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Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development

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• (1300)

[*Translation*]

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

Welcome to meeting number 31 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development.

I'd like to begin the meeting by electing a member of the Conservative Party to the position of first vice-chair, as this position is vacant.

For this portion, I will turn it over to the clerk, who will take care of the election of the first vice-chair.

[*English*]

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Alexandre Longpré): Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the first vice-chair must be a member of the official opposition.

I am now prepared to receive motions for the first vice-chair.

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): I nominate Damien Kurek.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Dave Epp that Damien Kurek be elected as first vice-chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.): I second the motion.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Dave Epp that Damien Kurek be elected as first vice-chair of the committee.

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Can I second that motion?

The Chair: It was seconded already, but I guess you can. We know your intent now, so it's noted.

The Clerk: Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried and Damien Kurek duly elected first vice-chair of the committee.

The Chair: Congratulations, Mr. Kurek. We look forward to working with you on the steering committee, which meets not too often, but from time to time.

We are completing our hearings for the clean-tech study today in the first hour. I would just like to mention that, in accordance with our routine motion, all the witnesses have completed their technical tests, and they have passed, so we're set to go.

We have three witnesses today.

We have Ivette Vera-Perez from the Canadian Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Association. From Fogdog Energy Solutions Inc., we have Swapan Kakumanu. From the Greater Victoria Harbour Authority, we have Ian Robertson.

Each witness has three minutes to give their opening remarks.

We'll start with Ms. Vera-Perez.

Ms. Ivette Vera-Perez (President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Association): Good afternoon.

My name is Ivette Vera-Perez. I am the president and CEO of the Canadian Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Association, CHFCA, with over 160 members at all stages of the hydrogen supply chain. Our members export clean technologies to over 42 countries that account for 65% of the world population.

According to a recent report by EY, the annual Canadian hydrogen market could reach \$100 billion and create 350,000 jobs by 2050. Recognizing this potential and the fact that we cannot get to net zero without hydrogen, CHFCA members recently visited Ottawa, where we made a number of recommendations that I bring to you today.

Canada must keep up with the ambition and activity in jurisdictions across the globe. Countries like Germany, China and the U.S. have made massive strides in scaling up the industry. The Inflation Reduction Act in the U.S. is one example. Its simplicity and the amount offered for hydrogen outpace Canada. We must operate in a global context when developing funding and policy so that we don't see our projects and companies migrate to other jurisdictions.

The Canadian 2020 hydrogen strategy committed to develop 30 hubs by 2030. Since then, there has been much discussion about the Canadian hydrogen sector, but not significant action at the federal level. Canada's commitments for the sector continue to increase, including the agreement to export clean hydrogen by 2025, but we're far behind in meeting this target. Deployment of the hydrogen strategy must be appropriately resourced to accelerate its implementation.

Programs like the strategic innovation fund and the clean fuels fund are great signals of the ambition the government has for Canadian clean-tech companies and for the industry, but the resource-intensive application process and the long wait times are a deterrent for project proponents. We must commit to a reasonable turnaround time for SIF, CFF, CIB and any other future funding.

Finally, federal strategies and policies should build on and enable each other, but too often they work at cross-purposes. This is costly, inefficient and ineffective. We recommend that all proposed federal strategies and policies undergo an assessment of how they support the government's vision. For example, Canada has declared a goal of net-zero emissions by 2050. Hydrogen has a key role to play in this respect. We must put forth the right set of enabling policies that jointly work to attain these goals.

In closing, Canada has always been at the forefront of the global hydrogen industry, but with the rapid development of the sector and our lack of action at home, Canada is falling behind. We must invest smartly, heavily and rapidly to reclaim our leadership position in the hydrogen sector.

Thank you very much. I look forward to your questions.

● (1305)

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Vera-Perez.

You're next, Mr. Kakumanu. You have three minutes.

[English]

Mr. Swapan Kakumanu (Chief Financial Officer and Co-Founder, Fogdog Energy Solutions Inc.): Thank you.

My name is Swapan Kakumanu. I'm the co-founder and director of Fogdog Energy Solutions Inc.

Fogdog is a privately owned Canadian company headquartered in Calgary, Alberta. Fogdog's mission is to eliminate landfills. We do that by creating groundbreaking innovations, where Fogdog systems use materials that would have otherwise been sent to landfills. Those materials provide sustainable green energy and raw materials while reducing greenhouse gases. Fogdog is currently working on a few joint venture partnerships and projects in Canada, as well as internationally.

To put this into context, Canada currently produces around 32 million tonnes of landfill waste per year. Fogdog's mission is to remove these 32 million tonnes from landfills and, in turn, help reduce the climate change temperature by up to 3°C in Canada. Fogdog can process many forms of waste, such as municipal, plastic, tires, oil waste, agricultural waste, etc., and, in turn, create high-quality products, such as graphite, graphene, hydrogen and other green fuels. Graphite, for example, is in high demand in the electric vehicle industry; it's used to manufacture batteries to run these electric vehicles. Currently, China is the largest exporter of graphite in the world.

Let me explain a bit about landfills.

Landfills are a huge problem and have a direct impact on climate change temperature. Less than 10% of plastics are recycled and the rest end up in landfills. Landfills are reaching capacity and new

ones need to be built. They contribute up to approximately 30% of Canada's methane emissions—a powerful greenhouse gas. Methane, as everybody knows, is 21 times more potent than CO₂.

The full-cycle cost of an average landfill is over \$30 million, and it also has a long-term environmental liability and impact. Landfills are huge fire hazards. We have recently seen several of these going up in flames and, in turn, emitting harmful gases as the landfills burn. Currently, landfills do not provide any revenue or energy but are a huge cost, both financially and environmentally. Municipal waste management is expensive. Municipal governments in Canada collectively spend around \$4 billion per year on waste collection, transportation and disposal, and on maintaining these landfills. Finally, every landfill leaks. Leachate, a toxic brew of waste chemicals, leaks into the ground system.

Let me talk a bit about Fogdog and the municipalities.

● (1310)

[Translation]

The Chair: I'm sorry to interrupt, Mr. Kakumanu, but the three minutes are up.

Please wrap up quickly. A period of questions and answers will follow.

[English]

Mr. Swapan Kakumanu: Sure, I will do that.

Around 2017, China stopped taking all the plastic and waste to process, resulting in most of the countries, including Canada, now facing huge problems in maintaining waste. The Fogdog process does not need upfront segregation or separation of waste. It takes its waste as it comes. The Fogdog process—

The Chair: Thanks very much. We'll have to stop there.

We'll go to Mr. Robertson for three minutes.

Mr. Ian Robertson (Chief Executive Officer, Greater Victoria Harbour Authority): Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as you continue your important work on clean technologies in Canada.

My name is Ian Robertson. I'm the CEO of the Greater Victoria Harbour Authority.

To start, I wish to acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen peoples, on whose traditional territories we operate, and the Songhees Nation and the Esquimalt Nation, whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day. Both nations form part of our eight member agencies.

For those who are not aware, the Greater Victoria Harbour Authority is a community-based not-for-profit organization that is committed to the stewardship and sustainable growth of Victoria's dynamic working harbour. Our organization is governed by a 13-member board of directors, represented by four independent members and eight member agencies.

The Victoria cruise terminal at the Breakwater District is Canada's busiest port of call. Victoria is an essential Canadian cruise port of call for vessels operating in the coastal waters of southeast Alaska and British Columbia. In 2022, Victoria will have welcomed 330 ship calls carrying 725,000 passengers.

In 2018, greenhouse gas emissions from the Victoria cruise terminal were equivalent to just over 3,200 cars on the road per year. Since 2010, criteria air contaminants have decreased by 41%; sulphur dioxide has been reduced by 95%; particulate matter has been reduced by 79%; and cruise passenger counts have increased by 45%, while GHG emissions have increased by only 19% due to increasingly stringent emission standards. Cruise emissions account for 96% of all emissions at the Victoria cruise terminal.

In January 2019, we contracted Synergy Enterprises to develop a full-scale emissions inventory for the terminal to help identify where we could make improvements to emissions under our control and jurisdiction. After extensive study of various shore power technologies, frequency conversion technology installed with the shore power connection has been recommended to optimize for variability in types of cruise and non-cruise vessels, further adding to the long-term diversification of the deepwater port.

The study found that by implementing a shoreside power system at two berths, the estimated annual reduction of carbon emissions is between 6,400 and 7,300 tonnes of CO₂. This equates to a total savings of just over 131,000 tonnes of CO₂ through 2040 over a no-action scenario. Sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides would also similarly reduce as well. These reductions would be in addition to gains made by the cruise industry to meet the global challenge of reducing the rate of carbon emissions across the fleet by 40% by 2030.

As other ports in North America and elsewhere have seen, shore power technology drastically reduces emissions where vessels are in port, as well as reducing emissions from buildings and fleet vehicles, along with other vessels being able to plug into the shore power infrastructure. This is an important move that is being adopted by the cruise lines themselves. By 2030, 85% of all vehicles calling to the Victoria cruise terminal will be shore power-capable. That number will—

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll have to stop there, but there will be opportunities to share information in the Q and A period.

[*Translation*]

We'll start the first round of questions with Mr. Deltell.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Good afternoon, honourable colleagues.

Welcome to the witnesses, who are joining us by videoconference.

My first questions will be for Ms. Vera-Perez on hydrogen.

[*English*]

It's good to see you, Madame Ivette Vera-Perez. I'm very pleased to see you at our committee.

[*Translation*]

When it comes to hydrogen, it's impossible to set aside the issue of electricity and the enormous energy requirements involved in producing green hydrogen.

Can you tell us more about that?

What are the challenges that Canada faces in meeting the electricity needs when it comes to hydrogen?

• (1315)

[*English*]

Ms. Ivette Vera-Perez: Thank you for the question. It is a good question.

I have read before that Canada has agreed at a national level that it would have to double or triple its capacity, as a rule of thumb. This is not only for hydrogen, but in general for electrification.

Hydrogen actually provides an avenue to enhance the grid, if you will, in the sense that hydrogen can be produced when the peak needs of electricity consumption are not there. In those times when you need less, you can store hydrogen. Hydrogen is one of the few mediums that you can store at the terawatt level for a long period of time. Fortunately, in Canada we have a blessed geography that allows us to store hydrogen in depleted natural gas caverns and salt caverns. That's not only in Ontario, but in different provinces as well.

