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• (1100)

[*Translation*]

The Chair (Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.)): Good morning.

I call this meeting to order.

Welcome, Mr. Guilbeault. It is a pleasure to see you. There have been a lot of changes since your last visit and this gives us a lot to discuss. The committee is very grateful to you for being here.

I would also like to welcome the new Deputy Minister for Environment and Climate Change Canada, Mr. Forbes, and the other witnesses from the department who are here with us.

Without further ado, I yield the floor to you for ten minutes, Minister.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good morning everyone.

It's a pleasure to join the members of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development to discuss the 2023-24 Main Estimates, as well as the 2022-23 Supplementary Estimates (B) and (C) for my portfolio, which includes Environment and Climate Change Canada, the Parks Canada Agency and the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada.

With me today are Chris Forbes, the new Deputy Minister for Environment and Climate Change Canada; Linda Drainville, Assistant Deputy Minister Corporate Services and Chief Financial Officer for Environment and Climate Change Canada; Catherine Blanchard, Vice President, Finance Directorate, Parks Canada Agency; Terence Hubbard, President of the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada; and Joelle Raffoul, Acting Vice-President, Corporate Services and Chief Financial Officer of the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada.

Before I get started, I would like to recognize that we are meeting on the traditional territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabeg, the original stewards of the lands we share today.

[*English*]

I take very seriously our responsibility to strengthen the nation-to-nation, Inuit-to-Crown and government-to-government relationship with first nations, Inuit and Métis, through respect, co-operation, partnership and recognition of rights.

[*Translation*]

I see this as critical to the ambitions and actions, throughout my portfolio, that we're discussing today.

[*English*]

Let me begin with Environment and Climate Change Canada.

The department works in collaboration with Canadians across the country, with all sectors of the economy and society and all faiths, including 2SLGBTQIA+, racialized and vulnerable people of all ages and, importantly, indigenous peoples.

[*Translation*]

The department leads, supports, and enables ambitious actions on a wide range of issues and concerns domestically and abroad.

[*English*]

From tackling climate change and pollution and managing toxic substances to slowing the loss of biodiversity and protecting nature and species at risk, plus safeguarding Canadians through its weather and environment predictions, our government's success in this regard is vital to protect the health and well-being of Canadians, the economy and the environment.

[*Translation*]

Priorities that go hand in hand.

As you know, we are in a critical decade in which we will have to address the triple crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and global pollution, in particular by plastic. This is a crisis that requires integrated and accelerated efforts if we want to avoid the most catastrophic impacts that threaten not just our standard of living, but also the future of humanity on this planet.

[*English*]

That is why the department is collaborating on a number of ambitious actions, such as achieving net-zero emissions by 2050, which is the best way to limit temperature increases to 1.5°C.

It's helping to create the conditions necessary for protecting at least 30% of lands and waters in Canada by 2030.

[Translation]

Scientific research shows this is the minimum that's needed to address the dual crisis.

And as members of the committee know well, when it comes to the environment, collaboration defines success.

[English]

That is why I'm pleased to note that the department played a vital role in helping to ensure that the global targets align with Canada's target in the Kunming-Montreal global biodiversity framework negotiated at COP15 last December in Montreal.

[Translation]

To enable continuous progress that will enable us to achieve our goals, Environment and Climate Change Canada's 2023-24 Main Estimates amount to \$2.4 billion, a 24% increase over last year. This includes about \$1 billion for planned operating expenditures, over \$100 million in planned capital expenditures and more than \$1.2 billion in grants and contributions. Total statutory costs amount to \$112 million.

In sum, the 2023-24 Main Estimates represent a net increase of approximately \$478 million over the total 2022-23 Main Estimates.

[English]

This increase is primarily due to new funding for nature-based climate solutions, the recapitalized low-carbon economy fund and the low-carbon economy fund re-profile. New funding will help to protect old-growth forests by advancing urgent protection of vital ecosystems, wildlife habitats and species at risk, and by protecting carbon stores in these areas.

Recapitalizing the low-carbon economy fund will help support projects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that both contribute to Canada's 2030 targets and align with goals for net-zero emissions by 2050.

[Translation]

This fund will support the renewal of the existing streams—the Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund and the Low Carbon Economy Challenge Fund—and add two new streams: the Indigenous Leadership Fund to support Indigenous-led clean energy and energy efficiency projects and an Implementation Readiness Fund to support applicants advancing proven low-carbon technologies.

Through the 2022-23 Supplementary Estimates (B) exercise, ECCC increased its reference levels in the amount of \$189.7 million. This update included new funding for the highly successful United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, COP15.

Funding sought also included initial requirements for the recapitalized Low Carbon Economy Fund as well as funding for the implementation of the next phase of the Oceans Protection Plan and for advancing a circular economy for plastics in Canada.

Mr. Chair, ECCC also participated in the 2022-23 Supplementary Estimates (C) process in order to drive further progress in the fight against climate change and to protect and conserve nature.

Through this process, the Department's reference levels were increased by a net amount of \$15.8 million bringing the Department's total financial authorities to \$2.3 billion in 2022-23. These Estimates included a funding transfer from Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, to support the Partnership for Market Implementation as well as funding for the British Columbia Old Growth Nature Fund.

[English]

Mr. Chair, let's turn to Parks Canada.

[Translation]

For 2022-23, Parks Canada received...

• (1105)

[English]

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): I'm sorry, Mr. Chair. I have a point of order.

Does the Minister have five minutes or...?

The Chair: He has 10 minutes.

Mr. Greg McLean: He has 10 minutes.

I'm sorry.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I'll just start the last paragraph again.

[Translation]

For 2022-23, Parks Canada received \$75.1 million through Supplementary Estimates (B) and sought \$9.9 million through Supplementary Estimates (C).

Supplementary Estimates (B) funds helped Parks Canada invest in its assets to support transition to long-term sustainability, support the Trans Canada Trail and invest in community trail connections to Rouge National Urban Park and implement the Federal Framework to address the Legacy of Residential Schools.

Supplementary Estimates (C) funds will support disaster relief and restoration efforts through the Hurricane Recovery Fund, implement the Impact Assessment Act and transfer funds from the Department of Natural Resources to support the planting of trees at various Parks Canada administered sites.

Parks Canada's 2023-24 Main Estimates are \$1.3 billion.

[English]

This represents an increase of \$305.4 million, or 31%, when compared to last year's. This increase is primarily due to funding to help Parks Canada transition towards the long-term sustainability of its infrastructures. The Parks Canada mandate is to protect national treasures in Canada.

[Translation]

In many places, its success centres on assets, such as the Fortifications of Quebec or the Halifax Citadel.

[English]

Beyond welcoming visitors and being a source of shared pride for Canadians, assets such as the Trent-Severn Waterway and the Trans-Canada Highway also support critical functions, such as transportation, water management and services to residents and businesses.

[Translation]

Funding will initiate critical, time-sensitive work on Parks Canada's assets. This includes high priority capital projects, asset assessments, inspections, and critical maintenance to improve asset condition and greening operations across the country.

Funding in the 2023-24 Main Estimates will also go towards the agency's work to support healthy natural infrastructure and increased access to nature and Canada's conservation targets. It will also strengthen the protection and recovery of species at risk and their habitats and, importantly, advance reconciliation through Indigenous leadership in conservation.

Parks Canada is working with partners to explore the expansion of the Park System with a focus on urban parks and connecting more Canadians with nature and cultural opportunities.

The agency will continue working with partners to consider the creation or enhancement of national protected areas and cultural landscapes as well as the creation or enhancement of urban parks and ecological corridors.

[English]

Parks Canada is also committed to supporting place-based approaches to indigenous leadership and stewardship of the lands, water and ice of traditional territories, ancestral homelands and treaty lands within Parks Canada-administered places.

[Translation]

Finally, Parks Canada will continue to protect, present, and manage existing national historic sites, national parks, heritage canals, national marine conservation areas and one national urban park in Canada for the benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors from around the world.

Turning now to the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada...

• (1110)

The Chair: Minister, it has been 11 minutes now. I would like us to have more time for questions. We will of course touch on the subjects you were about to address.

Mr. Deltell, the floor is yours for six minutes.

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

Colleagues, Minister, Deputy Ministers, welcome to your House of Commons. I am very happy to see you, Minister.

You all know that climate change is real and we have to make every effort to reduce pollution. Minister, I would like to point out that your official vehicle is entirely electric. I know that whenever possible, in the best of all possible worlds, you take the train to travel from Montreal to Ottawa. Last week, in fact, we cut short a conversation because you had to get to the train station.

That is why, two weeks ago, on March 13, like a lot of people, I went to the International Summit on Electric and Smart Transportation. There were thousands of people there, including the Prime Minister, who travelled to that event on a Challenger plane. It is a 22-minute flight. That was not the first time the Prime Minister had used a Challenger to travel between Ottawa and Montreal. On December 6 and 7, he did that exact return trip on board a Challenger.

Let's be clear. It is to be expected that the Prime Minister will travel around Canada. It is also to be expected that there will be security measures.

However, in all sincerity, Minister, what do you think about your Prime Minister, a member of Parliament from Montreal, taking a plane just to travel between Ottawa and Montreal, a 22-minute flight?

Is the environment really being considered?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Thank you for your question, Mr. Deltell. Thank you also for your kind words. It is a pleasure to be able to work with you and your colleagues on these issues.

As you said, as much as I can, I try to take the train between Montreal and Ottawa. Obviously, I am a minister; I am not the Prime Minister. I have no protective service personnel who have to accompany me everywhere, which would make travelling by train very difficult for the Prime Minister, for example.

Apart from the question of the Prime Minister, we are working, with my colleague Mr. Alghabra, to make significant improvements to rail transportation service in the Quebec City-Windsor corridor, so it will be even easier, faster and more reliable to use the train than it now is. A number of studies indicate that this will reduce the use of air travel in that corridor, and will accordingly reduce pollution.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: That is very interesting about the train, but my question was specifically about the use of a plane, which is highly polluting, as we know, for a 22-minute flight.

I would also point out that last week, the Prime Minister's Challenger made a ten-minute flight empty. Someone who knows a bit about aviation is well aware that take-off and landing are the points when a plane uses the most fuel. It's not when it's flying at 40,000 feet.

