



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 30th Legislature  
First Session

Standing Committee  
on  
Public Accounts

Environment and Parks

Tuesday, October 22, 2019  
8:30 a.m.

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**Legislative Assembly of Alberta  
The 30th Legislature  
First Session**

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts**

Phillips, Shannon, Lethbridge-West (NDP), Chair  
Gotfried, Richard, Calgary-Fish Creek (UCP), Deputy Chair  
Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (NDP), Acting Chair

Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (UCP)  
Feehan, Richard, Edmonton-Rutherford (NDP)  
Guthrie, Peter F., Airdrie-Cochrane (UCP)  
Hoffman, Sarah, Edmonton-Glenora (NDP)  
Nixon, Jeremy P., Calgary-Klein (UCP)  
Renaud, Marie F., St. Albert (NDP)  
Rosin, Miranda D., Banff-Kananaskis (UCP)  
Rowswell, Garth, Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright (UCP)  
Schmidt, Marlin, Edmonton-Gold Bar (NDP)\*  
Stephan, Jason, Red Deer-South (UCP)  
Toor, Devinder, Calgary-Falconridge (UCP)  
Turton, Searle, Spruce Grove-Stony Plain (UCP)  
Walker, Jordan, Sherwood Park (UCP)

\* substitution for Shannon Phillips

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Eric Leonty	Assistant Auditor General

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Jody Rempel	Committee Clerk
Aaron Roth	Committee Clerk
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## **Standing Committee on Public Accounts**

### **Participants**

#### Ministry of Environment and Parks

John Conrad, Assistant Deputy Minister, Operations

Tom Davis, Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services

Ronda Goulden, Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy and Planning

Justin Wheler, Executive Director, Regulatory and Compliance

Bev Yee, Deputy Minister

#### Alberta Conservation Association

Todd Zimmerling, President and Chief Executive Officer



8:30 a.m.

Tuesday, October 22, 2019

[Mr. Dach in the chair]

**The Acting Chair:** Good morning, everyone. I'd like to call the meeting, the meeting of the Standing Committee of Public Accounts, to order and welcome everyone in attendance.

My name is Lorne Dach, MLA for Edmonton-McClung, and chair of the committee for today. I would ask that members, staff, and guests joining the committee at the table introduce themselves for the record – and I'll then go to the members on the phone lines – starting with Mr. Gotfried, to my right.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Good morning. Richard Gotfried, MLA, Calgary-Fish Creek, and deputy chair.

**Mr. Rowswell:** Garth Rowswell, Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright.

**Ms Rosin:** Miranda Rosin, Banff-Kananaskis.

**Mr. Stephan:** Jason Stephan, Red Deer-South.

**Mr. Guthrie:** Peter Guthrie, Airdrie-Cochrane.

**Mr. Walker:** Jordan Walker, Sherwood Park.

**Mr. Toor:** Devinder Toor, Calgary-Falconridge.

**Mr. Jeremy Nixon:** Jeremy Nixon, Calgary-Klein.

**Mr. Turton:** Searle Turton, Spruce Grove-Stony Plain.

**Mr. Barnes:** Good morning. Drew Barnes, Cypress-Medicine Hat.

**Ms Goulden:** Ronda Goulden, assistant deputy minister of policy and planning, Alberta Environment and Parks.

**Mr. Davis:** Tom Davis, assistant deputy minister, corporate services division, Environment and Parks.

**Ms Yee:** Good morning. My name is Bev Yee. I'm Deputy Minister of Environment and Parks.

**Mr. Conrad:** Good morning. John Conrad, assistant deputy minister, operations, Alberta Environment and Parks.

**Dr. Zimmerling:** Todd Zimmerling, president and CEO of the Alberta Conservation Association.

**Mr. Leonty:** Eric Leonty, Assistant Auditor General.

**Mr. Wylie:** Doug Wylie, Auditor General.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Marlin Schmidt, Edmonton-Gold Bar.

**Mr. Feehan:** Richard Feehan, Edmonton-Rutherford.

**Ms Renaud:** Marie Renaud, St. Albert.

**Dr. Massolin:** Good morning. Philip Massolin, clerk of committees and research services.

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

**The Acting Chair:** Thank you, all.

I'd note for the record the following substitutions: Mr. Lorne Dach as chair and Mr. Marlin Schmidt for Ms Phillips.

I have a few housekeeping items to address before we turn to the business at hand. Please note that the microphones are operated by *Hansard*. Please set cellphones and other devices to silent for the duration of the meeting. Committee proceedings are live streamed on the Internet and broadcast on Alberta Assembly TV. The audio- and video stream and transcripts of meetings can be accessed via the Legislative Assembly website.

I'll move to the first agenda item, the approval of the agenda. Are there any changes or additions to the agenda? Seeing none, would a member like to move? Mr. Turton. All in favour? Opposed? Carried. That motion was that we approve the agenda. No discussion on the motion, so we passed that.

Approval of the minutes. Hon. members, we have minutes from our previous meeting on October 15, 2019. Do members have any errors or omissions to note in regard to the October 15, 2019, minutes? If not, would a member move that the minutes of the October 15, 2019, meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be approved as distributed? All right. Mr. Rowswell. All in favour? Opposed? Thank you. Carried.

What we'd do now is move forward with the rest of our agenda, to the Ministry of Environment and Parks and Alberta Conservation Association, have a conversation about it. I'd like to welcome our guests from the Ministry of Environment and Parks and the Alberta Conservation Association, who are here to address the office of the Auditor General's outstanding recommendations as well as the ministry annual report 2018-19. I'd now invite officials from the Ministry of Environment and Parks and the Alberta Conservation Association to provide opening remarks not exceeding 10 minutes.

Please proceed.

**Ms Yee:** Thank you, Chair, and thank you, committee members. Good morning, everyone. I'm very pleased to be here today to provide an update of the department's accomplishments for the 2018-2019 year. I will also provide you with highlights of the department's ongoing implementation of recommendations from the office of the Auditor General.

If you indulge me, I'll reintroduce my colleagues here at the table. Joining me is Mr. Tom Davis, assistant deputy minister of the corporate services division; Ms Ronda Goulden, assistant deputy minister, policy and planning division; Mr. John Conrad, assistant deputy minister of our operations division; and Dr. Todd Zimmerling, president and chief executive officer of the Alberta Conservation Association. You'll notice that I'm also joined by many additional staff and members from the department and from my executive team as well as members from the minister's office, who are seated in the gallery behind us.

Throughout 2018-2019 Environment and Parks had many notable achievements. As a department we made some significant strides to achieve meaningful results against each of our four key outcomes identified in our annual report. On the outcome to ensure environmental and ecosystem health and integrity across the province, the department advanced various initiatives that contributed to expanded environmental monitoring and higher scientific standards for air, land, water, and biodiversity. These initiatives include the implementation of a multiyear strategic science plan, knowledge coproduction between indigenous and scientific knowledge systems, and community-based and citizen science programs.

