when I'm speaking in here, but don't make it look like you're trying to speak.

We'll go to members of the Official Opposition for the first 10-minute block. Hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore, would you like to share your time or block time?

Ms Al-Guneid: I'd be open to it.

The Chair: A minister to answer questions on . . .

Ms Al-Guneid: Energy and Minerals, please. Yeah.

The Chair: . . . energy. Are you okay to go back and forth with the member?

Mr. Boitchenko: I'll probably do blocks.

The Chair: You want to do block?

Mr. Boitchenko: Sure.

The Chair: All right. Hon. member, the first five minutes is yours.

Ms Al-Guneid: Well, thank you, Madam Chair. I want to start on page 63 of the Energy and Minerals supplementary. That's expense line 2.2. That's \$316 million to cover the ministry's claim from settling on litigation matters. In 2023 five largely Australian companies, including Valory Resources, Atrum Coal, Northback Holdings, and Cabin Ridge Holdings, sued the Alberta government for a total of \$15 billion over the UCP government's flip-flopping on the coal policy. We know that three companies settled with the UCP government, and we only learned that because the companies actually disclosed these settlements in their financial statements.

Why didn't the minister disclose the exact amounts when the settlements had happened? That's line 2.2, of \$316 million. Can the minister confirm the exact settlement amount per company that received each settlement? In other words here, which entities, which companies are included in this payout, and how is the total \$316 million actually spent? What is the breakdown for that? Was there an alternative to settling and using public money, you know, to settle with the coal companies? Was there an alternative to protecting taxpayers' money from that settlement, Madam Chair? What is the status of the remaining two lawsuits? We have three settled that we know of. What is the status of the remaining two, and how much is the minister budgeting for them?

Then I want to go to line 2.2 again, page 63. Can the minister confirm that this \$95 million here is a payout for Evolve Power? This is not the first coal mining settlement the Alberta government has landed on. The province has also agreed on a \$143 million

settlement with another company – that’s Atrum Coal – earlier in 2025. Where is the money for the \$143 million settlement coming from? Are there more settlements coming, and when are they being released?

Key objective 2.3 of the ministry’s business plan is around modernizing Alberta’s coal legislation and policy and the framework as a whole. Can the minister confirm whether any of these lawsuits will be dealt with in any shape or form in the development of the new coal modernization initiative? Why would the government put Albertans on the hook for this reckless flip-flopping on their coal policy, Madam Chair? It’s a terrible waste of public money.

Then, finally, I want to go to – in the capital investment, 2.1, there’s \$1 million here to upgrade the IT systems that support revenue initiatives. What is this IT system used for? What exactly is being updated and modernized here? Can the minister explain what these revenue initiatives are? Can the minister confirm whether these IT systems are related to the management of the bitumen royalty in kind, BRIK, program, or is it supporting the set-up of the gas royalty in kind, GRIK, program, or not? Then, finally, is this supporting the efforts of the Alberta Petroleum Marketing Commission in any way, Madam Chair?

These are the three areas, really: trying to understand the status of the settlements, the three lawsuits, the breakdown of these settlements. What was the payment for each company, and when was that done, and what is the status of the remaining two lawsuits? We keep discovering them. They’re trickling in every few months. This week we just learned of a new lawsuit at \$2 billion, so they’re piling on at this point. I would appreciate the minister’s answers to the breakdown of the \$316 million, and then to give us more details on the \$1 million for the IT updating in the Energy and Minerals ministry.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Sport.

Mr. Boitchenko: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. It is my honour and pleasure today to rise on behalf of the Minister of Energy and Minerals. I want to say that I’m proud of the amount of work and the quality of work he’s doing on this file given that Alberta has the fourth-largest deposit of oil and, I think, the sixth-largest in natural gas, and given that the world is envious of our energy deposit and the world needs our energy. And given that I was born in Ukraine and I understand like no one else: if the world, especially Europe, doesn’t get energy from Canada, it will be getting it from Russia, that is actually funding the war in Ukraine. No country in Europe wants to use Russian oil and gas, and Alberta has an opportunity to export our energy to the rest of the world, including Asia and Europe.

I want to say, Madam Chair, that given that I’m also from Drayton Valley-Devon, I’m well versed in the energy sector as well because at one point we were very busy with oil and gas, until 2015-19, where everything slowed down and slowed down, and that brings me to answer the question here. We all know that Energy and Minerals is receiving an increase in Budget 2025-26 to cover expenses related to legislation against the Crown. I’m unable to comment on the litigation matters as the terms of any settlements are confidential in accordance with the agreements. A couple of the companies have had to divulge information on this to meet the public reporting requirements in their jurisdictions. Alberta’s government, however, is bound to the regulations and legal agreements in our province. Some of this will be off-set by lower costs to sell oil this year than the budget due to the lower price of oil last year and last fiscal year.

