



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 28th Legislature
First Session

Standing Committee
on
Resource Stewardship

Hydroelectric Energy Production
in Northern Alberta

Monday, November 5, 2012
6:15 p.m.

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First Session**

Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship

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[Ms Kennedy-Glans in the chair]

The Chair: Welcome. Thank you for being so adaptive. We've got a bit of a change happening here. The people that we had invited to come tonight were not able to come. We're at the front end of this process, so it's a time to tweak it and make it better, and we're going to talk about that tonight.

I also want to introduce Chris Tyrell, here on my left. He's going to help us with the secretarial and administrative functions for this committee. Committee clerk, right?

Mr. Tyrell: Committee clerk.

The Chair: Mrs. Sawchuk's father just passed away, so that's why she's not here. We'll pass on our regards to her and her family.

Let's go around like we normally do and introduce ourselves. I'll start with my vice-chair here.

Mr. Rowe: Thank you. Bruce Rowe, MLA for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills and deputy chair of this committee.

Mr. Hehr: Kent Hehr, MLA, Calgary-Buffalo.

Mrs. Leskiw: Genia Leskiw, MLA for Bonnyville-Cold Lake, and it's good to be back on Canadian soil again.

Mr. Fraser: Rick Fraser, Calgary-South East.

Ms Kubinec: Maureen Kubinec, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock.

Mr. Stier: Pat Stier, Livingstone-Macleod.

Mr. Casey: Ron Casey, Banff-Cochrane.

Mr. Webber: Len Webber, Calgary-Foothills.

Mr. Young: Steve Young, Edmonton-Riverview.

Ms Fenske: Jacquie Fenske, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

Ms Blakeman: Laurie Blakeman, and I'd like to welcome each and every one of you and particularly Mrs. Leskiw to the fabulous constituency of Edmonton-Centre.

Mr. Barnes: Drew Barnes, Cypress-Medicine Hat.

Ms Calahasen: Pearl Calahasen, Lesser Slave Lake.

Ms L. Johnson: Linda Johnson, Calgary-Glenmore.

Mr. Lemke: Ken Lemke, Stony Plain.

Mr. Bilous: Good evening. Deron Bilous, MLA for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Mr. Sandhu: Good evening. Peter Sandhu, Edmonton-Manning.

Dr. Brown: Neil Brown, Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill.

Mr. Cao: Wayne Cao, Calgary-Fort.

Dr. Massolin: Good evening. Philip Massolin, manager of research services.

Mr. Tyrell: Again, I'm Chris Tyrell, your committee clerk.

The Chair: Okay. Thanks, everyone. You guys know the drill already on this. You don't have to touch the mikes, no cellphones, the audio is streamed, and this will be covered in *Hansard*.

Again, to reiterate, it is the chair's prerogative to decide whether we can eat during a dinner meeting, and I think it's a very wise thing. We have protocol guidance from the Speaker, which you have all probably seen, and I absolutely agree that in this time frame we should all be eating in a little more relaxed fashion than we have been in the past. So please feel comfortable to take your meal, and we'll just make sure that presenters understand that this is a dinner meeting and we have to do this.

Would somebody like to move that we approve the agenda for tonight's meeting? Mr. Sandhu. Thank you. All in favour? Any objections? Carried.

Okay. We've got two sets of meeting minutes to approve. The first one is the October 24 meeting minutes, and the second one is the most recent meeting that you had, led by the vice-chair, on October 29. We'll start with the first set. Would somebody like to move that the minutes of the October 24, 2012, meeting of the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship be adopted as circulated?

Ms Fenske: So moved.

The Chair: Ms Fenske. All in favour? Any objections? Carried.

All right. The second set, for October 29. As long as there are no errors or omissions in that, I'd like to call for a motion to approve those minutes. Would someone like to move that the minutes of the October 29, 2012, meeting of the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship be adopted as circulated? Ms Calahasen. Thank you. All in favour? Any objections? Carried. Thanks.

Now to the meat of tonight's meeting. We had planned on starting the next step in our substantive presentations. We had asked Manitoba Hydro. They have great experience in northern development of hydroelectricity. We have a lot to learn from people with that expertise. We had also asked B.C. Hydro, who have expertise, especially very close by on site C, which is close to the border with Alberta. We had difficulty getting these people here on such short notice.

What we would like to do this meeting is talk through the process of how the LAO engages – after we put a proposal forward, how do they go about making these asks? I'd also like to start with the update of the stakeholder list. Mr. Bilous, in the second-to-last meeting you'd indicated that you would put forward some recommendations on environmental stakeholders for a panel. Also, Ms Blakeman, you had indicated that in correspondence. You can see in front of you that the stakeholder list has been updated to incorporate the recommendations of Mr. Bilous and Ms Blakeman.

I'd invite you both to offer comments on why you recommend these particular stakeholders.

Mr. Bilous: I can begin, or, Ms Blakeman, would you like to begin?

Ms Blakeman: Nope.

Mr. Bilous: Okay. Did it get circulated to all the committee members? I know that we sent it to the working group, including our clerk.

The Chair: Absolutely. Everything has been posted on the website.

Mr. Bilous: Wonderful.

Mr. Casey: What page are we working off here?

The Chair: Yes. If you've got in front of you the stakeholder list, Mr. Tyrell, maybe you can point out which page that addition is on.

This document is on the website, and you will get copies of it right now. It's the revised, updated list of prospective stakeholders.

