



FOURTH SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**VOTES
AND
PROCEEDINGS**

No. 49

Thursday, April 18, 2024

10:00 a.m.

PRAYERS

SPEAKER TABLES REPORTS

The Speaker laid before the Assembly the following:

Ombudsman Saskatchewan: 2023 annual report

(Sessional paper no. 180)

Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner: 2023 annual report

(Sessional paper no. 181)

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Petitions of citizens of the province of Saskatchewan were presented and laid upon the Table by the following members: Nippi-Albright, Makowsky, Teed, and Burki.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

According to order, the Deputy Clerk informed the Assembly that on April 17, 2024, a certain petition regarding the immediate suspension of the carbon tax across the nation of Canada and acknowledgement of its impact on affordability and inflation was presented. Pursuant to rule 16(7), the petition was found to be irregular and therefore was not read and received.

According to order and pursuant to rule 16(7), petitions from residents of the province of Saskatchewan, requesting the following action, were read and received:

To take real action to fight climate change.

(Sessional paper no. 179)

To provide adequate, sustainable, and predictable operating funds for Saskatchewan's 27 public and separate school divisions.

(Addendum to sessional paper no. 16)

To recognize the Timber Bay school as a provincially run residential school and release the school records to the survivors.

(Addendum to sessional paper no. 154)

To enshrine Duty to Consult into law by enacting meaningful duty to consult legislation.

(Addendum to sessional paper no. 161)

To suspend the collection of the provincial fuel tax from gasoline and diesel for a period of six months to help families struggling with the high cost of living.

(Addendum to sessional paper no. 170)

REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE ECONOMY

Ms. Young (Lloydminster), Chair of the Standing Committee on the Economy, presented the committee's seventh report, which is as follows:

2024–25 Estimates

The committee considered the following estimates for the executive branch of government and adopted the following resolutions:

Resolved, that there be granted to His Majesty for the twelve months ending March 31, 2025 the following sums:

Executive Branch of Government

For Agriculture	\$568,496,000
For Energy and Resources	\$51,313,000
For Environment	\$235,769,000
For Highways.....	\$741,093,000

For Immigration and Career Training.....	\$160,280,000
For Innovation Saskatchewan.....	\$31,042,000
For Saskatchewan Research Council.....	\$41,623,000
For Trade and Export Development.....	\$40,383,000
For Water Security Agency	\$103,638,000

2023–24 Supplementary Estimates No. 2

The committee considered the following supplementary estimates no. 2 for the executive branch of government and adopted the following resolutions:

Resolved, that there be granted to His Majesty for the twelve months ending March 31, 2024 the following sums:

Executive Branch of Government

For Agriculture.....	\$86,321,000
For Energy and Resources	\$94,500,000
For Environment	\$20,285,000
For Highways.....	\$23,400,000
For Saskatchewan Research Council	\$5,000,000

The committee recommends that upon concurrence of its report by the Assembly, the sums as reported and approved shall be included in the appropriation bill for consideration by the Legislative Assembly.
(Sessional paper no. 182)

On motion of Ms. Young (Lloydminster):

Ordered, That the seventh report of the Standing Committee on the Economy be now concurred in.

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The order of the day being called for question nos. 7 to 9, pursuant to rule 21(6), the questions were converted and orders for return were issued. (see appendix)

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

The order of the day being called for the following motion for a seventy-five minute debate, it was moved by Mr. Goudy:

That this Assembly supports the Government of Saskatchewan's programs and policies that have led Saskatchewan to be one of the most affordable places to live in Canada, with over \$2 billion in affordability measures included in every budget; and further,

That the Assembly denounces the federal NDP/Trudeau coalition government for their support for policies that have led to a drastic increase in crime, the price of homes, groceries, and more, while continuing to burden taxpayers with an unfair carbon tax.

