



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
Fourth Session

Standing Committee
on
Resource Stewardship

Conflicts of Interest Act Review

Wednesday, December 21, 2022
9 a.m.

Transcript No. 30-4-1

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 30th Legislature
Fourth Session

Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship

Hanson, David B., Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul (UC), Chair
Feehan, Richard, Edmonton-Rutherford (NDP), Deputy Chair

Aheer, Leela Sharon, Chestermere-Strathmore (UC)
Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (NDP)
Ganley, Kathleen T., Calgary-Mountain View (NDP)
Getson, Shane C., Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland (UC)
Issik, Whitney, Calgary-Glenmore (UC)
Nielsen, Christian E., Edmonton-Decore (NDP)
Orr, Ronald, Lacombe-Ponoka (UC)
Sigurdson, R.J., Highwood (UC)
Singh, Peter, Calgary-East (UC)
Turton, Searle, Spruce Grove-Stony Plain (UC)

Support Staff

Shannon Dean, KC	Clerk
Teri Cherkewich	Law Clerk
Trafton Koenig	Senior Parliamentary Counsel
Philip Massolin	Clerk Assistant and Director of House Services
Nancy Robert	Clerk of <i>Journals</i> and Committees
Sarah Amato	Research Officer
Christina Williamson	Research Officer
Warren Huffman	Committee Clerk
Jody Rempel	Committee Clerk
Aaron Roth	Committee Clerk
Rhonda Sorensen	Manager of Corporate Communications
Christina Steenbergen	Supervisor of Communications Services
Shannon Parke	Communications Consultant
Troy Rhoades	Communications Consultant
Tracey Sales	Communications Consultant
Janet Schwegel	Director of Parliamentary Programs
Amanda LeBlanc	Deputy Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>

9 a.m. Wednesday, December 21, 2022

[Mr. Hanson in the chair]

The Chair: Good morning, everyone. I'd like to call this meeting of the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship to order and welcome everyone in attendance. My name is David Hanson, MLA for Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul and chair of the committee.

I'd ask that members and those joining the committee at the table introduce themselves for the record. We'll begin to my right.

Mr. Feehan: Richard Feehan, MLA for Edmonton-Rutherford.

Mr. Turton: Good morning, everyone. Searle Turton, MLA for Spruce Grove-Stony Plain.

Mr. Getson: Good morning, Shane Getson, the MLA for Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland.

Mr. Dach: Morning. Welcome to everybody on this frosty morning in the territories of treaties 6, 7, and 8 who might be listening in the province of Alberta in the beautiful country of Canada. I'm Lorne Dach, MLA for Edmonton-McClung.

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

Dr. Williamson: Good morning. Christina Williamson, research officer.

Ms Robert: Morning. Nancy Robert, clerk of *Journals* and committees.

Mr. Huffman: Good morning. Warren Huffman, committee clerk.

The Chair: Thank you.

A few housekeeping items to address before we turn to the business at hand. Please note that the microphones are operated by *Hansard* staff. Committee proceedings are live streamed on the Internet and broadcast on Alberta Assembly TV. The audio- and videostream and transcripts of meetings can be accessed via the Legislative Assembly website. Those participating by video-conference are encouraged to please turn on your camera while speaking and mute your microphones when not speaking. Members participating virtually who wish to be placed on the speakers list are asked to e-mail or message the committee clerk, and the members in the room are asked to please signal to the chair. Please set your cellphones and other devices to silent for the duration of the meeting.

Before we get going with this meeting and since we have members joining us remotely, we need to address the issue of teleconferencing and videoconferencing before continuing. Section 6 of the Legislative Assembly Act authorizes members of committees of the Legislative Assembly to participate by teleconference or other methods of communication if unanimous consent is granted.

The committee had passed a motion on June 25, 2019, to approve teleconferencing for the duration of the 30th Legislature, and on July 7, 2020, the committee passed a motion to allow videoconferencing but not for the duration of the 30th Legislature. So in order to continue permitting members to participate using videoconference, the committee will need to pass a motion to that effect. I would note that this decision would not preclude the committee from determining in advance that in-person attendance at a specific meeting is required.

Would there be a member willing to move a motion to authorize participation by videoconference? Moved by Richard Feehan that

for the duration of the 30th Legislature the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship permit Members of the Legislative Assembly to participate in committee meetings by videoconference subject to the proviso that the committee may require members' attendance in person at a particular meeting upon passage of a motion to that effect.

Having heard the motion, all those in the room in favour, please say aye. Any opposed?

That motion is carried.

Now that we've passed that motion, I'd like to go to those joining us via videoconference to introduce themselves for the record. Please introduce yourself as I call your names. Member Ganley.