Dr. Massolin: I can point out where it is.

Mr. Bilous: Sure. I mean, I found the first one.

The Chair: Page 7.

Dr. Massolin: Yeah, it's page 7. Exactly.

The Chair: Is everybody okay with that? You've got the paper you need in front of you?

Mr. Bilous: I'll just speak briefly on them if I can, Madam Chair, about the logic behind it. The first that we recommended was the Alberta Water Council. First of all, they were in the original draft list of potential or prospective stakeholders. They are a long-term advocate for sustainable management of Alberta's water resources. They are also a multistakeholder. They have members from the government, industry, and nongovernmental organizations, and their focus is quite relevant to this committee in that their primary task is to monitor, champion, and steward the implementation of Alberta's water for life strategy. In its three goals we're talking about drinking water, ensuring that it's safe; that Alberta's aquatic ecosystems are maintained and protected; and that water is managed effectively to support sustainable economic development. That was the first of the three that we proposed.

The second – or this is the order that I'm going in – was the Land Stewardship Centre. They were also on the original list as of October 10, 2012. They're dedicated to achieving sustainability when it comes to land and resource stewardship. They encourage developing practices and policies that support sustainable resource use and offer a distinctly grassroots perspective, focusing on stewardship alongside development.

The third is an organization called Water Matters. Again, they were on the original list. They're one of the founders of the Alberta by Design vision, which is meant to provide relevant, current information regarding land use and promote sustainable land use, environmental protection, and the public interest. They were consulted in the past for potential hydroelectric development in Alberta. That was about a year ago. They have a long-term commitment to Alberta's watershed, a perspective which will be important when we're exploring potential hydroelectric energy projects, and their approach and process include policy analysis and outreach to stakeholder groups and culminates with an engagement of government decision-making process.

The last organization, the fourth – and pardon me for saying three earlier – is the World Wildlife Fund of Canada. Again, they were on the original list. They advocate on conservation issues, those relating to water, climate change. They're politically nonpartisan, and they recognize the importance of business and development and will work with corporations to promote a conservation climate, raise funds for critical work, and encourage the wider public to make more sustainable choices.

Those were the four that the Alberta New Democrats proposed should be on this stakeholder list.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bilous.

I'm going to also flag the Pembina Institute. They were included in the original list that we created on the basis that they had an explicit interest in hydroelectricity. They've stepped out and actually into this space, so we thought that it made sense to invite them. So we've left them on the list. Anyway, as we go forward and talk about how we plan for panels, maybe we can decide if five is the right number or not.

Ms Blakeman, do you want to talk about Robert Tarleck.

Ms Blakeman: Sure. He's the past mayor of Lethbridge and now consults with a group that has an interest in water and economic development. Given that he has paid a lot of attention to water issues in southern Alberta and also has a sensitivity for politics – let me put it that way – I thought he would be a good resource for us. It doesn't necessarily mean that I need to impose upon him or that we need to impose upon him to volunteer his time and effort to write a paper for us or anything, but he is certainly a good resource just to talk to. The other thing is that he was around when the Oldman dam controversy happened in southern Alberta, so I thought he was a good resource for us around the issues that can come up and some of the political hot points and economic development issues that can be considered.

6:25

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Blakeman.

I'd also like to say hello to Mr. Hale and Mr. Anglin and acknowledge their being here. Thank you.

All right. As we talked about several meetings ago, this document, this stakeholder list, is utopian. We'll never get to see all these people unless we continue this committee for several years, but as we get smarter about what we're looking at and refining the question of feasibility, this list should get smarter and smarter and more focused. There may be people on the list that we only want to ask a question of and have a written submission from. Just so we remember, you know, we don't have to have a motion every time we change this, but we do need to talk about it every time we add names to this list.

The other big group that we still haven't got specifics on yet, in my opinion, are the First Nation, Métis, and Inuit communities. I know, Ms Calahasen, you've made some really positive recommendations there, and we'll expect that those will continue and others who have particular interest.

Mr. Hehr: I guess I brought this up earlier, but we seemed to dance around the issue with our stakeholders last time, at least Mr. Anderson and I did, the economics of running this out, of the government having some role in this from an economic standpoint. Is that still on the table, looking at the analysis of whether this would be an opportunity for a Crown corporation, like some areas have done, or whether this is not the type of endeavour that we take on on behalf of the people of Alberta?

The Chair: It's a big question, Mr. Hehr, and it's a good question. I know you had asked it earlier. I actually spoke to the chair of the standing committee on – what's the title of that committee?

An Hon. Member: Alberta's Economic Future.

The Chair: Yes. Thank you.

We had decided that that question was probably most appropriately lodged within their committee. I think you're on that committee as well.

Mr. Hehr: Just so I understand it, if we decide, then, hypothetically, if this group says that this is a worthy project to go down or not . . .

The Chair: "Feasibility" is the word, I think.

Mr. Hehr: Feasibility. The next stage would be the second stage, then, where we go and discuss whether the economics makes sense for us.

The Chair: How we do it.

Mr. Hehr: Okay. So that's how you see this process going. So it would be probably six months here and then another month's discussion over there. Have you and the chair of the economic committee worked this out, or is this just sort of something that you guys have crafted and not really worked out?

The Chair: It's an evolutionary process. We have talked about how we allocate things between this committee and the other committee. It's not precise at this point in time, but I think we have to be tight about how we focus the question here. This is a feasibility question. The question of who invests in this project I think is another question, and we could wrestle through that after we get the first question answered.

