



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

43rd PARLIAMENT, 2nd SESSION

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# Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development

EVIDENCE

**NUMBER 031**

Wednesday, May 12, 2021

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Chair: Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia





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• (1645)

[*English*]

**The Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.)):** I will call this meeting to order.

Before we start, I imagine that I have the consent of the committee and of the House of Commons resources to do a full two hours. That would take us to 6:43 p.m. I don't imagine there are any objections to this. We're just adapting to the previous votes.

We're meeting today to look at the main estimates for 2021-22.

I think everyone here knows the drill for how meetings operate, especially in this virtual space. You can use the language of your choice, of course. When not speaking, put your mike on mute. Please address the meeting through the chair.

Minister Wilkinson, welcome once again to our committee. I know that you're coming to see us again on Monday. I think we'll make you an honorary member of the committee at some point.

As well as the minister, we have, from the Department of the Environment and Climate Change, Christine Hogan, deputy minister; and Linda Drainville, assistant deputy minister, corporate services and finance branch.

From the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada, we have David McGovern, president. From Parks Canada, we have Ron Hallman, president and chief executive officer; and Catherine Blanchard, vice-president, finance directorate.

I believe you have opening statements, Minister.

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Environment and Climate Change):** Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the committee.

I'm pleased to be with you today to discuss the 2021-22 main estimates for Environment and Climate Change Canada, the Parks Canada Agency and the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada.

I am joining you today from beautiful north Vancouver, which is on the traditional ancestral and unceded territories of the Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh and Musqueam first nations.

As the chair noted, I am accompanied by a number of officials who will assist me as required.

Since we last met, the government has remained focused on safeguarding the health of Canadians. We've also been focused on laying the groundwork to build a healthier environment and a healthier economy.

The economic recovery that will follow this pandemic will be defined by the global transition to a low-carbon economy. This is an opportunity that Canada cannot miss.

Over the course of the last number of weeks and months, our government has delivered on key commitments to address the twin threats of climate change and biodiversity loss. We unveiled an ambitious but achievable target to reduce our emissions by 40% to 45% by 2030. Our target is supported by a detailed, strengthened climate plan containing over 64 new measures and billions of dollars in new investments.

[*Translation*]

To ensure that this government and future governments are held to account on climate action, we have put forward Bill C-12, the Canadian Net Zero Emissions Accountability Act. I look forward to this committee's consideration of the Bill and remain open to constructive amendments that will strengthen the legislation.

Further, through Budget 2021 we are investing an historic \$4 billion to ensure we protect 25% of our land and water by 2025 and 30% of each by 2030, and that we protect species at risk.

[*English*]

We are moving forward with a comprehensive agenda to eliminate plastic pollution, including a ban on harmful single-use plastics, making producers responsible for their plastic waste and developing minimum recycled content standards for products. These measures will drive a circular economy for plastics, representing a significant environmental and economic opportunity that will reduce greenhouse gases and create thousands of new jobs.

We've also introduced the first substantive update to Canada's cornerstone environmental protection legislation, CEPA, in over 20 years. Bill C-28 will recognize, for the first time in federal law, Canadians' right to a healthy environment. It will better protect Canadians and the environment from toxic substances.

With regard to the main estimates, total authorities for Environment and Climate Change Canada in 2021-22 amount to just under \$1.7 billion. While this appears to be a decrease relative to 2020-21, this difference is, in part, due to delays in the rollout of the low-carbon economy fund as a result of COVID-19, as well as delays in submitting proposals by provinces and territories. This funding will be re-profiled into future years to ensure provinces and territories can access all funds that have been committed and approved.

Additionally, the climate incentive fund and the chemicals management plan both had fixed start and end dates by design. These programs came to their scheduled end dates. However, the CMP was renewed in budget 2021 and other investments were also announced in the budget. Subject to parliamentary approval, these decisions will be reflected in future estimates.

It is expected that funding for Environment and Climate Change Canada will increase in subsequent estimates due to budget 2021 investments.

[Translation]

For Parks Canada, the Agency's Main Estimates for 2021-22 are approximately \$1.129 billion, which represents an increase of \$26.1 million when compared to the previous year. This increase is primarily due to the ratification of collective agreements.

For new funding, the largest item is \$222.1 million to support capital assets in Canada's national parks, conservation areas and historic sites.

[English]

For the Impact Assessment Agency, the main estimates total \$79 million, which represents a \$2.5-million increase compared to the 2020-21 main estimates. That difference is primarily due to an increase in the agency's grants and contributions to support public and indigenous participation.

As I noted at the beginning of my remarks, our government's top priority remains supporting Canadians through the pandemic, but we recognize that we need to look toward the future and lay the groundwork for a sustainable recovery. We have made significant progress, and many of these initiatives are captured in these main estimates.

I look forward to discussing them with you today.

• (1650)

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Minister.

We now begin the first round of questions. Four speakers will have six minutes each.

Mr. Redekopp, the floor is yours.

[English]

**Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome, Mr. Wilkinson, to you and to all on your team. Thanks for coming.

You know, of course, that today is the day the Michigan governor has ordered for the shutdown of the Enbridge Line 5 pipeline that moves half of the gasoline from Ontario and Quebec. Your colleague, Minister of Natural Resources O'Regan, has stated that it would take the equivalent of 800 rail cars and 2,000 carbon-emitting trucks per day to move the same amount of gasoline. He also personally vowed to fight to keep the pipeline open.

I have a simple question to start with. As the environment minister, will you also personally vow to fight to keep Enbridge Line 5 operating? Yes or no?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** The government has been very clear on this. We are very supportive of Line 5. We are working very hard, through all kinds of channels—Minister O'Regan, the Prime Minister himself, Ambassador Hillman, Minister Garneau and a whole range of folks—so the government's position has been very clear on this.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Would you say that's your position, too, as the Minister of the Environment?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** Well, I would say it's the position of the government. I'm a minister in the government and I support the government's position—of course.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Do you see any irony in this, that the government is fighting very hard to keep the Enbridge Line 5 operating but not fighting at the same level for Keystone XL? How do you explain that?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** The first thing I would say is that this is actually supposed to be about the main estimates and I'm not entirely sure how this line of questioning is related to the main estimates, but the government was also very supportive of Keystone. It raised the issue on a number of occasions with the Government of the United States. That is something that was discussed very early on and, certainly, there are conversations that will continue to be had.

We're talking about Line 5. That is a critical issue right now, and it is something we are advocating for very strongly.

**The Chair:** I tend to agree. It doesn't seem to relate to the main estimates.

You have a good four minutes left, Mr. Redekopp.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Thank you.

Line 5 clearly does. It's part of the.... Anyway, let's move on to budget 2021.

You claimed to include some spending to put Canada on pace to achieve a 36% emissions reduction by 2030. Just a few days later, Prime Minister Trudeau promised Joe Biden that Canada would achieve a 40% to 45% reduction.

I'm just curious. Was that a typo in the budget? Should the budget have said "40% to 45%"?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** That was not a typo in the budget.

The focus of the efforts globally on climate obviously need to be informed by science. This government believes in science and evidence-based policy-making. Science tells us that we need to be more ambitious going forward. You saw that reflected in the commitments that were made not only by Canada, but by Japan, by the European Union, by the United Kingdom and by the United States of America at the Earth Summit a couple of weeks ago.

We have defined a pathway to 36% thus far. We have continuing work to do. We have nine years through which to actually ensure that we're doing that work, although obviously some of that work needs to be done over the next few years. There are certainly areas where we can do more. I think Canadians would think we were all a bit crazy, irrespective of party, if we said, well, we have 36% in the bank and we're done, even though it doesn't align with what the science tells us we must do on climate.

Yes, we have greater ambition and we need to do some more work, and that's what Canadians would expect us to do.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** It just seems a little puzzling. I get what you're saying, but why didn't the budget just say 40% to 45%? If that was what was baked into the budget, wouldn't that have been the number that would have been specified?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** No, the budget said with the investments that were made in the budget, and the tax measures that were introduced, we believe, we are at 36%. That's based on all the modelling we've done and all the initiatives that are currently under way, or that we have announced that we will be doing. That means there still is a 4% to 9% area that is going to need additional work, and that means the next budget and the one after are going to have to make climate change a priority. That's what Canadians would expect: continuing ambition to try to align ourselves with the science.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** I'm curious. Did you have meaningful input into your boss's decision to arbitrarily raise this target from 40% to 45%, or are you making this up as you go along?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** I've been working on this for a long time. Certainly the Prime Minister and I and all my cabinet colleagues have had many conversations about this. I had similar conversations with my provincial and territorial counterparts, and we developed a range we felt was ambitious, but attainable. I believe the 40% to 45% is both ambitious and attainable. Again, that's what Canadians would expect us to do: to reach, to stretch, to be in line with the science, and to ensure that we are moving forward in a manner that is addressing climate change for the crisis that it is, and putting Canada in a place where it can seize the economic opportunities that are enabled by the transition to a low-carbon future.

• (1655)

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** On a different subject, your government has often spoken about businesses needing to retool in the new economy, and workers needing to retrain, often in the context of oil and gas. I was shocked to hear from a company in the clean-tech sector that's facing the same problem. New regulations coming into effect shortly will require that emission controls be added to industrial engines prior to their arriving in Canada.

Safety Power in Mississauga adds emission controls after these engines arrive in Canada, and its products are world-leading and result in lower emissions than the regulations require, yet the new regulations will take away its ability to sell its products in Canada.

When you develop new regulations such as in this case, do you challenge your officials as to the possible economic consequences of their going into effect?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** Of course we do. When you're moving forward to try to put regulatory mechanisms in place, you're thinking about how you would advance the environmental efficacy of these products. At the end of the day, what we're talking about here is enhancing the requirements on engine manufacturers with respect to the pollution that's produced through the engines.

What you're talking about is an after-market solution. Certainly, we are bringing ourselves into alignment in terms of reducing air pollution such as nitrous oxide. We're bringing ourselves into alignment with many countries around the world, including the United States, which is requiring engine manufacturers to become cleaner.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** These are good, clean-tech jobs in Canada, though.

**The Chair:** Okay, we have to go on to Mr. Baker, who I believe is splitting his time with Ms. Saks.

Mr. Baker.

