



STANDING COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS AND JUSTICE

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS AND JUSTICE

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[The committee met at 15:33.]

Chair B. McLeod: — Welcome to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice, and thank you for everyone being here today. First of all, myself is Blaine McLeod, the Chair. And to my right we have MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] Megan Patterson; MLA Jamie Martens; MLA Doug Steele, who's chitting in today for MLA Racquel Hilbert; and to my left, Leroy Laliberte, MLA; and MLA Jacqueline Roy. And Jared Clarke will be joining us as well right away, and he's chitting for Betty Nippi-Albright. So welcome, everyone.

Bill No. 21 — *The Construction Codes (Derelict Buildings) Amendment Act, 2025*

Clause 1

Chair B. McLeod: — And today we're considering Bill No. 21, *The Construction Codes (Derelict Buildings) Amendment Act, 2025* with the Minister of Government Relations. And we will begin with clause 1, short title.

Minister Schmalz is here with his officials, and I would ask that officials please introduce themselves before they speak for the first time. And I encourage everyone not to touch the microphones as well. Hansard's operator will look after that for you when you speak. So, Minister, please introduce your officials and we'd be pleased to hear your opening comments.

Hon. Eric Schmalz: — Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of this committee, and thank you to everyone who's joined me here in this committee's review of Bill No. 21, *The Construction Codes (Derelict Buildings) Amendment Act, 2025*.

As you know, this bill if passed will eliminate barriers for municipalities to deal with the derelict buildings in a cost-effective manner. Derelict buildings continue to be an issue in many communities. Not only do these structures pose an ongoing health hazard due to the rodents and wildlife infestation, but there are also concerns from unauthorized people accessing these buildings.

Municipalities have expressed concerns about the costs of dealing with these sites, especially given the different requirements for disposing of these buildings. As a result many derelict buildings remain and continue deteriorating and remaining unwanted eyesores.

In response to these concerns, the Government of Saskatchewan has announced a pilot framework which will allow municipalities to burn derelict buildings under limited circumstances.

The bill before you today proposes to amend *The Construction Codes Act*, providing a limited exemption for municipalities from enforcing the demolition provisions of the National Building Code of Canada on derelict buildings which are part of this pilot project.

The exact details of this pilot project are to be developed, and consultation has already begun and will continue throughout the summer with stakeholders, including municipalities,

SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities], SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association], and the Volunteer Fire Fighters Association, among others.

This consultation will be led through the Ministry of Environment and in collaboration with the ministries of Justice, Labour Relations and Workplace Safety, and Government Relations. We are here today to discuss Bill No. 21, which is under the purview of the Ministry of Government Relations. I look forward to answering the committee's questions regarding the legislative amendment. Thank you.

Chair B. McLeod: — Minister Schmalz, could I just ask you to introduce your officials that are with you today as well. Yeah.

Hon. Eric Schmalz: — Yes. Go ahead, Jeff.

Jeff Markewich: — Sure. Jeff Markewich, Ministry of Government Relations, assistant deputy minister.

Hon. Eric Schmalz: — And that would be my chief of staff, Ryan Bellamy, as well as Kevin France with the Ministry of Environment. And I'm sorry . . .

Wes Kotyk: — Wes Kotyk.

Hon. Eric Schmalz: — Wes Kotyk with the Ministry of Environment.

Chair B. McLeod: — Thank you, Minister Schmalz. Appreciate that. Any comments? And I will open the floor now to questions. MLA Clarke.

Jared Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for the opportunity to be here and thank you to the civil servants and deputy ministers for being here to answer some of these questions. I have been doing a fair bit of consultation on this bill here over the last few months since it was announced at SARM.

I'm wondering just to kick us off . . . Well I'll say one other thing. Certainly here the need to deal with derelict buildings, this is obviously something that SARM and SUMA have both been advocating for for a long time — not necessarily burning them, but certainly getting help to deal with derelict buildings across the province.

You talked in your opening statement, Minister, about how the consultation will roll out. Appreciate that. I'm wondering, who did you consult with to prior to announcing the pilot project and introducing this bill?

Hon. Eric Schmalz: — Thank you. Thank you, MLA Clarke, for the question. Specifically to this bill, obviously this bill represents the opening and laying of the foundation for the policy framework to be built. There is no specific part of this bill that will speak to how this will be conducted. Obviously it is going to be . . . There's still consultation work to be done through the Ministry of Environment. It's led through the Ministry of Environment. Obviously it touches on three other ministries that I mentioned in my opening remarks.

