



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Third Session

Standing Committee
on
Resource Stewardship

Lobbyists Act Review
Office of the Property Rights Advocate

Tuesday, July 4, 2017
9 a.m.

Transcript No. 29-3-8

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

Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship

Loyola, Rod, Edmonton-Ellerslie (ND), Chair
Hunter, Grant R., Cardston-Taber-Warner (W), Deputy Chair

Babcock, Erin D., Stony Plain (ND)
Clark, Greg, Calgary-Elbow (AP)
Dang, Thomas, Edmonton-South West (ND)
Drysdale, Wayne, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (PC)
Hanson, David B., Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills (W)
Kazim, Anam, Calgary-Glenmore (ND)
Kleinsteuber, Jamie, Calgary-Northern Hills (ND)
Loewen, Todd, Grande Prairie-Smoky (W)
MacIntyre, Donald, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (W)
Malkinson, Brian, Calgary-Currie (ND)
Nielsen, Christian E., Edmonton-Decore (ND)
Rosendahl, Eric, West Yellowhead (ND)
Woollard, Denise, Edmonton-Mill Creek (ND)

Office of the Ethics Commissioner

Marguerite Trussler, QC	Ethics Commissioner
Lana Robins	Lobbyist Registrar and General Counsel

Support Staff

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

Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship

Participant

Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General
Joan Neatby, Barrister and Solicitor, Legislative Reform

9 a.m.

Tuesday, July 4, 2017

[Loyola in the chair]

The Chair: I'd like to call the meeting to order. Welcome to all members, staff, and guests in attendance for this meeting of the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship. My name is Rod Loyola, and I am the MLA for Edmonton-Ellerslie and chair of this committee.

I would ask that members and those joining the committee at the table introduce themselves for the record, and then I'll call on the members teleconferencing to introduce themselves. We'll start off here to my right.

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

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

Ms Neatby: Joan Neatby, Justice and Solicitor General.

Ms Robins: Lana Robins, lobbyist registrar and general counsel, office of the Ethics Commissioner.

Ms Trussler: Marguerite Trussler, Ethics Commissioner.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dr. Massolin: Good morning. Philip Massolin, manager of research and committee services.

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

Ms Rempel: Good morning. Jody Rempel, committee clerk.

The Chair: Okay. We'll now go to members on the phone. I believe we have Mr. Hunter.

Mr. Hunter: Yes. Good morning. Grant Hunter, MLA for Cardston-Taber-Warner and deputy chair.

The Chair: Since he's just called in, we'll go to Mr. Clark to introduce himself.

Mr. Clark: Good morning. Greg Clark, MLA, Calgary-Elbow.

The Chair: Okay. We've got Ms Babcock on the line.

Ms Babcock: Good morning. Erin Babcock, MLA for Stony Plain.

The Chair: And we have Member Kazim on the line as well.

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

The Chair: Okay. Is there anybody else on the line that I'm missing? I don't believe so.

Okay. Thank you, everyone.

The microphone consoles are operated by *Hansard* staff, so there's no need for members to touch them. Please ensure that all cellphones, iPhones, and BlackBerrys are in silent mode. Audio and video of committee proceedings are streamed live on the Internet and recorded by *Hansard*.

Up next is the approval of the agenda. Before approving an agenda for our meeting today, I would note that all MLAs have been invited to the swearing-in of Marianne Ryan, the new Ombudsman and Public Interest Commissioner. If it is the will of this committee, we could take an early lunch break at around 11 a.m. to facilitate attendance at the ceremony for those who are interested. Is this something committee members would be interested in? Would people like to break at 11 a.m., or would people prefer to continue and go on? Okay. I'm hearing keep going. Okay. We will just keep going until 12 p.m.

I understand we missed somebody in our intro. Sorry. Please go ahead.

Mr. Dang: Sorry, Mr. Chair. It's Thomas Dang, MLA for Edmonton-South West. Good morning, everybody.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you very much, sir.

Okay. Would a member move a motion to approve the agenda, please? Okay. Thank you, Mr. Kleinsteuber. All in favour of the motion? Anybody opposed? Okay. Thank you. That motion for the approval of the agenda is carried.

I'm just going to remind people that my practice instead of asking for those who are in favour of the motion and then going to opposed and then going to the phones – I just prefer those that are on the phone, when I ask if you're in favour of the motion, please say aye at that time, and if you are opposed, then say that you are opposed at that time, okay?

We have the minutes from our last meeting. Are there any errors or omissions to note? If not, would a member move adoption of the minutes, please? Okay. Thank you, Mr. Nielsen. All in favour of the motion to accept the minutes from the previous meeting, say aye. Anybody opposed? Okay. Thank you. That motion is carried.

We are now going to go into our primary business here today, to complete our review of the Lobbyists Act. Before we return to our deliberations, the Ethics Commissioner and her colleagues have offered to give us a brief demonstration of how the lobbyist registry works. At this point I would like to turn the floor over to our guests from the office of the Ethics Commissioner to proceed with a presentation, and then I want to open the floor to questions from committee members. Please go ahead, Commissioner.

Ms Robins: Good morning, committee members, and thank you for inviting us to give you a demonstration of the Alberta lobbyist registry today. Before we get going, would it be possible to dim the lights a little bit so you could see the screens a little better? Perfect. Thank you.

Okay. I'm going to start by doing a brief overview of the website, followed by a quick walk-through of how to set up an account as a lobbyist and then how to file a registration as a lobbyist. I'm also going to demonstrate some of the registrar's functions. In the interest of time I'm just going to hit the key points of those various elements.

The website is albertalobbyistregistry.ca, which is what is up on the screen right now. As you can see, there are several tabs going across the top of the screen. If you quickly run through those, the home screen is just some information about our office, history of

the legislation on the Home tab. Moving to the right, the For Lobbyists tab. This has just some more technical information for lobbyists in terms of filing a registration, different things they need to do in the application itself. The Registry Information tab just repeats the search registry function and also provides a few reports and statistics on there. The Enforcement tab to the right just gives some information on enforcement under the act. The Resources tab to the right of that again has some guidance documents. I'm just going to quickly click on that. There are some useful guides and brochures for the public and for lobbyists here, lots of very good information in those. We also have the annual reports on the Resources tab, and then to the right we've got the FAQ, the frequently asked questions, which is another really good resource for information.

I'm going to go back to the home screen here. Just scrolling down, I'm going to come back to just in the middle of the screen. We've got a link to the Lobbyists Act and then a link to the Lobbyists Act general regulation. Then I just wanted to point this button out to you: "Not sure if you are a lobbyist? Take our test." This is a tool we put on the website just to assist the public and people who don't know if they're a lobbyist to determine if they are a lobbyist. It just takes them through a series of questions. It's about a five-minute test, not even. They just answer yes or no, and then it will eventually get them to an answer. You can see I clicked yes or no to about three different questions there. It says that you do not appear to be a lobbyist. Of course, this is only a tool, so it's just an informational thing. If they want to find out for sure, they need to phone our office, but we've had lots of good feedback on this in terms of just providing some information.

I'm going to go back to the home screen. Okay. At the bottom of the website we've just got our recent news and events, which is just kind of good to have a look at once in a while to see current events and what's happening with the office.

I'm going to go back up to the top now. You'll see the Register for a New Account button in the middle. This is if somebody now wants to take the steps to register as a lobbyist. The very first step is to click on this, Register for a New Account. What this does is that it will just get them a temporary password. I'm just going to quickly show that. They just need to enter their name and their e-mail address, click Submit, and the system automatically sends them a temporary password.

Okay. I'm going to come back up to the top right, and you'll see the two buttons Search Registry and Login. Login is after they get their temporary password. They'd come and click on Login to then enter that password to get going in the system.

But I'm going to go back for a minute and show you one last thing on the website, and that's the Search Registry button, which is probably the most popular button on our website, I think, for the public and for lobbyists other than registering. This is where you can come and find out who's registered, what's been filed in the registry. You can search the active registry, which is highlighted right now, or you can come and click on the archived/terminated registry, and that's for old registrations that have been superseded by newer filings or ones that have been terminated. On the right you can also search by lobbyist type, so you can either do all or you can just search by type of lobbyist. So if I just want to find out all active consultant registrations, I would just click Search. Okay. I'm just going to click on that. It does take about 30 seconds for the chart to generate. You'll see, when it comes up on the screen, that there's a ton of information in there. That's actually the screen where you're going to be able to view the registrations as well. You can type in search terms.

9:10

Okay. So now you can see the different columns. We've got filing date, organization name, client name, senior officer, department lobbied, prescribed provincial entity lobbied, subject matter of lobbying, the registration status – for the people on the phone, these are just the different columns in the search chart – the registration number, type of lobbyist, the lobbyist named in the registration, the type of registration, and then finally the View button, so a lot of information on this chart.

Actually, each of these columns is sortable and searchable. If I want to come over to filing date, I'm going to click on that. You can see that you can search by registrations only filed in the last month, for example. It brings up 87 registrations. There are all kinds of search and sort capabilities. It's an extremely interactive tool. If I want to come and search, if I'm looking for a particular organization, I can click on Organization, and then a list comes up in alphabetical order of all of the organizations that have filed. You can just go and click on whichever one you want, and it's going to bring that registration up. That works the same for all of these different columns. If you want to just search for a particular government department lobbied, you could come over and just search for that particular department. Then on the top left there's a little magnifying glass. You can enter search terms as well.

The last thing I want to show you on this before we move on is the View button. This is where you can actually view the registrations. I don't know if pop-ups are enabled on this. We'll see. Okay. There we go. This is actually an active registration, what it looks like to the public. This is downloadable and printable. You can go and you can see the status. It gives you all of the details. You can just scroll through. I'm just kind of quickly going through this so that we can move on to the application, but it gives you an idea of the capabilities of the website and search function.

Okay. I'm going to go back now, and I'm going to log in as someone who's got their temporary password, and now they want to proceed with actually filing an application, so this is someone who's logging in for the first time. To complete the application, they've just got to click on the button on the home screen that says Start Here to Complete Application Request. I'm going to click on that, and that brings up a one-page application form. They just need to go in and fill out the forms. I'm just going to scroll through this. I'll come back to this in a minute. I just wanted to show you what it looks like. It's just a very brief form, and they just need to click I Agree and submit it at the bottom. I'm going to log out as this person.

I'm going to go in now as the registrar and show you one that's been submitted. This is the registrar home screen, and where we see the submitted applications coming in is Pending Application Requests in the top corner. I'm going to bring up this application request for Widgets Company, which is one we've just created for the purpose of the demonstration. This is a submitted application now, so you can see the type of information. They just have to put the name of their company, address, what type of account they want. They can select organization or consultant or if they're the senior officer. They need to put information for the designated filer, senior officer – that has to be included – and if they want to assign an account manager, which is someone who can manage their account but not actually submit registrations. That's where they would enter that person as well. Okay. So you can see that this has all been filled out.

What I'm going to do as the registrar now is that I'm going to start my review. There are a couple of different options. I can reset it to draft approved and activate if everything looks good. I'm going to go ahead and approve this. I'm going to assign a username,

approve, and activate. Okay. So this application has now been approved. This person has done step 1 of the two steps, step 1 being setting up your account. Now they can go in and file the registrations.

I'm going to log out again, and we're going to log back in as the same person. I can sort of walk you through the next step of their process. Okay. Now their application has been approved. They've logged back in, and now there's a new button that says Create a New Initial Return showing on the home screen. I'm going to just go ahead and click on that. Okay. This is their draft initial return. They basically have to go through – you can see the menu on the left has steps 1 through 6. Each of those is a separate page. They need to go in and fill out the questions. Now, I'm not going to fill this out as we sit here because I know time is important here. What I'm going to do is that I'm going to log out again and log back in as someone who's got one in draft already, and then I'll do a bit of a walk-through of that form. So lots of logging in and logging out here.