Let us not forget why we are in this position to start with. Every single company in their public court filings pointed to changes made under – who? The NDP in 2016 and after, so the person they returned to Alberta’s eastern slopes and Rocky Mountains, and that’s where we have a problem. We’re cleaning up their mess. It is kind of ironic that they are fully opposed to coal all of a sudden despite their cousins in B.C. pushing fast-forward on coal developments without proper protection in place. B.C. is one of the biggest coal production jurisdictions in North America. One of the biggest issues at play is that the NDP moved to deregulate coal policy and do away with the land categories and invited coal back to protect land under the 1976, just before I was born, coal development policy.

We recognize the value of metallurgical coal in today’s society. It makes steel, and steel that is required for thousands if not millions of everyday products around the world, including for every one of us here: everything from computers and laptops to household medical equipment, schools, bikes, and buses, to wind turbines and solar panels. Metallurgical coal is so important that it has been labelled a critical mineral by the U.S. and the U.K.

7:50

This is a big reason why we are modernizing our coal industry. We are implementing some of the highest environmental standards in the world. We have banned mountaintop removal. We have banned new open pit mines in the Rockies and the foothills, and we have prioritized the protection of our water, air, and environment. Before a shovel is put in the ground, companies will have to prove how they will accomplish these key foundation pillars, and when they are done, they will be required to reclaim the land, which is nice.

Further, as part of the modernization we are reviewing coal royalties to ensure Alberta receives – I’m not done.

The Chair: Well, that concludes your time, hon. minister.

We’ll now go to the next 10-minute block for members of the government.

Some Hon. Members: Waived.

The Chair: This next block is for members of the independent caucus. Any members wishing to speak?

All right. We will now go to members of the government for their 10-minute block. Seeing none. Okay. A very long way to get here.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-City Centre, which minister would you like to speak with, and would you like to go back and forth or block?

Mr. Shepherd: The minister of public safety, and if he’s amenable, back and forth.

The Chair: Is that amenable? Okay.

You may proceed. Your time starts now.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you very much. Looking at the supplementary supply page 95 line 4.5, the Alberta Emergency Management Agency, the \$4.1 million for the 2025 early spring wildfires fully off-set through federal funding through the disaster financial assistance arrangements program. The program’s cost sharing ranges from 0 to 90 per cent depending on the funding stream and the risk level. It also has per capita consideration. That program got tweaked in spring 2025, around the time that our province had some wildfires that were eligible for financial support.

Could the minister elaborate on how the costs were shared through the disaster financial assistance arrangements program?

What share did the federal government fund, and did the province pass any of their share of those costs on to municipalities?

The Chair: The hon. Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services.

Mr. Ellis: Thank you very much. The member is correct. The \$4.1 million will help cover some of the expenses incurred by the eight municipalities that responded to the wildfires and floods of 2025. Alberta Emergency Management expects the federal government will reimburse Alberta through the disaster financial assistance arrangements. This is a program that is common right throughout Canada. We don't burden folks with those additional costs. It's a cost share, and this is part of the arrangement that we have with the federal government. Let's see if there's anything else I can add to that.

The ministry already has the Legislative Assembly's approval to spend the remainder of the budgeted money for the hazard assistance and resilience program in 2025, so not much to add to that particular point.

The Chair: The hon. member.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to clarify the last question in that bunch there: did the province pass any of their share of the costs on to municipalities?

Mr. Ellis: Madam Chair, this \$4.1 million will help cover – I don't know why there's always an insinuation that we want to do something towards municipalities. That's just not the case. The \$4.1 million is to cover some of the expenses incurred by the eight municipalities to respond to the wildfires in 2025. It's a cost share that expects the federal government will reimburse Alberta through the disaster financial assistance program.

The Chair: The hon. member.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Moving on, then, to page 95 line 2.1, Alberta sheriffs, talking about some of the expenses around the G-7. Again, it's \$4.1 million that was expense for security services at the G-7 summit in Kananaskis, that were provided by Alberta sheriffs. Now, this was a federal event, so this expense was fully off-set by the federal government, but there were some provincial resources that were used, so I just have a few questions for the minister regarding some of the details of the Alberta sheriffs role therein, and I thank those sheriffs for their work and their service.