Our department also continued to advance a multidepartmental effort for caribou range planning while minimizing the potential social and economic effects on communities in Alberta. We are also collaborating and engaging with indigenous peoples, industry, municipalities, environmental NGOs, and other stakeholders on caribou conservation efforts.

To support progress toward sustainable economic diversification, the department continued to support opportunities focused on environmental conservation, innovation, and technology. Since most of the province's economic activity occurs on public lands, the department has also focused on increasing competitiveness of economic activities on public lands by streamlining our regulatory processes and working to reduce land-use approval backlogs.

We know that many Albertans also value the social benefits provided by the province's vast natural resources, so the department has continued with improvements to the Alberta parks system to enhance access to provincial parks and to improve visitors' experiences. We've also made progress in fostering outdoor recreation opportunities that appropriately consider managing the increased activity on public lands, many activities of which compete with each other. Examples of this progress include the development and improvement of trails, supporting infrastructure, and reducing trail impacts in areas where there are species at risk as well as better co-ordination of enforcement in critical high-use areas.

Finally, our department took important steps to protect public health and safety from adverse environmental conditions and events by continuing to explore flood and drought mitigation to protect Albertans from future environment-related events. We have also moved strongly to reduce the risk of aquatic invasive species entering Alberta. This includes action on zebra mussels and quagga mussels.

Environment and Parks has also made substantial progress on recommendations from the Auditor General in the last year. Of the department's 18 outstanding recommendations nine are currently being completed by the program areas, two more are undergoing a preaudit, and seven have an OAG audit either scheduled or currently under way. The department has also cleared five outstanding recommendations from the previous year's list, which is evidence of our commitment towards continuous improvement.

While we are ready to respond to all of the 18 outstanding recommendations, I would like to highlight a few items. There are four outstanding recommendations pertaining to climate change. We've made excellent progress on these climate change recommendations in the past year, and three recommendations are currently undergoing an OAG follow-up audit with results expected this coming December. For the remaining outstanding recommendation related to climate change the department has also made substantive progress to address the Auditor General's concerns.

There are also four outstanding recommendations pertaining to flood mitigation in Alberta. For each of these four recommendations we have created an implementation plan that targets key risk areas, that identifies actions the department must take and has a timeline for completion. The department understands the importance of flood mitigation to help support emergency response and to build safer, more resilient communities across the province.

We have completed five science-based flood studies in March 2019 for the following areas: the upper Bow, the Bow and Elbow, the Highwood, Fort McMurray, and Peace River. Many components of these studies such as the flood inundation maps have been shared with municipalities and First Nations to support local emergency response and to begin the flood study finalization process. Six additional studies were completed in July 2019, and 10 additional flood studies are now under way. Together these 21 flood studies will create 1,500 kilometres of new or updated flood mapping through more than 60 municipalities across the province and five First Nations across Alberta.

The department has also made important progress to support flood mitigation decisions. We've developed an important tool, the provincial flood damage assessment tool, which enables the comparison of proposed mitigation measures to determine which measure or which combination of measures provides the best benefit for the cost. This tool gives the department the ability to consistently measure the probable cost of flooding across multiple communities.

8:40

Alberta Environment and Parks is continuing to work closely with other departments on issues related to flooding and flood protection. The department has consolidated flood mitigation within a single branch in order to improve situational awareness and efficiencies in managing projects. Although there is still work to be done, we are on track to enter two OAG audits by the end of the 2019-2020 fiscal year and will continue to work to resolve the two remaining outstanding recommendations related to flood mitigation.

Alberta has many important wetlands, which are home to important species of plants and animals. In order to ensure that these important parts of our ecosystem are sustained for future generations, the department is actively working to address the Auditor General's recommendation regarding wetland restoration. Environment and Parks is continuing to implement the Alberta wetland policy, and the department has a partnership agreement with Ducks Unlimited Canada.

Under changes made last year to the Alberta wetland policy, now municipalities can also do restoration work. This means more restoration work can be done locally and closer to where the original wetlands loss had occurred. We are also actively engaged with the county of Vermilion River and the city of Calgary to ensure these municipalities understand and fulfill their outstanding wetland obligations. In light of the department's work the OAG is in the preliminary planning phase for a follow-up audit, and we are hopeful the outstanding issues will be resolved in a timely manner.

Finally, I am pleased to say that the department has made progress in addressing the recommendation to improve the annual reporting process for the oil sands monitoring program. We are committed to creating a reporting program that is complete, that is clear, accurate, and timely. In fact, many of the recommendations have been addressed or are on target for completion. We are on target to complete the program's 2018-2019 annual report shortly to comply with the Auditor General's request. We are also continuing to work on the timeliness of financial reporting for the program to ensure that the unique nature of the program is actually presented.

Overall, this past year has been a very busy one for Alberta Environment and Parks. I'm pleased with all that we have accomplished, and I remain committed to addressing the remaining recommendations of the Auditor General. I want to thank the committee for its time, and we welcome the opportunity to answer your questions.

**The Acting Chair:** Thank you, Deputy Minister Yee.

I'll now turn it over to the Auditor General for his comments. Mr. Wylie, you have five minutes.

**Mr. Wylie:** Thank you, Chair. I'd just like to thank the deputy for the thorough update on the status of the recommendations to the committee. There indeed has been significant activity ongoing, as the deputy has indicated. I'd just like to inform the chair that on those recommendations where the department has indicated they are ready for our follow-up, we, as the deputy said, have started

preplanning or are indeed in the process of conducting that follow-up work and look forward to getting it done expeditiously. For example, one audit we will be reporting on later this month as well, so the follow-up work is ongoing, and we're looking forward to working with the department as we go forward to clear the rest of the recommendations.

Chair, I'll turn the rest of my time back to the committee. Thank you.

**The Acting Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Wylie, for your comments.

We'll now proceed to questions from committee members for our guests. As a reminder of the questioning rotation the first and second rotations will be 10 minutes each for the Official Opposition and government members. Our third rotation will be five minutes each for the Official Opposition and government members. The final rotation provides three-minute time slots each for any opposition committee member, followed by government members. This rotation provides members the opportunity to read questions into the record for follow-up answers by the ministry.

I'll now open the floor to questions from members, and I believe Mr. Schmidt has some questions to begin with from the opposition.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Yeah. Thank you. Thank you, Chair. Sorry; I'm substituting. Do I direct my questions to you, or can I speak directly to the . . .

