



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Fourth Session

Standing Committee
on
Resource Stewardship

Conflicts of Interest Act Review

Tuesday, March 13, 2018
7 p.m.

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Fourth Session**

Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship

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[Member Loyola in the chair]

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

I would ask that members that are joining us at the table introduce themselves for the record. We'll start here on my right.

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

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

Mrs. Aheer: Leela Aheer, Chestermere-Rocky View.

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

Mr. Dang: Good evening. Thomas Dang, MLA for Edmonton-South West.

Mr. Westhead: Cameron Westhead, MLA for Banff-Cochrane.

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

Mr. Rosendahl: Eric Rosendahl, West Yellowhead.

Ms Woollard: Denise Woollard, Edmonton-Mill Creek.

Ms Fitzpatrick: Maria Fitzpatrick, Lethbridge-East.

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

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

Dr. Massolin: Good evening. Phillip Massolin, manager of research and committee services.

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

Ms Rempel: Jody Rempel, committee clerk.

The Chair: And we have one member joining us by teleconference. Please introduce yourself.

Ms Babcock: Erin Babcock, MLA for Stony Plain.

The Chair: Okay. For the record Ms Fitzpatrick is substituting for Mr. Nielsen, Mrs. Aheer is substituting for Mr. Hanson, and Mr. Westhead is substituting for Mr. Kleinsteuber.

A few other items to address before we turn to the business at hand. Please note that the microphones are operated by *Hansard*. Committee proceedings are being live streamed on the Internet and broadcast on Alberta Assembly TV. Please set your cellphones and other devices to silent for the duration of the meeting.

Up next is the approval of the agenda. Would a member move a motion to approve, please. Member McPherson. Yes. Thank you. All in favour of the motion? Any opposed? Okay. Thank you. That motion is carried.

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.

Mr. Rosendahl: So moved.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Rosendahl.

Just a reminder to Erin, who is joining us on the phone, that when I ask for those in favour, please feel free to chime in. I don't actually go to the phones. Just chime in at that time.

All in favour of the motion? Any opposed? Okay. Thank you. That motion is carried.

We have another member who has joined us at the table. We'll give him a moment. Please introduce yourself for the record.

Mr. Fraser: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's Rick Fraser, Calgary-South East.

The Chair: Thank you.

Hon. members, at our last meeting we decided to invite written submissions as part of our review of the Conflicts of Interest Act. February 26, 2018, was identified as the deadline for providing a submission to the committee. However, we did receive a few submissions shortly after this date. These late submissions, specifically numbers 18, 19, and 21 through 23, have already been distributed to committee members for information, but we will need to make a formal decision as to whether or not to accept them as part of the review process. Does anyone have any thoughts on this?

Mr. Malkinson: You know, I'm thinking back to past practice. I think that in this case I would be open to allowing these submissions to be part of our debate and deliberation.

The Chair: Okay. Would someone like to make a motion on that? Ms Woollard, please go ahead.

Ms Woollard: I would move that

the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship accept written submissions on the Conflicts of Interest Act received no later than one week after the February 26, 2018, deadline.

The Chair: Okay. All in favour of the motion, please say aye. Any opposed, please say no. Thank you.

That motion is carried.

With that taken care of, I would now like to turn the floor over to Ms Robert for an overview of the written submission summary. Ms Robert, over to you.

Ms Robert: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes. The summary of stakeholder and public submissions is a document you would have received last week. This document, as you'll recall, was originally done for the review of the Conflicts of Interest Act during the 2015-16 Select Special Ethics and Accountability Committee review of a number of statutes. The Assembly agreed to have this committee accept and use material that was prepared for that review, and a summary of stakeholder and public submissions was prepared for that review. So the document that you have before you now is that document, with an update based on the submissions that we received for this review.

During the 2015-16 review there were 32 submissions that were received, 14 from stakeholders and 18 from members of the public. Based on the current review, 23 submissions were received from stakeholders, but one was a duplicate. So there were actually only 22 submissions, and there were no submissions received from members of the public for this current review. As the chair noted and the committee has already dealt with, there were six late submissions that came in after the submission deadline. Just for the committee's information the content of those submissions was included in this document.