Ms Ganley: Good morning. Kathleen Ganley, Calgary-Mountain View.

The Chair: Member Issik.

Ms Issik: Good morning. Whitney Issik, Calgary-Glenmore.

The Chair: Thank you.

Member Sigurdson.

Mr. Sigurdson: Thank you, Chair. MLA Sigurdson for Highwood.

The Chair: Member Singh.

Mr. Singh: Good morning, everyone. Peter Singh, MLA, Calgary-East.

The Chair: And Member Orr.

Mr. Orr: Morning, everybody. Ron Orr, Lacombe-Ponoka. Thank you.

The Chair: All right. Approval of the agenda. Are there any changes or additions to the draft agenda? If not, would someone like to make a motion to approve the agenda? Moved by Mr. Getson that the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship approve the draft agenda for today's meeting as distributed. All those in favour, please say aye. Any opposed? The motion is carried.

Next we have the draft minutes of our June 11, 2021, meeting. Are there any errors or omissions to note? If not, would a member like to make a motion to approve the minutes? Moved by Mr. Getson that the minutes of the June 11, 2021, meeting of the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship be approved as distributed. All those in favour of that motion, please say aye. Any opposed, please say no. That motion is carried.

We'll move on to item 5, the mandate, Government Motion 7, and draft schedule. Hon. members, on November 30, 2022, the Assembly passed Government Motion 7, which referred to the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship the review of the Conflicts of Interest Act. Pursuant to clause (c) of Government Motion 7 and section 48 of the act the committee has 12 months to complete its review. This means that the committee must conclude its work by December 21, 2023.

As we are now into the Fourth Session of the 30th Legislature, many of you have participated in a statute review by a legislative policy committee and will have the general idea of the process involved in a statute review like the kind we have before us. Some of the common practices in the conduct of these kinds of reviews have included hearing technical briefings from relevant ministries, agencies, and offices of the Legislative Assembly, requesting research documents from Legislative Assembly Office research services, and receiving written and oral presentations from stakeholders and, if appropriate, the public.

When the committee feels it has collected sufficient information to begin deliberations, the committee will determine whether any recommendations will be made in relation to the Conflicts of Interest Act. The review is then concluded by drafting and presenting a report to the Legislative Assembly on the committee's review. Are there any general questions about the process of conducting this review?

Hearing none, hon. members, in the course of conducting similar reviews, other committees have found it useful to develop a timeline to guide their progress. The committee did establish a subcommittee on committee business back in 2019, consisting of the chair, deputy chair, and a member of the government caucus, that could be tasked with developing and proposing such a timeline. However, the subcommittee has never met. Additionally, it would take time for the subcommittee to meet, prepare a review timeline, and then for the committee to review it.

Alternatively, it might make a little more sense for the committee to direct the committee clerk to prepare a draft timeline for the committee's consideration.

I would like to open the floor to any comments, questions, or motions in relation to developing a timeline of our review for the Conflicts of Interest Act. Is there any discussion anybody wants to have on that topic? Mr. Dach.

Mr. Dach: In the past what have the timelines been? I think we've had a statutory review of this act roughly three times in the last – well, since the statutory review was required. Those timelines have been what length of time in the past?

Ms Robert: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Dach, the timeline, as the chair indicated earlier, is a year, and typically nearly an entire year has been taken to go through that process. Typically the committee will ask for research like crossjurisdictional comparisons and things like that. It will seek stakeholder written submissions, usually stakeholder oral presentations, often public written submissions. Typically those written submission periods are about a month long each in order to allow people the time to prepare submissions.

Then the research group will put together an issues and recommendations document, and then the committee will gather to go over issues and make some recommendations. It certainly takes several of the 12 months, but it can be done sooner if the committee is determined to meet very, very frequently. In the past it has typically taken nearly the entire year. I hope that helps.

Thanks.

Mr. Dach: A quick follow-up if I may, just because it seems to me that we may be coming up against budget estimates. Do these meetings typically overlap with budget estimates? Committees don't meet during estimates, correct?

The Chair: Go ahead.

Ms Robert: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Correct. This committee is not permitted to meet while the main estimates are on because, of course, it's tasked with the main estimates. You'll be quite busy with that. That's usually about a two-week period in March, so certainly the committee would not be able to consider this review during that time.

Mr. Dach: Just a final inquiry, basically, to the chair. I think it's the chair's hope to have this wrapped up by spring, so given that it has taken up to a year and we're overlapping with estimates, what's the chair's vision for a timeline?