For example, you can extend the life and the size of projects in the solar and wind space, but allow them to produce hydrogen when the grid is not in a position to absorb all that electricity, and then use it when needed. At the same time, transmission lines can be a bottleneck, if you will, when it comes to bringing more renewable wind and solar energy on board. Hydrogen provides that avenue as well.

Depending on the different provinces in Canada, we need to understand how and when in the 24-hour period it is more optimal to produce hydrogen.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: If we look at the Quebec situation, as you know we have a great expertise and a great asset when we talk about hydroelectricity since, I would say, the 1950s and the 1960s. There are also other projects.

Maybe you noticed that the premier of Quebec said three weeks ago that he was open to having a brand new facility for that.

[*Translation*]

Do you think it would be a good thing to ensure we have more dams in Quebec, where that's feasible, obviously? However, it's important to realize that constructing a new dam takes at least 10 years.

For example, the iconic Manic-5 Dam began construction in 1959 and operation in 1968. It's the emblem of Quebec and the pride of all Quebecers. It took nearly 10 years to complete it.

What do you see as hydro's potential as it relates to hydrogen and green hydrogen?

What other sources of energy could produce electricity?

[*English*]

Ms. Ivette Vera-Perez: That's a very good question.

You're very right. Hydro provides a tremendously stable potential for electricity generation, but it takes a long time. This is why we need to think short-, medium- and long-term. It's the same as nuclear, for example. There are lots of conversations in Ontario.

These technologies take time to be at the product's full capacity. Hydro is an option. Again, thinking long-term, we're looking to develop a new way to scale up an industry here. We think about the volumes we want to produce in 2040 and 2050. At that time, obviously, the hydro power facility will likely be up and running—if it is approved, of course.

In the meantime, you think about what is quicker to develop. There are renewable energy projects, for example, like solar and wind. Wind also has its lead time to production, but it tends to be a little bit shorter. There's solar as well.

Then there's always the utilization of the grid. Again, think about what times of the day are the most optimal. There's also the possibility of producing hydrogen through all our methods, which are not necessarily producing hydrogen by electrolytic means. There's also pyrolysis, etc.

It's about looking at the overall mix and thinking about how many tonnes we want to produce, for example, for 2025, 2028, 2030 and 2050. When will the hydro plant come in and what do we need before then? Then work backwards.

I know companies like Hydro-Québec are looking at the whole mix of the options in Quebec. Right now, Quebec is leading the charge, if you will, in the production of hydrogen from electrolysis.

• (1320)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Thank you very much for your testimony.

We believe very strongly in the power of hydro. We also welcome with great enthusiasm the Premier of Quebec's intention to relaunch major projects. They aren't just about building brand new plants. It could also be other plants that would be added to existing ones.

The Chair: Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Duguid.

[*English*]

Mr. Terry Duguid: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you to all of our witnesses today.

My first questions are for Ms. Vera-Perez.

You referred to the right set of enabling policies in order to scale up hydrogen production. You only had three minutes to amplify on that, so I'll give you the opportunity to give us a little more detail. While you're doing that, perhaps you could reflect also on the Inflation Reduction Act and some of the gaps you see between Canada and the U.S. and the threats to our competitiveness.

These are issues that have come in with this committee repeatedly.

Ms. Ivette Vera-Perez: Thank you very much for the question. It's a two-part question, so if you see that I don't answer one portion, please let me know.

First, on the policy side, there isn't one single industrial policy that will achieve all of the objectives that we as a country have, for example. Something I have observed in this role, and in previous roles, is that oftentimes we have a general direction—an overarching goal. Let's call net zero by 2050 an overarching goal. We have developed road maps for a number of technologies and industries, and in this space, I'm focusing on hydrogen. I'm thinking of that as an overarching goal for Canada.

Now, when we develop policies and funding mechanisms, sometimes we forget about looking at the big picture. I can give you a couple of examples. The green buildings strategy, for example, doesn't account for what we call power-to-X or blending of hydrogen. Meanwhile, Nova Scotia has just made amendments to the Electricity Act and to other acts that allow it to expand the hydrocarbons act, for example, and to include hydrogen and hydrogen blends as part of the Pipeline Act.

We need to think about the big picture. What is the overarching goal for Canada? How do the policies help to meet these goals, and how do the policies help each other? There is also the CCUS policy as well.

Do a little bit of a scan. With regard to big goals for the country and new policies or new funding mechanisms, how do they enable the goal? Not all of them will participate in this particular strategy or goal, but for those that do, how do they help that goal and, again, how do they match each other? It's like a little puzzle, and piece by piece, we put the puzzle together.

That's on the policy side. On the IRA side, it's only been a couple of months since August 16. There are lots and lots of discussions on IRA. I've been on many webinars, panels and discussions. The day before yesterday, the Canadian embassy in the U.S. gave a very good presentation for Canadian companies in general, not only hydrogen companies.

There are a number of components. There are the components for costing projects, of which the ITC, the investment tax credit, is important. What is included in the ITC? It's only equipment. Projects have costs beyond equipment. One example is the cost of electricity, of course. Is that going to be included in the ITC?

There is the production tax credit that provides a stimulus of up to \$3 a kilogram of hydrogen produced—which is not an absolute number and depends on the pathway and a number of indicators. There are all kinds of other potentials for improving the economics of a project, depending on training opportunities and domestically built components, etc. The overall envelope is very attractive.

There are also resources for those communities—municipalities, local jurisdictions—that need to develop permitting. There are resources for those groups to staff themselves so that they can help streamline the regulatory and permitting side.

• (1325)

Mr. Terry Duguid: Thank you very much. I think I have time for one more question.

Mr. Robertson, I had the good fortune of sitting down with May- or Helps and talking about the port and shoreside power production.

I wonder if you could amplify on what power you are using. Is that renewable, solar, wind or electricity? Maybe comment on the transferability of the kind of knowledge that you're developing to other ports of call like Halifax or the Great Lakes, because I am sure they are hungry for that kind of information.

Mr. Ian Robertson: Yes, we're very blessed, obviously, out here on the west coast that the technology and the source would be hydroelectric. There is an abundance of that.

What we're seeing is that the cruise lines are making great advances in terms of their technology and their ability to plug into ports. I think by 2040 95% of all the cruise ships that will be calling in Victoria will be capable.... I am just reading a statistic that 85% of all cruise lines will be shore power-capable by 2028. We're seeing good advances on the cruise line side. I think as a country and certainly as a destination, we're not seeing us catching up, so there's an opportunity for us to do that.

The Chair: Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Pauzé, you have the floor.

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to begin by thanking the witnesses for being with us today and especially for sending us their briefs in time for us to read them, which isn't always the case. As a former school teacher, I give them a 10 out of 10.

Ms. Vera-Perez, I'd like to come back to the topic of hydrogen. I've taken note of your concerns. You aren't the only one to say that it's very difficult to access the Canada Infrastructure Bank and get funding.

You also mentioned the United States and the rapid development there. In Texas, one company has set up facilities that are on track to being the largest in the world. It's the fast-growing Green Hydrogen International. While Canada is stagnating, other countries are making progress.

I think that if hydrogen is to be part of the mix of energy sources that will be used to achieve net-zero emissions, it must be green hydrogen. You can produce hydrogen from hydrocarbons, but it wouldn't be green hydrogen.

Also, my understanding of the industry is that the problem isn't the water, but the electrolyzers, which are expensive and require special expertise and strategic minerals.

You say that Canada has already been at the forefront in this area. If it wants to stay ahead of the curve, what does it need to look at to really be a global producer of clean green hydrogen?

[*English*]

Ms. Ivette Vera-Perez: I am going to start with expertise. That's a very important topic.

Canada has a very highly qualified workforce. Canada has been a leader—I can elaborate on that—since the early 20th century in hydrogen. There is quite a lot of knowledge in Canada. There are very high-level universities, highly-qualified individuals. At the trade level, there's a lot of training that still remains to be done. Fortunately, a lot of the skills from workers in the oil and gas industry are very much transferable. There is an incremental amount of training for hydrogen technicians for tradespeople, but it's not that they come from a very low baseline. That in a way is a blessing.

There are a number of colleges already in Canada that are developing expertise. There is the College of the North Atlantic, Cambrian College and NAIT in Alberta. There is Red River College and BCIT. Every province has colleges that are very seriously looking at what that upskilling or re-skilling or retooling, if you will, looks like in hydrogen. I have a number of members, actually, who have taken it upon themselves to develop those skills—

• (1330)

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: I'm afraid I have to interrupt you, Ms. Vera-Perez.

What I understand from your testimony is that we have everything we need in Canada, but it's not being promoted. Something is missing, and Canada isn't putting the money needed into moving this forward.

Mr. Kakumanu, I have to say that I was quite impressed with all the information you provided in your document. It's a gold mine.

You said that your company is involved in several projects and partnerships.

First, where are the fuels produced?

Second, is your technology patented?

Third, are the fuels produced through the process presented on your website biofuels? In other words, do they emit greenhouse gases when burned?

[English]

Mr. Swapan Kakumanu: Thank you for the question.

Our technology is basically trying to get rid of landfills. The base technology is pyrolysis. That is the basic technology behind it. We're not going to be patenting pyrolysis, because that's a technology that's already out there. We have unique know-how in terms of how we use that technology without the segregation of waste up front. We would no longer need green bins, black bins and blue bins, especially with municipal waste. We would be able to take all the mixed waste, both solid and liquid, and process it through our system, our know-how technology.

The projects we're working on right now are mostly with municipalities. We're working with a lot of municipalities in Canada right now, especially in Alberta, where we are almost ready to... We have signed MOUs and we have built our first prototype units, which are up and running here in Calgary. We are also looking at the private sector with private waste management companies, which actually have purchase orders with us so that we're building units for them.

We're also working with quite a few municipalities in the U.S. Actually, there's a lot of attraction from the U.S. From Oklahoma, we had a group of waste management companies travel up here to Calgary to see our demo unit. They're really excited, because they want to be able to share with us; they want to give us all their waste—

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: I'm sorry to interrupt you, Mr. Kakumanu, but I don't have much time, and I'd like you to answer my last question.

Do the fuels produced through your process emit greenhouse gases when they are burned?

The Chair: Please give a very short answer. It's a yes-or-no question, Mr. Kakumanu.

[English]

Mr. Swapan Kakumanu: Okay.

I would say yes, because basically what we're taking is plastic and tires and carbon-rich waste that will come back into some type of diesel. Yes, if you burn that, there will be greenhouse gases.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

You have the floor, Ms. Collins.

[English]

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank all the witnesses for their testimony and for being here.

I have two questions for Ian Robertson.