Okay. So this is someone who has done those steps. They've got one in draft that they haven't submitted, so we're going to go have a look at that. It's going to be sitting in the My Drafts folder. Because it was previously created, I'm just going to click to continue to update when I get into that document, just to be able to access it again. So we've got the steps of the document showing on the left. This first page, step 1, is for viewing only. It just pulls in information from the application. They basically just need to scroll through that and click on the right arrow or the arrow at the top right of the form to get to the next page, or they can just use the menu on the left as well.

Step 2. I should point out as well that this is an organization lobbyist registration. In step 2 they have to fill out the lobbyist information. They actually have to fill out for everyone in their organization who's actually engaged in lobbying activities. They have to put their name and their title. As you can see, there are a couple of entries here that they've made. There's no limit on how many they can add. We've got some with one; we've got some with 25. Just scrolling down, there are a few questions they need to answer. Are any of the lobbyists former public office holders? Did they hold one of those positions in the last two years? These are yes or no. Are you lobbying MLAs or Executive Council? They have to answer yes or no to those questions. Then under Contract to Provide Paid Advice: does anyone hold a contract to provide paid advice? We would expect to see noes here. So that's it for that page.

Then they can just move on to step 3, which is the organization information. Just moving to the next page of the form, for organization information, this is where they describe their organization a little bit. Does the organization have members: yes or no? They have to put a general description of the membership. You can see I've added one here: members are manufacturers, distributors of off-highway vehicles. We'd look for just a brief description like that. Then they actually have to enter all of the directors and officers of the organization. Again, there's no limit on these fields. Then describe the organization's business or activities. Just a free-form field here.

They have to answer the next questions: if there is any parent corporation or subsidiary corporations that have a direct interest in the outcome of the lobbying and if they receive any private funding over \$1,000 or more or if they've received any government funding. If they answer yes, they have to just fill in some additional details. I answered yes to government funding, and you can see that now I have to enter which department of government I've received that from and the amount of the funding.

Okay. That's it for this step of the form, and we're halfway through already. The next page: this is where they enter the lobbying activity. This is probably the main section of the form, that they

would spend the most amount of time on. Because it's an organization lobbyist, obviously they have to fill out both previous six months' lobbying and the next six months. Right now we're in the previous six months. You can see that this person has already entered a couple of entries, but I'm going to just show you how this works. It's actually a neat form.

9:20

Okay. Let's say that I want to enter another subject matter. I'm going to click on Add Subject Matter. This is going to take me into a three-step Wizard. There's no limit on the number of subject matters they can enter. They just have to enter them individually: add a department or prescribed provincial entity that they're going to be lobbying with respect to that subject matter. In this case I'm going to lobby, say, the Department of Agriculture. I'm going to click on here. It's all pull-down lists; they just need to select the prescribed provincial entity. I've added the department. Let's say that I now want to add a prescribed provincial entity and that I'm going to be lobbying on this same thing. I'm going to add a prescribed provincial entity now. All of the ones from the regulation are going to pop up, and I can just select. Let's say that I want to select that one. Those are the only two entities that I'm going to be lobbying about that subject matter. I'm done with that, so I'm going to Return to Lobby Activity Summary at the bottom.

Okay. We've got the subject matter, agriculture. Then go to the next page. We've got our entities whom we're lobbying, and then lobbying details is step 3. Under Lobbying Details there are six categories listed. There's no limit on what they can enter. For agriculture you have to just go through and say yes or no to each of these. "Are you lobbying about a legislative proposal, bill, or resolution?" I'm going to click No on that. "Are you lobbying about existing legislation?" I'm going to click Yes on that. Once you click Yes on one of the categories, you have to actually name what it is you are lobbying about. It's the Municipal Government Act.

Then lobbying goals or activities: we ask for two or three sentences to be provided here to provide a bit of detail on what you're lobbying about. Let's say: providing input on agriculture and the land-use bylaw framework. We would look for some sort of description so that anybody reading this registration actually knows what it is you're specifically doing. That's all I'm doing. If I'm doing something else under the Municipal Government Act, I could click on that Add Another Detail button there, and I could just keep going. If I have 10 things about that act that I'm lobbying about, I could do 10 entries.

I'm just going to go through the rest of the categories, like financial benefit, and say no so that we can move through the form here. If there was something else I was lobbying about, I would say yes. It would require me to enter some details again.

Now I'm done with this. I'm going to quickly click Save in the top corner and then Return to Lobby Activity Summary. You can see that my new entry is appearing as the second one there. You see I've got two for agriculture, but that's okay. You can see that the new entry is showing there. That's how easy it is to enter subject matters. If you want to remove one – let's say that I've got a duplicate here – I'm going to go into that one. Let's say that I don't want this one anymore. I'm going to delete it. I clicked on it, and now I'm going to delete it and then click Return to Lobby Activity. There. It's gone now, and I've got what I want.

Okay. We're going to move on in the form now. You have to enter under Communication Techniques. These are all clickable. You have to enter at least one. Once you're done with this, you can move on to the next page of the form. This is for the next six months. Most of our organization lobbyists click Copy Activity, and this copies activities from the previous six months into this

section because we find that their lobbying activities don't change a lot for each six-month period. However, you don't have to. You can certainly go in and enter and make them all unique so that each period is different. I'm going to click Copy Activity there. You can see how it's going to copy it over from the previous six months. There. It's now appearing in my next six months, the same entries. Then I can just go and adjust my communication techniques, and I'm done with that page.

I'm going to go to the last page of the form now, which is the declaration. This is the Additional Information section, where they can add any additional information at the top that they want to add. Then they have to click the declaration. We would look for the first one to be clicked off: no lobbyist holds a contract for providing paid advice. We're going to click on I Agree, the declaration at the bottom. I'm going to submit it. Okay. So that's now been submitted to the registrar.

Let's log in as the registrar now. Okay. That's going to come under Pending Registration Requests. You can see there are some sitting in the queue. There's the one we just submitted, OECOL test. We're just going to click on that one and bring it up. As the registrar I'm going to click Start Review, and this will allow me to go into the document, and then I can just go and look at each page, just scroll through, make sure everything has been filled out, if I have any questions. And we often do have questions, some that might require follow-up, on lobbying activity. So these are obviously just the same pages it's bringing up. Let's say that I'm going to go back now. If I'm ready to approve, I just click Approve and Activate, and then that will publish it onto the public registry, and then we're done. That registration has been filed.

Now, if there's an issue with it, what I can do is reset it to draft. I'm going to come down to the bottom, add an external communication, and then I'm going to do a note to the lobbyist to say, "Your lobbying details are not specific enough; please describe your lobbying activities in more detail," something like that. Then once I do that, I come up to the top. I'm going to click Reset to Draft. I'm not actually going to do that, though. When I click Reset to Draft, what that's going to do is that it's going to send an e-mail to the lobbyist. It's going to tell them that they need to log back in. They're going to go and click on their My Registrations Requiring Action folder. They're going to pull up that registration again. They can scroll down to see the exact note I've entered into there. Then they can go through, make the edits, and they can just do a submit right then and there and fix it all. It's a very quick process to reset to draft.

Okay. So that basically is the demonstration. I can just talk about a couple more things quickly. To do a notice of change, it's a very simple process. Working from their active registration, they just click on Create Notice of Change in the top right corner. There's always a button there, and it just brings up a document that's prepopulated, the same as their active registration. They can just amend it as necessary and then submit. Semiannual renewal works the same way. They get a notice 30 days in advance, and they just go up, click on that Create Semi-annual Renewal button on the top right, and it's prepopulated based on their active registration. They amend it as necessary and submit.

That concludes the demonstration. This was only a partial demonstration of the registry, but hopefully it will give you a good idea of how it works.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Before we continue, we did have a member join us at the beginning of the presentation. Mr. MacIntyre, I'd like to welcome you and give you the opportunity to introduce yourself.

Mr. MacIntyre: Hi. Don MacIntyre, MLA for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Now we'll open it up for any questions regarding the demonstration. Yes, Mr. Nielsen.

Mr. Nielsen: Good morning. Well, thank you for that presentation. I guess we'll just start off with a really simple question. I don't want to say that there's a problem, but I guess: what problem are we solving with this registry? What are we looking to accomplish?

Ms Robins: With the registry itself?

Mr. Nielsen: Yes.

Ms Robins: Well, it is required by the act, of course, that we maintain a registry and that that registry be accessible and interactive. With the updating of the system this past October, we actually have a system that's very interactive and usable. It's got tons of information that's accessible to the public. We think it's very easy for lobbyists to use it now to file registrations, and it is sort of intuitive as you walk through the different screens.

9:30

Mr. Nielsen: In other words, I guess what you had before wasn't as user-friendly, wasn't as robust.

Ms Robins: Absolutely.

Mr. Nielsen: And now there's more information that's available.

Ms Robins: This is so much better than the old system in terms of the information accessible to the public and the usability for the public and for lobbyists as well.

Ms Trussler: Ms Robins used to spend 50 per cent of her time working out glitches with lobbyists with the old system, and we don't have that issue anymore.

Mr. Nielsen: Excellent. Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Any other questions? Mr. Kleinsteuber.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Yeah. I'd just like to thank you for the presentation, Ms Robins. I think it's a very interesting and detailed system, but I was also wondering: like, when comparing to the previous system, which percentage of the budget, I guess, at this point is dedicated to maintaining this? It seems to me like it's a huge decrease from probably where we were.

Ms Trussler: Unfortunately, Kent is on holidays, and he runs our budget. The maintenance of this system, we think, is about the same or less than our old system, but we have far fewer problems. We don't have to spend money on maintenance updates on it, and we can do much more than we could with the old system.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: It sounds like it's a big savings to you on distractions with HR and, you know, just having to maintain and fine-tune things as well.

Ms Trussler: Yes.

Ms Robins: It's a lot less employee time.

Ms Trussler: We can make better use of our time now.

Ms Robins: Yes. Definitely.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Great. Good to know. Thanks.

The Chair: Any other questions? Please go ahead, Member Woollard.

Ms Woollard: Thank you very much. I'm really excited about this because I was in on initial discussions about setting this up quite some time ago, so this is wonderful. Just wondering really quickly: would the number of people or organizations who are using this reporting system impact the time or resources necessary to keep up the registry? You know, would it get overloaded? Is that an issue at all?

Ms Robins: It's not an issue with our new system and the new technology. It can handle basically any number of registrations that come in, so there are no system problems that would arise because of increased amounts of registration.

Ms Woollard: Thank you.

The Chair: I'm just going to check with those on the phone. Are there any questions for our guests today? Any questions here in the room?

Okay. Thank you very much for that demonstration. Really appreciated.

As we return to the deliberations and recommendations stage of our review, I would like to note for the record that Dr. Swann, MLA for Calgary-Mountain View, sent the committee a letter, which was distributed in April, outlining his support for maintaining the exemption for nonprofit organizations under the Lobbyists Act.

I would also like to quickly point out to everyone that we have a screen set up so that the committee clerk can type out any motions put forward, to avoid confusion as to what is being decided. Those of you participating by teleconference can view the proposed motions through the internal committee website as long as you remember to refresh your screen frequently. If you propose a motion, please be prepared to repeat it as necessary or provide the committee clerk with a written copy. I would also encourage committee members to discuss any issue and propose draft wording before putting forward a final motion. Does anyone have a question before we proceed?

Okay. At our meeting in February we discussed each item in the issues and proposals document, and committee members had just started bringing forward proposals for discussion. As we return to this process today, we have a motion from our previous meeting on which debate was adjourned. That motion was moved by Mr. MacIntyre and is as follows:

the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship recommend that the Lobbyists Act be amended by requiring public office holders to record, register, and file, by means acceptable to the office of the Ethics Commissioner, any lobbying between their office and directors, officers, or employees of an organization referred to in section 1(1)(g)(iv).

