



House of Commons
CANADA

Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development

ENVI • NUMBER 029 • 2nd SESSION • 40th PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Thursday, June 18, 2009

—
Chair

Mr. James Bezan

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• (0905)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC)): We have quorum so we'll get going, especially since we only have an hour with Mr. Hyer.

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Chair, I'm sorry for interrupting, but it's my understanding that we were going to have two full rounds. It's not necessarily restricted to an hour.

The Chair: We will have five-minute rounds right through and two rotations.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Why are we not having seven minutes for the first round?

The Chair: It's so we can get two rounds in and have enough time on the agenda—unless you want to stick with a seven-minute round. We have a full agenda today. I was trying to be expeditious in the way we dealt with our witness so we could move on to future business.

Do you want to do seven-minute rounds or five-minute rounds?

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): I don't care. Let's just do it.

The Chair: I was suggesting two rounds of five minutes rather than one seven and one five, but we'll stick with what you want.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Stay with seven.

The Chair: Okay. We'll do two rounds.

Before we move on to the witness, I want to make sure the committee is aware that yesterday we had a lunch where we honoured our clerk, Norm Radford, for his long and distinguished service to Parliament and the great work he has done on the environment committee. We want to wish him well in his future endeavours as he moves on to the next chapter of his life in the field of retirement—or at least retired away from this place. He has served us well and has a passion for the environment. We're going to miss him greatly.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Linda Duncan: Can we see “Hear, hear!” on the record?

The Chair: It's on the record.

Moving right along, Mr. Hyer, welcome to the committee.

We will start our study on Bill C-311, An Act to ensure Canada assumes its responsibilities in preventing dangerous climate change, pursuant to the order of reference that was given to this committee on April 1.

Mr. Hyer, please begin your opening comments and keep them under 10 minutes. We'd appreciate that.

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, NDP): To be honest, Mr. Chair, it's probably going to be more like 12 minutes.

Thanks for inviting me here today. I'm sure you all know that I am Bruce Hyer. I'm a biologist, I'm a terrestrial ecologist, I'm a forester, I'm a businessperson with three companies, and I'm a conservationist. We're all here for the same reason, and that is to foster a better Canada and a fairer and more sustainable planet.

I tabled Bill C-311, the Copenhagen bill, in the House in early February. It received the support of a majority of members in the House of Commons, not just once but three times, because as you know, it's the same bill as was passed by this committee and the House last year, when it was called Bill C-377. Because it's the only legislation currently being considered that tackles climate change by setting firm targets to reduce our greenhouse gas pollutants, many believe it's the most important legislation we are tasked with passing in this session.

Bill C-377 passed three readings, but then the 2008 election was called. That meant another year was lost when we could have been taking action.

Developments in the past year make it even more urgent that we take immediate steps to deal with the greenhouse gas emissions. In March of this year, IPCC scientists in Copenhagen, in the lead-up to the global climate change talks there this December, declared that the targets we have in Bill C-311 are the minimum we can do to prevent dangerous climate change.

This bill is meant to stop such global average temperatures from rising more than 2° Celsius in order to avoid the most catastrophic effects of climate change. To achieve this, the bill targets an 80% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2050, versus the IPCC recommendations of 80% to 95% reductions by 2050.

But we can't get there without a plan, so the bill mandates some interim target plans at five-year intervals, leading up to 2050. To have a hope of success and survival, we have to get started immediately. The environment minister will have to present a plan within six months of the adoption of this bill.

This bill will set firm targets to reduce Canadian emissions. It will set clear objectives to meet on fixed dates. It will help safeguard future generations from the dangerous effects of climate change. And it will make Canada credible again in the eyes of the world.

Last month, in a joint statement called “The Copenhagen Call”, global business leaders at the World Business Summit on Climate Change called on political leaders to limit the global average temperature increase to a maximum of 2° Celsius and asked for firm emissions reduction targets for 2020 and 2050.

They also noted that “a predictable framework for companies to plan and invest” would “provide a stimulus for renewed prosperity and a more secure climate system.” They stated, “Economic recovery and urgent action to tackle climate change are complementary—boosting the economy and jobs through investment in the new infrastructure needed to reduce emissions.”

I know that in the past we have worked in a cooperative way with others on this legislation. We have supported the good ideas of other parties, and amendments proposed by both the Liberals and the Bloc are already incorporated into this bill. I hope to continue to use a constructive and non-partisan approach to see this bill through again. I hope we can work together to ensure it's done quickly when the House resumes in the autumn.

There is no time to waste. Dangerous climate change is not some distant prospect that won't affect us in our lifetimes. It is already happening.

In Canada, the Maritimes have experienced more intense storms. There are more frequent and extreme floods. The prairies are drying, and that means our farmers will have their crops and their livelihoods threatened. Spreading pine beetle infestations have devastated our western forests and provided fuel for more intense and frequent fires.

Northern Canada has seen dramatic changes. The summer of 2007 was the summer that the Arctic melted. Sea ice was 22% less than ever recorded previously. This was 30 years ahead of predictions, redefining the phrase “glacial pace”. Polar bears and traditional Inuit culture are threatened now and might both be headed for extinction. Last year, Pangnirtung on Baffin Island was nearly swept away by a wall of melt water. Melting permafrost has destroyed many homes and forestry locations.

● (0910)

We are in danger of helping to create our own humanitarian crisis in this country, but melting permafrost also holds another danger. It holds frozen a great deal of dead plant and animal matter, all carbon rich, in frozen stasis where bacteria cannot work on it. When it melts, billions of tonnes of carbon will be released by bacteria into the atmosphere, creating a global greenhouse feedback loop.

But it's even worse for the least advantaged elsewhere. Developing countries bear the brunt of the climate change burden. They suffer 99% of all deaths from weather-related disasters now, and more than 90% of global economic losses—all this when the 50 least-developed countries contribute less than 1% to global carbon emissions. This is a looming international humanitarian disaster.

What's happening to the 12,000 people of the island nation of Tuvalu is an indication of what will happen to coastal peoples

everywhere. People have lived on those islands for over 2,000 years, but they must abandon their country soon and forever because it will soon cease to exist. Citizens of the Maldives and Kiribati know that their countries will soon disappear beneath the rising seas as well. These people are among the first of the environmental refugees, but many will be following.

The Red Cross now says there are millions more environmental refugees than people displaced by wars, and their ranks are likely to double within 20 years, as seas inundate fertile farming deltas and desertification dries up entire nations. This will be the greatest humanitarian disaster of our time.

The human impact report on climate change is a document that was launched by Kofi Annan at the Global Humanitarian Forum in London last month. It reports that every year dangerous climate change effects already kill 300,000 people and cause at least \$125 billion U.S. in economic losses. Global losses from extreme weather have increased tenfold. Insurance companies in Canada and abroad are facing fiscal and management crises. Just over the past five years, the annual global cost of weather-related disasters has gone as high as \$230 billion.

I am not here to argue the evidence, which now seems unequivocal. This committee heard from many experts on this bill last year, including experts on the science behind it. It was considered in this committee for 15 meetings and has already been agreed to. I am asking you to move to pass Bill C-311 quickly, because there are compelling scientific and moral reasons to do so. Science can give us the facts, but people don't usually act on science alone. Most of us do what we think is ethical, and we take responsibility seriously. We do what we think is right whenever we can. You can't find the answers to a moral question in an ice core.

Canada can take action on climate change right now. We have the room to make deep reductions, the technological know-how, and the economic capacity to get it done. All we need is the leadership. I'm very confident that despite our late start we can achieve these targets and, in the process, provide the world with green solutions and green jobs if we start soon. But more than that, we have the capacity to do something about climate change effects that cause untold human suffering. If doing nothing is wrong, particularly when one is well placed to help, then we are doing something wrong by delaying action, especially given our capacity to do the right thing.

Canada has fallen far in our reputation on the environment. We used to be a leader. We have descended from being the nation that helped tackle acid rain and ozone-depleting CFCs a generation ago to being the second worst country on the climate change performance index this year. Only Saudi Arabia performs worse. We get fossil of the year awards at international conferences. We now rank in the top 10 of world emitters, but we have only 0.5% of the world's population.

Most Canadians know this and they're not happy. Polls consistently show that a clear majority of people we represent want action and solid targets like those in this bill. But there are also important business reasons for moving right away.

• (0915)

Speaking at the World Business Summit on Climate Change this May, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called climate change “the defining challenge of our time”. He told the world's business leaders that if we tackle climate change early and effectively, we could look forward to “sustained growth and prosperity”. If we don't, “we face catastrophic damage to people, to the planet—and to the global marketplace”.

He's right. Taking action now makes good business sense, because we know that the cost of delaying will be much more in the future.

Jim Rogers is the CEO of Duke Energy in the United States. His company has one of the largest carbon footprints in North America. He has called for the same targets as are in this bill. In fact, he's expanding his business while implementing these same targets in his own company. He said that “the probability that we'll get good solutions to climate change—solutions that benefit both the planet and industry—is higher if we face the problem now”, and if you're constantly trying to define the problem or dispute it, “it gets increasingly difficult and costly to develop a good solution”.

Former World Bank economist Nicholas Stern has become even more concerned about our collective economic future since his famous *Stern Review*. He recently noted that climate change effects are occurring faster than predicted, and he re-emphasized that strong early action on climate change far outweighs the costs. He has clearly stated that the economic costs of inaction will be far greater than the more modest costs of achieving targeted reductions.

The climate crisis is also an economic opportunity. C.D. Howe represented my riding years ago. During World War II, he transformed the Canadian economy from Depression to one making armaments and ammunition in months. It resulted in the greatest economic expansion in the history of Canada.

It seems to me that we again face a crisis worthy of the most promising stimulus for our limping economy. It has to be done right here at home. No one is going to put your house on a boat to China to get insulated. Solar panels mean guys with hammers on our roofs. Carbon sequestration means implementing it right here.