Mr. Hehr: That sounds fair. Good.

The Chair: Okay. Good. Thank you.
Any other questions?

Mr. Casey: Maybe not a question so much. I was talking to a person on the weekend that was actively involved in the Oldman dam situation, legally involved in that for a number of years. Her recommendation was that we actually talk to the Environmental Law Centre here in Edmonton. They may want to talk to us directly, or, if not directly, they may be able to recommend someone to us. I think it's important. If we're going to look at the feasibility of this, we need to understand where some of the legal challenge and where some of the opposition is going to come from and what those arguments might be. I would just put it out there that that's maybe a group we may want to consider. They are also right here in Edmonton, so it's not like we have to pull them in from another province. I think they would have some very relevant comments.

The Chair: That sounds almost like part of the economic environmental feasibility question. It could be grouped under that panel.

Mr. Casey: Yeah. I don't know where you would like to put it. Anyway, I just think that they'd have some input.

The Chair: Thank you. Let's make sure we add that one to the list, then. Thank you.
Any other suggestions? Yes, Mr. Anglin.

Mr. Anglin: Just a question, Madam Chair. Do we have a procedure in place if somebody cancels at the last minute?

The Chair: That is our next topic. Absolutely. That's why we're having this meeting.

Mr. Anglin: Okay. I'll wait.

The Chair: Okay. Any other comments on recommendations for people to present?

Mr. Webber: Madam Chair, just a question on economics again here. It's a relatively minor issue, but I'm curious with regard to guest speakers and stakeholders coming here. B.C. Hydro and Manitoba Hydro are individuals who have got a little bit of a trek to get here. Who compensates for that? Who covers the cost of their travel and accommodation?

The Chair: Gentlemen, you are prophetic tonight. That's the next question on the itinerary. Yeah. This is good. Does anybody want to go for the next one?

Before we get to those two points, though, my vice-chair, Mr. Rowe, raised an issue from last meeting about the number of presenters. I think we should cover that ground first. You had some comments about that?

Mr. Rowe: Sure. Thank you, Madam Chairman. Those of you that were at that meeting know we only had one presenter, and it got pushed around quite a bit. I would take some responsibility for that, for not being firm enough, but with only one presenter we gave them a little bit of latitude. I thought we had been very clear that their presentation was limited to 10 minutes. Well, at the 10-minute mark they were only halfway through their slides, so we gave them some latitude. One of them we gave an extra five minutes, and then I had to cut him off at that because he was still going on.

I just don't know how we are ever going to do two presentations in an hour meeting. It is just almost impossible to do and get the kind of questions to them that we want. How we're going to address that, I don't know. I just know that that hour went very, very quickly. I'd be interested in hearing what the other members of the committee have to say and how we can proceed with this. With the time frame being very, very short and the number of people we want to see, I'm not sure how we're going to do it. I think coming up is the schedule of upcoming meetings, that we'll put to you, and some of those questions might be answered when we get to that discussion.

Mr. Anglin: I would agree with that statement. We're not going to do two presentations and have questions and get anything accomplished, but there is an opportunity with some of the presenters that are not going to have a whole lot of presentation material in the sense that they'll be here to answer questions. If you can group them together, we probably could get two or even three to come, particularly those ones that want to submit material and just come to answer questions. That could work, but it will all depend on you sort of asking a few questions of the presenters before they come.

Mrs. Leskiw: From previous experience if you have an hour meeting, you're not doing anybody any justice by rushing them through, so one presenter per hour meeting. Just the way MLAs work, by the time you get started, by the time they get the presentation done – it's just that everybody wants to say something and ask something. It isn't fair to the MLAs, and it's not fair to the presenters. If you're bringing them here as experts, then you want to have all the time you can for them to answer questions and present whatever they have to present. I agree with you that one per hour session is about all you're going to be able to handle.

Mr. Hehr: Do we want to consider maybe moving to a 15-minute presentation? If we are going to have . . .

Mr. Sandhu: No, man.

Mr. Hehr: Easy, guys. Just hear me out here a second, okay? If we're going to have an organization like Ontario or B.C. Hydro come out here, are we bringing them out here for a 10-minute presentation and then a dog-and-pony show around the room? Or do we want to hear what their recommendations are and the whole thing there? Honestly, that 10 minutes went pretty quick. I learned quite a bit in that presentation. Maybe the hon. Dr. Brown is more of an expert in these matters than I am; nevertheless, you know, I found it useful. It's something to consider.

6:35

Mr. Webber: I would concur with the hon. member down here, Kent Hehr. If you're going to get somebody out here from Manitoba or from B.C., a 10-minute presentation is ridiculous, I think. We should give them the time of day.

The Chair: Yes.

Ms Kubinec: I agree as well. I think what we have to do is be more vigilant in our questions and not use up the time with preambles and make the questions very focused and tight but spend more on the education piece. I want to learn what they have to tell me.

Mr. Casey: I think that if we really want to tighten it up, if we submitted questions earlier on, the chair would have the latitude to put some of those questions together if they overlapped. If the presenters were given those questions up front, then they would be able to address a great number of our questions right during their presentation rather than them giving us a presentation and regiving their presentation as they're answering our questions. I think we can make it way more productive. It doesn't mean you won't maybe have five minutes for: oh yeah, this came up during the meeting. If we get better at getting our questions in and then . . .