I'll open this up for discussion before we vote on the motion. Anybody wishing to make any comments? Mr. Kleinsteuber.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Sure. Yeah. With regard to this motion I think that this is an unusual way to proceed and that other jurisdictions are not taking that approach either. From the cross-jurisdictional 10 jurisdictions have the consultant lobbyist. In Alberta the senior paid officer of the consultant lobbyist organization that employs the consultant lobbyists is responsible for reporting. I think the onus is therefore on the lobbyists and not the public office holders in this case. From a logistical point, having public office holders report every five- to 10-minute encounter during events is going to be quite a burden. I think there is a gain to having lobbyists report to

an independent officer directly, and there's transparency that the government has no influence on. That's kind of where I stand on the issue.

The Chair: Thank you.

Any other comments from anybody?

Mr. MacIntyre: Mr. Chair, if I may?

The Chair: Yes. Please go ahead, Mr. MacIntyre.

Mr. MacIntyre: The reason for this amendment is because of the discussion that we had in previous meetings where not-for-profit organizations were talking to us about the difficulty that they felt they were going to have in registering and in navigating the registry and the number of hours it would take their staff to obey the rules. I think it's quite reasonable that a public office holder is already tracking the necessary information from a meeting with a lobbyist, including the times and the locations, the topics, and those who are present. I mean, we all do that as MLAs. We all do that already in the portfolios that we hold. I'm well aware that all of our public office holders, our deputy ministers and assistant deputy ministers record all of this information already whenever they have a meeting with someone. So it's not extra work for them to be able to record and report this information.

You know, if we go back in time a little bit, if the government hadn't shredded their visitor logs on a daily basis, it would be quite easy to file these disclosures.

It also helps to eliminate any burden that would be put on community organizations or not-for-profits since the people that they are lobbying are already recording all of this information. It's, I don't think, any kind of an onerous burden on them whatsoever to simply report that to the registry.

Now, the goal of the Lobbyists Act is to inform the public of who is meeting with their government and what they are discussing. I think it's entirely reasonable for the government to be responsible or be one of the responsible parties for sharing this information, especially given that those departments are already recording it.

Thank you.

The Chair: I have a speakers list going. I just want to double-check with those on the phone. Do any of you wish to be on the speakers list?

Okay. We are going to Mr. Dang, followed by Mr. Nielsen.

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess my concern about this is – the way I really understand it is that public office holders include, well, MLAs. That's government, opposition, all caucuses. I don't believe that requiring MLAs, if I go to the Calgary Stampede next week and meet with somebody for 20 minutes and they mention something to me, to have to register that is going to be useful for anybody or an efficient use of my time.

I guess I have a question for the commissioner, if I may. I just wonder your thoughts on this because I know you were here last time this was brought up – and I know that through our research we found that this wasn't in place in any other jurisdiction in Canada – and whether you had any more insight on that.

Ms Trussler: Nobody else in any place that I know of, inside or outside of Canada, requires the public office holder, whether it's an elected representative or a senior official, to be the person to make note of it. In all cases it's the lobbyists, after they have the meeting, that have to register. Our registry actually has a function in it where you can – it's not activated – register meetings. It's not a complex process. It might take someone 10 minutes . . .

9:40

Ms Robins: Yeah. Not even.

Ms Trussler: . . . after they come back from a meeting to register. They only have one meeting that they have to think about, whereas MLAs are going to have to keep a notebook in their pocket, and they're going to have to try and remember all the meetings that they have. I think it would be very onerous on MLAs and very onerous on deputy ministers and assistant deputy ministers to have to do the registration.

With respect to the not-for-profits I think the second proposal I put forward exempts over 90 per cent of them. It only includes those that actually have paid staff. It wouldn't be that much of a burden for those who have paid staff to actually go in and take 10 minutes to register that they had a meeting.

The Chair: Thank you, Commissioner.

We're going to go to Mr. Kleinsteuber.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Yeah. My point was just, I guess, to Mr. MacIntyre. He was talking about the number of hours navigating the registry, but I think we've had a demonstration here about how simple it is to navigate it. I think that it would be entirely appropriate, then, for those that have already got that sort of relationship with the Ethics Commissioner to be able to – as the one point was, having lobbyists report directly to the independent officer is a different kind of relationship than having the MLA directly keep records on this. I don't see the validity in that point, at the very least.

Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. I don't have anybody else on the speakers list. Does anybody else wish to speak?

Mr. Clark: Just a brief comment if I may.

The Chair: Please go ahead.

Mr. Clark: Thank you. You know, while I share the concern of Dr. Swann and, I think, some other members of the committee around not-for-profits and I understand that the Ethics Commissioner has amended her recommendation, still I'm yet to be convinced that requiring any not-for-profits to register is solving a big problem that we necessarily have.

But I do agree that requiring public office holders to register meetings rather than others just makes no sense. It seems like it's kind of a backwards way of – I'm not quite sure what the intention was beyond perhaps showing all of us MLAs how difficult that would be should we require not-for-profits to register. I don't really know. Any time that we are talking about doing something that no one else in the country or perhaps even anywhere else in the world that we know of is doing: that seems a little odd to me. So I really can't support this particular motion.

Thank you.

The Chair: Anybody else wishing to be added to the speakers list?

Okay. I will call the question. I'll just read through the motion quickly here, then:

the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship recommend that the Lobbyists Act be amended by requiring public office holders to record, register, and file, by means acceptable to the office of the Ethics Commissioner, any lobbying between their office and directors, officers, or employees of an organization referred to in section 1(1)(g)(iv).

All in favour of the motion? Any opposed? That motion has been defeated.

As we move on to discuss other proposals, I would again like to encourage committee members to present an issue for discussion and, when appropriate, propose draft wording for consideration before moving your final motion.

Now I'm going to open up the floor to more issues. I'll leave it up to everyone here. Yes, Mr. Malkinson. Please go ahead.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'm just going to list a couple of points out of the issues document that I and my caucus wouldn't mind talking about. I think that might make it a little bit easier for us, too, as we flow through the meeting, just to sort of know what we want to talk about. Perhaps my colleagues have similar points or other points they'd like to bring up, and I think that would be worth while if we can do that in advance so we can smoothly move through the meeting.

The Chair: Sure.

Mr. Malkinson: Specifically, Mr. Chair, I'd like to talk about the removal of the 100-hour threshold. That's issue 2(c) on page 5 of the issues document. I'd like to talk about public benefit nonprofit organizations. That's issue 5(a) on page 7. I'll talk about gifts from lobbyists. That's issue 7(b) on page 12. Then I would like to talk about contingency fees, grassroots communication considered lobbying, as well as tightening rules around exemptions regarding requests for input, which was raised by the office of the Ethics Commissioner. Sorry. In there I was referring to my own points on that, not the issues document. My apologies on that.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you very much.

Since a member from the private members of the government caucus has listed issues that they'd like to discuss, I'd just like to open up the floor to others providing issues that they would like to discuss if they so choose.

Okay. Hearing no interjections, I'll open up the floor to I guess you, Mr. Malkinson, since you brought up the list of concerns that you'd like to discuss.

Mr. Malkinson: Perfect. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Starting at the first one there, I want to talk about the 100-hour threshold. I'm going to sort of discuss my ideas here on this, and then I'm going to propose wording for a motion. Would you like me to do a motion first and discuss or discuss and then a motion? What would be your preference?

The Chair: Well, if you're going to be putting the motion, you should just put the motion forward.

Mr. Malkinson: Okay. So what I'm going to propose is that the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship recommend that the Lobbyists Act be amended in the definition of organization lobbyist to reduce the threshold to 50 hours of lobbying annually, including any preparation time.

The Chair: Just give us time to get this up on the screen.

Mr. Malkinson: I can repeat that, if need be, for the clerk.

The Chair: Okay. We've got it.

Mr. Malkinson: Perfect. Okay.

The reason for bringing this forward is that we're all here in this committee and we know that, you know, transparency is key when it comes to governing Albertans. We have discussed it at length. We have had many presentations from various groups that that is

important. But we also have heard that we want to balance transparency with the practical day-to-day work of Albertans.

As pointed out by the Ethics Commissioner in her submission, the threshold for organizational lobbyists allows for significant lobbying to take place before those lobbyists hit the need to be registered. To quote the Ethics Commissioner herself:

In practical terms, an organization would need to engage in 100 one-hour meetings in person, or 400 fifteen-minute phone calls, before meeting the threshold to register under the Act. Organizations may therefore engage in a significant amount of lobbying without being required to register under the Act, and it is possible that some may specifically arrange their affairs so that they come close to, but never exceed, this amount of lobbying annually, therefore never triggering the requirement to register under the Act.

That quote came from page 5 of the office of the Ethics Commissioner's submission to this committee.

I agree with the office of the Ethics Commissioner that this threshold, especially since it does not include preparation time, is most definitely too high. When the Lobbyists Act was reviewed in 2011, at that time – my understanding from looking back at the records is that there was significant concern about the 100-hour threshold at that time as well, so I don't think this recommendation or this concern about the 100-hour threshold as it currently exists in the act is a new one. At the time those concerns were not recognized by the committee, which had a majority of a different party on that committee at that time. It was of PC members.

9:50

However, I don't feel that getting rid of the threshold altogether is the best approach. We have discussed that dropping the threshold to zero would create another barrier towards engagement, and of course as government we don't want to run the risk of losing input from organizations and consultants as we rely on their information and their input. That is why in this motion I am proposing a middle ground. I think that a middle ground between 100 hours and zero will increase transparency and effectiveness and will not place an unreasonable burden on Alberta companies and organizations who do lobby government.

I think we do have to be cognizant of, you know, the thousands of Alberta companies and organizations who interact with government on a very infrequent basis and who are not on a regular basis lobbying. If a small company or even a large company takes the time to prepare some briefing notes about their organization and set up a meeting with a government official to get their point across, they may take a few hours to do that once a year. Are they going to have to register and report as a lobbyist?

A perfect example of that, Mr. Chair, is that I have several small companies headquartered in my riding. One in particular did a presentation for me. They specialize in products for hanging picture frames, and they chatted to me a little bit about our various government programs and how our programs are helping them and how perhaps they could be tweaked slightly to be improved. From a company that is locally based, not particularly large, I think that's an example of a company where they should be able to talk to and lobby their local MLA but perhaps not at the threshold that we are trying to capture through a review of this act. I think it's clear that there does have to be some kind of threshold.

Now, we don't want to signal to Albertans, of course, that anyone who wants to access government is a lobbyist. We don't want to send a chill through Albertans that they have to disclose publicly every time they want to talk to their MLA or a public office holder when there's something that they're concerned about. We want Albertans to come and talk to their government, and we don't want to force government officials to ask everyone who talks to them

whether or not they've registered as a lobbyist. My colleague Mr. Dang made a great point about the Calgary Stampede coming up, and that is the Super Bowl of political events if you are a Calgary-based MLA and, I would say, for many other MLAs in the province. I will be meeting lots of constituents and, you know, other levels of government and many different organizations, and it would make sense that I should be able to talk to them, and it makes sense that you don't have to record every five-minute interaction.

Now, some of the public submissions either suggest that the 100-hour threshold should be maintained or that it be done away with, and I don't think the consequences of either proposal were discussed in detail. Certainly, unintended and unwelcome consequences of forcing every organization who has any contact with government to register as a lobbyist were not discussed extensively in the committee.

Of course, I'll point out that as a part of the Ethics Commissioner's proposal she pointed out that there may be organizations who could be organizing their lobbyist activities to keep under the 100-hour limit and could effectively do so. I agree with her on that. I think that the 100-hour threshold is too high; hence, the 50-hour threshold, as proposed in this motion, including preparation time. I think it matches the intent of the Ethics Commissioner's submission, to include more such organizations having the requirement to report. Lowering the threshold to include preparation time makes it more evident to organizations that it is necessary to do so. I think this is a good middle ground.

I realize that this was a bit of a lengthy presentation, but I think this is a good middle ground. I'm open to hearing discussions from other members of the committee.

The Chair: All right. Before we continue, may I ask that you just review this to make sure that it adequately represents the motion that you put forward.

Mr. Malkinson: Yes, Mr. Chair. It matches my intention.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you very much for affirming that.

May we continue with discussion, then? Okay. Mr. Hanson.