The submissions from members of the public that came in in 2015-16 for the most part made very general comments about the act, and they're summarized in part B of the document. And just for your information, in order for you to sort of be able to identify which submitters are making comments, abbreviations are used to identify the stakeholders who made written submissions and whether they submitted during the current review or the '15-16 review. That's identified in the abbreviations. Each submitter's full name is listed in the appendix to the document.

With respect to the current submissions of the Department of Justice and Solicitor General and Public Service Commissioner and the Ethics Commissioner those submissions were intended to replace the submissions each of them made during the 2015-16 review. Therefore, only their current submissions are discussed in this document.

Other than Justice and Solicitor General and the Ethics Commissioner only two stakeholders who submitted in the 2015-16 review also submitted for the current review. Those are Alberta Health Services and the Alberta Electric System Operator. However, both of those submitters made completely different submissions than they made in '15-16. Therefore, both of their submissions, the ones from '15-16 and the current ones, are considered in this document.

The other thing I'll point out is that the current submission from Justice and Solicitor General and the Public Service Commissioner was made after consultation with other deputy ministers across government and, according to the submission, takes into consideration many of the recommendations contained in the submission from the Ethics Commissioner in respect of the current review. Just for your information.

The 22 stakeholder submissions for the current review were, as I noted, the Justice and Solicitor General and Public Service Commissioner submission, the Ethics Commissioner submission, and then the other 20 from public agencies that are now subject to the obligations under the Conflicts of Interest Act. The public agencies submissions came from a few different types of agencies. A few were from postsecondary institution boards of governors and presidents, from some finance-based agencies such as ATB and AIMCo, from some appeals bodies like the Appeals Commission for workers' compensation and the Metis Settlements Appeal Tribunal. There were some utilities agencies such as the Alberta Utilities Commission and the Alberta Electric System Operator; some research agencies such as Alberta Innovates, Alberta Research and Innovation Advisory Committee; Alberta Health Services; and also the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission.

The submissions during 2015-16 came from provincial agencies, boards, and commissions and, as I'd mentioned earlier, the Department of Justice and Solicitor General and the Ethics Commissioner. One was from a Member of the Legislative Assembly. There was one from a public administration association and one from an academic. Part A of the submission summary summarizes the issues and recommendations that were made by stakeholders in all those submissions during the last review and during this review.

7:10

The document is organized by issue, and some of the types of issues raised by stakeholders include the standards of ethical behaviour and accountability, the possible alignment of conflicts of interest provisions that apply to designated office holders which are currently under the Public Service Act to be moved to the Conflicts of Interest Act. That was a recommendation of the Ethics Commissioner. Justice and Solicitor General and the Public Service Commissioner expressed a bit of a concern about that, that currently

the Conflicts of Interest Act covers individuals who are outside of the public service and the Public Service Act covers individuals who are within the public service.

Another of the issues is the obligations of public agencies under the Conflicts of Interest Act, and the most prominent issue that came out in the submissions that were received was concerns about senior officials that are going to be designated under the act. They're going to be designated by an order in council, some of them, and they will be subject to additional obligations under the act, postemployment restrictions. They'll have to submit financial disclosure statements. A lot of the concerns that were raised by public agencies that made submissions were related to that requirement. Because the order in council has not yet been done, they're not certain who is going to be included and who is not, so there was a lot of concern about that.

Another issue that was raised is the requirement of MLAs to resign as Crown employees upon election, specifically Alberta Health Services. Some legislation was amended to make Alberta Health Services employees Crown employees. Therefore, AHS employees, if they become members of the Assembly, now have to resign their positions as opposed to having to take a leave of absence, as was the past practice.

Some issues were raised with respect to the gifting provisions in the Conflicts of Interest Act, to the definition of private interests and direct associate, to the confidentiality provisions to which the Ethics Commissioner is subject in the course of administering the act, and to the ability of the Ethics Commissioner to access documents that are protected by privilege.

That's, basically, an overview of what you will find in the document. I think I'll leave it there for now. There are a couple of other things, but I think they'll come up in the later part of the discussion. I think that's everything. I know it's a lot, and I'd be happy to try to answer any questions if anybody has any.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Robert.

We'll open it up to questions. Does anybody have a question for Ms Robert?

Okay. Quite thorough. Thank you very much.