As Minister of the Environment, can you tell us that this was okay because it was necessary for security?

Remember your first election, in 2019: your party and your leader used two planes for travelling during the election campaign, one of which was a Boeing 737-200, one of the most polluting planes on the market.

Minister, I will ask you the question again: as Minister of the Environment, is it not time to cut down on the use of airplanes, to be consistent, when whole days are spent all around the world lecturing everyone about the environment, as the Prime Minister does?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I don't agree with your characterization of what the Prime Minister says about these issues, but we can agree to disagree.

We can spend a lot of time looking at anecdotal cases, but my role is to work to reduce the entire population's carbon footprint. The good news is that greenhouse gas emission inventories in the last two years show that greenhouse gas emissions in Canada are declining. You're going to tell me that in 2020 there was a pandemic, and that's true. There was no pandemic in 2019, however, and greenhouse gas emissions declined. The next inventories will be released in early April, and I think we are going to continue seeing that there is good news in Canada in this regard.

We can point fingers at this person or that person, but I am working to help millions of Canadians reduce their carbon footprint, particularly in the transportation sector.

• (1115)

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Using two airplanes to conduct an election campaign is something that had never been seen before. That isn't an anecdote, it's a fact. I don't know how you could have tolerated that, particularly since it was your first election campaign.

I'm going to move on to another subject now: COP27. There were Canadians who took part in it. According to the lists we have, Canadian taxpayers paid over \$1 million for hotel room accommodation for 113 participants. There were rooms at \$1,500 or \$1,545 a night.

Did you really need 113 participants, Minister, when everyone has the ability to participate online? How did you manage to have such a large delegation for 12 days? I understand it was a bit unique, doing it in Egypt, but did you really need 113 people? Would there not have been some way to save some money on that point?

What was the environmental footprint of these 113 people whose stay cost taxpayers \$1 million?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Concerning the size of the Canadian delegation, I would remind you that it is one of the most open delegations. Canada is one of the rare countries in the world that includes parliamentarians like some of you in its delegation, along with Indigenous representatives, young people, union representa-

tives, and industry representatives, including representatives of the oil industry. In fact, I defended that industry's presence in the delegation, because I believe that as a democratic society, our delegation has to reflect the make-up of Canadian society.

The fact that I don't like what some people have to say does not mean that it should not be heard.

[English]

The Chair: I will pass the floor to Mr. Turnbull.

I'm sorry—I have Mr. Turnbull, but it's Ms. Taylor Roy.

[Translation]

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

Hello, Minister.

First, I would like to thank you and the senior officials for being here today. I also want to highlight the progress that you and your team have made in implementing the calls for action that fall within your mandate.

[English]

Now I'll turn to English, which is much easier for me.

First, I want to thank you for all the work you've done for millions of Canadians in reducing our emissions and fighting climate change.

I'd like to turn to some issues that have perhaps a broader impact on that topic. I'd also like to acknowledge that my fellow committee member, Lloyd Longfield, isn't here today. He has done so much work on this and has actually prepared the questions that I am asking on his behalf.

The first question I'd like to ask is regarding the net-zero accelerator initiative. In particular, in these estimates there is a transfer of \$1.26 million from the Department of Industry to the Department of the Environment. I'm wondering how specifically that is going to be used, because this is obviously a very important initiative in reaching our climate targets.

Thank you.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: The strategic innovation fund, an \$8-billion fund, and the net-zero accelerator are providing funding to support projects to accelerate decarbonization on a very large scale. We're seeing the benefits of this tool on an almost daily basis when we look at the work that my friend and colleague, the Minister of Innovation and Economic Development, Mr. Champagne, has done in the process of transforming Canada's auto industry. Right now, we're seeing the largest investment in the history of the auto sector for decarbonization and for pivoting this sector from producing internal combustion engines to electrification.

Even President Biden was singing the praises of the Volkswagen announcement that was made a couple of weeks ago. More specifically, the transfer of funds via this memorandum of understanding will support a number of activities at Environment and Climate Change Canada, including conducting technical reviews, the assessment of GHG-reduction potential, and alignment with NZA—the net-zero accelerator—objectives, for a statement of interest.

Basically, what the department does is provide technical and GHG result-monitoring expertise during the due diligence process and project implementation phases, as well as contributing to ad hoc policy regulatory and technical discussions impacting project approval and implementation.

We're working very closely with our colleagues from Industry to ensure that the projects that are chosen have the most impact, obviously from an economic perspective but also from a greenhouse gas reduction perspective.

• (1120)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Thank you.

[*English*]

I'd like to turn to a question about the Impact Assessment Agency. The budget for that agency is being decreased by \$5 million. I question why, and why now. Especially in Ontario, as you know, given the vital role that the Impact Assessment Agency is playing or will play in protecting the greenbelt, it's of great concern. Thank you so much for your recent announcement regarding that. I think the work that the Impact Assessment Agency is doing is vital.

My question is this: Why is it being reduced right now by \$5 million?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Thank you for your comment on the Greenbelt. Like many, we feel that it's important for the federal government to ensure not only the environmental integrity of the Rouge national park, but also the environmental integrity of protected lands in Ontario. The decrease of \$5 million is actually a transfer to CIRNAC related to the indigenous agenda. As such, it falls under the transfer payment vote and not under the agency's operating vote; in other words, it has no bearing on the agency's capacity to deliver high-quality impact assessments.

I totally agree with you. If there was ever a time when we needed a strong, robust, independent Impact Assessment Agency, it's now. We fought for this. In fact, we're still fighting in the Supreme Court, unfortunately, against a number of provinces that don't want to have truly meaningful and impactful impact assessments that would include indigenous people and that would include looking at the impacts of climate change on projects that are being proposed. We disagree with those views, which is why we're fighting all the way to the Supreme Court to be able to have a robust system in Canada.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Thank you.

I appreciate your taking on that fight. I know it's difficult when you're collaborating with the provinces to make progress and at the same time sometimes have to challenge them. I appreciate the dual role you're playing there.

Very quickly, I'd like to go back to the “taking action on clean growth and climate change” initiative. That fund, as we know, is very important for research, and again, there's an increase of \$350,000 of support for that. I'm wondering how that will be used as well.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: One of the ways it will be used is through the academic engagement strategy. Environment and Climate Change Canada has launched a competitive process to fund research related to priority policy areas. For example, the Economics and Environmental Policy Research Network was first funded via a five-year, \$500,000 contribution agreement, and we renewed that after 2017—

The Chair: Unfortunately, we're going to have to stop there and go to Madame Pauzé.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Pauzé, the floor is yours.

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

Thank you and all the people with you for being with us today, Minister.

I am going to start by talking about COP15 and congratulating you on the agreement being signed. I think you and everyone who attended with you influenced the outcome that led to the agreement. However, certain initiatives were taken that are contrary to biodiversity objectives. As we know, biodiversity and climate change are closely connected.

I would like you to speak about Trans Mountain. According to the information documents distributed to us for today's meeting, \$2.4 million has been awarded in grants and contributions. That small amount is not what interests me; it is the \$30.5 billion figure. We are talking about a 44% increase since the beginning of the pandemic, and I find this disturbing and frustrating. I understand there has been inflation, and I imagine that affects the project as well. I would note in passing that this project has been opposed by the Bloc Québécois since 2018, the year it was announced.

A number of independent analysts concluded, after this \$30.5 billion was announced, that the resale of the Trans Mountain, TMX, network to private equity firms would call for guarantees from the government for the debts contracted by investors and the banks that finance them. The government said that once the sale was completed, it would be possible to recover it all. In my opinion, we can forget about that; it isn't going to work.

Minister, as you know, it is urgent that structuring measures be adopted in connection with the labour force, the legislation and strategies for reducing the carbon intensity of heavy industry sectors. It is particularly urgent that innovative technological solutions involving renewable energy be funded. These are all sectors where dollars could have been invested.

I recall that when the project was going to cost \$7 or \$8 or \$10 billion, the leader of my party said that the Bloc Québécois was prepared to take those billions of dollars and invest them in Alberta to help oil workers get out of that field of work, but the government is still dragging us into a bottomless pit.

Can you formally recommend that we get out of the money pit that TMX represents?

• (1125)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Thank you for the question.

On the subject of the financial aspects of this project, since I am the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and not the Minister of Finance, I am not in a position to comment.

However, I can tell you that we are already investing \$120 billion in the electrification of transportation, in public transit, and in clean technology. On a per capita basis, that is three times more than the Americans will be investing under the Inflation Reduction Act. In their case, we are talking about \$300 billion. There are ten times as many Americans as us, and if they were investing as much per capita, they would not be investing \$300 billion, they would be investing \$1 trillion or something along that line.

Not a cent has been spent under the Inflation Reduction Act. It will come, but the bill still has to go through a number of steps in the United States Congress. On the other hand, we are making these investments now.

Take the example of public transit, which I know is something that you are concerned about. There are 300 public transit projects underway. This is actual construction: ground is being broken. So we haven't waited. We have started the transition in Canada.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: However, there are other billions that have been invested in initiatives that are completely contrary to the objective of the Paris Accord, to slow climate change by limiting the average global temperature increase to 1.5°C. Last week, we had the report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, or IPCC, which more or less summed this whole situation up.

Apart from the Trans Mountain issue, there are also the Bay du Nord oil project and the offshore oil exploration permits on the Atlantic coast. You have also just given the green light to the liquified natural gas, or LNG, plant in Kitimat, British Columbia. That was done with the agreement of the NDP, which is in government in British Columbia, but once again, these projects have just been greenlit.

In addition, the cost of the Coastal GasLink gas pipeline started out at \$6.2 billion, but has now risen to \$14 billion. As a taxpayer, as a person who pays taxes, I have had enough of seeing all this money invested in projects that are the opposite of what should be done for the planet, for nature, for the environment and for health.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: There are a lot of points in what you have said, but I think they all revolve around funding for fossil fuels. As you know, at the end of last year, we ended international subsidies for fossil fuels.

For example, at Export Development Canada, or EDC, fossil fuel subsidies fell from \$12 billion in recent years to almost nothing this year. On the other hand, investment in clean technology has risen

by several billion dollars. This has not happened at the same pace as the reduction in fossil fuel subsidies, but it's close.