**The Acting Chair:** Through the chair to the guests.

**Mr. Schmidt:** So directly to the deputy minister through you.

**The Acting Chair:** Through the chair always, sir, to the guests.

**Mr. Schmidt:** All right. Well, thank you very much for joining us this morning. I'd like to start off with some questions around the climate change plan. Outcome 1 of the first performance measure is "percentage of priced provincial CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions" with a target of 60 per cent. That was exceeded at 64 per cent. Can you tell us what impact the department will see on provincial CO<sub>2</sub> emissions if this percentage decreases?

**Ms Yee:** Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Member, for the question. With respect to the climate change emissions, 50 per cent of our provincial emissions do find themselves coming from industry, so I think this performance measure is trying to identify those provincial emissions that get priced. Obviously, there's a greater incentive for the reduction of them. Obviously, the logic with the greater amount that can be priced: there's an incentive for the reduction.

However, there is also the other 50 per cent remaining of our emissions, that come from home heating, come from small business and things like that. I think that really becomes our challenge. While this represents a certain portion of the picture, then how do we address the remainder? On a go-forward basis, we are developing a new climate strategy that will address all of the emissions, including the ones from industry that get priced, and then engaging with smaller businesses through efforts like energy efficiency and then even home energy efficiency to reduce the balance of the emissions. I think we're optimistic that taking a comprehensive approach like that will enable us to continue to be on a good track relative to emissions.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Okay. Can you tell us whether or not the department has any estimates of what – I mean, we notice that carbon emissions have actually increased in Alberta over the last few years. Does the department have any estimates on what Alberta's emissions would

have been without climate leadership action that had been implemented in the past four years?

**Ms Yee:** We do do modelling to help us understand, when we put in different management tools, whether it be a price, whether it be voluntary energy efficiency programs – I don't have those projections with me directly but would be happy to provide any of our understanding to you in writing.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Yeah. If you could provide that to me in writing.

**Ms Yee:** Okay. Yeah.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Great. Thank you.

I know that Energy Efficiency Alberta in their annual report provides an estimate of the number of jobs that were created through climate leadership action. Do you have those numbers with you?

**Ms Yee:** I do; it's a matter of just finding it. Thank you for the question. Chair and to the member, according to Energy Efficiency Alberta's 2017-18 and 2018-19 annual reports two years of program delivery have resulted in investments of \$218 million in programs across the industrial sector, the commercial sector, the nonprofit, institutional, and residential sectors, reaching over 214,000 participants and facilitating installation of over 15 million energy-efficient products. These investments are expected to reduce greenhouse gases by 5.7 million tonnes over the lifetime of the products that were installed and realize about \$692 million in energy savings over the lifetime of their installation. The investments are estimated to drive about \$850 million in economic activity, creating about 4,300 local private jobs over the lifetime of the products installed.

**Mr. Feehan:** What was the jobs number? I missed that piece.

**Ms Yee:** Forty-three hundred local private jobs over the lifetime of the products.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Just to be clear, when you say "private jobs," those are private-sector jobs. Those are not employees of Environment and Parks or any Energy Efficiency Alberta staff.

**Ms Yee:** Correct.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Okay. Great. Thank you very much for that.

Now, one of the recommendations that the Auditor General has made is related to data hosted or processed with respect to climate change. Can you tell us about data that is collected with respect to climate change emissions, about where it's currently hosted – you know, who provides those services – and who determines the accuracy, the quality of the data, that kind of thing?

**8:50**

**Ms Yee:** Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Member, for the question. I'm going to invite Justin Wheler, who's our executive director on our climate change team, to respond to that question.

**Mr. Wheler:** Good morning. The Auditor General's finding related to data is specific to the data that's hosted on the Alberta carbon registries, our registry for emissions offset credits and emissions performance credits. That's hosted by CSA, under contract with the government. We've conducted a service provider audit of CSA in 2018, and the Auditor General follow-up that's currently under way is following up on that recommendation. They have a secure service that is hosting the data for the registry. The registry data is also publicly viewable and accessible, so anyone can go on and

download the data, and the government gets a monthly download of that data.

The other data that we have: we have quite a bit of data that we collect from regulated industry that's under annual reporting requirements, that's hosted within government in my team on secure government services, and citizens have access to that through the FOIP process or through specific data request processes under the regulations, the specified gas reporting regulation as well as the carbon competitiveness incentive regulation.

**The Acting Chair:** Sir, before you leave the mic, could I get you to identify yourself for the record.

**Mr. Wheler:** Sorry. Justin Wheler, executive director of regulatory and compliance in the climate change division, Alberta Environment and Parks.

**The Acting Chair:** Thank you very much.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Forgive me for asking to decode acronyms. What does CSA stand for?

**Mr. Wheler:** The Canadian Standards Association.

**Mr. Schmidt:** It's the Canadian Standards Association.

**Mr. Wheler:** Yeah.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Okay. Is my understanding then correct, Justin, that carbon emissions related to the SGER and the CCIR are collected and stored by the department itself? Is that correct?

**Mr. Wheler:** That's correct.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Then what information is stored by the Canadian Standards Association?

**Mr. Wheler:** Just the information on credits that have been created, either emissions performance credits created under the specified gas emitters regulation or the carbon competitiveness incentive regulation. Each time a facility reduces its emissions beyond its requirements, it's eligible to generate a credit. Those credits are serialized and tracked on the registry. In addition, the Alberta emissions offset registry is where parties outside of the regulated facilities can generate emissions offsets for reductions or sequestration of emissions. All of the documents associated with those offsets – the offset project plan, the reports that calculate the emissions, the verification reports, and then the actual serial ranges and who owns those – are housed in the registry.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Can you give us some insight into the decision-making behind contracting with the CSA to host that information rather than doing that within the department itself?

**Mr. Wheler:** Sure. The history goes back quite a way. The registry was first set up with the specified gas emitters regulation in late 2007, early 2008. At the time the government did not have a tool available to build a registry, and we were implementing the regulation quite quickly, so we needed something up and running to track and publicly display the information associated with credits, because these are fungible credits that have a value both in our emissions system but also have a financial value for the companies. An RFP was issued, and the CSA was selected as the vendor. They provide the service on a cost-recovery basis. The users of the registry pay a fee with their various transactions and activities, and that covers the cost of operating the registry.

The thinking at the time was also that there is potential for other carbon markets to emerge in Canada or North America, and having a third-party platform may enable harmonization across some of those platforms. It's taken 12 years instead of the two years we expected at the time, but those developments are starting to happen now wherever there's consideration . . .

**The Acting Chair:** I hesitate to interrupt, but thank you, sir. The time has expired for the last segment of questions.

I now invite the government members to put forward questions, starting with, I believe, Member Rosin.

