



STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE ECONOMY

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE ECONOMY

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The Battlefords

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Kindersley

Mr. Terry Jenson
Martensville-Warman

Mr. Delbert Kirsch
Batoche

Mr. Doug Steele
Cypress Hills

[The committee met at 16:00.]

The Chair: — Good afternoon, folks. Seeing as we have everyone here, I think we can begin. So welcome to the Standing Committee on the Economy. I'm Colleen Young and I will be chairing this afternoon's committee meeting. We have members Jeremy Cockrill, Ken Francis, Terry Jenson, Delbert Kirsch, and Doug Steele, as well as Erika Ritchie substituting in for Buckley Belanger this afternoon.

Because we are still implementing measures to facilitate safety in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, if the minister needs to confer privately during the proceedings he may do so in the hallway or the vestibule at the front of the Chamber. And as a reminder, please don't touch the microphones. They are fragile and sensitive. The Hansard operator will turn your microphone on when you are speaking to the committee.

Cleaning supplies are located at the tables by the side doors for members and officials to use if they require them. And if you have any questions about logistics or have documents to table, the committee requests that you contact the Clerk at committees@legassembly.sk.ca. Contact information is provided on the witness table.

**General Revenue Fund
Environment
Vote 26**

Subvote (EN01)

The Chair: — We will now begin our consideration of the estimates for the Ministry of Environment, vote 26, Environment, central management and services, subvote (EN01). We have technical difficulties right now, but when you are ready, Minister Kaeding, you can introduce your official that's here with you this afternoon and begin with your opening remarks.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Well good afternoon, Madam Chair, and members of the committee. Thank you for taking this time to consider the estimates of the Ministry of Environment. I look forward to your questions and a good discussion about the work of the ministry.

Here with me today are Sarah Harrison, our deputy minister; Elias Nelson, my chief of staff. And we have additional ministry officials providing vital support today which include David Brock, our assistant deputy minister of climate change and adaptation division; Kevin Murphy, our assistant deputy minister, resource management and compliance division; Wes Kotyk, our assistant deputy minister, environmental protection division; Veronica Gelowitz, our assistant deputy minister of corporate services and policy division; Brant Kirychuk, executive director of fish, wildlife and lands branch; David Cobb, our executive director of forest service branch; and Brady Pollock, the executive director of environmental assessment and stewardship branch; and Aaron Wirth, the executive director of climate change and adaptation branch. And also I want to, for the record, say that we have Emni Eltassi, Alicia Bay, and Aaron Metcalf in our office that are providing crucial support on a daily basis. This feels like Telemiracle. I think I should say, let's ring those phones. But anyway, you can tell that we've got some

tremendous staff behind us.

This year's budget is focused on protecting Saskatchewan people through the remainder of the pandemic and beyond — our foremost objective, really, as government. In that vein the budget also focuses on building the infrastructure for a strong economy and growing Saskatchewan to help ensure a healthy and robust recovery socially and fiscally for the future of our province and our people.

The Ministry of Environment will continue to lead and support a number of key commitments in *Saskatchewan's Growth Plan: The Next Decade of Growth 2020-2030*. This includes delivering on the province's Prairie Resilience climate change strategy, implementing the new solid-waste management strategy, and supporting the development and deployment of small modular reactor technology in Saskatchewan.

The ministry's 2021-22 budget of \$113.134 million represents an increase of 3.5 million or 3.2 per cent from the '20-21 budget. This year's budget allocation supports the ministry's core mandate of environmental protection and sustainable resource management for the well-being of the province and its people.

The budget includes 10.2 per cent in additional funding to help deliver the Sarcan beverage container collection and recycling program, bringing the province's total funding support to \$35 million. Sarcan employs more than 700 people at its 73 collection depots across the province. This important and ongoing funding contributes to economic activity, provides waste management and recycling benefits, and contributes to the well-being of people with disabilities who work with Sarcan's recycling operations.

I'd also like to take a moment to highlight a couple of important recycling initiatives that have launched in 2021. Just in April, through a partnership with Product Care, Saskatchewan launched its household hazardous waste recycling program. Household hazardous waste collection events will be funded by Product Care in partnership with municipal governments. Through these events, residents will be able to recycle hazardous wastes such as domestic pesticides, toxics, corrosives, flammable liquids, and certain non-refillable fuel cylinders free of charge. In the long term, Product Care is seeking municipal governments, organizations, or private partners that meet site and compliance requirements to establish permanent collection depots.

On another front, the province launched its single-use battery recycling program January 1 of this year. Call2Recycle will operate the province's regulated battery stewardship program, both the collection and recycling of consumer batteries. Residents now have access to 150 convenient drop-off locations located across the province.

These are important initiatives for the province that will pay dividends for our residents and the environment, much like our approach to the challenge of climate change. This budget continues to support the ongoing delivery of our Prairie Resilience strategy. There will be an additional \$255,000 invested in the output-based performance standards program, and \$629,000 to support the small modular reactor unit. The budget includes 719,000 for remediation of the Newcor non-uranium

abandoned mine located near Creighton.

The province's conservation officer service will see an injection of \$450,000 to hire more officers. This funding recognizes the critical role our conservation officers play in supporting environmental protection, managing natural resource utilization, and contributing to public safety, especially in rural communities. Another \$450,000 has been provided to address conservation officer accommodation issues in Southend.

A new fund of \$200,000 will also be established to better support Indigenous participation in a range of ministry engagement initiatives. Capital funding of \$845,000 will be in place for 2021-22, enabling the ministry to continue addressing safety and security concerns in its facilities and to maintain required operating equipment.

The '21-22 budget will allow the Ministry of Environment to continue to ensure the environment is protected, communities are safe, and economic growth is balanced with environmental health.

Madam Chair, I thank you and the committee for your time. We appreciate your interest and look forward to your questions.

The Chair: — Thank you, Minister. I will now open the floor to committee members for questions and acknowledge Ms. Ritchie.

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess maybe before I get started I would ask that everyone is wearing their masks properly while in the Assembly. Thank you. Okay.

All right. Minister Kaeding, thank you for that introduction and making yourself available here to the committee. Also I want to extend my thanks to the deputy minister and her staff for all the work that they have done preparing these estimates for us to discuss here today. I know that they are very dedicated public service employees who take their work very seriously and are very diligent in their roles. And I want to acknowledge their contribution here today as well before getting into the questions.

There's quite a bit of material I'm hoping that we can get through here in the time we have allotted. And I'll maybe just begin my questions focused on some of the estimates that you've just highlighted and maybe dig down into some of those. So perhaps starting with the remediation of contaminated sites. You've indicated 719,000 new this year to that budget. And I'm just looking for some further details on the abandoned Newcor mine located near Creighton that those funds are being put to, the scope of the work and why that rose into the top priority for addressing.

Maybe at the same time when we're also addressing that question, I did also want to ask more generally about the contaminated site program to understand the full extent of the financial liability associated with identified impacted sites, the status of reporting publicly on the location, and risks associated with impacted sites around the province. I'll maybe leave it at that for now.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — I need to confer just more around the status of recording publicly, Ms. Ritchie. I need to get a better background on that, otherwise I think we've got some good response here.

Okay, thank you for your patience, Ms. Ritchie. How we ended up with the Newcor mine site, certainly there's a gradient of assessments as we've got, first off . . . Let me back up. These mines are ending up as provincial government's responsibility because they are located on Crown land. And they are abandoned sites so there's nobody that we can go back to, to seek remediation on this. So there's seven that we've indicated that we know that we're responsible for, and there's a constant monitoring process. There's a process that we go through to identify what the risks may be, associated with each one of these mines.

Newcor has gone to the top because it is close to the community of Creighton. So there's concern around potential contamination of their drinking water source and even contamination going into the community. So that's why that has been elevated to number one.

Each year we estimate that there's an estimated liability of approximately \$31 million on these seven different sites. And each year, you know, we certainly hope to be able to remediate a site kind of year by year. So in this one, it's been deemed through the initial work and assessment done on it, it's going to be approximately . . . 719,000 is now budgeted for the completed remediation of that. And what that's going to involve is there's going to be some physical work done to cap a shaft as well as to remediate some exposed tailings. And then there will be some long-term monitoring that'll be put into place as well and that, I believe, will be an operating budget as we move forward. Yes.

Ms. Ritchie: — Also part of the question had to do with the public reporting on contaminated sites. There had been indications that there would be a publicly accessible electronic registry that was part of the framework for the results-based regulation around transparency and ensuring that that information was available. To the best of my knowledge, I'm not aware if that has been implemented, and if so, why not, and when we can expect that to be made available.

I would also mention that it falls under the national classification systems for contaminated sites and also, as I was mentioning before, the fact that it is part of the framework for regulating these sites and an expectation on the part of the public that they have access to this information, not just for the seven sites that you mentioned, but for all sites that exist across the province.

I did note in one of your recent documents that — I think actually it might have been a news release — but you had mentioned that there had been thousands of records that had been assessed, and these were for historic sites. And then from those, you had identified impacted sites. Again, you know, this was a number in the thousands. I'm just trying to find it in my notes here.

