



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Third Session

Standing Committee
on
Resource Stewardship

Conflicts of Interest Act Review

Thursday, January 25, 2018
10 a.m.

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**Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 29th Legislature
Third Session**

Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship

Loyola, Rod, Edmonton-Ellerslie (NDP), Chair
Drysdale, Wayne, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (UCP), Deputy Chair

Babcock, Erin D., Stony Plain (NDP)
Dang, Thomas, Edmonton-South West (NDP)
Fraser, Rick, Calgary-South East (AP)
Hanson, David B., Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills (UCP)
Kazim, Anam, Calgary-Glenmore (NDP)
Kleinsteuber, Jamie, Calgary-Northern Hills (NDP)
Loewen, Todd, Grande Prairie-Smoky (UCP)
MacIntyre, Donald, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (UCP)
Malkinson, Brian, Calgary-Currie (NDP)
McPherson, Karen M., Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill (AP)
Nielsen, Christian E., Edmonton-Decore (NDP)
Rosendahl, Eric, West Yellowhead (NDP)
Woollard, Denise, Edmonton-Mill Creek (NDP)

Office of the Ethics Commissioner

Marguerite Trussler, QC	Ethics Commissioner
Lara Draper	Lobbyist Registrar and General Counsel
Kent Ziegler	Chief Administrative Officer

Support Staff

Robert H. Reynolds, QC	Clerk
Shannon Dean	Law Clerk and Director of House Services
Trafton Koenig	Parliamentary Counsel
Stephanie LeBlanc	Parliamentary Counsel
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Nancy Robert	Research Officer
Corinne Dacyshyn	Committee Clerk
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Rhonda Sorensen	Manager of Corporate Communications
Jeanette Dotimas	Communications Consultant
Tracey Sales	Communications Consultant
Janet Schwegel	Managing Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>

Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship

Participant

Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General
Corinne Carlson, Barrister and Solicitor, Legislative Reform

10 a.m. Thursday, January 25, 2018

[Loyola in the chair]

The Chair: I'd like to call the meeting to order. Welcome to members, staff, and guests in attendance for this meeting of the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship.

My name is Rod Loyola, and I am the MLA for Edmonton-Ellerslie and the chair of this committee. I would ask that members and those joining the committee at the table introduce themselves for the record, and then I'll call on members that are teleconferencing to introduce themselves. We'll start over here on my right.

Mr. Hanson: David Hanson, MLA, Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

Ms McPherson: Karen McPherson, MLA, Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill.

Ms Draper: Lara Draper, legal counsel and lobbyist registrar to the office of the Ethics Commissioner.

Ms Carlson: Corinne Carlson with Justice and Solicitor General.

Ms Trussler: Marguerite Trussler, Ethics Commissioner.

Mr. Ziegler: Kent Ziegler, chief administrative officer, office of the Ethics Commissioner of Alberta.

Ms Babcock: Erin Babcock, Stony Plain.

Mr. Dang: Good morning, and welcome back. Thomas Dang, MLA for Edmonton-South West.

Ms Kazim: Good morning. Anam Kazim, MLA for Calgary-Glenmore.

Mr. Nielsen: Good morning, everyone. Chris Nielsen, MLA for Edmonton-Decore.

Ms Woollard: Good morning. Denise Woollard, MLA for Edmonton-Mill Creek.

Mr. Rosendahl: Good morning. Eric Rosendahl, West Yellowhead.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Good morning. Jamie Kleinsteuber, Calgary-Northern Hills.

Ms Sorensen: Good morning. Rhonda Sorensen, manager of corporate communications with the LAO.

Ms Robert: Good morning. Nancy Robert, research officer.

Ms Dean: Shannon Dean, Law Clerk and director of House services.

Mr. Roth: Good morning. Aaron Roth, committee clerk.

The Chair: We'll now go to the phones.

Mr. Malkinson: Brian Malkinson, MLA for Calgary-Currie.

Mr. Drysdale: Wayne Drysdale, MLA for Grande Prairie-Wapiti.

Mr. Loewen: Todd Loewen, MLA, Grande Prairie-Smoky.

The Chair: Okay. A few housekeeping items to address before we turn to the business at hand. The microphone consoles are operated by the *Hansard* staff, so there's no need for members to touch them. Please ensure all cellphones, iPhones, and BlackBerrys are in silent

mode. Audio and video of committee proceedings are streamed live on the Internet and recorded by *Hansard*. Streaming access and meeting transcripts are obtained via the Legislative Assembly website.

We'll now proceed with the approval of the agenda. Would a member move a motion to approve? Mr. Rosendahl. Thank you very much. All in favour of the motion? Anybody opposed? I'm going to check on the phones. All in favour? Anybody opposed? Okay. That motion is carried.

We have the minutes from our last meeting. Are there any errors, omissions to note? If not, would a member move adoption of the minutes, please? Mr. Nielsen. Thank you very much.

I'm just going to remind people that when there are people on conference call and I ask for all those in favour, I expect the people on the conference call to pipe up at that time and then also if any are opposed. That's the way that I traditionally like to do it rather than going through the whole process that I did previously.

In terms of approving the meeting minutes, all those in favour of the motion? Any opposed? Okay. That motion is carried.

Hon. members, today we are continuing our review of the Conflicts of Interest Act. At our November 29, 2017, meeting the committee issued an invitation to the Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General and the office of the Ethics Commissioner to provide technical briefings as part of our review of the act. Today we welcome Ms Corinne Carlson from the Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General and the hon. Marguerite Trussler, Ethics Commissioner. Each will have 15 minutes to provide their briefing.

I would like to invite Ms Carlson to provide her briefing to the committee. Please go ahead.

Ms Carlson: Good morning. Thank you for inviting us to this technical briefing for the Conflicts of Interest Act review. I plan to cover most of the substantive requirements in the legislation, and the Ethics Commissioner will discuss her responsibilities and how the legislation works in practice.

The Conflicts of Interest Act governs the ethical standards of Members of the Legislative Assembly. It also covers staff working in the Premier's and ministers' offices other than administrative support staff. Elected officials and staff working in political offices must avoid improper conduct or conduct that has the appearance of impropriety. The rules in the act are in place to help those officials avoid situations where they may have conflicting motivations. The principle is that elected officials and staff should be impartial and not make decisions or influence others on subjects where they have a personal financial interest.

In the fall of 2017 the Legislative Assembly amended the act so that it applies to senior officials of about 136 public agencies and Alberta Health Services and subsidiaries. The act covers three main groups of people, and as I go through each requirement, I'll point out which groups the requirements apply to. The three groups are MLAs and ministers, the Premier's and ministers' staff, and the select staff at public agencies. Those are the new requirements.

I'll first discuss some requirements that apply to ministers, MLAs, and in some cases the Premier's and ministers' staff. In the act MLAs are referred to as members, and that's specifically defined to include ministers. Members and staff in the Premier's and ministers' offices cannot take part in a decision if it would further the private interest of the member, the member's spouse or adult child, or a person directly associated with the member. When I say "a person directly associated," I mean the member's spouse or adult interdependent partner; a for-profit corporation where the member is a director or a senior officer; a private corporation of which the member owns shares; a partnership of which the member is a partner or a partnership where a private corporation that the

member owns is a partner; or lastly, a person or group of persons acting with the express or implied consent of the member.

In addition, members and the Premier's and ministers' staff cannot use their office or powers to influence or seek to influence a decision of the Crown in order to further their own private interests or that of a direct associate, a minor child, or another person. Also, they cannot use or communicate insider information to further their own private interests or that of another person.

Members have certain employment and contract restrictions. They cannot work in the public sector or for any of the entities set out in the schedule of the act such as the Alberta Securities Commission or postsecondary institutions. Members, spouses, and direct associates can't be a party to various specified contracts with the Crown or receive money from the Crown other than the salary they're paid as an MLA, with certain exceptions set out. Restricted contracts include contracts that involve borrowing money from a treasury branch, selling land to the Crown, or constructing public works.

The legislation also includes a general rule against receiving gifts, with some limited exceptions. I understand that the Ethics Commissioner will provide more details about this rule.

Another rule is that members can't travel on noncommercial, chartered, or private aircraft. An exception may be made if the travel is required for the performance of the MLA's office, if there are exceptional circumstances warranting the exception of the travel, or if the MLA receives approval from the Ethics Commissioner before accepting the travel. If an MLA does travel on noncommercial aircraft, they must report it.

The restrictions that I've mentioned relating to gifts, travel, and employment do not apply to the Premier's and ministers' staff. They apply to members. But the Premier's and ministers' staff have their own code of conduct, that's authorized under the act.

Moving on, part 3 of the act requires members to file financial disclosure statements with the Ethics Commissioner as well as information about direct associates. I believe the Ethics Commissioner is going to provide more details about the financial disclosure requirements.

After the disclosure requirements, the next part of the act refers to restrictions on holdings. These restrictions apply to ministers, the Leader of the Official Opposition, and the Premier's chief of staff. The rule is that they can't hold publicly traded securities except in a blind trust or in another authorized arrangement approved by the Ethics Commissioner. In general ministers can't engage in employment or practise a profession, carry on a business, or hold an office of directorship that creates or appears to create a conflict. The minister can consult with the Ethics Commissioner, who can determine whether there may be a conflict and sign off on any activity where appropriate. Members may be reimbursed for the costs of financial disclosure or setting up a blind trust.

The next substantive topic is cooling-off periods. Ministers, the Premier, and their staff are subject to postemployment restrictions for 12 months. There are five postemployment restrictions, and in the interest of time I'll go over the restrictions for ministers only while noting that there are similar restrictions for the Premier's and ministers' staff.