**Ms Rosin:** Yes. Awesome. Well, before I start, I just want to thank you all for coming here today. As the name of my riding, which is Banff-Kananaskis, would imply, you all play a very critical role in the day-to-day dealings out here, so I'm really grateful to have you all here today.

On page 28 of the annual report it reflects a measure for the percentage of Albertans that have visited a government-managed provincial park in the last 12 months. Admittedly, it quite concerns me that over the last three years fewer and fewer Albertans are visiting our parks. I'm wondering if you can explain or if you have any metrics or surveys that reflect why nearly 85,000 fewer Albertans are visiting Albertan parks and further share with us why the ministry target for park visitation reflected in your annual report is actually even lower than the already falling average visitation measure for the last three years?

**Ms Yee:** Thank you, Chair and Member, for the question. We also agree that our provincial parks are something we're very proud of, and visitation to parks is vital to our economy. You're quite correct in terms of looking at the percentage. I note that the metric is percentage of Albertans. Over the period of 2014 to 2018 Alberta's population actually grew by 6 per cent, so while the percentage may look like it represents a slight decline, the number of visitations has remained high.

That being said, from one season to the next there are different things that will impact visitation to a park. Weather will do it. The smoke that we've had in the province in previous years has also impacted Albertans' desire to be outdoors. I think also that our economic situation and whether folks feel they can be spending money on those kinds of activities also contribute to that. In 2018 we had 200,000 more Albertans visiting compared to five years ago, so we do see a very positive trend there. But just like the agriculture business, our parks business is very subject to weather conditions. Therefore, giving people a variety of experiences, experiences where they might have more shelter from the weather conditions, also helps. We monitor this quite consistently.

Also, looking at the demographics of Albertans who are coming to the province, some of the needs for visitation are different as well, and some of the kinds of facilities and services they're looking for are changing, and we need to be responsive to those changes.

**Ms Rosin:** Thank you.

To follow up on that, page 29 has the measure of Albertans' satisfaction with the quality of services and facilities in Alberta's parks. Objectively, it shows that from 2014-15, parks satisfaction increased 3 per cent. Then over the following four years it decreased as much as 6 per cent at one point, putting us nearly 10 per cent below our target. The annual report, if I read correctly, explains that this decline is a reflection of, quote, necessary improvements being undertaken that negatively impacted the park experience. Your report also indicates that this was entirely the opposite of what your department expected, and as a result the department actually lowered its expectations for the foreseeable future. My question is:



what do you attribute this multiyear reduction in both visitation and satisfaction to? I suppose you already answered a bit of the visitation piece. But, on reflection, how have you addressed these results?

**Ms Yee:** Thank you, Chair and Member, for the question. You've pointed to something that is very complex in this particular business. I know that in developing the target and developing our strategies for increasing visitation and increasing satisfaction, one of the assumptions that we make is that if there is more infrastructure, improved infrastructure, that's going to attract people to come. As I mentioned, the demographics of our population are changing. We're discovering that some of the needs are changing, with greater demand from baby boomers for comfort camping as opposed to rustic camping, and we don't have as many of those kinds of facilities in our provincial park system currently. Those are the things that in terms of our anticipation – the correlation between the kinds of infrastructure and services we put in place and the impact on visitation: it's constant work for us to be surveying our visitors to see what it is that they need. Then the turnover in terms of the impact: to see that improve takes some time as we get some of those services in place.

**Ms Rosin:** Perfect. Thank you.

My final question kind of actually correlates back to what we already talked about, too, in terms of facilities and the enjoyment of our parks. Outcome 2.4 is focused on developing partnerships and increased revenue in Alberta's parks. I'm very happy to see this as a strategy, but it severely concerns me that there's no performance measure anywhere to allow for the determination of what success looks like or to track investment and visitor spending generated in our parks. With visitation and satisfaction on the decline and many of my constituents trying to operate sustainable recreation and tourism businesses right in Kananaskis Country to increase these measures but, instead, being forced to wait years for responses from the department regarding their permit applications, I'm wondering why it appears that the department does not measure or monitor private-sector investment despite claiming that this is one of our focuses.

9:00

**Ms Yee:** Thank you, Chair and Member, for the question. The notion of increasing revenue is very important to us. Increasing revenue through working with partners who seek to invest in our parks, in our park system, is also very important to us. I think what we're finding is that Alberta is a very diverse province, and in our parks system itself the kinds of parks experiences that we provide in different regions of the province are different. The needs are different from one region to another in the province. I think we've been challenged to find a measure that would measure provincially. Certainly, on a regional basis our staff in the regions do monitor very closely what some of the needs are, what some of the potential partnerships are, and what partnerships would benefit that particular region in our parks system.

I think you're quite correct that we can do a better job of measuring and monitoring. One of the things that is under way right now in the department is that we're looking broadly across our parks system to do an evaluation of where we see success and better understand the reasons why we're successful in those particular parks and, where we see some decline, doing an analysis and better understanding that and how we can actually either pursue partnerships or work to invest differently in that particular park in order to increase our visitation and therefore increase revenue.

**Ms Rosin:** Okay. I'll just follow up with one last question. I absolutely understand that there are different needs across different areas of Alberta and in different parks, but in, say, Kananaskis Country, which really feeds into basically Alberta's largest tourism economy, would you argue that there may be a correlation between the lack of metrics and the lack of or complete inability to get permitting to operate a business in the park?

**Ms Yee:** Certainly, we have heard concerns from stakeholders in terms of the speed at which we can provide permits. I think part of it is being able to keep on track with our strategic plan and understanding what is needed in the park and in matching and aligning that with the kinds of proposals that we get. Certainly, to be more nimble along those lines would be very important for success.

**Ms Rosin:** Perfect. Thank you.

With that, I'm not sure how much time I have left, but I will cede to Mr. Rowswell if there is time.

**Mr. Rowswell:** Okay. I'm just concerned about grazing leases, and one of the outstanding recommendations from the Auditor General was with regard to that. The minister's update on the recommendation says that a plan to address the issues was created in 2015, and then in 2017 preliminary performance measures were developed. I guess my first question is: what has taken so long to complete this recommendation?

**Ms Yee:** Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Member, for the question. The recommendation about grazing leases is very important. As you've identified, there are environmental, social, and economic objectives that are important when it comes to looking at our grazing sector. In 2017-18 we did work with the minister-appointed Grazing Advisory Panel to define the following grazing lease objectives. So we've made some progress on identifying what those objectives are, and once the objectives are in place, then it allows us to establish what the performance indicators are.

The kinds of objectives that have been identified with the help of this advisory panel include ensuring that the use of public lands under grazing lease is sustainable, that it's ecologically sound, and that it reflects responsible environmental stewardship practices. We do see that having measures and indicators of this is vitally important because that is also how we market the behaviour and the stewardship of our ranchers in the province. Preservation of rangelands by conserving public land is also another objective in place.