And I guess I'm under the expectation that, you know, information about these sites will be available in a registry, as has been indicated in the past. And if that is indeed so, the case now; and if not, when? Just for the record, 2,600 contaminated sites identified from a review of 8,818 historic sites.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — So we'll maybe differentiate in the list or the total that you're adding up to here. You know, the environmentally abandoned mines we talked about is those seven projects. Now the 2,700-plus contaminated sites that you're

talking about are what we refer to as “impacted sites.” So these could be everything from underground retail service stations, you know, the old underground storage. They may be, you know, a site that had an oil spill on it from, you know, wood preserver days. You know, it could range from a multitude of sites that have specific criteria on them.

And they’ve obviously kind of exceeded the, you know, the guidelines, the original criteria that they were designated for. So these sites we’ve identified. We’re aware they exist. And I’ll maybe get my deputy minister to explain where we’re at with the process that you’re asking about.

Ms. Harrison: — Thank you. So thank you for the question about the registry. It is a commitment that the ministry has made and it is something that we’re currently pursuing. It’s something that’s actually part of a broader technology solution process for us, so we’re looking at a business process review in the ministry, and this is one area. So while we may not have the online registry as it’s ultimately imagined online this year, we are making a commitment to have a list of all of the impacted sites available on our website this year.

Ms. Ritchie: — Okay. Oh, that’s very encouraging to hear that and I’m pleased. That was a commitment made a considerable time ago, and so it’s nice to hear that it’s finally going to be followed through on.

I’ll move along to my next question related to the estimates. There is a drop in funding to the climate change and adaptation line item of 3.35 million. I understand that that’s largely due to the fact that the net metering program has been fully subscribed and it’s reflecting those monies. I did have a few questions in regards to that however, just in terms of, you know, maybe just more of a historical bit of understanding because it seemed a bit odd to me that that program was administered through Environment instead of SaskPower.

I understand that that has been something that had been transitioned over, over the course of a couple of years. But more puzzling to me is understanding the fit of the nuclear secretariat within the climate change branch. I’m not clear how that fits within the mandate of the ministry.

Based on the information that I’ve been able to gather so far, it seems as though it’s, you know, more focused on the development of, you know, a new industry as opposed to anything to do with environmental protection. So wondering if you can help me understand the rationale for that.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — There was a couple of questions there. We’ll deal with the net metering one first. So the net metering was transferred to the ministry in April of 2019. And really it was just to ensure policy alignment, that we had everything kind of consistent with ultimately where we were headed with Prairie Resilience, which then leads to why we’re involved with SMRs [small modular reactors] in the climate change unit.

Part of Prairie Resilience is that we are trying to, you know, have a very cohesive strategy when we’re moving towards reducing emissions in the province. Certainly a good component of our emissions is through electrical generation. And I think you’re well aware that SaskPower is committed to trying to achieve 50

per cent renewables by 2030, which gives us a ramp to reduce emissions through our entire electrical generation process.

SMRs are going to be the continuation of that. They’re going to be that next level that we’re going to move to, to reduce emissions through our electrical generation. And Prairie Resilience is managed through the Ministry of Environment. Part of the SMR plan is to fit that part of Prairie Resilience. So ultimately it’s just a continuity of services.

So the other thing is, is that even though the Ministry of Environment houses climate change, we have a number of outreach into literally every ministry that’s found within government, and you know, working in collaboration as well with a number of agencies, and one of those would be included, SaskPower. So what we’re using the climate change unit for is to provide that collaboration and I guess just bringing all of the actions that we’re trying to do, that we’ve introduced through Prairie Resilience in ultimately reducing emissions and storing carbon and all the other things that are mentioned in Prairie Resilience.

Ms. Ritchie: — Well you know, I certainly can appreciate, you know, wanting to take a whole-government approach. But it still seems like an odd pairing that could also lead to some conflicts of interest related to ensuring environmental protection if there are, you know, parts of that strategy that are, you know, working at cross-purposes. So you know, I certainly see that, you know, there is always a need for collaboration, and you know, across government ministries.

But you know, when it comes to the Prairie Resilience strategy, you know, it’s very light on mitigation. You know, many of the things that it’s focused on are more in the area of adaptation, and I fail to see how having this secretariat put in . . . It seems to really blur the line. And you know, I think we see this in Energy and Resources, which you know, arguably would be the more appropriate location for this to reside.

But even there we’ve got, you know, environmental oversight within that ministry too. So it really, I think, leaves the public concerned about how we are ensuring both, you know, development that is separating out the functions of development from environmental protection. So I don’t think that that’s really satisfactory in my mind in terms of a response, but I will use it as a little bit of a springboard in terms of the climate strategy that you just referenced.

[16:45]

And you know, I did go back to *Hansard* and looked at some of the responses from former ministers where they talked about the climate strategy itself and then some of this Resilience reporting that’s been undertaken and, according to the former deputy minister, that there’s really no direct line of sight between those two documents.

And so I want to understand a few things. First of all, I mean, I’ve gone through the strategy document. You know, you make 40 commitments. I identify 13 which to me are — you know, and I’m being generous — 13 commitments here that are targeting mitigation actions. And you know, at the same time I’ve seen in other places where you’ve identified and made a commitment

towards, you know, 12 million tonnes of emission reductions through, you know, the output-based system and also the renewable energy from SaskPower. And then this . . . and I think they offset. I can't remember. There's a third item there.

Anyways, 12 million tonnes, but you know, you originally committed to reducing emissions by 20 per cent by 2020. You blew through that target. Now, you know, you've committed to these 12 million tonnes. You know, I've done the math, and it leaves quite a shortfall, you know, if you take what was the 30 per cent before from 2005 levels. And now we've got, you know, an increase from the federal government.

Okay, so here are the numbers. So you know, we currently emit, you know, in the last year that it was recorded, 76 million tonnes. So with the 12, that brings us to 64. So that's only 4 million tonnes below 2005 levels, by my math. And so we seem to have, you know, a lot outstanding here. And so I'm not seeing, with the actions that are identified in that plan and really lack of reporting on even the progress we made on those items, where we are going to be able to, you know, reduce our emissions overall. And so, you know, that's my concern and what I would like you to speak to.

Number one, when are we going to see reporting on that plan? It's not in the Resilience document, and the former deputy minister, you know, made that very clear in her statement, that that's not where we would be seeing it. Minister Duncan, your predecessor, indicated that, well yes, you know, there wasn't any plans, but you know, maybe, maybe not.

So what is your current plan to report on progress made on that plan in a very transparent and detailed manner? Because, you know, people are being left confused, and it's unclear to them how we're actually going to, you know, do . . . you know, sort of achieve any reduction beyond those 12 million tonnes based on the current commitments that we've made. So one is the reporting piece and then where are you going to make up the shortfall?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — So I guess just if we can give a bit of a snapshot as to where we're at 2018, 2019. 2020 data is really just coming online now. We should have access to it . . . Actually we'll have a report here fairly soon, probably within a month or so. But I guess just to review kind of where we're at, 2018 emissions, 2019 emissions actually declined 1.4 megatonnes between 2018-19. It was interesting during that time that they actually declined in every sector except buildings, which is an interesting fact in itself.

The other interesting thing was that 2019 was the first year which Prairie Resilience and the carbon tax were both in effect, and ultimately it was the sectors that were supported by Prairie Resilience is where we saw their emissions fall. It was the two sectors that were really regulated federally that we didn't actually see a GHG [greenhouse gas] emissions reduction. So that's an interesting fact in itself.

You know, we've been doing an awful lot to reducing emissions that . . . and certainly Prairie Resilience is, like we talked about, is our guiding light in this. You know, we talk about the inter-ministerial component to this. And I mean that is part of the function of Prairie Resilience, is that each of the ministries is

going to be responsible for reporting their successes and their strategies and their work that they're doing within each of those ministries.

And you know, I think there's some pretty significant milestones that we're able to observe. Just the one I think just announced the other day was SaskPower has moved from a 40 per cent emissions reduction — so what they first anticipated — and now they've actually upped that just the other day to 50 per cent by 2030.

Government Relations, just as another example, introduced the National Energy Code, which I believe just came into force at the beginning of the year, which is going to make significant changes, reduce emissions when it comes to buildings with a new code within the building code.

You know, Environment, we just initiated the heavy emitters, you know, through the output-based performance standards that we've got. I believe it's 114 facilities now that are signed up for our output-based performance standards program. And you know, just through provincial regulation, we've seen electricity emissions. We anticipate they're going to be reduced by 40 per cent. We've got regulations within the oil and gas sector, where methane emissions are going to be 40 per cent reduction. We're looking at regulations that are covering industrial emissions, looking at the intensity being reduced by 10 per cent there.

You know, we're really continuing to develop a lot more policies, programs that are made in Saskatchewan, you know. It's certainly a balance between emissions reduction and economic recovery, is ultimately what we're looking at. You know, we've got a provincial technology fund now with the performance credit system. That's under development and we're fully anticipating that will be initiated this year.