Can you comment a bit more on how shore power is progressing in Victoria and in other ports? You also mentioned the commitment of the cruise industry to have the vast majority of their fleet shore power-ready—85% by 2028 and 95% by 2040. Will we be missing out on an opportunity to develop a cleaner cruise industry if the Greater Victoria Harbour Authority and others aren't able to get the funding they need for shore power?

Mr. Ian Robertson: Thank you for the question.

In Victoria, we do not have shore power. That's our main goal and our main priority right now. We're very close. We have funding commitments from the provincial government. We have funding commitments from the cruise lines themselves. We're just waiting on the federal government, and I'm hopeful that will happen.

As I mentioned, there are very few ports across Canada that are shore power-capable. On the west coast, there's Vancouver and then there's us, and we do not have shore power. I think there's an opportunity for us to catch up. It would be sad to see the cruise lines make their advancements and be shore power-capable and then we as an industry, specifically we as a port, not being able to provide the technology or the hookup with the capability for them to plug in and power down while they're in ports.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Thank you so much.

Victoria's port is a bit unique. It's located right beside the James Bay neighbourhood. Pollution from the cruise ships is a big concern for residents. Can you speak about the additional challenges that presents and how shore power could make a difference?

• (1335)

Mr. Ian Robertson: You're absolutely right, MP Collins. Our port is adjacent to a neighbourhood community. That also creates, I think, another level of responsibility and obligation: We have to do everything we can within our power to reduce the environmental impact upon the community. That's where this report has identified that the installation of shore power would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 96% off the facility.

It's important that we move ahead with this project. As I said, we're very close. We just need the support from the federal government to be able to make this a reality.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Another thing that makes our harbour unique is that the Greater Victoria Harbour Authority is not part of the Canada Port Authorities.

Can you talk a bit about that, and how that impacts this issue?

Mr. Ian Robertson: You're absolutely right. We're a not-for-profit organization. What that means is that we do not have any ongoing access to operating funds from either the federal government or the provincial government, unlike other Canadian port authorities, such as Vancouver, Nanaimo, Port Alberni, and Prince Rupert here on the west coast. It's important that we do everything we can to seek support from the federal government.

I do note, and this is important for the work that you're doing, that about eight to 10 years ago, the federal government did have a shore power program that was available to all ports. I would urge this committee to reconsider making that available to not just Victoria but all ports across the country that would like to utilize the very clean technology that's available in order to put the technology in to allow cruise and other ocean-going vessels to power down while they're in port.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Thanks for that. I feel like that's a very important recommendation.

Can you talk a bit about the history of how the Greater Victoria Harbour Authority got to the place where it is, where it's not part of the Canada Port Authorities, and also the history of Vancouver, and how they got shore power?

Mr. Ian Robertson: The Greater Victoria Harbour Authority was created back in 2002 when the federal government of that day divested a number of smaller harbour properties, and that's how we were created. We were established as a not-for-profit organization governed by a number of local agencies.

The governance model is very good, very strong, and it supports local input. However, the downside is that we do not have access to federal funding, unlike other Canadian port authorities across the country.

Vancouver was one of the first ports in Canada to install shore power. That was done in 2010, leading up to the Olympics. That was done based on the program the federal government had at that time, which provided funding for ports to install that technology.

We've seen a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in Vancouver. It's our goal in Victoria to mirror that same result.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Another kind of unique piece of the Greater Victoria Harbour Authority is that you have a number of people on your board representing different stakeholders, including the Songhees and Esquimalt nations.

Can you talk a bit about the importance of having the nations as part of the governance structure of your organization?

Mr. Ian Robertson: Ever since we were created, we are honoured to have both nations as part of our board governance model, and that allows us to work with them very closely. We were one of the first ports in Canada to assign 1% of our operating revenue toward supporting reconciliation programs for the Esquimalt Nation and the Songhees Nation. We're very proud of that.

What it also means is that we're very mindful of our other stakeholders in order to receive their support. In order for us to continue to support the Songhees Nation and the Esquimalt Nation and the work they're doing, it's important that this technology be employed. About 72% of our revenues come from cruises. It's a very important sector for us, and it allows us to continue our very good work in the local area.

The Chair: Unfortunately, we'll have to stop there.

We'll start the second round with Mr. McLean, for five minutes.

Mr. Greg McLean: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I welcome all the witnesses. Thanks for coming today.

My questions today are for Ms. Vera-Perez.

Thank you so much for the briefing you gave me and my office a couple of weeks ago on hydrogen economy and its importance to our future. I have followed up with a lot of research after our meeting, and I want to ask you a few questions here.

We all know the world is going to demand more power going forward, more energy from all sources, and hydrogen is one of those sources. It's obviously pretty important for us. Leadership, of course, is often in blue hydrogen.

Can you tell me, when you look at our path forward...? Can you talk about green hydrogen, and the actual power consumption required to produce green hydrogen?

• (1340)

Ms. Ivette Vera-Perez: This is a question that comes up over and over. We're looking at, for example, five gigawatts out of the Newfoundland offshore wind capacity. The Province of Newfoundland has just allowed the production of five gigawatts of offshore wind. That's going to be new, and that would be, in principle, dedicated to hydrogen. I don't have a number right now in terms of gigawatts or tonnes and what that would be equivalent to—

Mr. Greg McLean: What I'm asking about, Ms. Perez—and I'm sorry to interrupt—is that the whole thing about energy is energy return over energy invested. If it costs 60% of the power just to produce hydrogen and to get hydrogen out, at the end of the day, on the stack of energy options available to society, it is the most energy-consumptive. Would you agree?

Ms. Ivette Vera-Perez: I would agree that, if we're talking about the round-trip efficiency of a system, it is not the highest round-trip efficiency; however, when you think about the whole picture, efficiency is one of the components.

This is an industry that's scaling up now, so you will argue that efficiency will improve over time and is already improving over time, so that's one point. The other point is that we cannot forget about the robustness and resiliency of the system that we're trying to develop going forward. This is also something that hydrogen brings into the mix—

Mr. Greg McLean: Thank you, Ms. Perez. I only have a little bit of time here. I appreciate what you're saying, that as technology develops, it becomes more efficient going forward once you get through it.

I was at the International Energy Agency meetings back in March, and a gentleman named Dr. Andrew Forrest, who is a billionaire from Australia and heads Fortescue Future Industries, said that hydrogen will not be viable as a fuel source for 20 to 30 years and that it's important for governments to de-risk it until that point in time.

In the meantime, de-risking it means a whole bunch of money, like \$12 billion off the coast of Newfoundland to produce hydrogen from wind energy, consume power to turn it into either ethanol or ammonia, and then ship it, all of which is very energy-intensive. As a matter of fact, in some cases, it will result in energy lost through the process.

At what point in time do you think this will become more robust so it's not consuming 15 times as much cost as blue hydrogen, which is further developed?

Ms. Ivette Vera-Perez: That's a good question, and there are good points with a few items here.

Andrew Forrest, at the same time, is very bullish on his capacity to bring in the order of megatons of hydrogen to the EU, and I'll get to the number. I've read an article that he wrote—

Mr. Greg McLean: Mr. Forrest is bullish on this as long as somebody else is paying for it. I have noticed that Mr. Forrest hasn't put a dime down for what the government is paying in Newfoundland; and if he has, I haven't seen it, and I would love to see that.

Go ahead.

Ms. Ivette Vera-Perez: I would have to give you that.

What I wanted to mention is that a lot of what you're saying about government helping to de-risk is, for example, contract for difference, which is the initiative that Germany has come up with. The idea is that the government helps de-risk the difference between what it costs to produce hydrogen today and what the end users are able to pay. Now, the contract for difference itself, that

program, is quite complex, which is what I hear from members and people in Germany, but the principle, I think, is quite valid. Now, you would need to think about the—

The Chair: I'm sorry, but we're going to have to stop there. This is very technical and very involved. I'm sure we could go on for many more minutes, but we'll have to go to Mr. Weiler now for five minutes.

• (1345)

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

It's fascinating testimony already, so thanks to the witnesses for being here today.

I want to remain with questions to Ms. Vera-Perez on this general topic.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has pushed up the price of natural gas right around the world, especially in Europe. We're seeing in Europe now that the price of green hydrogen is cheaper than natural gas. Looking ahead, the thinking was that green hydrogen wouldn't be cost-competitive with blue hydrogen for about 10 years, but with the Russian invasion of Ukraine, I was wondering if you could give us a sense of how that gap might have narrowed with the energy market where it is right now.

Ms. Ivette Vera-Perez: Quite sadly, the gap keeps narrowing and the energy bills—for those of us who have family in Europe—are quite high right now.

It's not only the war in Russia. It's also climate events and, in general, the possibility of other events that we in Canada cannot control, globally speaking. It's about diversifying the energy supply and the energy mix. I just wanted to make that point, very quickly.

I'm not able to give you a number in terms of how many cents per kilogram cheaper green hydrogen is becoming. Many elements are contributing to hydrogen getting cheaper. A gigafactory was announced in the U.S. by Plug Power, which will be operating next year. France invested \$1.2 billion in a gigafactory in their territories. There are many factors influencing it. Now, there's going to be a hydrogen pipeline. It was just announced today in *The Financial Times*. It will be between Spain and France. Then there's the gas pipe that is not going to be built.

I don't have a number in terms of how many cents this is making green hydrogen more viable, but the gap is narrowing. When you think about it, the biggest factors that influence the price of green hydrogen are the costs of electricity and the costs of electrolyzers.

The capital costs of the electrolyzers and all of these things will go lower as the economies of scale increase. The price of electricity is also a matter of thinking about which jurisdictions you want to start producing the highest volumes first and where you have the best deal—if you will—on the price of electricity. Those are the two big indicators. Also, when the price of natural gas goes up, obviously the economics gets better.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Thanks for that.

You talked about some of the competitiveness concerns with China, the U.S. and Germany. I was hoping you could maybe speak to some of the competitive advantages that Canada has right now. How can we seek to leverage those in the hydrogen economy?

Ms. Ivette Vera-Perez: Canada has many advantages. I had no intention of being a party-pooper in this statement.

I don't know if this panel knows that Canada is the country that has led the development of the electrolyzer industry. It started at the beginning of the 20th century with a company called Stuart Energy. That company, through many iterations, led to Hydrogenics, to Next Hydrogen—in some ways—and to Optimized Hydrogen today. That know-how is Canadian. A lot of the electrolyzer technology used elsewhere, including some projects that we've looked at in India, for example, were born in Canada.