So we have reduced public investment in fossil fuels by several billion dollars and increased public investment in clean technologies by several billion dollars. If that is not the transition, I don't know what is.

That said, I am going to correct something that was said about the Kitimat project. The project was assessed under an equivalence agreement between the federal government and British Columbia. It was the province that did the assessment and greenlit the project. Obviously, Ottawa still has a role to play, but the assessment of the project was not done by the federal government, nor is it a project in which the federal government is investing. We must not mix everything up. There are private projects in which people invest private funds. This is not a government project.

• (1130)

The Chair: Thank you.

We will now move on to Ms. Collins.

[*English*]

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

I want to thank the minister for being here, and the officials as well.

I want to follow up on some of the questions around Trans Mountain.

The cost of Trans Mountain has ballooned. When it was at \$20 billion, the Parliamentary Budget Officer said that it was magical thinking to think that there was going to be any profit from this.

You've just said that as the Minister of Environment you can't really comment on the finances—that it's up to the Minister of Finance—but your predecessor, Minister Wilkinson, when he was here at committee, said that the proceeds from Trans Mountain were going to fund climate action. I'm curious to know if now, as the Minister of Environment, you can admit that purchasing the Trans Mountain pipeline was a mistake.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: As I said to your colleague, I'm not the Minister of Finance. I don't have expertise in this field. I would be happy to put your question to—

Ms. Laurel Collins: As a minister of the government, knowing that your government purchased the Trans Mountain pipeline... It's now going to be over \$30 billion. That's money that we could have put into climate action. Clearly, the government is going to lose money on the sale of Trans Mountain. Are you disappointed?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Again, you should really ask your question to the Minister of Finance.

I don't know what's going to happen—

Ms. Laurel Collins: I'm asking you.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I'm not the Minister of Finance. I don't have in this big—

Ms. Laurel Collins: You are the Minister of Environment. This money could have been spent on climate action—\$30 billion.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: We're spending \$120 billion. We're the second-ranking G20 country in terms of our greening investment—

Ms. Laurel Collins: I hear that you're not going to answer the Trans Mountain pipeline question, so I'll—

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I've answered it a number of times. I said that you should ask the Minister of Finance that question, because it is a financial question.

Ms. Laurel Collins: You, though, as a minister of this government, won't answer the question of whether you feel disappointed or think it's a mistake that the government purchased the Trans Mountain pipeline, which is now going to cost \$30 billion.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: As you well know, I have worked, since I was nominated environment and climate change minister, very hard to ensure that Canada reduces its carbon footprint. We've worked together on eliminating fossil fuel subsidies, and we're doing exactly that.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Thank you, Minister.

Maybe I can ask you some questions about the water agency.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Yes.

Ms. Laurel Collins: In the supplementary estimates (B), the ministry is requesting \$3 million for funding for the Canada water agency. We were expecting to hear an announcement on the launch of the Canada water agency last year, but there's still no word. I'm curious if you have a timeline for when we can expect to see the Canada water agency announced.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: We've already announced that we would have an independent Canada water agency.

Ms. Laurel Collins: When will it be launched?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: It's coming. As you can imagine, we're creating a new agency. It's not something that can be done overnight.

I would add that last week we made an historic investment in the Great Lakes—\$420 million. It is the single-largest investment in the Great Lakes in the history of Canada.

Ms. Laurel Collins: With regard to the Canada water agency and the freshwater action plan, your government promised \$1 billion over 10 years. Each year, that would be \$100 million. That money didn't come through last year. This year it looks as if it's \$3 million, so a measly 3% of that. The longer we wait for the Canada water agency to be launched, the harder it is to get that money out the door.

I'm curious. Are we expecting, in 2024, to see the government make up for that funding gap? That \$1 billion over 10 years I would hope would be front-loaded. Freshwater advocates are saying that they'd like to see \$1 billion over five years. Even just to meet the commitment you've made, I would expect to see, at minimum, \$100 million a year. I'm curious about when that water agency is going to be launched so that we can get the funding out the

door, and whether there is going to be makeup in the coming years to make sure we're following through on that commitment.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: We just announced \$420 million last week. That's almost half of our \$1-billion commitment to fresh water in Canada. I think we're front-loading this.

Obviously we can't announce all of the money before the agency is created. It's going to take some time for the agency to be up and running, but we're not waiting for that to happen. We're already investing a historic amount of money into freshwater protection in Canada.

• (1135)

Ms. Laurel Collins: Thank you. I want to ask a couple of questions about tailings ponds.

New research is showing that tailings ponds from the oil sands surpassed 1.8 trillion litres. That grows daily. There is currently no legislation to force oil and gas companies to take on the environmental costs and economic liabilities, which are a risk to taxpayers.

In this committee, we saw Conservatives and Liberals vote to take the words “tailings ponds” out of Bill S-5, the bill on the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. I'm curious whether you would like to see those words put back in to ensure that we're addressing this, and that our Canadian Environmental Protection Act covers tailings ponds.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: As you probably know, we have a Crown-indigenous working group on tailings ponds. Our commitment is to find a long-term, environmentally durable solution to oil sands tailings ponds. I know there's a proposal in the House to reintroduce...to make an amendment to Bill S-5. I'm very open to this amendment.

As you know, I have also proposed that we change the way we monitor and report on tailings ponds, which would include, for the first time, indigenous people, the federal government, the Province of Alberta, obviously, and industry as well.

The Chair: We have to stop there and go to the five-minute round, starting with Mr. Lake.

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm going to focus on the website for the Canada Energy Regulator—a government website—and its most recent data from 2021. In 2021, the total cost of imported crude oil in Canada was \$14.7 billion, an increase of 30% over the previous year. Of that \$14.7 billion, we brought in 15% from Saudi Arabia for over \$2 billion. We brought in 13% from Nigeria for \$1.9 billion. It was over \$4 billion from those two countries.

Is oil coming from Saudi Arabia and Nigeria subject to the same rigorous regulations around upstream and downstream emissions as oil coming from Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland and Labrador is?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: As you know, the Canada Energy Regulator falls under Minister Wilkinson, so Natural Resources. I don't have the data you're referring to in front of me.

Hon. Mike Lake: My question was a straight-up yes or no, because you're the Minister of the Environment. Is oil coming from Saudi Arabia and Nigeria subject to the same rigorous regulations on upstream and downstream emissions as oil coming from Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland and Labrador?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I don't know by heart the regulations, or legislation, in Saudi Arabia. I would imagine that Canada's are more stringent, but I don't have any material to compare there.

Hon. Mike Lake: The rules that Canada applies to oil coming from Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland and Labrador would be more strict than the rules Canada applies to oil coming from Nigeria and Saudi Arabia. Canada's own rules.... We treat our oil more toughly than we treat foreign oil coming over here. Very clearly, I think the answer to that is yes.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: As you can imagine, we can't impose....It's very difficult to impose our bodies of laws and regulations on other nations, just like we would find it difficult—

Hon. Mike Lake: I agree.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: —for other nations to impose theirs.

Hon. Mike Lake: I'm going to move on.

On refined petroleum products, I'm looking at the same website. In 2021, the total cost of imports was \$16.8 billion, up 50% from the year before. The Russian Federation supplied 2.4% of those imports, for a total of over \$400 million in 2021.

Was that oil coming from Russia subject to the same rigorous regulations on upstream and downstream emissions as oil coming from Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland and Labrador?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: If we want to compare oil imports, I would be happy to provide the committee with some data that shows that under the previous government, the importation of oil from other countries was 50% higher than what it is today, and I could provide—

Hon. Mike Lake: To what level are you able, as Minister of the Environment—

The Chair: Excuse me. I would like the Q and A to be a little more orderly, but go ahead, Mr. Lake.

Hon. Mike Lake: To be clear, he can table anything he wants after the fact, but he's not answering the question. To what level does

the minister have access to information regarding emissions in Russia and the regulations around emissions?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Emissions are available through inventories that are submitted to the United Nations.

● (1140)

Hon. Mike Lake: Does the minister trust whatever information would be coming from Russia on its upstream and downstream emissions?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: We rely on international agencies like the UNFCCC or the IPCC for this information.

Hon. Mike Lake: I'm sure Russia has a great record in terms of its reporting to international agencies.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: As you know, Canada doesn't import any more Russian oil.

Hon. Mike Lake: It was over \$400 million in refined petroleum products in 2021.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: But we don't any more.

Hon. Mike Lake: Revenues from oil and gas in Canada fund important things, like our health care services and education systems. What does the minister's research show regarding the revenues generated by Russian oil sold to Canada? What might they have funded in 2021?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: As you know, Canada doesn't import any more Russian oil.

Hon. Mike Lake: Could it have been foreseen, though, that Russia might have used the revenues from the sale of oil to Canada over the last seven years, say, for something nefarious like the war in Ukraine right now?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: As you're probably aware, under the previous government, the import of oil was about 50% higher than it is today, including from countries like Russia.

Hon. Mike Lake: To be fair, the Liberal government has been in power for almost eight years. We're talking about 2021 numbers, so there were many years to make decisions on this. Does the minister perhaps regret rules that benefited foreign oil from Russia, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria and other countries over Canadian oil based in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland and Labrador?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: We cut oil imports. Our government cut oil imports by about 50% compared to the previous government. That tells you how much we care about this, which is much more than the previous government.

The Chair: Mr. Lake, we're out of time.

We'll now go to Mr. Weiler.

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I'd like to thank the minister and officials for being here today to answer questions on the main and supplementary estimates.

There are few issues I hear about that generate as much concern as the continued high level of logging of old-growth forests in B.C. by our NDP provincial government. This is very frustrating, because we know how cherished these irreplaceable ecosystems are. As a result, we're seeing major protests right across the province.

The main estimates and supplementary estimates (C) include an increase of almost \$27 million for the B.C. old growth nature fund. My question for the minister is, what's holding up the launch of the old growth fund, and what is the Government of Canada prepared to do to protect some of our last intact old-growth forests?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Obviously, old-growth forests and species that are dependent on them are found primarily on provincial lands. We continue to look first to the province to protect and recover species at risk on those lands and to manage its forestry sector.

That being said, the establishment of the old growth nature fund is in progress. The funding agreement is also in place. We are currently negotiating a trilateral nature agreement with provincial and indigenous partners. We have in fact had several meetings in the past few weeks, specifically on that, with the province and with indigenous partners. The agreement will help all parties to better protect and restore habitats, including old-growth forests, to improve ecosystem resilience and to advance the recovery of species at risk.