Ms Woollard: I was just going to thank research services, as always, for pulling the information together and making such a very comprehensive document, complicated but comprehensive. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Woollard.

Having just reviewed the written submissions, I think that this would be a good time to consider what we would like to do in regard to making these submissions available to the public. Does the committee wish to make these submissions available to the public on our website? If this is the case, it would be standard practice to remove personal contact and third-party information before doing so. Does anyone have a proposal as to how we should proceed with these documents?

Ms Woollard: I would be happy to make a motion to that effect.

The Chair: Please go ahead.

Ms Woollard: Okay. I would move that

the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship direct that written submissions in relation to the committee's review of the Conflicts of Interest Act be made public, excluding personal contact and third-party information.

The Chair: Perfect.

Mr. Fraser: I'll second that, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.
Please go ahead, Mr. Loewen.

Mr. Loewen: Yeah. Sorry. I just wondered if by removing personal information, is that their name also? Is that the intent?

The Chair: No. Just the contact information.

Mr. Loewen: Just the contact information and not the name. I don't know. I wonder if the people that make these submissions would be expecting that this would be made public with their name? Okay. If they're expecting it, then fine.

The Chair: Okay. Member McPherson.

Ms McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm just wondering, under the previous review, what the practice was then as far as publishing the submissions.

The Chair: Please go ahead.

Ms Rempel: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As far as the one that was started two years ago, they did make the submissions public on the website. In most cases that is what happens, with the contact information removed.

Ms McPherson: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Mr. Drysdale.

Mr. Drysdale: Yes. I don't know if this is the appropriate time, but I had a question asked, if this crossjurisdictional comparison could be made public. Is this the time to ask that, or would that be appropriate?

The Chair: I would recommend that we finish this item of business.

Mr. Drysdale: It's two separate things?

The Chair: Yeah. Can we do that?

Mr. Drysdale: Sure.

The Chair: Can we add it under other business, perhaps?

Ms Rempel: Yeah. Or even just after this.

The Chair: Okay. We'll do it after this.
Any more questions, concerns, issues? None?

Mr. Fraser: Sorry. I'll just second the motion if there are no other questions.

The Chair: Okay. Just so that you know, there's no seconder required.

Mr. Fraser: Okay. I'm sorry.

The Chair: No. It's all good. I'm assuming that you don't want the question read again? You know it well.

Mr. Fraser: No, it's good. Yeah.

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

Mr. Fraser: Mr. Chair, do you want a standing vote? I'm just kidding.

The Chair: We could do it. We could do it. Too great.
How about we go on to the item of business that you wanted to bring up, Mr. Drysdale.

Mr. Drysdale: Yeah. I just had somebody ask me if this was public, and I wasn't going to share it, so I thought this might be the time to ask. I don't know if it's appropriate to share this crossjurisdictional comparison with the public or not.

The Chair: Please go ahead.

Ms Rempel: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Actually, with regard specifically to the crossjurisdictional comparisons, they were addressed at the last meeting so they are actually referenced in the minutes that were passed earlier this meeting. They are available to the public upon request and will be filed with the Legislature Library. Both the previous version and the new version will be available to the public. It's not standard practice to post that kind of information online – the websites aren't really set up for that – although if we ever encountered high demand for a particular document, we could consider it.

Mr. Drysdale: So they just have to request it from you, then?

Ms Rempel: Yes. They could contact me and ultimately through the Library as well.

Mr. Drysdale: Good. Thank you.

The Chair: That answers your concern?

Mr. Drysdale: Yes. A dozen cheers.

The Chair: Okay. Perfect.

As we move on to our next item of business, I will quickly remind everyone that in addition to the briefing documents and written submissions prepared for this committee, we also made a decision to bring forward and consider the briefing documents and written submissions from the review of the Conflicts of Interest Act carried out by the Select Special Ethics and Accountability Committee. Having reviewed all the information available to us, members were encouraged to consider who we may need to hear from further as a part of this review and to come to this meeting prepared to put forward names of any potential presenters. Does anyone have any comments or suggestions regarding the need for additional presenters at this time?