That's one. Another one, obviously, is the fuel cell industry, which is based on the west coast. Ontario has been the cradle of the electrolyzer industry. The west coast of Canada is the cluster where the fuel cell industry was born.

The know-how, patents and knowledge are here. That's a reason to be proud. That's one of the reasons why I always feel that we should continue to lead. This was the 1987 Canadian hydrogen strategy, but it had a different title.

When I say that we have been leaders in this space, I mean it. We were leaders when nobody was paying too much attention to hydrogen. Now that everybody's paying a lot of attention to hydrogen, we really need to claim our spot.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Quickly, how can we better support those clean-tech companies working in hydrogen, both in Canada and for export opportunities?

The Chair: I'm sorry, but we're out of time.

Ms. Ivette Vera-Perez: I'll follow up on it.

The Chair: That's perfect.

Madame Pausé, go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pausé: The International Energy Agency and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, or OECD, find that the U.S. plays an important role in bringing renewable energy on a large scale?

I'd like to ask Mr. Kakumanu a first question, and then a second question to Ms. Vera-Perez.

Mr. Kakuman, in your industry, are governments showing interest in your technology?

• (1350)

[*English*]

Mr. Swapan Kakumanu: Yes. We are looking at some municipalities in the U.S. that have expressed an interest in using our solution to process their waste. They're basically putting their waste into landfills right now.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pausé: Thank you, Mr. Kakumanu.

Municipalities seem to be following you, but I didn't hear you mention the federal government, so I'm not sure it is present.

Mr. Kakumanu, would you like to add anything?

[*English*]

Mr. Swapan Kakumanu: We've not been approached by the federal government yet. That is something we are trying to address, that with these kinds of opportunities companies like Fogdog are available with some technologies. We need some support where we can actually... I totally understand the long-term strategy of hydrogen and the long-term strategy of wind and solar, but what we're trying to say is that there is current low-hanging fruit and that we could get rid of these landfills, which are contributing up to 3°C to our climate temperature. We could get rid of that right now and all that would be required—

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pausé: I'm afraid I have to interrupt you. Your notes on this are very informative and interesting.

Ms. Vera-Perez, you said that the know-how is Canadian, that the patents are Canadian, but when I read the document you sent us, it seems that the money isn't there.

Could you elaborate on that?

Why does the federal government not seem to think that green hydrogen could help us achieve net zero emissions?

[*English*]

Ms. Ivette Vera-Perez: I do believe the federal government is very interested. I do believe that a lot of what we're lacking or what we're needing is around funding that is dedicated to help the scale-up of a new industry to the scale that we're talking about.

Here we're developing a new industry at a very large scale. There needs to be that push so that industry gets on. Then the other aspect would be regulatory.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Collins, go ahead.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I wanted to continue with my questions to Mr. Ian Robertson.

We've had a lot of conversations about modernizing our grid and grid connections. Is there any concern about grid capacity with the additional energy required for shore power?

Mr. Ian Robertson: I'm very pleased to say that we've had very good conversations with BC Hydro and they've confirmed that there is sufficient power on the island, specifically within the Victoria area, to accommodate the request, the technology that we would like to employ.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Wonderful.

You talked about the fact that the provincial government has made commitments and the cruise industry has made commitments. I hear from constituents all the time about how our community really wants to see shore power here.

What is the level of commitments that you've heard from the cruise industry, etc., and what would you be looking for from the federal government?

Mr. Ian Robertson: The funding strategy that we are using is very similar to what was used in Vancouver, where the federal government and the provincial government equally shared 50% of the funding, and the cruise line industry contributed 50%. Specifically to your question, we've received a commitment from the provincial government to fund 25%, and we've received a funding strategy, a funding model, for the cruise lines to contribute 50%. We're just waiting on that last 25% from the federal government, and we're ready to go.

I hope that by providing this information to the committee, and specifically talking about the funding mechanism that was provided about 12 years ago for Vancouver to come online...would be made available to Victoria. Again, given our not-for-profit status, that is incredibly important. If we don't get the funding from the federal government, we're not able to move this project forward. It's as simple as that.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Thanks so much.

I know the Greater Victoria Harbour Authority has been doing other work outside of shore power to become more environmentally friendly. Can you talk a little more about protecting our oceans, emissions reductions, etc.?

The Chair: Fifteen seconds are all we have left, Mr. Robertson.

• (1355)

Mr. Ian Robertson: Our transportation provider has been making significant reductions. In fact, we have probably one of the cleanest motor coach fleets in Canada, moving our guests from the terminal to downtown Victoria.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Kurek, go ahead.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Thank you very much.

Thank you to all the witnesses for joining us.

Before I jump into my questions, I'd just note that I'm very pleased to have the support of the committee and the opportunity to be the vice-chair. Certainly, in coming from a large rural constituency that is at the centre of energy production in our country, I'm very pleased to be a part of this. I thank the chair and, of course, the analysts, the clerk and everybody involved for their work.

Statements were made by Ms. Vera-Perez and also by Mr. Kakumanu about their short-, medium- and long-term solutions. I think that's absolutely key.

You referenced "low-hanging fruit". In my constituency, for example, some of the major urban centres in the province of Alberta ship their garbage hours out of those major urban centres to landfills in rural Alberta.

Can you elaborate a bit both on the immediate emissions reduction possibilities associated with your technology and on how some of the supply chain wins—it's hard to believe there's a supply chain for garbage in Canada—could be accomplished through technological solutions like the company you're representing?

Mr. Swapan Kakumanu: It's a good question. Thank you very much.

That's absolutely right. When I said "low-hanging fruit", I think we have long-term strategies and medium-term strategies, but what we are focusing on is what exists, what we have right now with these landfills, which are generating these methane gases.

What we are saying is, look, municipalities at the grassroots have issues. They are not able to export this garbage out—which they were able to do five or six years ago—to Asia and other countries. They're now all stuck. Several municipalities with which we talk on a daily basis are even stuck with plastics that they're afraid to put into the landfills. They're actually storing them in containers next to the landfills because they don't know what to do with them. They're all waiting for a solution. Also, some of these municipalities are actually shipping or trucking, paying \$120 to \$200 a tonne to ship the waste 100 kilometres away to a landfill.

What we are proposing is, look, we could actually use that waste and generate revenue for the municipalities—because that's a cost saving for them—and actually use graphite, one of the by-products where we'd be able to get more of the carbon content the waste has, which is basically used in EV batteries. What we're trying to say is that we can clean up your landfills. You could actually cost-save your line item of revenue costs where you're shipping and transporting that waste and at the same time get your lands free of these landfills.

The issue we're having is capex. Nobody wants to write the capex bill: They're willing to give us a 15-year contract or a 20-year contract, but they're saying, "Hey, you need to build this." This is where we're approaching provincial and even federal governments and some of the agencies and saying that we are the kinds of companies that would need some support whereby we could actually prove that these technologies are working.

As we get through the next level, maybe hydrogen and the other broader strategies would play into that. By that time, we would be able to help reduce.... Our math right now shows that we can reduce 3°C of the climate temperature in Canada if we get rid of these landfills. There are basically 32 million tonnes of waste being put into landfills.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Thank you very much.

Having joined the committee recently, I would like to emphasize the fact that we've heard this week that there's no silver bullet, but it's important to acknowledge the need for a diversity of solutions. I think highlighting technology is absolutely key.

Do I have about 30 seconds?

The Chair: You have 40 seconds.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Ms. Vera-Perez, regarding hydrogen, Alberta recently announced a hydrogen strategy. Is it a step in the right direction to continue the conversation about hydrogen development here in Canada?

Ms. Ivette Vera-Perez: Yes, absolutely. Alberta is leading the charge on hydrogen as well. There are the hydrogen centres of excellence in Alberta. There is \$50 million being put into hydrogen and into development pathways to clean hydrogen through CCUS as well.

• (1400)

The Chair: Thank you.

We have to go to Mr. Longfield now for five minutes.

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

I'll be flipping my time over to Ms. Taylor Roy.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Longfield.

I'm very curious about the manufacturing of these gigafactories and the electrolyzers, so I'd like to direct my questions to Ms. Vera-Perez.

You mentioned that electrolysis or electrolyzers are kind of a Canadian invention or that we've been doing this for a long time. Do you think there is the potential to build a gigafactory or to manufacture electrolyzers in Canada?

Ms. Ivette Vera-Perez: Yes, there is. We have been advocating for that. There is one company, one electrolyzer producer in Canada, that has also opened offices in Houston. They are advocating very heavily to be allowed to build an electrolyzer gigafactory in Canada, and it could be the first. They have strong partnerships with strong European companies, as well, that could very well balance the needs of this other company.

Also, Hydrogenics—Cummins now—produces electrolyzers in Mississauga in Canada. This is happening today. They produce these small electrolyzers, up to 20 megawatts, in Canada, and now they're going to be producing the large electrolyzers, up to 100 megawatts, in the U.S.

However, there is manufacturing in Canada.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Why is there not greater manufacturing in Canada, and why do you think Cummins has gone to the U.S. to produce these larger electrolyzers?

Ms. Ivette Vera-Perez: Partly, it's the possibilities that the Inflation Reduction Act brings. Part of it is that there's a lot more of an appetite for risk-taking, if you will, in this case in the U.S. We're talking about this example: Just this week, Plug Power, which is one of our members, unveiled a gigafactory project in the U.S. as well. This is all because it is acknowledged that the supply chains

are tight, and delivery of equipment is crucial in the right timelines. Those companies that can be taking it on themselves to develop their own gigafactories.

We spoke about Andrew Forrest. They're also doing that, of course.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: When you mention that supply chains are tight, are you saying that it's more difficult in Canada than in the U.S. due to supply chains? What's the relevance of the supply chains?

Ms. Ivette Vera-Perez: No, not necessarily. Supply chains are tight in general. Since the pandemic, world supply chains have.... I think we've realized how fragile we are, in a way. I don't think it's the lack of support; it's that the support is a little bit disjointed and in many different pockets. It's very difficult to navigate. There's the advanced manufacturing supercluster engine, for example. Then there's the CIB, the SIF and the CFF. We need to think about whether there's a possibility of a one-stop shop or the possibility of looking at this important.... Again, we have this overarching goal in Canada. We have a strategy.

What are the possibilities of helping—

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: I'm sorry. I just have two more quick questions, and I'm conscious of the time.

I'm just wondering if you think that the goal of the Hydrogen Shot clean hydrogen cost target is realistic. Do you think that a dollar per kilogram of hydrogen by 2030 could actually be achieved?