With respect to the spotted owl in particular, I recently determined that the species is facing an imminent threat to its survival and recovery, so I'm now consulting with the Government of British Columbia and first nations communities on my finding. While the federal government continues to prioritize collaboration with provinces and partners on these issues, I will use the authorities outlined in the federal legislation if British Columbia's protection efforts for the species should be determined to be ineffective.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Thank you so much for that. That's good to hear.

As well, I know there's lots of private capital that's interested in contributing to the conservation of some of our most important ecosystems.

In your opening, you mentioned that Canada has budgeted about \$120 billion since 2015 to tackle climate change. You also mentioned that the most recent greenhouse gas inventory for 2021 is going to be released here in the coming weeks.

Minister, I was hoping you could share with the committee what have been the results in emissions reductions since 2015, outside of the fossil fuel sector.

• (1145)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: As you rightly point out, we are in the process of deploying more than \$120 billion in investments to tackle climate change, restore nature and fight plastic pollution. These investments, along with policies, regulation, tax incentives and other measures taken since the adoption of the 2016 pan-Canadian

framework, have enabled Canada to bend its GHG emissions curve downward.

In 2015, when we came in, the sky was the limit for emissions, so what we've worked on over the past few years is to bring that curve down. Now, in the 2022 national inventory report, the data shows that Canada's greenhouse gas emissions have decreased to 672 megatonnes. That's a 9.3% reduction below 2005 levels, the baseline against which Canada's climate efforts are measured.

Obviously, that's not enough. We need to do more. Emissions trends have remained consistent with previous editions of the Canada NIR, unfortunately, with emissions increases in the oil and gas and transportation sectors being offset by decreases in other sectors. Clearly, we need to work harder on every sector of our economy, but those two sectors—transport and oil and gas—represent more than 50% of our greenhouse gas emissions, so there is a specific targeted effort that needs to be done in these two sectors.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Thank you.

I want to ask a question on that, because emissions from oil and gas are the largest and of course the fastest-growing in Canada, growing by over 20% since 2005. The emissions reductions plan has committed to reducing emissions by 41% relative to 2019 levels.

One of the things we've committed to is bringing in a cap, to cap and reduce emissions from oil and gas. Given that B.C. has now committed to bringing in a similar cap and is requiring new projects to be net zero by 2030, I'm wondering what that means for Canada as a whole.

The Chair: Unfortunately, Minister, you'll have to work that answer into another answer.

[Translation]

Ms. Pauzé, the floor is yours for two and a half minutes.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Thank you.

Earlier, Minister, you opened the door concerning Export Development Canada. Indeed, under the Glasgow commitments, Export Development Canada must stop funding projects at the international level. However, in its most recent report, which dates from just a few weeks ago, Oil Change International noted that Export Development Canada was still funding projects in the United States, in the amount of \$7.5 million. Someone is going to have to clamp down on Export Development Canada someday.

According to all credible sources, such as the World Energy Outlook report, the International Energy Agency and the IPCC, investment is needed in the fields of energy efficiency and renewable energy. This is what is important if we are to address the energy crisis, not investments in oil, gas and fossil fuels.

Canada has provided exceptions to the Glasgow commitments. I have not seen other countries do that, in everything I have read. It has provided a national security exemption, ongoing support for natural gas, and false solutions such as carbon capture and storage and hydrogen that is not green.

Why have these exceptions been made?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: First, we have to understand that what we published after making our Glasgow commitments dates from the end of last year, for EDC. This isn't going to happen from one day to the next. I have also seen the evaluations you are talking about. The one by Oil Change International is based on data from the previous year. We have to look at what EDC is going to do starting this year.

You referred to \$7.5 million dollars, and that is a lot of money, but in 2018, EDC invested \$12 billion in fossil fuels. So we have gone from \$12 billion to \$7.5 million, as you say.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: I think it was more than \$5 million. That is what we have found, but the figure was probably higher.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: We have made a lot of progress. We have to make a distinction between investments in fossil fuels that provide for increased production and investments in decarbonation.

Our commitment to the Canadian public and all of the regions is to work with firms and organizations in all economic sectors to help them decarbonize. We are working with firms and organizations in the cement, aluminum and steel industries and we are also going to work with firms and organizations in the oil industry.

• (1150)

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Collins, the floor is yours for two and a half minutes.

[*English*]

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

I want to thank the minister again for being here to answer questions.

I wanted to quickly follow up on something. You said you were open to the amendment I've tabled around reintroducing the words "tailings ponds" to the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

Does that mean you are supportive and open, or...? Can you clarify?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: To be quite honest, I learned about it over the weekend, so I haven't had a chance to be properly briefed by the department and the team on it. However, as an initial reaction, I'm very open to it.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Thank you.

There is a requirement for a 2026 emissions objective in Canada's net-zero climate accountability act. Has that been set? What is the emissions reduction objective for 2026?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: You're talking about the interim target on the way to 2030. We are in the process of elaborating on that. We have to do an update to the emissions reduction plan by the end of the year this year. Starting this year, it's going to be every two years. We're still working on that interim—

Ms. Laurel Collins: Will we have the 2026 emissions objective by the end of this year?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I can't answer that at this point, but I would be happy to follow up with your office on it.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Okay, that's great.

I wanted to follow up on the announcement from three days ago that you mentioned. I quickly looked up the \$420 million. It's \$420 million over 10 years. Again, when it comes to front-loading, this still doesn't tell me how much is being spent this year, when that \$420 million will be spent, and if it's even going to be spent in this minority Parliament.

Given that we have, at most, until 2025, I'm curious how we're going to ensure that the commitment the government made for \$1 billion over 10 years is actually going to materialize.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I don't have the details of how and at what speed the \$420 million will be spent, but I can assure you that some of the money will start being spent very soon. We need to act as rapidly as possible.

As someone who comes from the environmental sector, one thing we really don't like is when there's a lot of money, and then all of a sudden there's no more money. You want to have a sustained amount of money so that you can continue to work to support your scientists and the organizations on the ground that are doing the work.

It's important that there is an investment initially, but you want to sustain it over time.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll go now to Mr. McLean.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Greg McLean: Welcome, Minister.

I'd like to thank you and the officials who are with you for being here with us today.

[*English*]

In the supplementary estimates for this current year, Minister, you've allocated over \$2.5 million extra for grants and contributions for the Trans Mountain expansion project. Can you tell this committee to which organization you gave those funds?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I don't have that information.

Could you please, Linda...? *Merci*.

Mr. Greg McLean: Let me go on to the next question. You bought this for \$7.4 billion back in 2018. You're now over \$22 billion over budget in building this.

It is a ridiculous execution. Obviously, something has not gone right. The pipe has been purchased. The route is roughly the same as it was before.

There's \$22 billion that has been spent on something that isn't, as your government would say, "just inflation". Can you tell us what allocated expenditures led to a quadrupling of costs in this project, when the hard costs were virtually locked in?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: As I told your colleagues, I'm not the finance minister, but I would be happy to turn to Finance and ask them to provide written information on this to the committee.

Mr. Greg McLean: I have, and they haven't answered, but thank you.

To add delays and confusion, your department, you, promulgated some regulations last year, in June, migratory bird regulations, that delayed the construction of Trans Mountain by another three years, potentially, at Bridal Falls. This is a new regulation in the midst of construction.

Would you say you're a little complicit in putting hurdles in the way to stop this pipeline and in actually making it much more expensive for Canadian taxpayers?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: First, we have a responsibility to protect species, and we take this responsibility very seriously. The migratory bird regulations that were put out were saluted by many.

In terms of the added three-year delay, I am not sure I can accept the premise of that question.

• (1155)

Mr. Greg McLean: Thank you, Minister.

Let's get it on notice here then. It's the pileated woodpecker. It's the only land-based bird that was added. Most Canadians will tell you that the pileated woodpecker is not an endangered species. Let's get onto it. A group called the Community Nest Finding Network, backed by the Dogwood initiative, actually found the nest shortly after your rules were promulgated.

Can you tell us if any of the money from your department, under grants and contributions, actually goes to either of these organizations to help thwart the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: We fund hundreds of organizations every year. We can certainly verify that. I don't have that information with me now, but we would be happy to follow up on that. This is public information.

Mr. Greg McLean: Yes, please. We'll table that—all the organizations you're funding that are potentially involved in holding up this pipeline. It's much appreciated. I'm wondering if those are included in the \$22-billion cost overruns here that Canadians are bearing.

Before being elected in 2019, you more or less said—and I'm paraphrasing—that this pipeline would be built over your dead body. Now you're in cabinet, and effectively you have a different

position in cabinet, but it seems you're in some kind of conflict with the Minister of Finance here on getting this pipeline built.

Let me point out that this pipeline would benefit Canada by over \$20 billion annually, yet somehow it's not being built. It continues to run into hurdles, many of which I'm pointing out here today.

Now, this is a large amount for us to actually be subsidizing, if you will, the hurdles that are ongoing. We're \$22 billion over budget with years of delays, yet when we have to deliver oil to Europe, the government's response is that we can't help Europe with oil.

Can you see now the consequences of not getting Canadian resources to market effectively?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I don't recall saying what you said I said. If you would be so kind as to provide us with the information, that would be super.

As you know, this pipeline is mostly for the Asian market, not for Europe. At least that's what I've read from most analysts and experts who've written on the subject.

Mr. Greg McLean: Well, seaborne oil is seaborne oil, Mr. Minister. Once you get oil to the open waters, it goes wherever the market dictates it goes. If ours goes south to the U.S. or east to Asia, that means something else is freed up to go elsewhere. We're not part of the solution. We're part of the energy insecurity we have helped Russia deliver around the world. This is a problem we've contributed to because of a lack of foresight and a lack of ability to develop Canadian resources. This is on your government's watch. Don't try to blame the previous government for this.

I'll note that we talk about greenhouse gas increases. One of my colleagues around the table here has said that Canada's have gone up 20% from our oil and gas industry. That's fine, but there's been a doubling of production. Let's look at things in relative terms and look at where we fit in the world as far as addressing our environment—

The Chair: We're out of time, unfortunately.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: The German chancellor at the EU cut—

The Chair: Minister, we're out of time.