What types of security services were provided at the G-7 summit in Kananaskis? How many sheriffs were pulled in to help provide security at the G-7? Did this lead to any known staffing shortages in any other parts of the province? Did vacancies in Alberta sheriffs lead to any known issues in either providing security services at the G-7 or in filling potential service gaps in the sheriffs' other duties and responsibilities?

The Chair: The hon. the minister.

Mr. Ellis: Well, thank you, Madam Chair. The member is correct: \$4.2 million will cover the expenses incurred by the Alberta sheriffs to support security at the G-7 summit. These expenses will be reimbursed through the federal government through an agreement with the RCMP. This is what a joint forces operation is all about. I want to thank all the members who participated, from the RCMP to members of other police services, including the Alberta sheriffs.

The primary role of the folks within the Alberta sheriffs would have been a form of traffic enforcement, sometimes providing some

of that cover so some of those we'll call very important people can make it from the Calgary airport to Kananaskis. That was primarily the role that they played. This was, again, an operation that was done between the RCMP as well as the Alberta sheriffs. Any sort of coverage was something that, from an operations perspective, the Alberta sheriffs worked through with the folks in Alberta sheriffs.

The Chair: The hon. the member.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Madam Chair. Can the minister confirm if the federal funding, then, this \$4.2 million, was only used to off-set Alberta sheriffs resources? Were there any municipal security resources that were used at the G-7 that the government had to approve federal funding for as a result of the Provincial Priorities Act?

Mr. Ellis: Well, I'm only aware of the \$4.2 million. That's going to cover, again, the expenses incurred by the Alberta sheriffs to support the security at the G-7. Expenses will be reimbursed by the federal government. No, there's not much more to add to that.

I thank them for their service and the way they helped at the G-7 and look forward to the federal government reimbursing us. Thank you.

The Chair: The hon. member.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Madam Chair. All right. We're not going to a particular level of detail tonight, but we'll continue with what we've got.

Speaking to line 2.8 on page 95, organized and serious crime. We have \$2.121 million for the gun and gang violence action fund. Now, this also was fully off-set by federal funding. Can the minister detail what exactly this funding went to? What was the reason for the extra \$2.1 million that's in the supplementary supply? Can the minister clarify what additional programs or spending was needed to bring this extra \$2.1 million in in supplementary supply?

The Chair: The hon. Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services.

Mr. Ellis: Thank you. The \$2.1 million was a year-in funding of previously approved and ongoing initiatives. That includes money for firearms prosecution teams to Justice – I see my friend here to my right – money to CPS for their gang suppression team; EPS was money for investigative support capital asset as well as police officers to address gun and gang violence investigative support; money to Camrose to off-set the work of the investigator FTE addressing gun and gang violence; finally, money to corrections for their intelligence analysts. Of course, I think it's important to note, we do our best to do what we can to provide metrics. They're obviously a little more complicated in policing, but we'll do our best to get you some answers here.

They're different for each of the 31 initiatives that were originally approved for funding. There are 38 initiatives. We do have guns and gangs evaluation plans that has identified performance measures for each initiative. The team of course works with each recipient to develop progress reports, which are, in turn, provided to the joint management team and the executive steering committee following a fiscal year. So lots of analysis on what works and what, of course, we can do better. We're still gathering information for the 2024-2025 and '25-26. The projects only just started through '24-25.

One project that I'm very super passionate about, actually, Madam Chair, is that we just signed off on a grant for \$900,000 for three years for YouthLink, using existing guns and gangs violence funding. This proposal is to develop and deliver a province-wide

virtual crime prevention initiative focused on gun and gang violence youth crime, drug use, and online exploitation. Rising levels of youth violence and gang involvement, drug use, and online exploitation in Alberta have highlighted the need for a virtual prevention model that ensures equitable access for youth and families right across the province. This virtual and online platform will be about cost-efficiency and scalability, enabling broader distribution to rural and remote underserved communities in Alberta. Madam Chair, I think this is going to be a fantastic program, especially for the folks in rural Alberta, to make sure the kids are going to be educated on the dangers of guns and gangs and, of course, organized crime as well as drugs.

8:00

I will also add that the National Crime Prevention Centre has shown that prevention-focused programs aimed at youth, particularly around education efforts related to violence and gang awareness, can reduce pathways into criminal involvement. This virtual gangs and guns prevention initiative supports the ministry objectives to enhance prevention efforts and increase awareness for guns and gangs violence.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Madam Chair. One final question around contract policing and police oversight, line 2.5, pages 94 and 95: "\$764,000 for the Biological Case Analysis Agreement." It says that it was a cost-sharing agreement. How was that cost split? What share did the province carry? It also notes that was fully off-set by external funding. If the minister could detail where that funding came from.