**Mr. Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.):** Thanks very much, Chair. That's correct, I'll be sharing my time with Ms. Saks.

Minister, thank you very much for being here today to speak with the committee.

My constituents in Etobicoke Centre are understandably very concerned about the impact of climate change. They expect us, as a government, to do what's necessary to protect our planet. To do so, they expect the Government of Canada to ensure that we reduce our emissions in Canada and globally to the degree necessary to achieve that objective.

Our government has made substantial investments, including in budget 2021, towards a green recovery, to create middle-class jobs, build a clean economy, and fight and protect against climate change. Could you summarize for us what emission-reduction targets our government has committed to, and to what degree this would reduce our emissions? What legislative measures will we pass to ensure this government and future ones will live up to these commitments?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** As you know very well, climate change is both an existential threat to humanity and a massive economic opportunity for countries that move early and aggressively. When our government took office five years ago, Canada's emissions were going the wrong way. We were on track to be 12% higher in 2030 than emissions were in 2005. We developed Canada's first national climate plan in 2016, and brought forward a further-strengthened climate plan last December that provides a very detailed pathway for Canada to exceed its initial Paris Agreement target. That plan represented one of the most detailed climate plans that exists around the world, but we knew we needed to do more. Budget 2021 made significant additional investments in that regard.

In April, alongside the Prime Minister and with the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union and Japan, we announced that Canada would commit to reducing emissions to 40% to 45% below 2005 levels by 2030, which is an increase of up to 50% from Canada's previous target. To keep all future governments accountable, we are also moving forward with a net-zero accountability act to enhance accountability and introduce five-year binding targets.

The bottom line is that these targets are not just ensuring a healthier environment. It's a plan to build a cleaner and more competitive economy for generations to come.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Thanks, Minister.

Minister, I know we're about two minutes and a bit into our questions, and I'm sharing the time with Ms. Saks, so I'll be brief.

In December, our government announced its strengthened climate plan to accelerate the fight against climate change. Can you provide us an update on the investments we've made since the release of the strengthened climate plan?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** As you know, in the strengthened climate plan there were a whole range of things around ZEV infrastructure and grants for home retrofits, but subsequent to the plan and incorporated into the budget was another \$17.6 billion. There was \$4.4 billion for interest-free loans for home retrofits, and another \$5 billion for the net-zero accelerator to ensure that we're working with large emitters to help them implement technology that will buy down emissions. We also announced an additional \$15 billion for public transit investments in Canada. I think there was a big announcement in Ontario just yesterday on a number of major public transit announcements. We're going to continue to do what we need to do to make the progress we need to make.

• (1700)

**The Chair:** I'm assuming it now goes to Ms. Saks.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** That's right.

**Ms. Ya'ara Saks (York Centre, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to my colleague, Mr. Baker.

Minister, welcome.

Thank you to the officials who have made time for us today. It's great to see you all.

As you know, for many Canadians, sustainable environment also means sustainable wildlife stocks and protecting our natural re-

sources and our natural environment. Recently, our committee studied Environment Canada's enforcement of CEPA. Over the past decade, the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development conducted audits on toxic substances and protecting fish from mining effluent, which called on Environment and Climate Change Canada's enforcement branch to implement a risk-based approach. We had a lot of discussions about the risk-based approach.

Can you explain what work has been done since then to address the commissioner's recommendation?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** Thank you. It's certainly a very important set of issues, and it's important to address the commissioner's audits.

We announced a new investment of about \$51 million for the enforcement branch, which will help it to build on its current base and to develop world-class, scientific, robust knowledge of the risk to the environment and conservation due to non-compliance with laws and regulations.

There are four key areas of enhanced action. One is the risk analysis. It's putting in place a risk analysis process, which responds directly to the request from the commissioner. It enhances the field strength, so there's the onboarding of 24 new enforcement officers to support enforcement actions. There's additional training with respect to officer training on the ground, and better electronic infrastructure to meet the enforcement demands of the new age. The government is making the required investments to ensure that we are keeping Canadians safe and that polluters pay.

**Ms. Ya'ara Saks:** Thank you.

Mr. Chair, that was really my primary question today.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** We now continue with Ms. Pauzé.

Ms. Pauzé, the floor is yours for six minutes.

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Thank you for being here, Mr. Minister, and thanks also to all those accompanying you.

In your speaking notes, you talked about an ambitious target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% to 45%. You say it is achievable. I feel that is worthy of being highlighted.

You talked about 64 new measures and about billions of dollars in new investments. Since those 64 new measures give you confidence as to the achievement of the targets, I'd like to hear you briefly describe those new measures. With the chair's permission, perhaps we can have written information on the criteria you chose to distribute all those billions.

In the decision-making process, are you using an evaluation grid? Which tools do you use to select projects and how do you choose the bodies responsible for managing them?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** Thank you, my dear colleague.

Those are not simple questions, but I will try answer them. I would be happy to meet with you in order to discuss them some more.

We have selection criteria for the measures that we are planning to use, of course. However, there are measures in each sector of the economy that emits greenhouse gases. Of course, with vehicles, for example, we are making investments in infrastructure for electric vehicles, but we also have subsidies to make sure that Canadians can buy zero-emission electric vehicles. The measures deal with particular issues in each sector, and, of course, we have criteria to evaluate how effective the measures are.

Of course, I am very open to continuing the conversation for longer.

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** If I understand you correctly, you have evaluation grids for each project and we could have them in writing. Thank you.

In your speech, you said that the funding for Environment and Climate Change Canada had increased. However, as I look through the Departmental Plan 2021-2022, I see that the planned expenditures in the category entitled "Taking Action on Clean Growth and Climate Change" are, in broad terms, \$540 million in 2021-2022, then they drop significantly to \$284 million in 2022-2023, and to \$254 million in 2023-2024.

How do you justify that reduction? The money is just melting away.

Maybe it's a pointed question.

• (1705)

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** Thank you.

I may ask the deputy minister to say a few words, but I can tell you that the reduction in funding for one particular five-year program was planned from the outset. It is called the low carbon economy fund. Yes, it is being reduced, but that was part of the plan.

As for the other measures, the estimates do not necessarily reflect the budget. With the Chemicals Management Plan, for example, the budget contains new investments, but they are not in the estimates.

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** It is a concern that we can also see that 170 jobs will be paying for those budget cuts.

Can we have some details about those 170 jobs, such as the job titles, the departments affected or the number of positions eliminated?

If you want to do more, it seems to me that it will take more people. But you are eliminating jobs.

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** Once again, this is about the difference between the budget and the estimates. Of those 170 jobs, 160 are tied to the Chemicals Management Plan, for which an investment has been made in the budget. We have no plans to eliminate jobs.

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** Okay.

Earlier, you were talking with Mr. Baker and you had specifically mentioned certain funds.

Is any funding planned in order to add value to the circular economy in plastic?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** We are working to regulate plastic. Of course, we have an agreement with the provinces and territories to achieve zero plastic waste by 2030, but we are also establishing regulations under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act to make sure that we can impose bans on single-use plastic.

We will then perhaps make more investments, but we have invested in technologies that can be used to meet the challenges that plastics presents. We have already made some investments and we will make further ones in the future.

**The Chair:** That is all the time you have, Ms. Pauzé.

Mr. Bachrach, the floor is yours.

[English]

**Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Welcome, Minister, and welcome to your team as well. It's good to see you.

I want to start with fossil fuel subsidies. Your government committed in 2015 to eliminating inefficient fossil fuel subsidies. I wonder if you could share with the committee an example of one of those inefficient subsidies in Canada currently.

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** You're right that our government committed to phasing out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies by 2025. That's being done alongside our colleagues in the G20. We were pleased to see the U.S. follow our lead in making that commitment recently.

Canada has already eliminated eight tax breaks for the fossil fuel sector. I'm happy to get you a copy of the eight that we have reduced. We're working right now with Argentina on a peer review of fossil fuel subsidies, which will help us determine what we need to do to meet our next commitment, and we're going to continue to work to cut pollution across the country in practical and affordable ways.

**Mr. Taylor Bachrach:** I'll be continuing on the same theme, Minister.

As you know, this committee has been studying single-use plastics. One of the things we've learned is that oftentimes virgin resin is cheaper as a feedstock for manufacturing plastic than recycled inputs or post-consumer inputs. At the same time, we subsidize the fossil fuel industry to the tune of billions of dollars.

My question is: Should we not be reducing those subsidies so that companies have more of an incentive to use post-consumer material and invest in making the recycling process more effective, understanding that right now we recycle only a very small percentage of the total amount of plastic waste? If you could speak specifically to the subsidies for virgin resin, that would be great.

• (1710)

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** I would just say, yes, yes and yes in terms of your question.

Yes, we need to phase out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies, those that incent production and exploration with respect to fossil fuels. That's a commitment we've made. That's something we are working on right now.

Yes, we need to ensure that there is more in the way of the utilization of recycled plastics and non-virgin resin. That is something we intend to do under CEPA: put in place a requirement with respect to the percentage of recycled content that must be in products going forward.

Yes, we need to work with the Canada Plastics Pact and others on product design to ensure that recyclability is simpler, such that we can raise the very low levels of recycling that happen in this country right now.

**Mr. Taylor Bachrach:** Thank you, Minister.

I was a bit confused by an interview you did with *Power & Politics*. It felt like you were saying both that the transition to a low-carbon future was accelerating and that we were not to worry that it was going to take a long time, and we didn't need to worry too much about a just transition.

Your government has promised a just transition act. I know there are many workers across Canada who are very keen to see such legislation move forward in pace with the various climate legislation that you've put forward.

Can you update the committee on the status of the just transition act and when you might be tabling it in Parliament?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** As you will know, we went through quite a process with respect to coal. There was a just transition process that we worked on with labour and industry to ensure that we were addressing issues for workers and for communities, given the commitment that was made to phase out thermal coal.

Certainly, there is work going on to think about and to work on a just transition strategy and act. I would say that a just transition is not just about skills retraining and those kinds of things for our workers who may be impacted through transitions we will be going through. It's also about economic diversification and economic opportunity and looking at the ways in which different sectors can effectively make those kinds of moves forward from an economic perspective.

That is something we are working on now. You will see it moving forward over the coming months.

