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Chair

Mrs. Deborah Schulte

Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development

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• (1545)

[English]

The Chair (Mrs. Deborah Schulte (King—Vaughan, Lib.)): We'll get started. Obviously, once the bells go, we'll continue for a bit, if we have unanimous consent around the table. We have votes at 4:15, so we'll go for a bit and then give ourselves about 20 minutes to get over there. We'll come right back as fast as we can so we can carry on.

I want to welcome our guests.

We have with us, from the Department of Health, Christine Norman, who is the director of the healthy environments and consumer safety branch, and James Van Loon, director general of the healthy environments and consumer safety branch; from the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lori MacDonald, assistant deputy minister of the emergency management and programs branch; and, from the Department of the Environment, Eric Gagné, director general of the science and technology branch, and Ken Macdonald, executive director, national program and business development, Meteorological Service of Canada.

Where is Ken?

Mr. Eric Gagné (Director General, Science and Technology Branch, Department of the Environment): Ken was not able to join us today.

The Chair: He was unable to join us?

A voice: [*Inaudible—Editor*] via teleconference.

The Chair: Okay. He is on teleconference, so we're going to hear him.

Also, from the National Research Council of Canada, we have Philip Rizcallah.

I'm seeing that he's not here either. I guess he's not coming.

Mr. Robert Judge (Director, Sectoral Policy, Office of Infrastructure of Canada): He's the one on the teleconference.

The Chair: Oh, he's the one on the teleconference? Philip is on the teleconference, and he's the director of building regulations.

Thank you very much, Philip, for joining us.

From the Office of Infrastructure of Canada, we have Laura Di Paolo, director general, program integration; Robert Judge, director, sectoral policy; and Bogdan Makuc, director, program integration.

We have a lot of people here to share their information with us. Each group will have 10 minutes.

Would you like to start?

Mr. James Van Loon (Director General, Consumer Product Safety Directorate, Healthy Environments and Consumer Safety Branch, Department of Health): Sure. Again, I am James Van Loon, director general of the consumer product safety directorate at Health Canada.

[Translation]

Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would also like to take this opportunity to again thank Ms. Gelfand and her team for their report last year. This report focused on the management of chemicals of concern in consumer products and cosmetics.

I am pleased to have this opportunity to outline some of the progress we have made over the last year in response to those recommendations.

First of all, I will just remind the committee that Health Canada co-administers the Chemicals Management Plan, or CMP, with Environment and Climate Change Canada. Through the CMP, Health Canada systematically reviews chemicals used in Canada to identify and manage chemicals of concern. The CMP is Canada's comprehensive and integrated strategy for identifying and taking action on potentially harmful substances.

When the CMP identifies substances of concern, the department uses the most appropriate legislative or regulatory program to address any risks facing Canadians from these substances. For example, in the cases of BPA in baby bottles and the flame retardant TCEP in foam products for children, both of which are prohibited, the department took actions pursuant to the Canada Consumer Product Safety Act—my act.

Health Canada developed a comprehensive management response and action plan to address the recommendations made in the report. We have accomplished many of the actions outlined in that plan.

[English]

One of those things is that supporting consumers in making wise choices is an important part of our work.

We acted swiftly to address the recommendations to increase communications to Canadians about chemicals of concern in consumer products and cosmetics.

Health Canada has introduced new and updated social media web content on potential risks of products that you might buy via e-commerce and the hazards that can be associated with counterfeit products, such as batteries.

We have revised our information on how we regulate under the cosmetic regulations under the Food and Drugs Act, and how Health Canada treats marketing terms such as “hypoallergenic” or “fragrance-free” that are used by industry—all of which were recommendations.

The commissioner also recommended that other improvements be made regarding the resolution of cases concerning restricted or prohibited substances and the accuracy of the notifications about cosmetics.

In response, we've implemented a process to automate the identification of cosmetic notifications for ingredients that are on our cosmetics ingredient hot list, which is a list of substances that are prohibited or regulated in cosmetics. Today, substances that are prohibited get an automated screening on the very day the notification is received. We'll have all the hot list substances covered by that in the not-too-distant future.

We've also initiated a review of our processing and follow-up of all those cosmetic notifications to make sure that we have service standards and are monitoring our performance.

Finally, we've updated our cosmetic notification form to include information on the date of first sale in Canada of a cosmetic, which was another recommendation the commissioner made.

Our regulations regarding cosmetics also require companies to disclose all cosmetic ingredients on the label. This makes it easier for consumers to make informed decisions. The one exception to this, as the report pointed out, is that sub-ingredients of fragrances or perfumes do not have to be individually listed. To require this would put Canada out of alignment with every major regulator in the world.

Following a recommendation by the commissioner, though, this year we're carrying out a new kind of compliance and enforcement project in which we're going to look for substances that would be on our hot list and could potentially be hiding under terms such as “fragrance” or “perfume”.

The commissioner recommended that Health Canada also verify the extent of industry compliance with our incident reporting requirements for consumer products, so that's kind of moving off cosmetics and into the consumer products realm. We've initiated a new compliance and enforcement project to assess compliance of industry on that, basically by showing up at a company's place of business, looking at the kinds of complaints they've been getting from consumers, and making our own determinations about whether those should or should not have resulted in incident reports.

● (1550)

[Translation]

The commissioner also recommended that Health Canada should improve the verification of product recalls and the documentation of overall recall effectiveness. In response, Health Canada has updated its recall policy, standard operating procedures, and the documents that are given to our inspectors, i.e. all related materials. The updated

recall guide for industry is undergoing final approvals and will soon be posted online.

In conclusion, we have worked hard over the past year to improve our communications to Canadians and to streamline processes so that we can react more quickly to address unsafe products. We have also added new types of inspections to look for potential products containing harmful chemistry.

I thank you for your time and would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much for addressing the concerns raised.

We're going to go through all your presentations and then go to questions, if you don't mind.

Who would like to go next?

Ms. MacDonald.

Ms. Lori MacDonald (Assistant Deputy Minister, Emergency Management and Programs Branch, Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness): Good afternoon.

[Translation]

Good afternoon, Madam Chair.

[English]

I am pleased to be here to speak on behalf of Public Safety Canada, with my colleagues from Environment and Climate Change Canada, Infrastructure Canada, Health Canada, and the National Research Council of Canada, to follow up on the spring 2016 report of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development.

Madam Chair, we recently held a federal-provincial-territorial meeting of ministers responsible for emergency management. At this meeting, we formalized a third edition of the emergency management framework for Canada and received a consensus on the outline for an emergency management strategy in order to fulfill the mandate commitment of our minister.

We are pleased to provide a progress report on the issues and commitments made in the 2016 report. The Auditor General's report included a number of important recommendations on how the federal government can be better positioned to support Canada's long-term mitigation efforts related to the effects of severe weather.

Now I'll highlight how Public Safety has advanced efforts on three key recommendations.

Overland flooding costs the Canadian economy more than any other hazard we face and is the single largest draw on the disaster financial assistance arrangements. In light of this, the Auditor General recommended that Public Safety work with key stakeholders to develop guidelines and standards for flood plain maps and encourage their consistent application in all provinces and territories.

A federal flood plain mapping framework was published on March 17, 2017, to provide technical information on flood plain mapping, outline roles and responsibilities, and provide an overview of past and present flood plain mapping activities in Canada. Public Safety Canada is working with Natural Resources Canada, provinces, territories, and flood plain mapping experts to develop additional documents to support flood plain mapping across Canada.

For example, federal hydrologic and hydraulic procedures are being developed to support practitioners in examining flood magnitudes and water surface elevations in specific environmental circumstances. It will also include information on how to incorporate climate change and coastal flooding considerations into these analyses.

Public Safety has also been working with the Insurance Bureau of Canada to help facilitate an overland flood insurance market for Canadians. Minister Goodale signalled his commitment to this issue by announcing a multi-stakeholder round table on flood insurance, to be held later this year.

[Translation]

The Auditor General's 2016 Report also recommended that Public Safety work with the federal partners to better understand the information needed to support their disaster risk reduction efforts, including severe weather.

Public Safety Canada has developed a flood- focused risk profile to strengthen our understanding of flood risks in Canada by examining historical events and annual flood risk climate change impacts and potential mitigation measures.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

• (1555)

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much. We appreciate that. It was very fast.

Next up is Ms. Di Paolo.

Ms. Laura Di Paolo (Director General, Program Integration, Office of Infrastructure of Canada): Thank you for having us here to speak before you.

I am joined today by Robert Judge, director of sectoral policy at Infrastructure Canada, and Bogdan Makuc, director of program integration.

We're here today to speak to you about Infrastructure Canada's progress in addressing the recommendations made in chapter one on federal support for environmentally sustainable infrastructure.

[Translation]

This chapter of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development's 2016 Spring Report examined federal

municipal infrastructure programs that are intended, among other objectives, to improve the environmental performance and sustainability of Canadian communities.