**The Acting Chair:** Thank you, Deputy Minister.

Before I move on to our second rotation of 10 minutes, I'd like to remind administration or caucus staff not to approach the members or guests at the table. LAO staff will be happy and pleased to pass notes on your behalf.

Now I'd invite the opposition members to continue with their second rotation of 10 minutes, and I believe Mr. Feehan will begin.

**Mr. Feehan:** Yes. Thank you very much. Thank you very much for being here. As you know, I'm the critic for Indigenous Relations, so I'd like to focus a few of my questions on that. I know that you have a knowledge coproduction arrangement program with indigenous communities. I just want to have you tell me a little bit more about some of the successes that you've had in terms of involving indigenous communities in some of the plans, and then I'll have some specific questions beyond that. If you could just give me a quick overview.

**Ms Yee:** Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Member, for that question. In terms of knowledge coproduction, we see this as vitally important. I think one of the things that we've come to realize over time is that our western science knowledge systems are different than our indigenous knowledge systems, but different does not mean that they can't work together. This concept of braiding together indigenous knowledge with western science knowledge has been embraced by the department and by the indigenous peoples that we've been working with. We have an Indigenous Wisdom Advisory Panel, that has been very actively working with us and has been very positive.

A lot of the engagement of indigenous peoples has been primarily around the oil sands region in the northeast part of the province, where there are some significant concerns about what's happening with land, air, water, and biodiversity. Being able to bring that knowledge together is really important. A further step that we've taken in that region is to have co-operative management boards for our protected areas in that region. It's early days for that right now in terms of identifying the best governance structure and how we move forward with those co-operative governance boards.

**Mr. Feehan:** Right. I just wanted to ask about something, the planning you've done to assess the effectiveness of the indigenous voice in the planning that you're doing overall. Sorry; it may be a too complex question the way I worded it. I know that it's fairly early on in terms of some of the co-operative management pieces. How will you know whether or not you are indeed ensuring indigenous voices in terms of development in parks and other things, species at risk, water? I'd go through the whole range, but I just want to know: how do you know that they're actually at the table and that they're actually effecting change?

**Ms Yee:** Thank you, Chair and Member, for the question. That, really, fundamentally, is what we're striving for, that the voice that's brought to the table by our indigenous peoples is recognized by the other players at the table to be as important as other knowledge that's brought to the table. I think that when we look at the results of hearing their voice at the table – and one to watch for will be our caribou range plans. When we do that planning, we do have indigenous people at the table. Will the actions that come out of it be supported broadly by those indigenous communities? As you know, Member, those things are often vetted and shared with the entire community to get support: support of the elders, support of the broader community. When we have in our processes full recognition by all of the members there, as diverse as they are, of the value of the indigenous voice, I think that's one indicator of success.

Another indicator of success will be when our indigenous communities are telling us that they themselves feel that their involvement has been meaningful and contributive. We often hear concern about meaningful opportunities to consult and participate. When they tell us that, then we will know.

**Mr. Feehan:** Thank you.

You know, I will be looking forward to specific measures about: how do you measure whether or not indigenous involvement is there and whether or not the community does accept the outcomes? For example, the caribou range planning: what are the specific ways in which you will demonstrate that the indigenous people have supported that?

I'm just wondering about some specific things. What percentage of the parks in Alberta have a comanagement plan with indigenous people at this particular time, for example?

**Ms Yee:** Thank you, Chair and Member, for the question. In terms of a percentage, I don't actually have that number. We can provide it to you. But as I mentioned earlier, certainly in the lower Athabasca region it's quite significant. Then we also have an arrangement in the south for the Castle with the Piikani. So there's growing interest, and we're growing our opportunities as well.

**9:10**

**Mr. Feehan:** So is there a performance measure associated with getting a certain number of the parks signed up for comanagement across the province, both existing and new ones? I noticed that the ones you're talking about are all related to new parks, and there doesn't seem to be a commitment to moving to existing parks.

**Ms Yee:** Thank you, Member, for that question. Currently we don't actually have a formal performance measure, but it's certainly something that we could explore, because measuring success is important to us.

**Mr. Feehan:** Okay. Thank you very much, by the way. I'd like to ask some questions about the caribou range planning. I just want to begin again with: what is your performance measure for success with the caribou range plans? How will you know when you've achieved a reasonable outcome?

**Ms Yee:** Thank you, Chair and Member, for the question. Caribou range planning is very complex, and obviously at its very base a measure of success is going to be the continued and healthy presence of caribou on the landscape. We would have population measures, for sure. We also have measures around how much critical habitat is available to the caribou. We also have measures in terms of – in Alberta we often talk about our belief in the principle of a working landscape, that we can have activities on the landscape, whether it be industrial activities, recreational activities, and that they can coexist alongside having a healthy population of caribou. I think those are all measures for us that we would put into place in the planning process that we're about to launch for our three caribou task forces. Those kinds of terms will be discussed with stakeholders, and we look forward to them agreeing to a set of specific measures. Those would be some of the ones that have been set forward in the recovery plan.

**Mr. Feehan:** Okay. With regard to the measures you have for maintaining critical habitat, do you have a specific land mass size or percentage of Alberta that needs to be set aside for caribou in order to ensure the preservation of critical habitat at this time?

**Ms Yee:** Thank you, Chair and Member, for the question. There has been a very thorough assessment done for each caribou herd in the province, and there has been an assessment done on what existing critical habitat is still present right now. The federal government has set a target for us in terms of maintaining a 65 per cent critical habitat, so we would measure against that and make sure that we are on a trajectory to increase in cases where we have not achieved that.

**Mr. Feehan:** Can you tell me now how often you're achieving that 65 per cent?

**Ms Yee:** We do not achieve that in any of our caribou herds today.

**Mr. Feehan:** I didn't think so.

Okay. Have you set a plan to move ahead to try to rectify that?

**Ms Yee:** Thank you, Chair. We have been working on the caribou issue for a lot of years on a go-forward basis. We do have a caribou task force that will be working on this.

**Mr. Feehan:** So my understanding at this point is that you haven't yet met the federal requirements for caribou protection.

**Ms Yee:** Thank you, Member. Currently we do not, but that does not take away from the fact that over time the province and industry and other players on the landscape have always considered caribou conservation and do have measures. Many of the industrial players on the landscape today actively plan around caribou conservation. For example, forest companies in their planning, in terms of where they harvest, must consider caribou habitat and do consider that. That has happened for many years. The oil and gas sector does the same. They have a good, solid understanding of where the caribou ranges are, and they work closely with the department when they are planning for their activities on the landscape.