The Chair: We're going to get better at this.

Mr. Casey: . . . give them to the presenter up front, then I think we will be using their time way better than us guessing at questions.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms Blakeman: Well, I can't say that I would agree to having questions submitted in advance in writing to be approved by the chair and the vice-chair. I just don't find that a useful exchange between people. I'd like to hear what they've got to say and be able to react to what they're saying. The whole process just becomes so controlled and rigid that we might as well all not be here. We'll just submit everything in writing and have the chair and the vice-chair figure it out. We could all use our time in another way. So that may work for some people, but I don't know that it would work for everyone, especially being able to follow up on what the presenters have actually said.

The Chair: Ms Blakeman, I totally agree with you, and I don't think the vice-chair and I want that role. But I do think that there is an efficiency in that if you have questions that you would like to have before the presenter before that person gets here, I think that's actually useful. If you wish. It's totally your decision whether you want to do that or not. I think spontaneity is actually

very, very important. You won't know all the questions you're going to ask because you don't know the information. I think it should be a naturally occurring event, not a controlled event. That's what we're trying to achieve here.

Mr. Bilous: I was going to say that I can appreciate where the intent of that is going.

The other challenge, too, I think, for smaller caucuses such as my own is that asking for things a week in advance or several days in advance can be a great challenge on its own just with the resources that we're working with and then staffpower. I do think your point is that as MLAs we should be paying attention to what the speakers are presenting and to each other's questions and not repeating them or going down the same line of thinking and really putting some thought into what we want to ask and what we want to derive in the short period of time that we have.

I was going to ask, you know, going back to the debate of two presenters versus one, Madam Chair: do you have the breakdown, if we did one presenter, taking into consideration the fact that we're losing the one week next week, of how many presenters in the time allotment we have that we can actually invite? Then we can look at our list and start to decide if one is going to be sufficient or not.

The Chair: That's the purpose of this evening's meeting. We are looking at, for these one-hour sessions while we're sitting, one presenter and maybe a second as a backup. I think that's something we need to talk about as we talk to logistics.

We're also proposing that we have bundled panels of presenters. Maybe the environmental groups all come together. Maybe some of the First Nation, Métis, Inuit groups all come together. The other one that we talked about previously was having Jim Prentice and Shawn Atleo come together in a longer session. So we're going to be proposing a schedule tonight that would look at some days in January, and hopefully many people will be able to participate. We'll put that on the table.

Mr. Bilous: Sorry. Just to follow up, do we have a number, if we were to count, of how many presenters or how many presentations or meetings we have between now and our deadline? I believe you spoke of a six-month deadline.

The Chair: Yes. That's right.

Mr. Bilous: Do you have the exact number? I guess that's what I'm fishing for.

The Chair: What I've got right here in front of us – does everybody have these handouts of the proposed November schedule and the proposed December and January schedules? Okay. Everybody doesn't have those. Why don't we make sure those are handed out? I'll get these other questions, and then we'll walk through those.

Is that okay, Mr. Bilous?

Mr. Bilous: Absolutely. I mean, I don't know if any of the other committee members have figured out the number. I just haven't had a chance to count.

The Chair: Ms Calahasen, you had a question?

Ms Calahasen: I see that we've got two in one day. I'm just wondering if we should make a decision on whether it's two or one. I am really concerned about the fact that we have people coming, and it took us an hour, and still we weren't done when the

last proponent came to talk to us. I would suggest that maybe we make a decision as to: is it one or is it two?

Then I think what we should do, also, is look at when we're going to do the panels. I think we should do it maybe on a Friday morning or something like that in order for us to be able to get it over and done with, you know. That's just to give them the time because we don't have that time. My gosh. The poor people are here, then rushed and gone.

The Chair: Thank you.

Any other comments on that before we turn it over to the clerk here to talk through the process?

Mr. Hehr: I might be mucking up the waters here, but I would find that if we're going to settle this tonight with all of us here, that would be an exercise in futility. I'm prepared for us to say that maybe the working group for caucuses designs a schedule of this, then comes back. Let's do it that way. You know, I'm not sure. I'd be comfortable with the people I've worked with so far in here. We're going to have to be realistic in that probably only two environmental groups are going to be able to come. Okay? Really, I'd suggest that four of us go back, hammer this out, and present it to the group, and let's go.

The Chair: Well, because we've got tonight available – it's kind of a bonus night – I think we can get through this discussion. If we decide that it's too rigid or it's too much, then we can revert to that as plan B.

Let's try to move on to the clerk.

Mr. Anglin: I couldn't hear anything that Kent was saying because he was so far from his mike.

Mr. Hehr: Sorry about that. No big deal. We're going to work it out here, and we may revert to my plan afterwards, but you'll hear it again at that point in time.

The Chair: Are you okay with that?

Mr. Anglin: I couldn't hear him the second time either. That's okay.

Mr. Hehr: Sorry.

The Chair: I'm going to turn it over to our clerk to explain the logistics, after we decide on a set of recommendations, of how the LAO goes about making those invitations and also to answer the question about the funding.

So I'll turn it over to you.

Mr. Tyrell: Can everyone hear me? Beautiful.

Ms Blakeman: Outside voice.

Mr. Tyrell: Outside voice. I'm getting a little sick, but I'll try and get closer to the microphone here.

