



House of Commons
CANADA

Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development

ENVI • NUMBER 027 • 3rd SESSION • 40th PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Wednesday, October 6, 2010

—
Chair

Mr. James Bezan

Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development

Wednesday, October 6, 2010

•(1640)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC)): Order.

I'll just go to the order of reference: that pursuant to the order of reference of Friday, October 1, 2010, Bill S-210, an act to amend the Federal Sustainable Development Act and the Auditor General Act (involvement of Parliament), was referred to committee.

The sponsor in the House is Mr. Woodworth.

Mr. Woodworth, do you want to make an opening statement on the bill before we start considering the bill?

Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Thank you very much.

First of all, I want to express my appreciation to all those members and their party House leaders who were willing to facilitate the speedy passage of this through unanimous adoption at second reading. Particularly, I have been concerned because I know it was a leap of faith for Senator Banks, the Liberal senator who originated this bill, to entrust it to a member of an opposite party to carry forward in the House. I take that responsibility extremely seriously—as I do all of my responsibilities, but as a personal obligation to Senator Banks—so I'm happy to get this through before anyone springs any surprise elections on us, if possible.

Senator Banks was also good enough to prepare some briefing material. I don't know where his original material went, but I had one copy left and I have simply photocopied it, although some of the photocopies may have some of my notes on them, which you can feel free to disregard.

Essentially, this bill amends two previous statutes, in particular the Federal Sustainable Development Act and also the Auditor General Act.

In the main, this Bill S-210, which was formerly Bill S-216, is intended to do two things: first, to replace previous references that were only to the House with references that would include both the House and the Senate; and second, to allow for the filing of the sustainable development commissioner's response to the federal sustainable development strategy not only on an annual basis but also at other times during the year, including, for example, when the Auditor General and the sustainable development commissioner render their annual reports—and as well, I think I can say, when other reports filed by the federal sustainable development commissioner or Auditor General are being delivered. This just gives him

more flexibility as to when he wishes to respond to the government's federal sustainable development strategy and make the reports that are necessary for him in that regard.

I could certainly go through it clause by clause, if you wish, but that is what it is in the main. It's not very controversial, and I hope it will be receiving the support of the members of this committee.

The Chair: Are there any questions of Mr. Woodworth?

Mr. Warawa.

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Chair, I want to thank Mr. Woodworth for assisting this important bill.

It was an interesting journey, as all parties came together to move forward on the Federal Sustainable Development Act. It's timely that today we have Bill S-210 before our committee and that the Minister of the Environment tabled today in the House the federal sustainable development strategy.

So it's timely, it's good for Canada, it's good for future generations as the perspective in all planning. All parts of government have this now as their paradigm, whereby what we do and the decisions we make are based on sustainability, a balance between a healthy environment and a thriving economy—jobs and a green environment.

Again, I want to thank Mr. Woodworth for his efforts on this committee and now for helping to bring this through this committee. I also want to congratulate the environment minister and each member of this committee for their help in the past on the strategy—and also the commissioner, Mr. Chair. He was here and he helped also in supporting this and guiding it.

Thank you very much.

•(1645)

The Chair: Ms. Duncan.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Chair, I just want to add that we'll be supporting this bill, but the bill is not necessary. It is my understanding that reports are always tabled in the Senate as well, so it's formalizing something, as I understand it, that has always been the custom of the Auditor General and the commissioner anyway. So we see no reason to object to it. It's nothing substantive. It's simply confirming the practice that has always been.

That is my understanding.

The Chair: Mr. Woodworth.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: To a limited extent, Ms. Duncan's comments are correct, although there is also at present no obligation for the minister to deliver his report to the Senate. At present, the federal sustainable development commissioner is limited in the opportunity that he has to respond, so this bill is necessary in order to give him that extra flexibility to respond at any number of points during the year.

The Chair: Monsieur Bigras.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): We are also going to support this bill, which is no problem at all.

My question is more about the tabling of the sustainable development strategy. The parliamentary secretary just told us that the minister has tabled the sustainable development strategy. Could the parliamentary secretary tell us whether this strategy has also been tabled in the Senate?

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Warawa, there's a question for you.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Could he repeat the question, please?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Bigras: I will not repeat myself. Mr. Woodworth understood that we are going to vote for this bill. But the parliamentary secretary told the members of the committee that the minister has tabled the sustainable development strategy. So I just wanted to know whether this strategy has also been tabled in the Senate in the context of today's bill.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Warawa: I want to thank Mr. Bigras for that question.

I was in question period, and right after question period one of the first things that happened—it was the first order of business—was the tabling of the strategy. Right after that I came here. So I would be glad to let him know if it's been tabled in the Senate, but I wasn't there, so I don't know yet.

The Chair: Seeing no other questions, we shall go to the clause-by-clause consideration of the bill.

(Clauses 1 to 6 inclusive agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the title carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Shall Bill S-210 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Shall the chair report the bill to the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: It is carried. Thank you very much. We are done.

We have 40 minutes left.

Mr. Mark Warawa: I move to adjourn.

The Chair: I have a motion to adjourn.

The meeting is adjourned.

MAIL  POSTE

Canada Post Corporation / Société canadienne des postes

Postage paid

Port payé

Lettermail

Poste-lettre

**1782711
Ottawa**

If undelivered, return COVER ONLY to:
Publishing and Depository Services
Public Works and Government Services Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5

*En cas de non-livraison,
retourner cette COUVERTURE SEULEMENT à :*
Les Éditions et Services de dépôt
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5

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

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Additional copies may be obtained from: Publishing and
Depository Services
Public Works and Government Services Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5
Telephone: 613-941-5995 or 1-800-635-7943
Fax: 613-954-5779 or 1-800-565-7757
publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca
http://publications.gc.ca

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the
following address: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

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

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

On peut obtenir des copies supplémentaires en écrivant à : Les
Éditions et Services de dépôt
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5
Téléphone : 613-941-5995 ou 1-800-635-7943
Télécopieur : 613-954-5779 ou 1-800-565-7757
publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca
http://publications.gc.ca

Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à
l'adresse suivante : <http://www.parl.gc.ca>