[English]

At the time the report was issued, Infrastructure Canada agreed with all of the recommendations made by the commissioner. I would like to briefly review the progress we've made in response to the recommendations.

With respect to performance measurement for the gas tax fund, in January of this year the department held a gas tax fund national workshop that brought together all partners responsible for implementing the gas tax fund. Part of the conversation included discussions around options to improve the GTF reporting. We agreed to work with our signatories to consult further on how to improve the indicators collected for the selected outcomes.

[Translation]

For the longer term, the department will also align the approach to performance measurement and reporting for the Gas Tax Fund with the new suite of outcomes-based programs of the Investing in Canada Plan launched in 2016 and further expanded in budget 2017.

[English]

Infrastructure Canada also committed to improve data on infrastructure. Over the past year, we've worked with Statistics Canada to develop the Canada core public infrastructure survey, which is launching this summer. The survey will provide a national picture of the current state and performance of infrastructure across Canada and will be the first national survey regarding core public infrastructure: Canada's roads and bridges, and water, waste-water, and public transit infrastructure.

[Translation]

We are working with other federal departments, provinces and territories to determine how best to integrate climate change mitigation and resilience considerations in our infrastructure investments.

These requirements will be incorporated into the upcoming integrated bilateral agreements with provinces and territories.

[English]

We are also working closely with our partners at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, who will be delivering a \$50-million municipal asset management program and a \$75-million "municipalities for climate innovation" program. These are both five-year programs and, respectively, will support municipalities in their adoption of good practices in asset management and in adapting to the impacts of climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

[*Translation*]

As we have demonstrated with our new initiatives—the FCM-delivered programs, and the Core Public Infrastructure Survey—Infrastructure Canada recognizes and supports the importance of innovation, particularly in the context of ensuring the environmental and financial sustainability of infrastructure.

[*English*]

As identified in budget 2017, phase two of the federal government's infrastructure plan signalled that the federal government will work with partners over the next year to examine new innovative financing mechanisms to increase the long-term affordability and sustainability of infrastructure in Canada.

Two of these new innovative financing mechanisms include the Canada infrastructure bank and the smart cities challenge. Legislation to establish the bank has been tabled in Parliament, and the Prime Minister introduced the smart cities challenge at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities conference at the beginning of June.

The department is looking forward to having more information on both of these initiatives in the coming weeks and months.

[*Translation*]

In the meantime, the department will continue to examine its own programming for opportunities that will maximize innovative mechanisms for program delivery and project funding. It will also aim to better support the use of state-of-the-art infrastructure technology to improve the efficiency and the effectiveness of existing assets.

[*English*]

Infrastructure is the backbone of our communities, big or small, and our department is committed to implementing the Government of Canada's long-term plan to support the resilient and sustainable infrastructure that is at their core.

[*Translation*]

Thank you for inviting us to speak with you today.

[*English*]

My colleagues and I will be happy to respond to any questions.

• (1600)

The Chair: Thank you.

We still have not had bells, so we're doing well.

We can get started with questions. Who is up first?

Mr. Amos, go ahead.

Mr. William Amos (Pontiac, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to all of our witnesses. This is really appreciated.

Given the recent circumstances of flooding in my riding—north, west, and south—I'm particularly interested in some of the measures taken to augment and to think more deeply about disaster relief and flood management.

I'll start with a general question for Ms. MacDonald. What are some of the lessons the department has drawn pursuant to the recent flooding in Quebec?

Ms. Lori MacDonald: Thank you for your question.

The situation in both Ontario and Quebec, and certainly in B.C. and New Brunswick, has been very tragic in terms of the flooding we've seen. Approximately 245 communities or districts have been affected.

One of the things that came out very clearly in the beginning is that there's a gap between what people believe they want to do in a crisis situation and what they actually do. An example would be that people want to be involved in terms of being prepared and being able to mitigate against disasters, but in fact do very little about it when it is actually happening to them.

One of the things we identified very quickly is that we really need to ramp up our awareness on getting ready for emergencies and what to do in emergencies. Earlier this year, we had advanced a "Flood Ready" campaign to try to educate people with respect to what to do in disaster situations and how to prepare for that, but in fact we've seen that we need to do a lot more in that area, so education is first and foremost.

The second thing is really advancing that conversation around a residential flood insurance market in terms of how most people, when they call after a flooding situation, are unaware that they don't actually have coverage. That traumatizes them further, so that they're much more in a place of "what does this really mean to me?" and the losses they experience in terms of their home.

Finally, we work with other government departments—Environment and Climate Change Canada, Natural Resources Canada, and Infrastructure Canada—with respect to what things we need to put in place purely from a mitigative perspective. We need to advance much further in terms of mitigation in our country, regardless of which province the flooding happens in.

Mr. William Amos: To follow up on that, given that so many Canadians are unaware of their lack of coverage in terms of overland flood insurance, is it fair to say that a lack of action on climate change is ultimately costing Canadians in the form of private mechanisms, either through catastrophic costs or payment for new insurance coverage above and beyond the typical housing insurance they would get?

Ms. Lori MacDonald: One of the things we see is that severe weather and climate change are having a significant impact both on our weather patterns and on disasters, both flooding and fire, as in the example that we saw in Fort McMurray last year.

We know that Canada is the only G7 country that does not have residential flood insurance, so the disaster financial assistance arrangements become the default insurers of choice, which is having a significant financial impact on the economy and at the same time doesn't situate people to be prepared and ready to take on their own responsibilities in that regard.

We have to work harder with the Insurance Bureau of Canada and the broader industry to create those conditions to implement a residential flood insurance market for Canada, so that we can have a positive impact on the economy but actually help and prepare people to be ready to respond in disaster situations from a financial perspective.

Mr. William Amos: Thank you for that.

My next question is directed to Ms. Di Paolo. I want to dig into the municipal asset management fund being delivered by the FCM, but with federal investment.

I think it is a given that rural municipalities do much less in the way of municipal asset management than do major urban centres. I wonder if you can speak to how the FCM is—or is not—being directed to emphasize to the smaller municipalities that tend not to have the capacity to manage their assets appropriately to do just that.

•(1605)

Ms. Laura Di Paolo: Thank you for your question.

The municipal asset management program that will be delivered by the FCM is really geared toward supporting the smaller rural communities, because we have realized that there is a gap in their abilities and their capacity, really, for infrastructure asset management planning. Over the past year, the FCM has done a lot of consultations and engagement to review what the needs and gaps are.

We do see a difference across the country as well. We see provinces—such as Ontario—that have legislated requirements for asset management planning in the province. That has made a significant advancement for us in management in the province. British Columbia is also quite strong on the asset management side, but we see quite a range in the other provinces in terms of their abilities, both in that kind of urban/rural area where you see a difference in capacity and across the country.

The FCM will be engaging further with provincial and territorial associations to provide on-the-ground support, actual training, and awareness to increase the capacity of these smaller communities. The program also includes some support for actual staffing around asset management to get in-house support for these smaller communities.

The Chair: I have to cut you off there, because we only have six minutes for each questioner.

To be helpful, when I hold up the yellow card, it means you have one minute. When I hold up the red card, it means that you're out of time, so please wrap up your thought there. That gives everybody a chance.

Mr. Shields.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Being from Alberta in a rural/urban municipality, I'll say that we received the two years...we went through and the mapping was done. The infrastructure inventory was done totally in Alberta, for both rural and urban. I'm not sure where yours is, but I know where ours is because we did it.

Going to the definition of flooding, you said “overland”. Can you define what “overland flooding” means to you?

Ms. Lori MacDonald: In the context of a residential flood insurance market? Is that the question?

Mr. Martin Shields: Well, there are two kinds of overland flooding. They're very different and are handled very differently by insurance or non-insurance. One is moving water, and another is water that comes down and overland. I'm looking for your definition.

Ms. Lori MacDonald: When I'm talking about overland flooding, I'm talking about those things that would normally occur, such as flooding in the situations that we just saw in Ontario and Quebec, where water pours in through doors and windows—

Mr. Martin Shields: Okay. Are you talking about a river or stream situation?

Ms. Lori MacDonald: It could be from the incapacity of the ground to absorb the water and torrential rains or severe weather, or it could be from a river flooding.

Mr. Martin Shields: Okay. So you're talking about all of it. They are very different in the sense of how you deal with them.

On the mapping, there is real conflict out there on the mapping of what exists and what's right and what isn't, so are you working with the provinces and the municipalities in getting this done?

Ms. Lori MacDonald: Absolutely. We work with every province and territory as well as municipalities and the private sector, academics, technical experts—

Mr. Martin Shields: Do you believe that it is totally done now?

Ms. Lori MacDonald: The flood plain mapping?

Mr. Martin Shields: Yes.