9:10

The Chair: Thank you for that, Mr. Dach. I know that when we first were assigned with this last week, I got a little excited about it and thought: well, you know, maybe we can get this thing pushed through. But looking into the act and looking at the other previous reviews of the act, I think it's far too important of a document to try and push it through.

When I looked at the timelines, I wasn't thinking about the budget estimates. I think pretty much the entire month of March is going to be gone with that. So in order to do a proper process, I don't think we're going to be able to make that ambitious deadline that I had of May 1.

But there is some more discussion. I've got two other people on the list here. Mr. Orr, go ahead.

Mr. Orr: Thank you. Yeah. I agree with the direction that Mr. Dach started this off going and your initial question about how we get a timeline. I think we should actually just ask the clerk to do it in light of the fact that the committee hasn't met.

Not only have we got estimates coming, but – let's be realistic here – we have an election coming up in the spring. No matter what happens in that election, this committee is going to probably be substantially reconstituted with members. Therefore, there's also that to take into account in order to get this done. I think we should just ask the clerk to take those two major obstacles, if I can call them that, to our progress into account and propose a timeline for us.

That's my suggestion. Thank you. If you want, I can make a motion, but, anyway, I'll leave it at that for now.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Orr.

Member Ganley.

Ms Ganley: Yes. Thank you. My comments were much the same in terms of timeline. I think as well, Mr. Chair, you had mentioned the subcommittee and the fact that they tend to slow progress somewhat. I think the only other thing I wanted to say was that I think I'm on the record fairly vehemently about my opinion on subcommittees: they meet off the record, taking the substance that is, in my view, public business away from the public. So it would be my view that we would avoid a subcommittee if at all possible.

Thanks.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Feehan: Well, in some sense, my concerns have just been addressed. I'm wondering, then, if we could set a timeline merely for informing the community about the review and seeking written submissions and not worry about all the rest of it until after the election. So the consideration of this committee would be done after the election, I would think.

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms Robert.

Ms Robert: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for that, Mr. Feehan. I guess my only caution about seeking input is that if we dissolve in May, which I'm hearing that we will, this committee will no longer exist. The motion that referred the review to this committee will be dead; it'll have to be referred again. Certainly, some research, if you, say, were to direct research services to prepare a crossjurisdictional: that information could be brought and offered to the new committee. But I would think that any submissions that were made this winter and this spring – you know, the organization would have to recontact all of those people to say: "Does your

submission still stand? Do you want to change it? Do you want to submit something new?"

That would be my only caution, that you might want to perhaps delay that part until the committee is reconstituted after the election and then seek that kind of input, but it's totally up to the committee. We can and have done in the past what you're suggesting, received that feedback and then contacted every person that responded to say, like, six months later or whatever time it's going to be: "You know, you submitted this last February. Do you still stand by this? Do you want it to account to this new committee? Do you want to add anything? Do you want to change anything?"

Mr. Feehan: So is there anything that can be done now to make the life of the committee easier post-election? I'm getting the sense we're either trying to get this all done pre-election, which seems completely unrealistic, or just basically we're putting this off until after the election. Is there a half-and-half place?

The Chair: I think that there's a certain amount of research that we could assign that isn't going to really have an effect whether it's done this spring or in the fall. The cross-jurisdictional study could be accomplished. Is there anything else that you can think of that would make sense?

Ms Robert: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes. Certainly, the committee could task research services with preparing a stakeholder list that the committee could have a look at. That's not something that's likely to change measurably in terms of content between now and the summer, if there were to be a session in the summer. You could also ask for a technical briefing from the Ethics Commissioner and from the department if you wanted to, or you could also wait on that if you wanted to wait on it since, I think, Mr. Orr made the comment that the committee may be made up of a whole bunch of different people come the new Legislature. That would be up to the committee to decide.

The Chair: Okay. Committee members, anything else? Go ahead, Mr. Getson.

Mr. Getson: Yeah. Just listening here intently to the realistic timelines, it sounds like all the technical briefings could be done pre-writ so at least we could have that work done. Regardless of which committee members come back later, we'll have that taken care of. It sounds like typically it takes over a year anyway to do the justice that is required for it. Maybe, Mr. Chair, what we can do is go back to the original request here to have the clerks come up with a timeline. What I would propose is that they show that the front-end technical briefings take place in the first part of that timeline and then realistically show which items can take place post-writ so we don't lose any traction and, quite frankly, we don't have you folks double handling information back and forth.

The Chair: Okay. If I could summarize, I think what we're hearing is that the committee would continue with some of the work that could be done that's going to benefit the next committee, however set up: cross-jurisdictional research, technical briefings from the two typical ministers that would brief this committee, and then the stakeholders list, that probably wouldn't change a whole lot. If we could get those three things accomplished prior to – is everybody kind of in . . .

