



# STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE ECONOMY

## Hansard Verbatim Report

No. 16 — April 27, 2026

Published under the  
authority of  
The Hon. Todd Goudy  
Speaker



**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

**Thirtieth Legislature**

*Hansard* and other documents of the  
Legislative Assembly are available  
online within hours after each sitting.  
<https://www.legassembly.sk.ca/>

## **STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE ECONOMY**

Daryl Harrison, Chair  
Cannington

Meara Conway, Deputy Chair  
Regina Elphinstone-Centre

Tajinder Grewal  
Saskatoon University-Sutherland

Racquel Hilbert  
Humboldt-Watrous

Sally Houser  
Regina University

Kevin Kasun  
Prince Albert Carlton

Kevin Weedmark  
Moosomin-Montmartre



[The committee met at 16:59.]

**Chair D. Harrison:** — Welcome to the Standing Committee on the Economy. I'm Daryl Harrison, your Chair. Chitting in for Meara Conway is Don McBean; Tajinder Grewal; Racquel Hilbert; Trent Wotherspoon is chitting in for Sally Housser; Kevin Kasun; and Kevin Weedmark.

**Bill No. 40 — *The Animal Protection Amendment Act, 2025***

**Clause 1**

**Chair D. Harrison:** — Today we'll be considering Bill No. 40, *The Animal Protection Amendment Act, 2025*. We will begin our consideration with clause 1, short title.

Minister Marit is here with ministry officials. I would ask that officials state their names before speaking for the first time. And please don't touch the microphones; the *Hansard* operator will turn your microphone on when you are speaking to the committee. Minister, please make your opening comments and introduce your officials.

**Hon. David Marit:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. With me, seated behind me is Venkata and Raj are behind me; and Stephanie is beside me. Brady Pollock's the assistant deputy minister beside me. And my chief of staff, Jean-Michel is behind me as well.

We're here obviously to talk about *The Animal Protection Amendment Act, 2025* that amends eight existing provisions and establishes five new sections. Much has evolved since the Act first came into force in 2018. Animal welfare and enforcement policies in Canada continue evolving to adapt to changing trade requirements and public expectations. Companies are developing stronger environmental, social, and governance policies that require higher standards for animal welfare. To support this, we are proposing amendments that will strengthen the Act and create more transparency and public accountability.

During the consultation, responses from stakeholders were overall very favourable. The following changes will strengthen the Act: creation of animal welfare inspector positions; provide authority to obtain telewarrants to relieve animal distress; provide authority to establish agreements with the Government of Canada, provincial governments, other ministries, local authorities, municipalities, and Indigenous communities for the purposes of enforcement; support other provincial legislation on humane euthanasia to respond to animal disease events and public safety; and clarify disposition of animals and veterinarians' ability to relieve animal distress under the Act.

The following changes are administrative in nature and will enhance public transparency and accountability: establishing a code of conduct for animal protection officers and animal welfare inspectors; establishing a chief officer position to oversee officer conduct; establishing an administrative agreement for animal protection agencies to enforce the Act; providing the authority to create an appeals board to adjudicate matters of animal disposition and owner liabilities for expenses; establishing guidelines on the use, receiving, and disclosure of information by designated agencies; and expanding the definition of animal protection officers to include police members as defined in *The*

*Police Act, 1990*. To date, livestock industry stakeholders have been supportive of this approach and have little to no concerns with the proposed changes, and no major impacts to the province's livestock producers and animal owners are anticipated.

There's one set of regulations under the existing Act. The current regulations will need amendments and prescribing certain provisions to accommodate changes in the Act. Regulations for the code of conduct and cost of care will be established to support the Act's provisions. It is anticipated that the new Act and regulations could come into force as early as January 1st, 2027.

In summary, *The Animal Protection Amendment Act, 2025* will address some of the critical gaps in enforcement to establish better public accountability while balancing regulatory approaches and evolving animal health welfare requirements. With that, Mr. Chair, that's my opening remarks. We are open for questions.

**Chair D. Harrison:** — Are there questions from any other committee members? MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] Wotherspoon.

**Trent Wotherspoon:** — Okay, thanks so much. Thanks, Chair, and committee members and minister and officials that are here tonight. Certainly these are very important duties and responsibilities, important aims around animal protection and upholding that responsibility.

I'm interested in getting a . . . Can you share with us who was all consulted through this process and identify what concerns those respective stakeholders shared with you?

**Hon. David Marit:** — The list is quite lengthy. In fact it's, I think, about two or three pages long, but I'll try and get through most of them.