Ms. Lori MacDonald: No, the flood plain mapping is not done. There are different phases of flood plain mapping. It depends on the leadership role that a province, territory, or municipality takes in terms of where they prioritize flood plain mapping.

Mr. Martin Shields: There's no target for a national mapping that would show us that, then?

Ms. Lori MacDonald: We have a target for national flood plain mapping guidelines, which was a commitment made as a result of this audit and recommendation, so we announced that in March 2017. Now it's up to each individual province and territory to lead that initiative in terms of completing their flood plain mapping.

Mr. Martin Shields: There's no end date to get this done?

Ms. Lori MacDonald: We don't establish an end date for them, no.

Mr. Martin Shields: Okay, and you're not regulated to do it.

Ms. Lori MacDonald: No.

Mr. Martin Shields: Okay, so it's wide open and still out there.

I'm talking about the differences in overland flooding and what streams cause, there's a difference in the sense of what municipalities will do with developers. If a developer says he wants to put in a 16-inch pipe, you have overland flooding from storms, and maybe a 24-inch pipe would do it. That's a decision that's made, versus allowing a developer to build on a flood plain. There's a difference there in insurance coverage. The insurance coverage will cost in sewer backup overland flooding in a different way than it will with the lack of capacity in infrastructure. Do you deal with all of that?

Ms. Lori MacDonald: Yes. We work with the National Research Council of Canada on things like building codes. We work with the Canada Mortgage and Housing agency. We work with a number of different entities that have a capacity to influence provinces, territories, and municipalities in terms of the kinds of programs and initiatives that are put in place.

As an example, we also have some mitigation programs that support those kinds of concepts. Examples would be encouraging individual homeowners to put in backwater valves or to have rebates on programs and so on.

Mr. Martin Shields: Would developers and municipalities decide how much pipe and capacity?

• (1610)

Ms. Lori MacDonald: We personally don't do that, but we work with the building code—

Mr. Martin Shields: Right, back to the building codes....

We can talk about hail insurance. The hail insurance guys do a seeding program to reduce the amount of hail. That's something they do at their cost. It's a good program. It's been out there for a long time, so it's not new.

You talked about flooding. The largest flooding that I would remember was in 1965 in Waterton park. We had 11 inches of rain on rocks, and a north wind so that the water didn't get out of the lake. It flooded the community to the highest level it had ever been flooded. It was a combination of events. In 2013, the 11 inches of rain that happened west of Calgary was—again—on rocks. If it had been 50 kilometres out on our prairie land areas, there would have been a huge difference.

As for the idea of surveys, how does that help you plan for that?

Ms. Lori MacDonald: I'm not sure if my colleagues from Environment and Climate Change or NRCan could answer that question. I don't have knowledge of that. I'm sorry.

Mr. Martin Shields: Okay.

Let's go to the gas tax: your world. You say, "As part of the New Building Canada Plan, the renewed federal Gas Tax Fund...provides predictable, long-term, stable funding for Canadian municipalities to help them build and revitalize their local public infrastructure...". Are you saying in your audit that it's not coming back to you when municipalities are saying that they've a road or they've replaced a water or sewer line? You're not getting it back? It's the challenge of the regulatory piece. Are you getting the information back on what municipalities are doing with it?

Ms. Laura Di Paolo: Do you want to go ahead...?

Mr. Bogdan Makuc (Director, Program Integration, Office of Infrastructure of Canada): Yes.

We get a report each year that lists the projects that funds were invested in.

Mr. Martin Shields: Yet in the information we hear, it seems that there is a challenge, a gap of some kind.

Mr. Bogdan Makuc: The gap identified by the report last year was in terms of the outcomes. We invest in the projects, and then the projects, individually and collectively, contribute to outcomes. The audit report found last year that we had challenges in trying to report on how those projects contributed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, cleaner air, and cleaner water.

Mr. Martin Shields: But it says the fund is for long and stable planning so municipalities can revitalize their public infrastructure. It doesn't say what you said.

The Chair: A quick answer.

Mr. Bogdan Makuc: I'm not quite clear what—

Mr. Martin Shields: Well, it's from the government, and it says what infrastructure is for: it's for revitalized local public infrastructure.

Mr. Bogdan Makuc: Yes, and municipalities invest in infrastructure projects across the country, and we do get information on those each year.

Mr. Martin Shields: But it didn't say what you just said it didn't have....

Mr. Bogdan Makuc: I was talking about what the report was critical of us about.

Mr. Martin Shields: Oh, but it says greenhouse gases and the rest of it, and that's not what it says here. It doesn't say that in here. It says what the fund is for.

Mr. Bogdan Makuc: "In here" being...?

Mr. Martin Shields: It's from Infrastructure Canada, the Government of Canada, and it says what the federal gas tax fund is.

The Chair: Martin, I'm going to have to cut you off.

Mr. Martin Shields: Yes, I know.

The Chair: You might want to pick that up on the next round.

The next one up is Ms. Duncan.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Thanks.

To begin, I'll just comment. I wasn't on the committee at the time when they all testified before us. I was speed-reading through the proceedings and noted that the commissioner previously recommended that the committee have a meeting for each chapter, but here we are again with all three or four chapters. I would suggest that by the end of the meeting—or after—we should confer and think about whether there is something we really want to follow up with, say, in 2018. That would be my first question.

Is it Natural Resources on the building code...?

Ms. Lori MacDonald: It's the National Research Council.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Okay.

I'm a little bit concerned with the deadline you've said, which is by 2020. In the meantime, we have a lot of housing and other buildings being built, and it's far more expensive to retrofit. It's been known for quite some time that we need an updated building code. I'm wondering why this keeps dragging out.

•(1615)

The Chair: Philip, go ahead.

Mr. Philip Rizcallah (Director, Building Regulations, National Research Council of Canada): Would you like me to respond to that?

The Chair: Yes, please.

Mr. Philip Rizcallah: The building codes are on a five-year cycle. The next cycle for the building code is 2020. Generally, it takes about a year and a half to two years of technical work, plus some consultation and stakeholder engagement. Then the material is published in 2020. The usual code cycle is 2020. Some of the material may be ready by 2018, and at that time the provinces and territories can have access to the material and adopt it, but the adoption period is every five years.

Ms. Linda Duncan: That's not very encouraging.

I remain very confused by all the funds for green infrastructure.

We have the gas tax, and the commissioner asked questions about the environmental side of the gas tax.

Then we have the fund directly through the FCM, where they allocate it.

Is that different from the \$20 billion over 10 years—in other words, \$2 billion a year for green infrastructure—or is it the same?

Ms. Laura Di Paolo: They are different, and also, they were announced at different times. The funds that will be delivered through the FCM are two capacity-building programs. Also, we will fund some small pilot and development projects under the municipal climate innovation fund. For the most part, those programs are very much capacity-building and trying to get municipalities and communities on board with us at management planning and working more towards the life-cycle management of their assets.

The green funding that we have in the 2017 budget speaks more specifically to what we'll be launching in the very near term through the integrated bilateral agreements with provinces and territories for climate change mitigation projects—

Ms. Linda Duncan: That's the planning that is delayed again for two more years. It was announced last year, at \$1.5 billion, and then it was held back this year, with \$750 million less this year. I'm looking at the 2017-18 budget and the "low carbon economy fund" under the pan-Canadian plan. There is adaptation and climate resilience, which is another one, where there is \$33 million, but other than that there doesn't seem to be much money released on that for a while.

Ms. Laura Di Paolo: I can't speak to the other two programs. They're funded through different departments.

Ms. Linda Duncan: This is what I'm trying to get a handle on. Who is going to have control over the low carbon economy fund under the pan-Canadian...?

Mr. Eric Gagné: I'm at Environment and Climate Change Canada. I'm not in a position to answer that. I'm here as a witness for the green municipal fund and the IDF curves. We'd have to get back to you on that.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Okay.

It would be my understanding that since that is Environment Canada's main document on climate, these would begin to be reported together. Could I just leave that comment with you? I've had many discussions with the minister's office and it remains very puzzling to me.

There are all of these funds and there doesn't appear to be any money being released. I'm hearing from at least my province that they're ready for the dollars. We have problems with flood mitigation. We want to do energy efficiency. Maybe at some point we could have somebody here in the fall to actually explain where all these funds are and which department is responsible. I know that the environment minister tends to be the one they put out as a spokesperson, and sometimes Mr. Carr, but it remains quite confusing to the public out there in terms of who is actually in control of these funds.

I have a few more minutes, and I have a specific question.

The Chair: You have one minute.

Ms. Linda Duncan: It's about northern infrastructure. If there's \$20 billion for green infrastructure and a certain amount of money generally for infrastructure.... I know that it's extremely expensive to do work in the north. We're already seeing housing and roads sinking with melting permafrost. We also have the issue of the melting ice roads. I'm wondering if you're starting to think of a separate budget allocation for just the northern isolated communities.