Mr. McLean, we're out of time.

Ms. Thompson, we'll end the second round with your questioning.

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

Welcome, Minister, and welcome to the officials. Thank you for the work you're doing.

There continues to be some confusion and conflicting information around carbon pricing. To help clarify this, would you explain what carbon pricing is and why it's important, please?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: According to most experts who've looked at measures to mitigate the impacts of climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, carbon pricing is known to be, if not the most effective, then certainly one of the most effective measures to fight climate change. The very novelty of the Canadian system is that we're supporting Canadians in the transition by returning the vast majority of the revenues directly to them, which means that countries in South America, countries in Europe and countries in Asia are looking at the Canadian carbon pricing system as being a very interesting one. In fact, between 2021 and 2022, we went from 20% of the world being covered by some form of carbon pricing to 25%. We held an event in Sharm El-Sheikh, at COP27, at which we had representatives from the United Kingdom, from Chile and from the World Bank all coming to sing the praises of Canada's carbon pricing system.

It is an essential component of the fight against climate change. Again, anyone who has looked at this seriously will tell you that's the case.

• (1200)

Ms. Joanne Thompson: Thank you.

Could you also explain what the Government of Canada is doing with the revenues it collects through the carbon pricing?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: As I said, the vast majority—90%—of the revenues are recycled directly to Canadians in jurisdictions where the federal system applies, and according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, today eight out of 10 Canadians are better off. They get more money back from the federal government than what carbon pricing is costing them.

It is about sending a price signal. It is about ensuring that we move away from our dependency on fossil fuels towards public transit, towards electrification and towards clean technologies. That's the very purpose, the very nature of the carbon pricing system.

The other 10% of revenues is sent back to municipalities, indigenous communities and small and medium-sized businesses through either bilateral agreements or government programs.

Ms. Joanne Thompson: Thank you.

Staying with some of the misconceptions, what is the federal benchmark and what does it do? Then, on the other end of that, why not just let provinces and territories decide for themselves how to price carbon pollution?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Well, the output-based pricing system is part of the system we're using. There's obviously the fuel charge, but the reason we have set a benchmark federally is so there's fairness across the confederation, so the efforts are similar in all jurisdictions while allowing for some flexibility in terms of the implementation. It should be said that we're renegotiating the output-based pricing system with every single province this year. Well, with some it was last year, but we finalized negotiations with all the provinces this year. We negotiated the output-based pricing system

with all of the provinces, including Alberta, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, your home province.

Ms. Joanne Thompson: Thank you. I really appreciate that.

Could you also then explain—it's a slightly different area, but I think still along the same line of confusion—the approach to capping and cutting oil and gas sector emissions?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Basically, as I was saying earlier, the oil and gas sector represents 27% of our emissions in Canada, and it is the sector that has seen the fastest growth over the last decade. The commitment we made during the last election campaign was to cut the emissions—not the production, but the emissions—of that sector. We held some consultations before Christmas. We had a consultation paper that was out there in terms of what kind of system we would use, so we are working with officials on draft regulations that should be presented in the coming months, for which there will be another round of consultations. We hope to have final regulations by the end of the year or the beginning of next year.

The Chair: Thank you.

That concludes our first hour.

Minister, I—

Ms. Laurel Collins: Mr. Chair, on a point of order, the minister offered to get the Minister of Finance to provide some information in writing. I'm wondering if we could make sure that happens. Also, on the interim emissions objective, could we get a response in writing around that as well?

The Chair: I'm sure there will be no problem getting that.

Mr. Lake, go ahead.

Hon. Mike Lake: While we're at it, perhaps we could also get a copy of the regulations that would come into play dealing with upstream and downstream emissions in oil coming from Saudi Arabia, Nigeria and Russia.

The Chair: If it's available, I guess we could. I don't know much about their databases.

Hon. Mike Lake: I would hope we would have regulations in place, so I'm sure they're available.

The Chair: Oh, you mean the regulations here, as opposed to in Russia and Nigeria. I'm sorry that I misunderstood your question, Mr. Lake. Yes, I guess so.

[*Translation*]

Thank you for being here before the committee this morning to answer a wide variety of questions about a number of issues, Minister. We will be happy to see you again soon.

We are going to take a break.

• (1200) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1205)

[English]

The Chair: I call the meeting back to order. We're going to get back for one more hour and two rounds of questioning.

[Translation]

Without further ado, we are going to begin the first round of questions. Mr. Lake will have the honour of asking the first questions.

Mr. Lake, the floor is yours for six minutes.

[English]

Hon. Mike Lake: I'm going to follow up on the same line of questioning that I was asking before. It's important to folks in my constituency to understand whether the rules that apply to what they worked so hard to produce apply to products coming from outside of Canada.

This is a simple question. Is oil coming from outside Canada—from countries like Saudi Arabia, Nigeria and Russia—subject to the same standards and the same regulations around reporting and around anything? Are regulations on upstream and downstream emissions for oil coming from Alberta, Saskatchewan and Newfoundland and Labrador the same for oil coming into Canada?

• (1210)

Mr. Chris Forbes (Deputy Minister, Department of the Environment): I'm not an expert in this area, so I would have to get back to you on what the specific rules are that are applied to oil and gas imported from other jurisdictions. The minister talked about international reporting requirements. There would be some, but as to what the specific reporting requirements are for imports of oil and gas, we would have to get back to you on that.

Hon. Mike Lake: Is there anybody at the table who would have any idea what the regulations would be for oil once it arrives in Canada from other countries?

Mr. Chris Forbes: Once it arrives in the country, obviously, there would be rules around transportation, storage, distribution and regulations. Some would be federal and some would be provincial. There would be a long list.

Hon. Mike Lake: Oil coming from Canada and moving around Canada—in a 60-second answer, if someone can give it—is subject to what rules around the before and after, the upstream and downstream part?

Mr. Chris Forbes: That's a big question. I think it would take more than 60 seconds to give you a good answer, but I would say there are going to be things like transportation and storage regulations. How does it move? Whether it's by pipeline, by rail or whatever, there will be different rules, depending on that and different regulatory bodies.

Storage would be another example, I think.

Hon. Mike Lake: There would be rules around before it's in the pipeline in the first place, though.

Mr. Chris Forbes: There would be regulatory...there are rules. Some of it comes to the permitting process and conditions of operation.

Hon. Mike Lake: There are rules around where the oil came from.

Mr. Chris Forbes: How it's produced, there would be within Canada...anything that is permitted.

Is that fair, Terry?

Mr. Terence Hubbard (President, Impact Assessment Agency of Canada): Yes. My understanding is that there would be similar rules—whether the oil is produced in Canada or imported from other nations—for how that oil is used and manoeuvred around the country.

Hon. Mike Lake: As we consider oil moving from one place in our country to another, we have to consider where that oil came from and what the emissions footprint was before it got into the pipeline in the first place—its upstream and downstream emissions. Is that right?

The Chair: I'm sorry to intervene here, and I won't take away from your time, Mr. Lake.

Aren't there negotiations or discussions globally about imposing someday—it's not in the offing, but someday—special tariffs on products coming into countries, based on whether they incorporate a price on carbon in the source country?

This is way off in the future. That might be what you're touching on. I'm not sure.

Anyway, keep going. I didn't take any time away from you.

Hon. Mike Lake: I asked my question.

Mr. Chris Forbes: Can you repeat your last question?

Hon. Mike Lake: As long as it doesn't go against my time.

For oil that's in the pipeline moving around our country, we have regulations to determine whether we can even build pipelines in terms of what the upstream and downstream impact of that oil and gas is. I just need a yes or no answer: We have regulations in that regard. Is that right?

Mr. Terence Hubbard: We have requirements for new projects to look at both upstream emissions as well as direct emissions associated with facilities. We don't look at downstream emissions once oil leaves our borders.

Hon. Mike Lake: Right.

When oil is coming into our country and presumably gets into a pipeline or gets moved within our country, do we have regulations that look at the upstream impact before it gets to our border in the first place? In other words, do we look at where that oil came from in Nigeria, Saudi Arabia or Russia and what the emissions footprint was of that oil, similar to what we would do for oil coming from Alberta?

Mr. Terence Hubbard: If we were looking at a new facility being proposed in the country that would handle petroleum, we would look at those upstream emissions. We currently do not have any facilities that we're looking at to handle imported petroleum.

Hon. Mike Lake: We've made it very difficult to build anything that actually transports oil in any direction in this country. The point I'm try to make is that right now there's an advantage given to oil coming from Saudi Arabia and Nigeria in terms of getting to some places in Canada versus oil coming from Alberta, because they're treated under different regimes. The regulatory impact is different. The burden is more on oil coming from Alberta than it is on oil coming from Nigeria, or a refined oil product coming from Russia in the last year, in 2021. It's a statement I believe no one is disagreeing with me on at the table.

• (1215)

The Chair: We're out of time now. I gave you an extra minute. No, I'm sorry, you have another 30 seconds.

Hon. Mike Lake: I will give 30 seconds to someone who can articulate what regulation at all, if any, is in place on oil coming from Saudi Arabia, Nigeria or Russia before it gets to Canada to determine whether it should even be allowed in our country or not.

Mr. Chris Forbes: None of us has that answer for you, in part because we don't have the details of all the rules that those countries would have in place around regulating projects, etc., because that's effectively what we would have to know to answer that question. I think the answer is we do not have that information.

The Chair: Thank you.

The words I was looking for before were "border tariff".

We have Mr. Turnbull for six minutes.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Thanks, Chair, and it's great to see all of the witnesses here today. Thank you for your expertise and your leadership in so many important parts of our environment and climate change strategy. The work you do every day is greatly appreciated.

I have concerns about Parks Canada, just given our commitments to land and water protection and the need for biodiversity and the focus on nature-based solutions. I'm concerned that Parks Canada is being impacted by climate change itself, that its assets and its infrastructure are being impacted.

I'm just wondering whether you could just give us a bit of an overview of that, and whether your budget currently reflects the degree of financing that you need to ensure that Parks Canada can continue to protect its natural assets.

Ms. Catherine Blanchard (Vice-President, Finance Directorate, Parks Canada Agency): I'm going to turn to David Millar, who is the vice-president of real property and assets, to respond to your question.