10:10

A former minister cannot lobby or get involved on a commercial basis in an ongoing matter with which they were involved while a minister. Those restrictions apply for 12 months after the person stops being a minister. The next two restrictions apply for 12 months from the minister's last direct and significant official dealing with a department or provincial agency. The former minister must wait 12 months before making representations with respect to a

contract with that department or agency or soliciting or accepting a contract with that department or agency. Finally, a minister who has had direct and significant official dealings with an individual, organization, or board must wait 12 months from the last day of those dealings before accepting employment with that individual, organization, or board.

The Ethics Commissioner can waive or reduce postemployment restrictions, if appropriate, in accordance with the factors set out in the act. The Premier's and ministers' staff have an additional exception from the cooling-off period which allows them to take employment with government or a provincial agency during the cooling-off period.

Before I turn to the recent amendments to the act, just a quick summary of what I've covered so far. There are the three conflict rules – that members can't make decisions, can't use influence, can't use insider information to further private interests – and there are the rules on concurrent employment and contracts, gifts and noncommercial travel, required financial disclosure, restrictions on holdings in a blind trust, and postemployment restrictions.

Finally, I'd like to discuss some of the most recent amendments to the act. Bill 27, which was passed in the fall 2017 sitting, amended the Conflicts of Interest Act to extend conflict-of-interest requirements to public agencies. A new part was added to the act, part 4.3, which applies to public agencies and subsidiaries of public agencies covered under the Alberta Public Agencies Governance Act, or APAGA, as well as any other body identified by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. The amendments focus on three major themes: the requirement to have a code of conduct, requirements for senior officials, and requirements for designated senior officials, a subset.

For the code of conduct, within four months of the act coming into force, which, for the most part, was last December 15, agencies must submit to the Ethics Commissioner a code of conduct for their members and employees. The code of conduct must include provisions regarding impartiality; using the influence of the position to further private interests; disclosure of real or apparent conflicts of interest; restrictions on accepting gifts, including establishing maximum cash values in the circumstances; restrictions on conflicting concurrent employment; and receiving and investigating complaints under the code of conduct.

After reviewing the code of conduct produced by each agency, the Ethics Commissioner determines whether it meets the requirements of the act, and if it does, the agency must publish and implement the code of conduct. Since the act was passed only recently, agencies are in the process of developing these codes, so they're not yet in place. The Ethics Commissioner must complete her initial review of the codes of conduct by March 31, 2019, and the codes must be published by April 30, 2019. That's the first part.

In addition to requiring the code of conduct for public agencies, Bill 27 sets out specific requirements for senior officials. Senior officials are the chair of a public agency, the CEO of a public agency, and any other person designated by the Lieutenant Governor in Council as a senior official. Senior officials have three similar core duties to members. They can't make decisions, use influence, or use insider information to further a private interest. This group also has a fourth core requirement: it is a breach to fail to disclose a real or apparent conflict of interest. Some senior officials are prohibited from having any concurrent employment other than a senior official position within the agency. There are transitional provisions allowing for transition of existing contracts of employment with those senior officials.

Some senior official positions will have additional obligations under the act. These positions are known as designated senior officials, or DSOs for short. In future an order in council will

identify which positions in which public agencies are to be treated as DSOs and therefore subject to more requirements. DSOs have similar requirements to ministers; for example, restrictions on holdings, they must file financial disclosure statements and direct associate returns, and similar postemployment restrictions. Designated senior officials are entitled to be reimbursed for the cost of their disclosure statements and establishing any blind trusts that are needed, and these costs are subject to approval by the Ethics Commissioner and are to be paid by the public agency.

The Lieutenant Governor in Council may also exempt a public agency or a position or a class of positions from some or all requirements of the act.

At this point I have covered the major substantive provisions of the legislation, and after the Ethics Commissioner's presentation I'll be happy to take any questions. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Carlson.

I'd now like to invite the hon. Ms Trussler from the office of the Ethics Commissioner to provide her briefing to the committee. Please go ahead.

Ms Trussler: Thank you for inviting me today. I'll try not to cover the same material that Ms Carlson did, but in some areas I will allude to a particular section if there's something more that you perhaps should know about the section.

The first thing that I just wanted to touch on very quickly is some of the historical information with respect to the act. It was enacted in 1991, proclaimed in 1993, and it's been reviewed three times, so this is the fourth review. It expanded from just being applicable to MLAs to also include the political staff, which was in 2014, and then, as you heard more recently, the heads of agencies, which was in 2017. Designated office holders, who are mainly deputy ministers, are subject to almost all the same provisions under the Public Service Act – that happened in 2014 – but prior to that they had to just make financial disclosure subject to a ministerial direction.

I just want to look again at the three obligations. I wanted to just deal for a moment with the concept of private interest because we get a few requests each session, when bills are before the Assembly, about whether a private interest is involved. Unfortunately, in the act, private interest is defined in the negative. It does not include an interest in a matter that is of general application, that affects an individual as one of a broad class, that concerns the remuneration and benefits of an individual, an interest that's trivial, or an interest related to publicly traded securities held in a blind trust. That is the one part of the section that sometimes causes some difficulties.

The next area I just wanted to touch on is the Crown employment because of the provision that you cannot be employed by either the Crown in right of Canada or Alberta. Occasionally questions have arisen about whether a person employed by the government of Canada or the government of Alberta can take a leave of absence if elected. The case law from the Supreme Court of Canada clearly states that the answer is no, they can't take a leave of absence, because one is still employed when one's on a leave of absence. That's just sort of an interesting twist on that particular section.

The next section that I want to deal with is that of gifts, and I'll go into it in a little bit more detail. Most of our questions come from the acceptance of gifts. The act specifically prohibits the acceptance of gifts given because one is a member. Then from that prohibition there are exceptions, and those exceptions are gifts from a political party, gifts from a constituency association, gifts from a charitable organization, and gifts from a Canadian government, either the federal, provincial, territorial, or municipal government.

Subsection 3 also allows gifts that are an incident of protocol or social obligation that accompanies the member's office, subject to monetary limits. Now these monetary limits are as follows: for a tangible gift they're \$200; for tickets and invitations to events it's \$400; and for conference fees, travel, and accommodation at a conference they're \$400. There is some discretion to allow the acceptance of gifts above this amount.

10:20

Political staff provisions with respect to gifts are in their code of conduct, and the limit is \$200. With respect to designated office holders the limit is in the public service code of conduct. And with the new designated senior officials it will be in the code of conduct of their particular agency.

I'd like to now move on to disclosure. There are three sections. It's probably the most familiar to you. Reviewing disclosure statements and meeting are the bulk of our work. At the moment there are 250 members, political staff, and designated office holders who provide disclosure. There is a possibility of 40 to 50 additional people being added as a result of the recent amendments to the legislation. As you're aware, there's a form which provides consistency of information and, hopefully, makes sure that there's nothing that's not disclosed.

Member disclosures and meetings occur from January to the end of June each year. Political staff do their disclosures over the summer months, and designated office holders and agency disclosure takes place from September to December.

The next area I want to deal with is public disclosure. We used to prepare all the members' public disclosure each year in November and file it with the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, who then released it, and the press used to go down and look at it all. It is now put on our website, and it's updated after each yearly meeting. It's easier for members as members used to have to review their public disclosure statements six to eight months after they had done their disclosure, and then they'd have to remember what they said and whether it was accurate. So now we do it right at the same time as the meeting.

One change in the past year: we no longer put the municipality of the principal residence of the member in the public disclosure. We found that we were the only province in Canada doing so. The territories do, but none of the other provinces in Canada did.

I'd like to now turn to direct associate reports. Direct associate reports have to be made with respect to a spouse or adult interdependent partner, a capitalized for-profit corporation where the member is a director or senior officer, a private corporation where the member owns or is the beneficial owner of shares, a partnership, or a member acting with the express or implied consent of the member. These reports have to be filed within 60 days of the member being elected and updated if there are any changes.

Political staff also have to fill out direct associate reports, as do designated office holders, and in the future designated senior officials. Now, these reports are sent to various places. With respect to members, as well as going on our website, they do go to the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly and the President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance. The direct disclosure reports for designated office holders go to the minister of the department where the designated office holder works. For political staff it goes to the minister for whom the political staff person works, and for the designated senior officials it'll also go to the minister that the agency reports to.

Now, I think Ms Carlson dealt with restrictions on holdings, that you cannot hold publicly traded shares unless they're in a mutual fund. They apply to pretty well everyone across the board except

political staff, with the exception being the Premier's chief of staff, but I do have discretion to make exceptions.

The next area is investigations into breaches, and those are two sections. Anyone can request an investigation, but requests have to be in writing, clearly set out the facts in support of the request to investigate, and be signed. We get numerous requests during the year, but often they're not in writing, or they don't clearly set out the facts, or they're anonymous, or they're totally outside of our jurisdiction.

The process, when they are within our jurisdiction and they've met the requirements for who can make a request, is that we evaluate the complaints. If we do an investigation, we let the person investigated know. We acknowledge the letter from the complainant. We interview the complainant. We request documents if appropriate. We evaluate the documents. We interview witnesses. We interview the person being investigated. Then if there are any follow-up interviews, we do those. We mainly do them in person, occasionally on the telephone.

We write a report, and we make a recommendation for a penalty, if any. We send it to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly if the person who's the subject of the complaint is a member. Then it's dealt with by the Legislative Assembly. They make any decisions. We also send the report to the minister without recommendations for a penalty if it's a designated office holder, political staff, or senior or designated senior official.