Mr. Robert Judge: Under the integrated bilateral agreements that are going to be negotiated with provinces and territories, this is one of the main funding mechanisms for the next phase of the investing in Canada plan. There is a stream in there for rural and northern communities. That will help with a number of projects. There will also be a national program. A new national program that's being established is the disaster mitigation and adaptation fund. That's a \$2-billion fund.

Both of these mechanisms should be in place by the end of this fiscal year. That disaster mitigation and adaptation fund will help with some of the larger-scale projects that might be bigger than some of the small community elements.

•(1620)

Ms. Linda Duncan: If—

The Chair: No. Hang on. Nice try. You have a bit of time at the end to try that one.

Mr. Fisher.

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Thank you, folks, for being here today. I appreciate the information you're providing us.

I want to talk to Ms. Di Paolo in regard to the gas tax fund and, to a lesser extent maybe, to Mr. Gagné, about the green municipal fund, at least as that pertains to environmental projects.

This government talks an awful lot about the importance of municipalities determining what the priorities are for those small on-the-ground communities. We've talked about that a lot. As a councillor, I recall that provinces and the federal government would come in and determine which projects were going to go forward, which might have looked like the shiniest penny in that community, so I love the fact that we've put the municipalities, through FCM, at the forefront of what is important and what projects should go ahead. We're making sure that they're at the table.

The commissioner has stated that she felt that the gas tax was inadequately managed—I believe those are the words she used in the report—and that there were some issues with FCM environmental projects. I'm interested in finding out specifically how you're working with municipalities and with the FCM to ensure that their priorities actually get built. You mentioned a national workshop. I'm curious as to the make-up of that workshop. Who's at the table?

Is that just one thing that you're going to do? Is that part of the your central focus on how you continue to work with municipalities through the FCM?

I'm not sure, Eric, if there's an actual question in there for you or not.

Ms. Laura Di Paolo: I can go ahead. Thank you for your question and your comments.

The gas tax fund, at its core, is a transfer payment. We deliver the transfer payment through provinces and territories, and then it's delivered to municipalities—

Mr. Darren Fisher: Yes.

Ms. Laura Di Paolo: —so every municipality in Canada receives their share of the fund. They can use 100% of that funding to fund the projects that they want to bring forward as long as they meet some of the eligibility criteria, but it is very much focused on the municipal or community priorities to be funded.

With respect to the workshop, that's where we're working with our signatory partners—the provinces and territories—to work on how we can report better and also how we can facilitate delivery of the fund. That's more a process of working through the agreement to do that.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Okay. It's transferred to the provinces to administer the project, but in the past and up until recently the provinces have been choosing the projects. My question is, how are we ensuring that the municipalities' priorities are coming through? Do we have a role in that so we can ensure the provinces aren't choosing the projects that are of importance to them and then saying to the municipalities that those are the projects they're going to get their gas tax funding for?

For instance, the HRM gets \$25 million a year. The province comes forward and says: "Our contribution to this project is going to be \$8 million. Are you in? We're going to use that \$8 million from the gas tax." In my experience, that's then, for the most part, a provincial priority, and the municipality says, "We'll be in on sharing that because we need that infrastructure."

Mr. Bogdan Makuc: The approach varies across jurisdictions. In certain provinces and territories, the funds flow directly to municipalities and they have the full say in how projects are selected. There are certain jurisdictions, perhaps, where there is a bit more of a discussion with the provinces, but those approaches are outlined in the agreements that we sign with provinces and territories.

In two cases, we do actually have agreements: in Ontario, with the Association of Municipalities, which actually manages it—it's not the province that manages the agreement—and in B.C., with the Union of British Columbia Municipalities.

Under the gas tax fund, all the funding goes straight through to the municipalities. They have the choice to identify the projects that they want to spend the funding on. As to how that relationship works with the provinces—

Mr. Darren Fisher: Yes.

Mr. Bogdan Makuc: —that's between the provinces and municipalities. We are working with the signatories and ensure that the funds get transferred through.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Okay.

Eric, on the green municipal fund, that's purely through the FCM and right straight to municipalities?

• (1625)

Mr. Eric Gagné: That's correct. Municipalities bring forward their proposals. The green municipal fund has a council that reviews the criteria to make sure that we're going to be innovative, that technologies are being implemented in those municipalities, and that there are going to be environmental benefits.

Mr. Darren Fisher: That would be like the solar city program in Halifax?

Mr. Eric Gagné: That's right. That's why the FCM works directly with the municipalities.

Mr. Darren Fisher: That's good.

I have a few moments, Mr. Van Loon. What actions has Health Canada taken? You spoke a little about social media, but to communicate to consumers about cosmetics regulation.... I mean, we all work hard on social media, but we reach 8%, 9%, or 10% of the population with social media. What else is tested? What else is planned? What are you envisioning?

Also, is there a plan for random testing of products to find these things, or are you looking at things that are complaint driven?

Mr. James Van Loon: Yes. We've updated our web page to make it clearer what we do. The recommendations of the commissioner were along the lines that we should tell people what we don't do. As a regulator, I'd want to temper that a bit so as to not be equipping people with all the stuff that we're not going to do.

We do risk-based, targeted sampling. You're asking what we are doing in terms of random sampling in the marketplace. This is valid, not just for cosmetics but also for consumer products. We can't randomly sample in the marketplace. If you take a large, big-box retailer that has 100,000 or 150,000 SKUs, we're not randomly sampling from that.

We point our compliance and enforcement resources in places where we believe there's a high probability of non-compliance and also a high probability of that non-compliance being something dangerous. Typically, all of our rules are on things we think are dangerous.

Where we're really trying to innovate these days, though, is on not spending our time walking into a store or warehouse or whatever and grabbing 20 or 50 or 100 whatever it is—products—and sending them off to the lab for an exam, out of the hundreds of thousands of things that might be there. We are really spending our compliance and enforcement resources on talking to companies about the systems they have in place, how they mitigate risk for consumers up and down the supply chain, how they identify emerging risks, and how they let us know about those. Then, where we see a strong system, we'll set it aside or reduce the amount of sampling that we would do, while for others we'll increase the amount, as they are a higher-risk entity.

That's the kind of stuff we're trying to work on. It's a bit different—consumer products and cosmetics—but that's the overall strategy: how do we find the risky places where we should be investing our resources?

The Chair: Okay. I have to cut that off. I let it run a bit because I think everybody was very interested in your answer—

Mr. James Van Loon: I wasn't looking either—

The Chair: That's okay. That's my job.

Mr. Eglinski.

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): I'd like to thank everybody for coming out this afternoon.

I had a bunch of questions written down here, but then Will started off with flooding, and that kind of drew my attention to a few things—past experiences and the like.

Lori, you talked about your flood ready program that was initiated this year as a result of the audit that was done. I'm very interested. You stated that you've met with the provinces and municipalities and you're looking at the overall picture and waiting for results back. Through the questioning from Mr. Shields, it's clear we really don't have a time frame.

What I'm curious about is this. When you met with the provinces and municipalities, were discussions on—I'm just going to throw out a random number—the probably one thousand areas in Canada that are built up in flood plains. They've already been built and were allowed by municipalities due to the ignorance of the times, due to not knowing what the consequences might be. Also, no one knew about global warming.

Now, we have probably hundreds of thousands of homes in Canada, in many major centres, from sea to sea to sea, that people may not be able to get insurance for, because they already know

they're in a flood plain. Is there any long-term plan for looking at those areas? Are finances being put aside to try to mitigate the risks that are there, with a big flood wall or whatever? I'm wondering if that was discussed?

Ms. Lori MacDonald: Thank you for your question.

We have a very interesting challenge in that regard, because the reality is that the vast majority of Canadian cities are actually built on flood plains. It's not just an issue for one or two provinces. It's an issue for pretty much everybody, except for maybe Nunavut—

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Like New Orleans, right?

• (1630)

Ms. Lori MacDonald: —in terms of what we do about that.

There are three main areas that we're having these conversations about in terms of the challenges. You have houses built on flood plains that become a high risk from an insurance perspective. We need to have some preconditions in place to support the conversation on a flood insurance market. Flood plain mapping is one of them.

If I can use the analogy, when you build a house, you need to have a good foundation. Well, a good foundation of urban planning and building in appropriate areas is to have the appropriate flood plain mapping done. That's one reason why we have so much focus and attention on that area: so we can set up the right conditions to introduce that residential flood insurance.

At the same time, one of the thorny issues is around what you do in terms of having an equal opportunity to get that insurance when you're the person sitting in the high-risk area, on the one hand, and the person next to you down the road is not in that high-risk area. How do you balance that out from a financial perspective? That's one of the issues that the insurance markets themselves are grappling with.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Can I stop you there for a moment? A national building code was mentioned earlier. Are we working with our provinces and our municipal counterparts in looking at a national building code? A number of us here are ex-councillors and ex-mayors, and we know about drainage systems. The drainage systems are inadequate in most municipalities in Canada.