**Mr. Taylor Bachrach:** Thank you, Minister.

I'm sure you're familiar with the report from the Canada Energy Regulator, which essentially stated that, if Canada achieves its climate ambitions—he was talking about the old climate ambitions, not the recently updated ones—the TMX wouldn't be profitable. I'm just wondering which it is. Are we going to achieve our climate ambitions, or is the Trans Mountain expansion going to be profitable?

I suppose there's a third option. Is the regulator wrong?

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** I'm just barging in, which I'm not allowed to do, but I think he means the PBO report, not the CER report.

**Mr. Taylor Bachrach:** It may be.

**The Chair:** Anyway, it's a report.

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** I would say a few things. This is going to be a transition. Everybody recognizes that it's going to be a transition. Of the cars on the road today, 97% use gasoline or diesel fuel to propel them forward and backward. It will take time before we get to the point where we're not using oil as a transportation fuel, so we need to be cognizant of that.

In the context of the work we are doing domestically, it is about working towards a future state where we have an electrified transportation fleet or a hydrogen-based transportation fleet, but that is going to happen over a long period of time. In the interim period, Canada simply needs to ensure that it's extracting full value for its resources, both domestically and also internationally. That is part of essentially making that transition and ensuring that we're doing it in a thoughtful, affordable way.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll go to our second round now, which is the five-minute round.

We have Mr. Scheer, for five minutes.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

A few weeks ago I submitted an Order Paper question. For those who are watching this committee, members of Parliament have the ability not only to ask questions verbally in the House of Commons, but to submit written questions that the government is supposed to answer. These are usually a bit more specific.

I asked a very specific Order Paper question about the number of infrastructure projects across all government departments, specifically asking about those that are behind schedule and what the delays in those projects have cost Canadian taxpayers. I was pretty alarmed with what came back from Parks Canada. Some of the numbers are very large and, quite frankly, staggering. I'm trying to make sure I'm not missing something, so I'm wondering if I can ask the officials or the minister to explain some of these cost overruns.



For example, for the Trent-Severn Waterway National Historic Site, the original total estimated cost of the project was \$8.3 million. There's a delay of one year. No specific reason for the delay was given. The revised estimated total cost is now \$18 million, a \$10-million increase.

For the Province House National Historic Site, the original total estimated cost of the project was \$20 million. It was supposed to be completed in 2019. There's now a five-year delay on this project. No specific reason was given for the delay. The new cost is \$91 million. That's a little over \$70 million in additional costs due to the delay.

Maybe we'll start with those two. What kind of explanation can be offered to this committee, and to Canadian taxpayers, as to the reason for these delays, and why it's adding so much money to the cost of these projects?

• (1715)

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** I'm more than happy to try to answer these questions here, but we're also happy to provide you with a longer answer in written form, if that would be of value.

Maybe I can ask Ron Hallman, who is the CEO of Parks Canada, to respond to the specific questions you asked.

**Mr. Ron Hallman (President and Chief Executive Officer, Parks Canada Agency):** Thank you, Chair.

By and large, most of our projects, including during COVID, have been proceeding on schedule or close to schedule. There are some that are of concern, as the member has identified. As the minister has suggested, we could provide greater detail after the committee, if you like, or during the officials' session. We will have our VP of operations with us, who may be able to provide some additional detail at that time.

Province House has been a particular challenge for a number of reasons that are outside of our control, with contractors, etc. It's a fair question though, and we would be happy to do our best to get the member the answers he's looking for.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer:** I recognize that on a project-by-project basis, it might be helpful for the committee to have that longer explanation.

You said something I'm kind of wondering about. I can understand that on normal infrastructure projects there are sometimes many moving pieces. You have municipalities, towns, RMs and large cities. You have provincial layers of government, and the federal government has one-third of the control or ability to manage the projects.

In fact, usually, for most infrastructure programs, the federal government acts as the person who reimburses other levels of government. For delays in projects, you can usually look to municipal governments or provincial governments or whatnot. However, with Parks Canada, we're talking about, in many cases—I'm reading through them—historic sites, like the Rideau Canal, the Trent-Severn Waterway and Jasper National Park. These are facilities that are owned and operated 100% by Parks Canada. There aren't other levels of government that are participating in this.

Again, understanding you might have to come back to the committee with a more specific example, if we go to Jasper National Park, the complete reconstruction program of Whistlers Campground—you're talking about upgrading a campground—was originally estimated to cost \$6.7 million. It's jumped up to \$62 million. That's a huge jump.

There are a few of these examples, and so far, a quick math shows 46 pages' worth of projects that are behind schedule and now over budget.... You said most of them are on time. Fine, but we're in the business of trying to give the very best results to taxpayers. We're halfway through the list, and I believe the number we've calculated is \$400 million in project overruns.

Can you explain how Parks Canada can—

• (1720)

**The Chair:** You can ask the question, but we won't have time for an answer until it comes back to the Conservatives, I guess, or anyone else.

We will go now to Mr. Longfield, for five minutes, please.

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.):** Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Thanks to the minister and the officials who are here today.

Looking at the estimates, there's a section that has grants and another that has contributions. When I'm looking at the grants, there's "Taking Action on Clean Growth and Climate Change". In contributions, we have the "Low Carbon Economy Fund".

I'm looking at how I help to steer my constituents towards the right types of funding streams. There are a lot of grants and a lot of contributions.

In general, what's the difference between those two streams?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** Again, it will depend a little on the specific program that you're focused on. Certainly, we have Gs and Cs under the low-carbon economy fund, whereby organizations and communities can apply to have project funding flow to them. There are a whole range of examples.

I think, in your neck of the woods, the University of Guelph had a heating system that was done. It got \$640,000 to do a new heating system, which is the equivalent of essentially taking almost 20,000 cars off the road.

The Gs and Cs are set up in such a way that it is about enabling community groups, municipalities, universities and those kinds of things to be able to apply to get federal support to do work on projects that will help reduce emissions.

That is separate and apart, often, from the work we do with provinces and territories directly.

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield:** Thanks.

In Guelph, it is like a firehose for me. There are a lot of projects and a lot of people interested in contributing to solutions. The University of Guelph is one, but there are many others, so we will be diving in on that. It's good to see the amount of funding going into grants and contributions, because we have a lot of ideas there.

We also looked at our study on single-use plastics. Madame Pauzé mentioned looking at recycling and topics around that. It's very important for Guelph. Again, I sat on a waste stream management group before I was elected. We looked at the diversion targets on plastics.

I'm getting a lot of emails for further details on plastics. Could the minister explain how the government is taking an integrated approach across Canada and here in Ontario to better manage plastics and recycled materials, and how the main estimates support the goals you have?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** Plastic is a very important issue, and as you saw from the scientific study, it is very harmful in the environment, given how we actually treat it today.

We typically are dealing with plastics in a linear fashion today. Recycling rates are very low. Most plastics end up either in the environment or in a landfill. The focus is trying to come up with a comprehensive approach that essentially keeps plastics out of the environment and in the economy.

That means you have to address a whole bunch of different things. Certainly, first and foremost, you have to ensure that what you're trying to recycle is recyclable. The ban on harmful single-use plastics that we are moving forward with is about dealing with those things that are particularly difficult to recycle or very costly to recycle, for which there are readily available alternatives.

Then, you have to have better product design, so we're working with the Canada Plastics Pact to ensure that we're thinking about recyclability in the context of all the work that producers are doing.

We're working with the provinces and territories to put in place extended producer responsibility systems, whereby they are responsible for collecting the plastics. Over time, we will be ratcheting up the percentage that is going to be required to be recycled.

It's about a comprehensive approach to ensure that we're getting at it.

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield:** We heard in our study that there's a massive economic opportunity, if we can get the investment side of it right.

A group of students I deal with a lot at the Upper Grand District School Board have a community environment leadership program. The students have been really interested in what we're doing in terms of conserving nature, improving biodiversity and working with indigenous partners to meet our goals.

Could you maybe expand on the line items on the "Canada Nature Fund" that support conserving nature and help build on the progress we've made so far. Is there some information I can give our students?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** It's a very important question. People think a lot about the crisis of climate change, but we have a

competing crisis, which is the crisis of biodiversity loss in this country and around the world.

When we came to office, the protection rate of our oceans, for example, was 1%. We have boosted that to about 15% through the work we have done over the course of the past few years. We have also added an additional 200,000 square kilometres of Canada's land and inland waters, and we're on track to conserve 17% of Canada's lands by 2023 and 25% by 2025.

The budget also contained an additional \$4 billion to focus on conservation and protection, to create these protected spaces, but also on addressing species-at-risk issues. It's about trying to stem that decline in biodiversity and ensure that we're living in better harmony with nature.

• (1725)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Ms. Pauzé, you have two and a half minutes.

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** Mr. Minister, I would like to go back to the issue of money.

I would like to know whether the members of the Net-Zero Advisory Body, the establishment of which you announced last February, will be paid for their advice to you.

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** No. If there are expenses, it is possible that the government will pay them, but the members of the body will have no salary.

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** But do the amounts allocated for those potential expenses appear in the Main Estimates 2021-2022?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** I will have to ask the deputy minister. I believe that the allocations to the advisory body are in the estimates, but I am not sure.

Ms. Hogan, perhaps you can say a few words.

[*English*]

**Ms. Christine Hogan (Deputy Minister, Department of the Environment):** Yes. In terms of the budget, there has been a dedicated amount of resources to the net-zero advisory panel, which was outlined in the strengthened climate plan last December. Those resources, of course, are to support the work of the advisory body, the secretariat that supports it, the research that the body will identify as priorities, and also the outreach with Canadians and stakeholders as they move their work forward.

Hopefully, that addresses the question.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** I would like to know when the advisory body's mandate will start and how many members it will have.

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** They started three months ago, I believe. The advisory body currently has 14 members.

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** Okay. Ms. Hogan spoke about a budget. In which budget do we find the amount allocated to the advisory body? Is it in the departmental budget?

**The Chair:** A short answer, please.

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** It is probably in the departmental budget. I think it's about \$15 million.

Ms. Hogan, am I right on that?

**Ms. Christine Hogan:** Yes, it's \$15.4 million over three years.

**The Chair:** Okay.

It's now Mr. Bachrach's turn.