We've talked about a provincial offset system that will help monetize further emission reductions in non-regulated sectors. I mean the tremendous work that Agriculture is doing currently, and will be doing into the future, is certainly going to help support us in emissions reductions. Waste management, we see a number of initiatives that will likely be provided there through our provincial offset system.

You know, we continue to engage with stakeholders. That really remains a priority, that we continue to seek their input on ultimately designing this program. This program has been the . . . I think that's one of the biggest advantages we've got to Prairie Resilience, is that it provides that flexibility. It really allows us, you know, to get and seek continuous input from our stakeholders, our business sector, mining resource sector, oil and gas, agriculture, transportation. Each one of them has an opportunity to continue to provide us, you know, updates and statuses, especially as they encounter new emerging technologies, or maybe they're dealing with specific issues that, you know, that they see a roadblock in.

I guess *Prairie Resilience*, just to kind of sum that up, is really . . . it's a very dynamic document. I know you talk about, you know, you have struggles with the adaptability portion of it, and honestly that is what we need to make sure that our municipalities, whether it's our towns, cities, municipalities have the ability to adapt to a changing environment.

[17:15]

And I think those are some of the core measurements that we've got in there, is making sure that our municipalities have the tools available to them, have the technology available to them, have the assessment, the impact assessments that they need to be able to adapt to a changing climate. Because the reality is it is a changing climate, and we need to make sure that they have the ability to adapt to that as well. So I think those are also key measurements that we need to continue to support and see evolve through *Prairie Resilience*. Really it's an ongoing, dynamic report that ultimately is going to go even beyond the 40 commitments that we've identified in here so far. Yes, I think I'll leave it at that.

Ms. Ritchie: — Okay, well thank you, Mr. Kaeding. You know, I would just say in response to that though that you talk about this document as a guiding light, but you know, it's not looking that bright when you're clouding the issue by talking interchangeably about adaptation and mitigation. Those are two very distinctly different things. And while they're both important and worthy, you're confusing the issue at the end of the day. That's why I had to go through that report and separate out, you know, what in this resilience plan is addressing adaptation and what is addressing mitigation? And as I said, you know, I could find, you know, some things but I'm trying to separate the wheat from the chaff.

And you talked to me earlier about how, you know, you're trying to coordinate and have, you know, continuity of service. And yet you're not willing to report on the totality of the plan which is, you just told me, your guiding light. So that seems a little bit, you know, like there's a gap there. And you know, I think I've heard your predecessor say this as well before, you know, we talk about what gets measured, gets managed. We also talked about transparency, and I'm not seeing a lot of transparency when it comes to this plan if you're unwilling to commit to coordinated reporting on the commitments that you've made.

The document talks about 40 commitments. Some of those commitments are related to reducing overall greenhouse gas emissions. Others are addressing adjusting to the impacts of climate change. You know, certainly in my professional career I've done a lot of work on the subject of adaptation. We used to call it vulnerability assessments at the time, because people are really scared of any language around climate.

But nevertheless, it's not that I'm not appreciating the importance and the significance, but as I say, you know, if you're going to make a commitment to 40 actions, then the public has an expectation for there to be transparent and clear reporting on those commitments. That is not available to us right now.

And you know, I was going to ask, you know, there really isn't time for it here today. And so I think what I would like to do is just make the request that the commitments that are made in the climate strategy document, if you could please provide me with an update on the progress made on those. Is that something that I can make a request for?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Well, so we have a report. We have an annual report. In fact it's the third annual report that's going to be released, probably within a month. So we'll provide that.

Ms. Ritchie: — But that's not the same . . . pardon me. But that's not the same thing. I mean, I have gone through your documents with a fine-tooth comb. You know, I've looked at your annual reports. I've looked at your state of the environment report, your resilience plan, everything that's publicly available. And what I'm saying is that those documents don't address what I'm asking for in terms of . . . I would like to see updates on the 40 commitments made in the climate change strategy and the progress. And I have a few specific questions on some higher-level items. But I think that that's fair and reasonable for me to, on behalf of the public, be making that request.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Madam Chair, we'll endeavour to try and answer as many of those as we can.

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you very much. Okay, so now going into some of the specifics . . . Well maybe before I do that, you know, I did have a look at *Hansard* like I was mentioning, and in 2019 there were some assurances provided from the ADM [assistant deputy minister] to the Environment critic indicating that we would be seeing a number of the elements of the program come into operation, those being the offset program, the output-based pricing system, and the technology fund. And I'm wondering if you can provide me with a status update on those three items, please.

Ms. Harrison: — Certainly. I'd be happy to give you an update on those. So you asked about the output-based performance system, which is in place. The best performance credits I believe was the third tool that is part of our options available to regulated emitters. The tech fund, which will be coming on stream this year, and an offset, an option to manage regulated emissions with offset purchasing, to come on stream in 2022.

Ms. Ritchie: — Okay. So those had originally been planned for 2021. And I'm just looking back in the notes. I thought that there had been a commitment to the offset program. Yes. Yes, Mr. Brock had indicated, "The commitment is to have the functional compliance obligations for the offset system . . ." Is that what you mean by performance then?

Ms. Harrison: — No. What I can say is you are correct in that the original target was to bring those options on stream sooner. 2020 was an atypical year. It prohibited us from doing the level of consultation with industry that we had anticipated and were required to do for some of that work. As part of that, we've certainly made that commitment to bring them on stream at the soonest, which now for the offset purchasing will happen in 2022.

Ms. Ritchie: — 2022. Okay. And then I also noted that there had been some discussion around, you know, getting verified, tangible, lasting emission reductions in any non-regulated areas. And you know, I think that that's been an area where there's been some contention. And I'm just wondering, you know, what the thinking is around that in terms of verifiable credits and how that relates to I guess, you know, in other neighbouring jurisdictions as well. Because I think that that had also been an issue, to have something that was, you know . . . So that certainty and continuity between provinces as well, if you could speak to that.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — So our offsets, as Sarah indicated, certainly had issues because we were anticipating and certainly

were encouraging significant stakeholder input on providing some guidance as to, you know, what their level of encouragement was, their level of support, their level of understanding of offsets, and then just us providing an opportunity to explain kind of the offset value to them.

So we had those engagements and they were very well subscribed. It ended up having to move virtual, which was a big move on our part certainly, as well with our stakeholders. But there was webinars provided towards the end of March, and we got tremendous input from the participants that were online. Continue to have engagements. Just the other day, had a great stakeholder engagement with our ag sector, with our livestock producers, crop producers. Again getting a good understanding of what their expectations were, but also provided us an opportunity to discuss offsets with them as well and just, you know, reminding them that offsets are a service.

It's something that ultimately, you know, isn't going to be a reward or a compensation for actions. And I think that's one of the discussions we're continuing to have, is that this offset market is something that is new to everyone, and it's not just our ag sector. Certainly appreciate the work that they've done and have done for the last number of years in being very good stewards, and certainly recognizing their abilities to reduce emissions and respond to the whole greenhouse gas issue.

But also it's our role, as one of the three components that we're providing our regulated market, is the opportunity to participate in the offset market. So the process we've gone, as we understood, was the tech fund, the best performance credit system. Those are going to be coming online sometime in 2021. But it does take us an awful lot of work, time, and effort to even I guess get our stakeholders to understand how to develop a protocol for them to be able to access an offset.

And as you indicated, there are certainly two opportunities for them to move offsets into. One is into the regulated market, which needs to have verification, needs to have validity established to it, needs to have all kinds of opportunity to be audited to make sure that those that are producing the offsets are producing a quality product, but those that are buying the offset are also going to be receiving a quality product that they can validate to put off against their emissions.

And then there's, like you also indicated, the non-regulated market. And I think as well that's taking a fair bit of time to get everyone to understand how, what level of participation they may have in the voluntary market. Certainly realizing that even the private sector is now providing all kinds of opportunities and will into the future for our ag producers, for foresters, for . . . Even municipal governments may have an opportunity to participate in that voluntary offset market.

So our role as the Ministry of Environment is to just, you know, I guess provide an environment that we can make sure that the quality of product that's being produced as an offset is also a quality product that can be purchased as an offset by the emitter. So it's a lot of work but it's . . . 2022, we made a commitment to have up to four different offsets available to the industry.

Ms. Ritchie: — So of those four types then, some of those are . . . they're land-based offsets, and how will that look in the

agricultural space?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — That's something that we're currently working on now. As I said just the other day, we had tremendous stakeholder engagement. We're still continuing to put that process together. You know, we certainly need to make sure that any of the participants understand, you know, what the protocol process even is about, so that if they're bringing something forward as a protocol that they would like to maybe have access to, that they understand what's behind that, the intricacies of it and also what we expect.