Mr. Hanson: Yeah. My question is for the Ethics Commissioner, whether she thinks that that 50 hours goes far enough. That still allows for 200 fifteen-minute meetings or 50 one-hour meetings, and you're kind of trusting the lobbyist that they're going to include the 50 hours of prep time or allow for that. I'm just wondering how you feel about that.

Ms Trussler: Under the current situation I doubt there's anybody who lobbies for 100 hours. It's just that many of the big corporations register in any event.

With the 50 hours there's a problem for us. It's very hard for us to monitor whether or not they're lobbying. The organizations then will have to keep track of it. But you can do a lot of lobbying in 50 hours. I doubt there are many organizations that even now lobby that much.

The thing I think you've got to understand is that if a constituent comes to talk to you, that's not lobbying. You have to be paid to be a lobbyist before you have to register, and that's part of the act so that constituents – unless they're a big firm and they're paid to talk to you about whatever product they're doing, then they're not a lobbyist. When Joe Blow your constituent comes in to see you, under the act right now that person would never be a lobbyist, and we've made no recommendations that they be designated a lobbyist.

Mr. Hanson: Can I do a follow-up on that?

The Chair: Sure. Please go ahead.

Mr. Hanson: I agree with you a hundred per cent. You can do a lot of lobbying even in an hour with the right person and the right speaker. Would your recommendation be that we eliminate the threshold completely?

Ms Trussler: That would be my preference. If you need to put hours in, I would make them quite a bit lower.

Mr. Hanson: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: I want to check with those on the phone. Does anybody want to be put on the speakers list?

Mr. Hunter: Can I be put on, please?

The Chair: Okay, Mr. Hunter.

Anybody else? I'll just do a go-around the room here. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Hunter, go ahead.

Mr. Hunter: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe that the comment was made by Ms Trussler that lobbying is lobbying, and I'm grateful that she was able to clarify for Mr. Dang that if someone comes and talks to him, they have to be paid, so they're not considered a lobbyist unless they're paid. I think that the standard has been set that you have to be paid in order to be a lobbyist, and if you're a lobbyist, you definitely have to show that you're lobbying when you're talking to a government official. So I am opposed to this motion, and I think that it should be brought down to zero.

Thanks.

The Chair: Okay. I have Mr. Loewen on the list.

Mr. Loewen: Yes. Thank you. I guess the comment was made that this is middle ground. I guess it is middle ground because it is half of 100, but it seems pretty arbitrary to pick a number like that. I'd mentioned that zero was a barrier to engagement. Again, these are paid lobbyists, people that, specifically, their job is to lobby. There should be no barrier to engagement when they're being paid to do just that.

It was also mentioned that people maybe adjust their efforts so that they come close but don't go over that limit. We've heard that hardly anybody lobbies over 50 hours a year anyway. Really, just lowering this to 50 doesn't accomplish much at all, if anything. I think the point has been made that lobbying is lobbying. Anybody that's a paid lobbyist is a lobbyist, and anything that they do in that job when they're working with government is lobbying. I think it's pretty clear that we should be counting all that. I mean, we just had this discussion with nonprofits, and it seemed like that issue was left out of that discussion as far as that the only ones of the nonprofits that would have to work with that would be ones that have paid lobbyists.

Picking just this 50-hour threshold: I think it's, like I say, not only just an arbitrary limit, but it means nothing. I think we need to go down. We need to go to zero.

Thank you.

10:00

The Chair: Mr. Hanson, please go ahead.

Mr. Hanson: Yeah. That being said, I agree with my colleague a hundred per cent. Zero is kind of a hard number to quantify as well, so I would like to propose an amendment, please, if I might.

The Chair: Please go ahead and present your amendment.

Mr. Hanson: I move that

the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship recommend that the Lobbyists Act be amended in the definition of organizational lobbyist to reduce the threshold to one hour of lobbying annually, including any prep time.

The Chair: Okay. We'll open the amendment up to discussion. Mr. Malkinson.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Perhaps, Mr. Hanson, you could provide a little bit of clarity for the reason for the one hour.

I'd also point out that in this committee we did have from research services our crossjurisdictional analysis. If we did go to zero or one hour, that would definitely make us unique within Canada from what I saw in the crossjurisdictional analysis whereas at 50 hours other jurisdictions do do that. Ontario would be an example.

More specifically, I was wondering if Mr. Hanson could explain his logic for the one hour.

Mr. Hanson: Sure. I'd be happy to. For one thing, I don't see any problem with being unique in Canada. I think we are very unique as a province.

The reason that I stepped away from zero is that that would mean that even if you weren't involved in any active lobbying that year, you would have to register.

I think that the right person with an hour's time can be very convincing. If they happen to have the ear of the Premier or one of the senior ministers, they can move mountains in an hour. So I don't think it's unreasonable that any paid lobbyist group that has a meeting of that magnitude should be registered.

Thanks.

The Chair: Okay. I just want to check in with those on the phone to make sure that we're hearing you. Does anybody want to speak specifically to this amendment?

Okay. Hearing none, I'm going to double-check with people in the room. Does anybody else want to speak to the amendment?

Mr. Loewen: I would.

The Chair: Please go ahead, Mr. Loewen.

Mr. Loewen: Yeah. Again, the crossjurisdictional analysis that we'd be unique at one hour: I think what we'd be unique with is openness and transparency in the Lobbyists Act. I think that's important. If we want to be not unique and want to, you know, keep stuff from being transparent and open – I think that's the wrong way to go. I think this is a good amendment, and I think we should support this and be open and transparent.

The Chair: Okay. Anybody else?

Hearing nobody else, we will move to vote on the amendment – I clarify: the amendment – which is to amend the original motion put forward by Mr. Malkinson to strike out "50 hours" and substitute "one hour." We will now proceed to a vote. All those in favour? All those opposed to the amendment?

Mr. Hanson: Could we get a recorded vote?

The Chair: We've had a request for a recorded vote, so we will do that. We will start over here, on my right.

Mr. Hanson: Yes.

Mr. Loewen: Yes.

Mr. Nielsen: No.

Ms Woollard: No.

Mr. Rosendahl: No.

Mr. Dang: No.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Against the amendment.

Mr. Malkinson: No.

The Chair: Okay. Those on the phone?

Mr. Hunter: Yes.

Ms Babcock: No.

Ms Kazim: No.

Mr. Clark: No.

Mr. MacIntyre: Yes.

The Chair: Okay. That amendment is defeated.

Now we're back to the original motion. We'll carry on with discussion on the original motion. Anybody wishing to comment on the original motion? Those on the phone?

Okay. We'll now move to vote on the original motion. I'll just read that for the record. Moved by Mr. Malkinson that

the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship recommend that the Lobbyists Act be amended in the definition of organization lobbyist to reduce the threshold to 50 hours of lobbying annually, including any preparation time.

All those in favour of the motion? All those opposed to the motion? Okay. That motion is carried.

Thank you very much. We'll now move on to the next issue or concern. Anybody have anything they'd like to bring up? Member Woollard, please go ahead.

Ms Woollard: Yeah. I'd just like to bring up the topic of the public benefit of nonprofit organizations. We had some discussion about that, and it seems there are a lot of questions. Albertans obviously need to know who is trying to influence government, but the concern we have about the recommendation from the Ethics Commissioner is that to divide it up, to cut off, to make the threshold higher about which organizations qualify as nonprofit organizations, adds a potential burden to many nonprofits who are working to provide the public with services the government is not able to do. The recommendation tends to be focused on special-interest groups, not the majority of registered charities, but with the recent Fair Elections Financing Act our government already has a provision in place to capture the special-interest groups. So we're thinking that for most things leaving the existing definition and qualifications of non interest groups is satisfactorily covering this area, providing opportunities for the nonprofit organizations to lobby as needed.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Member Woollard.

Would anybody else care to comment on the issue? I'm just going to double-check with those on the phone. Okay.

Would you like to add any additional comments, Member Woollard?

Ms Woollard: Just one. We were talking about third-party advertising as well. This is a concern that sometimes organizations are divided by how much they spend on advertising, but it's already

covered under Elections Alberta how much they're allowed to spend. So we feel that that's adequately dealt with.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

I'll just remind everybody that at this moment we do have the letter from Dr. Swann that was also supportive of maintaining the exemption for nonprofits.

Mr. Kleinsteuber, please go ahead.

10:10

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Yeah. I'd just like to mention, too, I guess, when discussing this topic, that the Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations, the Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations, and Volunteer Alberta represent a majority of nonprofits in Alberta and spoke in favour of keeping the exemption. Quite a few jurisdictions in Canada have some kind of threshold in place, whether it's defined by hours or by some other definition. Six provinces, specifically, across Canada do not exclude nonprofits.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Would anybody else care to comment? I'm going to double-check with those on the phone. Okay.

Mr. Loewen, please go ahead.

Mr. Loewen: I just want to clarify here. A nonprofit organization could have a paid lobbyist that would have unlimited hours of lobbying government, and there would be no recording of that. Am I correct?

The Chair: Commissioner, would you like to comment?

Ms Trussler: Yes. Right now, yes.

The Chair: Okay. Hearing no other comments, perhaps we'll move on to another issue for discussion. Member Woollard, please go ahead.

Ms Woollard: Okay. We had another topic that we wanted just to discuss a bit, too. The topic was having contracts for providing paid advice to the government. What we're talking about here is making sure that we continue to maintain the principles of transparency and freedom from manipulation, which are the primary considerations for this act. The goal of the government and this committee is to increase accountability and transparency, not to decrease it by relaxing the rules. On that basis we want to make sure that the act is maintained, that there is a prohibition on contracting for getting paid advice to the government. We're looking at the amendments which came about in 2014, the result of years of concern expressed by the opposition and the public over entitlement and conflicts of interest in the government. So they shouldn't be rejected now without serious consideration and input from all stakeholders.

The Chair: Okay. So you have no motion to put forward?

Ms Woollard: No.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Anybody else care to comment on that particular issue? Good.

Okay. Hearing none, perhaps we'll open it up to another issue for discussion. Mr. Rosendahl, please go ahead.

Mr. Rosendahl: Yes. The area that I want to talk about is the gifts from lobbyists. There are considerable issues concerning that, and I'd like to put a motion on the floor if I can do that, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Please go ahead, Mr. Rosendahl.

Mr. Rosendahl: I'd like to move that

the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship recommend that the Lobbyists Act be amended to prohibit organization lobbyists, consultant lobbyists, clients of consultant lobbyists, or employees, directors, or officers of an organization that employs one or more organization lobbyists from offering a fee, gift, or other nonmonetary benefit aside from reasonable hospitality not exceeding \$100 to any of the following persons:

- (a) a Member of the Legislative Assembly;
- (b) a deputy minister of the government;
- (c) a person employed in the office of the Premier or an office of a minister.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Rosendahl. We're just going to make sure that we've captured that. I want to confirm here with our committee clerk and Parliamentary Counsel.

Ms Dean: Mr. Chair, if I may direct a question to Mr. Rosendahl, the last clause in your proposed motion was: (c) a person employed in the office of the Premier or an office of a minister. Is that correct?

Mr. Rosendahl: That is correct.

The Chair: We're just going to wait for that to come up on the screen before we continue.

Mr. Rosendahl: Then I have also on top of that clause (d). Are we ready?

The Chair: Just give us a moment. We want to make sure we capture it. Hold on.

Mr. Rosendahl: Okay.

The Chair: Can you please read (d)?

Mr. Rosendahl: Okay.

- (d) a designated office holder as defined in section 25.2 of the Public Service Act unless the organization or person engaged in lobbying activities is a charitable organization registered with the Canada Revenue Agency or employed by a charitable organization registered with the Canada Revenue Agency.

The Chair: Okay. We'll get that up shortly here.

Perhaps while our committee clerk is getting that up on the screen, we can continue with deliberating on this particular issue.

Mr. Rosendahl, would you like to speak to your motion?