Ms Robert: Could I just add one more thing?

The Chair: Go ahead. Yes. Absolutely.

Ms Robert: The other point is that when the Assembly passes the new motion to refer the statute again, it could also indicate in the motion that the information that was received by this committee could be used by the next committee. That's also something that could be done.

The Chair: All right. Go ahead, Mr. Nielsen.

Mr. Nielsen: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Just with the stakeholder list – I mean, obviously, getting, you know, an initial list will be very, very helpful. If there are any other names that pop up to committee members, would we still have the ability to add to that list as well?

The Chair: Absolutely, sir.

Mr. Nielsen: Awesome.

The Chair: All right. I think we're kind of all going on the same path here. I apologize as a chair for getting a little excited. I try to do things at the speed of business, not at the speed of government, and sometimes it gets me in trouble. If we could have a motion to that effect, that we would ask for the clerks to draft a timeline. If somebody could do that.

Mr. Feehan: Are we doing the three items separately, three different motions?

The Chair: Yeah. I think that's probably appropriate.

Mr. Feehan: Timeline, cross-jurisdictional, and stakeholders?

The Chair: Yes. He just happens to have it typed up, ready to go.

Mr. Feehan: That's why we love these people.

The Chair: Would somebody like to make that motion? Mr. Nielsen, thank you.

Mr. Nielsen: Looks like it's the exact wording that I would have used.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Nielsen, and read it into the record, sir.

Mr. Nielsen: I move that

the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship direct the committee clerk to develop a draft timeline for the committee's review of the Conflicts of Interest Act at a future meeting of the committee.

The Chair: Perfect. Having heard the motion, all those in favour of the motion, please say aye. Any opposed?

That motion is carried.

Mr. Orr: Kathleen Ganley has a question.

The Chair: Go ahead, Member Ganley.

Ms Ganley: Yeah. Sorry. It wasn't totally on this specific motion. Just so I understand what we're suggesting, we're going to get a timeline drafted. The timeline will involve asking for the preparation of briefing materials by research services, but that's not going to be presented, right? The technical briefing. If we anticipate that this committee may have different membership once it's making decisions, I don't know that we necessarily need the current committee members briefed. I just want to get an idea of what – like, whether we're asking research services to start preparing so they can brief a committee sort of post-May or what's going on.

9:20

The Chair: Thank you, Member Ganley. I think my understanding is that if we had the technical briefings up front, say in early February, that will all be a matter of record of the committee, so it could be presented to the future committee for their use. They would have the option, if they wanted to, of having another technical briefing. I think it just kind of puts the wheels in motion for this part of the committee and does a little bit of the upfront work for the future committee, because, again, they're going to be tossed into this quite likely in the fall of next year. Just trying to get as much of the work done up front, and hopefully it isn't redundant. Any other ideas? Go ahead, Mr. Feehan.

Mr. Feehan: I wonder if I could just ask. Anything we decide: when the new committee is constructed after an election, they can just redecide anything, right? They can go back? Okay. We're not binding them in any way whatsoever. I didn't think so, but I thought I'd check.

The Chair: No. Like I said, I think we're just trying to get some of the upfront work done. I think that it will be a benefit. If it was my position to take over that committee and a bunch of that upfront work had been done, you know, having a meeting with the new group and having a discussion on what stuff was going to be accepted and where they want to go, I think that would be totally up to them.

Mr. Orr.

Mr. Orr: Thanks. Clarification further. So the current version of the committee gets dissolved. The new committee gets appointed and has to be retasked with the job of reviewing the act. I guess I'm interpreting, then, that the new committee would have a year from the start date that they are tasked to do this, not the start date that we have been tasked to do it with. Correct?

The Chair: That's correct. That's correct, Mr. Orr.

Mr. Turton: I'm willing to put forth that motion, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Which one was that?

Mr. Turton: Regarding technical briefings, if possible, to kind of help sum up the conversation.

The Chair: Okay. Is there any further discussion on it before we move on to motions?

Go ahead, Mr. Turton.

Mr. Turton: Yes. Thank you. I move that the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship invite a technical briefing on the Conflicts of Interest Act from officials from Alberta Justice and the office of the Ethics Commissioner of Alberta at a future meeting of the committee.

I can speak to that as well.

The Chair: Okay. Any discussion on the motion? Did you want to speak to it, Mr. Turton? Go ahead.