It also makes sense from a competitiveness standpoint. Setting out a path to spark green solutions now is more profitable than spending more later to try to catch up with our foreign competitors. Most of them are already pulling ahead of us. We cannot lose any more time.

We certainly can't lose more time if we're to have credibility when we go to Copenhagen for global climate change treaty negotiations this December. Some have said that we should wait even more than we have already, until Copenhagen is actually signed. Others have said we shouldn't do anything until China, and India, and other developing countries adopt similar targets. Still others say we can't do anything until the U.S. does.

None of this is leadership. We have already waited too long. We don't need Washington to write our climate change targets for us. If we don't step up and adopt our own firm targets, how can we have any credibility to ask other developing countries to do the same?

This act will help to re-establish our credibility at the bargaining tables and, just as important, increase the chances of persuading major developing countries to take on commitments too.

We only have six months left before Copenhagen. We must work across party lines, in a non-partisan way, to pass this bill through Parliament in time.

I look forward to working with you individually and collectively to make sure this important bill gets passed as quickly as possible.

Thank you very much.

• (0920)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hyer.

We'll go to seven-minute rounds.

Mr. Scarpaleggia.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Hyer. I appreciate your background and your commitment to the issue.

I would note that C.D. Howe had one advantage over us today. He was a senior minister in successive Liberal majority governments. We're in a state of minority government now. Things are, of course, much more complicated.

Could you just go through this a little more specifically and detail the targets that you're talking about in this bill? I know there's the 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. Then you mentioned some other interim target. I'm sorry; you said something about targets at five-year intervals. Could you provide some detail on that?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Yes, I'd be happy to. I brought a few notes, so I may refer to them from time to time.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Absolutely.

Mr. Bruce Hyer: It's not going to be easy, but it is pretty straightforward—simple, if you will. The year 1990 would be considered the base year from which we measure our reductions. By 2020, which is 11 years from now, we would have a 25% reduction based on those 1990 emissions. By 2050 we would have an 80% reduction.

There's a process utilizing the Minister of the Environment and the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy to provide some flexibility in terms of exactly when and how we meet interim stages at five-year intervals.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Why is there a need for flexibility? I don't understand why we have to build in some flexibility if this is just about setting targets so that we do everything possible to galvanize our resources and our will to meet those targets. I just don't understand why, when it comes to 2020 and 2050, we don't need flexibility, but everything in between requires flexibility.

As well, it's a very fluid state of affairs. We're in a minority government, we don't know what is really going to come out of the United States, and we don't know what will be decided at Copenhagen, so I'm just curious as to why we have to be firm about 2020 and 2050 but everything else in between is negotiable. I don't understand that.

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Even 2020 actually is flexible. The reason for that is that we know where we need to get to by 2050 at the minimum. Maybe we need more, but we at least need that, according to the scientists.

However, this bill does not provide for any prescriptions whatsoever in terms of how we achieve this goal. There are many tools that we're going want to consider, many of which we're going to want to use. It's going to be up to the governments now and in the future to determine exactly how we do it. As Jeffrey Simpson made very clear in his recent book about climate change, a succession of governments from several parties have made commitments that we have not come anywhere close to meeting, and we actually have increases instead of decreases.

Are we going to need flexibility? I'll let you answer that question for yourself. Like you, I hope we have firm targets, targets that are as firm as possible. If we can do it even faster, we lower the element of risk, but things change, politics change, technology changes, and I'm sure this will evolve over time. That's why I have resisted lots of suggestions on trying to be prescriptive about different methods for actually achieving this target.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Didn't you say the scientists recommend that we reduce greenhouse gases by 80% to 95% by 2050?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: That's correct.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Given that this is an urgent matter and that you wish to base your bill on science, why did you choose 80% as the target instead of 95%, or maybe something in between, such as 90%?

• (0925)

Mr. Bruce Hyer: That was for simple reasons. One is that this bill is fundamentally the same as the one that has already passed three

readings in the House of Commons. To change it now, at this time, would not make things simpler, would it?

The other reason is that we're so far behind at this point. If we can make those targets, or make a good start on those targets, we have a fairly long lead time, and the technologies, the regulations, our personal behaviour, and investment in the public and private sectors can all take us there faster and better. If we can meet better targets, that would be a wonderful thing.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: As you know, the current government is following an approach that is somewhat different from that taken by the Liberal government. In other words, it's going to use intensity targets for its greenhouse gas emission targets. Assuming that these intensity targets are unveiled and become the system over the next few months or who knows how long, how will that affect our ability to meet the targets in your bill?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: I'd like to go back to the hope that this will be as non-partisan a process as possible. Although I belong to a party, I'm not terribly tribal myself, and I really believe that all of us have a piece of the answers here. I think we need to meld and match and combine and negotiate in a number of areas to come up with a number of ways that we can move forward.

Do I agree that intensity targets will get us there? No, I don't. Do I think it may help in the short term to at least head in the right direction? Perhaps, but I certainly hope that we have firm caps in mind as we go into the future—the right goals—and then debate over time exactly how we're going to get there.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: We had firm targets. We had firm targets under the Kyoto Protocol, and as we all know, the previous Liberal government—and I don't mean to be partisan here, but it is I think a fact of political history—had said it would use the Canadian Environmental Protection Act to regulate greenhouse gases. It was preparing and was about to release hard caps, or regulations to meet hard caps, before the 2005 fall of the government.

This was before your time, Mr. Hyer, I know, but if this is the most pressing issue facing mankind, and if the NDP believes in hard caps and using CEPA to regulate greenhouse gas emissions, I'm still mystified to this day as to why they would pull the plug on the government in 2005. But that's history.

You spoke about the impact of climate change on Canada, and then you seemed to mention something about how adaptation would be a focus of some of your bill, to some extent. Did I hear that you believe we should have adaptation measures?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: I don't remember using that nomenclature. I'm not quite sure what you mean.

The Chair: Your time has expired, Mr. Scarpaleggia. We're going to continue on.

Monsieur Bigras, s'il vous plaît.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Hyer, my congratulations for introducing your bill.

When I arrived in Parliament 12 years ago, we were a long way from discussing the importance of having a climate change plan. I remember debates in the House where people were wondering whether climate change was real and whether human activity was primarily responsible for it. In 1997, some members believed that it was a natural phenomenon that was in no way related to human activity.

Today, fortunately, the House is almost unanimous. All parties believe that climate change exists. The problem is deciding how to deal with it. I have taken part in a number of international conferences and a number of debates in the House. Often, I feel, the problem comes from reduction targets. That is the problem. There is no agreement on greenhouse gas reduction targets. I know that it is a problem for the Liberal party and for the Conservative party too.

Could you remind us why you indicated in the bill that you want a 25% reduction below 1990 levels of greenhouse gases by 2020? That is no arbitrary target, after all. You do not put percentages in a hat and pull one out.

Why must we clearly indicate to the international community that Canada is committed to a 25% reduction below 1990 greenhouse gas levels by 2020. What are the scientific reasons, to start with?

• (0930)

[English]

Mr. Bruce Hyer: First of all, Mr. Bigras, and also Mr. Scarpaleggia, thank you for supporting this bill the last time around. That's appreciated, and I'm glad you did that at the time. You must have at that time believed that the targets were appropriate, because they're the same targets as before.

There are several reasons why here. One of them is that the United Kingdom, the European Union, California, the New England states, and some of our western provinces have all agreed that these are appropriate targets, so we're not pulling them out of thin air. They're also the ones put forward by scientists. I am a scientist myself. I'm not climate change scientist, but I'm a forest scientist, and I believe I recognize good science when I see it.

We will never have a perfect answer. Science cannot give us a perfect number. There will never be a perfect number on this. There will be people who think it's too low, and there will be people who think it's too high. There will be people who think it's too fast and people who think it's too slow. But 2,500 scientists from around the world working for the United Nations have repeatedly affirmed and reaffirmed these targets as the minimum, not the optimum, of what needs to be done.

Does it make me a little nervous that we're going for the minimum, and not the optimum or the maximum, in taking the principle of due diligence here? It does make me a little nervous. As was pointed out by Mr. Scarpaleggia, I'm new here. I leave the expertise, and the politics, and the committees, and the procedures of the House to those of you who have far more experience. But it certainly is very clear to 99% of the scientists in the world that these numbers are on the low side of what's required.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Bigras: I would add that, if we want to keep the increase in temperature to within 2 °C of the pre-industrial level, that

is a target that we must set. It is the only way to avoid the worst. That is one of the things that I have gathered from the recommendations from scientists.

To make it possible, you are proposing, in clause 6 of your bill, that the minister present interim plans. If I understand correctly, the minister has to present reports every five years. What should those reports contain? Why have reports every five years? Clause 6 says that interim plans for 2015 and thereafter shall be laid before Parliament "within six months after this act receives royal assent". Why the need for interim plans?

[English]

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Starting with the most basic, we have government. We have a Minister of the Environment who will have to show leadership here. But they can't do this in a vacuum. They have to have accountability. They need to report to the House. They need to report to their fellow parliamentarians. They need to report to the scientists. They need to report to the general public. So accountability, I would think, is the primary answer here.

The other one is that we need a plan, and we need an ongoing plan. I believe this plan will have to evolve, so it will keep us focused and keep us on track. At regular intervals we will be forced to plan and replan and adjust and make course corrections through adaptive management and adaptive leadership, and that's the way the world works.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Bigras: In order to meet the targets set in the bill, that is 25% below 1990 levels in 2020 and then the objective for 2050, are you proposing specific tools or vehicles with which to meet the targets? We have a number of tools that we can use to meet greenhouse gas reduction targets. Do you have any favourite options?

• (0935)

[English]

Mr. Bruce Hyer: I'm going to disappoint you, Mr. Bigras. I do have favourites, but I'm not going to answer that question here today, because that's not what this bill is about. As I said, this is going to evolve over years and decades in terms of how we do this. We don't know all the answers today. Technologies will evolve. New regulatory mechanisms will evolve. Politics will change. Ministers will come and go. For us to be prescriptive at this stage, I think would be inappropriate.