Thank you.

Mr. David Millar (Acting Vice-President, Assets Directorate, Parks Canada Agency): Certainly, climate change is an ever-present consideration in the management of our natural and built assets, our cultural heritage assets and natural heritage. It's something we're facing and trying to manage every day. It's particularly notable in our northern sites, where we're dealing with melting permafrost. It's very much noteworthy in our coastal sites, where we're dealing with erosion and storm surge and increasingly intense storms. We saw this, for example, in hurricane Fiona, where a num-

ber of our sites across the Atlantic were affected. I think we're using a number of strategies in trying to deal with that in terms of adaptation.

In terms of our physical infrastructure, we're not just building back like for like. We're trying to look at ways to make our infrastructure more resilient to the impacts of climate change, whether that's setbacks from the coast or a variety of other techniques. We were fortunate in the case of hurricane Fiona to receive supplementary funding that has helped us to do that building back and with increasing resilience. It's a factor that we consider in all of our planning now, whether it's our management planning for our parks and sites, or investment planning, so that we're considering climate resiliency and also how we can reduce our contribution to climate change by making our operations more efficient in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: That's great to hear. Thank you for that response.

I'll also note that I have a very strong youth council in my riding. Time and time again, the youth talk about the importance of the environment and climate change. The protection and conservation of our environment is something they rate very highly. It's probably number one on their list every single time we talk. It's that and mental health supports for youth. Climate seems to rank pretty highly.

I'm just wondering whether you can speak to what Parks Canada is doing to support the next generation of young leaders for climate resilience.

Ms. Catherine Blanchard: Parks Canada is a leader in the federal government for youth employment. Annually, we hire approximately 1,600 students to work across the country in rural and remote communities. The jobs that we provide range from science, conservation and protection to visitor experience. Really, it is an entryway for us to bring youth into conservation and protection.

It's also to expose youth to cultural heritage and heritage spaces across the country.

We're very proud to be partnering with ESDC in youth employment in this country.

• (1220)

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: That's great to hear.

I'm interested in the benefits of the national program for ecological corridors. Would someone mind giving an overview of those?

I know that connecting the lands that are being preserved and having those ecological corridors will aid us in terms of protecting biodiversity. A whole bunch of natural systems are supported by having that.

I wonder if you could give an overview of that.

Ms. Catherine Blanchard: Absolutely. I'll turn to Jewel Cunningham, who is our vice-president of strategic policy, to touch on that.

As a brief introduction, Parks Canada is very active in the preservation of land and contributes dramatically to the targets for 25 by 2025 and 30 by 2030. It's in connecting them that we really get the true value of the conservation and protection activities.

I'll turn to Jewel to talk about the benefits of the corridors.

Ms. Jewel Cunningham (Vice-President, Strategic Policy and Planning, Parks Canada Agency): Thank you, Catherine.

Biodiversity is declining at unprecedented rates. Habitat loss and fragmentation are important contributors to the decline. As you have stated, climate change is also increasing the likelihood of extreme temperature and precipitation and increasing the frequency and intensity of wildfires, droughts and floods.

For that reason, many species need to be able to transit from one protected place to another. Ecological corridors make a means by which species can transverse from one protected area to another.

In addition to that, it's also a tremendous opportunity to work in partnership with municipalities, stakeholders and indigenous partners, as well as to increase opportunities for indigenous people to connect to the land, be stewards and maintain that connection. It's also for communities and people to promote human and wildlife co-existence in ways that are positive, both for communities and youth—as you've mentioned previously—and for the protection of species.

Finally, it's to mitigate the effects of climate change and to foster collaborations to make that same effort.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Thank you.

Do I have any time left, or is that my time? I think that's close to my time.

The Chair: You're just five seconds over.

Those are good questions. I hope you'll come see us again.

[*Translation*]

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

Ms. Monique Pauzé: I'm going to come back to the Trans Mountain network.

The supplementary estimates contain \$2.54 million for the expansion project for that network. What will that money be used for?

I'm talking about subsidies, of course.

Mr. Chris Forbes: Thank you for the question.

It is allocated to our efforts to have Indigenous communities participate in the project.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Okay.

My first question is about subsidies associated with fossil fuels. Obviously, you know that the committee is studying a report.

Canada and Argentina have been twinned on this issue for five years.

Can you give us an update on the peer review?

Where are we in terms of the analysis? Has the report been published or submitted?

These agreements were made under the aegis of the G7 and the G20.

Mr. Chris Forbes: I will have to get you an answer about this later. I don't know the answer.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Okay.

My next question is about the main estimates.

We hear that more and more money will have to be invested in adapting to climate change. As we know, Canada contributes to funding the causes of climate change, if we think of the companies that are responsible for the climate crisis.

Do the main estimates make specific provision for money for adaptation measures? For example, we were talking earlier about restoring shorelines that need to be protected.

Is there a lot of money allocated to that?

Mr. Chris Forbes: I'm going to refer to Ms. Drainville, who might be able to answer your question.

Ms. Linda Drainville (Assistant Deputy Minister and Chief Financial Officer, Corporate Services and Finance Branch, Department of the Environment): Thank you, Minister.

Thank you for your question, Ms. Pauzé.

You will remember that an announcement was made in the fall concerning Canada's National Adaptation Strategy.

We are working on the process for including funds in the budget. At present, you don't see those funds in the main estimates. However, over the next year, when we come back to discuss the Supplementary Estimates (A), (B) or (C), the money will be there to encourage Canadians to adapt to the new ways of doing things in order to support adaptation measures.

• (1225)

Ms. Monique Pauzé: I'm having trouble understanding. If it is not provided in the overall budget, are you going to propose other methods afterward?

In the budget speech, it seems to me that what it presents is the broad policy lines. Legislation will then follow to implement the budget.

So does that mean that there is no provision in the main estimates?

Ms. Linda Drainville: Nothing is provided in the 2023-24 budget that has been tabled today.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Okay.

I would like to ask a question about the meetings with the fossil fuel lobby groups.

The Minister wasn't the only person present at the numerous meetings held. In fact, there is an organization that records this. For example, the famous Pathways Alliance—that is generally acknowledged to be full-time greenwashing—had 16 meetings in September alone. The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers had 14 meetings, and the Pembina Pipeline Corporation had 14 meetings.

The Minister of the Environment and Climate Change met with those lobby groups nine times, and in December there were again a lot of meetings, the equivalent of five times a day. People from the department were present at those meetings. Note that no one is obliged to meet with these lobbyists.

Of course, we will never know what happens at these meetings, but does it not influence the policies proposed by the government?

Mr. Chris Forbes: Thank you for the question.

I would answer no to your last question.

We have a responsibility to create regulations and put them into effect. We keep this responsibility in mind when we talk to representatives of the companies and industries in question. That is what we did in that case.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: I understand, but when we're talking about five meetings a day, as in December, that's huge.

Representatives of environmental advocacy groups, which include lawyers, biologists and experts, have trouble getting access to these meetings, and it is never the equivalent of five meetings a day.

How can you justify that?

Mr. Chris Forbes: I can't answer your question about meetings that took place five times a day.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: It's the equivalent of five times a day.

Mr. Chris Forbes: Those are your figures. I don't have other figures to give you to contradict that.

We believe it is important to meet with people who want to talk to us, and we are open to the idea of discussing these key issues with all of the organizations.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: They want to talk to you often, from what I see.

Mr. Chris Forbes: I am new to this position. I have received a lot of letters from companies or non-governmental organizations.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Yes, that is certainly the case.

I would like to talk about the Canada Water Agency.

We are going to be studying everything relating to water at the committee. However, probably starting in the fall, the Canada Water Agency is going to be created. Money has already been spent to create that agency.

Are we not putting the cart before the horse?

How does that work?

Mr. Chris Forbes: We are creating something new, and it takes time to prepare. Yes, we have started working on it, but we don't know exactly what form it will take.

The Chair: Okay.

Thank you, Ms. Pauzé.

Ms. Collins, the floor is yours.

[English]

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

Just quickly, this is for Environment and Climate Change Canada.

I asked the minister what the 2026 interim emissions reduction objective was. I'm just wondering if you folks had the answer to that.

Mr. Chris Forbes: Yes, it's 20%.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Can you tell me what evidence or modelling that was based on?

Mr. Chris Forbes: I could not tell you that right now.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Do you mind following up in writing?

Mr. Chris Forbes: Maybe I can explain a little.

We set the main target, obviously, of 40% to 45%. If you think about a pathway or a signal that we would be on track, 20% by 2026 would be, I think.... I don't have any modelling to back it up, but that's kind of the story.

We'll update that when we do the emissions reduction plan update. We will have that.

• (1230)

Ms. Laurel Collins: Do you anticipate that Canada's going to surpass or fall short of that target? Do you have a trajectory for this moment in terms of whether we're on track or off track?

Mr. Chris Forbes: Through the UNFCCC in December, we published our report, in which the modelling showed we were still on track for the 40%.

We will update that as part of this progress report. Until that work is done, I'll just say that we probably need to engage with provinces—

Ms. Laurel Collins: I'm sorry. More in terms of looking ahead at whether or not we're going to meet the 2026 objective, do you have a sense so far of whether we are on track to meet that?

If we're not going to meet it, what would the difference be—I'd love to know concretely—especially in tonnes of CO₂?

Mr. Chris Forbes: I would say, based on the last round of modelling we did, that we think it's on track for 2026 and 2030, but we'll be updating that modelling over the course of the spring and summer and into the fall. That'll give us a clear idea, with budgets and other things.

I'm sorry for the long-winded response.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Thanks.

I have a quick question for Parks Canada.

The contributions in support of the national historic site cost-sharing program in the 2022-23 main estimates were about \$1 million. The 2023-24 main estimates show that it's decreased to \$700,000.

In 2017, this committee had witnesses come to explain that the contributions in the cost-sharing program are simply not enough, so I'm curious.

Can you give an explanation for why the amount has decreased?

Ms. Catherine Blanchard: Yes, absolutely.

The amount hasn't decreased. What you see is \$700,000 for contributions, but you'll see in a different section of the mains that it's \$300,000 for grants. We now have the authority to issue grants, as opposed to contributions.