Are we looking at a national building code? Are we working with the provinces? How are the provinces coming back to us? Are we getting some agreement on coming out with a national code? I think a lot of people built with old standards that are not applicable today.

Ms. Lori MacDonald: We're doing a lot of work with provinces and municipalities in terms of the conversation around what you do with respect to those building codes and in introducing some of the concepts such as the backwater flood valve that I spoke about earlier. We have a couple of really good working groups. The flood plain mapping technical working group has on it representatives from the municipalities, from a number of key areas across the country, and is trying to influence those conversations on the building code.

One of the struggles, of course, is always that it does depend on the different views that are brought to the table in terms of having something that's standardized across the country, meaning that you're going to force the municipality or the province into implementing that national building code. The conversations are lively. They're well. They're happening across the country. We hope they're advancing to a place where we get something more standardized.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Thank you. I'm glad to hear that you are looking at that.

I have a quick question for the Department of Health on a part of your overall policy. I was looking it up on the computer the other day in getting prepared for this, and I had one question I wanted to ask you. In terms of your actions, you induce, encourage, and compel companies in the observance of your legislation.

I know that you had an audit here within the year and some things were mentioned, but I wonder if you can tell me roughly how many actions have been taken over the last year by your organization to resolve issues out there. Did you do any prosecutions? How are you finding the industry? Is it compliant or not?

Mr. James Van Loon: Thanks. That's a good one.

We publish a sort of quarterly dashboard that shows what kinds of incoming incident reports we're getting on various things. We get something in the order of a couple of thousand incident reports, which would include the industry-mandatory incident reports as well as consumer reports, at roughly a 60:40 ratio.

Each one of those things gets follow-up from us. We have a triage system established. Within a couple of days, we have taken a look at the report we got and have established, at the most gross level, how serious of a risk this looks like. Ones that look trivial or... There are many that we don't need to follow up on. Those go into a database and feed our ongoing analytics in the future, but a substantial number of those would go through into risk assessments.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Have there been any prosecutions?

Mr. James Van Loon: No, no prosecutions in the last year. In fact, prosecutions have been fairly rare in industry consumer product safety.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Is industry working with you?

Mr. James Van Loon: Industry does typically work with us. We've only had to issue two orders in the last several years, for instance, that would compel...

I'm seeing a red card being waved. I don't know if that's—

The Chair: Yes. We're over time.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: I'm trying to move along because I want to get three answers there.

• (1635)

The Chair: Jim, you're way out of time. I let you go a minute over.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: You're a sweetheart.

The Chair: Well, I know that for some of these questions, everybody wants to hear the answers. It's all good.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Gerretsen.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Ms. Di Paolo, I'll ask you a question first. In your remarks you mentioned the spring report, and indicated the objective, among others, to "improve the environmental performance and sustainability of Canadian communities". How do you measure the success of that? I understand you talked about the gas tax fund, and about how it's reported, but how do you measure success as to whether or not communities are performing better in terms of their environmental sustainability?

Ms. Laura Di Paolo: It is a very complex and difficult thing to measure. One area that we are looking at, as we establish our new programs, is getting a solid baseline on where communities may be at now. I can take as an example the innovation and climate program of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. In that program, as well as the asset management program, we'll be looking to establish where communities are at now in their development and their thinking around climate resiliency. Then we'll be looking to move them along a maturity model to see how, over the course of the program, through funding and training and various workshops that they'll participate in—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Do you apply that same maturity model to all municipalities, at least broadly?

Ms. Laura Di Paolo: It would apply to the municipalities that actually apply to the program itself.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Right.

Ms. Laura Di Paolo: They would need to do a self-assessment on where they're at now, and then, with the support of the FCM staff and resources, we'd be able to build on that.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: You talked about the asset management plan. In my previous role as a municipal politician, one of the things I always found very perplexing was when communities that didn't have an asset management plan would come to the federal-provincial government looking for money. They quite often seemed to be, and would be, in some kind of dire need, where they needed it to survive. But if they'd had the asset management plan in place, they might have been in a much better position. Quite often the municipalities that were being smart and proactive would end up being almost penalized because they didn't have that same kind of dire need when they'd go to other levels of government for funding.

I guess the important thing for me is to see that there's some kind of common measure of success so that when you talk about this, whether it be the asset management plan or not, everybody is pegged against the same kind of continuum in terms of how you are preparing and how you're improving your community.

Ms. Laura Di Paolo: That's very much the approach we're looking to take, going forward. Some municipalities will be assessed at a much stronger level because they have their basic plans in place. It's more a matter of getting a more cohesive approach to the life-cycle management of their assets. Then there's still an opportunity to move the ball forward with those communities. They would still be eligible for funding under that program.

It also supports the applications under other programs. If they can demonstrate that they have good asset management planning in place, then it does support their applications for other funding under our various other programs. It really is an opportunity for us to support communities and municipalities to make that happen.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: That's great. Thank you.

Ms. MacDonald, it's nice to see you again. It's been a number of years, I think, since we had the opportunity to interact.

You talked about the past and present flood plain mapping activities. Can you give us a sense, for the layperson, of why that's useful and how that information serves the public?

Ms. Lori MacDonald: Absolutely. Thank you very much for the question.

To go back to the point I made earlier, everyone who's involved in any kind of decision-making with respect to urban planning, with respect to disaster mitigation, or with respect to emergency management has to start with the foundation of someplace, and the foundation for us is flood plain mapping. They can make informed decisions with respect to not only what's happening now in their communities but also where they're going in the future in terms of planning, and then what that means from a preparation perspective in terms of disaster mitigation.

As I said earlier, we know that the vast majority of communities across the country are actually built on flood plains, so it puts a significant economic cost on a community in terms of not having that information—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: That's great.

I'm sorry, but I'm pressed for time. The reason I'm asking that is that right now in terms of Lake Ontario, for example—I know you're very familiar with the Kingston area—there is some flooding in the Kingston area on some roads in particular—such as Abingdon Road—that are quite low. A lot of that is because the lake is dammed up, and it hasn't been released. I think they just started to release that in the middle of June.

Some of the flood activity is as a result of natural occurrences—that's an oxymoron, because if we believe in climate change, they're really man-made occurrences—but some of this is also for strategic reasons, such as preventing the release of water from Lake Ontario in order to protect downstream municipalities or communities, and in the process, you're flooding some of the upstream ones.

Who makes those decisions about opening that up? Is that emergency preparedness? How do you balance out the decision to protect one city and say it's okay to flood another city in the process?

• (1640)

Ms. Lori MacDonald: Really, those decisions are made at the grassroots level—the municipal, city, or provincial level—in terms of those risk assessments they make about what the impact is going to be on the broader community overall.

One of the things we encourage in our conversations is that people look at risk assessments, flood plain mapping, small-scale and large-scale structural mitigation measures to actually try to offset some of those dire impacts when they have to make those kinds of decisions.

It's really about getting them to a place where they are making corporate informed decisions versus “this is a dire problem right now and we have to fix this particular situation”. That's where we're going.

The Chair: That's—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Just a number question? It's very quick.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Do you have a sense as to what the impact is in terms of dollars with respect to climate change?

Ms. Lori MacDonald: I can tell you that, just as an example, right now we have 76 open files on disaster financial assistance arrangements. I'll use that as one marker. Right now, I have a \$1.8-billion liability against that, of those ones that are still open. That's a five-year range that I'm looking at. We've probably already paid out \$2.3 billion of that. To use that one indicator, it's significant. If I use Fort McMurray, it's even greater.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you for that detail. That was good.

Mr. Shipley.

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Thank you very much.

Following up on Mr. Gerretsen's comments, what usually happens in my area is that it backs up. It doesn't back up into a city; it backs up onto farmland. The farmland isn't seen as being valuable as cities are. As a result, much of the farmland gets flooded to protect the ones downstream.

I'm interested in how flood plain mapping is done. Is it done by a model or by actual events?

Ms. Lori MacDonald: It's done by a model. There are various kinds of flood plain mapping.

On one hand, the Insurance Bureau of Canada will talk about the flood plain mapping that they do. It's a very high-level mapping that takes a picture. That doesn't give you the granularity that you would see in flood plain mapping that municipalities or provinces are doing right now, as an example, with some of the funding they're getting through the natural disaster mitigation program.

There's high-level flood plain mapping that gives you a snapshot or a picture, and then there's flood plain mapping that's very technical and detailed.

Mr. Bev Shipley: I was concerned about just using models. We just had it in agriculture in terms of doing a model on the neonic issue without using in-field testing. The models actually don't represent what happens on the ground. Sometime we have to be cautious about using just computer models.