Mr. Malkinson.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. You know, it's always important that we have some in-person presentations. I think it makes sense that we make sure that we at least include the public bodies, so that would be the office of the Ethics Commissioner, Justice and Solicitor General, Public Service Commissioner, office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. I think those would be four that we should definitely have in there. I know that I'd probably add one more, just on a personal level. I'd also like to see the Metis Settlements General Council as well. They had offered to submit to us. That would be my recommendation to sort of start us off.

The Chair: Okay.

7:20

Mr. Fraser: I think that under the former committee, before it came here, there was opportunity to provide submissions. While I respect what the member is saying, that it's important to have that input, my guess would be – and perhaps it's a guess or an assumption – again, without offending anybody, that they would have had the opportunity to make that submission then. Please correct me if I'm wrong. But my worry is that if we continue to push this down the road, somebody will make a submission. Then there's somebody else who, you know, again, didn't feel that they had their opportunity. How long does the committee go on with this? I mean, I think we've been dealing with some of this stuff for a long time.

I can speak personally for myself and other people where this act is affecting them. I think it's time that we exact it. You know, particularly around the Resource Stewardship Committee my belief is that there are other important issues facing this province. My hope would be, whatever the committee decides, that there is a timeline that's fast and hard so that we can get on with some other business and other issues that are facing this committee.

The Chair: Am I to understand that you still want to have presentations?

Mr. Fraser: Again, being put on this committee just recently, I don't want to overstep my bounds, but my assumption of the conflicts of interest special select committee, that was already there, is that there was an opportunity to provide submissions. Was this not provided to the office of the Ethics Commissioner, the Privacy Commissioner?

The Chair: Just a question of clarification to you, Mr. Fraser, because we've already received the submissions and now for a second time we've received the submissions. So are you specifically referring to presentations to the committee, where people would actually come in person to present?

Mr. Fraser: If that was part of the process. If I'm missing the boat, then just correct me, and I'm happy. Like, if presentations were part of the process at some point . . .

The Chair: No. We never got that far, actually.

Mr. Fraser: Okay. Fair enough. All right.

I welcome presentations if we didn't get that far in the process. I thought that there was already that opportunity, so my apologies, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Okay. Mr. Malkinson has proposed five.

Mr. Malkinson: Yes.

The Chair: Five.
Mr. Drysdale.

Mr. Drysdale: Yeah. I didn't write them down fast enough, but I think it overlaps anyway. I would like to see all the ABCs invited to do presentations. This is new to them. They haven't had the chance before, so I would like to invite any ABCs that would like to present to present. They were just added.

The Chair: How many ABCs do we have in total?

Ms Robert: Approximately 120.

Mr. Drysdale: Wow. Okay.

Ms Robert: We had 20 that submitted.

Mr. Drysdale: Yeah. So even the ones that submitted, if we could invite them to present. This is all new to them, and I'd like to hear what they have to say about the changes.

The Chair: Then am I to understand that the 20 that submitted, we would invite them to present?

Mr. Drysdale: Sure. That's my recommendation.

The Chair: That's your recommendation.

Mr. Loewen: I'm thinking that rather than invite them to present, I would maybe give them the opportunity to. If we give them an invitation, then they might feel obligated to come, but maybe they've already submitted everything that they need to. So I don't know that we need to encourage them to come; we just need to let them know that they have that opportunity.

The Chair: Yeah. My concern would be, like, what if all 20 say: hey, yeah, we'd like to come and present.

Member McPherson.

Ms McPherson: There was a hand up over there before me if you want to get to him first.

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

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'm just hearing the conversation from Mr. Drysdale and Mr. Loewen. I perhaps could suggest a way to have this. I agree that the ABCs, particularly the ones that submitted – I'd be curious to hear what their thoughts are on this legislation as well. Again, remembering previous committees, we would often have presenters come up in panels. So we'd have ABCs come up. We'd have the, you know, government agencies come up. We could, perhaps, in the invitation to those 21 ABCs – I think there's a split in them, if I remember, between schools and sort of the other ABCs – just mention to them that we're doing a panel format. So, then, that way they perhaps could, if they sort of have a unified voice or not, have the option to self-select. You know, they know that they're going to be on a panel together, and they perhaps can self-select their representatives. Is that something they want to do?

The Chair: You're recommending that we would communicate that to them in a letter perhaps?

Mr. Malkinson: Yeah.

The Chair: So they would self-select amongst themselves.