The Chair: The hon. minister.

Mr. Ellis: Thank you. Seven hundred and sixty-four thousand dollars to cover the increased costs charged by the national forensic lab for DNA casework provided for the RCMP, and expenses will be recovered through the establishment of the cost-sharing arrangement. That cost-sharing arrangement: the federal government contributes 46 per cent in the casework costs, and the remaining 54 per cent is covered by the provinces regarding their respective usage.

Thank you.

The Chair: All right. Any members from independent caucus?

Any members from the government?

An Hon. Member: Waive.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford.

Member Calahoo Stonehouse: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to speak with the Minister of Finance.

The Chair: Would you like to go with back and forth or block time?

Member Calahoo Stonehouse: I'm okay with either.

The Chair: With either.

Minister, would you like block or shared?

Mr. Horner: It's your question. I'll answer it.

The Chair: All right. You may proceed. Let's see what happens.

Member Calahoo Stonehouse: Okay. We'll go with block, then.

All right. On page 67 in the financial transactions vote, line 2.1 on wildfire management, \$107 million is to pay for a deposit for the purchase to build the five air tankers in support of wildfire suppression. I'm curious about four things. One, how is the contract for these air tankers sourced? Two, what's the final expected cost of these final air tankers? Three, what is the timeline for Alberta to get all five air tankers, when can Albertans expect them to be actively used, and what is the expected annual expense to operate the air tankers? Lastly, I'd like to ask how many FTEs will be needed to operate the air tankers. Those are my questions regarding Forestry and Parks.

My second set is going to be around Advanced Education. Under Advanced Education \$857,000 is requested to advance French language initiatives. Is this amount a result of provincial cost sharing, or is this money coming in part from the federal government? Second to this, how is this money going to be disbursed? Was it project based? Which institutions got which part of the supplementary funding? How much of this funding was allocated to each of these institutions? How much of this funding specifically was for Campus Saint-Jean?

The federal government's website suggested that the Canada-Alberta agreement on French language services will result in a maximum annual amount of roughly \$2.25 million until the '27-28 fiscal year. Is Alberta on pace to get the maximum amount possible of financial contribution from the federal government also under this agreement? If not, why haven't we? How much federal funding from this agreement is represented in the current estimate of \$2.53 billion on line 2.2 of 43, or is the funding from this agreement only visible in the \$857,000 requested in the supplementary supply? Further to this, the federal government can also approve complementary contributions for things such as nonreoccurring special projects or projects that contribute to strengthening the cultural, artistic, and heritage expressions of official language minority communities. Is any of the expense in line 2.2 a result of complementary funding under the Canada-Alberta agreement for French language services?

For Indigenous Relations what infrastructure projects were delivered to Indigenous communities using the \$4.1 million from the investing in Canada infrastructure program? We see on page 74 of the supplementary supply estimates that there are \$500,000 allocated to Indigenous training programs supported by the labour market transfer agreement. Can the minister please share what that is? Also, can we get the minister to detail the programs that were underspent to allow for a \$1.465 million in funding? Which program was underspent? Can the minister also explain what infrastructure projects were funded and who signed the contracts? What was the procurement process, and when can nations expect for these to be delivered? Also, on page 74 of the supplementary supply estimates there is \$500,000 allocated to Indigenous training programs supported by the labour market transfer, which I mentioned earlier. I'm curious as to how many people are going to be trained with this funding, and how are we going to measure the evaluation of these programs and if they were successful? Looking for some KPIs on that.

That is all I have, Madam Chair. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. I am going to seek guidance. Okay.

The hon. Minister of Forestry and Parks.

Mr. Loewen: Yes. Thank you very much, and thanks for the question. Appreciate the opportunity to talk about our water bombers that we just ordered. The \$107.2 million increase to the financial transaction vote brings the total budget to \$120 million,

which was paid as a deposit towards the purchase of the five water bombers upon execution of the agreement in '25-26. Previously there was \$12.8 million put towards them. This \$107.2 million makes the \$120 million deposit for those water bombers. You'll notice that in the current budget coming up there's no money in the budget for those planes because we won't have to start paying again until we start getting planes delivered.