I would like to restate what I said before, that it seems to me that they come under five categories, and I wouldn't want to take any of the tools out of our tool kit. So we have five tool kits, if you will.

The first is that we need to somehow put some kind of significant price on greenhouse gas emissions. The polluter-pays principle is not only a fair principle, but it also drives innovation and technology and investment decisions.

The second one is that we are going to actually have to have a government that regulates and governs, so regulations will play a variety of roles.

Third, we're going to need public investments. I and my party believe in public investments.

Fourth, we're going to need private investment. The investor confidence and the predictability of regular plans will help people to be able to make plans for those significant sectoral investments.

The last one is personal lifestyle changes. I think most of us are starting to do that. We talk about it. It's a topic at cocktail parties. It's a topic over coffee. I'm proud to announce that I bought a new bicycle and parked my car. That's hard to do at my age, but I'm doing it because we all need to make changes.

Those are the five general areas in which I think we'll have to make changes. I have a longer list that I can share with you later. There are dozens of ideas, and many of them have yet to come forward.

The Chair: Madam Duncan, the floor is yours.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Hyer, for tabling your bill and trying to expedite this process.

Can you tell the committee whether you have had any feedback from Canadians on Bill C-311?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: I'll give you two answers.

I've been surprised to date at the relatively low level of media attention on this, which some people think is the most important issue facing the world and humanity. In terms of grassroots feedback, I get lots. I get dozens and dozens, I think it's hundreds, of e-mails. I've been watching the polls. The polls clearly indicate—I have some of them with me here—that the majority of Canadians, on the order of magnitude of at least two-thirds or more on key questions, support not only controlling greenhouse gases but acknowledging that we're all going to have to pay for it one way or another. They're willing to make those investments in changing not only to a less polluting world but to a new, green economy, which will create jobs and economic benefit as well as controlling our greenhouse gases.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Thank you.

Mr. Scarpaleggia raised a question about there being a proposal—unfortunately, nothing happened with it—under previous governments where we might use regulations under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. Your bill, Bill C-311, is called the Climate Change Accountability Act. Am I correct in understanding that the very reason for setting the targets for 2020 and 2050 but not necessarily prescribing how we would meet those targets is because that would be determined by the elected parliamentarians? Therefore, it would prescribe the goals that the Department of the Environment and other ministries would have to meet.

Is that why the act is called that? Is that why that is being done in legislation?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Yes is the simple answer.

As Mr. Scarpaleggia has pointed out, a number of previous governments...and I'm not here to point the finger backwards today, but we've promised more than we've delivered to date. What we need is not only targets but a clear process for planning at regular intervals. If we try to do it on a weekly or monthly basis, we'll be bogged down in red tape. If we try to do it on a 15, 20, 30, or 40-year basis, and say it would be nice to get to 2050, that would be unrealistic. It has seemed to many, and I would agree, that five-year planning intervals seem like a reasonable compromise in terms of staying focused and providing for flexibility in the interim periods.

• (0940)

Ms. Linda Duncan: You're the water critic for the New Democrats, so I'm presuming that you've been following what has been going on with water and environmental assessment regulation. Would it be fair to say that there's a level of discomfort in the public about the lack of openness and transparency in making regulations in the environmental field, and therefore there's all the more reason for the public support to actually have these targets prescribed in legislation and in an open debate?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: I hope I'm not going to stray too far here, but I used to do a lot of consulting work in Japan. Japan puts the common good ahead of the individual good quite often. They're good at pulling in the same direction. It takes a while to get there, but then they set common goals. They also have national standards. It has always disappointed me that in our federal system here we have very few national standards on almost anything, especially for water and certain key environmental issues. For me, one of the things that appeal to me about this is that instead of delegating once again to the provinces or the municipalities or us individual Canadians, it would set national standards for timetables and achievable targets at a national level and we'd show national leadership.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Thank you.

As you have testified, Mr. Hyer, Bill C-311 is identical to Bill C-377, which was reviewed by this committee, amended, and passed on the House, and in fact passed by the House of Commons in June 2008. In this committee's review of the precursor bill to your bill, during the clause-by-clause review amendments were made, and that amended bill was referred to Parliament. That bill in fact was passed by the House of Commons and then referred to the Senate. The bill unfortunately died because Mr. Harper called an election.

Would you agree that the next logical step would have been, and would be, to expedite the processing of Bill C-311 back to the House of Commons so that it can get to the Senate, get passed, and become law?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: I'm nervous for two reasons.

One is that I'm in my sixties and feel more mortal every day. I'd like to see this bill passed in my lifetime, to be a little facetious. More importantly, it's very clear to scientists and to most of the public that the clock is ticking, and has been for quite a while, and that we're already at risk. Everyone will have to decide for themselves, but I personally believe that every day that goes by when we don't take action on this is a day that puts us at further risk.

Ms. Linda Duncan: I think it's well known to you that since you tabled this bill in April, I have been seeking to have it expedited and reviewed and to be given the due attention it deserves. I am going to be seeking that testimony presented on Bill C-377 be tabled so that we don't have to repeat the exercise and can in fact comply with what the public are demanding.

I'd like to share some of that testimony with you and get your opinion on whether or not you think it is still appropriate to your bill one year later. For example, Matthew Bramley of the Pembina Institute testified regarding Bill C-377:

To wrap up, this is not a political bill, in my view. It's a bill that's about basing policy on science and ensuring that Canada does not transfer our responsibilities to other countries. I see no reason why it should not be supported by all parties.

Mr. Ian Rutherford, executive director of the Canadian Meteorological and Oceanographic Society, said:

This bill would seem to be a step in the right direction.

....it's not just our current performance that is bad. In terms of accumulated per capita contribution to the present burden...Canada ranks just behind the U.S.A., the U.K., and Germany....

He then said:

Very briefly, there are costs to both action and inaction, and I don't think it's very easy to estimate them.

I would just look around the world and, as someone has already mentioned, look at those countries that have done the best job of de-carbonizing their economy, making it less energy intensive and less carbon intensive, countries like Norway, Denmark, and Germany. They've hardly been impoverished. They're doing very well.

I think we should be trying to take a leaf from their book, instead of always moaning and groaning about the cost of things that are proposed. Many of these things will pay for themselves; certainly energy efficiency pays for itself.

Professor John Stone, adjunct professor in the department of geography and environmental studies at Carleton University, spoke of the IPPC's targets, which reflect what you've put in your bill. Professor Stone said that he had appeared before the committee in one form or another four times in the last 12 months and was encouraged by the words he'd heard from the government of their intentions to tackle the issue. But he wanted to see the legislation and regulations, and the caps put on industries. He also said he believed that Bill C-377, the precursor to the current bill, was a useful contribution.

Dr. Andrew Weaver of the School of Earth and Ocean Sciences at the University of Victoria, and Dr. David Sauchyn of the Prairie Adaptation Research Collaborative.... Dr. Weaver, by the way, supported the bill and spoke in favour—

• (0945)

The Chair: Your time has expired.

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Could I make a brief comment?

The Chair: Yes, just a very brief comment, Mr. Hyer.

Mr. Bruce Hyer: I just came back from Finland, where I was studying forestry and climate change and their parliamentary system. I was impressed in all three areas. I won't go into lots of detail, but I was particularly impressed that Finland is a whole lot better than we are at cooperating issue to issue across party lines. They're much more collaborative and cooperative and are less confrontational. Their form of coalition government seems to be working reasonably

well. I was impressed with that. So I hope we can emulate that model more.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Warawa, finish us off with a seven-minute round, please.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Hyer, for being here.

As you've mentioned, Bill C-311 is virtually identical to Bill C-377. There are some minor changes in definition. You've called it the "Copenhagen bill". Mr. Layton, your leader, called it his "impossible dream." The testimony we heard was that it was a poorly written bill, and it was uncostered. Mr. Layton recommended that it be costed, as did Mr. Bramley. More recently, Ms. Libby Davies said bills like this should be costed.

The world has change since Bill C-377 was introduced and dealt with about a year and a half ago. I'm sure you're very aware of some of those major changes.

We have a global recession and it's a very difficult time economically for a number of countries. Canada entered last; we'll be the first to come out. Canada is one of the strongest economies in the world, but we're also being affected dramatically by the global recession.

We also have a new President in the United States, who has made the environment a priority. Things have changed now in that we have a clean energy dialogue ongoing with President Obama's administration. That's progressing in a very positive way. That wasn't present before. Both Canada and the United States agree that all of the major emitters have to be part of a global solution as we head toward Copenhagen.

Bill C-311, as you said, is virtually identical to Bill C-377. What changes would you be willing to make today to Bill C-311 to make sure that you get consensus around this table?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Those are good questions. I don't accept all of your assumptions and I won't natter about the history of them here today, but I would like to say the following.

This bill is very straightforward. It sets science-based targets. It requires the government to publish a plan. It ensures that the government has the tools to meet the targets and accomplishes them on time. Whatever the costs are, whether they're positive or negative, and there are many like Nicholas Stern—

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Hyer, you're not answering my question. My question was very direct: what amendments, what changes would you be willing to accept on Bill C-311 today to get consensus around this table? You've provided urgency, so what changes would you be willing to make?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: You asked two questions. You asked a question about costing, and you asked about—

Mr. Mark Warawa: I made a comment about costing.

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Can I comment on it?

Mr. Mark Warawa: I'd like you to answer my question.

The Chair: It is Mr. Warawa's time, and he has a question that he wants you to answer first. Perhaps you could answer the question he has put to you.

Mr. Bruce Hyer: The broad answer to your question is that I really believe what I said about cooperation among parties. If anybody from any party, including your party, can come forward with amendments that make this bill better they should be considered. I don't have any partisan leanings on this bill. I'd like to see it be made the most effective bill it can be.