Mr. Turton: Yeah. I think, in your words, Mr. Chair, this kind of gets the ball rolling. It allows maybe at least notice that we are going to be requesting this information, and I believe these technical briefings can be used by the future committee as well, so I think this will help at least move the ball down the field a little bit. You know, obviously, with the future meeting of the committee aspect of the motion it just gives a little bit more flexibility for us to be able to do it as well.

The Chair: Thank you, sir.
Ms Ganley.

Ms Ganley: Yeah. I guess my point would just be that it doesn't move the ball down the field at all. If I was a future member of this committee – I mean, assuming I hadn't been in this instance, so projecting some hypothetical new person that's on this committee – I would expect to be briefed by officials. I would expect to get to ask my own set of questions for my own understanding. I don't think I would find the fact that a previous committee had had a briefing particularly helpful in that respect. I guess my point is that the purpose is to put the information in front of the decision-makers. If this committee isn't the decision-makers, I feel like putting the information in front of us doesn't actually make any progress.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.
Go ahead, Mr. Getson.

Mr. Getson: Yeah. I think we're half-pregnant either way we do it here. We're trying to get as much work as we can on the front end. The clerks are going to be doing this work regardless of whether this is the same people sitting around the table postelection or after. At least they can get the timelines together. They can get the technical briefs that are internal. They're not having to redouble their efforts or wait again for another six months before they get started. If it were me coming in from the outside, I would appreciate having something to start with. If the new committee decides to throw that in the trash can or to use it for the good work that it would be, I think at least our committee at this point is, quite frankly, putting the people's money to work and using the time that we have appropriately. I would support the motion. I think that we should at least do something, not sit around, wait to do nothing because there's going to be an election in six months.

The Chair: Thank you.

I'd just like to add to the committee members that we have been given an assignment by the Legislature through Motion 7. We have the unfortunate knowledge of upcoming events, but we have to act as a committee like we don't have that foreknowledge of budget estimates and an election coming in May. We technically have work to do, so I think it's important that we do follow with that. As chair, my own personal opinion, I think we have to carry on with the work of the committee.

Go ahead, Mr. Feehan.

Mr. Feehan: I think the point here is that there are two separate things. One of them is getting the work done behind the scenes by our excellent staff who bring together the information, but actually presenting it to the committee seems to be the waste of time because the committee won't be the committee. Can we just ask them to, you know, produce a report without actually expecting that it'll be presented to this committee? There's no point in them presenting to us if we're not even here. Some of us won't even be here no matter what.

The Chair: Mr. Singh, I see you have your hand up.

Mr. Singh: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to support this motion here. I think that it has been a common practice to invite technical briefings from the Ministry of Justice and the office of the Ethics Commissioner as they are more familiar with the legislation that is the subject of review of the committee. This will ensure us to have a full enough understanding of the Conflicts of Interest Act, and

should we have some questions later, I think they are in the best position to answer them. Having said that, I support this motion.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Singh.

Go ahead, Mr. Getson.

Mr. Getson: Yeah. Just to respond to that, I appreciate the fulsome discussion. I do, folks. I think I'm of a different mindset. If the clerks are going to do this work and we're still sitting as a committee, they present it to us. At that point, Mr. Feehan, we can say either thumbs-up or thumbs-down. The new committee can take that on the record. Whether we approve on a list, whether we approve on a timeline: that's inconsequential, but at least this committee either says thumbs-up or thumbs-down. To leave it just to be in the wind – I honestly think that if I was coming in and I didn't have the previous committee give it a sniff test, I would be hesitant to accept any of it, and I'd probably start over. At least if we're moving the ball downfield and we spent the time, the capital, and the effort for it, then at least we can do, I think, our fiduciary duty, to say either thumbs-up or thumbs-down with the work that the clerks have done.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Getson.

Mr. Singh, you have your hand up again, or is that . . .

Mr. Singh: It was from before. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Yes. Thank you, Mr. Getson. Just like I said previously, you know, we can't ignore the fact that we've been given an assignment and we have some work to do.

If there is no other discussion on that motion, we will vote on that motion.

Having heard the motion by Mr. Turton, all those in favour, please say aye. Any opposed, please say no.

I would say the ayes have it.

Moving on. That was for the technical briefing. We need other motions, one for crossjurisdictional and one for the stakeholders list. Okay. One common research item that past committees have found beneficial during a statute review is a crossjurisdictional comparison of similar legislation. I'll open the floor to a discussion and any motions on this subject.

Mr. Getson.

Mr. Getson: Yeah. I'd question back to our wonderful clerk staff who span electoral cycles, which is awesome, to have that tribal knowledge. How long does that typically take, and do you anticipate any changes, I guess, since the last time you performed these duties in regard to a crossjurisdictional review?

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms Robert.