It's part of an overall investment to keep communities safe from wildfires. Alberta has secured a contract to build those five new water bombers right here in Alberta, and that'll be added to our existing tanker fleet. The total amount for the planes is about \$400 million Canadian. Planes are sold in U.S. dollars, so the numbers at this point can't be exact because of exchange rates and the inflation that's worked into the contracts to build those. As far as when the planes will arrive, the first aircraft is targeted to arrive in the spring of 2031. Following, two will be in 2032, and the last two will be 2033. So by 2033 we'll have all five planes in operation. Of course, this agreement will sustain thousands of Alberta jobs and inject investment back into the provincial economy, all while strengthening our wildfire response. We wanted to act proactively when it comes to ordering these planes. It takes years for these planes to be built and to be brought into service, so we needed to look ahead with that. We currently have four planes built between 1986 and 1988. They do have plenty of life left in them, but we want to make sure that we have planes coming on board, and these planes will add to our fleet.

We have 13 air tanker bases strategically placed across the forest protection area, and having aircraft and personnel stationed there during wildfire season is crucial to our ability to fight wildfires. We want to be able to respond quickly to new wildfires and keep them under control, preventing spread to nearby communities. When it comes to the operation and maintenance of these planes, the current planes that we have right now, there was an RFP that went out, and companies bid on that opportunity to operate and maintain the planes. We expect that'll be the same with these new water bombers when they come on stream, that there'll be an RFP to operate and maintain them moving forward. Again, this is a good story for Albertans, a good story for Alberta, and a good story for wildfire fighting in the province of Alberta.

I think I'll turn the time over to the Minister of Advanced Education.

The Chair: The hon. Minister of Advanced Education.

8:10

Mr. McDougall: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for the question. Looking at 2.2, as the first question was related to the French language, the \$857,000, it was an increase by the federal government under the French language initiatives in the Canada-Alberta agreement on French language services, so they increased the allocation from what we had originally budgeted. Of that \$857,000 increase, all of which goes to Campus Saint-Jean college, \$707,000 was going to the recruitment and retention bursary program at Campus Saint-Jean, and the remaining \$150,000 was for creation of an education assistant program at the Campus Saint-Jean.

You talked about 2.2, so just in case on the other \$1,050,000, that is a transfer from Arts, Culture and Status of Women to Advanced Education, so funding that was originally allocated to Arts, Culture and Status of Women. That's funding provided by the federal government, again, so fully funded by the federal government for the national action plan to end gender-based violence. The funding there is allocated to publicly funded postsecondary institutions to support eligible activities such as awareness activities, including

campaigns and information fairs; prevention and bystander training for students, staff, and faculty; and reporting tools.

The Chair: The hon. Minister of Indigenous Relations.

Mrs. Sawhney: Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and thank you to the member opposite for those questions. I'm very pleased to answer questions on the supplementary supply estimates for Indigenous Relations.

Now, if we do look at page 75, we can clearly see that the supplementary estimate is a total of \$3.2 million and that there's a transfer of voted amounts for \$1.2 million, which is related to the national action plan to end gender-based violence. I do want to talk about that \$3.2 million because it's composed of four different items. You can see clearly that \$500,000 is allocated to First Nations and Métis relations, which is essentially an increase to the employment partnership program, which is one of the questions that was posed.

The \$2.7 million in investing in Canada infrastructure is actually composed of three different items. It's a consolidation, and it's important to break that out so I can answer the questions that were posed. I'll list them now: an increase of \$4 million to reprofile funds from 2024-25 to '25-26 to complete three Indigenous-led projects funded by the federal ICIP program. I'll get into that in more detail.

The Chair: But not right now.

Any independents?

Any government members?

Some Hon. Members: Waive.

The Chair: I see the hon. Member for Calgary-Klein.

Member Tejada: Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Which minister would you like to speak to?

Member Tejada: Actually, my questions are around Assisted Living and Social Services, immigration, multiculturalism, but any minister that can answer would be great, and I'd like to do block.

The Chair: You'd like to do block? Okay. The first five minutes are yours. You may proceed.

Member Tejada: Okay. Thank you so much. Madam Chair, I would like to focus the first few questions on Assisted Living and Social Services. We can see on page 50 of the supplementary supply estimates that \$33.9 million was made available from "lower than budgeted expense in other programs." This is in addition to a requested supplement of around \$15 million. Can the minister of assisted living please specify which programs had lower than budgeted expense and why? On the supplementary amount of the \$1.5 million for the assisted living navigation portal also off-set by the aging with dignity funding that was done federally, will there be consultation with senior-serving organizations? How will we be able to measure the success of the portal going forward, and when do we expect that portal to be operational?