Following the motion, typically what we do is start with a phone call to whoever the stakeholder might be and just kind of give them a little bit of information on what the committee's mandate is, what the motion might have been, what's to be expected. It's not a very long conversation because no one wants all this information over the phone. We usually say that we'll follow up with them in an e-mail.

After the initial phone conversation just to kind of touch base, we draft an e-mail on Legislative Assembly letterhead, scan it so that the letterhead is in the e-mail, send it out to them. In this case

it has the motion as it was written, the mandate of the committee, you know, the date, the time, how long the presentation will be, how long they will have for questions, logistical stuff involving security and getting in and address. It's just everything they need to know about the meeting so that they have a hard copy with them.

Typically the response to that letter is the official response to them. So they can tell me over the phone that they will be presenting, but until I get a written response saying, "We will be there on this day at this time," it's all kind of hearsay.

6:45

Yeah. That's kind of, very basically, what we do. It does sometimes take a little bit of digging, if you don't have a contact initially, to find who the proper person is to go to to ask for a presentation. I mean, you know, trying to navigate a corporate directory isn't always the most easy of endeavours. In this case, we actually had a lot of the contacts provided to us in the stakeholders list, so we kind of know who we should say we're trying to contact, who to direct our calls to.

I don't know what else we could add here.

The Chair: The other question, Mr. Tyrell, that I think would be helpful is to understand the costing and what the logistics look like.

Ms Dean: Maybe I could make some comments.

The Chair: Yeah. Actually, Ms Dean, if you would, that would be wonderful.

Ms Dean: Thank you, Madam Chair. Typically the way we go about this is that we extend an invitation to the persons that the committee would like to meet with, and if they're coming from outside of town, we also extend the opportunity for them to video conference their appearance. If it's a situation where it looks like the person attending is looking for reimbursement for travel costs, then that issue must come back before the committee and must be approved by the committee. There is money available in the committee's budget for that type of thing. It's not utilized that often, but it is there if needed.

The Chair: Does that have to come back to the committee?

Ms Dean: Unless, for example, the committee could authorize the chair to approve that, the chair in consultation with the working group.

The Chair: That might be wise, actually.

Ms Calahasen: Yeah. I think that's a good idea, Madam Chair. I think that's so arduous to have to come back, and then we find out the following week that maybe they can't come. You know, that's really crazy. I would suggest that we maybe give the authority for the chair with the working group to make that decision.

The Chair: All right. Is that motion clear to everyone? Maybe can we describe that Ms Calahasen? Do you want to take a go at describing that?

Ms Calahasen: Sure. I'll take a go at it. I'll make the motion that the chair and the working committee make the decision as to whether or not there will be any money for any expenses that have to be incurred by presenters.

So you can make that decision.

The Chair: Okay. All in favour? Anybody not approve? Carried. Thank you. That's very flexible.

Does anybody have any questions for the LAO on the process here? Yes, Mr. Cao.

Mr. Cao: I learned that we have to finish this at a predetermined date, right?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Cao: Is there any option to change that? The reason is not about extending or procrastination, but it's more like we have so much to listen to, and then because of, you know, a line which is in fact put in there, we miss out on a lot. That's sort of another thought that should be considered, if we have to extend it for the sake of having more complete information.

The Chair: Mr. Cao, it's a good question. We talked about it at the very beginning of the establishment of these committees. Just to remind everybody, I believe the date we started was September 27, so we have six months from that date, which is creeping closer now. Again, Ms Dean, I would ask you to comment on that, whether we could go back and ask for an extension or rescope the question. Personally, as chair I'm a little bit loath to do that because I think we will receive requests to do other work, and I think we have to develop a crispness and an approach that gets us to the right question and gets us to some delineation where we can make a – you know, it's a decision tree, and we can move to another point.

Ms Dean, do you have any other comments on that?

Ms Dean: Sure, Madam Chair. In connection with that six-month timeline, the committee would be responsible for reporting within that six-month timeline, but the option would be available for the report to be: this is what we can report on now, but we need more time to consider X, Y, and Z, and requesting permission, just as you pointed out.

The Chair: I hope that doesn't slow us down. I think we will get other requests for this committee to do work, so we'll have to make those evaluations as we go.

Mrs. Leskiw: Madam Chair.

The Chair: Yes, Mrs. Leskiw.

Mrs. Leskiw: Are we going to be discussing the dates? Is the reason why we chose January 21, 22, 23 in relation to anything else going on at the Leg.? Usually in January it used to be quite sacred; a lot of people would . . .

The Chair: So I heard.

I'm sorry, folks. I'll back up a little bit. In front of you are two documents, one is the November date and one is the dates for December and January. I'll be the bad person here. It's fine.

Mrs. Leskiw: I just want to know if there's anything else going on. Are there any other committees going on? Is it just this one? Have you double-checked it? Because we're on another committee, what if they plan to have it at the same time as you are?

The Chair: As far as we know, there are no other inconsistencies with other committees.

Mrs. Leskiw: So you're the only one who put that meeting in January? Is that what you're saying?

The Chair: Oh, ouch. Let me finish here.

Mr. Anderson is here as well. Hello.

There are other committee meetings that are being held in January. I don't know if there are other standing committee meetings being held in January; that is yet to be determined. When we have a presentation to our committee, as I understand it, we don't even need a quorum to have that presentation. It would be preferable, but it's not essential. We have got a lot of people to get in front of us. I know January is supposed to be sacred, and I feel a bit bad about this.