I do think it's important to keep it as simple as possible. So if amendments clarified things, that would be a good thing; if they complicated things or delayed the bill, I would not be in favour of them.

• (0950)

Mr. Mark Warawa: So you are in favour of trying to get consensus, and you would accept amendments to your bill.

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Yes.

Mr. Mark Warawa: You're aware that Copenhagen international negotiations are ongoing. We are working with our partners in the United States, our biggest trading partner in the world. There are ongoing negotiations with all the international partners. There is a move to see all the major emitters part of the solution, because it's a global problem, not just Canada's.

You've humorously called it the Copenhagen bill, but in fact the Copenhagen bill is going to look for a global solution. What you're proposing here is putting the cart before the horse. You're trying to bind Canada going into negotiations, and you're not giving the government the opportunity to negotiate. You're putting Canada in a position that would not be in the interests of the environment.

Mr. Bruce Hyer: My response is to reiterate that the European Union, the United Kingdom, many states, some provinces, many municipalities, and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities have all indicated that this is a good starting point, and it's the minimum starting point that we should go to Copenhagen with.

Mr. Mark Warawa: You're not answering my question, Mr. Hyer.

Mr. Bruce Hyer: I do understand—

The Chair: You have a point of order, Mr. Bigras.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Bigras: Out of due respect for the witnesses, would it be possible to limit the exchanges to ones that allow the witnesses to answer the questions? Let us have the committee member ask the question and then leave it to the witness to answer. I think that this would be more constructive than exchanges that resemble a game of ping-pong.

[English]

The Chair: Members are urged to display courtesy and fairness in questioning witnesses.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I hear that clearly, but I have a limited amount of time.

The Chair: You do.

Mr. Mark Warawa: I don't want Mr. Hyer to use my time. I want him to answer my questions.

The Chair: In Marleau and Montpetit, on page 863, it says that witnesses must answer all questions put to them by the committees.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Is Mr. Hyer aware of the emission targets for Japan? He referenced Japan.

Mr. Bruce Hyer: I'm not.

Mr. Mark Warawa: They are using the 2005 base year, with a 15% reduction by 2020. Canada's is 20%, so it's a tougher target in Canada.

Are you aware of what Australia's target is?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Not today.

Mr. Mark Warawa: It's using the 1990 base year and 5%.

Are you aware of what the target is in the U.S.?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Yes, I have a pretty good handle on the U.S. The U.S. one is definitely a changing target. When I look at the Obama-Biden election promises, they are the same as this bill. Clearly it's in a state of flux in the United States right now. I don't think we know where that political process is going to end up.

Mr. Mark Warawa: It started out with the Waxman-Markey bill at 20%. It's now 17% by 2020, using a 2005 base year. So Canada's target is more stringent—20% reduction by 2020.

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Canada's target is actually not clear at all. Maybe I'm not understanding it, but I've reviewed your government's position, and it's not clear what the base years are and what the numbers are actually based on.

Mr. Mark Warawa: It's very clear. The base year is 2006. It's a 20% reduction by 2020, using 2006 as a base year. So we are in harmony. We're working with our international partners towards one of the toughest targets in the world.

The Chair: Mr. McGuinty.

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Thanks for being here, Mr. Hyer, and thank you for your work on this.

I want to pick up exactly where you left off. I think it's fair to say that most Canadians don't know what our target is right now. It's fair to say that most Canadians don't know what we're doing on climate change. It's fair to say that we've had three ministers in three and a half years and we've had three plans. We've had lots of shock-and-awe communications. We've had all kinds of irresponsible government demands made on the opposition. For instance, we were supposed to cost our bill—as if they were costing their own proposed plan. That's the kind of nonsense that's simply not taking us anywhere.

Right now we have a Minister of Natural Resources who is lobbying California to prevent carbon content regulations from going upwards. We have a minister who has said he has been participating in a dialogue with Obama, while doing everything he can to position himself as a free trader to prevent Capitol Hill, the United States, from taking aggressive action that would contemplate a carbon tariff against this country. So we're nowhere.

I share your frustration. The government doesn't have a climate change plan, and it's making it up as it goes along. That's why we're in the situation we're in now, and that's why the only piece of paper we have to work with is this bill. We don't have a bill from the government.

At the same time, I would agree with you that science-based targets are important. It is always important to put evidence over ideology. But we're stuck now in an uncomfortable situation. We had a government that was in lock-step with the Republican administration in Washington. It fought against a multilateral response to the climate change crisis. Now, all of a sudden, Washington has changed. We have a new administration that is itself struggling to move this climate change crisis through their own governance structures.

So that's where we're at. I don't think your bill is perfect, and I don't think the government has a response right now. I think they're simply saying things. They may be moving on a couple of fronts, but unfortunately they don't have the candour to tell Canadians what it is we're working towards. This rhetoric about having the toughest targets in the world isn't taking us anywhere. First of all, it's not true. Secondly, they're only putting stuff in the window to cover up for the lack of a climate change plan.

If we're going to be responsible and deal with this bill, there are a number of things we have to take into consideration. That's why I think Mr. Warawa was right in asking a number of probative questions. For example, what other G20 states have adopted 80% reductions from 1990 levels by 2050? That's a question for you. What other G20 states have got 80% reductions from 1990 levels?

Can you tell us the status of negotiations of the Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate, the G17 group led by the G2 of China and the United States. Surely, as a nation state, still sovereign, we have to take into account where some of these discussions are going.

You worked in Japan. The last I heard of the Japanese targets, they're somewhere between minus seven and plus four. Right? That's pre-Copenhagen.

According to experts, it appears that the UNFCCC process is being rapidly overtaken by the G2 discussions and negotiations. So all of this is in play. We don't know what the U.S. target is. We don't know whether we're going to have a cap-and-trade system out of Capitol Hill or whether the American administration is going to regulate using its EPA powers. We have no idea where this government is going—except that it's taking instructions from Washington on a lurch-by-lurch basis.

Then I hear your colleague from the NDP telling us to jump through everything we've already jumped through and pretend it's all the same. Well, it's not. This is like Sesame Street—one of these things is not like the others. We're in a different context now, so what do we do? What do you suggest we do to try to move the climate change response forward, other than simply coming down in favour of science-based targets? Shouldn't we be looking at all these questions to try to figure out what we can do to salvage the mess created by the government in three years and three months?

● (0955)

The Chair: Mr. McGuinty, you have 45 seconds.

Mr. Bruce Hyer: I'll try to be brief.

First of all, Mr. McGuinty, thank you for voting for Bill C-377 last time.

When I was doing my homework, I found one of your comments from last time. You said, "I think it's important for Canadians to understand we're debating a bill that is going to shift targets, a bill that is going to guide Parliament based on science," which is basically what you said again just now.

My simple answer to you is no, I do think those are important issues, and I think they're very important issues bearing on how we achieve these targets.

So do we need to cooperate with the G20, the G17, the G8, and any other G-combination that we care to come up with? Absolutely. We live in a finite world. Is that going to be tough? Yes. Is it up to the opposition to do that negotiation? No, we don't get to do that.

So just to reiterate, to set science-based targets, which you agree with, I think will set the stage in a strong way for Canada to do what we haven't always done, which is to actually show leadership, rather than just follow the lead of the U.S., Japan, or any other country.

● (1000)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hyer.

Mr. Woodworth, the floor is yours.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC): First, I would like to thank Mr. Bigras for his expression "pre-industrial". I feel that the term is very appropriate, in English at least, to describe the consequences of this bill.

[*English*]

Secondly, I wish to make very clear my point of view, which is that merely setting targets without providing detailed plans on how to achieve them is a highly partisan, totally useless publicity exercise, and notwithstanding your protestations of non-partisanship, Mr. Hyer, I'm afraid that's all I see in this bill—merely setting targets without providing any detailed plans about how to get there. Anybody can set targets for the sake of putting a plaque on their wall that says "I signed this agreement setting targets". It gets us nowhere, in my opinion.

Having said that, as you as a parliamentarian know, Mr. Hyer, under Standing Order 79, a private member's bill like Bill C-311 cannot require the appropriation of any part of the public revenue. So I want to ask you, can this bill be implemented without appropriating any public revenue?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: I'm not a constitutional expert. That's not my role.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: I'm not asking a legal opinion. I'm asking you for your research on whether you can see the government implementing your bill without appropriating any public revenue.

Mr. Bruce Hyer: I'm not going to comment, because I assume that when you went through 15 days of hearings over the last bill, which was functionally the same—

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: I'm sorry, Mr. Hyer. I did not go through 15 days of hearings over the last bill.

Mr. Chair, if I may, on a point of order, we were told earlier today that witnesses are required to answer questions. Now, if Mr. Hyer is trying to say that he doesn't know whether this bill can be implemented without appropriating public revenue, that would be a fine answer, but, Mr. Chair, is he allowed to say that he's not going to answer my question? That's my point of order.

The Chair: No. With respect to page 863—

Mr. Bruce Hyer: “That is not my area of expertise” would be a good answer.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: So your answer, then, is that you don't know whether this bill can be implemented without appropriating any public revenue?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: That's correct. I do not know.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: So you don't know how much public revenue might be required to implement this bill?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Yes, I have a sense of that.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: So you do know that public revenue is required to implement this bill?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: I do know that the experts in this field, the economic experts like Nicholas Stern, have said that the cost of not doing it will be far greater than the cost of doing it.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: I'm not asking about the cost of not doing it. I am asking you if you know how much public revenue, if any, will be required to implement this bill.

Mr. Bruce Hyer: That's the government's responsibility. You are the government.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: So you don't know whether this bill will comply with Standing Order 79.

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Have you asked the Parliamentary Budget Officer whether this will—

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Actually, that's one of the questions I'm going to direct my attention to in a minute, because as I understand it, in the last Parliament regarding the almost identical bill, your leader admitted that he had no idea how much economic damage this bill would do to the Canadian economy.