I want to deal with the provisions with respect to confidentiality. I think that it can be dealt with very quickly. We're required to keep everything confidential. There are very few exceptions.

In the last amendments to the act, in 2014, there was a provision added with respect to administrative penalties, and it allows us to impose administrative penalties when there has been late filing of disclosure or of direct associates reports. The maximum is \$500, and a report is sent to the Speaker.

Another section of the act is with respect to advice. Requests for advice under section 43 are specific requests on a topic, and this advice is provided in writing, usually by e-mail. The advice remains confidential unless released by the member, former member, or the political staff. The advice may be relied upon. Section 44 is a general advice section; in certain areas our office can give general advice.

In terms of the organization of our office the Ethics Commissioner is appointed by the Legislature after the report of a selection committee. We have four staff members, three full-time, one part-time. We also run the lobbyist registry out of our office, but that's the subject of another act.

The act also provides provisions with respect to records management. We have a records management retention and disposition schedule that is set by the Legislative Offices Committee. We have a requirement to destroy records of former members. In some parts in the act it says "2 years," in others, "3 years," three years for former political staff. For former designated office holders it's three years. We do destroy those records at the time that the act requires us to do so. Those records are actually shredded. We have a shredder come to the site because of the confidentiality provisions.

The act has provisions for political staff of the Premier and ministers. It's under part 4.2. They're very much the same except for the publicly traded securities with respect to members. As well, they're subject to a code of conduct.

We also deal with the Public Service Act, part 2, because that's where the provisions for deputy ministers and a few other senior officials are found. Their provisions are there, and they're in the public service code of conduct.

I think that pretty well concludes the comments I wanted to make just to show you how, practically, some of the provisions of the act work. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Commissioner Trussler.

I'll now open the floor for questions and comments.

10:30

Ms Woollard: First of all, we really would like to thank the Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General and the office of the Ethics Commissioner for making these presentations. We know from the Ethics Commissioner's own words that the Conflicts of Interest Act can be confusing and hard to understand, so we really appreciate that.

To the Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General: is it possible to provide the committee with an estimate as to when we can expect the act to be consolidated and ready for review?

Ms Carlson: That would be up to the members of the government. That's not the ministries, so I can't provide an answer on that.

Ms Woollard: Okay. Thank you.

Parliamentary Counsel, would it be possible that you might have an idea of when the act might be consolidated and available?

The Chair: Please go ahead.

Ms Robert: Thank you, Mr. Chair. From what I can gather from the Queen's Printer website – it's with Queen's Printer to do it. Their website is saying that the act has been amended and that the document is coming shortly.

Ms Woollard: Shortly.

Ms Robert: Unfortunately, I can't be more specific than that. Hopefully, it'll be fairly soon. We certainly check every day to see.

Ms Woollard: Thank you very much.

Ms Carlson: Sorry. I misunderstood the question. Yeah. The act has been consolidated, and it has been sent to the Queen's Printer, so it should be uploaded very soon.

Ms Woollard: Okay. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Mr. Kleinsteuber.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Well, thank you, Chair. The office of the Ethics Commissioner submitted recommendations in December 2017. Thank you very much for doing that. In the last round of considerations the Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General also submitted recommendations. A question, then, to the Deputy Minister of Justice and Solicitor General: can you tell us your plan to make an updated submission for the recommendations?

Ms Carlson: If we're invited to make submissions by the committee, we will certainly do so. We have a copy of the Ethics Commissioner's submissions, and we'll be reviewing those.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Okay. Thanks.

The Chair: Member McPherson.

Ms McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, all, very much for the information. I've taken copious quantities of notes.

I do have a question rising out of what you had mentioned, Madam Commissioner, about Bill 27 and the amendments in there requiring that 40 to 50 more people be interviewed per year. It sounds like you have a pretty full dance card already. I'm wondering: do any accommodations need to be made in your office in order to be able to interview everyone?

Ms Trussler: The next year is going to be very busy because of the codes of conduct, but we feel that we can handle the extra 40 to 50 people.

Ms McPherson: Okay. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Before we continue with our speakers list, I just want to assure the people on the phone that I'm listening, so just speak up if you'd like to ask a question.

We're going to continue with Mr. Kleinsteuber again.

Mr. Malkinson: Mr. Chair, can I be on the speakers list, please?

The Chair: Sure. You're on the list.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Sure. To either the office of the Ethics Commissioner or Justice and Solicitor General: do you think that it'll be worth while to hear from the Public Service Commission as part of the review? I was wondering if you could explain their role in relation to yours as well as when it comes to the Conflicts of Interest Act.

Ms Trussler: When the matter was before the select special committee but wasn't dealt with, the Public Service Commissioner worked with the Department of Justice, and any of the recommendations that they wanted to have made were made through Justice's submission.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Okay.

The Chair: Mr. Rosendahl, please go ahead.

Mr. Rosendahl: Thank you, and thank you for the presentations this morning. The question I have is in relation to the joint submission that was dated May 4, 2016, clarifying the opinions on where they differed on the act and where both departments had agreed. To either of the presenters the question I have is: can you tell us if you plan again to make a joint updated submission?

Ms Carlson: If I could respond to that, we have a copy of the Ethics Commissioner's most recent submission from December. If we're invited to by the committee, we would certainly like to make a submission from the Department of Justice on behalf of the government, and we would certainly be working with the Ethics Commissioner's office to point out if there are any differences in our submissions.

Mr. Rosendahl: Thank you.

The Chair: Over to you, Mr. Malkinson.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. My question is for Justice and Solicitor General. I remember you raised a number of considerations in your presentation way back in 2015 about the different roles of people in the public service and in agencies, boards, and commissions and how the Conflicts of Interest Act applies to them, especially in regard to cooling-off periods and postemployment restrictions. My question is: are you comfortable that the amendments made in the fall of 2017 have dealt with all of your concerns at the time, or do you think there are still some concerns left?

Ms Carlson: Today my presentation is on a technical briefing, so we would like to, if we're invited to, make submissions on policy and on some of the questions about whether there's anything left to

be addressed that we're concerned with. We would like to have the opportunity to do that later.

Mr. Malkinson: Okay. Fair enough.

The Chair: Over to you, Member McPherson.

Ms McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I've heard this mentioned a couple of times already about recommendations that were submitted in December. I'm brand new to the committee, so just in terms of context could you help me understand how those recommendations came about?

Ms Trussler: When the committee was struck, we worked on an update to our earlier recommendations to the prior committee because some things had already been dealt with in Bill 27. There were other things that we had managed to deal with in a different way, and in the meantime new issues had arisen. So we just sent in an updated brief in December of 2017.

Ms McPherson: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Again, I'll check in with the members on the phone. Any questions?

Any other questions for our guests? One more. Please go ahead, Ms Woollard.

Ms Woollard: Thank you, Mr. Chair. To the office of the Ethics Commissioner. In your October 22, 2015, presentation to the Select Special Ethics and Accountability Committee you mentioned that you had been on the job only about six months at that time. Can you tell us a little bit about your experience with the act since that time and whether or not you think it is overall providing good governance and sound ethical guidance for members and the other people it covers? That's kind of a broad question, but if you could give us your insight into that, that would be helpful.

Ms Trussler: I think for the most part the act works well. There are a few areas that need some changes, a few areas where there could be some improvement for better transparency, but for the most part I think it's reasonably sound legislation.

Ms Woollard: Okay. Thank you very much. Just as a follow-up if I may: are there any experiences you'd like to share with us that really highlight the value of the act?

Ms Trussler: Well, given the confidentiality provisions I don't think I can.

Ms Woollard: All right. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Okay. We're going to go back to Member McPherson again.

Ms McPherson: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. It's obviously an interesting topic. We were talking about the review and recommendation process, and I would like to ask both Justice and the Ethics Commissioner office if the process is effective, if you think that it's having the impact on the legislation or the management of these processes in a way that you think is effective.

Ms Carlson: Is your question about the committee process and the review of legislation by committee? Is that what the question is about?

Ms McPherson: More about your input into it.

Ms Carlson: Okay. Well, for input we certainly like to be invited to give input. It's helpful, I think, to have the committee have the information so that they can make well-informed decisions. We certainly appreciate that opportunity.

Ms McPherson: Do you find that other than having the opportunity, is it an effective use of the input that you are putting forward?

Ms Carlson: Well, certainly, the policy development is not up to us. We provide input, and it's up to the committee then to decide what recommendations they're going to make.

Ms McPherson: Okay. Thank you.

10:40

The Chair: Okay. Any further questions for those in the room and on the phone?

Hearing none, I'd like to thank our guests, Ms Carlson and the hon. Ms Trussler, for their technical briefings today.

Hon. members, it has been the practice of committees during similar reviews to invite technical assistance throughout the duration of the process. The committee may wish to call on the expertise of the office of the Ethics Commissioner and the Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General as resources for our review. Perhaps a member would like to have a motion to that effect. Mr. Rosendahl.

Mr. Rosendahl: I would like to move that

the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship invite officials from the office of the Ethics Commissioner and the Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General to attend committee meetings and participate when requested to provide technical expertise and request that these officials work in co-operation with Legislative Assembly staff as required to support the committee during its review of the Conflicts of Interest Act.

That is the motion.

The Chair: Okay. Any discussion on the motion before the committee?

Hearing none, all in favour of the motion, including those on the phone? Any opposed? That motion is carried.