Dr. Brown: You should.

The Chair: Okay. I do, yet I still feel a responsibility to get this progressed.

I saw a flurry of hands.

Dr. Brown: Well, I'd speak in favour of Mrs. Leskiw's comment. According to the standing orders we would go back in on the second Tuesday of February, which would be February 12, so that leaves us some time early in February to have some full days to accomplish some things. I would much rather see those dates in January moved into February.

The Chair: I'm hearing you.

The accommodation we also have to make is for the report writing itself, and maybe I can ask Dr. Massolin to again comment on the time frame and process for that.

Dr. Massolin: Well, there's a little bit of time required in order to prepare the report. We would write it in consultation, of course, with the committee – it's the committee's report – and then a draft report would have to come back before the committee for approval. So you're looking at a couple of weeks at least.

The Chair: Okay.

Ms Blakeman: Well, my experience has been that if the committee decides to make recommendations or propose a certain course of action, that's at least a couple of meetings to argue that out and propose the motions and have it all discussed, and then it would go into the report. That can sometimes be interlaced with the timing for the staff to prepare the report and come back with a draft and a final. Yeah, I would say that you're looking at three or four meetings to conclude unless all we're going to do is give a report saying that this is who we saw. If we're not going to say anything else, well, it's faster. But if we're going to say that this is where we think we should go, that takes more time.

The Chair: Mrs. Leskiw, you had a comment.

Mrs. Leskiw: What about the rules like when we miss a meeting, we need to find a replacement? Is it going to be the same rules for these three meetings in January?

The Chair: I think we would always ask for that, but understanding that we're in sacred space, we might have to accommodate differences.

Mrs. Leskiw: Yeah. Those are questions that I think are important for all of us to know because finding a replacement during . . .

Ms Calahasen: We can phone in, I think.

The Chair: You can phone in. That is correct, yes.

Mrs. Leskiw: Yeah, I know, but if you're away somebody has to . . .

The Chair: Yes, Mr. Bilous.

Mr. Bilous: Well, I'm just curious as to how the rest of the committee feels as far as – I don't know if the question was answered whether those three dates in January are fixed or if they are flexible, if we can move them. I mean, I'm open and flexible to adjusting. I think, you know, the important thing is that we get as many meetings in as we can. There is no proposal for any meetings in December. The session breaks on December 6 although, from the looks of folks, they're going to want to get back to their constituencies.

The Chair: Actually, there are: December 3 and December 10.

Mr. Bilous: That's right. Okay. I just saw those.

Anyway, I'm not sure how committee members feel about Dr. Brown's suggestion of moving it into February.

6:55

The Chair: Okay. Mr. Anderson.

Mr. Anderson: Yes, Madam Chair. I remember when I proposed a very aggressive schedule for my Public Accounts Committee folks and I saw the pitchforks come out. It was very clear that they wanted to make sure that we only met on these committees when it was convenient for everybody to be here and not have extra expense, the mileage claims, et cetera, that come when we're not in session. I mean, it is unusual. I don't really see the purpose of having one on the 21st, 22nd, and 23rd, and all of them, you know, five half-day meetings, essentially. If we could even move them all together perhaps in a single day, or move it to February, or both, I think you might get better participation on the committee. Really, it's pretty unorthodox for us to meet too much outside of session just because of the cost involved. I'd like to see these things in person, not necessarily over the phone. So just something to think about. That's a pretty hefty schedule.

The Chair: I have visions of pitchforks. So, yes, you've got my attention.

Ms Kubinec: Just again in that same vein, either we go to the first week in February and maybe do it or the last week in January, the 28th, 29th, 30th. As far as putting them all in one day, these are really more than half days. From 10 until 3 is a fairly full day if you're doing any travelling.

The Chair: Okay. I'm hearing you. Subject to the LAO comments and our ability to accommodate this, their saying yes, then let's move this into the first of February. You've kind of moved the pitchforks back a little. That's good. We're trying to bundle them so that we actually do limit the amount of travel. Let's at least target a couple of days because we've got a lot of people to go through. It will be hard, though, folks. That's a lot of stuff to go through in two days. Do you want us to attempt that?

Mr. Webber: Just one more thing I would like to propose. We've got the chairman of Public Accounts here along with you, Madam Chair. Perhaps you can consult each other and determine – I know a number of us sit on both committees – if we can have them on the same day or the next day or whatever. If there could be some communication between the two of you there, that would be a suggestion anyway.

The Chair: As long as you guys have lots of energy, that sounds great.

Anybody else? Yes, Ms Blakeman.

Ms Blakeman: Sorry. It just occurred to me in looking at the list. Could we agree that each group would get an hour? That way, there would be an equitable distribution of time, and it would help us to do our scheduling with a bit more clarity.

The Chair: Ms Blakeman, it would be nice in theory. I think when we start to walk through the experience of organizing this and inviting people and seeing who actually can come and wiggling and moving around in our limited space, it gets really hard. There are times that we're going to have to cluster people. For example, the First Nation, Métis, Inuit communities that we invite: we won't know with precision possibly who is going to attend. So to say that they all get one hour would be kind of difficult because if 20 show up, that would be fantastic, but we can't give them all one hour. I think we can try to be fair, but we also need an incredible amount of adaptability here.

Ms Blakeman: True. But I think we also have to approach this with a commitment to equality. You know, I wouldn't like to see the environmental groups put through in an hour and us spend five hours with the C.D. Howe Institute.