Since that time, you have had an opportunity to advise your leader about the economic impact of this bill, and so I want to ask you, have you asked the Library of Parliament to research for you the impact of these measures, both to public revenue and to the economy at large?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Yes, I have, and I did not get a straightforward answer.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Have you asked the Parliamentary Budget Officer the same questions about the need for public revenue or the impact on the economy of this bill?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: I have not. Have you?

•(1005)

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: I'm asking you, sir. As a point of order, I don't think you can ask me questions here.

So you have not. Have you, in fact, compiled any actual data yourself about either the public revenue, if any, that would be required or the impact on the economy of this measure you're proposing?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Yes, I have, and I'd be happy to provide some of that information to the committee or to you afterwards. For example, Amory Lovins of the Rocky Mountain Institute has indicated clearly, and has good data to support it, that the benefits and cost savings of appropriate measures to reduce greenhouse gases greatly exceed the costs....

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: I'm not asking you about the benefits. I am asking you about the costs. And I'm happy to wait to receive the information you have personally compiled on that.

I would like, if I have time, to ask whether you're aware that the government's assessment of attempting to meet the Kyoto targets—not your bill, but the Kyoto targets—within the 2008-2012 period would have resulted in a GDP drop of 4%. Are you aware of that information?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: I'm aware that there have been many estimates as to what the costs might be of implementing these. There are wide-ranging—

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Are you telling me that you're not aware that this is the government's information?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: I'm going to try to reiterate that there are a variety of projections as to what costs might or might not be, and they're both positive and negative.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: You know, I hate to sound too much like a lawyer, but this is a question that could be answered yes or no. Are you aware, yes or no, that the government's information is that Kyoto targets within the Kyoto period would have resulted in a 4% GDP drop?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: I think the question is irrelevant.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Again, Mr. Chair, as a point of order, am I allowed to get an answer, or do we have to accept the witness's refusal?

The Chair: Yes, you should answer the question, Mr. Hyer.

Mr. Bruce Hyer: I'll stick with my answer.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Mr. Chair, is there any recourse against a witness who won't answer questions?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: I'm not here today to debate Kyoto. I'm here to talk about Bill C-311.

The Chair: Okay, in chapter 20 of Marleau and Montpetit—

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: It is contextual for my next question.

The Chair: Well, your time has expired, but I do ask that Mr. Hyer.... It reads:

Witnesses must answer all questions which the committee puts to them. A witness may object to a question asked by an individual committee member. However, if the committee agrees that the question be put to the witness, he or she is obliged to reply.

We do have a request for an answer to the last question from Mr. Woodworth. We are asking that you respond. I know that it's tough as a parliamentarian to play the witness. We're used to being the members.

A point of order, Madam Duncan.

Ms. Linda Duncan: On a point of order, Mr. Chair, in the second part of the ruling, you said that the committee has to agree that the question is relevant. So it should be put to the committee, and if we agree that the question's relevant, then he can put the question.

The Chair: Mr. Hyer.

Mr. Bruce Hyer: To avoid getting bogged down in that debate, I would like to answer the question.

The Chair: Okay, Mr. Hyer's offering to answer.

Mr. Bruce Hyer: I would say that I do not know the number. I do not know the answer to the question.

Mr. David McGuinty: I'd like to speak to that point of order, Mr. Chair, for five seconds.

As a point of order, in the Library of Parliament briefing note provided for this committee today, it says on page 2:

On 20 April 2009, a request was sent to the Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) to provide a full costing of the legislative proposals contained in Bill C-311. On 18 May 2009, the *Hill Times* reported that the PBO office responded that it cannot fulfill the request with its current budget.

Now, as a matter of point of order, when a question is clearly answered, can a continuing series of questions being put to a witness compel a witness to answer a question that is answered?

The Chair: If a committee member is asking a question, and we hear the same questions and the same answers over and over again when we go through these processes of holding hearings, I believe that it's that committee member's time and his or her questions that are being asked, and the member is entitled to get appropriate responses from the witness. So I think that even though there is information in the brief, we don't always refer to everything in the brief. It's also based upon the testimony coming from the witness.

Mr. Hyer has answered the question. I do want to move on.

Monsieur Ouellet, s'il vous plaît.

[Translation]

Mr. Christian Ouellet (Brome—Missisquoi, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First, I would like to thank Mr. Hyer for having the courage to come and defend his bill from the attacks that some people want to launch. I am not one of those people. In fact, I would like to know a little more about it.

It seems to me that something is different in this bill from what you have proposed before. You said, in fact, that you would like federal targets for all of Canada, and that those targets would apply to every province. Clause 7(b) reads as follows:

(b) limiting the amount of greenhouse gases that may be released in each province by applying to each province the commitment made under section 5 and the interim Canadian greenhouse gas emission targets referred to in section 6;

Mr. Hyer, is this not the territorial approach that would satisfy the Bloc Québécois, in particular? Are you going back on this part, or did you just not notice it?

• (1010)

[English]

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Thank you for the clarification.

It's my understanding that while this bill clearly seeks to set national standards and goals overall in Canada, there is flexibility for the provinces to have different targets. And if you or any of the provinces or parties feel that can be better clarified in the bill, we're open to amendments that would make it even clearer.

[Translation]

Mr. Christian Ouellet: Thank you.

Mr. Hyer, in Ottawa yesterday, I attended a lecture given by Sustainable Development Technology Canada, a foundation created by the government. The topic was infrastructure. The foundation's specific goal is to reduce greenhouse gases by greening infrastructure through the infrastructure contracts. These people have clearly shown, time and time again, that many more jobs would be created if infrastructures were green. They say that, in the long term, Canada would be at a great advantage if infrastructure were to be more sustainable. They were talking about all infrastructure.

Do you not find it curious that this foundation, created by the government, is telling us exactly the opposite to what the government itself is telling us, that it will be more expensive? Of course, you know that your bill is going to be attacked by a government that claims that the measures you propose are, and will continue to be, expensive. That is what we expect to hear. At the moment, any number of infrastructure projects are being put in place, costing billions of dollars. If we required all those projects to be green, or to be made greener, more jobs would be created.

Would you agree with that?

[English]

Mr. Bruce Hyer: I certainly agree with you, Mr. Ouellet. It is my belief, as well as the belief of many in government agencies and non-profit agencies, scientists, and technicians from around the world, that there is huge potential to create jobs through new infrastructure. So if you're asking me if I agree with what you just said, the answer is yes.

[Translation]

Mr. Christian Ouellet: From what I heard yesterday, these are additional jobs. There was also a lot of talk about globalizing green equipment. They said that, if Canada developed expertise in green infrastructure and produced green equipment, it could export both all over the world.

[English]

Mr. Bruce Hyer: That would be my belief, as well.

[Translation]

Mr. Christian Ouellet: The argument that the Conservative government uses is that a bill like yours would cause economic damage. Do you think that is a correct statement?

[English]

Mr. Bruce Hyer: I guess my simple answer would be that there are those who are focused on the potential problems with this bill; what I see far more of is opportunities. There are incredible opportunities in this bill. Denmark, Sweden, Germany, and other countries are already moving at light speed, at the speed of electricity, literally, to implement these kinds of ideas—wind power, solar power—through technological and various incentives. A huge percentage of the houses and garages and shops in Germany now have solar panels on them that go directly into the grid, and they have already provided way beyond their predictions in terms of the percentage of electricity produced. I see opportunities more than problems.

Will there be dislocations? Absolutely. There were dislocations a hundred years ago when we switched from horses to cars.

•(1015)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Watson.

Mr. Jeff Watson (Essex, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witness for appearing today in defence of the bill.

Mr. Chair, if I don't complete my full time, I would like to defer it to one of my colleagues.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Jeff Watson: Your bill, if I can characterize it appropriately, is a post-Kyoto bill, right?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: I would say that's a good summary, yes.

Mr. Jeff Watson: Is meeting the Kyoto target a prerequisite for meeting the targets in the bill?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: The answer is yes and no. Obviously, on the way to a new post-Kyoto target, we're going to have to meet and pass some of the previous Kyoto targets, although not on time. Are we going to necessarily need to follow the same pathways, or lack of them? I think not.

This bill looks forward, not back. As we know, we have not met our targets under Kyoto. Do we give up? I hope not.

Mr. Jeff Watson: To the question of scientific targets, we had Dr. John Stone, a Canadian scientist...part of the UN IPCC's fourth assessment report. I asked Dr. Stone whether these were scientific targets—the 80% below 1990 by 2050. That is, are they based exclusively on science? The answer to that, of course, is that they weren't. There was a value judgment applied by the UN IPCC that only developed countries would take on the target. They're not exclusively science-based in that there's a determination that in order to address this, Canada must take on this particular total, or that developed countries would take on a particular total.

Are we in agreement that it's not a scientific target, that there is an additional value judgment applied beyond science?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: I'll agree and I'll disagree. I hope I won't sound facetious here, but hear me out for a second.

I have a really smart 13-year-old, and he just did a science project for the science fair. It was a well-designed project and he did a lot of statistics on it. At the end, I said, "Michael, what did you learn from your science project?" He said, "Dad, I learned that you can never really prove anything and you can never really disprove anything in science. All you can do is get the statistical probability that you almost proved or disproved something." I said, "Michael, in grade seven, you are light years ahead of most of the master's degrees and some of the Ph.D.s on the planet."

To get slightly technical here for a minute, we have one experiment, no controls, one planet, no degrees of freedom, and we are never going to know with certainty what's going to happen in the future, based on the science. At some point, all of us—both sides of the table, all sides of the table—are going to have to decide for ourselves that value judgment as to how much risk we want to accept and what kind of planning we want to do.

Mr. Jeff Watson: Right. My point at the time of asking Dr. John Stone, of course, was that value judgments are the purview of politicians, not scientists.

Mr. Bruce Hyer: That's true.

Mr. Jeff Watson: My point here today is to ask if you're going to persist in calling these scientific targets in your bill.