Because ultimately we have to regulate this, so we also have to have that level of expectation explained to them as well as to, if we're regulating this, these are the things that we are concerned about. We need to understand, they need to understand as they're putting something forward. So just, you know, you also have to be practical, right? They have to be able to work within Saskatchewan and we have to provide the market with that opportunity to see value in what they're purchasing. So it's kind of getting to that value proposition. It is also trying to get a good understanding.

I know you talked about other jurisdictions. And honestly that's part of the problem we've got right now is that everybody's all over the map. Everybody's got their own unique approach to this. Alberta's been at this for a number of years now. I think they've been at this for probably 10, 12, maybe 13 years developing protocols, finding a number of them just haven't been subscribed to. Obviously those that are thinking the protocol will have value to them have found out that it doesn't or it's an awful lot of work, heavy on administration, very low on return. So that's part of the issue that we're dealing with is that there's not a lot of consistency that's provided across the jurisdictional boundaries. And even just, you know, indications from Canada as to where the federal government is at and what they're seeking for, you know, for support, if they're going to be putting protocol development forward too. So that's an ongoing conversation.

[17:30]

But just the four protocols that we're working with, that we've literally told our stakeholders that there will be something available to them: landfill gas capture, anaerobic composting, and then we've been fairly vague on the farming and ranching side. But those conversations are ongoing daily.

Ms. Ritchie: — Well it'll be interesting to see how that all proceeds. We certainly know there's a lot of expectations to manage on that front. And certainly, you know, there is an issue here of stringency overall with the program.

I do note that . . . I'd like to go back to my *Hansards* here. What year is this? 2020, yes, which is last spring. My predecessor asked your predecessor, you know, well are you willing to bet the farm on this decision on the Supreme Court case? And the former Environment minister wasn't really willing to indicate that there was any kind of a backup plan in the eventuality that the case was lost. And well we know how that played out.

So it's my understanding that, you know, we did receive additional clarity and certainty from that court case, and the role of the federal government seems to have been strengthened more

than anything. And so being that we do face an existential crisis of climate change, and the ability of the federal government to act in the national interest, it does. And you know, the recent ambition that their nationally determined contribution has also indicated, which — I mean I don't mean to have such a long preamble; I apologize, but I'll continue — it should have been a surprise to no one that they did in fact, you know, increase that level of ambition. They had been signalling as much for a very long time. And it is, you know, this is a global collective-action problem. We all recognize that and nation states are working together. We see the landscape changing certainly as, you know, we have regime change across the globe and so forth.

But I guess all that to say that we know that the federal government has ability to impose a backstop where provinces are unwilling to move forward in a manner that is, you know, considered in the national interest. I'm paraphrasing the Supreme Court decision here, of course.

But I would like to know . . . You've made, yourself and the Premier have made some announcements about, you know, moving forward with a made-in-Saskatchewan price on carbon. And it raises a couple of issues, those being namely the ability to receive that approval from the federal government as it regards to the stringency level, particularly with the statements of the Premier that he would be reducing the fuel tax by an equivalent amount, effectively nullifying any of the increase from that.

And then second of all, the plans or the intentions for using any revenues generated from such a tax, if indeed there are any, and what the plan and the strategy is around implementing a carbon price here in Saskatchewan to avoid the federal backstop. I'm sure . . . [inaudible] . . . ready for the question.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — The presentation that we made at the Supreme Court of Canada we believed was a very compelling argument, and I believe that even though the outcome was maybe not what we . . . Well it was not what we expected, because we did believe that we had a very reasonable and sound argument. And I think that was even demonstrated by the number of Supreme Court justices who actually did not agree that that was the constitutional prerogative of the federal government. Regardless, the tax is here. We now have to deal with a federally induced carbon tax.

We need to do a few things in response to that. One of them is currently, you know, our electrical generation and our natural gas transmission is currently under federal control. We need to extract that back and put that into provincial control, so we've asked for that. We asked for that actually even before the Supreme Court ruling, and so we're anticipating that that will be accepted. We certainly hope that'll be accepted by the federal government so that will be something that we will have under provincial control.

The other thing is recognizing that there's been a number of unique initiatives that have been supported by the federal government when it comes to a federally induced carbon tax on fuel. And we're certainly anticipating that they will recognize the plan that we will be putting forward shortly. You know, we've talked about developing an offset program. That's something that we know will be another point of the plan that we need to put forward. We've talked about that. It should be available by spring

of 2022.

We've asked the federal government as well to support us in our small modular reactor plan, and that's something that we recognize doesn't have immediate support for us in the next five to eight years. But we've also got commitment by SaskPower that they are going to be moving to renewable, to up to 50 per cent renewable by 2030. SMR development we fully anticipate will be in that next generation, that next block of time that will provide us, you know, zero-emitted baseload power that's going to be dependable, certainly supporting uranium industry, something that we have here in abundance in this province that is a very important part of our economy, and recognizing that SMRs will provide us that, you know, dependable baseload.

You know, and I guess just the other thing that we always talked about is that if we're going to be treated as equals in the federation that we also need to be treated as equals when it comes to their provision of support, you know, through the Low Carbon Economy Fund that we never did have access to. So you know, we expect Canada will be fair. They will be reasonable in assessing the plans that we have forward. As we say, there's been a number of unique examples that have been put forward and accepted before us.

And you know, at the same time we're going to continue that if Canada is asking us to continue to support their moving targets for emissions, that they need to recognize the trade dependency and the economic realities of this province, and that being that we have a very dynamic resource development sector here. Whether it's forestry, it's agriculture, it's mining, it's resource development in the North, we are an export-based province. So naturally our emissions are unfortunately higher per capita if you want to use that metric because we are a very dynamic, innovative province that still is working with 1.2 million people. So that's why we continue to say if these are the federal government's mandated emissions levels that have been changing on a regular basis, then we're going to certainly need their support to help us on that runway out to reduce emissions.

Ms. Ritchie: — So it's my understanding that, or recollection that the reason why we weren't eligible for funding from the low carbon energy fund was because we didn't sign the *Pan-Canadian Framework*. Are you intending to rectify that situation and sign on to that agreement now to be eligible for that funding?

And more specifically, could you please state for me what precisely is your plan for pricing carbon here in Saskatchewan. I mean I know what I've heard in the media and I would just like to get some confirmation whether indeed that is . . . if those are the plans as they've been stated. And then how do you respond to, also in the media, comments coming back from the federal Environment minister that they are expecting a level of stringency to be shown in order to approve our plan?

[17:45]

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — So I think, Ms. Ritchie, we had two questions there. One was, you know, would we commit to signing on to the *Pan-Canadian Framework*? Well I think the one concern we've got right now is we're not sure if the *Pan-Canadian Framework* is existing in its entirety, or if it's

been evolved into some other documents. There's some new, you know, a new federal government mandate that was initiated, I believe just at the end of the year, that we're still unclear if it replaces the framework or if it's an addition to.

So ultimately, we would need to see what would be requested of us if that is the demand that is put in front of us before we access the Low Carbon Economy Fund. I think, you know, we still are of the belief that we're part of the federation, you know, and other jurisdictions, regardless of their position on this, have been provided those opportunities. And we just expect the same as, you know, fairness as to how they've been treated.

The plan that we're working on is again . . . And I don't think it's any secret. We've talked about other jurisdictions having plans that have been accepted by the federal government. They've provided that, you know, the mandate that they've looked for as to if we were going to be having the carbon tax back into provincial control. And I think that's the key. Our plan is going to ensure that this is going to be brought back into provincial control. We want it created by Saskatchewan, for Saskatchewan, to support Saskatchewan people. I think that's the most important part, that this has to stay in the province. And I think the Premier's been very clear. I've been very clear that this cannot hurt our industry here in the province.

Whether it's agriculture, whether it's oil and gas, forest sector, mining sector, manufacturing, this cannot be something that puts them at a competitive disadvantage that they are not able to overcome because other jurisdictions in the world are not working under the same premise or under the same restrictions or the same financial barriers that, you know, a federally induced carbon tax or mandated carbon tax would unfortunately they would be under.

So our plan is going to be one that's going to continue to support innovation. We recognize that our role that we're going to be playing in federation is to innovate our way through this. A carbon tax is not a means of effectively reducing emissions or reducing greenhouse gas components, so innovation is going to be the way out. And we've experienced that. We've seen that. We've seen innovation in the agriculture sector. I mean between us and Australia, we're the two countries leading in the world when it comes to direct seeding, reduced tillage, continuous cropping. We've led the way in that.

And certainly we've led the way in technology development. Carbon capture plant, first of its kind in the world was built in Estevan, Saskatchewan at that magnitude, at that scope. That's the kind of technology that we anticipate that we're going to see support in doing our part in reducing emissions in the country. That is going to be our plan.

Ms. Ritchie: — Just for clarification, Mr. Minister, is your government planning to implement a carbon price in Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — I think the Supreme Court has provided some guidelines as to ultimately what their expectations are going to be. I think ultimately what's been accepted in other provinces has been that there needs to be a price on fuel that is, you know, to curb reduction, the usage of fossil fuels. I would say this is still . . . We're working towards what ultimately that

plan is going to look like. We'll be making submissions to our federal government, and I expect there will be a conversation back and forth as to ultimately what that's going to look like. So I would say it's too early to preclude if this is going to be something that looks like a federally mandated carbon tax or what ultimately it's going to look like. But again, our focus is to make sure that it is not here to harm our business sector, our agriculture sector, anybody that needs to be competitive in our export-based economy.