The Chair: Nor would we.

Ms Blakeman: That would not strike me as an equitable research base. That's part of what I'm trying to say with an hour each.

The Chair: Why we bundled certain panels – the environmental groups and the First Nation, Métis, Inuit groups were two that were identified for that reason – why we'd have a six-hour session in one day is to have from 10 o'clock until noon or 1 o'clock the environmental groups present. Maybe we only get three here on that day. It's very ambitious for us to think that we're going to say: here are five environmental groups we would like to invite, and we're going to get them all here on time in our window. That's a very, very impossible dream. So I think we need the flexibility. I hear what you're saying, and I respect what you're saying. We need to respect the people who are coming. We will do everything we can to do that, but I think that to be that prescriptive is just inviting – we can't manage those expectations.

Ms Blakeman: Well, I'm glad the chair hears me and respects me, but I'd rather hear that there was some firmer commitment behind that. I really am concerned that there be a commitment. With the flexibility I hear what you're saying – I'm not trying to make your life difficult – but I do want to go away from here believing that there is a commitment to balancing the approaches of the groups that are coming before us.

The Chair: Well, I think, then, we would have to look at the environmental list and say: is it possible to have five names on that list, or should we only have two? That would be a choice that we would have to make as a group. Do we want to have five groups present in the morning and listen to one another? How do we want to do that? That still has to be ironed out. I am hearing what you're saying, and I do care about what you're saying. I just think it's not prescriptive. Right now we're locked into a one-hour session, and actually I'm watching the clock right now. We've got to get to the dates. Okay? Thank you. I am listening, though.

Let's walk through these two schedules, and maybe we will have our secretary here go through the November schedule, where we're at, and then we'll walk through December and February.

Mr. Tyrell: Okay. So you all have the November schedule in front of you. The two stakeholder groups scheduled for November 19 are ATCO and TransCanada Corporation currently. For ATCO I've sent an e-mail out to contact Judy Mickelson, who has forwarded them on to the president and the COO. Both have received them. I'm still waiting to hear back from them. That was as of today. I will be following up if I don't hear anything by tomorrow.

In terms of TransCanada Corporation I e-mailed Doug Page, who is in government relations. He responded today, actually, a couple of hours ago, asking whether they could combine their presentation with ATCO. So they would both present as one group. I assume they would have a 10-minute presentation which covers both of them, which would leave you more time for questions if the committee is okay with that.

The Chair: Is everyone okay with that, with the companies themselves and their co-proponents actually saying, "We'll combine our presentation"? Ten minutes might be a bit tight but maybe 15 minutes. Is that okay? Good.

Ms Calahasen: If they're willing to do that, I think that's a good idea. I think we should consider what information is being provided as we go forward, and I trust you two co-chairs and the working group to be able to bring that information forward to us.

The Chair: Okay. All right. We are trying to get the presenters, the proponents, here in November. It's not a perfect thing. We know that. If there are changes like there were tonight, we'll keep this flowing and invite other people.

Then your second page talks about December, January, February . . .

Mr. Tyrell: Sorry. There was also November. There was one more.

The Chair: Sorry. Go ahead.

Mr. Tyrell: Yeah. November 26, TransAlta Corporation. I spoke to Don Wharton in external communications today. He did say that they are very interested in participating, and I sent him kind of the official committee e-mail this afternoon. I should be hearing back from him within the next day or two.

The Chair: Okay. All right.
Yes, Mr. Cao.

Mr. Cao: A quick point. I look at these proponents. As far as my previous experience in corporations with proponents, usually the corporation already investigates almost everything before they come with a project to propose for investor or for government approval. They have a wealth of knowledge, consultation, whatever, right? I feel that if we give them only 10 minutes to present – I think that for these people we should have more time so we can ask them: "Have you consulted on this? How have you done this? What did you do with that? Tell us about this." It's different than the other ones.

The Chair: More questions and less presentation?

Mr. Cao: Yeah. More time for them to tell us.

7:05

The Chair: They've also provided a lot of written information. We have a lot already on the website that's shared, and that requires us doing a little bit of due diligence. We can be adaptive, folks. I think we're getting a little bit rigid. I think both the vice-chair and I will be adaptive, and you yell at us if you think that we're trying to cram questions in too early. We'll have to navigate this space.

Mr. Cao: The proponents say that these kinds of projects are usually in the hundreds of millions, so they're not going to just say: hey, let's do it. They already have a lot, so we can mind that.

The Chair: You can ask those questions, too.

Mr. Cao: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: All right. Let's go on to December and February.

Mr. Tyrell: Okay. For December under the hydro developers section of the stakeholder list we have – well, I spoke to B.C. Hydro. The reason they weren't able to come in today is because they're currently preparing an environmental report for one of their projects. They may be able to come in on December 3 because, ideally, all their people will have finished the work that they were doing, and someone will be available to come in and present. That is a possibility. I do need to follow up with them again tomorrow if I don't hear anything back from them, but that is definitely a possibility.

Dick Frey, who was formerly with ATCO, I spoke to this morning, and he would be willing to come. He retired in 2004, and he's not sure as to how relevant his expertise would be. I told him it might be more a question of the committee asking him questions because he was there for the beginning of a lot of projects that are either currently under way or currently operating. He's waiting to hear what comes out of tonight's meeting, and he would probably be someone that we could get for December 3.