On immigration and multiculturalism on page 78 I can see that there was an expense transfer of \$1.5 million that was requested from Arts, Culture and Status of Women for Alberta women entrepreneurs, gender-related injury and illness prevention program grant, and that these funds are fully off-set, again, by the federal national action plan to end gender-based violence. Can the minister specify if any of these funds were earmarked for newcomer-serving organizations or culturally appropriate services like language counselling that's specific to the client?

Line 5.3 on page 79, we see that there was a \$9 million request for supporting workers impacted by trade and market shifts, including for settlement and integration language program grants. Can the minister specify the following: which organizations received this funding specifically? How much of this was allocated specifically to English language programs, and do we know how many people will receive that language training? My next question would be: in terms of negotiations with the federal government, what steps is this government going to take to secure longer term and sustainable funding for settlement and integration in partnership with the feds?

In JETI line 2.3, page 79 of the supplementary supply estimates, we can see that there's a request for \$7.8 million additional dollars for skills and training. Can the minister give us a breakdown of what these supports are and how they're allocated? What I'm looking for is what kinds of skills training are benefiting the most from this funding.

Now, this was a question that I had asked previously in estimates, and asked if any of these monies were specifically earmarked for newcomers and newcomer organizations, as we know that these communities are usually the most disproportionately impacted by unemployment. I had also asked: in terms of the jobs training, we know that we've heard about programs specifically for youth, and I'm wondering if any of these skills and training support funds will be earmarked to support youth skills and employment. We know that there's a program that had been announced by this government that included digital badges and small grants to employers, but I'd like to know what the plan is in the medium term and where we will be able to see the outcomes of these programs publicly and how we are measuring their success.

That is all I have for today.

The Chair: Okay. We will start with the hon. Minister of Assisted Living and Social Services.

Mr. Nixon: Well, thank you, Madam Chair. I'd be happy to answer the questions. Most of the questions had nothing to do with supplementary supply, so I'll focus on supplementary supply, which is before the House.

Let me start with the aging with dignity questions. My department will receive \$15.2 million of supplemental operating funding in fiscal '25-26, along with \$33.9 million that has been made available from lower than budget expenses from other programs, primarily lower uptake in certain programs like income supports, to provide \$49.1 million in total for enhanced health care for seniors, which was fully off-set by the federal aging with dignity funding that will be present that way.

The second issue in that area is the \$1.6 million, which the hon. member referred to in regard to our new portal. The answer to her question: when will the portal be up and running? It is up and running, so already complete. That's the thing about supplementary supply: it's about this fiscal year, not next year, which may be causing some confusion for some members.

The second area was about the \$721.3 million of transfers associated from my friend in Hospital and Surgical Health Services. I want to reiterate, as I already said to other members in the Chamber, that this is a net-zero impact on the government of Alberta as a whole. It's a readjustment of portions of the department formerly known as health that have come over to our department to be able to meet our mandate when it comes to continuing care.

The breakdown of that \$721.3 million is as follows: \$362.8 million to support the alignment of ALA resources, \$310.5 million to represent ALA's portion of the transition service agreement to pay for services provided by the Health Shared Services organization,

and \$48 million for the ratification of the United Nurses of Alberta's agreement Q1 approval, which is a transfer from HSHS for staff that are moving from ACA, Alberta Health Services over to Assisted Living Alberta, which brings this budget fully in line with the overall mandate.

That was the only other question she asked about supplementary supply. I'm happy to hear if she's got anymore.

The Chair: The hon. – my apologies. I need you to go to your chair so that you can speak. I realize there are challenges with that.

Mr. Schow: Madam Chair, my understanding is that in committee I can rise and speak from anywhere in the Chamber.

The Chair: You can sit wherever, but you do have to speak from your chair. The hon. minister of JETI.

8:20

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will be brief as we are dealing specifically with supplementary supply, which, as the hon. minister at the end of the aisle here had mentioned, is dealing with this current fiscal year, not the next, and we did have several hours to deal with these other questions during the estimates.

As it pertains to the \$1.6 million fund transfer from Arts, Culture and Status of Women, this is to support initiatives under the national action plan to end gender-based violence, Madam Chair. The gender-related injury and illness prevention program grants will fund applied research to address personal protective equipment, violence and harassment, and gender-related health and safety differences in the workplace. The women's entrepreneur grant program will provide tools to build sustainable businesses, enhance economic participation, and create strong social networks to support the prevention of gender-based violence. Both the supplementary operating expenses and transfers are fully off-set by federal funding.