Ms. Ritchie: — Well thank you for that clarification. I will take that under advisement. It doesn't . . . it's not consistent . . . what we've heard in the media so far so we will wait and see, I suppose, what develops. You know, I guess I would say that there are, surprisingly enough, many things we agree on. You know, we want what's best for Saskatchewan people; we want our industries to thrive. But I have to say though that, you know, the way that your government has gone about this up until now has been . . . it's been a failure. You know, we need carbon diplomacy here. These are difficult issues. We need conciliatory relationships. We need to be able to find a way through and, you know, I think there's some give and take there.

There's a lot of money that the federal government has announced as part of their plan, and Saskatchewan people want to make sure that, you know, we gain access to those funds and that we're able to innovate as you say and so we're not left behind. And I think that, you know, we've lost a lot of time here. You know, Nancy Heppner stated back in 20 . . . Oh, what year was that? Gosh you know, she made some statements. You know, you came out with a plan here at the start of your, you know, your first mandate to take action on the climate emergency. You know, she said at the time, "The time for talk is over. Our government is taking real action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions." That was, well I'm not even sure of the year, but it would have been around, you know, I think it was 2009. So that's 12 years ago. And that's a lot of water under the bridge and in that time, you know, we've gone down some . . . had some wild goose chases, fighting the federal government on a carbon tax. And I say all that because, you know, we do face imminent threat. It requires serious action as Ms. Heppner has indicated.

And you know, I would just really strongly encourage your government to start taking a more conciliatory approach that will allow us to proceed on this file in a way that the people of Saskatchewan are expecting. You know, the debates are over. They've been over for a long time, maybe not to everyone's satisfaction in this province, but there is . . . I don't know . . . there are many things happening at the federal and the international level. And you know, I also engage with stakeholders, and what I hear from stakeholders is that they're worried about us being left behind, and that we're not taking decisive action when we need to be.

And I will use that as a segue to ask my next question because, you know, one glaring omission when I look at the climate strategy is there is nothing in there that talks about transitioning workers or diversifying. There's a little bit of a light touch in the document. I don't know if I've got that really at my fingertips. But I would just say that, you know, there is a lot more that needs to be done on the subject of jobs.

I did . . . Oh yes, here we go, page 9. Really nothing in there as it

relates to helping workers retool, receive training. It's something that's mentioned in the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce report. So maybe that should be the question. I'm not seeing it in this document but maybe you've had some further thoughts since then. What does your government plan to do to assist workers in fossil-based industries to transition?

[18:00]

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — So some of the direct funding that we're aware of — and you know, none of this is coming out of our ministry — is there's a \$10 million transition fund that I know Premier Moe had committed to Estevan and area to transition out of coal.

But I think ultimately this kind of leads us to really the fundamental premise behind, you know, building part of our efforts on making sure that we're supporting resiliency, not just a mitigation strategy. Because you know, what you're talking about, transition, is also what we're talking about — resiliency. And I think that is why that is still one of the core tenets of Prairie Resilience, is to ensure that our communities have resiliency built into them to be able to transition with everyone, with industry as they're moving away and moving towards a low-carbon economy.

But there's some real, fundamental issues that we've got with ultimately how we're maybe being led down a path here of one . . . Again I have to refer to the new, revised goal — third goal in less than three months now, or four months — of emissions reduction at the federal level.

[18:15]

And there is a significant risk that the pace of transmission is going to lead to significant vulnerability in the economy resulting in jobs losses. Certainly you'll get emissions when you lose jobs. And I think, you know, a perfect example is what's going on in Nova Scotia right now. You know, closure of refineries, lost 400 jobs. I think it was a pulp mill, lost 300 jobs. Yes, their emissions went down significantly because industry disappeared. And that's the issue that we've got with these significant changes in targets that all of a sudden this rapid pace of transmission is going to result in some significant issues — social issues and job loss and everything that goes with it.

So we need to provide a runway for industry to be able to transition to this low-carbon economy. There are sectors that are going to be able to do that relatively quickly, continue to talk about SaskEnergy moving from a hydrocarbon-based electrical transmission to a renewable transmission. I believe they're at 26 per cent renewables right now, believing that they can get close to 50 per cent by 2030. Remarkable transition on their part.

Unfortunately agriculture and the transportation sector does not have those opportunities available to them. And even with the rapid pace of adaption and technology available to them, it's going to be difficult for them to get to a level that is likely expected of them at the federal level.

You know, I just look at the remarkable work that the oil and gas sector has done, the methane reductions that they have implemented, that they have been able to convert. They've been

able to convert methane flare gas to energy production; you know, the movement that they've got, a number of facilities moving to solar-powered wellheads. Again, there's technology available, but we need to make sure that we have a proper ramp or runway for them to transition to a low-carbon economy.

I know it's been referred to, I think, by some people that we've kind of established target bingo. We're going to set our targets and then we're going to figure out how we're going to get there. That's how we feel right now. We're being talked to by the federal government: we've set these new targets for you; you guys figure out how you're going to get there. And that puts us as a provincial government, and that puts our business sector and increases their vulnerability to being able to not able to adapt to change, or to even have options available to them in the very shortened time frame that's been provided to them.

But I also look at, we need to make sure that we also have a growing economy. We talked about where Nova Scotia's happened. That's not a growing economy.

You know, I look at carbon capture, the ability that carbon capture has in enhanced oil recovery, a tremendous way to reduce the carbon footprint and still work with the valuable commodity that is still in demand, still at an increasing pace around the world. And I think that's one sector that we need to support and provide that opportunity for them to transition. They're doing it. You know, we've talked to so many stakeholders in the last few months that have all talked about their emissions reduction strategy and they're great. They were all working towards a 30 per cent target, and now all of a sudden that target's moved on them, and they are unsure what that is going to provide them for opportunities and the cost that it's going to take them to get there.

And I think that's part of the issue. The problem that we've got is that there has been no regional economic analysis of what these more stringent requirements are going to place on this province. I mean, we've seen research that's been provided by academics and entities, you know, across Canada that has quantified, potentially quantified, what it's going to cost us to get to these new revised targets, and it is significant. And it will jeopardize the economy of this province as well as the working capital of our private sector.

But at the same time I have a lot of hope. I think there's plenty of opportunity that's being provided if we can ensure that there is a gateway, that there is this ramp we need to transition out. I think just the announcements that you've seen in the last few days by Viterro, by Cargill, by . . . Who else? Well I think some of the innovation through DEEP [Deep Earth Energy Production Corp.] with the geothermal technology, with Proton and Kerobert and the hydrogen-extraction process there. These are all great examples of emerging technologies, but are they going to be commercially viable in 5, 10 years? Difficult to assess.

I know we talked to some of the big stakeholders that are planning some significant capital projects. They're a year and a half, two years in planning and development. It's three years of the capital project to build and that gets them five years out from if they can start today. And they are afraid of what the new standards, the new limits, the new federal regulations that may be implemented during that time of transition, that time of development, that all of a sudden changes their business picture.

And that's not fair to them.

In order for us to be able to adapt and develop new technology, we need to make sure we have a thriving and a successful economy. And I think that's the issue that we're trying to deal with today, is to build a made-in-Saskatchewan plan that doesn't penalize, doesn't restrict our economy, allows it to grow, and yet lets them move down that pathway of moving to a low-carbon economy.

Ms. Ritchie: — Okay, well I mean I didn't really hear much there that was answering my question. It seemed a little bit selective, you know, the events and factors that you're choosing to focus on in terms of the problem we have before us. But you know, it's not just the federal government that has shown increasing ambition. I mean you've shown ambition but in the opposite direction. And you talk about runways. Well my goodness, you've had a 14-year runway and very little to show for it.

And I appreciate how afraid industry is. I mean they're not the only ones afraid. My kids are afraid. A lot of people are afraid about, you know, the future reality we face. We know we need to move forward with clear sight and with conviction and ambition, and you've run out the clock. And you know, workers are afraid and they need a plan. They need to see that their government is taking their livelihood seriously.

So I'm disappointed in that answer, but you know, maybe it's time to move on to some other areas of the ministry's work. This of course is very important and I certainly don't want to shortchange it, but I don't want to leave out other areas as well. So we'll leave it at that for now.

I'm going to move over to the annual report from last year. And just a straightforward question — I think it is anyways — *The Water Appeal Board Act* was repealed. Can you please tell me why that was? Maybe it's been replaced by something else?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Sorry, I didn't . . .

Ms. Ritchie: — *The Water Appeal Board Act* was repealed in 2020 and I'm just looking for an explanation as to why that was. Am I mistaken? No, I don't think I am.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — So just getting advice from my ADM on this that we're going to have to do some digging on it as to the actual rationale behind it, but we understand that WSA [Water Security Agency] has established a number of protocols that will deal with water disputes, and that as a result, the Water Appeal Board became redundant, is our understanding on that.