Ms. Ivette Vera-Perez: It can be achieved, and I'm not saying this in an optimistic, unrealistic way. It can be achieved, but we need to work to get there.

Depending on the colour—and I must say that we celebrate all colours of hydrogen—if we're thinking about electrolyzer-produced hydrogen, there's the price of electricity and the price of the equipment. The price of the equipment goes down with economies of scale.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Thank you.

I am most interested in green hydrogen, as I feel that's really our future, the future of the world and the direction the energy market is going in. If we're going to be investing in this, I think this is the area we should be investing in.

When you say there's a greater risk appetite in the United States, do you mean from investors? Is that what you're talking about?

Ms. Ivette Vera-Perez: Yes, I mean from investors, from the government—the DOE, for example—and from venture capital. This is an industry that in VC terms is a hardware industry, meaning there's the capex and there are things that we build. It's not an app. It's not software.

We need to understand that the exit times for these types of investments are longer, and this is why patient capital.... Also, it's not only funding. Funding is important, but also policies. Policies also have dollar amounts.

• (1405)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you.

This concludes the testimony portion of our study on green technologies.

I'd like to thank the witnesses for being with us today. It was an extremely interesting and informative discussion. All the witnesses' comments will inform our thinking.

This concludes the first part of today's meeting.

We'll pause and continue in a few moments with our colleague Brian Masse.

• (1405)

(Pause)

• (1405)

[*English*]

The Chair: We are looking at our first private member's bill ever, as a committee, in this 44th Parliament.

Welcome, Mr. Masse. You have up to 10 minutes. If you can do seven, that would help us finish on time. As I said, you have up to 10 minutes, if you so choose.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Thank you very much for having me, Mr. Chair. Maybe you can just signal me when I get to one minute, and I'll scoot on through and do that. I want to make sure I respect the committee's time here.

I'm really pleased to be here and present Bill C-248. Members of this committee know that it was in the House of Commons and it passed first reading. I want to thank the authors of the bill, being the Library of Parliament, who helped work on it. It's a privilege to bring this legislation forward, and to be the one doing so. This has been a big environmental movement in the Windsor area and southern Ontario for a long time. We have been endeavouring to protect lands in this area for almost half a century, in particular because of our industrialization and the fact that we also have a lot of agriculture, so our natural areas have been taxed.

I want to say thanks to a number of groups, essential partners. I recognize Chief Duckworth of Caldwell First Nation; the mayor and city council of Windsor; Wildlands League; the Unifor environment committee; Wildlife Preservation Canada; Citizens Environment Alliance; Essex County Field Naturalists' Club; Green Ummah; Friends of Ojibway Prairie; Save Ojibway organizations; and all the local residents over the years who have sent in thousands of petitions, letters and so forth. It's been really special.

The proposed Ojibway national urban park here in Windsor, Ontario, is part of the traditional territory of the Three Fires Confederacy of first nations and includes the Ojibway, Odawa, and Potawatomi, with long-respecting relationships of first nations. In fact, it's the oldest European settlement. Next to it is west of Mon-

treau, with over 300 years of francophone settlement as well. It's where the War of 1812 was fought. It's where the Underground Railroad was. It is also where the rum-runners were. There has been a lot of heritage and tradition going on in this corridor.

The proposed urban park that we have here is part of a tall grass prairie. There's only 1% left in all of Canada, and this area is very special, because it's been preserved almost by accident. There have been a number of different community organization groups that have been trying to protect this land over a number of years, and it's come about, really, because the City of Windsor has been a very good steward—as well, the Province of Ontario. There have been some federal lands—I'm going to get into that later—that are now part of a change that could be good not only for 200 of Canada's 500 endangered species that are right down there, but also for ecotourism. Right next to it, we're building the Gordie Howe bridge, Canada's largest infrastructure project that goes into the United States.

Ojibway Shores, on the waterfront there, is 33 acres. It is the last undeveloped spot along the Detroit River in the City of Windsor and in the area, and maybe in the Great Lakes. It actually has a complex of a number of different tall grass prairie species and a number of different species at risk. They connect into several of the properties that the City of Windsor actually owns, and the Province of Ontario. Ojibway Shores itself is actually owned by the port authority.

Since the introduction of this bill, I, as well as others in the community, have been trying to save this land from development. It is now actually on a memorandum of understanding with Parks Canada and Environment Canada to protect it. It's crucial, because at one point the port authority wanted to bulldoze this area down and develop it, using it basically for landfill from the Herb Gray Parkway project. That's now protected. When it was inventoried by the field naturalists, it actually ranked high as some of the most valuable property for the ecosystem in Ontario.

There are several areas that I'm going to touch on briefly that connect into this. There's Spring Garden Natural Area, which is the City of Windsor. I was on city council when we protected that. It has everything from the Dukes' skipper to the red-headed woodpecker, the gray fox, all kinds of different American chestnut trees—a whole series of ecosystems there. Because we're actually a Carolinian area, and off the water, it creates this ecosystem diversity and a hot spot for species.

There's also the Black Oak Heritage Park, which is next to Ojibway Shores. So, Ojibway Shores is right on the waterfront, and then Black Oak Heritage Park, a City of Windsor property, is right next to it. We have the port property right next to the city property, but there's no management system there that's for both together. They have savannah and woodland species, and some of the best chestnut groves that are left in Ontario.

Next to that is the Tallgrass Prairie Heritage Park, where there are a number of different things—the red-bellied snake, Butler's gartersnake, the eastern foxsnake, and common park reptiles. In 1977, they found a species that they thought was extinct in Canada that was actually still there. That connects to it as well. Then we have Ojibway Park, which is next to it and has an excellent nature centre.

• (1410)

I think you're getting a theme here. We have these little plots of land that are owned by different people and different groups. This actually has a nature centre, walking trails, a beautiful ecosystem. It's also had some private areas given to it from the former raceway with Ojibway Tom Joy Woods. Next to that, we have the Ojibway Prairie Provincial Nature Reserve. There are more rare plants per hectare than anywhere else in Ontario. That's really cool in itself, if you ask me, in terms of what we have around us there.

What's really special, however, and why I think this is different from the other urban parks that are being considered, is that right across the river, in the United States, is the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, which is the only one that they have over there. Across in the United States, if you saw the area.... You'd see that on the Canadian side we have the bringer bridge being built, and then we have a swath of green, patchy territory that needs to be connected and managed. On the U.S. side, if you're fan of *The Lord of the Rings*, Zug Island looks like Mordor. It's not very attractive, but there's also another community that's getting revitalization, called Delray. This is exciting because Delray is like Sandwich Town, which I represent and which is one of the poorest places in Canada with child poverty.

Again, I mentioned the rich tradition that it has had in the past, with the War of 1812, the rum-runners, the Underground Railway and all of those things. Right now, however, it has some of the highest child poverty and some of the biggest challenges with the environment because it's pinned down in this border area, with the Ambassador Bridge on one side, a railroad track on the other, and the Detroit River on the other. It's an exciting renewal opportunity that we're pleased about.

On the Detroit side, they are putting a lot of money into the Humbug Marsh and a whole bunch of ecosystems. What this means is that this property is a conduit for keeping things together and for species to migrate and move.

About 12 years ago, local residents fought to keep Ojibway Shores from being bulldozed. There's a long story behind that. I won't get into that. Next to it, again, the Gordie Howe bridge is being built. That's actually going to come online in a couple of years. That's exciting. That's been a real fight. That's actually an example of doing things right.

When I first got here, nobody wanted to build another bridge. It was seen as excessive. It was seen as not needed. We're doing it right. It's a fantastic project that was actually started by Jean Chrétien with the original "Let's Get Windsor-Essex Moving" fund for \$200 million. Then, later on, it was actually finalized with Stephen Harper's government. They did a terrific job of making sure it was done correctly, because there were a lot of private inter-

ests against this. Now it's unified—everybody. It's a huge win for our environment and our economy. That's right next to it.

What happened in 2017 is that, after we stopped the destruction of Ojibway Shores, the port authority changed their mind and let people on board onto the site. There are 10 criteria of Ojibway Shores to find out whether it's environmentally significant. One is good enough. They had nine out of 10. I won't list them all because we don't have time, but it got nine out of 10 because of the way the ecosystem is and because of our Carolinian background.

I've been on about this for a long time. We had a town hall in 2019 where I invited not only the residents but also Caldwell First Nation and the Wildlands League. A number of different American state and federal officials also came. We've had a really good, positive input with that.

We followed it up with another town hall meeting just recently as well. In fact, even when the Prime Minister was down in Windsor in 2020, he said to the union leaders at that time that he supported a national urban park down there, so that was good.

In 2021, I introduced Bill C-248 because there had been some discussion of some new urban parks that might come online. What we wanted was simply what's been done for every other national park to date. It has its own legislation, just like a bridge or a border crossing. That's what we're doing. We're amending the schedule in the parks act to add this area.

I only have one minute left to wrap up. I would rather have interactions with everyone. One of the good news things that happened is that introducing the bill has actually triggered the memorandum of understanding for the Ojibway Shores to be protected from the port authority. The people at Parks Canada were opposed to co-management with Caldwell First Nation at first. To their credit, they have now changed positions on co-management, which is becoming the norm with first nations. It's important.

I'll finish with one of the most wonderful things we've seen happen out of this entire endeavour—a brief history as I wrap up. Caldwell First Nation was originally supposed to get Point Pelee after the War of 1812. They were burned out of their properties, and they were then shunted around for a number of years. They finally reached a settlement. It's the first new modern settlement that's actually taken place. They view this as reconciliation and are full-time partners in this. It's a wonderful story in terms of that. Chief Mary Duckworth has been excellent with this. Hopefully you will hear from her later.

• (1415)

I want to say thank you to the committee members for considering this, and I'm looking forward to the questions.

The Chair: Thank you.

I'm going to make the first round a five-minute round, and the second round a four-and-two round so we can finish on time.

Mr. Lewis, you have five minutes.

Mr. Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC): Thank you so much, Mr. Chair.

It's an honour and a pleasure to be here this afternoon with you all.

It's a beautiful day here in Essex and it would be a great day to take a walk in the park—a walk in a park. To the committee, it's pretty unique. This is a very unique opportunity for the folks of Essex. I've said it before and I'll say it again. We are somewhat landlocked in Windsor-Essex, in that we're surrounded by three bodies of water. I've spoken extensively with Mayor Dilkens, the mayor of Windsor; Mayor Bondy, the mayor of LaSalle; and Mr. Watson, the previous member of Parliament. We've done our due diligence. Everybody says this is a fantastic thing to do.