Hon. members, at our November 29, 2017, meeting the committee directed research services to provide an update to the crossjurisdictional comparison prepared for the Select Special Ethics and Accountability Committee's review of the Conflicts of Interest Act. At this time I would ask Ms Robert to provide the committee with an overview of this update. Over to you.

Ms Robert: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Okay. I will give you a high-level overview of the pretty thick document that we posted on the internal committee website. The purpose of the document is to provide information as to how Alberta's Conflicts of Interest Act compares to equivalent legislation in other Canadian jurisdictions on a number of issues. It doesn't cover every issue, every provision of the act, but a number of issues.

The other jurisdictions that we chose to review are British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, and Nova Scotia. The reason we chose those as opposed to all jurisdictions is because it's already a pretty thick document, and to try to review, you know, 12 other jurisdictions plus federal jurisdictions would have made the document quite unmanageable, I think. The reason we chose the jurisdictions that we did is that we felt they represented a cross-section of small, medium, and large jurisdictions representing each major geographical area in the country. In the cases of Quebec and Nova Scotia their legislation is relatively recent. It was enacted in 2010.

We also included federal conflicts-of-interest legislation, so the code for Members of Parliament, the code for Senators, and the

Conflict of Interest Act, which applies to federal public office holders, which are federal ministers, ministerial staff, and Governor in Council appointees, among others. There's a full definition of who is included as a public office holder in the crossjurisdictional document.

As the chair noted, this version of the document is an update from the crossjurisdictional survey that was prepared for the Ethics and Accountability Committee during the 2016 review of the act. Since that time, as has been noted earlier today, the Alberta act has been amended to include senior officials of public agencies. The current act contains conflict-of-interest provisions for members of the Assembly, members of the Premier's and ministers' staff, and senior officials of public agencies. With respect to the other jurisdictions their legislation hasn't changed significantly since the last time we prepared this document. However, information has been added with respect to provisions that relate to office staff of ministers in Quebec that are part of a regulation that's made pursuant to the conflicts-of-interest code in Quebec.

Following the introduction and background and executive summary in the document there are five main sections. First and foremost, there's a fairly large section, section 4.0, that looks at the obligations of members and officials in Alberta's act with respect to furthering private interests and compares them to other jurisdictions. There's a chart that begins on page 7 of the document that gives an overview of the provisions from all those jurisdictions related to a member's or official's obligations to not make decisions, not use his or her position as a member to influence the decisions of others, and not use insider information to advance the member's private interests or the private interests of a third party.

Following the chart, there's a discussion on a number of issues, including the definition of private interest in the various jurisdictions, who defines it as what a private interest is not, and who defines it as what a private interest is. There's a discussion with respect to the use of the term "improperly" in relation to furthering private interest in the various jurisdictions, to the use of the term "apparent" conflict of interest. The term "persons directly associated" with a member, which is used in Alberta's legislation, is discussed. It was looked at to see what that term includes and how it compares to other conflicts legislation. There was also a discussion with respect to the use and distinction of adult children versus minor children in terms of obligations of members.

Then the report goes on to discuss the issue of whether a member can hold office or be employed by the Crown in the various jurisdictions, the receipt of gifts, travel on noncommercial aircraft, entering contracts of a certain class with the Crown, accepting payments from the Crown. And then, finally, the report addresses postemployment restrictions, commonly known as cooling-off periods, with respect to ministers and officials in the various jurisdictions.

The report also discusses the disclosure of financial information of spouses and children of members and the confidentiality of investigations by the Ethics Commissioner. And then, finally, it deals with standards of conduct provided in legislation, conflicts-of-interest legislation, and also jurisdictions that have set out separate codes of conduct with respect to conflicts of interest.

That's a basic overview of it. I know that there's a lot of information in the document, so I'd be happy to try to answer any questions you might have.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Robert.

I'll now open the floor to questions. Mr. Rosendahl, please go ahead.

Mr. Rosendahl: Thank you. I want to thank research services for providing the survey. On page 3 you noted that the Conflicts of Interest Act was amended in the fall sitting of the Legislature, and you mentioned those amendments in some of the notes. Knowing that the consolidated act wasn't available when you did the review, can you tell us a bit about how easy or difficult it was to cross-reference the existing act and the amendments from 2017 all the way through your crossjurisdictional comparison? It's quite a large question, I know.

The Chair: Please go ahead, Ms Robert.

Ms Robert: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Actually – you know what? – it wasn't too difficult because for the most part a whole new part was added to the act. If you look in Bill 27, you know, the following is added after part 4.2, here's part 4.3, and then the provisions are just laid out, so I didn't find it too difficult to follow. You know, in some cases where there are amendments, lots of things are added, changed, repealed, and replaced, that sort of thing, and that really wasn't the case for the bulk of this bill. So it wasn't too, too bad.

Mr. Rosendahl: Oh, okay. All right. Thank you.

The Chair: Please go ahead, Ms Kazim.

Ms Kazim: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. And thank you very much for performing this research and for your extensive work on creating a crossjurisdictional comparison. I agree that it's definitely an extensive document. For those who may be watching and can't access it, it is 68 pages long. I can imagine the amount of work that has been put in, so that's very much appreciated. You are an experienced specialist who has been doing this for a while, so in your opinion: would the Alberta act as it's written be easy to understand for office holders in government and agencies, boards, and commissions, or would it be difficult? Can you please rate the level of difficulty based on your experience?

The Chair: Please go ahead, Ms Robert.

Ms Robert: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You know what? As I alluded to before, I don't think it would be that difficult because the act has been segmented into parts, and the parts that relate to senior officials of public agencies, the provisions are all in one part, as are the provisions with respect to the Premier's and ministers' staff. So I don't think it should be that difficult to find your way through it and manage it.

10:50

Ms Kazim: Okay. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Mr. Kleinsteuber.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Thanks, Chair. I noted on page 13 of the crossjurisdictional comparison that under 4.1.3 it talks about apparent conflict of interest, and the amendments in December 2017 added the clause in the preamble of the act. I guess my question is to Justice and Solicitor General or the office of the Ethics Commissioner, whoever would like to deal with it. Since this is in the preamble, does it apply to everyone who is now under the purview of the act, including the ABCs? Again, that's on page 13, 4.1.3.

The Chair: Before we get the opportunity for an answer, I'm just going to remind those people on the phone to please let me know if you want to get on the speakers list.

Ms Carlson: Based on my quick read, I believe it applies to the senior officials in the new part, part 4.3, and not the other parts of the act.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: I see.

Ms Carlson: I have some hesitation in giving a concrete answer on that.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Kleinsteuber, I believe that Ms Robert may have an answer for you.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Sure.

Ms Robert: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You're talking about the preamble – right? – the addition to the preamble.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: That's correct.

Ms Robert: I believe that particular recital refers to senior officials, members, and employees of public agencies, you know, so it doesn't refer to everybody. It refers just to that group of people. Does that help?

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Just to who, then?

Ms Robert: It says: "Whereas the senior officials, members and employees of public agencies are expected to act," et cetera, et cetera, "apparent conflict of interest." It refers specifically to that group of people. It doesn't refer to members. It doesn't refer to political staff.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Okay. Well, thank you for that. Understood.

The Chair: Ms Kazim, please go ahead.

Ms Kazim: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. This question is, again, either for Justice and Solicitor General or for the office of the Ethics Commissioner. On page 36 of the crossjurisdictional comparison it talks about jurisdictions where there is a code of conduct for MLAs in addition to a conflicts-of-interest act. I'm curious to know a little bit more about what the difference is between these two things. And in most cases would it be preferable to have both an act and a code of conduct, or in your opinion is it better to keep it all under one act?

Ms Trussler: Some jurisdictions, particularly the federal jurisdiction, do have a code of conduct. My personal preference – but it may not be your preference – is to have everything in one document, the legislation, because I think sometimes people will look in one document and not realize there's something in another document. For ease of use of the legislation and understanding, for people being able to follow it, I would prefer one document.

Ms Kazim: Okay. Thank you.

Any other opinions?

Okay. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Any further questions?

I'll just double-check with those on the phone if you have any questions.

Okay. Thank you very much, everyone.

We'll now move on with our agenda. Our next item of business is the consultation process as part of the committee's review of the Conflicts of Interest Act. As members are aware, at the committee's

November 29, 2017, meeting the decision was taken to bring forward the documentation, materials, and submissions from the Select Special Ethics and Accountability Committee's review of the Conflicts of Interest Act as per Government Motion 32. That committee had received 14 stakeholder submissions and 18 submissions from the public during its review of the act. Members were encouraged at the last meeting to review the stakeholder list prepared for this select special committee to determine if the information presented at that time is sufficient for this committee's review or whether members feel that any update may be warranted.

At this time I'd like to open the floor for discussion on whether or not the committee would like to use those previous submissions as they are, call for updated stakeholder submissions, or call for new stakeholder submissions for this review of the Conflicts of Interest Act in addition to asking the stakeholders who previously provided a submission if they wish to update that submission.

Mr. Rosendahl, please go ahead.

Mr. Rosendahl: Well, you know, looking at this important issue, we want to review, basically, this issue. I want to take a moment and lay out the scenario for further consultation for discussion. Generally after technical briefings and crossjurisdictional surveys we send out requests for further submissions, review those submissions, and then decide on what we want to do, to make oral presentations or whatever, and then we ask for oral presentations. Can we walk through this process a little bit to see how all these things might fit before session starts on March 8? I know that we're going to be sitting on March 8, so looking at the time frame.

The Chair: Please go ahead, Ms Robert.