Mr. Bruce Hyer: No, I'm going to persist in calling them science-based targets.

Mr. Jeff Watson: Okay.

I think you mentioned in your opening comments the idea of losing ground to our competitors. If I'm to presume correctly, when you're speaking about competitors, you're probably talking about Europe as opposed to, say, China or South Korea. Looking into the post-Kyoto period, this is where some of the discussion becomes important about whether or not these countries like China and South Korea take on a target. The concern is that there would be some competitive disadvantage vis-à-vis Europe, but would we not be increasing the competitive disadvantage if China and South Korea, or countries like that, don't take on a target as well in the post-Kyoto period?

•(1020)

Mr. Bruce Hyer: If your question is whether it's important for China, India, and all countries to come together for a global target and global strategies that meet a fair and balanced need, the answer is absolutely yes.

Mr. Jeff Watson: How much time do I have left, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Your time has just run out.

Mr. Trudeau.

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Thank you very much, Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Hyer, for being here today.

On the targets that the government has put forward—the reduction based on the 2006 baseline—have you heard them claim that it's a science-based target, or is it simply a value-based target?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: If it's a science-based target, I have not seen the evidence to support that.

Mr. Justin Trudeau: On the many plans the government has brought forward through their successive environment ministers—the proposals they've had—do you know if they fully costed their plans?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: I don't know.

Mr. Justin Trudeau: The answer is that they haven't. So the proposal they made that you need to cost yours, particularly when we hear that the Parliamentary Budget Officer, who is slowly being squeezed out of resources, simply doesn't have the ability to cost your plan, is particularly ironic coming from this government.

One of the things that are amazingly frustrating to me, and I'm sure to you as well, is the continual doubting—

Mr. Jeff Watson: On a point of order, on the Parliamentary Budget Officer, I was the one who made the original request. I have not received anything in writing to suggest that he is unable to do the costing. That's based on a report, but it's not based on a response to the actual inquiry.

The Chair: That's not a real point of order, but I recognize that the material that was circulated and referenced earlier by Mr. McGuinty is based on a report in the *Hill Times*; it's not an actual response from the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

Let's move along, please.

Mr. David McGuinty: On that point of order, Mr. Chair, because Mr. Watson has opened the door—

Mr. Jeff Watson: He ruled that it's not a point of order.

The Chair: I ruled that it's not a point of order, but I just clarified the information.

Mr. David McGuinty: Just for clarification, will this committee be copied on the correspondence from Mr. Watson?

The Chair: When we do get a response from him, of course

Mr. Jeff Watson: Absolutely.

Mr. David McGuinty: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Trudeau.

Mr. Justin Trudeau: Thank you.

The idea and the number that was tossed forward by the Conservative side of the questions here, about the 4% decrease in GDP over the past years if Kyoto had been implemented, relies on the assumption that there will be no innovation, that there will be no jobs created through new development, through creating solutions that targets will apply. Do you believe that reducing emissions by 80% by 2050 will cost us significant amounts of our economic profitability and economic activity in this country?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: It will require significant public and private investments, which I believe—I don't know—will result in significant return on investment that's very positive.

Mr. Justin Trudeau: There's no question that any time we are challenged to innovate and find solutions, humanity has been very

good at rising to the occasion and creating new ways of profiting from fresh technology. So I think the fear-mongering we've heard from the government around economic damage and devastation is of concern.

But I have a more specific question on your bill. Let's say this bill were to pass into law and bind the government when sitting down at the Copenhagen negotiations. If the Copenhagen results required Canada to sign on to a 24% reduction from 1990 levels by 2020, and a 79% reduction from 1990 levels by 2050, would we not be able to sign on or agree to Copenhagen because we were bound by your targets?

• (1025)

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Would you like a scientific answer or a political answer?

Mr. Justin Trudeau: You're here as a scientist and a witness more than a politician.

Mr. Bruce Hyer: The political answer is that I'm a rookie, and that's up to this committee, the House of Commons, and the government of the day.

The scientific answer is that there's no statistical significance between those numbers you've just mentioned. Are we going to hit those numbers exactly, either just above or just below? No, we're not. Do we still need a number?

Mr. Justin Trudeau: I'm not talking about hitting them. I'm talking about the negotiations and the targets that come out of the Copenhagen round of negotiations. If they are good, but not quite what we've been bound to as a Parliament, are we then prevented from signing on to whatever Copenhagen records?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: I live in eternal hope that we will get back to a day when leaders like Lester Pearson and Pierre Trudeau showed leadership and weren't afraid of running ahead of world opinion.

The Chair: Time has expired.

Mr. Braid, you're on.

Mr. Peter Braid (Kitchener—Waterloo, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Hyer, for your attendance today.

I'll just start with a few questions to help me get some detail. First of all, why do you select 1990 as the base year?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: There are several reasons why. One is that it's a matter of convention, and a variety of entities, countries, scientific panels have used it. I probably am not totally aware of all the reasons they did that, but I do know one of the reasons they did it. It's based on the principle that it partly has to do with the timing of the original Kyoto proposals. That is one.

The other one is there are countries and there are businesses that believed early on they should move in that direction. There's a strong feeling in certain circles that they should not be punished for having moved more quickly.

Mr. Peter Braid: In your presentation you indicated we have room to make deep reductions. Can you clarify that statement and what you mean by the fact that we have room or capacity to make deep reductions?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Yes, I'll tell you what I mean by that.

I'll tell you that the single biggest factor is I truly believe, as many people do from all walks of life, that we waste a huge amount of energy today. I've been guilty of it too until recently. I already indicated one change I've made in my lifestyle. I truly believe I could give you a ballpark number—you can make up your own—but I think the easiest, the most cost-effective, the quickest ways in which we are going to meet our targets is through energy efficiency and energy conservation, not incredibly bold new technologies that replace what we're doing now.

Mr. Peter Braid: Do you feel that Bill C-311 reflects the realities of the current global economic recession?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: For me it's pretty simple. You may have already made up your mind, you may be still thinking about it, but for me it's very simple. That is, if you accept the assumption, which I don't accept, that there may be some dislocations to the economy and some of them are negative, I think that saving the planet, saving humanity, saving species, saving ecosystems is more important than a slight percentage loss, if that were the case, to our economies. Look at what fiscal mismanagement has just done in terms of far larger dislocations in our economy recently. If we're looking not only at what's causing global climate change but also at what's causing—

Mr. Peter Braid: Are you referring to fiscal mismanagement in the United States?

•(1030)

Mr. Bruce Hyer: There are lots of directions.

Mr. Peter Braid: Do you feel this strikes the right balance between the interest with respect to the environment and our interest with respect to the economy? This is just to conclude this discussion thread.

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Sure. I'm very concerned about the balance. I am a business person. I have three corporations. I'm an entrepreneur. I'm also a conservationist, an environmentalist, and a biologist. Do we constantly need to re-evaluate our impacts and decide which ones are sustainable, which ones are acceptable? We do affect our environment in both positive and negative ways. As Mr. Watson said, at the end of the day, scientists are not going to decide this. It's going to be politicians who decide where that balance is, and that's appropriate.

Mr. Peter Braid: The bill sets out targets. Can you clarify the mechanisms through which targets would be achieved? I'm not quite clear on that. It's easy to set goals, but how do we do it?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: I bounce that question back to the governments of the day. It's not that I don't have opinions on it, but they have nothing to do with this bill. I guess they have something to do with this bill and that they need to be available and we need to avail ourselves of them. Off the top of my head, I can think of 25 of them, and over a malt beverage some time at Brixton's I'd love to pursue that with you, but for me to do that today—

Mr. Peter Braid: How would you suggest the goals be met?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Through a combination of literally dozens of different mechanisms. There's no magic bullet here.

Mr. Peter Braid: What, for example?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Well, I'll reiterate again that I'd divide them into five groups, and my five groups are these: pricing carbon in some way—and we have different ideas on how that is—

Mr. Peter Braid: Do you propose a price for carbon, for example?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Well, there's cap and trade, there's cap and dividends, there are carbon taxes, there are lots of mechanisms, and I myself am actually not wedded to any particular one. I really am not.

The second one is regulation. Sometimes regulations are appropriate—car regulations, emission regulations, that kind of thing. Public investments, private investments, and personal lifestyle changes, I believe, cover the bases, and under that there are lots of subsets.

Mr. Peter Braid: Okay. Tell me about—

The Chair: Your time has expired.

To wrap this up, Mr. Calkins, you have the floor.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Wetaskiwin, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And I appreciate you being here today, Mr. Hyer.

The responses that you're giving to us, a lot of them have basically come from *Deep Reductions*, *Strong Growth*. Do you have a copy of that in front of you, Mr. Hyer?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: I do.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: I could imagine.

One of the policy recommendations that you have actually said, significant price on greenhouse gas emissions, essentially a carbon price, is one of the major recommendations, obviously, that the Suzuki Foundation and the Pembina Institute are putting forward. Economic modelling results on page 2 talk about starting out with \$50 per tonne, moving up to \$300 per tonne by 2030. Do you have anything you can offer to this committee in terms of what that would do to the price of energy for everyday Canadian consumers? How much would a litre of fuel be in 2030? How much would a cubic litre of natural gas be in 2030?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: I know it'll be more than it is today.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Do you know how much more a litre of fuel is right now in Sweden or Finland than it is in Canada today, Mr. Hyer? Do you know that?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Yes, I do. I was recently there. It's quite a bit more.

I think you know that for me to comment would be speculative, and you're making a point, not really asking a question. But I will acknowledge that all of us are going to have to share in some increased costs in some areas, particularly in the energy areas in the future. There's no doubt about that; we all know that.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Hyer, obviously you pay attention to public policy; that's what motivated you to get involved in politics while coming from a background as a professional biologist. We have similar backgrounds and we've discussed this at length in private conversations.