Mr. Malkinson: If they so choose. Basically, say that there are going to be panels, so if they all want to come, we'll work with that. But it should take some of the pressure off. As Mr. Drysdale said, that there's not a feeling that if invited, you have to show up. But if you're Red Deer College . . .

The Chair: I'm still concerned that we would get a large number of presenters, but yeah.

Ms McPherson: Maybe it's helpful if we understand what the uptake has been in the past when we've extended invitations to come and do an oral submission.

The Chair: I'll go to the committee clerk. What's your recollection?

Ms Rempel: I mean, you know, every review is different. Usually we are able to make it clear that an invitation to present is exactly that. It's an invitation, not a requirement. Based on one of the fairly recent ones, I would say that we had maybe a third uptake. Usually what I have found works best as far as the panel suggestion, that is certainly something that we often use in organizing the presentations, but first we wait and see what kind of a response we get before determining what the panels will be.

Ms McPherson: Okay. Thank you.

I think, I mean, that unless there is a sense of a real burning need among these stakeholders to come and make a submission, I doubt we'll see a higher rate of uptake than a third, and I don't know that we want to make it overly complex to try and invite people by categorizing them. Just extend the invitation and let them make time if they want to, and if not, I think we'll be okay timewise.

The Chair: Okay. Mrs. Aheer.

Mrs. Aheer: I think it's a great idea to put out the invitation, especially if we've got a group of people that aren't quite used to what's going on here. It might be a great idea, too, to maybe put together some questions that would be relevant, to ask them when they come in. You could streamline it a little bit that way if you ended up getting a bunch more submissions. But I think the invitation should be offered.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Malkinson.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. You know, thinking about this sort of from a timeline perspective, we have to send out a letter. I mean, I imagine our people at the Legislative Assembly Office need to gather the information, send out the information. You know, that puts us out to, say, the end of this week perhaps. Of course, the organizations that we're sending it out to would need some time to prepare, so that gets us into April, perhaps after the constituency break.

What I would suggest, Mr. Chair, is that to help us be efficient in this committee, hearing the point that Mr. Fraser made about the importance of, you know, that I think there seems to be a desire from this committee to do this review and move on to other business, for the sake of moving things along at a reasonably expedient pace, it might make sense, Mr. Chair, depending on the number of people who have actually said they want to come and submit to a panel, to have you at your discretion, perhaps with the deputy chair, choose some times for how many panels we're going to have and schedule appropriately in April, perhaps when we're all up here, split it up over a couple of days. I seem to remember we've done that in the past. I mean, I would look to the committee clerk as to if that's something we've done in the past, have some of the presentations during session at a time perhaps in the evening, kind of like what we're doing right now.

The Chair: Please go ahead.

Ms Rempel: You know, certainly, it's possible. Again, I think you'd want to see what kind of uptake you receive on this.

I would also note that whenever the main estimates may be scheduled, this committee will not be able to meet on other business. It will be required to focus on its work on considering the main estimates.

The Chair: Mr. Dang.

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Mr. Chair. To Mr. Loewen's point and to Mr. Malkinson's as well, I mean, I think we do want to hear from the submitters if we can, but I think that, obviously, it could be very variable going into estimates as to how much time we have and what those submissions might look like.

I like the idea of maybe a panel or something. Perhaps if the letter is not going to be insistent that they come, if the letter is going to be something where they can sort of just choose if they want to come or not, then maybe we should just wait and see what our uptake is like. If it's one or two groups, then it's not a big deal. If it turns out that 20 groups want to submit, then we have to start looking at what our options are. We don't want to be forcing anybody to come if they don't need to or don't want to, right?

7:30

Mr. Fraser: I would agree with Member Dang. I think let's wait and see. Let's offer up, you know, the presentations, and then make a timeline around that.

The Chair: Okay. Mr. Malkinson, you had a point that you wanted to make?

Mr. Malkinson: Yes. Just as a point of clarification, would we allow for the discretion of the chair to set that next meeting, just so we don't have to come back . . .

The Chair: To set a meeting?

Mr. Malkinson: Come to a meeting to set a meeting. Then that would allow the chair to also work around whenever estimates happen to be scheduled. I would propose that that, I think, would be most efficient for the committee.

The Chair: Okay. So nobody minds if we meet every evening all next week? No. I'm just joking.