Mr. Rosendahl: Yes. The principles of transparency are important, and we have to make sure that when we're looking at that, we're being clear as to the fact that we need to be transparent and that we also make sure that we have it clear as to the amount, because it's important that we look at that. Our current legislation allows for tangible gifts of \$200 and \$400 for an event from the same source per year, for example, which is huge. It also could be higher in multiple cases if you added all this up. The federal legislation only allows for a gift of \$50, so I think that the picking of \$100 is kind of middle ground, so to speak. We really need to address this so that it's clear as to exactly what we think we need to go with on this.

The act needs to be amended to add a provision to prohibit organization lobbyists, consultant lobbyists, clients of consultant lobbyists, or employees, directors, or officers of an organization that employs one or more organization lobbyists from offering a fee or a gift or other nonmonetary benefit. These are the things that we really need to look at very clearly, aside from reasonable hospitality not exceeding \$100, which is a good part of it, right?

10:20

The Ethics Commissioner has recommended to the special ethics committee with regard to amendments to the Conflicts of Interest Act that MLAs, deputy ministers, members of the Premier's or ministers' staff, and designated office holders not be allowed to accept gifts from lobbyists totalling more than \$100. That was clearly a recommendation from the Ethics Commissioner on that issue alone, and I think that this amendment captures those concerns.

Also, according to the Ethics Commissioner amending the Lobbyists Act and the Conflicts of Interest Act in this regard is a stronger approach than only amending the Conflicts of Interest Act as it places the restriction directly on lobbyists, who must be in compliance with the Lobbyists Act, in contrast with the Conflicts of Interest Act, which places the onus on the public office holder not to accept such a gift.

It's important that we look at these issues as per the recommendation from the office of the Ethics Commissioner, and I think that this motion covers those issues. I think it's important that we proceed with that motion, so I'm in favour of it.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Rosendahl.

I just want to remind those who are participating by teleconference that you can view the proposed motions from the internal committee website as long as you remember to refresh the screen.

We'll now go to discussion on the motion. Mr. Hanson.

Mr. Hanson: Yes. Thank you, Chair. I just want some clarification on the last number, (d), that you put in there. If I read it correctly,

- (d) a designated office holder as defined in section 25.2 of the Public Service Act unless the organization or person engaged in lobbying activities is a charitable organization registered with the Canada Revenue Agency or employed by a charitable organization registered with the Canada Revenue Agency.

Basically, what you're saying is that if a charitable organization has a paid lobbyist, as long as they're registered with the Canada Revenue Agency, they can offer a gift to anyone. That's the way I read that. It doesn't make a lot of sense to me. It just seems that it'll cause a lot of confusion as to whether you can accept a gift or not. You'll have to ask these people whether they're registered with the Canada Revenue Agency. I don't see why we need the addition of that (d) in this motion. If you could clarify that, I would really appreciate it.

Mr. Rosendahl: Well, I don't believe that that is correct in the way you're saying that.

Mr. Hanson: I read it the way it's printed on the screen.

Mr. Rosendahl: Well, maybe we could get clarification from the Ethics Commissioner on this.

Ms Trussler: If you're not going to change the act to include some of the not-for-profits to require them to be lobbyists, then you don't need it.

The Chair: Mr. Malkinson.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In hearing Mr. Hanson's comments, this is to allow, I think, for charitable organizations to be able to provide a gift. I don't see a problem with it at this time, but, I mean, we're definitely willing to, I suppose, entertain motions if you feel strongly about it.

Mr. Hanson: I'm just more looking for clarification because I think it will cause some confusion. You know, there are a number of charitable organizations that are registered that do have paid lobbyists working for them that are fairly influential. According to this that means that I can accept a gift from them as long as they work for that agency that's registered. To me, it just makes it a lot more confusing, and I don't think it's necessary to have it in there.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: I'm just wondering if someone would like to make an amendment, then, in that regard. Mr. Hanson maybe?

The Chair: Would someone like to make an amendment, then?

Mr. Hanson: Just before we do that, can I just get clarification from the Ethics Commissioner. Am I reading that correctly?

Ms Trussler: Well, the reason that was put in our proposal was in the hope that you would include some of the larger not-for-profits and require them to register as lobbyists. But if you're not going to do that, then they don't have any lobbyists according to the act, so you wouldn't need that particular part of it. It would just be a designated office holder pursuant to section 25.2 of the Public Service Act.

The one thing I have a little bit of concern about is that it's offering "a fee, gift, or other nonmonetary benefit," whether or not the gift includes tickets or invitations to events, so the definition at the beginning may not go far enough.

Mr. Hanson: I can say that the way that I read this is that if somebody approaches me and says, "You know, I've got box seats to the Edmonton Oilers game, but I'm a lobbyist for a charitable organization that's registered with Revenue Canada," then I'm okay to accept. That is the way I'm reading that.

Ms Trussler: Yes, but right now under the Conflicts of Interest Act you can accept gifts from registered charities. It's an exemption under the act right now. So if the Stollery foundation invites you to one of their events, no matter what the cost of it, you could accept it.

Mr. Hanson: Okay.

Ms Trussler: But if you're not going to make any of the not-for-profits register, then the part that's outlined in blue is not necessary.

Mr. Hanson: Not necessary. Okay. I just want to make sure that we're going far enough. We've spent quite a bit of time on this Lobbyists Act, and if we're not going to make decisions that are going to be effective and help your office, I guess I would at this time make a motion, then, to eliminate the highlighted areas.

The Chair: So you'd like to make an amendment to delete everything after "Public Service Act."

Mr. Hanson: Yeah.

The Chair: Okay. Having heard the amendment, I'm just going to ask if anybody has comments that they would like to make regarding the amendment.

Mr. Nielsen: Just a quick question to the Ethics Commissioner. You had mentioned the Conflicts of Interest Act, and I know there are limitations within that as to what MLAs can accept. Would that still not sort of govern, you know, based on the example we were using – like, the box seats for the Oilers obviously would be pretty expensive. Would that part, then, not sort of say, "Oh, well, wait; there's that limit there"? We'd be having to check with you in terms of what's allowed and what's not.

Ms Trussler: If it's from a registered charity, right now it's covered by section 7(2).

Subsection (1) does not apply to a non-monetary gift or other non-monetary benefit that is accepted by the Member or the Member's spouse or adult interdependent partner or minor child from the Member's political party or constituency association, a charitable organization or a Canadian government, whether federal, provincial, territorial or municipal.

Right now if you're offered it by the charity itself, not by the lobbyist for the charity but by the charity itself – the CEO writes you a letter and invites you to something – you can accept that gift, and there's no monetary limit on it.

Mr. Nielsen: Even though we have that limit in the Conflicts of Interest Act?

Ms Trussler: This is right out of the Conflicts of Interest Act.

Mr. Nielsen: Okay. So that wouldn't supersede?

Ms Trussler: No.

Mr. Nielsen: Okay. Thank you.

10:30

Ms Trussler: Right now there are no limits on charities. The limits, the \$200 and \$400 limits, are on other gifts from noncharities and nongovernments and nonparties.

The Chair: Thank you, Commissioner.

Anybody else caring to comment on the amendment? I'm just going to double-check with those on the phone if anyone cares to comment on the amendment

to strike out all the words following "Public Service Act."

Okay. Hearing none, all those in favour of the amendment, please say aye. All those opposed to the amendment, please say no. The amendment is carried.

We will now go back to the motion as amended. Anybody else care to comment on the motion as amended? Double-checking with those on the phone.

Okay. We will now proceed to a vote on the motion as amended. All those in favour of the motion as amended, please say aye. Anybody opposed? Okay. That motion is carried. Thank you.

Mr. Loewen, please go ahead.

Mr. Loewen: Yeah. I guess I would like to just – we keep coming back to some of the same topics over and over again as we go through the discussion today, so I want to take us back to 5(a), the nonprofit organizations. What we've come to realize, of course, is that some of these nonprofit organizations have paid lobbyists. They don't have any limits on gifts that they can give MLAs or anybody else, and I don't think that what we've done here so far today on some of these issues and on this in particular is doing justice to openness and transparency in government and having a fair and just process here for the Lobbyists Act.

I'd like to make a motion.

The Chair: Please go ahead.

Mr. Loewen: That the nonprofit organization exemption to the Lobbyists Act not apply to nonprofits with paid lobbyists.

The Chair: Thank you. As we appropriately update the motion to reflect what you have said, would you like to speak to your motion?

Mr. Loewen: I guess I already have somewhat in my introduction of it. Yeah. I think we have a situation here where we have some

very large nonprofit organizations that obviously, even though they're considered nonprofits, have people, staff hired. They have paid lobbyists. Obviously, what happens: we just had a situation here where we realized that these nonprofit organizations can gift any amount to a government official and not be required – there are no limits on it or anything. Obviously, these paid lobbyists: that's their job, to influence government. We're allowing basically an open opportunity for these organizations to influence government. They don't have any restrictions on how many hours they lobby. They could have their paid lobbyists meet with the Premier for 100 hours a year, and they wouldn't have to register it. They wouldn't have to do anything. They could give the Premier whatever they wanted, and there'd be no accountability for that.

I just think that's wrong. I think we need to include these organizations that have paid lobbyists because a lobbyist is a lobbyist. That paid lobbyist is a paid lobbyist. Lobbying is lobbying. Why should these organizations be exempt from being open and transparent with Albertans?

Thanks.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Loewen.
Mr. Dang.

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to clarify, would this involve organizations that only have one or two staff? Let's say that the ED was paid and that was it. That would now fall under this amendment?

The Chair: Okay. Is that to Mr. Loewen, or would you like to consult the commissioner?

Mr. Dang: Anybody who may be able to answer that question.

Ms Trussler: I guess it depends on how you draft it.

Ms Robins: To meet the definition of lobbyist under the act, you have to meet the threshold.

Mr. Loewen: Based on this motion, they would fall under the same 50-hour criteria as other organizations, obviously.

Ms Trussler: See, they wouldn't be lobbyists under the definition of the act. It just depends how you word it. It's whether they would be employees who are paid to interact with the government or employees whose primary purpose is government relations, that sort of thing. You'd have to not use the words "paid lobbyist," but the concept is in the motion. It's just how it actually ends up being drafted or worded.

Mr. Nielsen: Just a question, then, to the Ethics Commissioner. Based on this, I mean, I can think of probably three different organizations within Edmonton-Decore – Dickinsfield Amity House, KARA, and the Victims of Homicide – very, very small organizations that are delivering, you know, services to the public that probably normally government wouldn't. There's one individual that looks after all the paperwork within Dickinsfield Amity House. Would this capture them, and now all of a sudden they're kind of on the hook for things here?

Ms Trussler: Well, I think it really depends on how you define paid lobbyist. That was one of the reasons we put forward a proposal for any of these service organizations that unless they had at least five employees, they wouldn't be caught because there are some smaller organizations that might possibly be caught. But it really does depend on how you define and how you end up doing the drafting at the end.

Mr. Nielsen: So we might have a problem with this.

Ms Trussler: No. You just need careful drafting.

Ms Robins: If I could just add to that, in six jurisdictions in Canada they actually don't specifically exclude nonprofits. Essentially, if they meet the threshold, they have to register just like for-profit companies do. So there are only four, including Alberta, that specifically exclude nonprofits. Those other six jurisdictions, including the federal government, say that if you're meeting that threshold, then you need to register, whether or not you're nonprofit or for-profit.

The Chair: We're going to go to Mr. Kleinsteuber, followed by Mr. Hansen.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Thank you, Chair. Yeah. I guess, just a question for Mr. Loewen here. Maybe if you could just clarify, I guess: with "paid lobbyist," are you talking about a staff member within the organization, then, that would be assigned, for example, to research grants or do other sort of political outreach? I guess what we're trying to say, then, that being an organizational lobbyist, being an in-house employee, officer, director of an organization who lobbies, whose job it is to lobby: are these the sorts of employees that I guess you're trying to clarify with this motion?