Right now though, this piece of legislation is required, is the first

step to allow the process to continue, the consultation to continue. I'm not privy to the consultation that occurred with the Ministry of Environment on the stakeholder engagement. That was done through the Ministry of Environment. This bill specifically is, like I said, the first step to allow a pilot project framework to be built.

Jared Clarke: — So if I'm understanding you correctly, you did not consult with firefighters, say, the Saskatchewan Volunteer Fire Fighters Association or the Saskatchewan Association of Fire Chiefs?

Hon. Eric Schmalz: — Thanks. So as we stated earlier, this is but the first step in creating a policy framework. This is not the final step. There is no current authorization for anyone to conduct any of these activities under the current policy or legislation. And those consultations will be ongoing. Some have occurred to my understanding. Obviously those are being led by the Ministry of Environment, not by the Ministry of Government Relations. This first step is simply to allow for those consultations to continue with stakeholders.

Jared Clarke: — But they haven't happened with Saskatchewan Volunteer Fire Fighters Association and the Saskatchewan Association of Fire Chiefs?

Hon. Eric Schmalz: — Again those are being led by the Ministry of Environment, not by the Ministry of Government Relations. The Ministry of Government Relations is simply amending the legislation to allow for continued movement on this pilot project.

Jared Clarke: — Thank you, Minister. The pilot project has been described by the Environment minister as a great training opportunity, especially for volunteer firefighters. I'm wondering if you can speak specifically to what kind of training opportunities does this pilot project present for firefighters.

[15:45]

Hon. Eric Schmalz: — Thanks. Yeah, so essentially this bill does not address that. It is simply to lay the foundation for that policy. It doesn't speak to the specifics of where the policy will land after the consultations are complete. Obviously there's still that component that remains yet to be completed. We are here specifically on this bill to provide an amendment for pilot projects like this to occur within *The Construction Codes Act*.

Jared Clarke: — Thank you, Minister. So I was worried this was going to happen today in the committee, that the questions I would ask would not necessarily have answers yet.

I have been talking to a number of firefighters across the province, and there's a lot of skepticism around the training opportunities that are being presented with the burning of derelict buildings. In fact a number of firefighters have expressed concern about, you know, hazardous materials and the risks being posed for firefighters to enter one of these buildings.

So I mean, it's disappointing to hear that like, you know . . . I sat in SARM in the dialogue with the Environment minister and I sat in the SUMA dialogue with the minister. And one of his championing statements around this pilot project is that this would generate a great training opportunity.

Now I understand that this bill is not the pilot project, but we're laying the ground for the pilot project. And once this bill passes in the development of the regulations to enable the pilot project to happen, we on the opposition will have no ability to have oversight in those consultations and regulations. So this is our only opportunity to ask those questions.

In terms of the National Fire Protection Association, the NFP 1403 standard on live training evolution, provides minimum requirements for conducting live fire training to ensure they are conducted in safe facilities in a safe manner for participants. Will firefighters need to follow this standard when conducting these controlled burns on derelict buildings?

Chair B. McLeod: — I'm just going to state that the minister is not in a position to be able to answer that type of question as previous answers have already indicated. And so MLA Clarke, I would really encourage you if you can to speak to the particulars of the bill that he can answer the questions of. And so dialogue with your folks if you choose, and come back with what you want in terms of an answer. But it is outside the parameters of this bill.

Hon. Eric Schmalz: — Yeah, with the question specific to that . . . the subject specific to that question, obviously there's again, the consultation is going to have to occur post passing of this bill because this is the first step for that to occur. As far as identifying any of the specifics, that's again yet to be identified by the stakeholder engagement, the group that will be struck to engage with our stakeholders across the province in furthering the policy framework for this pilot project.

Jared Clarke: — You'll have to forgive me, Mr. Chair. I'm confused about . . . The bill lays the foundation for the pilot project. The pilot project has already been announced. We know what the pilot project is, so where the line is of what this bill and pilot project are is blurry.

You talked in your opening statement, Minister, about burning derelict buildings in limited situations. I wonder if you could expand on what you meant by limited situations.

Hon. Eric Schmalz: — Yeah, specifically referencing my opening remarks, it was in reference to the parameters under which this policy or pilot project will lay out the ground rules on how these activities are to be conducted under this pilot project.