Are you aware, going back three years, as you take a look at the equalization formulas, which were the "have" provinces in Canada? Do you know which ones those were three years ago? There are two.

Mr. Bruce Hyer: I'm not an expert in that area, so—

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Do you know which ones they were? I'll be happy to help you.

Mr. Bruce Hyer: I know what some of them were, but if you want to finish your point—

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Ontario and Alberta. Now we're going through an economic recession, and if you go to page 3 in this very report, it talks about new jobs being projected in Canada between 2011 and 2020:

While meeting the science-based GHG reduction target, only the fossil fuel production sectors, crude oil extraction, petroleum refining, natural gas production and coal mining and the electrical industry would see net job losses.

Given that, three years later, if you look at the budget document that was tabled in the House of Commons, there are actually, based on today's equalization formulas, four provinces in Canada that are now considered to be "have" provinces. Do you know which ones those are?

•(1035)

Mr. Bruce Hyer: No.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Newfoundland and Labrador, a province that has basically access to oil and natural gas reserves, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia, the four provinces in this country that actually have access to oil and natural gas deposits. Now we've lost Ontario, unfortunately, on the other side of that equation.

Would you care to comment on anything that's written in this report, talking about net job increases and net economic benefits, because it seems to me the reality of today would indicate that the provinces that are in the strongest fiscal position in this country are the ones that actually exploit the natural resources that your bill seeks to quash and kill?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: I guess my comments would be two.

The first is that right now the energy sectors, particularly coal, oil, and gas, are highly subsidized so that we're not paying the real costs today, and we might have to move to full cost accounting here.

The other thing I truly believe is that the key to economic development from the resource sector in Canada has to do with more value-added in a variety of sectors, lots and lots of sectors.

Simply to be really clear, I am not anti-gas, I'm not anti-oil. I use those products and we're all going to continue to use them. It would

be my hope that we can find creative ways to use less volumes, at least of the emissions, and maybe we don't even have to reduce the actual use of the resources. It's the emissions that are clear. This bill is about emissions, it's not about how much oil or gas we use. I hope we can maintain the jobs we have and actually increase them through more creativity and more value-added.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Is it not the position of your party to have a moratorium on oil sands development expansion?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: It was Jack Layton's quite strong opinion before the last election that there should be a moratorium on further development—not on current levels, but on further developments. I don't really have an opinion on that.

I do have a strong opinion that we need to reduce our emissions, directly or indirectly, but does that necessarily mean we need to curtail growth in the natural resource sector, including carbon fuels? No, not if we can achieve our goals in some other way.

The Chair: Time has just expired.

Thank you very much, Mr. Hyer, for coming in today. I know it's a difficult situation for you as a member of Parliament to actually be called as a witness, but we do appreciate your giving testimony and answering forthrightly the questions that were put to you on Bill C-311. I want to wish you all the best.

With that, we're going to continue with our meeting. I'm sure you've all seen the agenda, which is being circulated again.

We're going to move to the motion by Ms. Duncan.

Ms. Duncan, if you could move that to the floor, I'd appreciate it.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Yes, Mr. Chair.

My motion is that in order to ensure a timely and efficient review of Bill C-311, An Act to ensure Canada assumes its responsibilities in preventing dangerous climate change, the committee agrees to accept information, testimony, and materials considered during hearings conducted by the committee in the second session of the 39th Parliament on Bill C-377, An Act to ensure Canada assumes its responsibilities in preventing dangerous climate change, as supporting documentation for review of Bill C-311, and agrees to proceed to clause-by-clause consideration of Bill C-311 immediately when Parliament resumes in September 2009.

The Chair: It's a two-part motion—

Ms. Linda Duncan: Could I speak to the motion?

The Chair: You can speak to the motion.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am in no way trying to cut off discussion, debate, or potential for some witnesses coming forward. I'm aware that we have a large agenda before this committee. We have not even come up with any recommendations out of our oil sands review, which is very disappointing to me. We have not completed our review of SARA. Once the House comes back, we'll be dealing with estimates and so forth. In fact, we have other bills that have been referred to us, I think including the review of the sustainability act by the commissioner, and so forth. We have a good number of things on our plate.

Our time is limited, our resources are limited, and my motion is simply to suggest a way of providing for a timely and efficient review of the bill. That is why I have brought it forward.

I look forward to clause-by-clause consideration. I look forward to any relevant testimony that anybody may feel necessary to table before us.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Trudeau.

Mr. Justin Trudeau: In response to that, Ms. Duncan, and to clause-by-clause consideration of Bill C-311 immediately when Parliament resumes, I'm open to accepting all the previous Bill C-377 testimony, but the world situation has changed so much that we have some serious issues we need to look at in and around Bill C-311. We have to hear what Canada's position is, what the world's position is, what's coming out of the negotiations that are happening now with the G17, and these sorts of issues. We need to know where the BRIC countries are and what kinds of targets....

There are things we need to talk about around Bill C-311 that will prevent us from getting immediately into clause-by-clause consideration with any ability to get somewhere.

• (1040)

Ms. Linda Duncan: Are you suggesting a friendly amendment to take out the clause-by-clause part?

Mr. Justin Trudeau: I'd like to hear some more discussions and points before—

The Chair: Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Warawa.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Chair, has there already been a motion or an understanding that previous testimony from Bill C-377 will be incorporated into the consideration of Bill C-311?

The Chair: We haven't had one at this committee, no.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Okay, then the first half of this motion—that the deliberations on Bill C-377 be taken into consideration and that we have that testimony—may be appropriate. I myself have it, but there are some new members on the committee, and I think it'd be helpful for them to have previous testimony as a resource.

In regard to the last two sentences talking about immediately proceeding to clause-by-clause consideration, we've just heard from Ms. Duncan that she's not opposed to hearing from further witnesses. Well, that's exactly what would happen if you move to clause-by-clause: you would restrict hearing from any further witnesses. That's inconsistent.

We've also heard from Mr. Hyer that he's open to having amendments to his bill, to having this committee do work on his bill and make possible amendments. That takes time. That needs consideration.

To immediately move to clause-by-clause would restrict witnesses and it would restrict consideration of amendments to this bill and healthy dialogue, so I'm opposed to the motion. If the last two lines were taken out in the form of a friendly amendment, I think you might find consensus around the table.

The Chair: So are you moving an amendment, Mr. Warawa?

Mr. Mark Warawa: I'm asking as a friendly amendment that the motion end after “review of C-311”.

The Chair: Ms. Duncan, will you accept the friendly amendment?

Ms. Linda Duncan: Just for clarity, Mr. Warawa, I was not presuming, and maybe procedurally I was incorrect in saying that. I was in no way suggesting there not be amendments.

The gist of my motion, if you take out the clause-by-clause, is that we have agreement, first of all. I agree with you, not everybody was on the committee before. I wasn't. I found it very informative to go back and see what my fellow members said. So I'm simply trying to say we should table that for everybody's verification. Maybe then, once they see that, they can decide whether it's worthwhile bringing those witnesses back.

What I'm wanting us to agree on is that immediately when we reconvene we continue this discussion on Bill C-311. So I'm happy to take out the clause-by-clause.

My motion is twofold. One is that we table before all the members, even if it doesn't say that we exclude those witnesses.... I just think it's really important for people to see what was said before, so we don't repeat it unnecessarily. You may want to follow up with some of the witnesses; you may not. But I think it's incumbent on us to look at what has already gone before and that we recommence on Bill C-311 immediately when we reconvene in September.

The Chair: So are you accepting Mr. Warawa's friendly amendment?

Ms. Linda Duncan: No, because he's taking out my motion that we proceed to consideration of Bill C-311 immediately when we resume.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Chair, I'm not prepared to make an amendment yet. I'd like to hear from others before.

The Chair: I have Mr. Woodworth, Mr. Watson, Mr. McGuinty, and Mr. Bigras.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The problem I'm having is that while I don't mind reading the previous testimony, the motion as it currently stands doesn't give me an opportunity to question witnesses, because we'd be going right to clause-by-clause. I also think that while the opportunity to read previous evidence is a useful tool, I would want to make it clear that I wouldn't want my acceptance of that tool to mean that I was in any way giving up the right as a member of this committee to have an opportunity to question witnesses.

I regret if sometimes my passion for getting out the whole truth comes across as attacking a witness. I certainly didn't intend that this morning with Mr. Hyer, and he knows that. My passion for getting out the whole truth in questioning witnesses is really just to get out the evidence. Whereas a member opposite me may ask what I believe, I ask what evidence they have on which to base their belief. I don't regard that, as some timid souls might, as fear-mongering; I regard it as a conscientious search for evidence, which I think I have an obligation to pursue on behalf of the people of Canada and the people of my constituency.

I just want to make it clear that I can't support the resolution as it's currently worded because it would seem to prevent me from having that opportunity to question witnesses as to the underlying evidence they rely on, rather than simply their rosy opinions or beliefs.

Thank you.

• (1045)

The Chair: Mr. Watson.

Mr. Jeff Watson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think some of my thoughts have been encapsulated by Mr. Woodworth and Mr. Warawa, so I will simply say I am against the motion.

The Chair: Mr. McGuinty.

Mr. David McGuinty: Mr. Chair, my understanding is that we have a work plan set up for the fall. We had agreed to somewhere between five and six or seven meetings, if I recall, on the climate change issue as prompted by this bill. The really good news is that this bill is actually prompting the committee to deal with the climate change crisis. I just don't understand how we can move forward.

Mr. Jeff Watson: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: On a point of order, Mr. Watson.

Mr. Jeff Watson: Is committee business supposed to be in camera or public?

The Chair: We're dealing with a motion and a motion can be in camera or public.

Mr. Jeff Watson: According to the orders of the day, it's under committee business.

The Chair: Yes, but we don't necessarily have to go to in camera. It's at the will of the committee.

Mr. Jeff Watson: I'm just asking.

The Chair: Continue.