Ms Robert: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah. Crossjurisdictionals: they're a mouthful. They're a big project, but you're right. We build on the one that we would have done the last time, five years ago, but of course legislation changes. Sometimes new legislation gets enacted and you need to kind of add that into the project, but it's something that I would say takes a month or two to prepare. Would you say that's . . . [interjection] Yeah. A month or two to prepare. Certainly, you know, it's something that could be prepared and provided to this committee during this winter.

9:30

The Chair: Sometime in April kind of thing would be . . .

Ms Robert: Possibly even before. Whenever the committee thinks they might need it. We will endeavour to make sure that we have it ready for you.

The Chair: Thank you. I'll look at the timeline. If it's going to be a month or two – that's January, February – then we're right into budget estimates, so I would say probably a presentation sometime in April to the committee would be reasonable. Would that be . . .

Ms Robert: Certainly.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you. All right.

Any other discussion, or would somebody like to make the motion? Mr. Huffman will read it into the record.

Mr. Huffman: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's not working on the projectors and on the screen right now, but I'll just read it into the record. Moved by a member that

the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship direct research services to prepare a crossjurisdictional review of legislation in relation to the committee's review of the Conflicts of Interest Act for an upcoming meeting of the committee.

The Chair: Does that sound reasonable?

Mr. Getson: I'll read it in.

The Chair: Mr. Getson to make that motion. Is he going to have to read it in again, or is that good? You're good. Mr. Getson, thank you.

Any discussion on the motion? Hearing and seeing none, all those in favour of the motion, please say aye. Any opposed, please say no.

That motion is carried.

We'll move on to the stakeholders list. Hon. members, I would also now open discussion on developing a stakeholders list. As members know, it is common practice to develop a list of organizations and persons as stakeholders, who the committee specifically identifies for their expertise and knowledge, for the purposes of seeking information from them.

There are a couple of ways the committee can go about doing this. We can task research services with compiling a draft stakeholder list to be brought before the committee for our next meeting for review and approval. We could also have each caucus suggest stakeholders and compile a list based on those suggestions. If the committee elects to have research services prepare a draft stakeholders list, the committee members will of course have an opportunity to review the list and provide input prior to it being finalized.

At this time I would like to open the floor to the discussion and any motions relating to the manner of developing a list of stakeholders the committee might wish to call upon.

I see Member Issik has her hand up. Go ahead.

Ms Issik: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to clarify that this stakeholder list, as it's developed – you've noted several different ways in which it might be developed. I want to make sure that the members of the committee that follow after the next election will also have the opportunity to have input into that list of stakeholders.

The Chair: That would absolutely be up to the next committee to make those decisions. They're free to add or delete from that list.

Ms Issik: If I might, Mr. Chair, if this is presented to the committee prior to the election, this list, in whatever form it's developed, I just

want to be clear that that's not necessarily the final list of stakeholders for this consideration.

The Chair: No, it would not be. Once the new committee is formed and a motion is put forward from the floor assigning them to review the act, it starts the clock brand new. Whether they use the materials that we provide them or not is up to them. They can accept our submissions, stakeholder list completely, partially, or start it completely anew again. It's totally up to them.

Ms Issik: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: You're welcome.
Mr. Singh.

Mr. Singh: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to know how the previous stakeholder list has been developed, how we develop it. How long does it take?

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms Robert.

Ms Robert: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr. Singh. In the past research services has been tasked with drafting a draft list for approval of the committee, and then sometimes the committee will then add a few names, and then it's finalized. The process, I would say, could probably be completed in about a week, something like that. Yeah.

Mr. Singh: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's fast, though.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Singh.
Go ahead, Mr. Dach.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just for clarity, I believe that research just about answered my question. I wanted to know: should we instruct research services to develop a draft stakeholders list, when they come back with that list, potentially in January or so, at that point do we still have options as a committee to add to it? That's, I believe, what she said.

The Chair: Yeah. Absolutely, Mr. Dach. The list would be provided, and then we have to actually vote on it and accept it as a committee. During that time the discussion would be open to add people to it or companies or organizations to that list as well. Lots of opportunities there.

Mr. Dach: On what basis would we be adding them? Just anybody can make an amendment to add anybody, or would there be equivalent numbers for either side?

The Chair: Oh, now you want me to be fair?

Mr. Dach: Just saying.

The Chair: Yeah. You know, just a reminder. I believe this act has been reviewed three times previously, so there's probably a pretty comprehensive list of stakeholders that – some may still be around; some maybe not. We can definitely add to them as we see fit as a committee.

Mr. Dach: Thank you.