The Chair: What about him as a backup in case B.C. Hydro can't come?

Mr. Tyrell: That would probably be a better way to go just because he's hesitant, but he still would be willing to do it.

The Chair: Okay. All right.

Mr. Tyrell: So the week of December 10 we would potentially have Jim Prentice and Shawn Atleo. This is something the chair had said she would follow up on directly with these two participants.

The Chair: I will need your authority, folks, to do that. If there's anybody else in the room who knows Jim Prentice or Shawn Atleo personally, I would ask for their support in this. I think it's the kind of ask where we do have to be very aware of their roles, and trying to get them here on the same date might be a challenge. If we target the week of December 10, give them at least an hour, one of them an hour, maybe a lunch or break, and then the other one an hour – I expect there will be a lot of media here, and some of your colleagues may want to be here. It's a big, big topic.

Ms Calahasen: So that would be the whole day, right? Is it the 10th or the 11th or just the week of the 10th and any day within that time?

The Chair: We're targeting that week. These are very difficult people to nail down to a schedule, so it's an aspiration.

Ms Calahasen: I like the 11th. I'll put my druthers in.

The Chair: Okay. Could I have a motion that this standing committee authorize the chair to arrange contact with the Hon. Jim Prentice and with Shawn Atleo to schedule their presentations before the committee during the week of December 10 or another suitable time for the committee and the invitees subject to the prerogative of the chair.

Mr. Anglin: I'll make the motion.

The Chair: Thanks, Mr. Anglin. All in favour? Any opposed?

Ms Calahasen: Not the 10th.

The Chair: Not the 10th. Okay. The week of the 10th but not the 10th.

Ms Calahasen: Right.

The Chair: Okay. All right.
Yes.

Mr. Stier: Sorry to interrupt you. I was going to try to get your attention. I have some medical issues going on that week, prescheduled, so I probably won't be able to attend if that happens then.

Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you for letting me know.

Mr. Bilous: I just want to ask a question regarding the December 3 date. Did we look into whether Manitoba Hydro was available on that date, considering we're already doing hydro?

The Chair: Actually, I'll tell you a story of Manitoba Hydro, which is actually part of the reason we're having this meeting. I worked with Manitoba Hydro in Africa a long time ago. They're stellar at hydro electricity; they're some of the best people in the world. I contacted their people to find out who could come here. When they found out that the offer was to come here and present for 10 or 15 minutes and then have, you know, 40 minutes of questioning, they said, "That doesn't seem meaningful enough to us," and I respect that.

We've left it that we can ask them written questions, and they will answer. We could do it by some other communications means. But I think that actually is indicative of the challenge we've got in front of us. If you really would like to hear from Manitoba Hydro – and perhaps after we hear from B.C. Hydro that would make sense – I think that's very possible to arrange.

Mr. Hehr: Madam Chair, maybe B.C. Hydro and Manitoba Hydro, because they've had storied careers at this, would be similar. To be honest, I think they'd have as much to tell us if not more than the Hon. Mr. Prentice and Shawn Atleo.

The Chair: Good thought.

Mr. Hehr: You know, those two groups appear to be the two

major experts. I'm not trying to get anyone offended here, but if we are going to hear from experts, those people should be the experts we hear from. Given what they've said to you, I would agree to be here for an hour. I'm sure Dr. Brown would, and we can go on from there.

Mr. Anglin: I don't disagree that Manitoba Hydro or B.C. Hydro will be any less important than what has just been described, but I will say that the Hon. Mr. Prentice will offer this committee a fairly good insight, particularly with the work that he's done, in and around this area. I think that there's quite a bit there.

The Chair: Well, can I ask the committee – and I'm really cognizant of time. We have about three minutes. I'm sorry; I apologize for kind of barreling ahead here. What I'm going to suggest is that we consider the idea of having a longer period of time to hear from B.C. Hydro and Manitoba Hydro if it's feasible. We will have to identify a date after session when that's possible. We've already got the week of December 10. Maybe we do two dates in that week of December 10 and try to do two of these.

I do need a motion to move forward, so I need someone to move

that the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship approve the targeted dates for meetings of Monday, December 3, 2012, the week of December 10, 2012, and early February and authorize the committee clerk to organize these meetings and that should there be a need to reschedule, the committee clerk work in conjunction with the chair to find new dates and times more suitable to the presenters and the committee.

Thank you, Mr. Bilous. All in favour? Anybody opposed?

Mr. Casey: I'm not necessarily opposed, but in the week of December 10 there are other committee meetings going on.

The Chair: Yes, I understand that.

Mr. Casey: You know, I've got stuff on the 12th, I've got stuff on the 13th, and the 11th I'm not sure I can get out of either. I mean, the truth is that it might have been a free week in other people's calendars, but it's certainly not a free week in my calendar, which means it's likely not a free week in other people's calendars either.

The Chair: The challenge going forward is that if we move it into the next week, then I get pitchforks again, I think. But I am aware of what you're saying. I think we just have to have these meetings and hope that as many people as possible can come, being aware of other commitments. Okay? Are you comfortable with that?

Mr. Casey: Sure.

The Chair: Okay. That is it. There were a few other things, but we don't have time.

The next meeting is November 19. Everyone have a wonderful constituency week. Thank you.

I'll call for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Sandhu?

Mr. Sandhu: Yes.

The Chair: All right. Thanks.

[The committee adjourned at 7:14 p.m.]