I believe that we've come to some kind of consensus here. Just to clarify, we send the invitation to the five offices that Mr. Malkinson has named as well as the 20 ABCs that have submitted. It's not demanding that they come, but it's suggested that we're open. They don't have to. Then the presentations would actually be determined by myself and the deputy chair.

Am I understanding everything clearly? Okay. I do believe we need a motion to that effect.

Mr. Malkinson: I am happy to make that motion, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Fraser: Sorry to interrupt, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Oh, sorry. Yes, please.

Mr. Fraser: Would it be possible to have myself or Member McPherson be part of your working group around the timelines of that, just to make sure that everything gels? Would that be appropriate?

The Chair: May I offer that I would actively consult with you both?

Mr. Fraser: Perfect.

The Chair: Perfect.

Mr. Malkinson, please take it away.

Mr. Malkinson: All right. Going back to moving a motion. Moved by myself that

the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship invite the following individuals and organizations to make oral presentations in relation to the committee's review of the Conflicts of Interest Act: (1) office of the Ethics Commissioner, (2) Justice and Solicitor General, (3) Public Service Commissioner, (4) office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, (5) Metis Settlements General Council, and (6) through (26) would be the ABCs previously mentioned by Mr. Drysdale.

The Chair: Is that good enough for you, Committee Clerk?

Ms Rempel: That works.

The Chair: That works for you?

Ms Rempel: Yes.

The Chair: Because you're the one that's got to do the work. I just sign the piece of paper.

Okay. Having heard the motion, then, all those in favour, please say aye. Any opposed, please say no. Perfect.

That motion is carried.

With that settled, I'd like to draw committee members' attention to the letter from the Ethics Commissioner that was distributed this morning. We've already determined that the commissioner will be invited to make a presentation at our next meeting. Is it the will of the committee that this letter be accepted and addressed during our next meeting as part of the commissioner's presentation?

I'll open that up to discussion. Mr. Drysdale.

Mr. Drysdale: Yeah. I would say that yes, she can present as one of the presenters at the next meeting.

The Chair: Any further discussion?

Okay. Sounds great. I don't believe we need a motion for that.

Ms Rempel: No.

The Chair: Okay. Oh, my goodness, it's already other business. So is there any other business that members would like to raise?

Mr. Loewen: Yes.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Loewen: Well, we've had this discussion before, and I would like to revisit this discussion. It seems that in the past – I don't know – maybe the government members didn't have time to think about

it or whatever, so I'm hoping that by now we've had time to think about it and make the proper decision here today. What I would like to do is that I'd like to make a motion that the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship create a working group to meet with stakeholders and report back to the full committee.

The Chair: Mr. Loewen, I'm going to call you to order. According to Standing Order 23:

A Member will be called to order by the Speaker if, in the Speaker's opinion, that Member . . .

(c) persists in needless repetition or raises matters that have been decided during the current session . . .

(f) debates any previous vote of the Assembly,

or in this case committee,

unless it is that Member's intention to move that it be rescinded.

I'm just going to leave it there, sir. We've discussed it multiple times, and I really don't want to enter into that debate again.

Mr. Loewen: Okay. But we're sitting here at the three-year mark from when these groups wanted to meet with us, and we . . .

The Chair: I know, sir. I'm going to call you to order again. I'm going to use the same arguments that I used in the past, sir, and say that the quicker that we handle this item of business before us, in a timely manner, then we will be able to dedicate ourselves to getting to the business that you really want us to turn our attention to. My recommendation is that we leave it there, sir, and that we get on with our business, and then we can get to that as soon as we finish this item of business.

Mr. Loewen: So meeting for 12 and a half hours in the last year. And this is a new session of the Legislature, too, so I don't know if that applies or not.

The Chair: I am going to ask Ms Dean if she can help us out with this. I feel that I'm following standing orders in calling the member to order. I've actually cited the specific standing order.

Ms Dean: Yes, you did, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Okay. Well, I've made my decision, then, sir, so we'll leave it there.

The next meeting will be at the call of the chair.

I will call for a motion to adjourn, please. Thank you very much. All in favour, please say aye. Any opposed, please say no. Okay. Thank you.

This meeting is adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 7:38 p.m.]