The Chair: Any others?

Seeing none, I will conclude that time block.

Any members from the independent caucus? Any members from the government caucus?

An Hon. Member: Waive.

The Chair: Seeing the hon. Member for Lethbridge-West.

Member Miyashiro: Thank you, Madam Chair. My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

The Chair: Sorry?

Member Miyashiro: Question for the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

The Chair: For sure. Block time or shared time?

Member Miyashiro: I'll share, unless the minister wants to do block.

Mr. Williams: Whichever you prefer.

Member Miyashiro: Let's do shared. Let's have a conversation.

The Chair: There we go. Shared.

Please proceed. Remember that comments still go through the chair.

Member Miyashiro: All right. Here we go. Line 5.3 on page 91 shows funding from federal grant programs. Line 5.3 has an

allocation of \$9.36 million to the investing in Canada infrastructure rural and northern communities program. This \$9.36 million is a substantial increase to the estimated \$15.3 million, with the total now over \$24.6 million. To the minister: why was the increase so large? Was this because specific projects got approved? Then maybe I'll throw in: how long was the average approval time for the projects funded through line 5.3? Do you know the longest time a municipality had to wait for approval?

The Chair: The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Williams: Well, thank you. I think I'll just speak very clearly to both the ICIP and the CCBF, both flow through dollars on this. Of course, both of these are dollars that come through Municipal Affairs in a flow-through manner. These estimates include two adjustments, both fully funded by the government of Canada, net neutral to the province; there's no impact on Alberta's bottom line and no additional burden placed on the taxpayer.

First, to address the \$9 million that was mentioned by the member opposite. It's to support infrastructure-based project under the Municipal Affairs portion of the investing in Canada infrastructure program, or ICIP. This adjustment is required due to updated cash flows for needs for municipalities and ICIP projects. In short, municipalities have informed Municipal Affairs that the projects require an additional \$9 million in '25-26, that project completion, versus what was originally forecast. The original ICIP budget for '25-26 was \$15 million, and this top-up aligns, with our appropriation, with these cash flow requirements municipalities now anticipate. As with all ICIP funding, these dollars are completely federally funded. Alberta's role is to administer and flow the funds through municipalities and local partners.

I'll address the second piece on the CCBF right now, too, before I speak to the question detail that was asked on the timing. We also were seeking approval for an additional \$4.8 million under the Canada community building fund, or CCBF; 100 per cent federally funded as well, reflects updated federal allocations. As with the previous item, the province acts strictly as a flow through to ensure municipalities receive the funding that each is entitled to.

All these dollars are contained within the supplementary supply estimates flow-through funds. These adjustments align with our provincial appropriations, with federal transfers already committed to the province, and there's no change to provincial spending and no additional fiscal pressures created by the amendments. The supplementary estimates ensure Alberta's municipalities can continue to deliver crucial, critical infrastructure that supports growth, quality of life, and long-term economic resilience.

Of course, we remain committed to transparency and accountability with the federal dollars, as we see here in this process today, so that they go directly to the projects they're intended to support. We've not seen any delays in the flow-through dollars at all. They continue to flow as the projects are needed without slowing down any other projects.

Member Miyashiro: Thank you, Minister. I just want you to clarify something. You're saying that there weren't any delays. So there have been no municipalities that have contacted your department with any concerns about any delays in having funding approved.

Secondly – and you read my mind about the \$4.8 million – the original estimate for Alberta's share of that program was about \$276 million. Can you explain to us also: what's the reason for the \$4.8 million increase? Then once you answer that, I've got a couple more, and then we're done.

The Chair: Just a reminder to speak through the chair.

The hon. minister.

Mr. Williams: Well, thank you. As I stated previously, the province has not created any delays for projects not being able to be completed or continued work on.

The piece around the \$4.8 million with the CCBF: the purpose of it is to continue those flow-through funds. There were 13 projects approved in 2020 that municipalities applied for and all approved. This is to continue the funding on those. As the municipalities incur the costs, they're informing us of what the needs are within the fiscal year. This continues to keep those dollars flowing as a smooth-oiled machine between our friends in the federal government and our municipalities.

The Chair: The hon. member.

Member Miyashiro: Thank you, Madam Chair. Is there an allocation formula for funds across the province, and is the province the main decision-maker for what gets approved? Going back to that first question, how is that funding for the Canada community building fund distributed and allocated?

The Chair: The hon. minister.