[*English*]

**Mr. Taylor Bachrach:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Minister, I have a question about the Impact Assessment Act. There's a project list that defines which projects receive an automatic federal assessment under the Impact Assessment Act. In addition, you are able, at your discretion, I believe, to designate projects to be assessed under the act. That doesn't happen very often at all. I'm pleased to see that it's happening for Highway 413. However, with the project list, as it's currently defined, your department is assessing fewer projects than it did before. Of course, your government promised to restore the cuts to environmental regulation that took place under Stephen Harper.

Are you considering expanding that project list?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** The project list was developed as part of what was then called Bill C-69 and is now the Impact Assessment Act. We did an enormous amount of work to look at how you put into place rules that will ensure that projects go through appropriate assessments, that good projects can proceed, and that projects that are more challenging get caught early on in the process.

We don't have any intention right now to revisit the project list, but as you noted, I have the ability to designate projects where there are impacts on federal jurisdiction. Let me be clear: I cannot designate projects where there are impacts on provincial jurisdiction only, but Highway 413 was one and the Vista coal mine was another that I designated recently because of potential impacts on federal jurisdiction.

• (1730)

**Mr. Taylor Bachrach:** I'd like to slip in one more question here. The supply of electric vehicles remains a major barrier to their uptake. Transport Canada estimates that by 2025 only 4% to 6% of our new vehicle sales will be electric. Our goal is 10%, so we're not on track. The accountability legislation that we're currently talking about is all about finding out if we're on track and, if we're not, increasing our ambition and using policy to get us back on track.

A ZEV mandate is proven to do that. It's something that's working in British Columbia, our mutual home province. They're currently leading Canada in terms of new car sales for EVs. Even the Conservatives say that a ZEV mandate is something that would take us forward in terms of the uptake of electric vehicles. Is that something you're willing to consider as part of our climate plan?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** Well, it's certainly something we're willing to consider, and we've said that publicly. The focus right now for us is working with the Americans on transportation-related issues, because obviously, we have a very integrated market and production of vehicles, so we are working with them on trying to find ways to enhance the efficiency of internal combustion engines, but also looking at accelerating the deployment of zero-emission vehicles, and that's definitely on the table.

I would say that British Columbia, where you and I both come from, leads the country with respect to deployment. It's partly the ZEV mandate, but partly that the government has made the decision to partner with the federal government on subsidies to ensure that we are actually helping to bring down the cost of electric vehicles to match those of internal combustion engines. We would love it if other provinces did the same thing.

**The Chair:** We've got it.

Mrs. McLeod, you have five minutes, please.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC):** Thank you.

It looks like a B.C.-dominated panel, almost, today. Welcome, Minister.

As a quick follow-up to Mr. Scheer's questions earlier, I understand if we send you a list of the projects we are wondering about, you have committed to doing a detailed response through your department. Is that...?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** Yes, I'm happy to provide an update in terms of timelines and, in the case where a project is shown to be over budget, why it's over budget.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** Thank you.

I've noticed what I would say is a bit of a disturbing pattern. On GHG emissions, you committed to meeting certain targets and, of course, we don't meet them. You committed to planting two billion trees. The last time I looked, there wasn't one in the ground yet.

I want to bring up another example. In 2016, to great fanfare—and we're a key group that are part of it—we committed to the Kigali amendment to the Montreal protocol, to massively scale down Canadian hydrofluorocarbon emissions. Companies were given five years to comply with new recommendations, and most did. However, your government granted last-minute, under-the-table exemptions to industrial manufacturers like DuPont, which didn't comply with these regulations.

Canada's jobs, of course, are important, but so is a level playing field. These exemptions allow up to 1.8 million metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent greenhouse gas emissions. That's the equivalent of 400,000 cars put back on the road this year.

Why do you think those exemptions were appropriate?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** You are absolutely right; our government committed to an 85% reduction of hydrofluorocarbons by 2036 through the Kigali amendment, and we remain firmly committed to meeting our international obligations. In fact, in 2019 and 2020, Canada actually exceeded its HFC reduction obligations. The permits that you're referencing are given based on technical criteria and are assessed very much on a case-by-case basis. We're going to continue to work with all industry stakeholders to ensure that we meet our international obligations to phase down HFCs.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** Thank you.

You're talking about technical issues. We have other companies that were able to meet the technical requirements. What you did—and you did it very quietly and very secretly—was give these exemptions. How can we be a leader when you're quickly.... Obviously, the technology was there. These companies had a number of years to meet these new criteria, but you thought it was appropriate.... Yes, jobs are important, but so is an equal playing field, and so is knowing the government is going to do what it says it's going to do.

How can we trust that you're going to be a leader in environmentalism when you don't stick to the agreements you've created?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** I would say a couple things to that. The first is that the essential purpose permits do not impact Canada's ability to meet its international obligations, and as I said, we actually met and exceeded our obligations in 2019 and 2020. The temporary permits, and I'll emphasize that they're temporary, are given based on technical criteria and are assessed on a case-by-case basis by officials. In terms of leadership in the world, Canada continues to play a leadership role with respect to HFCs and the Kigali amendment.

• (1735)

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** I would think that certainly companies.... Were any companies turned down for these exemptions?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** As I say, these are done on a case-by-case basis. They are actually handled by officials, as you would expect when they are technical. They are not handled by the minister's office. Certainly, if you want an answer as to whether somebody was turned down, I'm happy to get that from the department.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** Yes, because obviously if every single company that applied received exemptions, and those that met the

criteria worked diligently and spent the money, we've created a very unfair playing field. I'd certainly appreciate that information.

Where I'm going to go next is, of course, to forestry. We're heading into forest fire season, and forestry is huge in my area. You know, the harvesting takes up about eight megatonnes, but forest fires and pests emit 251 megatonnes, so those are big issues in Canada's forests. You've committed significant dollars.

What are your metrics going to be in terms of these dollars and the impact these dollars are going to have? Do you have specific metrics, and where are you in those conversations with the province?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** Are you talking specifically about tree planting?

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** No, I'm talking about your reductions, period. You have the last "State of Canada's Forests" report, the growing Canada's forests program, nature smart and an agricultural program.

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** Within the context of the climate plan, the focus, as you know, has been on tree planting, which is both a carbon sequestration tool and a way to address some of the biodiversity concerns.

With respect to pest control, Parks Canada plays a significant role in parks. Jasper, for example, has the spruce pine beetle, and Newfoundland and Nova Scotia have the spruce budworm. For the actual management of pests, while there is support from Natural Resources Canada for sure, on an ongoing basis the provinces and territories obviously take the lead on a lot of them.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** Is it accurate to say that there are no trees in the ground yet from the two billion you promised?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** You probably would have seen that we issued an expression of interest earlier this year. We had over 120 applications for tree-planting projects, and we expect to see some of those moving forward.

**The Chair:** Let's move on to Mr. Saini now.

**Mr. Raj Saini (Kitchener Centre, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, Minister and officials, for being available today. It's always good to have you at the committee.

I want to talk about something that's personal to me and my riding. One thing I've noticed over the last year is that the COVID-19 pandemic has helped many Canadians gain a new appreciation for nature. Record numbers of people have been searching for ways to get out and enjoy what the natural world has to offer. One of the best ways to do this is to hike the Great Trail, which stretches from coast to coast and right through the centre of my riding of Kitchener Centre.

How will funding in the estimates help more Canadians get out and gain a new appreciation for Canada's natural beauty?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** I couldn't agree with you more. The pandemic has made us all realize how important a healthy environment and nature are to all of us. As you mentioned, with its 24,000-kilometre network of multi-use recreational trails that connect 15,000 communities across the country, the Great Trail is an incredible resource for Canadians to connect with their nature. One only needs to walk or bike on trails like the Iron Horse Trail in Kitchener, which runs all the way to Waterloo, to see the importance that these trails can have.

That's why we have invested another \$7.5 million in the Trans Canada Trail organization. We also just recently announced \$200 million in the budget to establish the natural infrastructure fund, which will support natural and hybrid infrastructure projects. We also announced, as part of our public transit fund, the first active transportation fund, which will deliver more recreation, cycling and walking options for Canadians. It's really important.

**Mr. Raj Saini:** I want to turn my attention now to the biodiversity in southwestern Ontario.

I was very happy to see funding for protecting biodiversity in the main estimates. Being in southern Ontario, I live in a region with the highest biodiversity in Canada, but also, unfortunately, the least amount of protected land and the most species at risk.

What is the government going to do to protect the rare and endangered ecosystems of southwestern Ontario?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** As I mentioned before, we have a biodiversity crisis in this country and a climate crisis. We have tried to take an approach that looks at southern Canada, where we have large cities, high agricultural productivity and manufacturing; middle Canada, where we have a lot of our national parks but also a lot of the energy and forestry development; and northern Canada, where we have some of the vast wilderness areas.

In the south, we're looking to protect key ecological corridors and are looking into creating urban parks or near-urban parks to try to ensure that there are spaces for species and spaces for human beings to interact with nature on an ongoing basis. That is extremely important, and I think the pandemic has underlined how important it is.

• (1740)

**Mr. Raj Saini:** One thing that's going to be critically important for us as a country in fighting climate change is making sure that we have the skilled and educated workforce necessary to create and implement the strategies and tools necessary to fight climate change.

How will contributions to the youth employment and skills strategy help young Canadians realize their potential and help solve this issue in the years to come?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** Again, it's a really important question coming out of COVID. It's clear that young Canadians want to develop the skills and experience to be able to help build a cleaner and greener economy. The science horizons youth internship program, which falls under the broader federal youth employment and skills strategy, aims to give opportunities to youth with post-sec-

ondary education by providing eligible employers with wage subsidies to hire youth with a post-secondary education who are eligible to work in science and technology.

I was recently at a company in Vancouver called Terramera. I met a couple of folks in that program who are working in the green economy. These are the kinds of things that we really need to be focused on, because that economy is going to need workers, and I think young people will really want to be participants in that development.

**Mr. Raj Saini:** I can slip in one final question.

I want to talk about some of the transfers you have to help reduce emissions in government operations. It's important that we, in the government, lead by example. If we want Canadians to move to zero emissions, it's important that we lead the way.