Mr. Feehan: So we can just order the stakeholders list now, and then when we see it, we can make the opportunity for additions by both sides?

The Chair: Absolutely. I would encourage committee members to think about it, you know, over the next couple weeks, over Christmas

while you're having your eggnog. You know, if there's somebody that comes to mind, jot it down so that when we get the stakeholders list, those organizations don't get left out if you feel they're important. Absolutely. We'll have input from everyone to make that list as useful as we can, I guess, for the next committee group.

All right. Any further discussion on this motion? There is no motion yet. Oh.

Mr. Huffman: But I have one ready.

The Chair: Mr. Huffman just happens to have one written up here. Would somebody like to make that motion?

Mr. Turton: I'll make it, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Mr. Turton.

Mr. Orr: I'll do it as written on here.

The Chair: Mr. Turton has already spoken up. Sorry, Mr. Orr.

Mr. Turton: I move that
the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship direct research services to create a draft list of stakeholders in relation to its review of the Conflicts of Interest Act for review at an upcoming meeting of the committee.

The Chair: Having heard the motion, is there any other further discussion on the motion?

Hearing and seeing none, all those in favour of the motion, please say aye. Any opposed?

That motion is carried.

We have next on our list – yeah. We do have two other items on the list. I'd like to open up the floor for discussion on public written submissions and communications plan. I think what I'm hearing from the discussions we've had so far is that those would be kind of redundant exercises, so we may – but again, it's up to the committee. Go ahead, Mr. Getson.

Mr. Getson: Yeah, Mr. Chair. I'm kind of of the same context or the same mindset. I think we should ride the clutch on these ones and leave that for the new committee or whatever we can in those regards. Again, if we do a bunch of work on the front end, the other group may or may not see it. We might have new stakeholders, we might have new submissions, et cetera. In all likelihood I would think that would go for the communications plan as well. If we just want to do that one clean sweep, that's where my thoughts are: just ride the clutch on these ones.

The Chair: Thank you.
Any other discussion?

Mr. Feehan: Yeah. We're at item 6 now?

The Chair: Not yet. No. We're still on 5.

Mr. Feehan: Oh, not yet. Okay. Sorry.

9:40

The Chair: Yeah. Again, I agree with Mr. Getson. Like I said before, we still have to, you know, charge down like we're heading for the goal line, so to speak, because we have been given the assignment. So we have to carry on. I'd like us to focus more on stuff that's going to be meaningful to the next committee, but at the same time we have to go down the path like we don't know what's coming in the future. It's kind of a tough situation to be in. But I do agree, Mr. Getson, that we should probably just idle on those.

Is there any other discussion on that? Do we need a motion to that effect, or do we just kind of carry on? All right.

We'll move on to item 6. The one final item we should discuss is the request from the SouthGrow Regional Economic Development group to present to the committee. They sent a request to present to the committee back on November 26, 2021. The committee should decide if it would like to hear the presentation at a future meeting, and I'll open the floor to discussion on that item as well.

Is there any discussion? Go ahead, Mr. Feehan.

Mr. Feehan: I'd just like to support SouthGrow Regional Economic Development, the opportunity to come and present to the committee. I think the information would be useful to the committee regardless of whether it's presented before or after the election.

The Chair: Okay. My question to the clerk, then, would be: I know that we passed standing orders to allow other things to take place, so is there a timeline where we would have some space to maybe set up and meet with these folks?

Ms Robert: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Certainly, as long as it's not during main estimates. The committee is certainly welcome – you're right. The standing orders were amended to permit a committee that is tasked with a statute review or something else from the Assembly to also consider and do other work if the committee determines that time permits for that.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Getson.

Mr. Getson: Yeah. So the time of the estimates and all those different things – we have an Energy Caucus, that I'm a co-chair of, so I can take that on as well, and then under economic corridors this one kind of sits within that wheelhouse, so outside of this committee. I'm just throwing that on the table for folks, that I can probably meet with this group a heck of a lot quicker than we could with the committees and then not have those delays during estimates, et cetera.

I'm with Mr. Feehan on this. I really like what they're up to, and I would be more than happy to share that information with the members around the table afterwards if that would be the will of the committee. I can meet with them quick and give you an update on what's taking place. Again, not to preclude this group or any other writing in letters and wanting to meet with us specifically, but it's just since they've been, since November of last year – I feel, quite frankly, kind of compelled to meet with them sooner than later.

The Chair: It has been kind of tough to organize those things over the last couple of years, meeting in person especially. Do we have any idea of what timeline they're looking for, how much time they would want? Has there been any indication at all?

Go ahead, Mr. Huffman.