A debate arising and the period of seventy-five minutes having expired, pursuant to rule 25(5) the Deputy Speaker interrupted proceedings.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

The order of the day being called for **motion no. 4**, it was moved by Ms. Conway:

That the Assembly calls upon the government to pass legislation to improve accountability and transparency in Saskatchewan with regards to lobbying, electoral finance, conflict of interest, and freedom of information.

A debate arising, it was on motion of Ms. Young (Regina University) adjourned.

On motion of the Hon. Ms. Carr:

Ordered, That this Assembly do now adjourn.

The Assembly adjourned at 12:33 p.m. until Monday at 1:30 p.m.

Hon. Randy Weekes
Speaker

QUESTIONS ORDERED FOR RETURN

The following written questions were converted and orders for return were issued:

Return no. 7 (Ms. Wilson):

To the Minister of Environment, regarding *The Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2010*, *The Agricultural Packaging Product Waste Stewardship Regulations*, and the Saskatchewan Grain Bag Recycling Program, how the government ensures the accessibility and effectiveness of the Saskatchewan Grain Bag Recycling Program across Saskatchewan, especially in rural and remote areas, and the percentage of total fees allocated for enforcement for the years 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024.

Return no. 8 (Ms. Wilson):

To the Minister of Environment, regarding *The Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2010*, *The Agricultural Packaging Product Waste Stewardship Regulations*, and the Saskatchewan Grain Bag Recycling Program, when the punitive fine process for the Saskatchewan Grain Bag Recycling Program was last reviewed.

Return no. 9 (Ms. Wilson):

Regarding *The Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2010*, *The Agricultural Packaging Product Waste Stewardship Regulations*, and the Saskatchewan Grain Bag Recycling Program, the criteria and dates for the appointment of Cleanfarms as the program administrator including the renewal process for the Saskatchewan Grain Bag Recycling Program for the years 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024.

NOTICE OF WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The following questions were given notice on day no. 49 and are to be answered by day no. 54:

Question no. 10 (Ms. Ritchie):

To the Minister Responsible for Water Security Agency, regarding water-related emergency response and planning, (a) please list the amount of inflow into Lake Diefenbaker each year over the past 10 years and as a percent of historic inflows; (b) please provide outflow data (hydro and simple releases through the spillway) through the Gardiner dam for each year over the past 10 years, and as a percentage of historic outflows; (c) what is the projected inflow into Lake Diefenbaker in 2024; (d) what is the present level of the South Saskatchewan River and where does the level stand from an historical perspective (i.e. lowest in the last 10 years, 20 years, etc.); (e) according to the Alberta government, many areas in Alberta are dealing with drought conditions, particularly in the southern part of the province; there are currently 51 water shortage advisories in place in Alberta; on March 6, the flow near the mouth of the Bow River was measured to be 39.9 m³/s, the lowest March measurement in the last 24 years; please provide a record of specific actions the Water Security Agency has undertaken to assure that Saskatchewan will continue to receive its 50 percent share of the water flow from Alberta; (f) in early December last year, the town of Leader declared a state of emergency with respect to its water supply given that the level of the river where the town gets its water had fallen to such a low level that its intake could no longer sustain the community's vital supply; what is the province doing to assist the community to ensure that this doesn't happen again, and what was the reason for the low water supply on the South Saskatchewan River back in December; (g) are you expecting to see flooding in any of the Saskatchewan water basins and, if you are, which basins; and (h) are you expecting water levels to be low on any of the major lakes in the province such that it will cause problems for piers, floating docks, ferries, boat moorings, etc., and, if you are, which lakes would that be?

Question no. 11 (Ms. Ritchie):

To the Minister Responsible for Water Security Agency, how many FTEs does the Water Security Agency presently have and how many did you have in each of the past 10 years?

Question no. 12 (Ms. Ritchie):

To the Minister Responsible for Water Security Agency, for those portions of *The Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2010* that the Water Security Agency is responsible, (a) what performance objectives related to the protection of water resources and habitat has the WSA established and undertaken monitoring and reporting, and (b) can you please provide monitoring and reporting results for the past 5 years?