The Chicken Farmers of Saskatchewan, Livestock Services of Saskatchewan, Livestock Marketers, SaskMilk, Sask Pork, Saskatchewan Bison Association, Saskatchewan Cattle Feeders Association, Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association, Saskatchewan Cervid Alliance, Saskatchewan Broiler Hatching Egg Producers, Saskatchewan Egg Producers, Saskatchewan Goat Breeders Association, Saskatchewan Horse Federation, Saskatchewan Sheep Breeders' Association, Saskatchewan Sheep Development Board, Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association, the Turkey Farmers of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Poultry Council, Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association, Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan.

The municipal sector was obviously SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] and SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association], and the New North Saskatchewan Association of Northern Communities.

From a federal level, the Ministry of Government Relations, Advisory Services, Municipal Relations, and Community Planning; the Ministry of Health; Canadian Food Inspection Agency; the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], Animal Protection Services of Saskatchewan.

The Regina Humane Society; Indigenous Engagement unit, FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations] and Métis Nation Saskatchewan; Saskatchewan Marshals Service; Saskatchewan Veterinary Medical Association; the humane societies; Western College of Veterinary Medicine; the Veterinary Medical Centre; the Battlefords Humane Society; Meadow Lake & District Humane Society; Wildlife Rescue Society of Saskatchewan; Moose Jaw Humane Society; Weyburn Humane Society; Estevan Humane Society; Saskatchewan Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; North East Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; the Prince Albert Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; the Saskatoon Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; the Humboldt and District Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; the Swift Current society; the Yorkton society.

Also consulted with our neighbours: British Columbia, Alberta, and Manitoba. That is the list of consultation. You can see it was very, very extensive.

**Trent Wotherspoon:** — Thank you. Thank you for that, Minister. You shared that the livestock sector has been supportive of the changes that have been brought forward. Can you identify concerns that other folks, other entities have identified with you or your officials?

**Hon. David Marit:** — I'll maybe turn that over to . . . Brady can probably start, and then Stephanie might be able to add to it.

**Brady Pollock:** — Brady Pollock, assistant deputy minister. Thank you for the question. The stakeholders' major concerns were around the clarity for roles of some of the newly created positions, including the welfare inspector position and the chief officer position, along with the mandate of the appeals board and the code of conduct for the animal protection officers.

Much of that will be addressed through the subsequent regulations that are going to be developed pursuant to the amended Act, including the code of conduct regulations. So those are going to be largely operational in nature and further refined during the regulatory development process to support implementation of the Act.

**Trent Wotherspoon:** — So with respect to the concerns you've heard around code of conduct or qualifications, do you feel that you're going to be able to fully address those concerns that have been identified with you in a satisfactory way through the regulations and the process ahead?

**Brady Pollock:** — Well there will be additional consultation in advance of finalizing those regulations, so we'll be able to drill a little deeper into what we did here during the initial consultation on development of the Act. And since these will be new regulations, we'll be able to be responsive, depending on the nature of concerns and additional input that we do get during those consultations.

**Trent Wotherspoon:** — What are some of the concerns you've heard around the concerns over qualifications, and possibly that these changes erode or risk losing some of the experience or some of the qualified individuals that conduct this very important work?

**Stephanie Smith:** — Stephanie Smith, chief veterinary officer with regulatory and compliance branch. So any concerns particularly that we heard were around understanding the animal welfare inspector position — understanding what that means, what is that going to look like, how does that fit within the existing structure.

In terms of losing experienced individuals, certainly that's not the intent behind that. It is to expand and add additional capacity. We have seen already, you know, the existing experienced individuals we have have been maintained within the new agency that's begun. We've had ongoing conversations around how these animal welfare inspector positions can provide that support with experienced individuals from industry, such as in partnership with our livestock stakeholders.

So this really is about expanding the capacity that we do have with those positions and working jointly with the animal protection agencies.

**Trent Wotherspoon:** — And can you share which organizations were engaged in expressing some of the concerns around the qualifications?

**Stephanie Smith:** — So primarily it was the previous agency, Animal Protection Services, that expressed questions and clarity over that duality in role. Outside of that, individuals have been interested in working with us and to the new regulations on what this means.

**Trent Wotherspoon:** — And so the concerns were being identified by the Sask SPCA [Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals]. Have those concerns been addressed? And do you feel sufficiently responded to to . . . [inaudible] . . . the concerns that they were identifying?

**Hon. David Marit:** — Yeah, I do. You know, we launched that a few weeks ago here when we had the press release in the building here with the new agency and the new directive. And I'm very confident. And a lot of them were in the room actually that day when we made the announcement and were very happy that this is the direction path that it's gone.

**Trent Wotherspoon:** — And as far as resources and funding, have you heard concerns on that front for the new agency? And can you describe what the funding had been and what it'll be this year?