Mr. David McGuinty: So we agreed to five or six meetings on climate change in order to try to ascertain where we are, because we don't know where we are. Parliamentarians don't know where this country is going, as a sovereign nation state, on climate change. The

really good news and, I think, the good faith behind Bill C-311 is helping to prompt a timely debate of where we're going in advance of the important Copenhagen negotiation.

But that being said, Ms. Duncan, my challenge and our challenge as a committee is that in many respects the bill presupposes and prejudges outcome.

I've already asked a series of questions in my only intervention. I'd just like to state a few that I think have to be heard in the context of this motion and in the context of hearing witnesses on Bill C-311. I'd like to know whether the government has costed out their plan. I'd like to know, first of all, what their plan is. They keep demanding costing. I'd like to know if the government, in costing, if they've done any at all, are going to tell Canadians whether the price of carbon per tonne, under their proposed cap-and-trade system, is going to be the \$64 a tonne announced by the Prime Minister in London, England, a year and a half ago or whether it's going to be another number.

I'd like to know whether the government has done any assessment or any evaluation on the economic stimulus that lowering greenhouse gases will deliver for the Canadian economy. I'd like to know what the other G17 states and the Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate are doing. I'd like to know what Canada is saying to the United States right now, what it's saying to the Chinese. I'd like to know whether in fact Minister Prentice, for example, is still holding fast to intensity targets or whether he's going to be forced to admit that the world can only move forward on absolute cuts.

I'd like to know what the real state of dialogue is between Canada and the United States. We're told we have a new dialogue as of President Obama's visit, but we know there has been a dialogue on energy since 2001. It was killed in 2006 by the incoming government, and then resurrected as the only announceable—the only announceable—on the climate change crisis when Obama came to visit.

I'd like to know what Japan and other industrialized countries are taking on targets pre-Copenhagen. I'd like to know what the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its negotiators are contemplating as outcome for Copenhagen. I'd like to know what Canada's position is right now with respect to Copenhagen. I'd like to know what the United States is going to do for targets, number one. Secondly, will Capitol Hill deliver up a cap-and-trade system, as requested by the administration? Or will President Obama be forced to use his regulatory powers under the EPA to actually price carbon and bring in a cap-and-trade system?

There are so many questions here to ask in order to do this right that I can't possibly, personally and I think on behalf of the official opposition, support this motion. It's not because we don't want to see the country move forward on climate change, it's not because we don't want to see a coherent position taken at Copenhagen, but we have to do this responsibly. Unfortunately, the government has been irresponsible in the last three years and three months, because nobody in this room can tell us—nobody in this room can tell us—where the hell we're at.

I really think it's important to have a very intensive set of hearings in the fall. I would suggest that you may want to reconsider calling for an immediate clause-by-clause examination of this bill, because I think this bill can be vastly improved. But we need to hear. This is a moving target, and things have changed. Things have changed dramatically since the arrival of a Democratic administration in the United States that takes climate change seriously. That's the big difference.

I'm not finished.

•(1050)

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. David McGuinty: I'd like to conclude by saying that we're not in a position to support this motion as drafted. If you want to go forward and change it to reflect the fact that we should take into account all of the good testimony that was heard in the last round, we agree. But we need to come back in the fall and we need to start asking these questions that I've raised and getting answers before we can move forward.

The Chair: Just to follow up on Mr. McGuinty's reference to the previous motion we passed on June 2, it said that the committee shall study Bill C-311 for at least the first five meetings of the fall session.

Mr. Bigras.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Bigras: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Before moving to the motion, I would like to mention that something has changed down south in the United States, they have new leadership. In Canada, on the other hand, the change has been that, since they got their new leader, the Liberals' ardour for the fight against climate change has cooled. I remember the debates that we had on Pablo Rodriguez's Bill C-288. It wanted us to agree to Kyoto objectives and it set out a plan. Since the new leader has arrived, things have changed.

That said, I think that the timeframe that we have to keep in mind as we study Bill C-311 is Copenhagen. We cannot study climate change for ever and ever amen; the climate change conference is taking place in December. The negotiators need a clear message from the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. With a minority government, the mandate also should express the will of Parliament, as a principle. The longer the study of Bill C-311 drags on, the less clear will be the mandate that the government will have to come up with.

In my opinion, we would not be setting a precedent if we took under advisement the evidence we heard when we studied the old Bill C-377 and then moved directly to clause-by-clause considera-

tion. The climate change conference is taking place in December. The message has to be clear: either we are in favour of a reduction of 25% below 1990 levels or we are not.

My sense is that the will of the government and of the official opposition is that they do not want to discuss Canada's future commitments. How else do we explain the fact that the Liberal party is going to vote against the NDP motion today?

•(1055)

[*English*]

The Chair: Ms. Duncan.

Ms. Linda Duncan: I have to say that I'm completely befuddled by Mr. McGuinty's comments. His motion must have been raised when I was at the international climate change conferences, so I wasn't actually aware of it. His motion appears to support the very motion I've raised to expedite the review of Bill C-311. In other words, in my absence the committee agreed to move to it.

That's expediting it, in lieu of the fact that the review of this bill has been continuously deferred by both the Liberals and the Conservatives. We have swayed from the traditional practice of all committees, which is that review of legislation and estimates is given first. This bill is being given short shrift and has been put at the bottom of the pile. Instead of completing a review by now, we are only going to start it in September. I remind the committee that we have to report back to Parliament by October 22.

We are also reviewing Bill C-311. We're not reviewing whatever the Liberal new climate change plan might be. We're not reviewing "Turning the Corner". We are reviewing a bill that has been tabled before this committee by Parliament. So I think it's incumbent upon us.... Certainly everybody can have full rights and propose whatever witnesses they want to bring in. I am simply again, as I have continuously done in this committee, trying to suggest an efficient review.

I have already agreed, at the request of Mr. Warawa, to take out the clause-by-clause. That may have been my mistake as a new member. I know he was suggesting that we preclude amendments. I'm not even excluding that there be additional witnesses. I'm simply suggesting that my motion, on review of past testimony, certainly helped inform me who would be additional witnesses. There's a lot of pressure by outside forces, by members of my own party, about all kinds of witnesses who should be brought forward.

I am trying to balance the interests of this committee, because I feel responsible for proceeding with all the matters that are before us—and there are a number of other matters. The committee can choose to vote against it. I would accept a friendly amendment to take out the clause-by-clause. I'm in no way excluding that there be additional witnesses. I will certainly be objecting, as a member of the steering committee, to an endless list of topics, witnesses, and so forth, that do not directly speak to Bill C-311.

I would like to thank Mr. Bigras for his comments. There is something new in Bill C-311 that was not in Bill C-377: there are actually less than three months until Copenhagen. In fact, the negotiation position of this country is being made right now, not six months from now.

We were asked by Parliament to seriously review this bill. It puts forward targets to be considered to take to Copenhagen. So I think it's incumbent on us to move forward. If we only have that number of meetings we will have to seriously decide, as a steering committee and as a committee, how to constrain that review. That's all there is to it. This is simply my suggestion on how we constrain that review.

The Chair: Just for clarification, the committee already has a motion instructing us that the first five meetings when we come back in the fall session will be dedicated to Bill C-311. With that in mind, Mr. Warawa's suggestion was to remove the last two lines after "Bill C-311", because we already have direction to—

Ms. Linda Duncan: It's because of the motion. That's fine.

The Chair: Do you agree to the friendly amendment, Mr. Warawa? Are you happy with taking that out?

Mr. Mark Warawa: Yes.

The Chair: We have the friendly amended motion. The last two lines after "Bill C-311" are dropped.

Mr. McGuinty.

Mr. David McGuinty: What's the wording of the motion?

• (1100)

Mr. Jeff Watson: You said it would be after the words "Bill C-311". It's in the second last line twice.

The Chair: It shall read:

That, in order to ensure a timely and efficient review of Bill C-311, An Act to ensure Canada assumes its responsibilities in preventing dangerous climate change, the Committee agrees to accept information, testimony, and materials considered during hearings conducted by the Committee in the 2nd Session, 39th Parliament on Bill C-377, An Act to ensure Canada assumes its responsibilities in preventing dangerous climate change, as supporting documentation for review of Bill C-311.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Could we have a recorded vote, please?

The Chair: Mr. Warawa.

Mr. Mark Warawa: I just want to confirm that this will officially put in the testimony—

The Chair: It introduces the evidence that was previously submitted.

Mr. Mark Warawa: —but it does not preclude any of these witnesses from being recalled, and it's just a housekeeping and really meaningless motion. We all have access to this information.

Ms. Linda Duncan: It is unnecessary to insult me. I thought it was rather meaningful.

Mr. Mark Warawa: I wasn't trying to insult anybody.

Ms. Linda Duncan: You said it was useless.

Mr. Mark Warawa: It's a housekeeping bill.

The Chair: No, it is adducing the evidence. The evidence was public, but now it's under proper consideration by the committee for Bill C-311. It's what committee hears. We're just accepting that testimony for this committee rather than the evidence for the past committee, and we do have new members here.

Are there any other comments?

Mr. Woodworth.

We are running out of time.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: I want to put on the record once again that we have had this discussion time and again, and by continually raising these procedural points, which may have some impact on certain outside forces, I believe we have lost at least two full meeting dates, which have been consumed by these procedural discussions, and it's probably getting past two full meeting dates at this point.

Ms. Linda Duncan: You're the ones who've lost them. I agree. You wasted two days.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Thank you.

The Chair: Just for proper terminology, where it says "agrees to accept information" we are going to use the word "adduce".

A recorded vote was requested.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0)

The Chair: Since we never got to the rest of this here, I'm going to use my prerogative as chair and instruct the analyst to start writing the report on the oil sands based on the terms of reference as previously accepted by committee and the testimony that we heard.

With that, is there a motion to adjourn?

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: I so move.

The Chair: We're out of here.

The meeting is adjourned.

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons

Publié en conformité de l'autorité du Président de la Chambre des communes

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