Jared Clarke: — So can you expand on the situations where there is a derelict building that wouldn't be burned? It wouldn't meet the policy?

Hon. Eric Schmalz: — Okay, thanks. Again the situations around how these buildings will be disposed of through burning is going to be developed, have to be developed in the policy framework once the consultations occur. I can say though that because it's been out in the media and been announced, that these buildings will have to be owned by the municipality. These will be municipal-owned buildings.

Jared Clarke: — Thank you, Minister. Will hazardous materials need to be removed from buildings?

Hon. Eric Schmalz: — Again so we're kind of dancing around the same issue again, MLA Clarke, and I hear your comment

earlier. This is the initial step. And the consultation and the construction of the policy is . . . Again I'm not in a position to be able to identify any of that because I am not the minister responsible for the policy and the pilot project itself. I am here speaking directly to the Bill 21, which would be the amendment of legislation to allow for the pilot project to occur. So that would be probably a question best posed to the Ministry of Environment through their consultative process.

Jared Clarke: — Thank you for that, Minister. Certainly I've heard, again through dialogues with the minister at SUMA and SARM, that hazardous materials would not have to be removed. So I'm hoping that through consultation, that you will hear stakeholders who have great concerns about that. Certainly have through my consultations, that the lack of removing hazardous materials is something that is concerning to many stakeholders. Will the government be providing the necessary resources and funding for training to be certified for volunteer firefighters in the burning of these buildings?

Hon. Eric Schmalz: — Thank you. So I can say that this bill specifically does not have funding attached to it. But I cannot speak, or I wouldn't presume to speak for the Ministry of Environment on how that process will unfold through the pilot project framework being built. Obviously this is simply the bill again to provide a legislative foundation for which that project can be built.

Chair B. McLeod: — Again I will ask that the questions refer back to this bill in terms of it providing the foundation for what's coming. And please let's get the questions that are around the structure that's existing in front of us right now.

Jared Clarke: — So the aim of the bill is to deal with derelict buildings. The aim of the bill is to allow the minister to burn these buildings, correct? Not the minister, but allow . . . I know you're not . . . My apologies, Minister. I know you're not going out burning buildings personally. But it gives you the authority to allow a volunteer fire crew to burn a building, correct?

Hon. Eric Schmalz: — I'm trying to be as clear on this as I can, so I'm just going to read the following:

A legislative amendment is being advanced to exempt local authorities from enforcement of the construction standards of which the Ministry of Government Relations is responsible for while they are participating in a pilot project for the burning of derelict buildings.

So essentially we are part of the means by which this pilot project can occur; however we are not directing how that pilot project occurs.

Jared Clarke: — So when I read the bill:

Section 6 amended

5 The following clause is added after clause 6(2)(d):

“(e) any derelict building to be demolished by fire in accordance with the regulations”.

That's the bill that we're discussing here. So I know the minister's not going out and burning these buildings down.

Firefighters are going to be the ones burning these buildings. So it's my understanding that the vast majority of firefighters, especially volunteer firefighters, do not have certified gear in this province. Now a lot of these volunteer firefighters rely on like hand-me-down gear for their turnouts and safety gear, and a lot of it, the majority of it, is expired. And I've heard this directly from firefighters.

Given this fact, do you believe Saskatchewan volunteer firefighters are adequately protected from hazardous materials that could be burned in a derelict building, things like asbestos or lead paint or asphalt shingles? This directly is related to section 6, “demolished by fire,” which is going to be firefighters. So the question is, do you believe that Saskatchewan volunteer firefighters are adequately protected from hazardous materials?

[16:00]

Chair B. McLeod: — That's a question that the minister is absolutely unqualified to answer, and so I'll ask you not to. We'll move on.

Jared Clarke: — It's directly related to the bill on this one, Mr. Chair. The bill is to demolish buildings in Saskatchewan with fire.

Chair B. McLeod: — The bill that's in front of us is to allow the development of a pilot project. And that's the crux of the bill that's in front of us today, so that the pilot project will be developed. The minister can speak to it as well. That's what the intent of this bill is. It's very, very qualified and close-quartered in terms of what it's presenting to us today. The pilot project has not been developed.