**Mr. Feehan:** Can you tell me, in terms of protecting the habitats as necessary while you're working on some of these plans, what relationship you have to the government of Alberta selling land in northern Alberta from Crown land, wilderness land, into farmland? Does the department of energy and parks actually have input into the sale of Crown land in northern Alberta?

**Ms Yee:** Thank you, Member, for the question. When it comes to resource management, the system that we talked about is an integrated resource management system.

**The Acting Chair:** I do hesitate to interrupt, but time has expired for this segment. You may wish to continue that in the next rotation.

I now invite the government members to begin their second 10-minute rotation, beginning with Mr. Rowswell.

**Mr. Rowswell:** I just noticed that the pie chart on page 42 shows that grazing leases have generated about \$105 million of revenue, yet in the 2015 report it said that \$3.8 million came from grazing leases. Where does the rest of the money come from, like, what other sources of revenue?

**Ms Yee:** Thank you, Member. What page was that?

**Mr. Rowswell:** Page 42 was the pie chart, and it shows that \$105 million came from grazing leases. Then one of the summary reports showed that \$3.8 million in rent came from grazing leases, so that's a big difference. I just wonder where the rest of the money comes from.

**Ms Yee:** Thank you, Member, for the question. We may have to follow up with some specifics, but in that pie chart, land and grazing, as I mentioned in my opening comments, most of the economic activity generated in Alberta is based on public lands. I believe that this categorization includes more than just the grazing leases, that it would include other dispositions that we give out on public lands.

**Mr. Rowswell:** That's like the sale of land, or is that just sale of access?

**Ms Yee:** No, lease rental land.

**Mr. Rowswell:** Okay. Different from grazing?

**Ms Yee:** Yes, for purposes other than grazing.

**Mr. Rowswell:** Okay. Fair enough.

Now, do you know how much economic activity is created by this? We get that revenue, but the people that use it: do you have any measure for that?

**Ms Yee:** Thank you, Member, for the question. We don't have any measures in our annual report on that, but certainly we would have access to data that would tell us how much is generated in terms of economic activity, and we could certainly follow up in writing to provide you with that information.

**Mr. Rowswell:** Okay. Fair enough.

My next question is with regard to transferring grazing leases. I'm understanding that there are delays in that, or that's the complaints I've heard. Is there a reason for the delay, and is the department able to measure the time to complete a transfer?

**Ms Yee:** Thank you, Member, for the question. Yes, in our system we do sometimes face – sometimes it's because of complexity of applications. Other times we don't have all the information. I'm going to invite Assistant Deputy Minister John Conrad to provide a little bit more light on that.

**Mr. Conrad:** Thank you, Chair and Member, for the question. I'm delighted to provide a response. As my deputy had indicated, there are some hard-core realities in terms of staffing levels and just replacing folks who retire and also the knowledge transfer that comes with replacing them. However, most of our problems with respect to that timing, which we do accept is not acceptable, comes down to processes and the way we do business and the need to modify how we do regulatory services for our clients in Alberta. I know this is about the annual report, but there are pieces in the report that indicate that we're on a great trajectory to move to a new paradigm of a risk-managed festooned regulatory process and also one that will provide better service standards and better certainty for all Alberta clients, not just on public lands and grazing leases, which I hear about daily. We're motivated to fix it, and we're on a great trajectory to get there.

**Mr. Rowswell:** Okay. My final question is – it might be simpler, whatever – what's the difference between a grazing reserve and a grazing lease? Is there cost to keeping them separate?

**Mr. Conrad:** You know, I'm embarrassed to say that I don't have the fidelity to provide that answer to you, but I'm happy to respond in writing. I'd need to phone a friend on the particulars.

**Mr. Rowswell:** Fair enough.

Okay. I'll pass it on to Member Stephan.

**Mr. Stephan:** Thank you very much. I'm going to be referring to the November 2018 performance audit performed by the Auditor General and in particular in respect of page 102. This recommendation was also provided in the summary report of the Auditor General in their November 2018 summary report on page 27. This is in respect to a comment or a deficiency identified by the Auditor General in the design of systems to manage the climate leadership plan and adaptation. Of course, this was a plan that was brought in in 2015.

**9:20**

I'm going to read the deficiencies that were identified by the Auditor General, the recommendations that they made. You know, this plan was funded by the carbon tax. Alberta businesses, families, and individuals paid to the government over a billion dollars a year. It said that the plan should:

- develop and use comprehensive implementation plans for the Climate Leadership Plan and for each of its programs.

This concerns me because it appears that there was lack of planning for the plan. The plan itself did not have plans within it.

It also says as a second recommendation:

- implement efficient processes to sufficiently reduce the risk that the data used to monitor and report on progress is not accurate or complete.

You know, again, this suggests that the plan didn't really have good internal controls for measuring whether the plan was effective or not.

Then the last deficiency identified by the Auditor General was:

- provide clear and complete reporting on the expected and actual costs of programs and the Climate Leadership Plan overall.

Of course, when you have a plan, you need to have effective and timely feedback mechanisms, and it appears that the Auditor General identified that there were deficiencies there.

So I guess the question that I would have is: how could the plan actually be put into place in the first place, take billions of dollars of taxpayers' money, and then be found not to have this sort of what I would suggest due diligence done up front before putting the plan in place? This was discovered as a deficiency by the Auditor General in February 2018 after taxpayers had already started paying, you know, over a billion dollars each year into the plan. I'd like to understand why the ministry would have done this plan without doing this due diligence.

**Ms Yee:** Thank you, Chair and Member, for the question. In the development of the climate leadership plan – this would have been following one year of it being in place. The development of any plan starts out as a very high-level strategic plan. As revenue is generated and as we think about the amount of revenue that is generated and where the needs are, we try to match the programs to the plan. I think that in reference to what the Auditor General had suggested to us, for each of the programs that were put in place, whether they were programs for energy efficiency for the residential sector or energy efficiency for the industrial sector, the Auditor General was looking for detailed implementation plans for them. Certainly, at that point in time we had been working with Energy Efficiency Alberta to develop that, so part of this is tied into oversight of the bodies that do the detailed planning.

**Mr. Stephan:** Sorry, I have another question, and I'm going to run out of time here. It sounds like we did high-level planning without detailed planning before we started imposing the tax.

**Ms Yee:** Yeah.

**Mr. Stephan:** Okay. I want to ask one other question. Page 19 in the annual report for the ministry shows a graph of the total greenhouse gas emissions from 2013 to 2017. We know that commencing on January 1, 2017, the carbon tax came in place, yet emissions went up. So I'm just wondering if you could explain why emissions would go up with a carbon tax instead of down. Could you provide some light on that?