10:40

Mr. Loewen: I think lobbyist activities are already identified in the act, what's considered a lobbyist activity. Obviously, we just talked about the 50-hour limit, about how the actual meeting with the person and the prep for that meeting are what we've defined. The Ethics Commissioner has already said that there are hardly any organizations that even go above 50 hours, never mind nonprofits. By having the 50-hour limit, we've pretty well excluded everybody from going over any kind of limit there. Like I say, the activities are already identified as far as what's considered lobbying and what isn't. It wouldn't be, you know, a regular person's workday in an organization like that.

This has nothing to do with taking its toll on any kind of nonprofit organizations. We've talked about how simple this process is. It doesn't stop it from happening; it just means that it has to be identified. These organizations can continue to do it if they go over that threshold. They can continue to lobby. It doesn't stop them from lobbying; it's just that they'll have to be registered, and they'll have to keep track of it and make it public.

The Chair: I have Mr. Hanson on the speakers list.

Mr. Hanson: Sure. I'd just reiterate what Mr. Loewen said there. You know, we've already clarified that grant filing is not considered lobbying, if I'm correct.

Ms Trussler: I'm sorry?

Mr. Hanson: Grant filing: if you're filling out grant applications . . .

Ms Trussler: It's not lobbying.

Mr. Hanson: It's not lobbying. It's exempt. So that's not going to affect our nonprofits.

The last thing we want to do is alienate any nonprofits – they do wonderful work out there – but we do want to make sure that while we're sitting here in this committee and going through the Lobbyists Act, we're not leaving loopholes out there that are easily negotiated by people that are paid very highly to find loopholes. So that's all we're trying to clarify here. These nonprofits would still

fall under the 50-hour threshold, which we did try to change. That being said, I don't think it's going to affect any of those. You know, some of the larger nonprofits possibly – and if they're spending 50 hours lobbying government at any level, whether it's MLAs or the Premier's office or the Deputy Premier's, I don't see any reason why we shouldn't expect that to be transparent.

The Chair: Thank you.

We're going to go back to Mr. Loewen.

Mr. Loewen: Just to remind everybody here, we did try to make it so that public office holders were responsible for keeping track of this, and that was voted down. We've tried to make this as easy as possible for nonprofit organizations, but there's been, you know, somewhat unwillingness to co-operate from the government members on that, so here we are at this point.

The Chair: Okay. I want to double-check with those on the phone if they want to speak to the motion.

Mr. Hunter: Mr. Chair, I'd like to speak to it, please.

The Chair: Yes. Please go ahead, Mr. Hunter.

Mr. Hunter: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think that the issue here is – you know, one thing that I've been concerned about is multinational organizations. I talked about this before in past committee meetings, where multinational corporations will set up a not-for-profit organization as a front in order to be able to lobby governments. I am concerned about that, so I understand my colleague Mr. Loewen bringing forward this in order to be able to try to stop those loopholes.

I am deeply concerned, though, that when you bring a motion forward like this, it could create difficulties for smaller not-for-profit organizations that are already struggling due to lots of the things this government has been doing like the \$15 minimum wage, all of these issues that continue to hit these not-for-profit organizations that I talk to. I am very concerned that if we bring the not-for-profit organizations into this, it's going to just add insult to injury to what they're having to deal with. I guess that's all I have to say about that.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hunter.

Anybody else on the phones wishing to comment? Okay. I'm just going to double-check with everyone in the room.

Okay. Hearing nobody that would like to comment and continue . . .

Ms Robins: I've got one more comment.

The Chair: Sure.

Ms Robins: With "paid lobbyists," the last two words there, to bring that threshold in, you're going to need to say "organization lobbyists" because a paid lobbyist could be anybody who's paid to do any amount of lobbying. If you want to bring that threshold of 50 hours in, you need to incorporate that organization lobbyist definition.

Mr. Loewen: That would be fine.

The Chair: Can we simply change it, or do we need an amendment? Okay. So we'll just simply change it. Thank you. It would be, instead of "paid lobbyists," "paid organization lobbyists."

Okay. I'm just going to ask our committee clerk to read the motion into the record, please.

Ms Rempel: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It has been moved by Mr. Loewen that

the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship recommend that the Lobbyists Act be amended so that the nonprofit organization exemption in the Lobbyists Act not apply to nonprofits with paid organization lobbyists.

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

I suggest that we take a five-minute break here just so that people can perhaps grab a coffee or do whatever else they need to do. Five minutes.

[The committee adjourned from 10:47 a.m. to 10:53 a.m.]

The Chair: Seeing as we have the majority back, we will continue with our deliberations.

I believe that we are now on a new issue or that someone would like to introduce a new issue for discussion. Mr. Malkinson, please go ahead.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Just going along with the list of things we mentioned earlier, in the issues document I'd like to talk about 7(c). That was regarding contingency fees of lobbyists. We heard during our presentations from the Ethics Commissioner that contingency fees are controversial. We did see that other jurisdictions such as Ontario, Quebec, and Nova Scotia prohibit lobbyists from working on a contingency fee basis. You know, I think the reason for that is that it is perceived to make the lobbyists act in a way that is counter to the interests of perhaps even the organization they're working for. As somebody who was formerly in sales, the best stereotype of this is the used-car salesman on contingency. Thankfully, that era of craziness is most definitely gone, but that's sort of the most stereotypical example of contingency fees going awry, the stereotypical used-car salesman.

You know, I've got a quote here from the lobbyist registrar herself, actually, where she chatted about this, saying that

contingency fee arrangements are controversial. It is a common perception that contingency fees may provide financial incentives for someone to act on a basis other than the merits of the matter or to exert improper influence to achieve success. This undermines public confidence in the government. We also believe that some consultant lobbyists may take work on a contingency fee basis just so they can try to argue that they are not caught under the act as they are not guaranteed to receive payment.

Mr. Chair, I'm thinking that this is something where I think it would be worth while to heed the suggestion from the Ethics Commissioner that the act should be amended to prohibit a lobbyist from working where payment is contingent on the degree of success of that lobbyist in lobbying. To that end, I will propose a motion if the clerk is ready.

The Chair: Please go ahead.

Mr. Malkinson: I move that

the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship recommend that the Lobbyists Act be amended to prohibit the payment of consultant lobbyists through a contingency fee payment arrangement.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Malkinson. I think we've captured it. I know you've already spoken at length about your motion. Are there any additional comments that you would like to make regarding your motion?

Mr. Malkinson: No, Mr. Chair. I think I've laid out my point on this. I'd be curious to hear other people's opinions.

The Chair: Okay. We'll go to Mr. Hanson.

Mr. Hanson: Thank you. I agree with the motion. I think it's a good motion. I'm just getting a little bit of a mixed message here in that we're trying to close loopholes, yet we've allowed two of the major loopholes to go unattended here today. I guess that's my only comment. You know, we still allow up to 50 hours of lobbying without having to register. We've allowed a loophole that allows a lobbyist group to set up a nonprofit to hide behind. It seems that this is one step in the right direction, but we've taken two steps back here today, and I just find it a little frustrating.

Thanks.

The Chair: Anybody else care to comment on the motion?

Mr. Hunter: Yes, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Please go ahead, Mr. Hunter.

Mr. Hunter: Thank you. I've talked, again, about this issue before in committee. I guess I just don't understand. This is going to fix that if someone is actually on commission, they would be unethical in some way when, in reality, anybody could be unethical. Because they're on commission doesn't make them unethical or give them more reason to be unethical. I don't really understand the reason for this. As much as I respect the commissioner, I have to disagree. I don't believe that this is actually going to make people more ethical in their lobbying. If someone is to be successful, then they will continue to be paid, whether they are on commission or they're on regular salary.

One of the concerns I have is that a very small organization or maybe a group of small organizations would subcontract a lobbyist in order to be able to get the desired result. They may not be able to do this. They may not be able to afford it now because they'd have to bring them on as salaried. I don't really know if that's going to be achieving what we want to achieve here.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hunter.

Would anybody like to comment? Yes, Mr. Hanson. Go ahead.

11:00

Mr. Hanson: Thank you. Just to clarify Mr. Hunter's position there, a small organization, if they have somebody, hire a lobbyist on contingency: as long as they don't hit the 50-hour threshold, they wouldn't even have to register. Is that correct?

Ms Trussler: Consultant lobbyists all have to register. It doesn't matter how many hours they do.

Mr. Hanson: Okay.

Ms Trussler: But many of the consultant lobbyists we find actually not do it on a contingency. For some of the smaller organizations, for not-for-profit sometimes they will do it without charging them, but they still register.

Mr. Hanson: Yeah. So if they're not being paid a fee and they're not on an hourly or on a contract basis, would this motion eliminate their ability to donate their time?

Ms Trussler: No.

Mr. Hanson: Okay. Thank you.

Ms Trussler: It's the same thing in the legal profession, where some jurisdictions prohibit contingency fee arrangements with lawyers and some don't. There is some incentive for people who are doing things on a contingency basis to sometimes push harder or perhaps take shortcuts that they shouldn't take.

The Chair: Okay. I'm just going to double-check with those on the phone and see if anybody would like to comment regarding this issue or the motion that's been put forward. Okay.

Mr. Hunter: Can I speak again, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Yes. Please go ahead, Mr. Hunter.

Mr. Hunter: Okay. Again, if someone is paid, whether they're on commission or whether they're on salary or an hourly wage, if they don't do their job and aren't effective, then they wouldn't have a job. They would be fired as a lobbyist. Again, I don't really know if there's a correlation between someone being paid on a commission versus someone being paid an hourly wage or a salary to say whether they're going to be ethical or not ethical. I guess, is the commissioner willing to provide the committee with evidence, any studies done that show that someone, an organization or a lobbyist, that is on commission would tend more to be more unethical? Or is this just a belief that potentially that could happen?

Ms Trussler: It's more of a public perception issue. It is something that could happen. I think one of our bigger concerns is that there are some of these lobbyists who are doing contingency lobbying who then claim, "Well, because I'm not getting paid, I don't have to register," and they're getting around the registration that way.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Hunter: Sorry, Mr. Chair. Could I comment on that?

The Chair: Yeah. Please go ahead, sir.

Mr. Hunter: Thank you, Chair. Could we not have an amendment that actually states that, then? You know, if the problem is the getting around the act, then why don't we create an amendment that makes it so they can't get around it? This amendment actually just says that you can't pay them commission.

The Chair: Okay. Anybody else would like to comment on the motion as put forward by Mr. Malkinson? Double-checking with those on the phone.

Okay. I'm just going to ask our committee clerk to read the motion into the record before we vote.

Ms Rempel: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Moved by Mr. Malkinson that the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship recommend that the Lobbyists Act be amended to prohibit the payment of consultant lobbyists through a contingency fee payment arrangement.

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

We'll continue with issues for deliberation. Not all at once, please. Does anybody else have any issues that they would like to bring up? Mr. Dang, please go ahead.

Mr. Dang: Yeah. Sure, Mr. Chair. Thank you. I guess I'll start with reading my motion into the record, and then I'll get into my points here. I would move that

the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship recommend that the Lobbyists Act be amended to expand the definition of

lobby to include grassroots communication similar to the definition found in the Lobbyists' Registration Act of Nova Scotia.

The Chair: Okay. I believe that we have it. As they're preparing the motion for the screen, feel free to speak to your motion, Mr. Dang.

Mr. Dang: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think it's obviously important that all lobbying is transparent and obvious to Albertans. When we talk about things like grassroots communication, in today's social media landscape this can be a very powerful tool when used by lobbyists. The use of these tools should be reported. It's something that we found is almost a new medium of communication and a new method of lobbying that's becoming more and more prevalent, and I think it's important that we modernize the act to include this.

The Chair: We're going to open up the motion for discussion. Anybody wish to comment on the particular motion put forward by Mr. Dang? Mr. Hanson, please go ahead.

Mr. Hanson: Yeah. I'd just like it clarified. Give me some examples of what you would be talking about if you could.