How are we getting government operations to net zero, so that we can build a Canada for the future?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** As a government, you have to be able to walk the walk. On one side of this is figuring out how you are procuring in a manner whereby you are actually procuring green goods and helping to build the kind of economy that you want to have in the future. It's also about federal departments investing in lower-carbon buildings, heating plants, energy efficiency and retrofits.

Our target is for the government to achieve a 40% reduction by 2025 and to get to net zero by 2050. The focus very much has been on a number of steps to get there. We are making good progress. We are actually ahead of schedule. We have a goal to power federal buildings with 100% clean energy by 2022. The budget put about \$15 million into the purchase of renewable energy certificates for all federal buildings.

It's about supporting job creation and attracting investments, but it's also about showing that we are actually doing what we say.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister.

The minister was kind enough to give us an hour today. We've hit the one-hour mark on the dot.

Minister, I'll thank you for being here and answering all these questions. We look forward to seeing you on Monday to answer more questions.

[Translation]

Thank you very much, Mr. Minister.

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** The officials from Parks Canada and the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada will stay with us for another hour to answer more questions.

So we will now start the third round of questions.

I will not take the time to identify everyone coming in, but I think some people have to be added.

Madam Clerk, are the witnesses coming in already online or do we have to wait for them?

**The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Angela Crandall):** All the witnesses are here and the sound has been checked.

**The Chair:** Excellent. That makes for a smooth transition.

Let's move on and start the third round of questions with Mr. Redekopp.

Mr. Redekopp, the floor is yours for five minutes.

[English]

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Mr. Chair, I'm going to pass that to Mr. Jeneroux.

**The Chair:** You're keeping me on my toes here. Are you switching with Mr. Jeneroux? He was further down in this round.

Mr. Jeneroux, go ahead.

• (1745)

**Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Redekopp, for the kind gesture.

I'm looking here at the recent Gazette on plastics, which was published just today. I know Ms. Hogan and a few others are on the call. I wonder if any provinces expressed their displeasure with the proposed order and the proposed approach.

**Ms. Christine Hogan:** Thank you very much.

I am joined today by a few colleagues, including Helen Ryan, who is our associate assistant deputy minister responsible for the plastics file. I will ask Helen to reply, if you are okay with that.

**Ms. Helen Ryan (Associate Assistant Deputy Minister, Environmental Protection Branch, Department of the Environment):** In terms of the formal consultation period, provinces provided responses, specifically the province of Alberta. Since then there have been a number of provinces that have expressed some concerns with respect to using CEPA as the vehicle for listing plastic manufactured items.

**Mr. Matt Jeneroux:** Which other provinces? How many?

We know Ms. Ryan well at this committee. She attends often.

If you have the number of provinces, it would be helpful.

**Ms. Helen Ryan:** Mr. Chair, I believe it's five provinces, but I will need to confirm that for you. I can provide that following the meeting.

**Mr. Matt Jeneroux:** Thank you, Ms. Ryan.

In the wake of the Supreme Court decision on carbon pricing and the national concern doctrine, do you believe the provinces are constitutionally incapable of acting to reduce plastic waste without the federal government interfering?

It's probably best directed to Ms. Ryan again, if Ms. Hogan doesn't want to answer.

**The Chair:** That might be a difficult question for public servants to answer; it's kind of an interpretation—

**Mr. Matt Jeneroux:** Do you want to take it, Mr. Chair? You're welcome to take it on behalf of the government.

**The Chair:** I'm not actually in the government; I'm on the government side, but I'm not actually in the government.

Would you agree, Ms. Hogan, that it's not a question that officials can answer?

**Ms. Christine Hogan:** It is a legal question, I think, in some ways.

**The Chair:** Mr. Jeneroux, why don't we move on to another question, then?

**Mr. Matt Jeneroux:** I was hoping that there might be, maybe, some follow-up. I know there are lots of lawyers employed under Environment Canada; perhaps they could take that back and take a bit more of a deeper dive into it. I know it's legal, but at the same time it's pretty significant in terms of the direction of where plastic is going.

That being said, I'll leave it to the department. We did hear, over and over again, on our plastics study, that the ban on plastics would kill good-paying middle-class jobs and export these jobs to other countries, making Canada the only country in the world that will declare plastics toxic.

We've heard that this will cause trade and transportation issues to the manufacturing sector, increase the cost of Canadians' grocery bills, and lead to more costly alternatives and increased food waste, with no environmental or economic benefits to Canada. We also know that countries like the U.S. have raised major concerns regarding the designation of plastics as toxic.

Can the government provide us with the definition of "plastic manufactured items"?

**Ms. Christine Hogan:** Again, I'll ask Ms. Ryan to respond to that question.

**Ms. Helen Ryan:** Plastic manufactured items encompasses any item that's made from a plastic form and includes a specific shape or design during the manufacturing of it. It includes final products, as well as components of products and packaging. The reason for having a broad definition of plastic manufactured items is, as we've heard, that we're looking to be able to take actions across the life cycle of plastic and to be able to implement specific measures that have been requested, such as defining recycled content support for extended producer responsibility and other like measures.

• (1750)

**Mr. Matt Jeneroux:** Thank you, Ms. Ryan.

My next question is, has the government conducted a cost-benefit analysis for the classification of all plastic manufactured items as toxic?

**Ms. Helen Ryan:** With respect to the assessment of the cost, the listing of plastic manufactured items on schedule 1 of CEPA is a means to access authorities under CEPA. When we then go forward with specific actions, we will undertake a cost-benefit analysis [*Inaudible—Editor*].

**The Chair:** You cut out a bit at “undertake a cost-benefit analysis”.

**Ms. Helen Ryan:** It's to define the approach.

**The Chair:** Did you get that, Mr. Jeneroux?

**Mr. Matt Jeneroux:** I think that's a long no until later, I guess. If that could be clarified, it would be great.

**The Chair:** I don't know if Ms. Ryan wants to make a clarification in writing. Basically, what they're saying is, as we get down to specific items, there will be cost-benefit analysis and impact assessments as part of the regulatory process, I guess.

**Mr. Matt Jeneroux:** So you do speak on behalf of the government, Mr. Chair. That's interesting and noted.

**The Chair:** No, I'm not. I'm trying to say what I know about how the process works, but I could be wrong.

Mr. Bittle, for five minutes, please.

**Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.):** Thank you so much, Mr. Chair.

I'd actually like to follow up on Mr. Scheer's question to the minister in regard to cost overruns at Parks Canada.

I was hoping you could expand on that. I know the minister didn't necessarily have a fulsome answer, but I know we have Parks Canada officials here and I was hoping they could expand on what Mr. Scheer was asking about in terms of cost overruns.

**Mr. Ron Hallman:** Thank you, Chair. I'm pleased to have this opportunity to speak more on this.

I would start by acknowledging the incredible effort and work that so many Parks Canada employees and contractors have been putting in over the last year and a bit, during COVID, to keep so many of our critical infrastructure projects moving.

I would start with the point, in response to the member's very good question, that more often than not it's not delays that are driving the cost increases; it's actually the nature of the project, as one might expect, given the complexity and often the heritage nature of certain iconic assets.

In terms of the examples referenced earlier by the other member, project costs for the Whistlers Campground in Jasper, the Trent-Severn Waterway, which is 368 kilometres long, and Province House in P.E.I. were initial project estimates. Often you can't determine what the costs will be until you get into it and find out what you're dealing with. Anyone who's had the joy of doing renovations and repairs would probably relate to that. Infrastructure work of this nature often requires adjustments to the initial estimate as more is learned about the scale and scope of the work needed. That's why we transparently communicate those cost adjustments.

For example, Province House, which members will know is the provincial legislature in P.E.I., has unique needs. It's an excellent example of the complexity of not knowing what you're dealing with in a heritage property until you get the walls opened up and take a look inside.

In terms of the previous member's comment about it being understandable when there are delays with municipalities, that's actually a great point, and I would agree with that. In fact, in the case of Whistlers Campground in Jasper, which the member referenced, members may be interested to know that Parks Canada delivers 120,000 nights of camping at that campground each year across 800 campsites, making it the size, frankly, of a small municipality, for which we do the electrical, the water service, and everything. Now, that campground was built back in the 1960s and has had very little recap since then, so you can imagine what we found when we dug in and started finding out what the underground infrastructure was for what is, frankly, comparable to a town of 2,000 people in Alberta, if you look at an average of 2.3 people per household.

• (1755)

**The Chair:** Can you raise your mike just a bit, Mr. Hallman?

**Mr. Ron Hallman:** Certainly. Thank you, Chair.

The other thing I would say, Chair, is that the reasons for the cost delays are often quite similar. As I mentioned with the campground example, a lot of these assets haven't been reviewed for many years because of fiscal constraints. More recently, over the past decade and a half probably, successive governments have put priority on our looking at these assets and recapping them and improving them. I'm very proud that we are now at this place where we have more than 80% of our assets in fair to good position. Some of the MPs who have been around a lot longer will remember just how bad some of our assets were about 15 years ago.

What I would say, as a final comment, if I may, is that we really try not to confuse additional scope with additional cost. As we get into an historic waterway sometimes, where not doing the dam properly or the canal properly can have catastrophic effects downstream, etc., once we get into a project, we have to follow through. That's why, for the examples that were referenced earlier, the big campgrounds, canals and iconic places like Province House, those costs go up. Again, it's not necessarily because of delays and it's not entirely unexpected, given the nature and age and complexity of those assets.

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** Perhaps I can make an analogy—I know you're not involved in this project—of how as members of Parliament perhaps we can look to our own Centre Block and West Block, and the great number of unknowns that existed before the walls were opened up, such as the amount of asbestos or lead or knob-and-tube wiring, and whether there was structural damage or not. Those things couldn't be assessed from the outside.

Is that a fair comparison? I know Centre Block is a bigger project, but—

**The Chair:** We'll have to stop the analogy, but I think you've made your point, Mr. Bittle.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Pauzé, the floor is yours.

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** Mr. Chair, before you start the timer, I have a point of order. In the second hour, I thought that the timers were set back to zero and all members had six minutes.

**The Chair:** You are right, in principle. That is what we do when the groups of witnesses change. However, as I see it, we are continuing with these officials. That's why I started a third round, and then we will have a fourth. I see it as the same group, except that the Minister has left.

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** So that means I have two and a half minutes.