Question no. 13 (Ms. Ritchie):

To the Minister Responsible for Water Security Agency, (a) what actions and mitigation measures is the WSA taking to address elevated mercury levels in the Rafferty and Alameda reservoirs, and (b) can you please provide water quality monitoring data for the Rafferty and Alameda reservoirs for the past 5 years?

Question no. 14 (Ms. Ritchie):

To the Minister Responsible for Water Security Agency, in 2022-23, the Water Security Agency entered a memorandum with the Ministry of Highways to provide a full range of expertise and advice related to the Lake Diefenbaker Irrigation Expansion Project with respect to planning, cost estimating, designing and rehabilitation or construction of all aspects of the project; is that memorandum still in effect and how much money has the WSA paid to the Ministry of Highways for the above services?

Question no. 15 (Ms. Ritchie):

To the Minister Responsible for Water Security Agency, in 2021 the Provincial Auditor recommended that the Water Security Agency actively monitor and enforce using technology (e.g., drones, airplane flights, mapping tools) to collect information (e.g., aerial photographs) in high-risk areas specifically to identify and take action on unapproved drainage works; the auditor also noted that not taking timely enforcement action on unapproved drainage works increases the risk of landowners not achieving compliance or not changing the culture; in addition, further damage may occur to surrounding landowners and the receiving water body if compliance does not occur timely: (a) how much did WSA spend on monitoring and enforcement in 2022-23, (b) how much is budgeted for monitoring and enforcement in 2024-25, and (c) how many acres were brought into compliance in 2022-23 as a result of WSA monitoring unapproved drainage?

Question no. 16 (Ms. Ritchie):

To the Minister Responsible for Water Security Agency, (a) how many fulltime equivalent employees (FTEs) were in the Agricultural Services and Economic Development Division within the Water Security Agency in 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24, and (b) what is the budget FTEs for 2024-25?

Question no. 17 (Ms. Ritchie):

To the Minister Responsible for Water Security Agency, with respect to irrigation in the province, how much water from a water rights perspective has been allocated in total and by major regions in the province for the years 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24, and current year 2024-25?

Question no. 18 (Ms. Ritchie):

To the Minister Responsible for Water Security Agency, (a) can you advise how many water-related legal claims or legal suites are presently registered against either the Water Security Agency or are managed by the Water Security Agency on behalf of the province, (b) can you please provide a list of claims, the reason for the claims, as well as who registered the claim, and (c) how significant an issue will salinity claims from irrigators be in the future for the Water Security Agency?

Question no. 19 (Ms. Ritchie):

To the Minister Responsible for Water Security Agency, WSA recently announced that it will be charging \$1,000 to file drainage complaints, (a) why was this fee introduced, (b) how many complaints have you received since implementing this fee, (c) has WSA undertaken any cost analysis on different methods of handling unapproved drainage works, (d) how many orders did WSA issue in 2022-23, (e) how many drainage complaints are outstanding as of today, and (f) how much does it cost to acquire a drainage license?

Question no. 20 (Ms. Ritchie):

To the Minister Responsible for Water Security Agency, it is my understanding that WSA will be piloting the proposed Ag Water Stewardship Policy this year, (a) how much has WSA budgeted in the current 2024-25 fiscal year to pilot the proposed Ag Water Stewardship Policy, (b) how much has WSA budgeted to measure impacts to water quality and habitat loss as part of these pilots, and (c) how much has WSA budgeted to restore wetlands in these pilots?

Question no. 21 (Ms. Ritchie):

To the Minister Responsible for Water Security Agency, (a) can you tell me where in the Growth Plan it states that the proposed almost 2 million acres of new land will be gained through wetland drainage, (b) how much has WSA spent over the past 5 years, either directly or indirectly, supporting farmers to drain wetlands, and (c) how much does WSA intend to spend in the current fiscal 2024-25 year to support wetland drainage?