Ms. Ritchie: — So they've taken that function in-house, is what you're telling me?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — I believe so, but I need to confirm that because that's a WSA initiative.

Ms. Ritchie: — I will be going into committee with them tomorrow evening as well, so I can certainly ask there for a response as well.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Okay. Thank you.

Ms. Ritchie: — Okay. All right, you mentioned in this year's estimates additional funding for Indigenous consultation, I believe. And I was just wanting to have a little bit of explanation in terms of the application of those funds, the kinds of things it's going to be put towards, what brought that about.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — This is actually a new initiative for us, and we're actually quite excited that we've been able to designate specific funds for this. But I'm going to let Sarah kind of get into the details around, you know, the component of it and ultimately the responsibility that these advisors are providing us. But yes, it's a very exciting initiative for us.

Ms. Harrison: — Thank you, Minister. So as the minister said, it's new funding in our budget this year dedicated to this because we recognize that ongoing engagement with Indigenous communities is essential to the work of the ministry. The new fund will be used to increase opportunities for Indigenous communities to participate in the development of ministry policy, programs, and further developments.

Specifically I believe the question was more around how would we be using this funding. And I think some of the considerations that we have are around support for elder participation, access to subject matter expertise. So these would be examples of like traditional land-use studies, consultant fees, support for travel costs, improved ministry responsiveness to requests for additional engagement sessions. So this is often a request that's made of us. This gives us a little more latitude to be able to do that. And ultimately this is about us building an enhancement of our trust and respect with the community.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — If I could add to that, this is strictly an internal fund to be used internally. So there's no attachment to duty to consult or anything. This is just to be used internally for internal engagement.

Ms. Ritchie: — Oh, okay. I may have a follow-up question then just in terms of . . . It sounds to me like you might be using the funds to contract with an elder to provide information and some kind of service to the ministry. Is it going to be sort of dollars going out to First Nation communities so that they can participate? I think that's what I understood you to say.

Ms. Harrison: — Thank you. Building on the minister's comments, it's correct that this is for internally initiated consultation and engagement that we're doing. So there won't be an application-based approach to this like there is for other funding that we might find, as the minister mentioned earlier, with the duty to consult. So this is really . . . well it will be used to support Indigenous engagement, so to support external participation with Indigenous communities with the ministry. It's going to be focused on engagements that the ministry is leading.

[18:30]

Ms. Ritchie: — I see. Yes, okay. I appreciate that clarification because I mean, you know, I am aware that, you know, when a proponent is undertaking, you know, discharging some of those administrative aspects, they'll reach out and undertake their own consultation. And I guess you're saying that this isn't related to those engagements.

Ms. Harrison: — I'm sorry. I think if I'm understanding you, you're referring perhaps to funding that might be available through Government Relations, through a duty to consult and through some support for communities. No, this is separate from that. This is distinct to the Ministry of Environment.

So consultations that we would be leading, I really should characterize those more as engagement sessions that we would be leading with Indigenous communities in a number of areas of interest for the ministry, ministry-wide. So an example might be on the implementation of our solid-waste management strategy as an example. So intention to involve elders in the community and that discussion for its implementation, realizing that there are some barriers without some provided funding. But the intention would not be for the community to apply to the ministry for funding, but rather for the ministry to make allocations to the community to enable that participation.

Ms. Ritchie: — I see. Okay, great. Thank you for that clarification.

Apologies if I start jumping around a little bit, but that's the nature of the beast now. There's also the additional funding for conservation officers, and I had a few questions around that. As I understand it, you know, their role has expanded and that they're also offering service in the area of rural crime protection. And that seems to me sort of an increased level of danger that they're being asked to take on.

So just some questions around, you know, and I think I saw this in some of the previous *Hansard* notes. You know, you've mentioned in the past that they've received similar types of training and also carry firearms. And also if you could just confirm for me if they will be included under that recent legislative amendment for oversight, police oversight, that being one thing. Another one being, you know, is there any . . . Do they have body cameras? Are their engagements videoed? And how is this impacting on their ability to undertake their core duties? I guess part of the reason I ask that question also is there was a very unfortunate incident that occurred with an Indigenous hunter, last fall I believe it was, and wanting to understand some of the accountability measures and discipline. A bit of a mixed bag, I apologize.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — So our COs [conservations officer], and I believe we have just over 140 of them in the province, do extraordinary work. Yes, they quite often work in challenging conditions. They have training similar to what the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] have when it comes to dealing with engagement and difficult situations. They're allowed to carry side arms. They will be under the auspice of the provincial oversight, police oversight commission — the new commission that we've established — they will be under the auspice of that.

And regarding body cameras, we're following Justice's lead on that and they're not equipped with body cams at this time.

Ms. Ritchie: — And so what is the reason for that?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — So right now Justice is just reviewing . . . There's a number of issues, you know. There's going to be data that is ultimately provided by this engagement, so it's being able to secure the data to provide the privacy components around that

data. So from what we understand, this is something that Justice is currently reviewing.

But there are a number of other officers that are actually, you know, supported in the PRT [protection and response team] as well, so it'd be highway traffic officers, and none of them are provided that same opportunity. They're not carrying body cameras as well.

Ms. Ritchie: — Okay. You know, I mean certainly I think that in this day and age it's becoming more of an expectation, you know, to sort of ensure accountability and . . . But I'll leave it to my Justice counterpart to do some further follow-up on that particular item, so thank you for that.

I guess I would sort of move now into, you know, some questions around the work that's being done around habitat protection. And you can start flipping to that tab in your binders, I guess, while I formulate my question. Again I think it's going to be sort of multi-pronged here. You know, we've seen the federal government make some commitments and announcements related to protecting biodiversity and some funding available. There's been a lot of concern about the number of developments in terms of protecting land. I wonder if you could please restate for me what the current level of habitat protection we have in the province, what the goal is, and the time frame for achieving it.

And then I know that there are these — and I might be confusing issues, pardon me — but you know, I understand that there are representative area networks, and that's been talked about in debates before. And you know, we've also had some emergency protection orders for certain endangered species, and you know, collaborative work with the federal government on some other key species. And I would like to know what the status of woodland caribou protection is as, sort of, that key species in northern Saskatchewan. And I'll maybe leave it at that for now.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — So we're continuing to move towards our goal of a 12 per cent protected area. So we are currently at 9.76 per cent, which involves 6 354 385 hectares, so we're just under 10 per cent.

I know we have had significant engagement with a number of communities especially in northern Saskatchewan, ongoing discussions on providing maybe an opportunity for other Indigenous-protected conservation areas or certainly, you know, working on a RAN [representative area network] target, I guess, or a network that we'd like to add to. I think we're close to maybe being able to announce one fairly shortly, another protected area. So it's an ongoing conversation.

I know we've got a few communities that have received federal funding, as well as from some private entities to support their work in developing, you know, a strategy around and identifying areas that they would like to conserve. So it's a very active file. It's ongoing. We have had a number of engagements with Indigenous communities, Métis communities on working towards that goal of 12 per cent. I'm feeling comfortable that it's a very achievable goal and that we'll be getting there fairly soon.

Now your discussion on caribou and that's certainly . . . I can give you a bit of an update as to where we're at right now. So certainly the ministry is definitely devoted and working towards

protecting woodland caribou and their habitat. It's an ongoing discussion. There's certainly a lot of research that's going on, again, because it's an area that's sensitive. There's resource development going on, especially a lot of our timber industry is in an area that overlaps with the caribou area. Some of our northern resource development is in that area.

Where we're at right now, so the woodland caribou range plans, they've been completed for the central portion of the SK2 Central area, and we're in the draft stages for SK2 West and East. We are now initiating work on the SK1 range plan which is an area north of Turnor Lake. And we are just again getting back into initiating engagement sessions with our stakeholders up there — so with our First Nations, Métis, local land users — you know, to make sure that we are incorporating local knowledge into the further development of the SK1 range plan, for our caribou range plan. So again it's ongoing work. There's some interesting development that's going on there. I would say we've had very good stakeholder engagement, and it's something that we're continuing to work towards.

I did have a note here. We have only one emergency order for a protected species and that would be for the sage grouse.

[18:45]

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you for that, Minister. I had had from some stakeholder engagement that I had undertaken that, you know, that there were some concerns around a tier 1 conservation area southeast of Candle Lake in the SK2 region. And I'm wondering what the status of that might be, because it seemed as though, you know, that there's some competing interests there. Or maybe not competing interests, but certainly, you know, the need for protection but the interest in the area and wondering what the status of that is.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — So, Ms. Ritchie, we're assuming that what you're referring to is a tier 1 area, area P. And if that's the area that you're referring to, then we're currently in discussions with Sakâw who's the forest management company that's working there. So now we're just going through the process of working with all the key stakeholders, including NGOs [non-governmental organization], that certainly had expressed some concerns there as well. And we're very confident that we're going to soon be coming to a resolution that we're pretty sure is going to satisfy each of the stakeholders' concerns in this. So if that's what you're referring to, then that's our response to that.