**The Chair:** Yes, but you are asking good questions, so we will keep that in mind.

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The purpose of the Low Carbon Economy Fund is partly to fund projects that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Of the \$500 million in the fund, how much has already been allocated to projects in the Low Carbon Economy Challenge, and how many projects have been funded?

**Ms. Christine Hogan:** Thank you very much for that question.

I will ask my colleague, Doug Nevison, to answer that question on the Low Carbon Economy Fund.

**Mr. Douglas Nevison (Assistant Deputy Minister, Climate Change Branch, Department of the Environment):** Thank you very much, Deputy Minister.

Mr. Chair, I will reply in English.

**The Chair:** Yes, go ahead.

[*English*]

**Mr. Douglas Nevison:** The low-carbon economy fund is a \$1.4-billion fund. Of that, \$1 billion has been approved or already paid under the leadership fund.

There are a number of aspects to it. There's the leadership fund, which is the larger of the two; and there's the challenge stream, which is about \$500 million.

Under the leadership fund, \$1 billion has been approved or already paid out. Under the challenge portion of the fund, which is smaller scale and a competitive funding stream, \$370 million has been allocated to 105 projects.

• (1800)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** So there are 105 projects. Okay, that's what I wanted to know.

Have any projects in nuclear energy or carbon capture being given grants under this program? Yes or no?

[*English*]

**Mr. Douglas Nevison:** The grant component of this program has been set aside for indigenous organizations to provide added flexibility in that particular situation. To date, no money has been allocated under that stream, but we have \$2.5 million allocated in these main estimates in the hopes that flexibility will be available to indigenous organizations.

Thank you.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** As I understand it, there has been no money for that kind of project, but there could be.

**The Chair:** A quick answer, please.

[*English*]

**Mr. Douglas Nevison:** Yes, that is correct. We have put money aside in the hope that this will be attractive to indigenous communities and provide additional flexibility in terms of funding in their particular circumstances.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Your turn, Mr. Bachrach. Go ahead.

[*English*]

**Mr. Taylor Bachrach:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to our witnesses.

My first question is around the estimates. I note that there are several areas in the estimates related to climate action and clean growth that have fallen quite substantially. Notably, transfer payments for climate action and clean growth have fallen by more than a third, from more than \$0.75 billion last year to less than \$0.5 billion this year. In particular, contributions to the low-carbon economy fund decreased by more than \$180 million. Other transfers for clean growth and climate change have also decreased by nearly \$12 million. Innovative Solutions Canada funding is also nearly halved. None of these cuts seem to be balanced by increases elsewhere.

Could you explain how these reductions are consistent with the ambitious action we need to be taking towards our fair share of emissions reductions in Canada?

**Ms. Christine Hogan:** I'll make a start on that question, and if my colleague Mr. Nevison wants to add, I will let him do so.



As Minister Wilkinson indicated in his opening comments, a big part of the main estimates story relates to the low-carbon economy fund and the re-profiling of those resources, in part because of some delays encountered in the submission of proposals to access and some of the ripple effects that come with that.

I would also underscore that the main estimates that we're discussing today do not reflect a number of decisions that are in budget 2021, which will be, following approval of Parliament, appearing in future estimates and will reflect an increase in our effort around climate action and clean growth.

Mr. Nevison, would you like to add anything?

**Mr. Douglas Nevison:** I think that covers the question very well.

Maybe I would just point out one additional item; that is, a decrease of around \$100 million in the climate action incentive fund. This was a two-year program coming out of carbon pollution proceeds in 2018-19. It was set to sunset. It ended at the end of 2020-21. That made a significant contribution to the decline in the main estimates as well.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I'm not sure if it's Mr. Redekopp or Ms. McLeod next, for five minutes.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Thanks, Chair. I'll go ahead.

Ms. Hogan, I want to come back to the question of Safety Power and the aftermarket emission controls. I'm not sure who's best to answer this question.

We're talking about the fact that these new regulations are coming in, I think, within the next month. In this case, this clean tech company is struggling with understanding how these regulations are going to impact it. The minister seemed to think it was more important to maintain the climate standards than jobs in Canada.

What specific steps is the government taking to ensure that clean tech companies like Safety Power can remain in operation in Canada after these regulations come into play?

• (1805)

**Ms. Christine Hogan:** I will ask my colleague Helen Ryan to take this question, if she's able to, please.

**Ms. Helen Ryan:** Yes. Thank you.

The regulation contains specific provisions to allow for alternative testing measures. The consideration of the company in question is that they use a different technology than what is currently certified. Under the regulation, they can apply for and seek approval of alternative testing so we can confirm that their equipment meets the requirements laid out in the regulation, to ensure that we're reducing the NOx and other emissions from these engines.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Ms. Ryan, has that process been defined?

**Ms. Helen Ryan:** The elements in terms of requirements for alternative test methods are laid out in the regulation. With respect to the specifics on an individual test method, that would need to be advanced in the context of the specific engines and technology they're using.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** This question is maybe for Parks Canada and Mr. Hallman.

In conversations I've had with some stakeholders, there has been confusion as to the exact definition of a protected conservation area. As we seek to have more spaces defined as protected, it can be anything from a national park to all kinds of things.

With respect to first nations in this definition, if you were to designate a parcel of terrestrial land as protected, what rights and responsibilities does that confer on the first nations, where that may be their traditional land?

**Mr. Ron Hallman:** Chair, I may turn to Darlene Upton, our vice-president of protected areas establishment and conservation, if time permits, but I would say this by way of introduction. In terms of indigenous peoples, the majority of our national parks created in modern times have been done as a result of some kind of agreement with indigenous peoples, through an impact benefit agreement or other treaty-type work.

Their rights under the Constitution continue to apply, and we work with them to ensure they have appropriate access to their traditional lands. In many cases, we share governance with them to one degree or another—depending on the nature of that protected area—in national parks and national marine conservation areas.... One can think of the Haida in British Columbia with Gwaii Haanas, where we have from seabed to mountaintop protected through the NMCA and the park reserve there. We're very proud of that relationship.

We are evolving those relationships over time in many of our protected areas. If there's time, I might switch to Darlene and ask her—

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Actually, that's fine, but one question that may be a follow-up on that is, how do we empower first nations while still protecting the rights of current landowners, whether they're private landowners or provincial Crowns? Do first nations get exclusive rights? Maybe a bit more of a general question is, have you done any sort of charter analysis on the implications of such a policy?

**Mr. Ron Hallman:** I will limit my comments, Chair, to the federal lands that Parks Canada stewards in partnership with our indigenous communities. In terms of private land or provincial Crown land, I don't think it would be in my remit to speculate on those.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Okay. That's fair.

**Ms. Christine Hogan:** If it would be helpful for the member, we're also joined today by our assistant deputy minister for Canadian Wildlife Services, who may also want to comment on this, because this is quite an important area of discussion around our protected areas.

**Ms. Tara Shannon (Assistant Deputy Minister, Canadian Wildlife Services, Department of the Environment):** What I would say is that when we approach the protected areas discussions, we do so in collaboration with provincial and territorial partners, as well as with indigenous partners. We do not use the protected areas to advance or assert rights, but we develop these areas in partnership.

• (1810)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll go to Mr. Baker now, for five minutes.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Thanks very much, Chair.

Thank you to all the officials for being here today. It's wonderful to have so many of you here. I'm really looking forward to being able to meet in person, whether that's in the House of Commons or in committee. I don't know how we would manage this meeting if we were all in person, because there are so many of you. If there's a silver lining to being in a pandemic, it's that we have access to so many wonderful folks in a single meeting. Thanks to all of you for being here and making time to answer our questions.

What I want to do is go back to the estimates. I'm thinking about my constituents in Etobicoke Centre, who are watching this or following our committee meetings. I know that when I look at the main estimates, I'm looking at page 2, I guess, or the first page, anyway, and the figures there. Near the bottom, there's a table called "Main Estimates by Purpose". It breaks down the estimates into key categories: taking action on clean growth and climate change, preventing and managing pollution, conserving nature, and predicting weather and environmental conditions.

These are major areas of spending in terms of protecting the environment and fighting climate change as a government, if I understand correctly. I'm wondering if, for those first three categories, somebody could just walk me through, at the highest possible level, where that funding is going.

For example, taking action on clean growth and climate change has \$540 million allocated to it. Could somebody just talk me through what that money is being used for and what's the benefit of that investment for the environment? I think the taxpayers of Etobicoke Centre and Canadians in general would appreciate knowing that.

**Ms. Christine Hogan:** Thank you very much for that question. I'll let my chief financial officer and ADM for corporate services and finance, Linda Drainville, respond to that, but just so you are aware, the four themes or the four areas are those that are of course reflected in our departmental plan and our results framework, and they track, as you said, very much against where the levels of investment and investments are being put in the department.

Linda, could you take the question, please?

**Ms. Linda Drainville (Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services and Finance Branch, Department of the Environment):** Thank you very much.

I will walk you through it briefly. Bear with me, as it could become a bit technical.

What you see at the bottom of page 2 is a comparable table to the table you have above, where you see vote 1, vote 5 and vote 10. When you look at it by purpose, the first one, which has to do with taking action on clean growth and climate change, is mainly the funding we have there for the low-carbon economy fund, as well as the temporary initiative related to modification and adaptation to climate change. That's your first purpose, your first core responsibility.

The second one, which has to do with preventing and managing pollution, is mainly the different programs we have on a recurring basis that are funded on a permanent basis for preventing and managing pollution, as well as addressing air pollution. What we also have there is a portion that is related to the federal contaminated sites action plan, to make sure we keep our environment safe and healthy for our people.

The third core responsibility, which is conserving nature, shows contributions for protecting Canadian nature parks and wild spaces, as well as some permanent funding for conserving nature. Everything that has to do with species at risk is also reflected there.

The last one, which is predicting weather and environmental conditions, has everything to do with our weather radar replacement, as well as our Eureka weather station in Nunavut. That's what it's comprised of, predicting weather and environmental conditions.

Internal services is all the support we provide to those core responsibilities.

I hope this answers your question. Thank you.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Yes, and I appreciate the answer.

I asked that question in part because it sometimes helps to translate these figures into what types of results these investments are generating for the environment and for taxpayers.