**Hon. David Marit:** — Yeah, in fact when we did the launch with the new organization . . . The funding will be 1.6 million, as it was last year, the same as last year, which is up significantly from 2021-2022, where it was 1.1. So now we're at 1.6 in this budget year.

**Trent Wotherspoon:** — Thanks. Did you hear a concern from officers or a desire for officers to be better protected and have some defensive tools facing the risks that they face? I hear concern around their own safety and just the lack of being able to protect themselves. Just wanted to hear what you've heard on that front and what you've done on that front.

**Hon. David Marit:** — Thank you. Obviously, you know, we did have some discussion with the police service and public safety as

well on this. But some of the things we have done to ensure the safety and well-being of APOs [animal protection officer]: the ministry has approved the use of radios with dedicated channel frequency; dog bite sticks and spray, with ministry-approved training; and the new policy requires APOs to be accompanied by members of a police force when attending a case where there are perceived safety concerns. So there's quite a few things that we have done to improve the safety of the officers and the police force as well.

**Trent Wotherspoon:** — Can you speak to what the labour force looks like right now on this front and what you envision moving forward? Do you have sufficient officers that are trained? Or what are you doing to build that labour force?

[17:15]

**Stephanie Smith:** — Sure. Certainly. So Saskatchewan Animal Enforcement Agency is now in operation, and they had a record number of applicants when they put out their call. So it was an incredible response. They are looking to be staffed up at 14 officers, which puts us at a very reasonable caseload: around 70, 78 cases per officer, which is well below the typical standard across Canada.

In addition to that, I'll note as well the amendments in the legislation also support us by building that capacity and working more collaboratively with all policing agencies across the province that we are recognized as animal protection officers.

**Hon. David Marit:** — And I would just like to add one note. They just told me the interest on the applications was unreal. Like there was hundreds of people that are interested in it. So it's good.

**Trent Wotherspoon:** — It's my understanding there's not any funding on the animal protection side for the Regina Humane Society. Is that correct? Who fulfills this responsibility in the city limits of Regina?

**Hon. David Marit:** — The Regina Humane Society fulfills that themselves, yeah.

**Trent Wotherspoon:** — And what's the rationale for not providing any funding for that service?

**Hon. David Marit:** — That's their choice. That's what they want. Like Saskatoon doesn't have it now, all falls under . . . But this is Regina's choice to have the Humane Society do it.

**Trent Wotherspoon:** — Right. And this new agency takes that over in Saskatoon, those responsibilities, but you're funding that, correct? It just seems to me that maybe there's a bit of an inequity on this front to not provide a bit of funding. You're funding it for the rest of the province. Regina Humane Society fulfills that role in a very strong way with lots of integrity. But I'm just wondering where the consideration is to provide them a bit of funding.

**Hon. David Marit:** — Yeah, it's actually a very mutual collaboration. I know when the new agency was formed, the Humane Society was consulted, and they were confident, you know, where they were. One thing we do for them is all the training of all their APOs. We paid for all that. That's one thing we do, yeah.

**Trent Wotherspoon:** — Okay. Listen, I don't believe I have any further questions at this time with respect to this bill. And thanks to you all for the time.

**Hon. David Marit:** — Thank you.

**Chair D. Harrison:** — Are there any other questions from committee members? Seeing none, we will proceed to the vote on the clauses. Clause 1, short title, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**Chair D. Harrison:** — Carried.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 to 16 inclusive agreed to.]

**Chair D. Harrison:** — His Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: *The Animal Protection Amendment Act, 2025*.

I would ask a member to move that we report Bill No. 40, *The Animal Protection Amendment Act, 2025* without amendment. MLA Kasun has moved. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**Chair D. Harrison:** — Carried. Minister, do you have any closing comments?

**Hon. David Marit:** — No, I just want to thank the team for a lot of work. And you can see the consultation process was very, very extensive, and good work by everybody. And I think we landed in a very good spot with *The Animal Protection Act* and with the agency that is moving forward as well. Very good spot.

**Chair D. Harrison:** — Okay, thank you, Minister. MLA Wotherspoon, do you have any closing comments?

**Trent Wotherspoon:** — Just real briefly, thanks, Mr. Chair. Thanks, committee members. Thanks to the minister and the officials for the time here tonight and the work on this front and the important undertakings that they've committed themselves to.

**Chair D. Harrison:** — Thank you to the minister and all your officials. And thanks to my Clerk and *Hansard*. And thanks to my committee for coming out tonight.

That concludes our business for today. I would ask a member to move a motion of adjournment. MLA Hilbert has moved. All agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**Chair D. Harrison:** — Carried. This committee stands adjourned to the call of the Chair.

[The committee adjourned at 17:22.]