Ms. Ritchie: — Yes, well thank you, Mr. Minister. Yes, that is the case. But it's pretty high level. I wonder maybe if you could sort of speak more to the specifics in terms of what's at issue and how you see that being resolved going forward. Because it's my understanding that, you know, it is in this SK2 range with key habitat for woodland caribou. Yes, so it has some sensitive habitat.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Probably about as much as I can discuss here tonight is that we've done some additional modelling. We're reviewing the buffer zones that ultimately Sakâw would have to adhere to. And from what we understand, there's just some further assessment that's going to be required on, I believe it would be Sakâw's part, or our part to . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . yes. Yes. We've each got to do a little bit more assessment as

to where everybody is positioning. That's why I say there's, you know, there's certainly some give-and-take in this whole process. And that's ultimately where we're coming to now, that hopefully is going to be satisfying all the parties involved because there's a number of stakeholders that have expressed some concerns or interest here.

Ms. Ritchie: — Okay. Well now as I understand it, you know, there is this conservation agreement that exists between the province and the federal government. I mean, woodland caribou is identified as a species at risk under federal legislation. And so I guess I would just like to understand a little bit better as, you know, you work in partnership with another level of government and then you're working with a proponent, other stakeholders. And I'm just curious to know, you know, what are the requirements of the agreement with the federal government that will have to be upheld as you're working this through?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — My apologies. This is where you really, really need the expert advice of somebody that has been working in that area for a number of years. But as I understand, it's a federal requirement that the range plan requires 65 per cent of the area to be protected at all times — that means, you know, to be covered or left alone — and that the population is not to decline.

Now what we've found is that there's an opportunity to initiate what's called the section 11 agreement of SARA [*Species at Risk Act*]. And what that does is that it allows us the provision to modify the plan to be a little bit more realistic for those that want to utilize the area. So what it does is it modifies the time frame that provides an adequate recovery time and yet allows the economic development of the area that has been initiated. So from what I understand, that this is a public document and all of this is available on that public document for review. Yes.

Ms. Ritchie: — Okay, well that's interesting to hear. I think I can sort of get a sense of where the concern lies in terms of, you know, deviating from the standard through the section 11 provision. And you know, I guess I just wonder what assurance you have or that the stakeholders have that by, you know, sort of making those provisions if it doesn't place the population at risk unnecessarily.

And you know, obviously this is something that is of great concern to the stakeholders. And you know, I don't know what else to say in this case. I mean it sounds quite concerning to me, and certainly something that I'll be wanting to sort of watch and follow up to see if it isn't putting the population at risk unnecessarily.

And I guess maybe what I would ask is, what kind of monitoring and follow up? You know, oftentimes you talk about adaptive management, you know, and I assume would be the case here. Is there anything that you can tell me about, you know, going down this road? You know, what kind of other mitigating factors and monitoring will be put in place as part of the plan?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Okay. We just got a confirmation. I was expecting this was the case that . . . So we continue to monitor the population. And if there's declines, then that triggers subsequent modifications to the range plan and the habitat use, you know, utilizing the cut plan. The monitoring is shared, shared with the federal government. Just interesting, at the point they are

also co-funding that opportunity to be monitoring the population. So they do have a vested interest in this as well. There is that federal level of oversight that we are continuing to report those population numbers.

Ms. Ritchie: — Okay, thank you for that response. I guess one of the other related items I had, you know, like it's . . . The 12 per cent goal, I think, by normal standards is viewed as being rather low. You know, there's been concerns raised in the past about connectivity between native protected habitat and, you know, areas where we see a lot of natural, native habitat also being removed, you know, particularly in the southern part of the province for agricultural purposes, and then that being compounded by, you know, the sell-off of Crown land which has been quite contentious.

And I guess I just wanted to raise that issue in terms of how that number of 12 per cent was arrived at and the justification for it and if there is any intention of increasing it. I mean, I think I know the answer to that question, but I do want to ask all the same, and particularly in light of any information that has been coming out of the cumulative effects of work that your ministry has been undertaking, how that might be informing policy within the ministry when it comes to habitat protection.

And then lastly, I think I mentioned this at the start, but you know, I guess I would question, you know, how the ministry is assessing the ecosystem value of a native habitat, you know, when it comes to providing ecosystem services, you know, acting as climate sinks, and there's been quite a bit of . . . Well there's been talk for decades, frankly, on the topic of, you know, how we value ecosystems. And there's been, you know, more debate and discussion about it of late because of . . . I don't know. It's just it's more, sort of, in the public domain these days, it seems.

[19:15]

And so there seems to be, you know, some increased awareness and understanding of the value of our ecosystems, in terms of maintaining ecosystem health and providing these services, you know, both globally and locally. And so wanting to know based on, you know, that body of knowledge and the cumulative effects assessments and information your ministry is collecting, how that might be informing policy and shifting the dial on the current level of commitment that's been made.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — I think we've got a couple of questions that we need to respond to here. One was how did we end up with a 12-per-cent-protected area? Now from what we understand, this goes back to actually 1992 and it was a study done by the UN [United Nations]. It was called the Brundtland Commission. And it was an internationally accepted target that was adopted by a number of signatories that ended up with the 12 per cent area that was going to be protected.

[19:30]

Now since then Canada has, as in the federal government, has unilaterally adopted higher and higher targets unfortunately without any consultation. So we haven't had any input into what we felt was going to be a reasonable number to aspire to. But from what I understand, Canada is not requiring connected lands. What they're looking for is really pristine unencumbered land.

You know, and you're wondering ultimately what is our timeline to get there? And I would say that right now it's the quantity isn't as important as the quality. And I think that's been, you know, been resonated through some federal government consultations, is that they want to ensure that the lands that are being protected are those that have high ecological value to them. And ultimately it's taking a fair bit of time to: (a) assess that and assess that in kind of a unilateral foundation, and as well it's taking significant amount of time with stakeholder engagement. Because there is a number of interested parties in moving this forward and each has their own unique thoughts and ideas as to what should be protected, governance model, you know.

So there's definitely a lot of moving parts that are going into, you know, into the commitment to these acres. But as I indicated before, you know, I have seen some of the proposals. I like what I've seen. There is some pretty interesting lands and there's some significant properties that I believe are being put forward. So it's going to take further engagement, but I believe, you know, we're on that path to getting to that 12 per cent.

Cumulative effects kind of takes us into a whole new area. It's housed in our climate change unit because, you know, ultimately it's part of building Prairie Resilience. And our climate change strategy is that, you know, we recognize that really, nature-based solutions are going to provide us all kinds of opportunities to really strengthen our climate change strategy. You know, I think Saskatchewan, being a large contiguous land mass, has got plenty of opportunities to provide, you know, some solutions to, or I guess some answers to some of the queries that are out there as to how can the properties that we've got in the province, how can they contribute to supporting our climate change strategy?

And you know, I look at the great work that is being done in carbon sequestration in ag land. Certainly we've talked about the native prairie, even just graze grassland and the opportunities there. I mean, we've seen a new protocol initiative that Shell is actually the final signatory on as the offset purchaser. So they've initiated I think some very interesting work in using some nature-based solutions.

You know, we certainly see the vast opportunity with our forests. I mean we're certainly blessed with an ample amount of forest, some that is harvestable and certainly a fair bit that is not harvestable. And there will be opportunity to realize some benefits there. Certainly wetlands, you know, provide an opportunity. So I think, you know, the whole concept of cumulative effects is trying to find . . . And you know, we talk about even accessing some of the federal monies, and I think there's plenty of opportunity for us in the province to be able to utilize some of that.

Just a couple of examples I think is the one I think they've devoted \$630 million towards nature-based solutions. And honestly our cumulative effects branch is identifying what some of those opportunities . . . either we, as government, or certainly the private sector or the NGO sector may be able to certainly encourage them to follow up and make some applications for that.

You know, the \$3 billion for 2 billion trees I think is again an area that I know we're having inter-ministerial conversations now is that, you know, what can we maybe propose as

government to be able to take advantage of that. But also realize that we've got landholders, we've got private landholders, we've got, you know, plenty of nature-based groups that may even be able to subscribe to the federal government's tree planting initiative. That again is one of those nature-based solutions that we are assessing and monitoring through our cumulative effects division.

But I do want to get on the record that our cumulative effects branch within our climate change unit is actually world-renowned. They're world-renowned in their abilities to . . . and I guess the history behind them, and that they have been doing this for a number of years now. And they are now being recognized both nationally and internationally for the work that they've been doing regarding cumulative effects, kind of on assessing and understanding the effects on the biodiversity and uses of land. So I want to provide them that bit of an opportunity to recognize them for the great work they've been doing.

And you know, what we're finding now is the federal government, other international bodies are reaching out to us, to our cumulative effects group to find out how they're approaching this, because it's just now that we're finding other governmental bodies are just starting to recognize the cumulative effects component and what that's going to mean to helping support greenhouse gas reductions.