I have only about 30 seconds left, if I'm not mistaken, so I'll leave it at that. I'll just say thank you all very much for being here. I've learned a lot here today from all of you. I wish we had more time for questions, but I appreciate that answer in just helping to clarify where the funds are being allocated and how they help us fight climate change and protect our environment.

Thank you very much.

• (1815)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

It's Ms. McLeod now.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** Thank you, Chair. We're on track again.

I'm going to go back to the Kigali amendment and the Montreal protocol, because the minister said he'd have to ask the officials, and, of course, the officials are here. Hopefully we can get a little more information.

My first question is, did any of the other countries that ratified this agreement grant exemptions?

**Ms. Christine Hogan:** I'd like to ask John Moffet, who is the assistant deputy minister for the environmental protection branch, to respond to that question.

**Mr. John Moffet (Assistant Deputy Minister, Environmental Protection Branch, Department of the Environment):** The time-limit exemptions the regulations provide for don't address emissions of substances covered by the Kigali amendment. We have not exempted anything related to Kigali. The exemptions relate to emissions of substances not regulated under Kigali.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** I understand the government is being taken to court. If our commitment to massively scale down the emissions is not related to the Kigali amendment or our commitment to the reduction of HFCs, why did we have a bunch of companies, especially international companies, comply, which are now taking Canada to court?

**Mr. John Moffet:** It would be inappropriate to speculate about why a particular company has decided to initiate a court action, but I would say that the actions do not allege that Canada has done anything inappropriate with respect to adherence to international obligations. The allegations relate to the competitive disadvantage that certain companies allege they have received.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** We have some regulatory requirements that were set out for some companies to meet. Some companies have met these regulatory requirements. I understand that these regulatory requirements were indeed to meet some of our obligations, but you have just indicated otherwise.

How many companies applied for exemptions in terms of meeting these regulatory requirements, and how many were granted exemptions?

**Mr. John Moffet:** I don't have the precise number, but we have had numerous applications—

**The Chair:** Excuse me.

Madame Paupé, is that a point of order?

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Monique Paupé:** Things seemed to be going better, but on several occasions when Mr. Moffet was answering the question, the interpreter had to say that the poor sound quality meant that the comments could not be translated.

**The Chair:** Okay. Is that because the volume was not high enough?

[*English*]

Mr. Moffet, do you have a mike?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. John Moffet:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Perhaps things have to be replaced.

You can continue.

[*English*]

**Mr. John Moffet:** The regulations apply to numerous types of producers and products. We have received a number of applications for time-limited essential-use exemptions. We have not acceded or granted all of those. We continue to receive applications. We ad-

dress each one on a case-by-case basis, applying the criteria that are established in the regulations for granting those time-limited exemptions.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** Are you saying that the regulations that were put in place were not in order for us to meet our commitments under the Kigali amendment? Is that what you're telling me?

**Mr. John Moffet:** I'm saying that these particular products that you are referring to, and the emissions associated with those products, are over and above the commitments we made in the Kigali amendment.

• (1820)

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** It's essentially the release of HFCs into the environment. I mean, is this not mincing words, in a way? We have some regulations in place in terms of commitments that we've made. We have the broad commitments. I'm hearing that it's technically possible to meet the regulatory environment that we created. We have a goal.

This is certainly very puzzling in terms of what I'm hearing from you.

**The Chair:** Unfortunately, we don't have time to pursue this, unless it comes up again.

We'll go to Ms. Saks now.

**Ms. Ya'ara Saks:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thanks again to all the officials who are with us today. These are such important questions and terrific answers.

I'd like to circle back to our relationship with first nations. They are the gatekeepers and are the most knowledgeable about our environment and the landscape we live on and with.

ECCC's 2021-22 departmental plan speaks about collaborating with provincial and territorial governments and indigenous partners. Could any of the officials describe the collaborative approaches being taken to work with our indigenous partners? How has the pandemic affected ECCC's working relationship with its partners, particularly the indigenous ones?

**Ms. Christine Hogan:** It's a very important question.

Before I ask Tara Shannon to comment on this, I will mention the very important role of our indigenous partnerships. There are a couple of examples to point to. One, of course, is the agreement concluded last calendar year with first nations in British Columbia related to the southern mountain caribou. There was a recognition, of course, of the importance of their role in the protection of the species.

As well, a very important feature of our work on the nature agenda is related to what we call the indigenous guardians program.

Maybe I'll ask Tara Shannon to elaborate a bit further.

**Ms. Tara Shannon:** I was indeed going to highlight the indigenous guardians program. It's been a pilot project, and it was recently re-endorsed through budget 2021. Through that program we provide funding to indigenous communities to support us in our work around both habitat restoration and conservation efforts. The program has been quite successful. It's a program whereby we co-develop funding approaches with our partners and really design the projects and their implementation together. I think it's been seen as a model. We are really pleased to be continuing to advance the work.

I would also just say that on the conserved areas themselves, the indigenous communities have played a very large role in achieving the advancements we have achieved to date. I know my colleagues from Parks Canada could also elaborate.

I'll leave it there.

**Ms. Ya'ara Saks:** Thank you so much.

I'm going to shift this a bit in a direction that's often of interest for each and every one of us as we wake up in the morning and check our weather app.

The main estimates include \$67.7 million in capital expenditures in predicting weather and environmental conditions. The work is essential for all Canadians, whether they are fishers, urban dwellers, hikers, farmers, or anyone really just trying to manage their day. The WeatherCAN app is a great and accessible tool.

Can one of the officials please explain what programs and initiatives the capital spending is meant for? I would like to follow up now, so I can get it all in.

How do these investments in predicting weather and environmental conditions account for the effects on climate change?

**Ms. Christine Hogan:** I'm very happy to have a question relating to our meteorological service, because I would highlight that this year, about 10 days ago, the Meteorological Service of Canada celebrated its 150th anniversary. It's an incredible institution.

I'm very proud of the fact that the men and women who have been leading our weather prediction and forecasting services in particular have worked day in and day out throughout the pandemic to continue to deliver these services to Canadians.

There are two elements I would highlight that you are referencing in the main estimates on the capital side.

First is the \$32.8-million Canadian weather radar replacement project. This is, of course, important to modernize the network of weather radars that exist across Canada and across our landscape from coast to coast to coast.

There's also a capital investment highlighted in these main estimates for the Eureka weather station in Nunavut, in the high Arctic. We will be making very important and timely investments in infrastructure, in everything from runways to sewage systems, storage tanks and the like.

• (1825)

**The Chair:** Actually, I can see the Canadian Meteorological Service from my window. I had a great tour last year. It was fantastic and really amazing.

Madam Pauzé, you are next.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** Given that this is my last opportunity to speak, I will use it to thank all the witnesses for joining us and for answering our questions.

My question is for the officials from Environment and Climate Change Canada.

The department has set itself the objective to recover the populations of 60% of species at risk by 2025. However, in the 2021-2022 Departmental Plan, we see that the department is standing still. Things are not really moving forward.

Is the government looking at changing the way it supports the recovery of species at risk?

Is its approach to the target compatible with achieving it?

**Ms. Christine Hogan:** Thank you. I will ask Ms. Shannon to answer your question.

[*English*]

**Ms. Tara Shannon:** Thank you, Deputy Minister.

To that I would say that the recovery for species at risk takes some time. Once recovery measures are put in place, we are able to measure those results.

In terms of approach, I would highlight that since 2018, in cooperation and coordination with the provinces and territories, we've moved from a single species approach to a more of a multi-species ecosystem approach. That is key to the understanding of species and their role within the biodiversity areas in which they live.

I understand the question, but the response at this time is that we think it's a bit too soon to say we aren't able to meet the target.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** I understand that it is not simple.

So let me ask the people from Parks Canada a question about the 2 billion trees. Planting them is a major part of Canada's strengthened climate plan. Now we are told that the Department of the Environment is going to play a role supporting the Department of Natural Resources in carrying out the plan.

How will the Department of the Environment help the Department of Natural Resources to achieve that objective?

Finally, let me ask you how many trees have been planted to date, wink, wink.

**The Chair:** Could I ask you to answer the question quickly?

[*English*]

**Mr. Ron Hallman:** I think I heard you say that was for Parks. I'll do my best.

I won't speak for Natural Resources, but I will say Parks Canada very much agrees with and works with our federal partners to the end that natural climate solutions such as planting trees, restoring grasslands and wetlands, and improving land management practices can make significant contributions.

Parks is mobilizing at this time to plant 150,000 trees this summer in up to 18 parks from coast to coast to coast, including 45,000 trees in Rouge National Urban Park. A lot of what we're doing is reaching out to local community groups like 10 Thousand Trees for the Rouge and other organizations, to partner with on that and provide jobs to youth, including disadvantaged youth who may have been affected negatively by the pandemic, to help do that.

• (1830)

**The Chair:** Thanks.

Mr. Bachrach.

**Mr. Taylor Bachrach:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Perhaps I'll pick up where my colleague, Madam Pausé, left off, talking about the two billion trees.

I appreciate, Mr. Hallman, that 150,000 trees are being planted, but we need somewhere around 220 million trees per year in order to make that target by the end of the decade.

I'm wondering a couple of things. First of all—and I understand you're working on this in collaboration with NRCan—I'm wondering where those plans are at in terms of this planting season. Here in British Columbia, tree-planting companies plant about 300 million trees per year, but it's a massive effort. I'm wondering how many trees it's estimated are going to be planted under this federal initiative this year.

Secondly, I know there are a lot of questions around the effectiveness of this tree-planting initiative as a carbon sequestration and carbon storage approach. What are the considerations that your department is ensuring are part of the program, so that we don't simply offset trees that would already be planted under a company's silviculture requirements in the forest industry, or plant trees where they don't grow properly, or plant the wrong species in the wrong places?

Can you speak to those two things: how many trees this year, and what considerations is your department bringing to the table?

**Ms. Christine Hogan:** Thank you very much. I'm happy to try to comment on the commitment around the two billion trees.

As you well know, this is a very important initiative led by Natural Resources Canada. As Minister Wilkinson made mention during his comments earlier, NRCan has gone out with expressions of interest to identify potential opportunities for this planting season. That work is well under way at Natural Resources Canada.