**Ms Yee:** Thank you, Chair and Member, for the question. On the graph, if I'm looking at the same one that you're looking at, which has the total million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emitted over time, this measure tracks largely the industrial . . .

**The Acting Chair:** Thank you. Time has expired for this segment. I now invite an opposition member, I believe Mr. Schmidt, to begin the Official Opposition's five-minute third rotation.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Thank you. I want to talk about flood mitigation. It's my understanding that there is a grant program, the community resilience program. Is that correct?

**Mr. Conrad:** Yes.

**Mr. Schmidt:** What was spent on that program in 2018-2019?

**Ms Yee:** Thank you, Chair and Member, for the question. We're just finding our data.

You're referring to the Alberta community resilience program, which is a grant program that is provided to municipalities, First Nations, and Métis communities. Since 2014 in five rounds of approved grants Environment and Parks has invested \$230 million in grants that have been awarded to 49 municipalities and four First Nations. Specifically in the 2018-19 year it was \$32.7 million.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Okay. Can you tell the committee how much of that money that's set aside for the program was funded through the carbon tax?

**Ms Yee:** Thank you, Chair, for the question. The funds that would have been used to support this would have been from the carbon levy that was imposed, and it was also from the climate change emissions management fund.

**Mr. Schmidt:** So 100 per cent of the grant program came from some combination of carbon tax as well as the climate change emissions management fund?

**Ms Yee:** Correct.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Okay. And maybe this would be better provided to us in writing. Could we have a list of all of the projects that were funded in 2018-19? We've only been working on supplemental and interim supply, so we don't have a comprehensive list of those.

**Ms Yee:** Thank you, Member. We would be happy to provide the listing.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Great. Thank you very much.

Now turning to citizen science, it's my understanding that Alberta Environment and Parks has significant partnerships with respect to airshed monitoring, watershed planning. Can you provide in detail expenditures on the airshed associations and the watershed associations? Could I get a detailed breakdown of how much was spent in 2018-2019 on each of those associations?

**Ms Yee:** Thank you, Member, for the question. Just for clarification, you're talking about grants that we would have provided to the airshed monitoring organizations?

**Mr. Schmidt:** Well, I mean, I understand that there is air monitoring that's done outside of the airshed monitoring organizations, and there are airshed associations as well. I'm interested in both, kind of a detailed breakdown of where we spend money on air monitoring and who does that work on behalf of the people of Alberta.

**Ms Yee:** Right. Thank you, Member, for the question. We can provide you with a list. For example, in the 2018-19 year, just to clarify, the total that we gave to air partners was in the order of \$2.75 million, and we do have a listing of the organizations that would have received funds. I'm assuming that would be the list that you're looking to have.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Yes. That's correct.

**Ms Yee:** Okay. We can provide that in writing.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Okay. Just to clarify, that's for the airshed associations or partnerships for watershed – what the hell are they called? – WPACs. I don't even know what the acronym stands for anymore. Watershed planning and something else?

**Ms Yee:** Advisory councils.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Yeah. Then, of course, there's the water council and then the watershed stewardship groups: if I could get a detailed breakdown of those.

Then oil sands monitoring programs. Can you provide a detailed breakdown of the funding that you give to oil sands monitoring programs as well?

9:30

**Ms Yee:** Thank you, Member, for the question. For water partners, you're quite correct; it is the watershed planning and advisory councils. We will provide you with that breakdown as well for our water partners. I don't think this list includes the Alberta Water Council, but for the watershed councils last year, in 2018-19, we did provide \$4.3 million in funding, and we will provide you with the breakdown of that.

In terms of oil sands monitoring . . .

**The Acting Chair:** Thank you. You could perhaps follow up in writing with the balance of those statistics that were requested.

I'd now invite government member Mr. Guthrie to continue with the third rotation of five minutes.

**Mr. Guthrie:** Thank you. On page 11 the annual report mentions that

Environment and Parks continued to support work done to enhance methane emissions quantification, reporting and leak detection. With Alberta Energy, the department supported development of the Methane Emission Reduction Regulation and also continued to engage with the federal government on its planned . . . methane regulation.

Considering Alberta's economic condition over the last five years and the toll it took on jobs in this province and considering that Alberta already has some of the strongest regulations in the developed world, why did the department feel that it was necessary to increase and adopt these regulations in such tough economic times?

**Ms Yee:** Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Member, for the question. I'll make just a brief comment, and then I'm going to invite Justin Wheler, executive director from our climate change team, to provide a more detailed answer.

One of the dynamics that we see going on in Alberta is hoping to not subject our industry to double regulation, regulation from the federal government as well as regulation from the province. Most of the industry will tell us that they prefer to be governed under Alberta's regulatory system. Part of our motivation, then, is to shield our industry from having to be regulated by the federal government, which would have even more significant economic impact on them.

I'm going to ask Justin . . .

**Mr. Guthrie:** Actually, that's probably good.

**Ms Yee:** Oh, okay. Thank you.

**Mr. Guthrie:** Was there any job, financial, or industry impact analysis that was completed before going ahead with these regulatory changes? If so, can we have that report tabled?

**Ms Yee:** Thank you, Member, for the question. We did do a very strong engagement and consultation with the industry itself. I would have to check to see if we did any job analysis on it, but part of this was to encourage the installation of technology that would help the industry be better performers. Whatever data we have on that I could provide to you in writing.

**Mr. Guthrie:** Yeah. That would be great. And any industry impact analysis, et cetera, would be really good, too, to know what those costs are going to be.

Another question along the same lines: considering that these federal methane regulations are only being applied in oil and gas jurisdictions and seem to be specifically targeting our province and possibly, I guess, Saskatchewan as well, our neighbours, why would the department support the federal initiative, and was there a constitutional or any legal opinion requested on these federal regulations, the changes?

**Ms Yee:** Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Member, for the question. I don't know whether I would characterize it as supporting the federal government by us having our own regulations. I think we're trying to avoid for our industry to be subject to those regulations. I think that methane contributes to our overall emissions, and I think that we endeavour to have our regulatory system be equivalent to the federal system so that our industry here is not subject to federal regulation. Even in recent consultations that we've had for our new TIER system, the industry very strongly voiced to us that they prefer to be regulated by the province and want to see the province achieve equivalency so that they're not subject to the federal system.

**Mr. Guthrie:** So there was no legal opinion, then, that was asked for regarding whether or not this overreach by the federal government was – there was no report for it?

**Ms Yee:** In terms of the constitutionality of the overreach?

**Mr. Guthrie:** Yes.

**Ms Yee:** Thank you for that. I think that is a separate issue, and we have gotten legal opinion on that. In fact, as you know, we do have a legal challenge under way currently, and that is informed by the legal advice that we've gotten.