Ms. Di Paolo, I was wondering about the gas tax fund. For Ontario, you're absolutely right: this is how it's supposed to work. AMO runs that. They do it for about one-half of a per cent for administration. That's how it really should work. I think those are the types of models that as governments we need to be promoting. When those monies funnel through, they actually go to the municipalities, and the administrative cost is very low.

But you've mentioned that it's not meeting the objectives of the plan, that it's not meeting the environmental objectives, I guess. Who determines that? There's a difference if they're not meeting some of the conditions in a large urban area versus meeting the conditions in a rural area. A lot of that in my area gets used to do bridges and to do roads. The great thing about it is its flexibility, because if you don't use it one year, you reserve it, and it's indexed. I'm wondering how it doesn't meet the objectives of the plan in terms of the environment.

• (1645)

Ms. Laura Di Paolo: As my colleague mentioned earlier, those are the findings of the report of the CESD last year. The program does have various objectives. The main objective is to provide the predictable funding to municipalities to invest in community infrastructure and to support and encourage long-term municipal asset management planning.

When the program was originally designed, it did have some more environmentally focused outcomes. Over the years, the program has evolved to include more assets eligible for funding so that we could do a better job of meeting the needs of communities and municipalities with the fund.

Mr. Bev Shipley: Is it that they aren't recording what they want? Or is it just a malfunction?

Ms. Laura Di Paolo: Part of the issue is more around how we report out on the outcomes themselves. What we generally get from the municipalities in terms of information that comes through the provinces in their annual reports is very much around the infrastructure that was built, how much money was spent, and project start and end dates. It's very concrete in that we know the funding was used for funding of a particular asset.

As for going in and determining what outcomes were achieved through the projects, that has gone beyond the program reporting. In 2018, however, we will be receiving our five-year outcomes report, from 2014-15 to 2018. That will provide more information on the actual outcomes that have been achieved for the program.

Mr. Bev Shipley: I want to go back and comment on this whole issue of flood insurance. One of the comments was that the lack of action on climate change is having an impact on flooding.

I would not think that the people now are any smarter than the people were a little while ago, but here's what I am wondering about, which happens in large urban areas, which I'm close to, as well as in rural areas. You have the influence of professionals who have buildings built in flood plains. They do. I went by a 25-acre parcel that was all treed. They stripped the trees out, brought in five feet of dirt, and now there are houses on it. I don't understand that, when I have trouble building a drive shed because somebody else believes that it may be on a flood plain.

I think one of the concerns is that the influence of professionals on councils has a large impact on where the housing is going to be, and the result is that the homeowner gets stuck with the insurance because somebody else nodded their head. Then, when it goes wrong, the professionals tend to go out the back door, and the homeowners and the municipalities get hung with it.

That's just a comment. I really do get concerned about this insurance issue, because somebody allowed them to do that, and it's

the homeowner who gets caught with it. Are there discussions about how they may rectify that?

The Chair: Okay. We are really over time, so can you make it a very short answer?

Ms. Lori MacDonald: Yes, there are conversations on that. It's one of the reasons why we are talking with provinces and territories at the municipal level with respect to their urban planning: because those are the decisions that get made that ultimately have impacts on the individual citizen down the road. Those conversations are lively and well.

Mr. Bev Shipley: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Bratina.

Mr. Bob Bratina (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

First of all, on infrastructure, what scrutiny is given to projects when municipalities offer their request?

I have a specific reason for asking that. It was controversial in my case, where \$30 million of gas tax money was given to renovate city hall. It came under—I have to look it up, because it was back in 2009—"community energy systems". The infrastructure deficit of the city now approaches \$200 million a year. There are roads and bridges and all kinds of things that need to be fixed.

Does the application get a rubber stamp when it comes to the department for approval? How does that work?

• (1650)

Mr. Bogdan Makuc: Under the gas tax fund, we actually don't approve the projects. The federal government does not have a role in the approval of those. The funds are transferred to municipalities, and municipalities are allowed to make the decisions on which projects to invest in—within a framework, within some guidelines.

For that project in particular, I don't know the details, but I suspect that it would have had a reduction in the use of energy, so it would have contributed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and thus been within the framework.

Ms. Linda Duncan: In energy bills?

Mr. Bogdan Makuc: Energy bills, yes. More practically, yes.

Mr. Bob Bratina: I'm surprised that nobody looks at anything, because I think it would have been a good discussion among two or three experts in the departments. No other expenditure throughout the last several years approached anything like that—not roads or bridges. There's a cry now for transit funding and so on, but to fix the city hall under the topic of community energy systems strikes me as calling for a need for somebody to say, "Is this really the best way?" Do we really want to spend the money this way? We'll leave it at that for now.

Now, on the question of flooding and the federal flood plain mapping framework, I think many of us in municipalities have experienced these once-in-a-hundred-year floods. In fact, we've had two or three once-in-a-hundred-year floods in the last five years or so in our municipality. How detailed is this mapping? It seems to me that for flood plains the chance of a flooding occurrence at the municipal level is a fairly small and detailed incident. How would the federal framework relate to municipal issues?

Ms. Lori MacDonald: Thank you for the question.

We have a very large technical working group. We purposely have in there representatives from municipalities, provinces, territories, academia, industry, and private sector experts in technically advancing the discussion on flood plain mapping, because we want the framework to be as comprehensive as possible in terms of having comprehensive flood plain maps.

There are four or five different types of mapping that have been identified and also what's required for them to actually complete those mappings, depending on what they have already and what the need is in their particular area. We have it peer-reviewed by the water resource people so that we can in fact demonstrate a level of integrity to the flood plain mapping guidelines that we've put in place.

Mr. Bob Bratina: Okay.

On the relationship with the insurance industry, we had a situation in our municipality that I actually didn't support, because it seemed as though the insurance industry wanted technical details from the city that would enable them to set premium rates for different parts of the city, which we didn't think was fair to our residents. What would you say the relationship is in the federal regard with the insurance bureau?

Ms. Lori MacDonald: We actually have a very good relationship with a number of the insurance industries right now. We have dialogue with them on likely a weekly basis right now. It's a whole-of-society issue. It's not just an insurance industry issue or a government issue. It's an issue even right down to the individual level, where we're taking that conversation.

The insurance industry wants to introduce a residential flood insurance market. There are some difficult decisions that have to be made. One of them would be sharing information, because that becomes a tension point as to whether you want to have the information shared about your home, which might be in a high risk area, and the impact that will have on property values and so on. That has an impact on the municipality and on the person who owns a home, but it also has an impact on what their rate of insurance would be, as an example.

When I spoke earlier about trying to address some of that, what are the preconditions we need to have in place to actually implement residential flood insurance? That's the kind of conversation we're having right now in trying to bring a number of players to the table in order to be able to make an informed recommendation on that.

Mr. Bob Bratina: I think that's important, because what we have been dealing with is the water that entered through the sewer backups and so on. That was typically under the house insurance, whereas the water that came in the basement window wasn't. That's what you're looking at.

● (1655)

Ms. Lori MacDonald: I think the conditions are very good right now. Earlier, I mentioned the awareness. We recently did some research in a survey. It showed that 86% of people said that, yes, they had the individual responsibility to make sure their home was safe from things like that, but then only 20% of people actually did something about it. That's this very large gap where individuals need to have an understanding, but so do municipalities and so do provinces and government in terms of how we bring all those pieces together to be successful.

The Chair: Your time is up. I'm sorry.

Mr. Bob Bratina: Thank you.

The Chair: Linda.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Thank you.

I'll continue with this. It seems to be a favourite topic.

There were major floods in Alberta of late and, more than 30 years ago, in the community I lived in, in the river flats in Edmonton on the North Saskatchewan River. Since that big flood, they've required any new housing to have the furnace above—not in—the basement. There are a lot of simple things that can be done to reduce costs in flood damage.

I noted after the big flood in Calgary and Canmore that there's this conflict that goes on. The mayors say, "Well, people really want to live along the rivers, and we get a high tax base." But then I have to subsidize when they're flooded out. I think people are starting to take a closer look at this.

I am wondering if, at the federal level.... For example, we give out aid, right? Eventually the province or municipality will come to the federal government and say "disaster assistance". Isn't it time, given the fact that we know that we have climate change, that unpredictable things can happen...? We know that there have been developments in flood plains, and we know that new developments shouldn't happen in flood plains. Isn't it time for the federal government to be putting conditions on it and saying that you—the province, the municipality—did the flood plain mapping, and you didn't do any measures, so you don't qualify for relief and you're going to have to bear the cost?

Isn't it time? We talk about it, but isn't it time that certain levels of government got serious about this? It's like a pre-existing condition. Insurers won't pay you if you didn't identify the pre-existing condition.

Ms. Lori MacDonald: We're having very good conversations right now. The disaster financial assistance arrangements are coming up for review in 2020, so in some of the conversations we're having right now, we're looking at the program to ask if it is still meeting its original intention. It was created in 1972. Our life has changed since 1972. We're talking about things like severe weather and climate change and what that means to us. We have to really rethink how we approach this.