Mr. Dang: Yeah. I think that we all know that a large amount of grassroots communication that's done through some sort of paid campaign almost is going on in the province right now, and I think that we'd like to capture some of those instances. When we talk about, for instance, if you had a consultant lobbyist that took out a large number of campaign ads on Facebook or Twitter, let's say, and is doing a very large campaign to try and generate a grassroots-level initiative, I think that that's something that Albertans want to know about, and I think it's something that we'd like to be transparent about.

Mr. Hanson: I think it's called democracy.

Just to clarify, the Lobbyists Act, from my understanding, is for groups trying to influence government by contacting Premiers, Deputy Premiers, MLAs. Contacting the grassroots people of Alberta, I just don't see that as being – yeah, you may excite people enough that they phone their MLA on it, but that's not a direct form of lobbying, so I don't really think it should be treated as such. How would you ever possibly keep track of it? I just see people challenging you on this one. I can't really agree with it. Sorry.

The Chair: Just a point of clarification that may help all the members regarding deliberating this particular motion. Could we have the definition of lobby as in the Lobbyists' Registration Act of Nova Scotia read into the record, please?

Ms Robert: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes. In section 2(1)(c) of the Nova Scotia Lobbyists' Registration Act it reads as follows: "lobby" means to communicate with a public-office holder, directly or through grass-roots communication, in an attempt to influence." Then it goes on to the development of legislative proposals, et cetera.

The Chair: Thank you very much.
Mr. Dang.

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah. I got this idea from one of the submissions that the Ethics Commissioner did indeed make. Perhaps the Ethics Commissioner can give a bit more clarity on this. But I do believe, really, that when we see this type of paid work being done to try and directly influence elected officials, this is something that we should be transparent about.

The Chair: Okay. Please go ahead, Ms Robins.

Ms Robins: This issue was considered in the commissioner's decision in May of 2016, where there was a detailed analysis done of grassroots communications and whether that should be interpreted as being lobbying because the act currently is not clear. Through that analysis the commissioner determined that it can be interpreted as being part of lobbying. Grassroots communication, just to clarify for everybody, is "appeals to members of the public through the mass media or by direct communication that seek to persuade members . . . to communicate directly with a public-office holder in an attempt to place pressure." It's a very specific type of communication, not to be confused with education, not to be confused with just putting your opinion out there. They're very focused, pointed communications that are saying: this is our view; please support us and contact your MLA to support this view. They have a very focused and intended purpose to lobby. There's a lot of material out there right now that you could talk about. It's very much a form of indirect lobbying.

11:10

There are other jurisdictions that have similar wording to Alberta's act. They've also issued interpretive bulletins to also interpret it as being included in the definition of lobbying, that you can interpret it as including grassroots communication. We suggested this amendment just to clarify that when you're lobbying, that includes both direct lobbying and indirect lobbying through grassroots communications as that term is defined in the act.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you, Ms Robins.

Anybody else wishing to comment on the motion put forward by Mr. Dang?

Mr. MacIntyre: Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Yes. Please go ahead, Mr. MacIntyre.

Mr. MacIntyre: Just for some clarification from the commissioner, please, would this grassroots lobbying, then, also fall under the hourly threshold that is in place in the act?

Ms Trussler: Yes, it would. I've already made a decision that says that it does, but for anybody reading the act, it's not quite clear.

Mr. MacIntyre: All right. Then how does one calculate that hourly threshold in the calculation of a medium that travels as fast as social media travels? How do you calculate that hourly threshold?

Ms Robins: If they have a website up, for example, they would automatically meet the threshold because there's going to be 50 hours of time there in terms of preparation for building that website to get those messages out there and the fact that that message is out there 24/7, which is invaluable lobbying time.

Mr. MacIntyre: If I may continue.

The Chair: Please go ahead.

Mr. MacIntyre: By virtue of the fact that they are employing social media, we're going to assume, then, that they have already met or exceeded the threshold, just by virtue of the fact that social media is available 24/7, whether that social media is actually accomplishing anything or not. Is that right?

Ms Robins: Well, I think again it comes down to the message that they're getting across. If they're lobbying, the organizations that are doing this are very much aware that they are lobbying. Grassroots

communication lobbying campaigns are very much planned campaigns, and most organizations wouldn't deny that they are lobbying. I don't think that they would also deny that they're meeting that now recommended 50-hour threshold.

Mr. MacIntyre: All right. Thank you. I do understand. Okay. That answers my questions. I have nothing further.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Hanson: If I could just get a clarification, then, from the commissioner. During the Bill 6 debates back in December 2015 a number of organizations were formed in Alberta, concerned farm groups. I think there were three or four of them. They got onto Facebook and Instagram and everything that was available, and they actually organized demonstrations at the Legislature that actually influenced the government into slowing down on their approach to Bill 6. Now, that's grassroots. That's as grassroots as it gets. Is that going to be considered under this Lobbyists Act?

Ms Robins: We would look at the activity itself. We would look at: is it mass communication with the intended and specific purpose of appealing to people to contact their MLAs? We would look at what they're doing. Yes, if it meets that definition, then we would go down that path. Okay. You've met that definition; have you now met that threshold? We would have to consider each individual circumstance to see if potentially it could.

Mr. MacIntyre: Mr. Chair, if I may.

The Chair: One second.

Mr. Hanson: I'm sorry. I have a real problem with this one. If you're going to start to affect the public's ability to organize and oppose government, no, I cannot support this. Sorry.

Ms Robins: Just to be clear, it's not the actual demonstrating of your own opinion. That's different than mobilizing a group of people to support your position and contact the public officer to support a specific position. That's where we would look at the lobbying activity. If you're out there, you know, doing your own demonstration, then that wouldn't necessarily fall under that.

Mr. Hanson: Sorry. If I might, Mr. Chair, that's exactly what took place here. They put it on their web page to contact your MLA, phone your MLA, write letters. They encouraged people to get into that. Is this going to be considered lobbying under this clause?

Ms Trussler: That's not the intention. Let me use the example of the decision I made in the Campbell case. The intention is to stop a company that has a vested interest in something and actually has lobbyists and who are registered from circumventing the act. If these companies are going to do the grassroots lobbying, their 50 hours would be reached very quickly. It's not a farmer who is unhappy about something and goes on Facebook or social media and says: we should do something about this. That's not the intention.

The Chair: Okay. On the speakers list I have Mr. Loewen, followed by Mr. MacIntyre.

Mr. Loewen: Okay. A question to Mr. Dang, I guess, who put this motion forward: just as an example, for a political party that sends out, you know, something on Facebook to the public to contact their MLA or the Premier or whatever to take a certain position, would

that mean that political parties would be registered as lobbyists, then?

The Chair: Mr. Dang.

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's simply not the case. I mean, they're not captured under the Lobbyists Act, and this wouldn't expand the definition of a lobbyist to capture them. I think that this very clearly isn't anything that's trail blazing. We're using language that's already defined in other jurisdictions. We're recommending that we use language already defined in other jurisdictions. It's something that, I think, allows us to capture when, as the commissioner was saying, companies that have significant resources to do lobbying are trying to circumvent the legislation. I think that's the intent of what we're trying to do here.

The Chair: Okay. Mr. MacIntyre.

Mr. MacIntyre: Thank you, Chair. I think we need to rewind for a moment and get back to the whole reason for the Lobbyists Act in the first place. We needed transparency. There were groups and individuals attempting to influence the government in its policies and in its legislation in a way that would favour those organizations and individuals. This was happening behind closed doors. The public in Alberta wanted transparency. The very fact that any organization is utilizing a grassroots social media campaign to attempt to influence a government is already transparent. It's out there on social media for the whole wide world to see. I see no reason whatsoever for this amendment because by virtue of them using social media, we all know and all Albertans know what they're saying, who they're trying to influence, and what their intentions are.

The purpose of the Lobbyists Act was to bring all of that stuff that was happening behind closed doors out into the public, to make it transparent, and to make it an accountable activity. Grassroots activities are already transparent. This is redundant. It really is. To make any organization, you know, even if it's paid lobbyists, for crying out loud – if they're employing social media, we all know what they're up to. That is the intent of the Lobbyists Act, so that we all know what they're up to.

Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Loewen.

11:20

Mr. Loewen: Yes. Mr. Dang, you mentioned that, you know, this is already in legislation and that this is already in definition, but what this motion does is specifically expand the definition of lobby. What we're doing here is not just including grassroots communication. We're expanding the definition of lobby to include grassroots communication, which could open it up to any communication that goes out in mass media.

Like Mr. MacIntyre said, that's already open and transparent. I guess I could see a whole can of worms being opened up here for anybody that does any kind of communications to encourage the government to take a position on something. Since this motion would expand the definition of lobby to include that, then obviously they would become part of this definition of lobby. The way this motion is worded, I don't see how you could come up with any other interpretation of what it will do.

Mr. Hunter: Mr. Chair, could I get in on this?

The Chair: Okay. Go ahead, Mr. Hunter.

Mr. Hunter: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The commissioner said that it was not the intent, but I guess the question I have for the commissioner is: with this motion the way that it's worded, could there be a situation where, say, the government brought forward another example like Bill 6, which has been talked about? Could there be a situation where this would shackle the ability of grassroots people to be able to, I guess, rally the troops in protest? I don't know. Would they have to register just in case it was deemed that they were lobbying? Can you speak to that, please?

Ms Trussler: Well, this would never stop anyone from contacting their MLA. To be a lobbyist, you have to be paid. Let's say that it's a farm issue. If all the farmers want to contact their MLAs, it would never in any way catch them.

The reason we suggested it is because I've already decided that grassroots communication is a form of lobbying, and it was based on what's been done in other jurisdictions. It's based on a decision of the Supreme Court of the United States, but I've already made that decision. The reason we asked to have the definition changed is so that it's clear to the public when they're trying to decide whether or not they're lobbying, so that it's clear to corporations that want to have a vested interest in something and want to get the public to write the minister on their behalf, to make it absolutely clear to them that they are lobbying. I've already made the decision that they're lobbying, but the act is not very clear. Some of them could fall into a trap and not realize they're lobbying when they are.

The Chair: Thank you, Commissioner.

Mr. Hunter: Can I respond, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Yes. Please go ahead, Mr. Hunter.

Mr. Hunter: Thank you. Commissioner Trussler, would you say, though, that this motion, the way that it's worded now, goes beyond the mark of what your intent was?

Ms Trussler: No. I don't think so. We had asked just to include grassroots communication in the definition of lobbying just so that it was absolutely clear to people that, in fact, it was a form of lobbying.

The Chair: Okay. I now have Mr. Dang on the list.

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll try to be brief here since it seems like we have mostly covered off the points here, but that was part of my comment, what the commissioner just said. I think this is really based on an existing ruling, so it's aligning the legislation with what the commissioner has already ruled.

On top of that, I think that what this also allows is that when we talk about transparency, we're not talking about only the transparency of what is being lobbied for but who is doing the actual lobbying as well. So we also see very clearly in the registry who is doing these actions, and that gives more ability for people to go out and say, "Which company is trying to influence my opinion? or "Which organization is trying to influence my opinion, and why?" and make those decisions for themselves. I think that when we speak about trying to let our recommendations align with what is actually being enforced right now under the Lobbyists Act, this motion is very important for us to move forward with.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Clark: Mr. Chair, could I be on the list, please?

The Chair: Please go ahead, Mr. Clark.

Mr. Clark: Thank you. I've been listening and trying to just understand. Any time that we as legislators seek to control freedom of speech, I think that we'd better establish a pretty high bar as to why we need to do that. So I guess I'm just curious if the commissioner could give us – the working example we're using is Bill 6, but there have been countless examples like it in the past, and I imagine that in the future it will be similar. You know, farmers are in this case family farms. Also, they are businesspeople in their own right, but they're also citizens who have a right to organize and let their views be heard by government. I certainly don't want to suggest for a moment that anyone is trying to stifle that, but I guess the question I have is: in that example, if a group of farmers got together and said, "Well, we'd like to pay someone to help us organize properly because we feel very strongly about this and we feel we maybe need some help," is that the kind of thing that you would feel would be captured by what we're talking about here?