Mr. Williams: Well, thank you. It's largely a question of demographics. It's allocated on a formula based – it's not a discretionary project, largely. When it comes to funding these municipalities, we want to make sure that these dollars do get into municipal coffers. They're funding hard infrastructure, exactly what this ministry has been talking about and this government has emphasized on core services. It is a collaborative relationship that the federal government continues to have, was always flow through as needed as they commit, and the province continues to fund those on a per capita basis and population based within the province.

The Chair: The hon. member.

Member Miyashiro: Thank you. Just one final question, Minister. The approval times for projects that have been submitted to your office: is there a change in your timelines for approval pre the Provincial Priorities Act versus post?

Mr. Williams: No, the Provincial Priorities Act has not affected the delivery of any of these. We continue to operate as we did before when it comes to these flow-through dollars. The Provincial Priorities Act is about emphasizing priorities that the government of Alberta has. We've always had the ability, in conversations with our federal partners, to let them know what those priorities are. Now, with the Provincial Priorities Act, we have the teeth behind it to make sure that we're not funding things, as I mentioned in our estimates conversation around – the only time it's been used so far is the funding of meth pipes and education for meth pipes for children in Lethbridge. Happily we did invoke it then. When it comes to priorities like that for the province, we'll continue to invoke the Provincial Priorities Act.

The Chair: The hon. member.

Member Miyashiro: Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. We will now seek any independent members wishing to speak.

Any members from the government?

Any members from the Official Opposition?

Vote on Supplementary Supply Estimates 2025-26 General Revenue Fund

The Chair: Well, I will now put the question. We shall now proceed to the final vote on the supplementary supply estimates.

Those members in favour of the resolutions for the 2025-26 supplementary supply estimates for the general revenue fund for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025, please say aye.

Hon. Members: Aye.

The Chair: Any opposed, please say no. That is carried.
Shall the vote be reported? Are you agreed?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Any opposed? Carried.

I'll now invite the Government House Leader to move that the committee rise and report the 2025-26 supplementary supply estimates for the general revenue fund.

Mr. Schow: So moved, Madam Chair.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock.

8:30

Mr. van Dijken: Madam Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions, reports as follows, and requests leave to sit again. The following resolutions relating to the 2025-26 supplementary supply estimates for the general revenue fund for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2026, have been approved.

Offices of the Legislative Assembly.

Office of the Auditor General: \$4,057,000.

Office of the Chief Electoral Officer: \$13,329,000.

Office of the Child and Youth Advocate: \$183,000.

Office of the Ethics Commissioner: \$23,000.

Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner: \$335,000.

Office of the Ombudsman: \$200,000.

Office of the Public Interest Commissioner: \$43,000.

Government main estimates.

Advanced Education: expense, \$857,000.

Arts, Culture and Status of Women: expense, \$5,055,000.

Assisted Living and Social Services: expense, \$15,174,000; capital investment, \$1,580,000.

Children and Family Services: expense, \$192,000.

Education and Childcare: expense, \$27,057,000; capital investment, \$9,538,000.

Energy and Minerals: expense, \$213,491,000; capital investment, \$1,008,000; financial transactions, \$95,000,000.

Forestry and Parks: expense, \$1,320,000; capital investment, \$3,217,000; financial transactions, \$107,200,000.

Indigenous Relations: expense, \$3,216,000.

Jobs, Economy, Trade and Immigration: expense, \$9,075,000.

Justice: expense, \$16,587,000; capital investment, \$2,500,000.

Mental Health and Addiction: expense, \$8,847,000.

Municipal Affairs: expense, \$14,134,000.

Public Safety and Emergency Services: expense, \$11,159,000.

The Deputy Speaker: Perfect. Does the Assembly concur in the report? All those in favour, please say aye.

Hon. Members: Aye.

The Deputy Speaker: Any opposed, please say no. So carried.

Introduction of Bills

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

Bill 20

Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2026

Mr. Horner: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 20, the Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2026. This being a money bill, Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

Bill 20 will provide authority for the government to pay from the general revenue fund for additional costs that are not already covered or otherwise provided for during the current fiscal year. If passed, the estimates will authorize approximate increases of \$326 million in expense funding, of which \$113 million is off-set by increased revenue; \$18 million in capital investment, of which \$10 million is off-set by federal funding; \$202 million in other financial transactions; \$18 million for the offices of the Legislative Assembly; and \$734 million in expense transfers between ministries.

Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 20 read a first time]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I move that the Assembly be adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 8:35 p.m.]

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