It's \$1 million in the main estimates. Internally, we allocate \$1 million additionally, because there is such high demand for the program. It is a \$2-million annual budget.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Thank you so much for that explanation.

When it comes to Parks Canada, Mr. Turnbull asked about some of the impacts of climate change on parks. I know Parks Canada is also looking at how it engages with indigenous communities. Indigenous communities are often hardest hit by climate change.

I'm just curious about that interaction around climate change, indigenous communities and how Parks Canada is addressing this.

Ms. Catherine Blanchard: I'd have to say that with Parks Canada, almost everything we do is in active engagement and collaboration with our indigenous partners, from the establishment of new sites, national parks and national marine conservation areas.... We're also working on an indigenous stewardship framework for our cultural assets.

We bring our indigenous partners to the table for all that we do. Sometimes it takes a bit longer, because we really try to drive to consensus and bring indigenous knowledge systems, indigenous science and their culture into how we administer Parks Canada places and how we establish new sites going forward.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Thank you so much.

I'll go back to ECCC and the question around the emissions reduction objective for 2026.

When it comes to the largest emissions reduction pieces to meet those targets and to be on track, can you name a couple and what the funding is for programs that are currently happening?

Mr. Chris Forbes: We've talked about the big sectors. Obviously they are going to be oil and gas, transportation, buildings and other things. We have a range of....

Do you want me to go through all the programming we have?

Ms. Laurel Collins: It's more just those three in particular.

There was a report just released by the Canadian Climate Institute, showing that those three, in particular, have gone up since

2005. Other areas have decreased, but in oil and gas, it's an increase of 10% since 2005. Transportation is up, and buildings are as well.

I'm just curious if there is...ensuring that the oil and gas sector, especially, is doing its share when it comes to emissions reduction.

Mr. Chris Forbes: I think the government has laid out some existing and some proposed pieces. The minister talked about a potential oil and gas cap and a discussion paper that was out last year as part of the way to work on that.

We also have other programming tools with transportation. There's extensive work on zero-emitting vehicles. Regulation is out on that. There are requirements around the share of market. I think there is also a commitment from the Minister of Natural Resources around moving to no emissions in buildings.

All of those pieces together tackle those individual sectors.

• (1235)

The Chair: We have to go to our second round now. It's the five-minute round, starting with Mr. McLean.

Mr. Greg McLean: Thank you, officials.

Mr. Forbes, I recognize you're new in the job—it's been one month—so I don't mind if you defer some of these questions to your colleagues, who might have more detail, which I'm asking for here.

Grants and contributions from ECCC, in particular, are up to \$1.23 billion in this year's estimates versus \$577 million in 2021. That's more than double as far as grants and contributions go.

Would you say this is a lot of overspending going into a lot of new programming?

Mr. Chris Forbes: No.

Mr. Greg McLean: Okay. That's a good answer. Thank you.

You're talking about your department going up by a 42% increase. You're talking about the Impact Assessment Agency going up with a budget increase of 38% this year compared with 2021. For Parks Canada, it's a paltry 11%.

I don't know how Chrystia Freeland, the Minister of Finance, is going to balance a budget if even organizations such as yours are going up by such egregious amounts at the end of the day. I guess the proof will be in the telling there, but let's get into the numbers.

With Canada's international finance program, there was \$6 million in 2021 and \$45 million this year for international finance. Can you tell us what's going into Canada's international finance program's grants and contributions?

Mr. Chris Forbes: I might ask Linda to take the detailed question.

Ms. Linda Drainville: Yes. Thank you very much.

The grants and contributions for the international finance program are mainly to help developing countries adapt to climate change and build resilience within their own countries. This is where we have that funding.

Mr. Greg McLean: Yes. Thank you very much.

At COP26, developed countries committed \$100 billion to developing countries. You're saying that this \$45 million is just one drop in the bucket toward that \$100 billion that developed countries are going to contribute.

Mr. Chris Forbes: The broader Canadian commitment is \$5.3 billion out of that—

Mr. Greg McLean: Over what time frame is that?

Mr. Chris Forbes: It's over five years.

Mr. Greg McLean: Okay, so it should be.... Accrual would give you about a billion-plus a year.

Mr. Chris Forbes: Yes. That would largely—almost entirely—sit with Global Affairs Canada—

Mr. Greg McLean: At a time when we're vastly overspending in this country and we're running deficits—it's supposedly for employment—we're going to continue to spend more money on international commitments around the world. We're going to increase this deficit.

Mr. Chris Forbes: The spending commitment is \$5 billion over five years as part of a global commitment to hit \$100 billion U.S.

Mr. Greg McLean: All right. Thank you.

More on this.... The low-carbon economy fund expands from \$243 million to \$666 million this year.

Can you briefly go into why that is increasing at more than double?

Mr. Chris Forbes: The program was renewed—I believe it was announced in budget 2022—at an expanded level with a broader mandate. I think the minister mentioned this in his remarks.

There are three or four streams. There's some money that goes to provinces for bigger projects, and there are some challenges—

Mr. Greg McLean: Is it accomplishing anything, at the end of the day, as far as greenhouse gas reductions are concerned?

Mr. Chris Forbes: The revitalized program was launched in budget 2022, so I wouldn't have any information.

Mr. Greg McLean: Okay. Likewise, there's the Canada nature fund. Conserving nature goes to \$430 million from \$220 million two years ago. Again, that's double.

Would you put the two billion trees program under this conserving nature program?

Mr. Chris Forbes: I think that largely sits with Natural Resources Canada, the budget for the two billion trees program.

Mr. Greg McLean: The cost of the two billion trees isn't in this conserving nature part of the estimates here, then. Thank you very much.

The other questions I would have are about the publication of your reports. I know one of the items that's indicated in the estimates is the minister's ability to engage consultants. These consultants are not necessarily giving the advice that the government needs here.

I had the deputy minister of natural resources in front of the procedures committee. Effectively, he said that they are making up the numbers. He said that he could not provide where they were getting the sources on their triple, if you will, of your department's estimates on the reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from the hydrogen economy.

I would like to know which consultants you're using to get all your data, which I find highly suspect.

• (1240)

Mr. Chris Forbes: I might answer the question a different way. We get our data from a number of sources. It depends on what we're talking about. I think the minister mentioned that, for climate change data, for example, there's a UN-approved process. It's scientifically collected and reported to the national energy board.

The Chair: We're out of time here.

We will go to Mr. Duguid.

Mr. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have a few comments, and then I will turn it over to officials.

First of all, I want to thank Ms. Collins for raising the freshwater issue. I'm just back from the UN Water Conference, the first conference of its type at the UN in 50 years.

Mr. Chair, I know that you have an abiding interest, and of course I will be sharing what I have learned with this committee as we embark on our freshwater study.

There were 6,000 delegates, 1,500 side events and 80 or so Canadians who attended. It was a very rewarding experience for us all. I want to thank our ECCC officials, particularly Michael Goffin and Gemma Boag. They put together a great program and made Canada's presence felt on the world stage, so I thank them for that.

While we were there, we heard about the \$420 million that would be dedicated to the largest freshwater body on earth, the Great Lakes, so that's good news.

Can officials confirm—this is in response to some of Ms. Collins's questions—that in the last budget, 2022, we projected, booked—whatever term you want to use—I believe the figure is \$47 million over five years to establish the agency and get it up and running? Are my facts correct?

Mr. Chris Forbes: Yes, they are.

Mr. Terry Duguid: The figure of \$3 million in the brief from the Library of Parliament is a little confusing. That may be the money that has been drawn so far, but we project in the budget that it's going to be \$47 million.

Ms. Linda Drainville: I will clarify the \$3 million that you can find in the supplementary estimates. This was a question with respect to the funding we received for the transition office. We got a bit of funding in budget 2021, which totalled \$17 million, but part of it was for the fiscal year that just ended or will be ending this week. It's really for transition purposes.

It's not going toward the Canada water agency per se, because it hasn't been created yet. It's to enable us to come together to plan with respect to the creation of the agency.

That being said, there is, in the total of our main estimates, already freshwater funding there in Gs and Cs so we can contribute to keeping the Great Lakes all together.

Mr. Terry Duguid: Ms. Drainville makes a really good point. That's another comment, Mr. Chair. The amount for the Great Lakes is \$420 million plus \$80 million, for a total of half a billion dollars. That's halfway there, Ms. Collins. Who knows? Tomorrow is the budget, and we may hear some more good news on fresh water. I certainly hope so.

I imagine some of the detail surrounding the \$420 million and how it will be spent may be laid out in the budget. Is that correct?

Mr. Chris Forbes: I think, either in the budget or in the weeks that follow, we will certainly get more details and clarify how we're going to proceed.

Mr. Terry Duguid: I don't want to pre-empt the budget. Of course, no one knows what's in the budget, except a few select folks.

I'll move on to one final question, Mr. Chair, as my time winds down.

We've made a commitment—this has been in throne speeches and mandate letters—to establish a Canada water agency and a freshwater action plan; \$500 million of that has been announced. We are going to modernize the Canada Water Act. My understanding is the act will be modernized with a climate change lens, front and centre, and with indigenous rights as an important component.

I wonder whether anyone at the table could comment on that, particularly the issue of addressing indigenous rights in light of UNDRIP, and the importance of fresh water to indigenous people, which, of course, they emphasized when we were at the UN.

You have 15 seconds.

Voices: Oh, oh!

• (1245)

Mr. Chris Forbes: I think you hit on the important points.

One key, for us, will be engagement with indigenous people and communities, in order to understand their needs and expectations and to make sure we work with them, in any way, as we move forward.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Pauzé, the floor is yours.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: I'm going to continue in the same vein as Mr. Duguid concerning the \$3 million.

I believe it was Ms. Drainville who was saying that this money would be used to prepare the plan.

Mr. Forbes, where do we stand now, in terms of the development of this agency?

Mr. Chris Forbes: No formal decision has been made concerning the form the agency will take. However, the preparation efforts include creating a team that is responsible for developing the agency's mandate, whatever its format. There is work to be done to prepare the ground before launching the agency.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: I know there are people waiting for money for it.

My next question is for the representative of the Parks Canada Agency.

Ms. Blanchard, at COP15, a commitment was made to protect 30% of the land by 2030.

Could you tell us, in broad terms, what organizations and departments will be participating in that commitment?