The conversations with the Insurance Bureau are very timely in terms of the review coming up of the disaster financial assistance arrangements, with the conversations with respect to building codes, and with regard to the economic impacts we're seeing. Even if you just look at this spring alone, we haven't been seeing requests come in yet for those situations.

It's very timely. People are engaged in this conversation right now to get us to the next step with respect to how we manage this from a financial perspective.

Ms. Linda Duncan: You're not sounding quite tough enough to me, but that's not your decision. That's the government's decision.

The Chair: You have 30 seconds.

Ms. Linda Duncan: To go back to the budget again, if I look at the green infrastructure fund under "Creating Canada's Clean Growth Economy", I see zero dollars for green infrastructure until 2021. Is that because there was a pre-existing commitment? Or is it simply that there isn't going to be any money for green infrastructure funding until 2020-21? That's on page 149 of the budget.

Mr. Robert Judge: I apologize. I don't have those figures in front of me. With the funding that will flow through for green infrastructure through the integrated bilateral agreements and the new disaster mitigation and adaptation fund that's being set up... these should be in place by the end of this fiscal, but then, I'm... Without—

Ms. Linda Duncan: Can you just get back to me?

Mr. Robert Judge: Yes.

Ms. Linda Duncan: You have two pages of initiatives. It's hard to tell which is which. It's on page 149 of the document, under "Canada's Clean Growth Economy". It's the last one: zero dollars right up until 2020-21, and then only \$76 million for the entire country. I don't know if that's because there was money committed before, so it's to forward.... I'd appreciate it if you could get back to us on that.

The Chair: That would be great.

Are you good to come back to us on that? Okay.

I think we could go on. There are a lot of great questions. We focused on floods. There are still a lot of questions that the analysts had suggested and that I think our team may have in terms of Health Canada. Given that we just did CEPA, I think there are some things there that we would have liked to delve into.

I'd like to make a suggestion. We could continue, as we haven't had bells yet. Or what we could say is that maybe we'd like to have a two-year review. In the next year, we would have you come back and touch base again to see how we're doing in terms of some of these things we identified. I think you're telling us that there's some good work being done. Maybe we can touch base in another year. Obviously, you can see that the committee is interested in progress.

Mr. Eglinski, is that something you would support?

• (1700)

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Yes, I would, Madam Chair, but I don't think we had a lot on the agenda for today, did we? If we had the opportunity to ask more questions, I think most of us wouldn't mind taking another round because—

Mr. William Amos: I have a motion for which I'd like to seek unanimous consent.

The Chair: I think we do have a few other things on the agenda, but we were going to take it into closed session to do that, and we wanted to decide about our next meeting on Wednesday—

Mr. Jim Eglinski: All right, Madam Chair. I understand.

The Chair: —so unless there's something burning, I think we should say thank you.

If the committee is interested, I'll just put it out there that we could ask to have you come back in a year. You could give us an update on where you're at, because there's clearly a lot of work being done. There's still a lot that we'd like to know about in terms of how it's being done.

Ms. Linda Duncan: If I could just—

The Chair: Go ahead.

Ms. Linda Duncan: —comment briefly, I think that's a good idea, but I noted in reading the proceedings of the last time these ladies and gentlemen were here, that Mr. Bossio said that he wanted to ask questions about climate change because we were about to study that, and that has fallen off the table.

That's why I was suggesting that maybe—

The Chair: It hasn't. Let's—

Ms. Linda Duncan: Well, I'm saying, okay, we've had them back a second time, and we still haven't studied climate change. If he were here, he might say, "Well, maybe I will ask those questions."

I think this is great, but I still stand with what the commissioner said. We're just touching the tip of the iceberg—

The Chair: Yes.

Ms. Linda Duncan: —because we're covering three chapters all at once.

The Chair: Fair enough.

Ms. Linda Duncan: We might want to rethink how we're going to do it.

The Chair: As we get closer to a year out, we'll look at it and see whether we want to do it in separate meetings.

Does anybody want to move that we would have them come back in a year? Do we need to...? All in favour?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Okay. That sounds good, so we'll do that.

Thank you very much for all your time and for being patient with us as we were a bit late today.

We'll all suspend for a few minutes, and then we'll go into closed.

• (1700)

(Pause)

• (1705)

The Chair: All right. We have a couple of things to do in terms of committee business.

We potentially have a meeting on Wednesday. We don't know what the schedule of the House is. We may or may not need it. I didn't want to cancel it. We thought we were going to have Finance here. They are not able to meet with us on Wednesday, so if they're not coming, I don't think we have a lot to discuss unless we want to get started on our next report, which we could try to do.

We wouldn't have witnesses, but we might be able to have Van Loan come in front of us. That's an option. I wanted to put it in front of the committee. I never like to waste any time if we have it, but it's completely at the committee's pleasure.

I'll open it to discussion. Would you like to start or what?

We'll start with Jim and then go to Linda.

Go ahead.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Madam Chair, I think if we're here Wednesday, I would like us to—

The Chair: Do something...?

Mr. Jim Eglinski: I would like to start an informal discussion with John over our proposed heritage things. I think there are a lot of things to discuss. It's going to be a short meeting anyway. We're not going to get a lot accomplished, but I think if we had an in-depth discussion of where we're going to go and what our ideas are and stuff like that, I think it would be very informative when we come back and start.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: I think it's important to Canada Our heritage is important to a lot of people. It would give us an opportunity to have an impromptu discussion.

The Chair: Okay. That's a spot.

You do know that there's a proposal on the table. What we haven't heard yet and haven't got back are your suggestions of who you'd like to have as witnesses. We have John's suggestions, and if you do have some other ideas, we need to get them in so that we can start incorporating them.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: I thought we were waiting for something from John.

The Chair: He gave it out at the last meeting—

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Yes. We circulated it.

The Chair: —and we circulated it.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: That is right. I have that.

The Chair: You have it, so I would like—

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Okay. I will—

The Chair: I would like to get as much as we can to the analysts

Mr. Jim Eglinski: I'm sorry, Madam Chair. I'll get that.

The Chair: —so that we can start building that plan, because if we don't start on Wednesday, we're going to start when we come back, and we're going to need to get going on it. I'd like to have all of that before we go for the summer.

Linda.

Ms. Linda Duncan: My guess is that we're going to have a zillion votes in the next couple of days, so I'm just questioning whether it's really useful to be even setting up a committee meeting.

The Chair: That's fair.

Ms. Linda Duncan: That would be my suggestion. I think we're just going to get interrupted anyway.

The Chair: Okay.

Anybody on our side?

Go ahead, Will.

• (1710)

Mr. William Amos: Plan on holding it, and if it gets knocked off, it gets knocked off.

I think Jim's suggestion is a good one. It gives us some time to get through some of the assumptions early on. It may help provide some guidance to the opposition members as to what witnesses they might want to see, because they'll be able to ask John questions as to the witnesses that the group here has proposed.

The Chair: Okay. Again, I'm open. I think we're going to have a very busy schedule when we come back. I don't like to waste any time that we might have. If we're going to be here and votes are called, votes get called, but at least we've given it a shot.

Do you want to have Mr. Van Loan in now to explain anything about what he was proposing? Or do you want to wait until we get going with our study? What are your thoughts? There's a bill, and there's also a heritage study. It's a little bit different. He's brought in a particular request, and we're looking at a broader approach. It's just a matter of what you'd like to do on Wednesday.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Have the analysts had time to look at that and propose...? Do we need other witnesses or just him? I don't know if we're ready to look at it.

The Chair: No. John brought forward a proposal—

Ms. Linda Duncan: No. I'm talking about the bill.

The Chair: Okay.

Tim.

Mr. Tim Williams (Committee Researcher): Usually with a bill, you have the sponsor of the bill initially to speak to it.

Ms. Linda Duncan: I don't know if he's available.

Mr. Tim Williams: Yes, if they—

The Chair: That's what I thought. It's just that if we can get it out of the way, we can have him come and present and make sure that we are very clear. I think it's obvious, but we can make him answer questions, if we have questions. It might help—

Mr. Jim Eglinski: John has had some discussions with him.

The Chair: —inform what we're going to be doing.

Go ahead, John.

Mr. John Aldag: That wouldn't be seen as the clause-by-clause review of the bill, though, would it?

The Chair: No.

Mr. John Aldag: It would be just sort of a warm-up for the heritage discussion and what he was thinking.

The Chair: I think so, and it might help us with our study, just to make sure we understand exactly what... I think it's obvious from what his bill is, but it would give him a chance to present it in front of the committee before we kick our study off in full form. I just thought we could get that done.

Go ahead, Martin.

Mr. Martin Shields: I have one caution on that. If the committee membership changes, for instance, and we have two or three people sitting here who didn't hear it, that's a problem.