**Mr. Guthrie:** Okay. Thank you.

I will pass this over to MLA Nixon.

**Mr. Jeremy Nixon:** Yes. Page 8 states that the Alberta Energy Regulator is a public agency with shared accountability between this ministry and Alberta Energy. Can you comment on your ministry's oversight in light . . .

**The Acting Chair:** I hesitate to interrupt. Perhaps if there was enough of a question there, you may respond in writing. Or you may continue . . .

**Mr. Jeremy Nixon:** I'll read the whole question in the three minutes.

**The Acting Chair:** Once we get to that section, certainly.

I'd now invite an opposition member, I believe Member Renaud, to continue with the opposition's – actually, with the three minutes for reading questions into the record.

**Ms Renaud:** Okay. I have some questions about the Alberta Conservation Association. If you could respond in writing, that

would be great. If you could describe: is there any overlap, grant duplication between the ACA grants and the department? Also, would bringing the ACA in-house result in any cost savings? As well, *Conservation* magazine: could you tell us what the circulation is, what the cost is to produce, and whether or not it is revenue neutral? As well, if you could share any ad-buy guidelines with us.

My second bunch of questions: how long has Kingston Ross Pasnak been your auditor, and how are your auditors selected?

Finally, what is the purpose of your corporate partners in conservation program? What accountability mechanisms exist to ensure that your corporate partnership programs align with your statutory responsibilities?

Go ahead. Do we have time left?

**Mr. Schmidt:** Yeah. Back to the citizen science, I'm interested in a detailed breakdown of any grants that are provided to organizations that are engaged in citizen science – I'm thinking of the Lake Management Society, as an example – that fall outside of the airshed partnerships, the watershed partnerships, the oil sands monitoring programs; a complete detailed breakdown of all of the grants that Environment and Parks provides on an annual basis for groups that are engaged in citizen science.

**Mr. Feehan:** Just a couple of questions that are very specific to specific communities. If you could respond to me on whether or not there's been any advancement on the South Saskatchewan regional plan with the accommodation of Eden Valley's request to make a change in terms of the boundaries. As well, the request of the Conklin Métis community to prevent the establishment of a waste management site close to their community. I wonder if you could just tell me what plans have been made or what responses have been made to those communities.

Thank you.

**The Acting Chair:** Go ahead.

**Ms Renaud:** Okay. A question about the report a poacher program. Can you tell us about the success of the program and which regions of the province are most affected, which species are most at risk? Is funding for enforcement adequate?

**The Acting Chair:** Any other opposition members have further questions to read into the record?

If not, we'll move to government members for three minutes, the fourth and final rotation. Go ahead.

**Mr. Jeremy Nixon:** Page 8 states that the Alberta Energy Regulator is a public agency with shared accountability between this ministry and Alberta Energy. Can you comment on your ministry's oversight role in light of recent findings of the Auditor General which showed that the AER had not only strayed far outside its mandate but spent millions of dollars doing so? Where was Alberta Environment in all of this, and what can you share with us that might explain such revelations and clear lack of organizational and fiscal accountability? Were there any red flags that might have hinted at such a blatant abuse of authority?

**The Acting Chair:** Any other government members with questions to read into the record?

9:40

**Mr. Stephan:** On the March 2015 recommendation of the Auditor General as it relates to flood mitigation systems, an analysis to support mitigation policies and spending, could you please provide to the committee the written analysis from your provincial flood damage assessment tool which enables the comparison of proposed

mitigation measures to determine which measure or combination of measures provides the best benefit for the cost?

**Mr. Gotfried:** What is the ministry's approach to leasing public assets, particularly in provincial parks, and leverage against not-for-profit or private-sector activity or investment? Can you provide us with a list or at least several examples?

With respect to grazing leases on Crown land the Auditor General has previously recommended that the Department of Environment and Parks define and communicate the environmental, social, and economic objectives it expects grazing leases should provide all Albertans as well as relevant performance measures and, particularly, revenues generated due to surface lease payments for oil and gas operators to access public land in monitoring, measuring, and potentially managing such revenues to ensure those objectives are met. While comparisons to other jurisdictions indicate securing the opportunity for public financial benefit, has your department acted on any of these recommendations, and if not, why not?

The ACA mission is to conserve, protect, and enhance fish and wildlife populations and their habitats for Albertans to enjoy, value, and use. This is likely not possible without building a close working relationship with the ministry. Could you please share with us the nature of your relationship with the ministry and minister over the past four years while sharing with us the regularity of your meetings directly with the minister?

I'll read one more if I can.

**The Acting Chair:** You certainly may continue if you wish.

**Mr. Gotfried:** To the ACA as well: can you please identify what not-for-profit organizations undertake conservation work on behalf of or in collaboration with the ACA? How would you characterize your relationship with these groups?

Thank you.

**The Acting Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Gotfried.

We have only five seconds left in our fourth and final rotation. Given that that time has now expired, I'd like to thank the officials from the Ministry of Environment and Parks and the Alberta Conservation Association for attending today and responding to committee members' questions. We ask that any outstanding questions be responded to in writing within 30 days and be forwarded to the committee clerk.

We will now move on to other business in our agenda. Hon. members, the subcommittee on committee business met on Friday, October 18, 2019. The subcommittee is recommending that written briefing materials from Legislative Assembly Office research services and the office of the Auditor General as well as the completed ministry or entity status reports on those outstanding recommendations from the Auditor General be provided to the committee by 12 noon two weeks less a day – in brackets, Wednesday – prior to the meeting they are prepared for. The subcommittee is also recommending that the office of the Auditor General and Legislative Assembly Office research services hold a research briefing for caucus staff approximately one week prior to the meeting of the committee. The purpose of this recommendation is to provide sufficient time for the preparation of members in advance of the meeting. The ordinary premeeting briefings that are held prior to each meeting of the committee would continue but serve as a mechanism to ask any final questions of the Auditor General or Legislative Assembly research services.

Is there any discussion on this recommended process? Is there a general sense of consensus amongst committee members that the

committee should follow this briefing process? I see heads shaking positively on both sides.

Are there any other items for discussion under other business?

If not, then I will just say that the next meeting is scheduled for October 29, 2019, 8:30 a.m. with the Ministry of Health and Alberta Health Services. As a reminder, if consideration of main estimates by the legislative policy committee is scheduled to start either next Monday or Tuesday, the committee will not meet next Tuesday nor again until the consideration of main estimates has concluded.

I'll call for a motion to adjourn. Would a member move that the meeting be adjourned?

**Mr. Feehan:** So moved.

**The Acting Chair:** Mr. Feehan. All in favour? Any opposed? That's carried. We stand adjourned.

Thank you, all.

[The committee adjourned at 9:45 a.m.]