Ms Trussler: This all arose in the situation in the Campbell case, where Mr. Campbell, who had a prohibition against lobbying for a year under the cooling-off period, was working for the Coal Association and had been told very clearly that he could not lobby and knew that. They had somebody else as their registered lobbyist. He went out and did public information sessions in many places and urged people to contact their MLA, and that was considered to be lobbying.

If a whole bunch of farmers get one of their organizations, farm organizations, to lobby – if it starts with the farmers, it's not a problem. They're not paid lobbyists. They can make all the submissions they want to. But if a big farm organization, for example, that has a paid government relations department decides to go out and ask all the farmers to write the MLAs because they have something that they want done for that organization, then that would be grassroots lobbying. That would be included under the act, so this organization would have to make sure that they were registered. But it doesn't go the other way. It doesn't affect the farmers. It doesn't affect the citizens that are being asked to make the representations to the government. It affects the organization that is trying to get other people to make representations to the government.

The Chair: Thank you, Commissioner.

Any further comments on the motion put forward by Mr. Dang? On the phone?

Hearing none, I'll ask our committee clerk to read the motion into the record, and then we'll vote.

Ms Rempel: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Moved by Mr. Dang that the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship recommend that the Lobbyists Act be amended to expand the definition of lobby to include grassroots communication, similar to the definition found in the Lobbyists' Registration Act of Nova Scotia.

The Chair: Including those on the phone, all those in favour of the motion, please say aye. All those opposed to the motion, please say no.

Mr. Hanson: I think the noes have it.

The Chair: I'm not a hundred per cent sure.

Mr. Nielsen: Recorded vote, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you. We will go to a recorded vote, and we'll start here on my right-hand side.

Mr. Hanson: No.

Mr. Loewen: No.

Mr. Nielsen: Yes.

Ms Woollard: Yes.

Mr. Rosendahl: Yes.

Mr. Dang: Yes.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: In favour.

Mr. Malkinson: Yes.

The Chair: I'm going to go to the phones now.

Mr. Hunter: Opposed.

Ms Babcock: Yes.

Ms Kazim: Yes.

Mr. Clark: No.

Mr. MacIntyre: No.

11:30

The Chair: Okay. That motion is carried.

Okay. Moving on to another issue or concern. Yes, Mr. Rosendahl. Please go ahead.

Mr. Rosendahl: Yes. For further discussion concerning the Robin Campbell issue in May 2016, I have another motion that I would like to propose.

The Chair: Please go ahead with your motion, Mr. Rosendahl.

Mr. Rosendahl: Okay. Moved that the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship recommend that the Lobbyists Act be amended to remove the restriction on the application of the act with respect to a submission made to a public office holder by an individual on behalf of a person or organization in response to a request initiated by a public office holder for advice or comment.

I'll give you some information on that.

The Chair: I believe we do have the motion, sir, so please go ahead and speak to your motion.

Mr. Rosendahl: Well, currently the act exempts any submission made in response to a request for advice or comment initiated by a public office holder. In the report the Ethics Commissioner says that this is too broad and recommends limiting the exemption "to situations where a public office holder has initiated a written request for advice or comment on a specific matter . . . and a person has responded directly to the public office holder." This is consistent with, say, the NDP submission to the committee in 2011, wherein it was argued that reporting obligations should be expanded to include communications with members of Executive Council when initiated at the invitation of a member of Executive Council. This would also eliminate the loophole used by Robin Campbell in May 2016.

Really, in looking at the report that was submitted to the committee by the Ethics Commissioner on tightening up these rules, it needs to be done so that we eliminate these situations, especially where Robin Campbell took advantage of this loophole. The Ethics Commissioner can comment further on that as well, but the whole idea is that we want to close the loophole so that we prevent this

from happening. When a public office holder, for example, asks for input from citizens and/or stakeholders, that process should not be abused by a few individuals or an organization such as the one that Robin Campbell was chairperson of and then used to lobby the government. That's exactly what happened.

By amending the act to reflect that, we are ensuring that the consultation process is a level playing field for all Albertans that want to participate. We have seen clear cases, like, you know, the two mentioned, where this was being abused, so we really need to close the door on this issue so that we prevent it from going on further.

I also ask the Ethics Commissioner if she's got further comment on that.

Ms Trussler: No. I think that anything that we wanted to say was set out on page 28 of our submission to the committee.

The Chair: Thank you, Commissioner.

Anybody else caring to comment on this particular motion? Double-checking with those on the phone.

Okay. Hearing none, I will ask our committee clerk to read the motion stated by Mr. Rosendahl into the record, and then we'll go to a vote.

Ms Rempel: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Moved by Mr. Rosendahl that the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship recommend that the Lobbyists Act be amended to remove the restriction on the application of the act with respect to a submission made to a public office holder by an individual on behalf of a person or organization in response to a request initiated by a public office holder for advice or comment.

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

We'll now move on to any other issues that members would like to bring forward for the committee so the committee may deliberate on them. Anybody else wishing to comment? Double-checking with those on the phone.

Okay. Hearing no other matters, issues, or concerns for deliberation, we will now wrap up that section, and we'll carry on with our agenda.

Thank you, everyone, for your contributions today.

Having completed our deliberations, we now need to report back to the Legislative Assembly. Before asking research services to draft a report, I'd like to give them an opportunity to clarify any questions they have about our recommendations.

Dr. Massolin, do you have any questions or comments at this point?

Dr. Massolin: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't have a lot to say except to sort of reiterate the process at this point, and that is that research services will prepare a draft report on behalf of the committee. The basic elements of that report will be the recommendations passed by this committee and some information, some contextual information, with respect to the reasons why those decisions were made. I'm prepared to answer any questions about that report at this point if need be.

Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. On Dr. Massolin's request: any questions for him? Checking with those on the phone: any questions for Dr. Massolin regarding the drafting of the report?

Okay. Hearing none, with that, I would look for direction from the committee as to whether we should meet again to review the

report or follow a process in which the chair and deputy chair are authorized to approve the final report after a draft of the report has been distributed to committee members for comment.

Mr. Nielsen: So moved.

The Chair: So moved.

Mr. Nielsen: Or do you actually need a specific motion?

The Chair: I'll have the committee clerk read the potential motion into the record, and then we can ask for someone to move it and then move forward.

Ms Rempel: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe what Mr. Nielsen may wish to move is that

the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship direct research services to prepare a report regarding the review of the Lobbyists Act and that the committee authorize the chair and deputy chair to approve the committee's final report on this issue.

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

Okay. Moving on with our agenda, on June 1, 2017, the Assembly passed a motion referring the review of the 2016 annual report of the Property Rights Advocate to this committee. We will need to have a report ready shortly after the beginning of the fall session. Before we wrap up today, we need to make some decision about how we will proceed with this review. For example, in previous reviews of this nature the committee has started off by inviting the advocate to make a presentation on the report. Is it the will of the committee that we proceed this way again?

Mr. Rosendahl: So moved.

The Chair: Okay. Moved by Mr. Rosendahl that the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship invite a presentation from the Property Rights Advocate office regarding the 2016 annual report of the office.

Discussion?

11:40

Mr. Loewen: Can I make an amendment?

The Chair: Please go ahead.

Mr. Loewen: I'd like to make an amendment to include Justice, Environment and Parks, and Municipal Affairs, which all have relativity to the subject.

The Chair: Okay. Discussion on the amendment proposed by Mr. Loewen? Mr. Dang, please go ahead.

Mr. Dang: Yes. Could we get that read again?

The Chair: Okay.

Ms Rempel: I believe, Mr. Chair, that Mr. Loewen has proposed an amendment which would add the words "Justice and Solicitor General, Environment and Parks, and Municipal Affairs" after "Property Rights Advocate office" in the motion. Ultimately, you would be asking for organizations to come and make presentations on the report.

The Chair: Okay. Discussion on the amendment put forward by Mr. Loewen?

Ms Woollard: I would suggest that it's probably going to be more efficient or, you know, time efficient to just have the report from the Property Rights Advocate office first and then to invite other ministries as needed. We don't know what the recommendations are yet or the directions that the report will go in. I think it would make it more likely that we could get a prompt presentation if we just go with the Property Rights Advocate.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you, Ms Woollard.
Mr. Loewen.

Mr. Loewen: Yeah. We have recommendations from the Property Rights Advocate already in previous recommendations, so I think that, based on our timelines, we need to probably take care of this as much as we can when we meet. Trying to fit in another meeting afterwards to try to bring all that in would probably just, you know, not be wise use of time.

The Chair: Okay. Any further discussion on the amendment? Mr. Malkinson, please go ahead.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you very much. Just a question for the chair: our timeline for this is for the upcoming session? I believe I missed that earlier, Mr. Chair, what our timeline is for this.

The Chair: I will go to our research services staff to give us an idea.

Dr. Massolin: Mr. Chair, if I understand the question correctly, it is the timeline for the committee to actually consider the property rights report and then report, in turn, to the Assembly. Is that the question?

Mr. Malkinson: Yes.

Dr. Massolin: Okay. I think it is, as the section in the act reads – and I'll stand to be corrected on this; I'm going from memory here – 15 days after the commencement of the sitting, and that's the fall sitting. As it stands now, the fall sitting will commence on October 30.

Thank you.

The Chair: So we have some time, into October.

Mr. Malkinson: Roughly mid-November.

I believe Mr. Loewen's intention is to have all these presentations take place back to back on the same day to fully consider the report. Is that your intention?

Mr. Loewen: Yes.

Mr. Malkinson: Perfect.

The Chair: Mr. Loewen, please go ahead.

Mr. Loewen: Yeah. I just want to reiterate that the report has already been released, so we already know what the Property Rights Advocate is going to say when they present to us. So we might as well be moving on to the next steps of the process by listening to these government departments that have, you know, an interest in or have to do with property rights.

The Chair: Okay. Any further discussion on the amendment put forward by Mr. Loewen? Mr. Malkinson.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Since we do have till about mid-November, I think I agree with Mr. Loewen.

You know, for the purposes of making these meetings expedient, I would think that this would be an idea that I'd be willing to support, so I will be voting in favour of it.

The Chair: Okay. Any further comments from those on the phone regarding the amendment put forward by Mr. Loewen?

Hearing none, I will ask the committee clerk to read the motion into the record once more just for clarification, and then I will call the vote.

Ms Rempel: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Loewen has moved that the motion be amended to add "Justice and Solicitor General, Environment and Parks, and Municipal Affairs" after "Property Rights Advocate office."

The Chair: For clarification, we're going to vote on the amendment first. All those in favour of the amendment as proposed by Mr. Loewen, please say aye. All those opposed to the amendment, please say no. Okay. The amendment is carried.

Do people wish to have any further discussion on the motion itself as amended? I'm seeing a lot of noes, heads shaking no, so we will go to the vote on the motion as amended. All those in favour of the motion as amended, please say aye. All those opposed to the motion as amended, please say no. The motion as amended is carried. Thank you.

The next order of business on the agenda is the date of the next meeting. I believe what we'll do is that we'll just poll committee members at a future date, but please note that previously we've

talked about July 18 and 19 as potential dates for future meetings. Perhaps we'll poll those numbers again, and we'll just go from there.

Mr. Loewen: Sorry. Which dates did you say?

The Chair: July 18 and 19, sir, were previously polled.

Maybe what we'll do is that we'll poll again. I think that's what we'll do. We'll poll again for the 18th and 19th.

Mr. Hanson: If I could, Chair, the 18th and 19th are submission dates and oral submission dates for the boundaries commission, so it may conflict with a lot of members.

The Chair: Okay. Then potentially what we'll do is that we'll poll for future dates once I've had an opportunity to determine with the deputy chair. Okay? Sounds good.

That brings us to the end of the meeting, and I will call for a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Dang: I would so move.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dang. All in favour of the motion, please say aye. Any opposed to the motion, please say no. That motion is carried. Thank you, everyone.

[The committee adjourned at 11:47 a.m.]