The Chair: That's a good point. That could happen.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Yes.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Too, Wayne and I have to work this out. I've talked to John a bit about this.

The aspect that I'm interested in, frankly, has to do with the private bill as well, and is private property, whereas it's appropriate for Wayne, as our protected areas critic, to do all the parks and government-owned facilities. If you decide that he comes in, maybe we could both just listen, and one of us could ask questions.

The Chair: Yes, that's fine. We've been pretty open here to try to move things along.

We don't know if the committee's going to change, but again, I don't want to hold everything back in case it does. I think we should take every opportunity to move forward if we can. Whatever happens, happens. People can read the blues and get the information that we shared at the meeting, so it's not going to be that difficult to have one meeting that they've missed, if we decide that we're going to have him in. We're going to have discussions anyway, and that's all informative.

I guess what I want to ask the committee is, do you want to start on Wednesday discussing heritage, and shall we ask to see...? He may not be available, but is it valuable to get started with him and have a good handle on what he's looking at with his bill?

Mr. Darren Fisher: I don't think John is available Wednesday anyway.

Are you?

Mr. John Aldag: If we're sitting, I won't be here.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Yes, if we're not—

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. John Aldag: I was just going to say that the issue with Peter is that he sits on Canadian Heritage, and they sit at the same time that we do.

The Chair: Oh. I—

Mr. John Aldag: He would be in committee unless he's able to... I don't know if they're sitting on Wednesday.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Yes.

The Chair: You're pushing that point.

First off—

Mr. Jim Eglinski: No, it's the first time.

The Chair: —let's have a vote on whether we have the meeting or not. I think we have a sense of what we could do if we have the meeting. We could have a further discussion in preparation for our study on the heritage study.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Is it a free vote or whipped?

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: Okay. All in favour of having a meeting on Wednesday?

An hon. member: Yes.

Some hon members: No.

The Chair: Well, that was easy. That ended that discussion.

There are a couple of things before we go.

You may or may not have noticed, but a little something was put in front of you, which is the response from the government on our "Federal sustainability for future generations" report. It's nice to get that before we go, so have a look at that. The clerk tells me that we don't know exactly where it's going to be posted, but it's likely to be posted somewhere so we can get that.

Something else was just tabled. Protected areas was just tabled as well. That's posted already. It's nice that we have those two things posted. That's pretty good when you think about it, to have both of those up before we rise.

There's one last thing I wanted to ask, and we can go into a closed session. We had our CEPA report tabled, and we did have a dissenting report, and we had a...what did you call it?

● (1715)

Ms. Linda Duncan: Supplementary.

The Chair: We had a supplementary report. It was really good.

I don't know if you guys had any media, any pickup on that. No? Okay.

There was one call, but I didn't get a chance to get back to him before his deadline, so that was that.

Ms. Linda Duncan: There's a lot of media coverage, but none of us are being interviewed.

The Chair: Yes, a lot of NGOs were out there talking about it and saying good things. I don't know if anybody has anything to say about it, but this is the opportunity to talk if you want to about the report and supplementary and dissenting reports.

Mr. William Amos: I have something to say in camera.

The Chair: You want to stay in camera?

Mr. William Amos: I don't think we're in camera.

The Chair: We're not in camera yet, but if you want to go in camera—

Mr. William Amos: Before we go into camera, I have other issues that I'd like to get into.

The Chair: Okay. Go ahead and then we'll move in camera.

Mr. William Amos: Not on the issue of our previous report, but in relation to our summer work, I previously indicated that so as to ensure that we have a minimum of problems with our House financial administration justifying expenses to attend specific environmental conferences, such as those outlined by our research staff, I propose—and I hope we'll get unanimous support—a motion: that the members of this committee be encouraged to attend, on their own members' office budgets, conferences or environmental or sustainable development-related events that occur over the summer.

I say this because I had this issue last year. I tried to go to an environmentally oriented event and the House administration turned around and said this is out of riding, what's the justification, were you invited...?

Ms. Linda Duncan: Even with the special fund?

Mr. William Amos: If you're not invited, you can't justify using the special fund. I had this hassle. This is why—

The Chair: I never heard of such a thing.

Mr. William Amos: —I'm looking to pre-empt all these hassles.

Ms. Linda Duncan: As long as there's a meal, right? That's my one condition: that there be a meal.

Mr. William Amos: I appreciate it, but unfortunately, Ms. Duncan, you're not the one deciding in the House financial administration whether we get reimbursed.

Ms. Linda Duncan: I've never heard of that, so that is concerning.

Mr. William Amos: Yes. We have a great list of events that are coming up. We also may be invited by colleagues, members of Parliament, to come to their ridings to discuss with their constituents the work we've been doing on the standing committee. I think it is also very important that we be able to do that.

I wanted to propose a resolution with the following terms: that the members of this committee be encouraged to attend environmental conferences or other such events or visit parts of Canada with a view to explaining the work of the committee over the course of the summer. Something simple like that...

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: At their own discretion.

Mr. William Amos: It's at their own discretion and pursuant to their own member's budget.

The Chair: All right. We've heard it.

Linda.

Ms. Linda Duncan: I'm not comfortable with that at all. We all do outreach all the time. I don't think it's the business of the committee what we as individual members do in going out to meet with people.

If you are invited to present to any community organization—a university, an institute, whatever—it's to do with your work in your critic portfolio. If it's your critic portfolio, it's defensible. Never in nine years have I ever had an issue. That's what the conditions are. I don't want to put a qualifier on that I can't go out there except that it's through the committee. I don't think it has anything to do with the committee that I'm doing outreach. If somebody is interested in hearing about some of the work we've done, I'm happy to try to fit it into my schedule. If I have special points, sometimes I might use my

own personal points, but I don't see that it has anything to do with the committee.

The Chair: Jim.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: I want a clarification. I was under the impression that if a fellow member calls me to his riding to assist him on something like that, it is on my dollar, and there is no way you can claim it otherwise.

• (1720)

The Chair: Right. He's not saying—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: He's saying that he had a hard time doing that last year.

Ms. Linda Duncan: If it's political, but if you're invited to present to a community.... If you are speaking to his constituency association, it is on your own dollar, but if you are invited to speak to his town or his veterans' association, whatever, no, it's a special point....

Mr. Jim Eglinski: I just wanted to clarify that and make sure we all understood that.

The Chair: Mr. Gerretsen.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I tend to agree with what Ms. Duncan said. Last summer, I travelled to another riding for a similar purpose. I used a point and everything. They asked me what the purpose of the travel was, and I told them who I was meeting and why I was going there. I utilized a travel point to do it. It was a same-day drive, there and back. I don't think you need some kind of blanket statement from the committee to be able to do that. I don't think it's appropriate either.

If whoever told you that is correct and you are not supposed to be doing that, then it's an issue to take up with the House leadership team so they can sort that out in the Board of Internal Economy and fix why it is like that. If what you've been told is correct, I don't think we should try to essentially create some kind of loophole or something by passing a motion in this committee. It's just a recipe for disaster, in my opinion.

The Chair: I am listening to what everybody is saying, and I'm just wondering if we could at least.... What I am hearing is that everybody is supportive of each of us getting out there, learning as much as we can about environmental issues, and supporting communities to learn about what we're doing. That's not a problem. Can we say something like “the committee is supportive” of individual members doing those things?

Ms. Linda Duncan: No. It's none of the committee's business what I do outside of the committee. I'm totally opposed to it.

The Chair: Okay, I'm hearing that, and I'm hearing—

Ms. Linda Duncan: I mean, look at our report right now. We have a strong dissent, so I don't think it would even be appropriate to say we're going and talking about the CEPA review on behalf of the committee. Each individual member, whatever their perspective is, is going to go out and talk about it.

I think what Jim is talking about is that if it is one of your colleagues saying, "I want you to come and talk to my constituency", that is out of your own pocket. What people do is have another adjunct thing. They meet with a hunters' and fishermen's association or whatever. That's a special point. That's why you have special points.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: If it is political or if it is...

Mr. Jim Eglinski: I just wanted to make sure everybody was clear.

The Chair: Will, you've heard all the comments. Did you want to

—
Mr. William Amos: It would have to be unanimous, so no, I'm not going to bring a written motion.

The Chair: You heard the comments, and you've let it go.

Mr. William Amos: I'll leave it.

The Chair: Fair enough.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Can I just add one thing?

The Chair: Yes, and then we're going to go in camera.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: I don't think any member of this committee should be speaking and representing the committee on an individual basis—

The Chair: Agreed.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: —without the sole information of the chair and the committee.... It would not be appropriate.

The Chair: I think we all operate that way.

Mr. Darren Fisher: I speak on behalf of you all the time, Jim.

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: Okay. Let me know if you want to speak on behalf of somebody, because if it is going to be through the committee, then I should know about it.

We are going to go in camera now.

[Proceedings continue in camera]

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