I know I only have five minutes and I just used up one minute.

Mr. Masse, first and foremost, congratulations, sir. I think this is going to be great for both of our communities.

With regard to our farming industry, it's gobbled up a lot of land and I'm proud of that because we need our farming industry to feed Canadians. We need the industry to pay the bills. However, there are not a lot of opportunities to get outdoors for mental health. Can you just expand a little bit as to what this will do for the residents of LaSalle and west Windsor, and quite frankly across the county?

• (1420)

Mr. Brian Masse: Thank you, Mr. Lewis, and thank you for your assistance on this bill as well. This has been a collaborative effort in the region.

That's an excellent point. Our area has a high degree of manufacturing. In fact, some of this area was originally forested, and when I talked to the port originally they called it “scrub brush”. It now has 200 of Canada's 500 endangered species, but it was originally forested.

Mr. Lewis, you're correct. When you look at the amount of agriculture we have, it's high-industry. Mr. Epp knows as well that, with the agriculture industry that we have with greenhouses, it takes up a lot of space and resources.

This is one of our last few opportunities to bind these elements together. The reason why I think it's different from the other proposals that are out there is that it's on the international border and we have a diversity of species. We paid a big price with environmental diseases, high rates of cancer. It's all been well identified by Health Canada. We get a lot of smog and other types of pollution from the United States, so this is our way of pushing back. Also, this is for young people to see that they can participate in their ecosystem development.

Mr. Chris Lewis: Thank you, Mr. Masse.

This morning I spoke with CFIB, as well as with the tourism industry. The new Gordie Howe International Bridge is pretty exciting. We're going to get a bike path and/or a foot path across that, and I think there are some three million friends from Michigan, upstate New York, Wisconsin and Ohio, so this could be a huge tourism possibility.

Do you agree, Mr. Masse?

Mr. Brian Masse: Absolutely. In fact, it was Minister Champagne who agreed to have the bike lane and pedestrian lane for free because it's actually going to combat...some of the distances we've had over the years with regard to COVID. This is exciting because, with Slow Roll Detroit, for example, they've had up to 5,000 cy-

clists meet in downtown Detroit and cycle in harmony, in union, and have fun, so they could actually cross over there.

I had Rashida Tlaib over, the Democratic congressional representative, a good friend of mine for 20 years, and we met in the house of the U.S. ambassador to Canada. We toured the Gordie Howe International Bridge together, and this is right next to it.

One of the reasons I want this to be an official national urban park, and the way we're presenting it, is that we also want to manage the park properly for the ecosystem. Point Pelee, which is close to us, has a management plan because it gets a lot of bird tourism and ecotourism, but it puts stress on the park, so we want this done properly. It's exciting to have these ecotourism opportunities, but we also want to make sure they're planned properly.

Mr. Chris Lewis: Thank you, Mr. Masse.

I realize I have 55 seconds left. I would like you to expand a little bit on the corridors. With regard to Matchette and Malden roads, it's vital that we allow our folks to get to the new \$5.1-billion battery plant, the Stellantis plant. Is there something in the bill where you'll ensure that they can get to their workplace and get home quickly?

Mr. Brian Masse: Absolutely, and that's another reason why the bill is so important. It's because other national parks do have corridors through them, but they're managed responsibly. They're also very important for this region because when we have all these parsed apart as I've identified—I have a map, but it's not in both official languages, so I'll send it to you later—you'll see that there are some roadways there. It's going to take some good strategies and also investment. More importantly, it really is the proper way to actually manage those things.

That's a good point, Mr. Lewis. That's why we have the Town of LaSalle and the City of Windsor and others on board unanimously for this, because they know we want to do this.

The Chair: We'll now go to Ms. Thompson, for five minutes, please.

Ms. Joanne Thompson (St. John's East, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Masse, for coming forward, and thank you for the work you've done on the private member's bill.

A Liberal colleague shares a boundary, I believe, with you in Windsor. Reviewing the debate, he made a very valid point around process. I absolutely believe in the need to expand our parks within Canada. They're fabulous. I use them as often as I can, but I do believe in process. In terms of the complexity of this process, in terms of the points of engagement, and also the number of parcels of land involved, methodical steps are quite important.

To that end, why is this bill necessary when Parks Canada is already working in partnership with the City of Windsor and local first nations through a partnership committee to establish the national urban park in Windsor?

Mr. Brian Masse: There was an announced process, but there isn't much detail about that. It has actually not been the process that has normally taken place for national parks. National parks are usually added and appended to the bill, and they follow the rules that are there.

We don't know about those other ones. The city council and the mayor unanimously support this bill. Caldwell First Nation and Chief Mary Duckworth support this bill. Those reasons come from the genesis.... When Ojibway Shores was going to be demolished, the first thing I did was reach out to Caldwell First Nation, and I brought them to the site to see if they would be interested in actually fighting to acquire the site. They decided to go to the Leamington area, for a different reason, for a better future for housing and a whole series of things. It would be close to Point Pelee, but still within their traditional territory.

We have a lot of.... We also have the Wildlands League. Everybody is pointing toward legislation, because it's the most accountable and most transparent for the future. It's different. I don't know about other parks that are happening with regard to other urban areas. All I know is this one. I've represented the area for a while, so I know this fits really well.

• (1425)

Ms. Joanne Thompson: Again, I'm just trying to break down the steps in the process.

Regarding boundaries, how do you respond to critics who say that the private member's bill doesn't go far enough? Is there a risk that we'll miss the opportunities to move into a more ambitious vision for the park? Are you open to other boundaries being defined within the park?

Mr. Brian Masse: First of all, I don't think.... It was the Wildlands League that said it doesn't know of a park that hasn't actually improved over the years. Maybe the only one that hasn't is the Bruce, which was done in a way that still needs to go through its own legislation. I don't know if you're familiar with that project, but it actually went the opposite way, similar to what is being proposed right now. I'm concerned with the government on its proposal. It's going to be in the courts, and it's going to take longer.

This one is open for amendments in the future. The beauty of it, and why this is almost like shelf-ready, is that you have the City of Windsor asking for its property to.... The mayor actually asked them to take the property. They actually want to upload the property and give it proper responsibility. The Province of Ontario will

have a vote coming up. They have expressed interest in all of this, and there's due process even as we go forward with that.

In the future, hopefully future generations will improve the park. There are plenty of opportunities in the private sector, as well, which isn't originally in the bill. When I was vice-chair of the conservation authority, I talked to some of the businesses around there, and some of them might actually bequeath some of their properties eventually for the national park once it becomes solid. However, if you don't have it as an official national park, nobody really wants to donate something, knowing that it might be undermined later on.

Ms. Joanne Thompson: Do you have any concerns about whether there's a constitutional authority for this bill? Can you explain?

Mr. Brian Masse: No, I don't. The Speaker has vetted the bill, and that's why it's here. I'm very confident in the process. The Speaker, Mr. Rota, and I have served for a long period of time together here. He's quite capable with these things. I'm very confident he knows his due diligence. In fact, we actually shared a floor for a while before he became Speaker.

Ms. Joanne Thompson: Thank you.

Do I still have a minute?

The Chair: You have about 45 seconds.

Ms. Joanne Thompson: Are there privately held lands within the boundaries set out under the bill, and if yes, have the owners been consulted on the bill?

Mr. Brian Masse: No, there are no private lands, and that's the reason why we start there. It's the logical way to start to deal with the bill, and then later on, if private lands are offered, that's a different story. There's a great property next to it. We've talked to the Kennette family, and so has the port authority and others.

Right now, if you can believe this, next to this beautiful treasure, we have the Gordie Howe International Bridge being built, and we have asphalt and concrete-recycling capabilities in front of our gateway for our new border crossing.

Some of us want to see the Kennette property turn into more environmental ways, but that's another story for another day. Perhaps with this bill, when they see this, perhaps they're going to see a legacy. They are open to discussions and so forth, but again, it comes down to money.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Pauzé, you have the floor.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: I'm giving my time to Ms. Collins.

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms. Collins.

[English]

Ms. Laurel Collins: Thank you so much.

Mr. Masse, as a city councillor and then as a member of Parliament, you've been very involved in trying to protect and preserve natural areas. You mentioned to Ms. Thompson that legislation is really important and potentially the only way to permanently protect this area. You've spoken about how the city once had to purchase a provincial park to prevent it from being developed.

Could you just expand on this for the committee and tell us a little bit about how that informed your understanding of the need to ensure that legislation was passed to make Ojibway a national park?

Mr. Brian Masse: Thank you very much, Ms. Collins. I appreciate it.

When I was on city council, we had a provincial park called Peche Island. It's in the middle of the Detroit River. It has an ecosystem. They used to say that the rum-runners were there. The remnants are there, as well as all kinds of folklore and so forth. There is actually a little bit of infrastructure on it.

That provincial park was put up for sale by the provincial government, including a woodlot on part of the shore. We had to purchase that land or it would have been lost to Americans or to developers. It was up for sale, so at that time the city council bought the provincial park for \$1.3 million. The only way to pay for that, in terms of getting support to do it, was that we actually had to develop the woodlot—which had been used for camping and kids programs—to be a subdivision.

One thing that I want to see—and what I've been told and coached on with regard to the non-government organizations that are involved in the environmental movement—is what they view as the consistency and solidity of a project or a plan. The normal process to create a park is to actually amend the parks act and include it in there.

That's why we want this to be the regular process right now. It's ready. It's perfectly set to be the structure to be advanced in the future. It doesn't involve any type of barrier, aside from the legislation needing to be passed and a proper management plan.

• (1430)

Ms. Laurel Collins: Thank so much.

You also talk a lot about how you've been working with the Caldwell First Nation. How long have you been working with them on this project? Could you detail your involvement with the Caldwell First Nation and how you see this as part of reconciliation for indigenous communities?

Mr. Brian Masse: Thank you.

Former member of Parliament Cheryl Hardcastle introduced me to the Caldwell First Nation when the port authority was looking to sell Ojibway Shores, which is the shoreline area. Caldwell First Nation had just gotten their settlement.

For a little more background, Caldwell First Nation fought with the British to protect the country. I mentioned briefly that they were supposed to get Point Pelee. They didn't get it, so they went

through the courts and a whole series of things. Now it's part of a whole beautiful reconciliation process because they set up an agreement with Ontario Hydro with regard to being respected there. They were involved in also helping move the Stellantis plant and other types of development projects that we have.