Ms Robert: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I suspect – hopefully, I'm answering the question you're asking – if we were to go through a solicitation of written submissions, generally there's about a 30-day window allowed for stakeholders to make submissions. Research services gathers the submissions and prepares a summary document, which is then presented to the committee, and next steps are planned after that.

Is that basically what you're wondering?

Mr. Rosendahl: Yeah. Well, I guess the issue here is: how long do we usually provide for stakeholders to have written submissions based on that? So it's 30 days you're saying generally?

Ms Robert: Generally, uh-huh.

Mr. Rosendahl: Okay. So would it be fair to say that it could be three weeks or so, or where would it put us in the time frame before having to sit on March 8? Where would that sit? Do you have some idea?

The Chair: I'm going to turn it over to the clerk to answer your question.

Mr. Rosendahl: Okay.

Mr. Roth: Thanks, Mr. Chair. The experience that I've had in other committee scenarios like this is usually if the committee decides that it wishes to seek written submissions from stakeholders, for instance, there's a period in which the committee would decide on who they would like to solicit those written submissions from, and then there's the crafting of the letter and the sending out of the letter. So depending on how many stakeholders there might be, that might be a couple of days. It might require a little bit more time, like a week, a week or so. Then usually around two to three weeks, I would say, at a minimum, for stakeholders to sort of provide that

information back has been the experience that I've seen from other committees. Then there's the time for research services to put that into a submission summary for the committee.

The Chair: Thank you.

Any further questions?

Ms Kazim: Given the number of submissions that we received last time and the number of submissions we are likely to receive this time, can you please give us an estimate of how long it would take to prepare a summary for our review?

The Chair: Please go ahead, Ms Robert.

Ms Robert: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I mean, you know, there have typically been fairly low responses. We can turn around the document as quickly as the committee needs us to turn around the document. We work at your direction. If you need it done in a few days, it's done in a few days. Whatever the committee needs, we will see that it gets done.

Ms Kazim: Yeah. We appreciate your services. Thank you very much.

My next question is: are we looking at around February 26 before we could meet and review the written submissions and determine who we want for oral presentations, and if we wanted to invite people for oral presentations, we would only be able to give them a week if we want to hear them before session starts on March 8? Just walking through these dates, it looks a little bit difficult for us to get written submissions and oral submissions before session starts, so I would like to ask the chair about our options for meeting during session for oral submissions. Are we able to meet in the evenings? Are we able to meet on Fridays? We have a constituency week scheduled for the week of March 26 to 30. I'd like to hear other members' opinions about when they think it would be best to meet to move these deliberations along.

11:00

The Chair: I'm completely willing to set a meeting whenever the committee likes. It's really up to the committee. As you expressed, I think that perhaps we should open the floor to when people would like to meet. Any comments?

Ms Robert, please go ahead.

Ms Robert: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If I may, I wonder if perhaps the committee should decide what they want to do with respect to written submissions. Do they want to just have the people that already submitted resubmit? Do they want the entire stakeholder list to be written to again? Do they want a new stakeholder list? Do you know for certain that you do want oral presentations? Do you want to wait until you see what you receive with respect to written submissions before you make that decision?

I'm just not sure if the committee should perhaps – like, how far along do you want to go in terms of making decisions today? Do you want to just make one decision and then carry on from there, or do you want to make a whole bunch of decisions? Do you know for sure that you want oral presentations? Those are just some of the things that I might ask.

Thanks.

The Chair: Mr. Kleinsteuber.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I think the stakeholder list that was created in the 2016 review is pretty extensive, and I think that it's probably a good place to start. I'm assuming that research

services is able to go through and update the contact list of the various institutions.

Ms Robert: Yes. Absolutely.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Okay. Thanks.

The Chair: Ms Woollard.

Ms Woollard: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Since the act has been updated to include the ABCs, we think it's important to solicit their input. Now, there are over 130 of them. Some of them are quite large; some are quite small. Can we clarify something? Were all the ABCs invited to submit to the 2016 review?

The Chair: Please go ahead, Ms Robert.

Ms Robert: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In 2015 approximately 150 ABCs were invited to make submissions to the committee, okay? Now, of course, at that time public agencies were not subject to the terms of the act. Now they are. I just spoke with the Public Agency Secretariat a couple of days ago about which agencies are affected by the act, and they sent me a list. There is a list of 121 currently, as of January 10, plus Alberta Health Services and three other subsidiary corporations. So approximately 125 agencies are subject to the act, and I would say that all but 16 of those were part of the stakeholder process and the stakeholder letter process in the 2016 review. So, yes, the bulk of them were.

Ms Woollard: That came out to about 150, you said.

Ms Robert: At the time it did. But the agencies that are covered under the act today: there aren't 150 of them. There are fewer of them.

Ms Woollard: Thank you very much.

The Chair: We're going to go over to Mr. Hanson.

Mr. Hanson: Thank you, Chair. Just with respect to that, because there were some changes that do affect those ABCs, I think that for that entire stakeholder list, we should, you know, make sure that we include those ABCs that were affected. At that point, when we're sending out that request, we could ask them if they would be happy with a written submission or if they would have to present to the committee. Then we could maybe make a decision that way. If nobody asks to do a presentation, then we're easily able to review just the written submissions at that time. Would that work?

The Chair: Ms Robert.

Ms Robert: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just so that I'm very, very clear, are you suggesting that in a stakeholder letter the query "Do you wish to make an oral presentation to the committee?" be offered?

Mr. Hanson: Yes. Exactly.

Ms Robert: Okay.

Mr. Hanson: Then if we don't get any requests for oral presentations, you know, we can just review the written submissions and be done.

Ms Robert: Right. And would you want that query to be offered to every stakeholder or just the ABCs?

Mr. Hanson: I think to all of them.

Ms Robert: All of them. That would be a committee decision to decide, you know, and that would, I would think, form part of a motion if you decide to go ahead with resoliciting the stakeholders.

Ms Woollard: I've got a motion here that I'd like to propose. Basically, it is that the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship ask research services to provide an updated stakeholder list, which includes stakeholders from the 2015-2016 review and representatives from the ABCs, to the chair and deputy chair and to invite updated submissions from these stakeholders, with a deadline of two to three weeks, whatever research services suggests is reasonable, from the date that the consolidated act is ready for distribution.

The Chair: Please go ahead, Ms Robert.

Ms Robert: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Okay. One little update: the Queen's Printer will have the consolidated act available this afternoon. That's good news.

Now, with respect to your motion regarding public agencies, I just want to make sure that the stakeholder list is exactly what you want it to be. The stakeholder list of public agencies: do you want that to be only the public agencies that are covered by the act, or do you want it to be every public agency that was solicited the last time?

Ms Woollard: I think the ABCs affected by the act, for whom the act is pertinent. Does that make sense?

Ms Robert: Yes. Thank you.

The Chair: Perfect.

Can I just get you to repeat the motion one more time, Ms Woollard? A little bit slower if you don't mind. We're trying to capture it here at the front.

Ms Woollard: Okay. I can revise it now that we know that the act will be ready this afternoon.

The Chair: Okay. Please go ahead.

Ms Woollard: I move that the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship ask research services to provide an updated stakeholder list, which includes stakeholders from the 2015-2016 list and representatives from ABCs who are affected by the act, to the chair and deputy chair and to invite updated submissions from these stakeholders, with a deadline of February 26, 2018.

The 26th is what I am proposing.

The Chair: We have a request to get it up on the projectors if possible. Would that be possible?

Mr. Roth: I can put it on the internal committee website. I can put it under the meeting's motions.

The Chair: Okay. We'll get it onto the internal committee website, then.

Ms McPherson: That would be great. Thank you. It's a long one.

The Chair: Yeah.

Okay. Mr. Hanson, please go ahead.

Mr. Hanson: Thank you, Chair. Just an addition, you know, regarding my previous statement asking whether as part of that submission request they would be happy with just a written or would like to present to the committee. If we could maybe amend that, if everybody is willing, to include that statement just so that

we get a better idea from them at the time rather than them coming back three months later and saying: well, you know, we would have liked to have done an oral presentation to the committee. In that way, it would be written right in their returns to us that they're happy with presenting just with a written submission. If there's some way we can add that, that would be great.

The Chair: Before we carry on with that discussion, I'm just going to get our clerk to state what we have captured so far.

Mr. Roth: Just to make sure that I have it clear. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Moved by Ms Woollard that

the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship ask research services to provide an updated stakeholder list, which includes stakeholders from the 2015-2016 list and representatives from agencies, boards, and commissions who are affected by the act, to the chair and deputy chair and to invite updated submissions from these stakeholders, with a deadline of February 26, 2018.

The Chair: Okay. Responding to Mr. Hanson's inquiry, go ahead.

Ms Woollard: I think that that would be, certainly, appropriate. Let's see: "invite updated submissions from these stakeholders." Could we add in at that point a clause requesting or suggesting inviting them to submit either oral or written submissions, whichever is their choice? Let's get better wording on that.

The Chair: Yeah. We'd better.
Ms Robert, please go ahead.

11:10

Ms Robert: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to put this out there for the committee. I wonder: if you ask this question and, say, two people say, "Yes, I want to orally present" and the committee doesn't really want to go forward with it for two organizations, will it hem you in? Will it hem you into having to have oral presentations if the committee doesn't want to? I will say that many times when stakeholders make written submissions, they say at the end: "Happy to speak further to this. If you require any more information, please contact me." I would say that the majority of them will say that, you know, will indicate an interest. It should be up to the committee to decide if they want to have oral presentations as maybe opposed to the other way around.

Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. One second here, because hands have been flying up.

Member McPherson, is your question related to this topic?

Ms McPherson: It's not related to the amendment, the proposed amendment; it's related to the original motion.

The Chair: Can we finish this conversation?

Ms McPherson: Please. Yeah.

The Chair: Okay. I have Mr. Nielsen. Then we'll go to Mr. Hanson.

Mr. Nielsen: Yeah. Thanks, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to, I guess, ask a clarifying question. It all revolves around this: are we asking for a submission or a presentation or for a submission and a presentation? That's what I was wondering, and it goes to that whole wording.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.
Mr. Hanson.

Mr. Hanson: Yeah. What I'm looking for is just some clarity when we're sending out these requests for submissions. You know, I'm happy if we put on there that written presentations will only be accepted because of the time constraint that we're under. I'd be happy with that as long as we don't get ourselves into the position where you've got 11 people submitting and then they say that they'd like to come and present to the committee. Then we're kind of bound to do that. I think that because of the time constraint we're under, just some clarity on that request, that at this time, due to time constraints on the committee, only written presentations will be accepted.

The Chair: Ms Robert.

Ms Robert: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think, if it's helpful, that typically we don't mention oral presentations. We just say: at this time we are soliciting written input. The committee can then make a decision after having seen what does get submitted: "You know, we want to hear further; we want to hear more" or "You know, we're good; these written submissions give us what we need." It leaves the control in the committee's hands as to how to move forward.

Mr. Hanson: I'm fine to withdraw my amendment on this.

The Chair: You're going to withdraw?
Member McPherson.

Ms McPherson: Okay. I need to recalculate. Are we talking about the original motion now?

The Chair: Not yet. Just on this particular topic.

Ms McPherson: Okay. Then two questions about the proposed amendment. What's been the previous practice? It sounds like you just answered that question, that it was written submissions. Also, we're speaking about time constraints. I'm not aware of the deadline. Do we have a hard stop where we have to have this information?

The Chair: We have a year from November 29.

Ms McPherson: So it's not like we have to get this done by June.

The Chair: No.

Ms McPherson: Okay. All right.

The Chair: It would be nice to get it done sooner than later, though.

Ms McPherson: I totally understand, yes, but I don't know that we want to push things really quickly and not be quite as fulsome in how we're going about our deliberations.

The Chair: Yeah. Perfect.

Mr. Rosendahl: Would it be fair to say that once we get the list, we get the chair and the deputy chair to sign off on that list? Would that be fair, to get them to do that, that they, rather than sending it out all over the place or whatever, can have a look at it and see whether it's relevant or not, that kind of thing?

The Chair: I'm glad you bring that up, Mr. Rosendahl, because, yes, the previous motion, I believe, was that the stakeholder list just be given to the chair and deputy chair, so we'd need to amend that motion. Can we do that? Can you read that particular motion, then?

Mr. Roth: A proposed possible amendment, just a suggestion, that the motion be amended by adding after “act, to the chair and deputy chair” the words “for approval.” But that would have to be moved as an amendment by a member.

The Chair: Can I get a member to move that amendment? Okay. Thank you, Mr. Rosendahl.

I just want to make sure everyone is clear on what we’re amending here. That is that the stakeholder list not only be provided to the chair and deputy chair but that it also be for approval. We would then contact those people on behalf of the committee. Is that clear to everybody?

Mr. Nielsen: Just a clarifying question: that would include, then, like, any invitation that’s sent out, that you guys will sign off on that?

The Chair: We will sign off on that. Yes, Mr. Nielsen.

Mr. Nielsen: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Everyone is clear on the amendment? Okay.

Including those on the phone, all those in favour of the amendment to the motion, please say aye.

Ms Woollard: What’s the amendment?

The Chair: One second. Sorry about that. We have a question to reread it, so we’ll do that. Please go ahead.

Mr. Roth: Moved by Mr. Rosendahl that the motion be amended by adding the words “for approval” after the words “chair and deputy chair.”

Ms Woollard: Thank you.

Mr. Nielsen: I guess I should just probably ask: will that include Justice and Solicitor General being added to that list, or are they already on that?

The Chair: Yes. I’m told that they were on the list.

Ms McPherson: I was going to ask this later in reference to the motion itself, but it seems like it’s pretty pertinent right now. I think for us to take a look at the stakeholder list – I took a look at the internal website for the committee, and I wasn’t able to locate it there. I’d like to have a better understanding of what I’m talking about before I agree to motions that affect that stakeholder list.

The Chair: Please, Mr. Clerk.

Mr. Roth: Thanks, Mr. Chair. The list from last time is on the committee website actually under Current Business, at the top, and then it has the 2015-2016 materials that are there, and then the final stakeholder list is listed there under briefing documents.

Ms McPherson: Thank you. I was looking under previous business.

The Chair: Mr. Dang.

Mr. Dang: Yeah. Sorry. I just had one quick, I guess, question. If we do use this timeline, deadline, does that mean that we won’t basically have time for oral submissions before we get into session? I guess if we’re all okay with that, then I’m happy to move forward, it’s just that session is . . .

The Chair: That’s not my understanding.

Mr. Dang: No? Okay.

The Chair: I’m getting talked at from, like, several different angles here.

Member McPherson, you have a question.

Ms McPherson: Yeah. I’m not sure I understand why we cannot hear oral submissions after we go back into session. There is time. There are Mondays before we go in, Monday mornings. There are Fridays if necessary. I know that’s not ideal, but this work is very important, and I don’t want to rush it because we have some sort of issue with doing this while we’re in session.

The Chair: Correct me if I’m wrong, but the question right now, based on the timeline that’s being proposed, is not that we would hear oral presentations or not. I just want to make that clear, right? That’s not being debated here, right? What we’re trying to do is to get out the invitation for the written submissions, and then we can then potentially discuss when we would have oral presentations. I mean, are we agreed? Okay. I’m seeing the nodding of heads. Thank you.

We are currently on the amendment still. I’m going to ask our clerk to read it out one more time to make sure that everyone is clear on what’s being requested to be amended.

11:20

Mr. Roth: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Moved by Mr. Rosendahl that the motion be amended by adding the words
for approval
after the words “chair and deputy chair.”

The Chair: Okay. Including those on the phone, all those in favour of the amendment to the motion, please say aye. Anybody opposed, please say no. Okay. That motion is carried.

Now we are on the main motion. I’ll have our committee clerk read out the main motion.

Mr. Roth: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Moved by Ms Woollard that the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship ask research services to provide an updated stakeholder list, which includes stakeholders for the 2015-2016 list and representatives from agencies, boards, and commissions who are affected by the act, to the chair and deputy chair for approval and to invite updated submissions from these stakeholders with a deadline of February 26, 2018.

The Chair: Having heard the motion, I will now call the question. Including those members on the phone, all those in favour, please say aye. Anybody opposed, please say no. That motion is carried.

Okay. We’re getting there, ladies and gentlemen. We’re getting there. The stakeholder list has been taken care of.

We’re still on the topic of consultation. I believe that there is the matter of requesting from the public their submissions. I’ll open the floor to that discussion.

Ms Kazim: As a government and as a province – can I ask?

The Chair: Please go ahead, Ms Kazim.

Ms Kazim: Sorry. As a government and as a province we value the input of all Albertans in the review of legislation. It is important to hear from as many Albertans as possible. We think it’s very important with a piece of legislation like this to get it right and to make sure we hear from everybody we should. In general if there is a cost involved and if the value is limited, we would not support the spending of money for no value, but if the opposition members of the committee think that this is necessary, we will support them.

We know that communications services has not developed a communications plan for this, but I'm wondering if someone from the LAO could tell us what the price range usually is for soliciting public submissions through advertising.

The Chair: Ms Sorensen.

Ms Sorensen: Certainly, I can speak to that, Mr. Chair. I've been involved in a few of these reviews of the Conflicts of Interest Act, and we've had direction at some points to advertise and sometimes not to advertise. To do a province-wide ad campaign typically is going to cost around \$30,000, and what we've seen is perhaps that garnering one or maybe two public submissions.

My advice, if the committee is seeking it, would be to do a more direct approach with the stakeholders list as already agreed to and perhaps engage the public more through information such as doing some social media, some media relations, letting them know when the committee is meeting so that they can follow it online. That would be my recommendation.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Sorensen.
Any other questions?

Ms Kazim: Yes, I have one.

The Chair: Please go ahead, Ms Kazim.

Ms Kazim: Did the committee pay to advertise for public submissions during the 2012-13 review or during the 2015-16 review?

Ms Sorensen: In 2012 and '13 we did not do paid advertising. We took the approach similar to what I just described through social media, media relations, and that sort of thing. In 2015-16 we did advertise, but, again, that was for four pieces of legislation, not just the Conflicts of Interest Act.

Ms Kazim: Okay. We also have to consider the – I was going to ask more details about it, but I think this covers it in terms of what I was looking for, so I'm good for now. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you, Ms Kazim.
Anybody else have questions, comments?

Okay. Regarding public submissions are there any more? Okay. We'll go with Member McPherson.

Ms McPherson: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. My concern about this stakeholder list – I've just found it, thank you very much; really appreciate that – and what I'm wondering about is that I see a lot of stakeholders from the side of having to make ethics submissions but not a lot of stakeholders from the other side of the equation, the public at large. The way that the last motion was worded, it seems like committee members won't be in a position to suggest possible stakeholders to be included. I want to make sure that that's a possibility before the final stakeholder list is landed on.