I can comment that Environment and Climate Change Canada, and particularly our scientists and our folks in the Canadian Wildlife Service, of course, are playing an important role because there's an objective within the tree-planting initiative focused on habitat restoration. This goes to the member's question about where trees are planted, and species. We are working with Natural Resources Canada in that regard.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Redekopp.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Thank you.

I want to come back to Mr. Moffet on the hydrofluorocarbon, HFC, issue. If I'm understanding you correctly, what you said was that because we were under our Kigali targets, we had the room, essentially, to offer exemptions. Is that, in a nutshell, what you're saying?

**Mr. John Moffet:** I'm not saying that the decision was connected to that. I'm observing that we are below our target, and we are exceeding the performance expected by our international commitment. The decision to issue the exceptions was strictly based on a review of the criteria that are explicitly in the regulation, and whether or not each applicant met the criteria. As I explained earlier, some applicants did and some applicants did not.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Okay, thanks.

On that subject, we did ask the minister, but just to confirm this, we are requesting a list of all the people who were approved for an exemption under the HFC regulations. Can you provide that?

**Mr. John Moffet:** Yes. Those unlimited exemptions are public. We would be happy to provide a list.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Thank you.

I just want to come back again, Ms. Ryan, to Safety Power. The message I was hearing from them was that the testing regime is not going to be ready in time for when the regulations come into effect.

Is that your understanding? Am I understanding that wrong and the testing regime will be ready for these companies, so they will have a pathway forward?

**Ms. Helen Ryan:** Our regulations, which we put out in draft form and then finalized, laid out a provision for an alternative testing method. The responsibility for the testing method is on the applicant who is wishing to use something that's not provided for in the regulation. It's actually the company that needs to put forward the method that would be appropriate for its equipment. It's to provide flexibility for those that are not following the traditional approach in terms of how they are undertaking their assessments.

• (1835)

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Okay.

You're saying that the testing regime is in place. It's just up to the company to use it.

**Ms. Helen Ryan:** That's correct.

Alternative test methods are provided for in the regulation. Those provisions exist. It's up to the company to put forward a proposal that lays out how they would go about testing their equipment. We would undertake an assessment to determine if that testing is equivalent. They would then be able to move forward with that.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Mr. Chair, I going to pass the rest of my time over to Mr. Jeneroux.

**The Chair:** You have a minute and 45 seconds, Mr. Jeneroux.

**Mr. Matt Jeneroux:** That's all I'll need, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

Ms. Ryan, I'll go back to the question asked about the provinces expressing their displeasure in the proposed order and proposed approach. You listed Alberta, and you said there were five.

Can you confirm with me what the four others are?

**Ms. Helen Ryan:** I'm not in a position at this moment. A summary of the comments was put out with respect to the proposed order. We received some subsequent comments. We are working collectively and collaboratively with the provinces and territories on a number of initiatives, including those laid out—

**Mr. Matt Jeneroux:** Pardon me, Ms. Ryan. I know you guys do and you always will, but you listed Alberta already.

If you can't, can Ms. Hogan, being in the deputy minister position, comment on the other four?

**Ms. Christine Hogan:** I don't have that information with me at the moment.

**Mr. Matt Jeneroux:** Can we get that relatively soon, seeing that this just came out and obviously we're doing our plastics study?

If there's any chance you would be able to provide that to the committee, sooner rather than later would be great.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for indulging my question.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Is there a bit more time, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** You have 25 seconds.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Back on the HFCs, we asked for the list of those who were approved.

I also want to make sure we get a list of those who applied but were not approved.

Thank you.

**Mr. John Moffet:** I will have to get back to you as to whether that is publicly available information. That may be protected by business confidentiality.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Thank you.

As a committee, that's something we're asking for.

**The Chair:** Okay, it's understood.

Last, but by no means least, we have Mr. Bittle.

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** Was it Mr. Longfield?

I don't think it was me.

**The Chair:** Mr. Longfield, if you want it to be you, go ahead.

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield:** Thank you.

In the estimates, you mentioned Eureka. I'm looking at the contributions for the World Meteorological Organization and also the support for predicting weather and environmental conditions.

I was fortunate to visit your Environment and Climate Change site up in Eureka and saw the work they were doing in collaboration with international partners. Canada has an arctic footprint. Most of the world knows that, but I think we take that for granted.

In the climate change research that's going on in the Arctic and with all the countries that are using Canada as a spot to also do research, there is a lot of horizontal work between your department and other departments. You mentioned the runway work. We also have defences up there. The Department of National Defence has a small presence up there, with some communications networks.

Can you comment on the importance of continuing the investments in the Arctic, please?

**Ms. Christine Hogan:** Well, thank you very much for that. Thank you for noting that the main estimates include our assessed contributions to the World Meteorological Organization. Canada is a very valued international collaborator and partner in meteorological matters and, of course, as you well know, on climate science and also other atmospheric science areas. Eureka is a very important resource, as is our centre in Alert, Nunavut, which is the most northern research facility of its kind.

Of course, we do a lot of work around long-term measurement of greenhouse gases, short-lived climate pollutants, persistent organic pollutants and ozone. The assets we have in the north are important, and it's critically important that we continue to invest in those, as is featured in the estimates before you.

● (1840)

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield:** Thank you.

In sharing the infrastructure with universities and with researchers, there's quite the collaboration that goes on there. I mean, congratulations. I was blown away when I went up there, but I also saw it can be ignored because it's in the high Arctic—out of sight, out of mind. It's absolutely critical for the global fight on climate change.

**Ms. Christine Hogan:** I appreciate your bringing that forward.

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield:** Thank you.

Mr. Bittle, I think, might have a few questions.

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** I do.

Sorry for the back-and-forth, Mr. Chair. I thought it was Mr. Longfield's turn.

I guess Mr. Hallman got cut off from my analogy about Centre Block and West Block. I guess to close that loop was my analogy with respect to the heritage buildings that we're familiar with. Maybe that's not a fair question, but was that an accurate analogy for the Parks Canada issues that you described?

**Mr. Ron Hallman:** Well, Mr. Chair, I would be reluctant to comment about the parliamentary precinct in general, because I'm not involved with that. However, as an analogy of not knowing what you're dealing with until you get in behind a wall or into the plumbing or underground, particularly with a heritage building that is an iconic and treasured asset for the nation, I think it's a very good point and very relevant to a lot of the assets that we are dealing with on behalf of Canadians.

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** Thank you so much.

One of my colleagues mentioned that COVID-19 has really made us understand the importance of nature. I'm wondering if someone can speak, with respect to Parks Canada, about what the agency is doing to support the government's commitment to increasing urban parks across the country?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Ron Hallman:** I would like to pass the floor to Darlene Upton.

[*English*]

She is our relevant VP who is leading the charge on our work on urban parks.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Ms. Upton.

[*English*]

**Ms. Darlene Upton (Vice-President, Protected Areas Establishment and Conservation, Parks Canada Agency):** As is noted, the Government of Canada committed to expanding Canadians' access to nature by creating a system of national urban parks. Those will have positive benefits for biodiversity, climate, connecting people to nature, reconciliation, and equitability as well. There are a number of possible sites that are going to be of interest. We've had several interested proponents approach Parks Canada already to discuss that with us. A formal process for selecting the sites has not been set up yet, but we're using the results of the minister's round table consultation, which dealt with urban parks, to inform our process, as well as the meetings we're having with various proponents.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention that another spot I can see from my window—a green space around Trudeau airport—is an item of interest for a local group here. I just thought I'd mention that because they've been working with me a bit.

Yes, Mr. Hallman.

**Mr. Ron Hallman:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

If I could reveal a bit of an agenda in calling upon Ms. Upton to answer that question, I wonder if I might acknowledge that Darlene has, as of yesterday, completed 25 consecutive years of service to the Parks Canada agency.

**The Chair:** Oh, that's wonderful. Congratulations.

**Mr. Ron Hallman:** She's a remarkable leader who has made a remarkable contribution to Canada, and we thank her for everything she has done.

**The Chair:** Yes, we do. Thank you for bringing that up.

Well, that brings our meeting to a close. I thank the witnesses who have been kind enough to come before us today and answer questions.

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield:** Congratulations, Darlene.

**The Chair:** Yes. Congratulations.

Thank you to the witnesses.

The order of reference for the committee to study the main estimates expires on Monday, May 31. If the committee feels that it has completed its consideration of the main estimates, then we can proceed to taking a decision on the votes that were referred to the committee.

There are seven votes on the main estimates 2021-22 that were referred to the committee. Unless anyone objects, I will seek the unanimous consent of the committee to group the votes together for a single decision.

Is there unanimous consent to proceed that way?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Shall all votes referred to the committee in the main estimates 2021-22, less interim supply, carry?

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Vote 1—Operating expenditures.....874,087,203

Vote 5—Capital expenditures.....104,520,877

Vote 10—Grants and contributions.....623,678,109

(Votes 1, 5 and 10 agreed to on division)

IMPACT ASSESSMENT AGENCY OF CANADA

Vote 1—Operating expenditures.....50,983,558

Vote 5—Grants and contributions.....22,172,274

(Votes 1 and 5 agreed to on division)

PARKS CANADA AGENCY

Vote 1—Program expenditures.....916,901,348

Vote 5—Payments to the New Parks and Historic Sites Account.....7,371,000

(Votes 1 and 5 agreed to on division)

Shall I report the votes, less the amount voted in interim supply, back to the House?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** By way of alerting members to what we're doing next week, which is a break week, we've decided to meet for three three-hour meetings. The meetings will be May 17, 19 and 20, on Bill C-12.

Correct me if I'm wrong, Madam Clerk, but I believe that the meetings start at 2:30 p.m., for three hours, so for 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Because of various rules around the House administration, they will be entirely virtual meetings. I would discourage anyone from showing up to the committee room next week for any meetings.

As I mentioned before, we'll have the minister lead off on May 17 at 2:30 p.m.

Ms. McLeod, did I see a hand go up?

• (1845)

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** I'm sorry. Did you say that they weren't three hours?

**The Chair:** They are three hours. They are three-hour meetings.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** All three are three hours.

**The Chair:** Yes. They will be from 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Thank you to all, and to all a good evening. We'll see each other next week, if not before, in various other virtual fora.

This meeting has come to an end.

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