It was a different scenario when I took over as member of Parliament in 2002 from what it is today. We've worked on a series of projects together, including discussing issues of the Jay Treaty. They're making progress on that as well.

I just talked to Chief Mary Duckworth yesterday. She's been here on the Hill with me, presenting this as a national urban park. It was several years ago, before COVID. She's been with me on this, front and centre, for a long period of time.

As a member of that area, with this being introduced where we didn't have that chapter, I think it's been really special. In fact, I brought one of my publications. I don't know if you're familiar with all these things. This is for educating my constituents on Caldwell First Nation. It was a direct flyer because it's a new chapter for us in our area.

It's really special because it's working out well. They've been part of all the town halls and all the consultation. That's why they support the bill.

One last thing is that, through them, we were able to get Wyandotte Nation on the U.S. side to support this bill as well.

Ms. Laurel Collins: That is great to hear.

You mentioned a bit the potential for co-management. Can you talk about what that opportunity is and the importance of co-management?

Mr. Brian Masse: Co-management is part of the truth and reconciliation view that Chief Duckworth has. In fact, we had a town hall meeting over the summer about this. The focus was on co-management with the public. We had about 300 people show up to the event.

Part of it, which is in my publication here, is to get people used to that. It goes beyond just reacting and consulting. It's actually about being participants in how to use the property and how to engage with the property.

This property doesn't have the access for hunting and fishing. It's too small for that, but it's a significant enough property for the ecosystem. It's going to be very important. How they view it, and the exciting part for me, is that we have a lot of terrible situations to deal with for our first nations, but this is one where a light is being shone in a very positive way.

The first time I met Chief Duckworth was when they were left out of consultations for the original Gordie Howe bridge, so I brought them down to the community benefits event and we crashed it together. That's kind of how we got to know each other. They were left off the invitation list and I invited them to come down.

It's been a great relationship. I know the government is making some good relationships with them as well. She was just recently on the Hill here, too. It's been a really good news story.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Thanks so much.

You mentioned, in your opening remarks and responses to other committee members, the Detroit River international wildlife conservation area and how it could be connected to the Ojibway national urban park. I know that you are also our Great Lakes critic, a long-time member of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group and the U.S. border critic. You have significant involvement and relationship with our friends south of the border.

Can you talk a bit about the opportunity the Ojibway national urban park and the Detroit River international wildlife conservation area present for the Great Lakes region and for the relationship between our two countries?

• (1435)

Mr. Brian Masse: This is another good one, because Vance Badawey, a member of Parliament, has been really good at working on the Great Lakes. In fact, we worked together. I'm one of the vice-chairs of the Canada-U.S. parliamentary association, and Vance helped trail-blaze. We have a special component for the Great Lakes, now. We've been lobbying in Washington. Prior to that, it was always hit-and-miss. I was always pushing against issues, here and there. Now, it's actually a part of the function of the Canada-U.S. parliamentary association, which is excellent.

I've been working with Senator Gary Peters for years. I've known Rashida Tlaib for a long time, like I said, and Stephanie Chang. There's a lot of activity in the U.S.

In fact, they're looking at Canada, and they're not very pleased about our Great Lakes investment, right now. They're putting in hundreds of millions of dollars. They're also concerned about the DGR, which is a nuclear waste depository project in the Huron area. There have been concerns raised about that. They would like to see us be more progressive.

The interesting thing about this project is that we need to have hot spot zones in the U.S. for the species migrating back into Canada or the United States. That's what this location does: Point Pelee and Rondeau parks, all the way up here, then back into the United States.

Lastly, to conclude, this is also uniting citizens on both sides, as well as NGOs. The Great Canadian Trails will now go over into the United States. It was announced three weeks ago. The Canadian trails will go into the U.S., and the U.S. cycling.... All the different sponsors, groups and organizations came over for that announcement. There were a number of people. Our trail system will go into the U.S. Maybe some people on our border aren't as familiar with how.... That's just the way we are. They're our cousins, and we're their cousins.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Wonderful.

You just mentioned Point Pelee National Park, with which you're very familiar. You have talked to me about the ecotourism that's grown significantly, related to that park, especially with regard to birding.

Could you talk a little more about that?

Mr. Brian Masse: That's where we're lucky. I don't know if people are aware, but Richard Cannings is an ornithologist. I didn't even know what the heck that was—a bird guy. We have a resident bird guy. He came down to the area and toured it with me. He also went out to the Leamington area for the hawk festival. There's been a real explosion with regard to this, which has been really great.

There are a couple of other properties outside of that. Once we get this defined, we might have better consensus in terms of increasing the spots. Again, as a former conservation vice-chair, I know people get on board when they see something solid and know it's going to last. Ecotourism is huge. I'd love for it to be part of a repertoire of places people could visit or stop at—not just Point Pelee, which is getting active and busy. Either open up more spots for business, or we might have restrictions in the future. This is a great spot for business.

Ms. Laurel Collins: I think I'm getting close to the end of my time, but I would like to know a little about how the Ojibway national urban park would help with adapting to or mitigating climate change in the Windsor area.

The Chair: You have 10 seconds or less.

Mr. Brian Masse: For flooding...it's the easiest one, in our area. It's a great sponge and we need it, especially for the town of LaSalle and other places. It's an important sponge. The businesses.... It's the same thing, because they're flooded.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Laurel Collins: I'll ask a bit more in my next round.

The Chair: Okay.

We'll go to the second round, a four-minute round.

Go ahead, Mr. Epp, for four minutes, please.

Mr. Dave Epp: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the opportunity.

Serendipity has allowed me to sub in today, which makes it three-quarters of the Windsor-Essex members of Parliament having the opportunity to speak to this.

One of the disadvantages of going in the second round is that many of the topics one wants to cover were covered before. I'm going to have you retrace a bit of ground, because I have some similar lived experience.

Living in Windsor and Essex County...our American friends are on three sides of us. Can you talk a little more about the opportunities? I'm heavily influenced. I'm a diehard, in terms of our national sport. I'm a Toronto Maple Leafs fan. I have to be, but I'm also a Detroit Lions and Detroit Tigers fan. I'm sorry, Blue Jays.

This park establishes another cross-border opportunity. I have attended the freedom fireworks and the Gordie Howe International Bridge. There are all sorts of other international co-operations.

Can you expound a little more on this? I know you talked a little about the walking and bike paths. What else does this do, culturally, because we are so intertwined? I have the Point Pelee park in my riding, so I have a lot of Detroit cottagers on the way to the Point Pelee park. What does this expand?

• (1440)

Mr. Brian Masse: Thank you, Mr. Epp.

First of all, I'm a Blue Jays fan, and after that last game, we still have to apologize. It didn't work out so well.

Thank you for your work. We've seen highly industrialized areas, and also agriculture. We had to work back. We've been doing those things, but our connections to the United States, as you mentioned, are so imperative. It's been hard over the last number of years. We have family members. I'm not sure people are aware of the connections. You almost have to experience it. The area that's next to this in my riding goes through a lot. There are 40,000 cars and 10,000 trucks per day that go through right next to Sandwich Town, and half of that traffic is family, friends, businesses and colleagues. We really suffered.

With regard to the western hemisphere travel initiative, that was when the U.S. first introduced passports. A lot of U.S. citizens didn't want to get passports. A lot of U.S. citizens haven't come because of other issues, and this is a way of bringing some of them back.

It's also economics. We know that the tool and die and the trade industries, when they go back and forth, get us contracts. We get developments and we get all kinds of synergies, so if we miss out on those, it would be awful.

We even had tours before COVID for people to come for the Underground Railroad to find where their relatives ended up, because many of them fled the United States to come to Canada, and there were a number of tourism initiatives just to deal with that.

Mr. Dave Epp: Thank you.

In a previous life, I worked with the Foodgrains Bank, and we established a growing project, which we have across Canada, in one of our other urban parks, Rouge River park in Toronto. Rouge River park—I'm familiar with it—has throughways through it. We're farming inside that park, and we have transportation inside that park.

Can you talk about some of the unique aspects of having an urban park here in Ojibway?

Mr. Brian Masse: You're absolutely correct, and I've toured the Rouge. The Rouge came up in our original meeting, so I've been out there a number of times.

You're absolutely right. It shows you that you can live and develop your ecosystems within an urban area. When there are issues related to industry and ecosystems, there can be solutions, and that's what I'm really excited about with the Rouge. What they've been doing is that they have, as you mentioned, roadways, and they have

multi-faceted types of activity taking place, and that's what we need, but we need a good business plan, and we need an accountable business plan.

I like this legislation because it also requires you to come back at a series of points in time with public consultation as the plan evolves, develops and goes forward, including submitting accountability to Parliament. Another thing that's different is that we have to do that.

Those are the reasons I think it's important.

The Chair: You're pretty much done.

Mr. Brian Masse: I'm sorry, Mr. Epp.

The Chair: Mr. Longfield, you have four minutes, please.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Masse, it's great to see you at the table. We served on the industry committee together back in the 42nd Parliament, and I always enjoy working with you.

I want to come back to Parks Canada. You mentioned just now about Rouge, and that was a park that was turned over to Parks Canada in 2017 with a new process for establishing urban national parks.

The private member's bill we have in front of us seems to be on a parallel track to the consultation process that Parks Canada has been following, as you know, taking 20 opportunities and narrowing them down. Saskatoon is in the running. We have Windsor in the running, but landing on Windsor was an opportunity through the consultation process with Parks Canada.

Could you comment on that process? You said earlier that it's not really clear what that process is, and we'll ask Parks Canada, I'm sure, in a future part of the study, but could you maybe comment on the existing consultation process?

Mr. Brian Masse: Thanks, Mr. Longfield, and, yes, it's always been a pleasure to serve.

I think it's a good and fair question. We started this process before the process that Parks Canada is doing, before they did their thing, and that came out just previous to an election. It was announced, and then they've been having meetings with different groups and organizations, which is good. There's been some recent movement since we tabled the legislation.

I got drawn at the top of the legislation tree, so to speak, and I could have chosen something else that would have been maybe easier to get—

• (1445)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: To be fair, that process is ongoing. To be fair, they didn't pick it up because of your private member's bill.

Mr. Brian Masse: Yes, well, some of it started, but we.... Anyway, we're not privy to all those meetings and discussions; we get them from third parties after they happen.

The differences I'm looking for are in the full process for the future as well, and that's why the legislation was put forth. It's going to include accountability through the parks act, and that's kind of really where we see it.

We asked the drafters of the legislation about the best way to enshrine this as a park and have it consistent, because right now every park has to have its own legislation. That's the way it works.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Thank you.