[*English*]

Ms. Catherine Blanchard: Thank you very much.

In terms of the organizations involved in this protection effort, it's a wide range of stakeholders, including provinces, municipalities and indigenous groups. I don't have an exact, detailed list. It is extremely long. As I said earlier, everything we do, within Parks Canada, is relationship- and collaboration-based, with a high level of engagement.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Okay.

I am now going to come back to Environment and Climate Change Canada. The main estimates provide for about \$876 million for measures relating to clean growth and climate change.

Mr. Forbes, can you give us an idea of these measures for clean growth, and tell us how that is going to enable us to achieve the Paris Accord objectives?

Mr. Chris Forbes: I think this title is used to refer to a whole range of programs. I would refer to...

The Chair: I'm sorry, your speaking time is up.

Ms. Collins, the floor is now yours.

[English]

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

I want to ask a question about indigenous-led forest stewardship and follow up on Mr. Weiler's question about the old growth fund.

For the past few years, my NDP colleagues and I have been pushing the government to provide funding for first nations communities on the coast, in order to ensure they can do indigenous-led forest stewardship. That funding should be short-term, to financially compensate them when deferrals are made; intermediate, for consultation within the community; and long-term, to implement the indigenous-led forest stewardship plans. I'm curious to know whether the old growth fund covers all three of these stages for supporting first nations in indigenous-led forest stewardship.

As a quick comment, we're pushing for \$500 million, and this is a very small fraction of that.

Where is this funding going, and do you think it will be adequate to support nations in this work?

Mr. Chris Forbes: I would have to get back to you on the details of how that programming is split up, the various lines of it. I don't have that answer for you right now. It's what we've got to work with right now and we'll use it as a way of moving forward. Certainly our goal is always to make sure that the funding is sufficient to move forward to where we need to get to in terms of stewardship.

• (1250)

Ms. Laurel Collins: Thanks. It is so critical that we are protecting the last of our ancient forests. These are critical ecosystems. Also, the federal government has a responsibility to support nations in this critical work. These nations have been stewarding their lands since time immemorial.

If you could follow up in writing, I would love to see the breakdown of where that money is going. Thank you.

I have a question about the breakdown of the grants and contributions for first nations communities on the Trans Mountain expansion project. Is there another level of detail that I could see in terms of how the government is spending that money and where the money is going?

Ms. Linda Drainville: I don't think so, unfortunately.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll go now to Mr. Deltell for five minutes.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Welcome to the House of Commons and the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, ladies and gentlemen.

[English]

First of all, Mr. Forbes, you look like the new man on the team, so welcome.

You made me laugh when you said earlier that since you arrived you've received a lot of invitations. Welcome to the club. When I was appointed by my honourable leader as critic for climate change and environmental issues, on a daily basis I received around 100 invitations during the first week, each and every day. This is what Canada is all about: a wide country, 10 provinces, all localities, and first and foremost, people, because those people are very involved when we talk about climate change. This is why you have plenty of groups, and this is what we appreciate.

[Translation]

I would like to come back to the two topics I addressed a little earlier with the Minister.

To begin, I am going to talk about the 27th United Nations Conference on Climate Change, COP27, which was held in Egypt. At that event, we spent over a million dollars to pay for hotel rooms. I would like to draw your attention to one of them, the room rented at the Reef Oasis Blue Bay Resort, which seems to be a lovely place to stay. The room cost \$700 a night, and it was rented for 17 nights. Although we are all concerned about the price, what I find more interesting is that someone spent 17 nights in that room when the conference lasted only 12 days.

Why was that person in that room before or after the conference?

Mr. Chris Forbes: I'm going to ask Ms. Drainville to answer that question.

Ms. Linda Drainville: Thank you for the question.

As you said, the conference lasted 12 days, but people had to get there in advance to handle logistics. They had to stay 24 hours longer to make sure that all the equipment needed for the Canada Pavilion would be returned to Canada. That is why the length of stay was longer.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: I'm now going to come back to the hotel where the most reservations were made: 106 rooms, 1,220 nights, 113 people. Those are among the most expensive rooms.

Why was the Canadian delegation, made up of 113 people, in one of the most expensive hotels?

Ms. Linda Drainville: Thank you for the question.

We have to remember that these events are very high security. We have to work with the host country to accommodate participants in a pre-authorized hotel.

In this case, we used the list of hotels provided by the host country. That is why certain delegations were accommodated in specific hotels. Substantially the same thing was done at the United Nations Biodiversity Conference that was held in Montreal. We wanted to ensure the security of the hotels where people were staying.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: If I understand correctly, we are held hostage by the people who organize the stay. A majority of the delegation stayed in the most expensive hotel: \$1,545.58 for a room. There are several cases like that.

What measures are going to be taken for the next Conference on Climate Change, which will be held in Dubai? The last I heard, Dubai is not exactly a place where an all-inclusive hotel can be found for under \$100 a night.

What measures are you going to take to make sure that astronomical sums are not being spent? Spending \$1 million to pay for hotel rooms in Egypt is a lot.

Mr. Chris Forbes: Our goal is always to keep the costs associated with events like these as low as possible. We look at the various options, in terms of hotel room prices, and for the delegation and the number of participants whose expenses we are paying, since you talked about that, we make sure we are only sending the people we need.

This is the kind of exercise we do for all events we participate in.

• (1255)

Mr. Gérard Deltell: I would now like to address the other subject, the use of the plane by the Prime Minister.

I want to be quite clear: it is entirely to be expected that the Prime Minister will travel from one end of Canada to the other to go out and meet Canadians. That is his job, and that is fine.

However, there are some very debatable ways of doing things, like return trips between Montreal and Ottawa by plane. It's a 22-minute flight. We think that is not the right thing to do, particularly when someone spends his time saying we have to reduce our footprint and climate change is important.

As the Prime Minister rightly said at the Montreal conference, we choose to take the fight against climate change seriously. However, when you take a plane for a 22-minute flight, that isn't taking it seriously. On the contrary; it is taking people for fools.

You don't have to comment on what I have said, but I want to ask you a question.

[English]

The Chair: We're out of time on this, Mr. Deltell.

Go ahead on a point of order, Mr. Duguid.

Mr. Terry Duguid: Mr. Chair, that is a political question that was addressed by the minister.

The Chair: It does not have to be addressed, because time is up.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: That is exactly what I said.

The Chair: Mr. Weiler, you're batting cleanup today. You have five minutes.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Thank you, Mr. Chair, but it's actually Ms. Taylor Roy who's next.

The Chair: Ms. Taylor Roy, please go ahead.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: I would like to ask some questions about Parks Canada, and in particular the progress we've been making with Parks Canada to try to hit our ambitious goals of 25% by 2025 and 30% by 2030.

Can you talk about how Parks Canada is helping with that initiative?

Ms. Catherine Blanchard: In terms of Parks Canada's contribution to the 25% by 2025, we're doing it in two ways. One is on our territorial land-based commitments, where we are moving towards the creation of 10 national parks, 10 national urban parks and 10 national marine conservation areas on the water side. Those are progressing very well within the agency and will increase our contribution to the 25% by 2025 and the 30% by 2030.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: I saw there was an increase in funding for the Trans Canada Trail, something I'm very interested in, as well. How is that project going, and how close are we to completing the connections across the country?

Ms. Catherine Blanchard: Budget 2021 announced \$55 million over five years for the expansion of the Trans Canada Trail. There are 27,000 kilometres of trails throughout many urban, rural and remote communities within Canada. We are progressing very well, flowing \$11 million per year to the Trans Canada Trail association to create access routes from communities into the trail. Really, the focus is improving accessibility. About 80% of Canadians already live within 30 minutes of the trail, making it easier for them, including those with disabilities, to have direct access to the various routes of the Trans Canada Trail. It's going extremely well.

There's also some work going on in the Rouge National Urban Park. There was \$2 million over two years announced for the Rouge. We're making great progress in connecting the Rouge National Urban Park to the Trans Canada Trail. It's been a really exciting project and one that's valued by Canadians.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: That's fantastic. I believe our chair has a question, so I'm going to give the remainder of my time to him.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Taylor Roy. I appreciate that.

Could you give us an update on where we are in terms of designating the monarch butterfly as an endangered species?

Mr. Chris Forbes: I don't have much to share with you. Obviously, that's something we'll have to come back to at a later date.

The Chair: Would it be possible to send me an email or something on that?

Mr. Chris Forbes: I can have someone do that, for sure.

The Chair: It's a big issue in my riding. There are the monarchs at the airport in Montreal. It's been recommended by COSEWIC that the butterfly be considered an endangered species. That was in 2016. I think now we're in consultations to somehow implement that recommendation. I'd be really interested in knowing where that's at. I thank you for that.

Do you have anything else, Ms. Taylor Roy? No?

Okay. I want to thank our witnesses for being here and speaking to the estimates.

We, as the committee, we have one more task to complete here before we break today.

We have to vote on the main estimates. We have a number of votes. We have votes 1, 5 and 10 under the Department of the Environment; votes 1 and 5 under the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada; and votes 1, 5 and 10 under Parks Canada.

Shall vote 1 under the Department of the Environment, less the amount in interim supply, carry?

An hon. member: On division.

The Chair: I'm going to read the French.

● (1300)

[*Translation*]

ENVIRONMENT

Vote 1—Operating expenditures..... \$998,976,093

Vote 5—Capital expenditures..... \$100,902,516

Vote 10—Grants and contributions..... \$1,234,196,797

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

IMPACT ASSESSMENT AGENCY OF CANADA

Vote 1—Operating expenditures..... \$70,317,336

Vote 5—Grants and contributions..... \$21,453,336

(Votes 1 and 5 agreed to on division)

PARKS CANADA AGENCY

Vote 1—Operating expenditures..... \$663,382,945

Vote 5—Capital expenditures..... \$331,076,015

Vote 10—Grants and contributions..... \$81,304,508

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

● (1305)

The Chair: Shall I report the votes on the main estimates, less the amounts voted in interim supply, to the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Thank you, colleagues.

On Thursday we will discuss a sort of supplementary report concerning the subjects the government should be considering in the future. If we are concluding this discussion—which is not an easy thing, to me—we will continue with our consideration of the report on fossil fuel subsidies.

Have a good day, and we will see you during question period.

The meeting is adjourned.

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