The Chair: Yeah. That was a question under the previous discussion. There was an opportunity there to suggest other stakeholders to be included. Because we've already agreed to a motion, I'm going to ask Ms Robert: what is the protocol here?

Ms Robert: Thank you, Mr. Chair. All I can really say is that the motion has been agreed to, so I'm not sure – unless the committee wanted to seek unanimous consent to rescind the motion and start all over. The motion has been agreed to as is, and that is to use the

stakeholder list from '15-16, making sure that the agencies that are covered by the act are in it.

Ms McPherson: Rather than rescinding the motion, is it possible to introduce another motion that says that in reference to that motion this further action can be taken?

Ms Robert: I'm not so sure about that.

The Chair: I'm thinking out loud here. I don't see why potentially we couldn't accept suggestions to incorporate into that if the committee was in agreement. Like, I mean, let us make the assumption that you go away today and you have a recommendation before our deadline to send out letters inviting people to submit – let's assume you have one – we could potentially add that one to the list if people are comfortable with it.

Ms McPherson: If there's unanimous consent. If there's not, I'll understand.

The Chair: Can you comment? Would that be . . .

Ms Robert: The cleanest way to do it would be to rescind the motion and to craft a new motion.

The Chair: Okay. Any comments on rescinding the motion? Please go ahead, Ms Woollard.

Ms Woollard: Okay. Before we go that route, you mentioned about – when we were talking about letting people know about kind of opening up the window for submissions, you said: directed invitations to the group identified in the motion, plus social media information for the public. Is there any avenue in there that it could be decided upon here that if there was take-up from the public based on the information provided in social media, we could receive it?

Ms Robert: Yes.

Ms Woollard: Yes.

The Chair: What I'm hearing is that, for example – I'm painting a scenario here – Member McPherson invites another stakeholder to make a submission through the public submission route instead. Is that what I'm hearing? Is that what you're suggesting?

Ms Woollard: Exactly. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay.

11:30

Ms McPherson: I think that in the interest of being more expedient with the meeting, I'll go with that, and I'll be much better prepared next time. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Rosendahl: I guess the question I have, then, is: because of the amendment that we made to that motion, that it be reviewed by the chair and the deputy chair, would they still have that ability on the extra list that may come in through that other route?

Ms Robert: If I'm understanding you correctly and the situation correctly, I think what we're hypothesizing might happen is that if we use social media to bring the public's attention to this review, which may mean that people write in, it won't be a list that'll be coming. It'll be actual submissions that will be coming, and it'll be up to the committee to decide if it wants to consider the content of those submissions.

The Chair: Thank you.

I want to push us forward. Are there any more comments on public submissions? Okay.

Does anybody want to make a motion to move us forward regarding the public submissions?

Mr. Dang: I'll make the motion, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Mr. Dang.

Mr. Dang: Thanks. I guess I would move that the standing committee ask research services to create a web-based input form for the public and promote that form through social media. Is that correct? Can that be worded in a better way?

The Chair: Would you just repeat that, please, Mr. Dang?

Mr. Dang: Sure. I would move that the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship direct research services to create a web-based form for the public and to promote that form through social media.

The Chair: Would you say "LAO" instead of "research services"?

Mr. Dang: Yes. The Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

The Chair: Is there a deadline that you'd like to add to that, Mr. Dang?

Mr. Dang: With a deadline of February 26.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dang. Could you just repeat the end of the motion one more time after "web-based input."

Mr. Dang: A web-based input form for the public and to promote that form through social media platforms, ending February 26.

Mr. Roth: Can I read that back just to make sure that I have the motion correct?

The Chair: Sure.

Mr. Roth: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Moved by Mr. Dang that the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship direct the Legislative Assembly Office to create a web-based input form for the public and to promote that form through social media platforms, with a deadline for submissions of February 26, 2018.

The Chair: Mr. Dang, that appropriately reflects the motion that you'd like to put forward?

Mr. Dang: Yes. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Having heard the motion, including those on the phone, all those in favour, please say aye. Anybody opposed, please say no. Okay. That motion is carried.

Good. I believe that we've handled the whole consultation process. Is everyone happy with that? Okay.

Now we are going to move on to other business. Is there any other business that members wish to bring forward? Mr. Hanson, please go ahead.

Mr. Hanson: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I hesitate to bring this up again, because I know that it annoys the government members, but when I mentioned the time constraints in my earlier amendment, I wasn't really talking about the time constraint of November 29. What I was talking about is the ability or lack of ability of the Resource Stewardship Committee to address any other issues. I

think Resource Stewardship is a very, very important committee, and we have been tied up for two years now between the Lobbyists Act review and this act review.

I'd just like to point out a couple of things. The Conflicts of Interest Act was given royal assent in '91, and as part of that, it was recommended that a special committee be struck to do that review every five years. I'd like to also point out that this is the fourth review, and this is the first time that it has not been given to a special committee. It has been handed over to a standing committee. I'd also like to point out, referring back to the Select Special Conflicts of Interest Act Review Committee report that was submitted in November 2013, that two of the members on that special committee were our Premier, Rachel Notley, and Minister Brian Mason.

The frustration I have is that, again, we'll be tied up until November 29. We have got people that have submitted and that would like to do presentations to this committee and have been waiting for two years now. We won't be able to listen to them again until this committee has finished its report. That's the time constraint that I'm talking about. You know, this is very important legislation, and we shouldn't be rushing it, but at the same time we're also tying up a committee, the Resource Stewardship Committee, that cannot do its work.

I'm going to just read a couple of things to you here quickly. Under the 2013 special committee they said:

The Act was amended in 1998 in response to these recommendations, one of which was the requirement that a special committee of the Legislative Assembly review the Act every five years and report any recommendations to the Assembly within one year . . .

The first committee for this five-year review was created in 2005 and reported to the Legislative Assembly.

So this was a recommendation that was made by the last committee, that included our Premier and one of our ministers.

The act itself says under section 48 that, again, "a special committee established by the Legislative Assembly must begin a comprehensive review of this Act" every five years.

We go on to the Lobbyists Act. Under section 21 it reads: "Within 2 years after this Act comes into force and every 5 years after that, a special committee established by the Legislative Assembly." Again it refers to a special committee.

With that in mind, if you would indulge me, I would like to make another motion. I know that we've brought this up at just about every meeting of this Resource Stewardship Committee that we've held.

I would like to move that the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship petition the Legislative Assembly to amend the standing orders to empower legislative policy committees to prioritize inquiries notwithstanding that a matter of business has been referred by the Assembly. So that we would be able to do other work, if it is the will of the Legislature to give the mandate to one of the standing committees rather than to form a special committee, as is legislated in the act, there should be some provision in there that the standing committee can carry out some other business while we're waiting for reports and submissions.

That would be my motion, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hanson.

I'm going to open the floor for discussion on the motion. Member McPherson, followed by Mr. Nielsen.

Ms McPherson: Just a request that this motion also be put up on the internal website.

The Chair: Thank you.

Okay. Do you mind rereading your motion a little bit slower there, Mr. Hanson? Thank you.

Mr. Hanson: Okay. I move that the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship petition the Legislative Assembly to amend the standing orders to empower legislative policy committees to prioritize inquiries notwithstanding that a matter of business has been referred by the Assembly.

The Chair: One more time, just for assurance, if you don't mind.

Mr. Hanson: Sure. I move that the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship petition the Legislative Assembly to amend the standing orders to empower legislative policy committees to prioritize inquiries notwithstanding that a matter of business has been referred by the Assembly.

11:40

The Chair: Thank you.

It's now up on the internal committee website.

It's open for discussion. Over to Mr. Nielsen.

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You know, I think it's good to know that the consolidated act will be ready here shortly for us to get moving on this. I'm confident that I think this committee can move quickly to get this work done if we put our heads down and get to it here. I think the date was November 16, 2017, pursuant to Government Motion 32, that the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship was deemed as the special committee to handle this act. Creating a special committee outside of us I don't think was necessary. We have the tools to do that pursuant to section 48 of the act. We are that special committee. I think we can get that work done. If we get it done quickly, then we can certainly move forward on any other business that we deem is necessary.

I think, again, that this is just something where we're trying to move rules and directions whenever we just feel they're – I don't know – inconvenient or something. I'm not prepared to support this motion at this time, and I think I'm going to urge others on the committee to not support it as well.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Nielsen.

Member McPherson.

Ms McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As I understand the motion, we're essentially asking the Assembly to empower legislative committees to address issues that are in their mandate. As I've said earlier, I'm just new to this committee, so I don't understand the history, but I am very concerned about what you're talking about. I was just at an energy future update yesterday. The capital expenditure for oil and gas in Canada last year was \$42 billion. That's the biggest private capital expenditure in the country. This is something that is really important to our province, and if we are busy with ethics and other legislation that's not directly related to the mandate of the committee, then I am very concerned that we haven't had the opportunity to hear from resource organizations in the province for two years. That's very, very concerning. For that reason, I'm happy to support this motion.

The Chair: Any further comments?

Mr. Hanson: I'm a little troubled with the term "inconvenient." It's not at all what this is about. This is about allowing the Resource Stewardship Committee and any other standing committee that is given a mandate by the Legislature, you know, given a job like we have been to review this – I don't have a problem with that. I don't have a problem. It may have been nicer to put it forward to the entire Legislature to pick out people that might be specifically interested in the Lobbyists Act or the ethics act to be a part of that special

committee. I think there probably are people that aren't on this committee that do have a special interest in that.