Jared Clarke: — So the bill is establishing for the pilot project, which I'm not allowed to ask about. And I'm not allowed to ask about who's burning down the buildings, even though the bill in front of us reads, “any derelict building to be demolished by fire in accordance with the regulations.”

That's the bill we are discussing here, is these are being demolished by fire, and I can't ask about who's burning them and whether they're safe?

Chair B. McLeod: — That is correct.

Jared Clarke: — Wow.

Chair B. McLeod: — At this point in time what we're talking about is Bill 21, everything combining here in front of us. And, Minister, if you want to speak to that question, the answer you have provided many times already, but I'll ask you to provide it one more time.

Hon. Eric Schmalz: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. So the specific section that the member's alluding to here is the . . . it doesn't speak to any . . . the means or methods to be used by which this will occur. Obviously those are going to be developed as part of a pilot project, but this clause was added to provide an exemption from the construction standards to derelict buildings which are being destroyed by fire. So it's meant to provide an opportunity for municipalities to be exempted from *The Construction Codes Act* on this specific purpose.

Jared Clarke: — Minister, I'm wondering why there would not be more guidance included in the regulations for municipalities on how . . . Why rely solely on the regulations? Why not put more in the bill?

Hon. Eric Schmalz: — Thanks for the question. It's specifically because this is a pilot project. It is not a legislated activity currently. It is a pilot project to allow consultation to occur with stakeholders, engagement with stakeholders, and to provide feedback on the efficacy of these opportunities as they occur.

Jared Clarke: — I'm wondering if you can speak to the liability of allowing these derelict buildings to be burned, which again, is in the bill here. So if there is damage to adjacent properties — whether that's smoke damage, whether that's they're physically burned, the water damage from containing the fire — who is liable in this situation?

Hon. Eric Schmalz: — Yeah. So I want to point out specifically that this will be a voluntary pilot project. We're not forcing anyone to undertake this pilot project. We are simply going to be determining, the Ministry of Environment will be determining how the pilot project, the parameters for the pilot project through their consultative process.

But again, this is a voluntary project in that we are providing them an exemption from the building codes Act, and that is all that we are doing at the Ministry of Government Relations. Any of the other consultative work, as well as the final decisions with respect to how this opportunity rolls out, will occur with the Ministry of Environment.

Again, though, I can speak to the fact that this will be a voluntary program, that no one will be forced to deal with derelict buildings in this way. This is just another option for municipally owned buildings that are deemed to be derelict at the local level through local councils to deal with these problematic structures.

Jared Clarke: — Is there any plan to have an alternative if this is . . . You know, we know that derelict buildings are an issue for a number of reasons and they are increasing in rural Saskatchewan. They need to be dealt with, for sure. We've heard that loud and clear.

If the burning of these derelict buildings is not an option for a municipality because they're not comfortable with the safety risks or the liability or for whatever reason, is the ministry looking at additional funding for helping with getting rid of these derelict buildings? Waiving, say, landfill fees so that, you know, it doesn't cost municipalities so much to haul them to a dump? Are there any other alternatives being considered?

Hon. Eric Schmalz: — Thanks. Yeah, this bill specifically does not have any funding component attached to it, but I wouldn't want to speculate on what the pilot project may contain before the policy is even developed. So I can't, again, speak to any specifics on that particular question. I don't know what the future holds as far as this pilot project or what kind of feedback or data will be gleaned from it.

Jared Clarke: — Thank you, Minister. Certainly I think there could have been a fair bit of consultation done prior to this bill being presented. We've heard from a number of key stakeholders

around the concerns being presented in the pilot project, around hazardous materials, around safety to firefighters, around liability, around just like the dangerousness of setting a building on fire in a small community where there are adjacent buildings that are occupied.

I talked with a number of firefighters at various levels over the last couple of weeks and, you know, they talked about how when they get to a fire their main priority at a fire is to prevent the fire from jumping to the next houses. Conflagration, I believe, is what they call it. They talked about how dangerous it is and that what's being presented, what's been released in terms of some of the ideas of what's been presented at SARM and SUMA, they have a lot of concerns about. They don't feel that the value of cost savings — because this is what we're talking about, cost savings to municipalities to deal with these derelict buildings — is worth the risk that volunteer firefighters are being put in.

One of those consultations that we had was with SUMA. I received a letter here. I know SUMA has corresponded with the Ministry of Environment when the pilot project was initially announced, expressed some of their concerns around . . . or had questions. I have this letter here that has been sent both to the government and to myself. And I want to ask some of the questions that SUMA has, that they have posed in this letter.