Mr. Huffman: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I haven't had any discussions about how long it would be, but I think that generally this type of thing is one meeting, and it's maybe 20 minutes for their presentation and then 40 minutes of Q and A afterwards. I think that's the whole process there. I stand to be corrected if there's more.

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms Robert.

Ms Robert: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The only other thing, of course, is that then we would prepare a report to the Assembly, and you as chair would present the report in the Assembly. It would just basically outline that we heard from them, and that's it, a pretty basic report. So up to the committee.

The Chair: MLA Ganley, I see your hand is up. Go ahead.

Ms Ganley: Yeah. I guess I just wanted to say that I think it's possible for multiple groups to meet with the same stakeholder. I'm happy to have them come and make a presentation to the committee. I think they requested to present to the committee, and I think that that's a good idea. It's really interesting work that they're doing. Yeah, I mean, I'm happy to make a motion to do that. If Mr. Getson wants to meet with them separately sooner and that's amenable to them, that seems fine also.

The Chair: I have a question for the clerks, then. If we've already passed motions for a technical briefing, would it be possible to combine two meetings so that we can do it the same day rather than have the committee reconvene just specifically for that? Okay. So that is allowable. Is that something the committee would agree to, then, that we set up the technical briefing and bring these folks in at the same time if it fits in with their calendar as well?

Mr. Getson: I guess I would just offer, again through those other avenues, to Ms Ganley's point: I will be reaching out to them again. I feel kind of compelled, with the work they're doing, to put a nice bow and a ribbon on it. If that works, that we want to meet with them again as a fulsome group, I have no issues.

The Chair: Sorry. Mr. Dach had something.

Mr. Dach: I was saying that we would need to be honouring SouthGrow's request to meet with the committee. If we were going to ask them to meet, it should be to meet with the committee and not rely upon a subcommittee of one to report back to the committee.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dach.
Go ahead, Mr. Turton.

Mr. Turton: Thank you very much. I support the motion as put forth by Member Ganley. I think this group did ask to come before this legislative committee, which is public and transparent and open to the public. I support them presenting in that fashion in the same manner that other groups have come before other legislative committees as well. I don't see any harm with them coming here. I actually think it will be a positive aspect to have their voice put into the public discussion.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Turton.

Ms Ganley, does that fit in? As a committee I'm more than happy to meet with these folks. They've been very patient. If we can actually set it up so that we do it the same day as our technical briefing, I'd be happy to entertain that if that's the will of the committee.

Ms Ganley: Yeah, and I'd be happy to move a motion to that effect . . .

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Ms Ganley: . . . if somebody wants to draft one for me.

The Chair: Mr. Huffman just happens to have one drafted up, so go ahead.

Ms Ganley: How convenient.

The Chair: Would you like to read that into the record?

Ms Ganley: Yes. I move that the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship invite representatives from SouthGrow Regional Economic Development to make a presentation at a future meeting of the committee.

The Chair: Thank you very much. Is there any discussion on the motion?

Seeing and hearing none, all those in favour of the motion, please say aye. Any opposed?

That motion is also carried.

Thank you very much.

Are there any other issues for discussion before we wrap up today's meeting?

Mr. Feehan: You had made an allusion earlier to a subcommittee that existed?

Mr. Getson: Yeah.

Mr. Feehan: I'm wondering: does that subcommittee still exist? Is it still on the record as a committee?

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms Robert.

Ms Robert: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I believe it was constituted at the beginning of the Legislature. I believe, if I'm not mistaken, that it lasts for the entirety of the Legislature. It just hasn't been very active.

Mr. Feehan: I guess, then, I wonder whether I can make a motion to disband the subcommittee. No?

Ms Robert: I believe that in the standing orders this legislative policy committee is required to have a subcommittee formed.

Mr. Feehan: Oh. Okay. Great.

The Chair: Apparently, we didn't just do it on a whim.

Mr. Feehan: Okay. It seems funny to have a subcommittee that isn't in practice used.

Ms Robert: It's at the ready, just in case.

The Chair: Well, we could assign it something.

All right. Okay. The date of the next meeting will be at the call of the chair. I will be in touch with research services, and we'll try and line something up for the technical briefing at the soonest possible, probably the first week of February, somewhere in that area if we can. We'll invite the group SouthGrow Regional Economic Development to come and present at the same time.

If there's nothing else for the committee's consideration, I'll call for a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Nielsen: So moved.

The Chair: Mr. Nielsen is on the record. All in favour? Any opposed?

Mr. Turton: No. I'm having so much fun.

The Chair: He doesn't want to go back out in the cold.

Thank you very much, everybody, for your patience with me today. This meeting is adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 9:49 a.m.]