That aside, I don't have a problem with being given this assignment. What I have a problem with is that it ties us up for the entirety of what could be up to a full year, and it's the second time it's happened. We have not been able to do any of the work of a very important committee, Resource Stewardship. This is Alberta. That's a very, very important file, and we have been able to do nothing on that file for two years, the entire time that I've been on this committee.

It's a simple request. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. We're going to go to Mr. Kleinsteuber, followed by Ms Kazim.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Thanks, Chair. I've just got a question, I guess. In the motion what is Mr. Hanson defining by "petition the Legislative Assembly"? What function of the committee involves petitioning, basically, and how does that role actually change? What is the purpose of that particular wording there? Would the committee then come back and review something?

Ms Robert: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think, practically speaking, what would end up happening if the committee were to agree to the motion is that the committee would make a report to the Assembly making a recommendation that the standing orders be amended. I suspect that that would be – that's generally how committees of the Assembly communicate with the Assembly, through a report with a recommendation. I don't think it's a petition – I don't like to speak for you. I don't think the petition is necessarily what as legislators you think of as formal petitions. I think it's a report with a recommendation, if I'm understanding you.

Thank you.

Mr. Hanson: If I could add some comments.

The Chair: Please go ahead, Mr. Hanson.

Mr. Hanson: I'd like to, you know, bring to light a few of the people. These are meeting requests that go back to early 2016, so we're now two full years from when these requests were put forward: Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties, Independent Power Producers Society, Alberta Used Oil Management Association, Beverage Container Management Board, Alberta Recycling Management Authority. These are all people that have been waiting for two years to come and submit to this committee so that we can do some of the work that we're actually mandated to do under our resource stewardship mandate.

Now, like I said, I don't have a problem with us being given this. You know, you talk about convenience. It's very convenient to just assign a committee rather than going through the process of selecting a special committee, so that is convenient. I don't have a problem with that if we are allowed in the interim, while we're waiting for reports and submissions from the Ethics Commissioner or whoever – and we've had times where we haven't met for four months because we're waiting for submissions. During that time we're not allowed to address any of these other issues, and that's the problem I have. If we're going to continue being given these assignments, we need some latitude from the Legislature to allow us to do our other job, and I don't understand why the government members have a problem with that.

The Chair: Okay. I'm just going to put us on hold here.

I understand, Mr. MacIntyre, that you've joined us by teleconference. I want to give you the opportunity to introduce yourself for the record.

Mr. MacIntyre: Don MacIntyre.

The Chair: Okay. We'll leave it at that, I guess.

I want to go to Ms Kazim, then followed by Mr. Nielsen.

Ms Kazim: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I got the answers through the discussion, so I'm good. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Nielsen: I guess what I'm going to point out to the members opposite, that our government's sort of – I don't know – putting these people off, ignoring them: I'm not too sure what kind of words we want to put in here. During the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties, you know, two weeks before our last meeting, I believe there were over 20 MLAs present and over 15 ministers right there in a room. I think that trying to put the weight of this on this committee, that there aren't other opportunities as well – I mean, that's just one example. There's this picture, I think, that's trying to be painted that there's some sort of deliberate action by members of the government side on this committee to block people or ignore people, and I don't think anything is further from that statement. I don't buy that. I think the committee can focus on its work. I look forward to seeing this review done quickly, and then we can certainly get on to other things.

The Chair: Okay. I have on the speakers list Mr. Kleinsteuber, followed by Member McPherson and then Mr. Hanson.

Mr. Loewen: Could you add Mr. Loewen, too, please?

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I guess my question is just generally, actually, to you and maybe the deputy chair, too. I seem to recall that in the fall we issued letters to these organizations that had submitted requests to meet with us. I'm just wondering if maybe we heard a reply back from those organizations because I do agree with Mr. Hanson here: I think it is important to meet with some of these groups that have actually sent in letters to us, particularly the AAMD and C. I'm just wondering what the status is or if we'd heard back from those organizations.

11:50

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kleinsteuber. Yes, indeed. We did, at the request of the committee, re-engage the organizations that did make that initial request to ask them if they wanted to come and present and continue. We did not hear from all of the organizations and institutions.

Mr. Clerk, do you happen to have the ones that did reply in the positive that they wanted to present?

Mr. Roth: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I apologize. I'm not the ordinary committee clerk for the committee, so this info might be a little bit out of date. My understanding is that the three – Used Oil Management, the recyclers, and there's a third one in there as well . . .

The Chair: The AAMD and C, I think it was.

Mr. Roth: Yeah. The AAMD and C, the last I heard, was the only one that had not responded to the committee.

The Chair: Indeed. That's my recollection as well.

Thank you, Mr. Kleinsteuber.

I know that our meeting is supposed to go until 12, so I want to invite our guests – you don't necessarily need to be here for this discussion on other business, so if you'd like to take leave, please

go ahead. We'll continue with our discussion, but don't feel that you need to stay for this discussion.

I have Member McPherson next.

Ms McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Well, notwithstanding other opportunities for any of these organizations to address MLAs, this is the mandate of the committee, and it's a very reasonable motion, in my opinion, to ensure that the committee is able to address the business that we're supposed to be addressing here.

Another thing that I wanted to bring up is if we could just put aside any kind of acrimony to address this directly, whether it feels like there might be barbs being slung or not. It's really, at the base of it, what we're charged to do on behalf of the people that we represent, and it is a concern that we're not in a position, because of reviewing legislation, to be able to address the mandate of the committee.

Also, again back to timing, now that I understand it better: we have an election coming up next year, so that's going to eat into the time that the committee has left to be effective in regard to its mandate. It would be a real shame to have a huge period of time like that where we weren't engaging with any of the stakeholders in the areas that the Resource Stewardship Committee should be engaging with in order to act on its mandate.

The Chair: On to you, Mr. Hanson.

Mr. Hanson: Thank you, Chair. Just briefly, I don't see it as a deliberate action, as Member Nielsen suggested, but I'd also like to point out that at the AAMD and C conference – I believe there are over 1,200 delegates there. They get a question-and-answer period where they're given 30 seconds and a red light pops up and shuts them down. I hardly see that as an ample opportunity to address the government or members of the Legislature.

I don't see it as a deliberate act by the members opposite against this motion, but I fail to understand why during the brief periods and sometimes lengthy periods that we're waiting for submissions, we can't have a Resource Stewardship meeting and address some of the issues and bring some of these people in. We could get this done in a couple of hours. You know, I don't see why it's such a big issue, and I would really, really ask all of you to support my motion so that – it may be too late for this committee – in future if the Legislature delegates a responsibility to a standing committee, it gives them some latitude so they can do their other job as well.

Thanks.

The Chair: Okay. Any further comments, questions?

Mr. Loewen: Yes, I would.

The Chair: Please go ahead, Mr. Loewen.

Mr. Loewen: I've just done a little looking here. I see that this committee has met five times in the last year for a total of 12 and a half hours. Now, that excludes, of course, the budget debate, that happens during the session, which happens every year, of course. I know that there's other time that we spend preparing for these meetings and everything, so the 12 and a half hours are maybe an incomplete representation of how much time we spend on this committee, but that does give us a bit of a look at how much time we spent sitting in the committee meetings, only 12 and a half hours in the past year. Now, of course, something like this, what's being proposed, would add maybe an hour or two to this and possibly no work afterwards. I'm not interested in having meetings just to add hours, but I am interested in doing my job as a committee member, and I think this committee should be doing its job, too.

Now, I know there was some comment about the deliberate actions or something. I don't know the government's ideas behind this, why they keep bucking this idea of meeting with these groups, but if it's not deliberate action that's causing that, then what's happening, though, is deliberate inaction in taking care of this issue and being able to meet with these groups that want to meet with us. Like I say, it's been over two years now. There's no reason for us to be stuck in a situation where we can't meet with these groups as they contact us like this. We're not being burdened with time or work on this committee. We have lots of time to be able to add these groups in and listen to them, which is our job. I don't understand why the government keeps bucking this. Like I say: deliberate action? I don't know, but definitely deliberate inaction, that's for sure.

The Chair: Okay. I'm going to ask our clerk to just read out the motion one more time.

Mr. Roth: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Moved by Mr. Hanson that the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship petition the Legislative Assembly to amend the standing orders to empower legislative policy committees to prioritize inquiries notwithstanding that a matter of business has been referred by the Assembly.

The Chair: Okay. Having heard the motion, all those in favour of the motion, please say aye, including those on the phone. Okay. All those against the motion, please say no.

Mr. Hanson: Could I get a recorded vote, please?

The Chair: A recorded vote has been requested. We will start off to my right, and then we'll go to members on the phone.

Mr. Hanson: Yes.

Ms McPherson: Yes.

Ms Babcock: No.

Mr. Dang: No.

Ms Kazim: No.

Mr. Nielsen: No.

Ms Woollard: No.

Mr. Rosendahl: No.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Against.

The Chair: On the phone, please.

Mr. MacIntyre: Yes.

Mr. Loewen: Yes.

Mr. Malkinson: No.

Mr. Drysdale: Yes.

The Chair: Okay. That motion is defeated.

Anybody have any other business for the committee?

Hearing none, our next meeting will be at the call of the chair.

May I ask for a motion to adjourn, please? Mr. Nielsen. Thank you. Thank you very much, everyone. The meeting is adjourned. Yes. You all have to vote. All those in favour of adjournment? Okay. Thank you. I got ahead of myself. Sorry, people.

[The committee adjourned at 11:58 a.m.]