I'm going to table this letter to the committee here as well, but I'm going to read here . . . and I know I'm not going to be allowed to ask these questions but I'm going to state them anyways, because I think they're important for the discussion as we go forward.

Liability is an additional concern and potential challenge for municipalities. If a fire spreads beyond its intended site and results in damage to nearby properties or injuries, will the provincial government bear full legal responsibility since municipalities are acting under the provision of the bill?

Are you allowed to answer that one, Minister?

Hon. Eric Schmalz: — All I can say is what I've said before, is that this is a voluntary exercise or a voluntary opportunity for municipalities to undertake if they choose to undertake it at the local level through decisions at the local council level.

As far as the policy or the framework around which they are able to conduct these activities, again they are not in place yet. They are still going through a consultative process in which they will be finalizing at some point and providing direction through the lead of the Ministry of Environment.

Jared Clarke: — I'm going to continue quoting from the letter here:

Given these potential risks, we believe the following questions require clear answers before the initiative moves forward. What protective measures and safety protocols will be implemented to prevent environmental contamination and safeguard human health?

Chair B. McLeod: — Now I'm going to interject again. Those are theoretical questions that cannot be answered because there is no pilot project defined at this point. Again I draw you back to

the fact that Bill 21 simply allows the opportunity for a pilot project to be developed. The minister has stated in many ways, different and varying ways, his inability to answer those questions because he's not the Minister of Environment. So questions that are specific to Government Relations and the change to the code, absolutely on. Further consultation obviously will be required.

Jared Clarke: — It's a shell game. The Minister of Environment's not here.

Chair B. McLeod: — It's not a shell game. We're dealing with Bill 21 and questions related to the making way for the room for a pilot project to be developed. The pilot project has not been developed yet at this point in time, so it is not a shell game and do not refer to it as that.

Jared Clarke: — Minister, why did you bring along representatives from the Environment ministry?

Hon. Eric Schmalz: — They're here to provide a frame of reference specifically on this bill with respect to how their ministry intercedes or intersects with the legislation currently. That's simply all they're here for.

Jared Clarke: — So the bill does apply to the Ministry of Environment?

Hon. Eric Schmalz: — The bill applies to the ability for the project to go forward, the pilot project to go forward. So again I can refer back to my opening remarks. There's several ministries that are engaged on this in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment: the ministries of Justice, Labour Relations and Workplace Safety, as well as the Ministry of Government Relations. So there's several ministries that are contact points throughout this process. This is one of them.

[16:15]

Again the bill is a legislative amendment being advanced to exempt local authorities from enforcement of construction standards while participating in the pilot project for the burning of derelict buildings. It's our piece to provide this legislative amendment to allow the consultation and the pilot project construction and consultation to continue.

Jared Clarke: — I want to thank the ministry officials for being here, of course. And this is not an attack on them in any way, and I hope they know that. But just so I fully understand, the Ministry of Environment officials are here to be able to give context to the pilot project that we're not allowed to ask about but is relevant to the bill that we are discussing. I'm not going to ask you that question because I'm going to get called out of order.

But I'll continue on with some of the questions that SUMA has posed, and I will read them out here. And then I'll ask a follow-up question because I will be ruled out of order on these questions as well. But I want to enter them into the record. How does this pilot align with existing provincial and federal environmental protection regulations? Are alternatives, less hazardous methods for managing derelict buildings being considered? Who will be financially and legally responsible for managing the aftermath of any burns under this program, including debris removal and

potential incidents?

I'm going to table that letter here to the committee.

Hon. Eric Schmalz: — So I just want to quickly correct the record. I didn't say that the ministry officials were here for context with relation to the pilot project, but in context in relation to the bill itself.

Jared Clarke: — Which is laying the groundwork for the pilot project, but that's neither here nor there. We're just having a great time.

All right. I mean I have a lot of questions. We've had a lot of conversations with folks across the province around this. A lot of questions remain. This seems like an easy out to not have to spend any money in terms of the pilot project.

I wish more consultation had been done up front with firefighters, especially so that those concerns could be brought forward right off the hop, the issues around liability, the issues around are we ensuring that firefighters are safe, and are we asking firefighters to do something that really firefighters shouldn't be doing, right. We have an issue with derelict buildings. Let's come up with a policy that actually deals with that without relying on firefighters, who we know are already stretched thin in Saskatchewan, especially volunteers.