I feel like I'm in your role and you're in Navdeep Bains' role in INDU, as I recall. I'm just trying to get in as many questions as I can.

You mentioned the Caldwell First Nation. I'm aware that Walpole Island First Nation is also within the region. Have you done any consultation work with Walpole?

Mr. Brian Masse: Yes. We've left most of the consultation with Caldwell for that. I actually have a Walpole Island pin on me right now because I work with them on the Jay Treaty. They're in my office and that, so they're aware of the work that's going on. Caldwell has been with them.

Part of truth and reconciliation is to also make sure that they have their strategy. They are both engaged with Parks Canada as well. It's a good question.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Really, when we're talking about reconciliation, working with Parks Canada and having them go through that process as part of the Government of Canada and under the parks act, as you said, I think is an important thing to respect, and that members of Parliament don't interrupt that part of the consultation—

Mr. Brian Masse: Yes. That's not happening here, but the reality for me as a local member is that Caldwell First Nation represents the land there and that's whom we went to to start our consultation. We've left it to them. They're working with their different organizations.

We actually had a big meeting in Windsor over the Jay Treaty recently. That was over the boundary stuff, so that was there, and they were also up on the Hill for the Jay Treaty discussion, too, which I've heard had some positive things taking place.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: That's good. Thanks.

I also appreciate that this isn't a partisan thing. We've spoken with Irek Kusmierczyk, who is also quite excited about the park being established, following whatever process Parliament decides and works on.

The Chair: Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Do you have a comment to add, Ms. Pauzé?

Ms. Monique Pauzé: No. Again, I'll give my time to my colleague Ms. Collins.

The Chair: Okay.

Ms. Collins, you have four minutes.

[*English*]

Ms. Laurel Collins: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to Madame Pauzé for the time.

I wanted to go back to the question about adaptation and mitigation, specifically around floods. Could you expand a bit on how the Ojibway national urban park would help this area?

Mr. Brian Masse: Yes. Right now, you have the border crossing that is there. You already have it as a lower area, so even when they're building the Gordie Howe bridge, it's taking longer on the Canadian side. Mr. Epp will know this too. We've actually had to fill in the property and let it settle, because it's already at a low level with the river.

That's another complication we face and the reason why, like the Rouge, it got its own legislation. The Rouge has its own legislation. Every other national park has its own legislation. That's part of the reason we want it, because there are other complexities there that are going to involve international border boundary issues.

Then, basically, that sponge area, we want to protect that. The businesses there also want that. They don't want that developed either, because if it's developed, it's going to create more problems. We have major agriculture down there and fuelling and so forth.

There's a whole series of things. It's a gem among a lot of tough stuff that's going on there.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Thanks so much.

In addition to the work you've been doing with the Caldwell First Nation, you also mentioned—also across the border—the Wyandot First Nation. Can you talk a bit more about that developing relationship?

Mr. Brian Masse: Yes, that's an exciting one too. That's the Wyandot. When you look at our 300-plus years of francophonie, and then also before that, Huron Church Road was basically a highway. It's the oldest settlement west of Montreal. We have a lot of traditions with the Huron as well. These are important things.

That was really the thing with Caldwell First Nation and others. They went back and forth over the border. That's what the Jay Treaty is. It's part of what Mr. Epp was referring to earlier with regard to our relations and going back and forth. These are part of who we are as people, and that's really exciting.

There's been that extra contact taking place as more people are realizing what we have here and realizing that there's movement on it. It's growing. It's growing and getting better. That's exciting, because we haven't had those things before. They're rather unique. With COVID, we were locked out of each other's lives, and now it's opening up in other ways. It's kind of amazing.

• (1450)

Ms. Laurel Collins: You've already talked a bit about the Gordie Howe bridge and said that it's the largest federally funded infrastructure project in the country and is connecting Windsor and Detroit. It's the busiest border crossing. Can you expand a little on how Ojibway national park would be connected with this new bridge?

Mr. Brian Masse: Yes. Actually, I was there the other day. It's amazing, because there's actually going to be this section where you can take your bike or your e-bike or whatever it might be—who knows what they're going to be anymore—or walk across, and there's a section to go separately through there. There's a tourism section that's going to be caught right into Sandwich Town. This is huge for the people down there.

I mentioned that they were pinned by the water and they're pinned by the Ambassador Bridge. If you're not familiar with the Ambassador Bridge, there is an American billionaire who has boarded up homes on the Canadian side and he's known for...and the family, his son now, Matthew.... We've had to bring in a special law to bring it under control. There have been several stories of problems over the years.

They had no community benefits. The Gordie Howe bridge got them community benefits for the first time, and those community benefits go to Sandwich Town to help it deal with the poverty and with the other issues. Part of that is a tourism connection there. The bike lane is coming, a brand new road is going into Sandwich Town, and this urban park goes right next to it.

What's kind of cool is also that the urban park will connect into the Herb Gray Parkway, which also has extensive trail systems going all the way out to Highway 401. This is another way to get into a whole other section that I didn't talk about and that is also already developed in there. It has actually won awards, so we've done it right. We want to finish it right.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Thank you so much.

The Chair: Mr. Kurek, you have four minutes, please.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Thank you very much.

I think this is one of those unique opportunities in a minority Parliament. Our Westminster system gives these tremendous opportunities for there to be discussions. I was looking into this bill before the vote that took place, and I was surprised that it was all but two members of the government...and with full opposition support, it passed and was sent to this committee. Certainly, that's an interesting dynamic that exists. I'm in a province where we have an international park, Waterton Lakes, as a tremendous example.

That's where I'd like to take my question. I was surprised that most members of the government voted against it, but perhaps you could highlight some of the opportunities that exist with economic development, reconciliation and tourism that really can come out as a result of members of Parliament doing what we do in this place, which is being able to forward the issues that are important to Canadians, and the unique dynamics of this being a minority Parliament where we're at committee discussing this important bill.

Mr. Brian Masse: Thank you very much for that.

I was a little bit surprised too that I didn't get a little bit more government support. Some of the stuff now is almost like grabbing at clouds: What's wrong with the bill? I'm open to amendments. I'm open to changing it. I'd like to have everybody support this bill. I'm appreciative of and very grateful for the openness. I've tried to be transparent.

To be fair, the Bloc Québécois, the Conservatives and the Green Party had some concerns on things, and I had to work on getting those resolved. They were smaller things, but I was very happy to get that input. I'm looking for that input on the government side, because I would like more than two Liberals to vote for it.

It is a unique thing. My first Parliament here was in 2002, during a majority. I've been through Liberal majorities, Liberal minorities, Conservative majorities and Conservative minorities. Whatever you want to have here, life is short and time is short. That's why last time I worked with Mr. Waugh on a bill. I was really proud to do that, because it actually helped me to grow as a person. That's what I want to do here. I don't want to stop growing as a person at the table here. I'm trying to find solutions and get to that.

If we don't take those opportunities, they get.... What I've learned about this place is that it can be a logic-free zone. It can be that way, and it takes everybody, including me, to keep it from being that way. Sometimes, and it's why we're here, we have to make some political decisions. I know that it can be convenient to basically not see this uniqueness the way I do, but that's my job. It's never been easy to get the border crossing done. It's never been easy to do some of the other work I've done. But my job as a representative for that area is to prove the case. We did this with the border. We were told that it was not necessary and not needed. We fought until we got it done and done right.

I believe the same thing with this case. It's unique. It's on the border. It fits a lot of different things. I don't understand why we can't get it done.

Mr. Damien Kurek: I would note that, interestingly, I didn't expect to see, at my first meeting as vice-chair of this committee, Stephen Harper being given credit in both panels that exist.

With that, I'll cede my time for us to move forward.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Brian Masse: Yes, and Lawrence Cannon....

The Chair: You've ceded your time to Mr. Duguid, I guess.

Mr. Damien Kurek: I think there were only probably 20 seconds left.

• (1455)

The Chair: Okay.

We'll finish with Mr. Duguid for four minutes.

Mr. Terry Duguid: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to Mr. Masse for appearing before us today.

I think you've heard around the table, Mr. Masse, that there is a shared goal. There may be some differences in the pathway to get there, but I think all of us share the view that this is a very special place on earth and needs to be protected.

I particularly understand your passion. I was a former city councillor for two terms and protected a small patch of tall grass prairie, the most endangered ecosystem in Canada. There's less than 1% of it left. So I share your passion. It was in Bill Blaikie's riding, rest his soul, and I prevented a big roadway from going right down the middle of it. I was called all sorts of names—I was a “hindrance to progress”—so maybe I understand some of the criticism you're getting. It's an incredible educational resource for the people of Transcona and the broader city.

My question, I think, has already been answered. You are open to amendments if they strengthen the proposal. That was good to hear.

I'm curious about your interactions with Parks Canada and with other members of Parliament, particularly the Liberal member who shares a border with you. It does seem that we share a common interest. I'm just wondering about your interactions, particularly with Parks Canada, to get to that good place that we all want.

Mr. Brian Masse: Absolutely.

We have had discussions with Parks Canada. They're having discussions with other groups and organizations, but we don't really know what the process is.

We asked about Caldwell First Nation being co-managers, and at first they said no. Now they're saying yes and they're actually funding that, so that's excellent.

Before my bill, when I started working on saving the property, we went to Parks Canada, obviously, for advice when dealing with Point Pelee to understand the ecosystems and the diversity of it and why it's necessary. That has only convinced me more, with the work they are doing on Point Pelee, that we need this as a national park with the full package, and it's different.

I've always enjoyed working with Mr. Kusmierczyk. We've had frank discussions about this, and, quite frankly, before there was a bill with regard to single-event sports betting in the last Parliament, the government introduced its own legislation but then they pulled it off the table knowing that it wasn't going to go. I think it's a similar situation here. Every once in a while....

I'm not saying I'm right, but I know this area. I've represented this area for a long time and I've tried to do the right thing with consultation from day one. I'm looking to enhance it. I am open to amendments, because every piece of legislation needs help.

Mr. Terry Duguid: Mr. Chair, I see it's the top of the hour. It is Friday afternoon. Could I cede my time to the chair?

The Chair: Absolutely. I just want to use that time to thank Mr. Masse for his passionate and eloquent support for the bill and for all the work he's done on it.

For the benefit of the members, the next meeting is in camera. We're doing the drafting instructions for the clean-tech study and then we'll start looking at the fossil fuels report.

Thank you, Mr. Masse.

Thank you, everyone. I wish everyone a very good weekend.

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