You know, if they are doing a controlled burn on a derelict building and another call comes in, an emergency comes in — you know, there's been a number of grass fires around Regina in the last few days — and they're at a controlled burn, burning down a building, what do they do? Do they abandon the job at hand of burning down this derelict building or do they ignore the emergency that's unfolding in the community?

I think this bill, while it may appear to be a good idea, based on the consultations and the conversations I have had, there is not a lot of excitement around this bill. In fact one of the firefighters I talked to said that, and I quote, "It's a really, really bad idea." So I'm really hoping that government does a full consultation and ensures that they are talking with all stakeholders and ensuring that firefighters are safe, volunteer firefighters are safe, that communities are safe.

One firefighter told me about, you know, standing 50 feet away or 60 feet away from a fire and their gear melting. This is a dangerous way to deal with derelict buildings. If hazardous materials are not being removed and contaminating soil, air, all sorts of things, this is a dangerous way to deal with those hazards and derelict buildings.

And I think . . . I just go back to the notion that we are currently passing a bill in the House right now that extends presumptive WCB [Workers' Compensation Board] claims around cancer. There's 11 additional cancer types that are being approved for WCB presumptive cases for firefighters that we're passing in the House right now, and we're going to put firefighters who don't have the proper PPE [personal protective equipment], don't have certified gear . . . We're not removing hazardous materials out of these homes, and we're putting firefighters in these situations. This feels reckless and it feels dangerous to those firefighters.

So I do hope that consultation is broad and that the ministers are open to hearing those concerns and hearing that it's not just, you know, full steam ahead, even though we've checked a box and talked to certain individuals.

So, Mr. Chair, I know we're a little bit early. But I mean, I'm not allowed to ask a lot of these questions, so I'll leave it there.

Chair B. McLeod: — Seeing no more questions, then we will proceed to vote on the clauses. I'll just get myself ready here.

Clause 1, short title, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Chair B. McLeod: — Carried.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 to 7 inclusive agreed to.]

Chair B. McLeod: — His Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: Bill No. 21, *The Construction Codes (Derelict Buildings) Amendment Act, 2025*.

I would ask a member to move that we report Bill No. 21, *The Construction Codes (Derelict Buildings) Amendment Act, 2025* without amendment. MLA Patterson moves. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Chair B. McLeod: — Carried. Absolutely. That brings us to the conclusion of our business for today. And if there's any concluding comments, I'd invite Minister Schmalz to provide them for us.

Hon. Eric Schmalz: — Thanks, Mr. Chair. I just want to thank or show my appreciation for officials from both ministries who attended here today with me to provide advice and guidance on the subject at hand.

I want to maybe address a couple of comments that were made at the end with MLA Clarke. There is significant work to be done in building these policy frameworks. It's not a done deal by any aspect. We are continuing those . . . The Ministry of Environment will be continuing those policies. So any, you know, allusion to potentiality is, in my view, unwarranted at this time. It's still under consultation.

So I would just like to put that on the record, that we are not by any means at the conclusion of this process, but just at the beginning.

Chair B. McLeod: — Thank you, Minister. Any closing comments, MLA Clarke?

Jared Clarke: — I'd just like to extend my thanks to the minister and his officials here today for answering my questions. And I got heck last time I was in committee for not acknowledging the folks behind the videos and making us look good, so I want to give them a special shout-out, as well as Hansard. And also to my colleagues on both sides of the table here, and of course the

Clerks and their work. So thank you.

Hon. Eric Schmalz: — Mr. Chair.

Chair B. McLeod: — Yes, absolutely. Please, Minister Schmalz.

Hon. Eric Schmalz: — I was remiss in not thanking the committee. I apologize. I wanted to get out my comments there, but I want to express appreciation for the members who serve on these committees. I know it's a time commitment for you and I do appreciate it. As well as the members of Hansard and their hard work and their ears, how they, you know, can be harmed by the bumping of these microphones. We're very conscious about that. So thank you.

Chair B. McLeod: — And thank you very much. I would echo those comments and I appreciate everyone's attendance here today. I would ask a member to move a motion of adjournment. MLA Martens has moved. All agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Chair B. McLeod: — Carried. This committee stands adjourned to the call of the Chair. Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 16:26.]