Ms. Ritchie: — I guess I would ask how their work is informing the policies of the ministry then? Is it changing the target or any of the, you know, decision making when it comes to, you know, any kind of decisions that are before the ministry, whether it's developments, areas for protection, what have you?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Well certainly they're definitely informing our climate change branch on a number of initiatives that they're able to contribute to. And you know, certainly one of them would be the offsets that we've been talking a fair bit about tonight. That's one opportunity that they can certainly provide some guidance on and certainly some very in-depth analysis in that area. You know, as we're moving forward in other initiatives that, you know, that were just currently under assessment now, there's opportunities that they've been able to provide us a fair bit of guidance in that area too. So no, they're a very important part of our future.

Ms. Ritchie: — If that's the case, and I'm not disputing it, I'm just saying that it's something that it would be helpful to understand better. Is there any documentation and reporting that we could have tabled with respect to the scope of work that they are undertaking?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — I was just reminded that our cumulative effects group has actually assisted with the recovery of linear features in the caribou zone, so that's another area that they've been able to . . .

Just an area that you may want to review is the *Climate Resilience Measurement Framework* and some of our annual reports. I believe there's some significant direction that has been provided in those documents that can . . . And we can certainly endeavour to see if there's some other documents we might be able to provide you.

Ms. Ritchie: — All right. Thank you, Mr. Minister. I'm just sort of noting the time here and thinking maybe it's time to move into the rapid-fire round. I'm just having a look at revenue statements in the annual report, page 16, and the revenue generated in 2019-20 of 5.556 million, I believe that is. And you know, I think I have a fairly good understanding of how those revenues are generated and what they're used for. And just, you know, it's my impression that there is a lot more work that could be done. And when you compare it to say, what is happening in the United States, you know, it's orders of magnitude different between the work that our fish and wildlife branch does compared to US [United States] jurisdictions.

And fun fact: I did learn that there is an excise provision in the United States, or excise tax, where any time any kind of outfitting products are purchased in the United States, that there is an excise tax that provides a pool of funds that are then used for conservation and fish and wildlife purposes. They do that at the federal level and, you know, to me that just seemed like such a wonderful, untapped potential area for us to be acquiring funding to enhance the work of that group. And I mean, it seems as though it's kind of an established provision in other states or nations. And I just wanted to put that on the radar for consideration. I don't know, maybe it has been in the past; I really don't know, but just offer that suggestion. Certainly we've had a lot of debate about, you know, taxes and their use in the past week but I think that's one worth exploring. So anyways, no question there. That's more just a comment.

One thing I do want to ask about though is, I'm wondering about your interaction or relationship with your counterparts in Agriculture and Energy and Resources, you know, certainly in the area of oil and gas and air quality management that that's, you know, there's some sort of shared jurisdiction there. And interested to know the kind of collaboration that occurs there and whether or not, you know, there is any appetite for moving the environmental oversight of that sector into Environment. Perennial issue — it's been talked about a lot in the past. I'm sure you're aware of it. Wanting to know what is the state of or the view of that at the moment.

Ms. Harrison: — Thank you for the question. You know, this is a great opportunity for us to talk about the work that we're doing across ministries to build that one-team approach in the Government of Saskatchewan. It's some work that I think we're especially proud of in the ministry, that we've been working very closely with our colleagues in Energy and Resources, as you mentioned, but also in other ministries. Environment is a ministry that interacts and interfaces with so many of the other ministries. It gives us a really opportune moment to really exemplify what the government is trying to achieve with the one-team approach.

I know personally speaking, you know, at the deputy level we have not only the deputy minister council where all deputies come together and there's a weekly sharing of information and dialogue, but there's also a lot of informal interaction between ourselves, between myself and with my colleagues on a number of fronts as you can appreciate and have alluded to. Our files cross paths frequently and so this is a, you know, something I think we would describe as being a bit of an intentional program amongst the deputies to be more engaged with each other, I mean on a regular basis. I know I spend probably at least four or five meetings a week with other deputies outside of even our deputy

ministers council. So you know, inside of a week that's a lot of interaction and that's not exclusive to me.

[19:45]

There's also a number of committees and working groups that occur at the officials' level in our ministries, so we have ADM working groups. We have other direct contact with officials at other levels of the organization. So without perhaps itemizing, I guess I would say that there's a considerable effort and intention to be engaged directly, to be using that time to be trying to problem solve as ministries as opposed to working in silos.

And this also, you know, is felt in the way that we collaborate with recommendations that we're bringing forward to decision makers. We increasingly are looking for those collaborations and input from our colleagues in other ministries to help ensure that we've considered all parameters of, you know, of a policy before we're making recommendations and putting forward suggestions and options to decision makers.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Just if I can add to that as well, is that our ADMs have all been commenting here and they're very proud of the engagement that they've got as well. So we have the ADM climate change committee that has representatives from 16 ministries and agencies including ER [Energy and Resources] and Ag. We do meet regularly with E and R on shared jurisdictions. We work very closely with E and R on methane emission regulations and work very closely with Ag on offsets. Environment reviews every new oil and gas project. And you know, programs like environmental protection permitting, spills, mining, we certainly have full engagement across ministries in each of those areas.

Ms. Ritchie: — And then to the specific question regarding the environmental oversight for oil and gas and that function being housed within the oil and gas, or the energy and resources division, has there been any consideration, serious consideration to moving that across into Environment?

Ms. Harrison: — Thank you for the question. You know, I think what I can offer is that I'm not aware of any discussions or any desire to change that governance of that oversight that you're referring to. I believe that probably, you know, if we looked at this more historically, I think there have been conversations. I just don't believe that that's one that's active.

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you for that response. I notice in, I think it was maybe the annual report I was looking at, there was mention of reports for specific air zones, and would like to request copies of those. I believe there's four active air zones currently in the province with reports, and if I could request receipt of those.

Part of the . . . I mean well it's not really related but I just would . . .

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Ms. Ritchie, I'll just interject. I've been told we have three active air zones, so okay?

Ms. Ritchie: — Okay.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — We'll try and provide the documentation

on those. Okay.

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you very much. I did notice that, you know, we're seeing higher levels of particulate matter from open sources, that being mentioned in the *State of the Environment* report. Obviously that's very difficult to control given its nature, and wondering though if there is any work being done to understand — not just understand, I think we understand the health effects — but you know, any monitoring, how we see that affecting health outcomes or maybe anything in terms of mitigation regarding that trend.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Well we have a bit of an idea as to what some of the particulate matter is responsible from, and that would be from wildfires, certainly from, you know, the significant wildfires that were experienced in northwestern US and I think in BC [British Columbia] as well. And certainly upper air tends to move that in a number of different directions.

I know we have, I believe, it's six fixed monitoring stations throughout the province and we're able to kind of indicate and establish if there's even a pattern that would come and ultimately helps us try and, I guess, anticipate or assume where the source may come from. We have a number of mobile monitoring stations that we can also deploy. I know we'll send those out to an area that may indicate that they believe there's a source problem. So we will send the mobile units out there and do a, you know, a period of testing, do the analyzation, and then certainly can go and try and, you know, estimate where the proponents were and then have those discussions. Or you know, ask for further assessments on their part that they're responsible for.

Yes, I know there's even some discussions on, you know, particulates that again that may be up in the upper atmosphere and ultimately settle out. You know, we talk about ozone as one example is that ozone is something that, you know, we've reduced the ozone-emitting materials. And ultimately every once in a while we'll see an ozone number show up that goes kind of beyond what has been a normal trend. So there's lots of interesting, I guess, items out there.

We do post this on our website, from what I understand, that there is a public portal where you can assess where and what we've found in these stations.

Ms. Ritchie: — In 2019 the Environment critic was asking about the status of the Assiniboia scrap tire facility and that had not . . . I would just ask for a status update on that facility. Has it been signed off?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — The majority of material has been removed. There is still some shredded material that is left, that is currently on site. Being it's shredded has significantly reduced the risk to fire or any other concerns that would come from that. But we anticipate by, I believe it's the end of the year, Sarah, that we should have the rest of that pile mitigated and removed.

Ms. Ritchie: — What has been the cost of that cleanup to the provincial government?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — I believe we can confirm that we had allocated through a grant of 3.3 million to oversee the clean up of the site. Now the product that's remaining . . . I'm just getting

a live update here. I believe that there has been a commitment by a municipality to utilize the rest of the material. I'm not aware of the financial obligations on that, but I believe we may be able to provide that.

Ms. Ritchie: — Okay. Well yes, I know that this has been discussed in previous committee meetings in terms of the reasons why this cost was borne by the public as opposed to the stakeholders, and that going forward there will be assurances provided for facilities and money set aside. Is that correct? Okay.

I believe also last year . . . Well there was a new solid waste management strategy that was launched at the beginning of 2020, I believe, and I would like to request a status update on that. I mean in the interest of time, certainly if there's a document you can point me to. I'm just trying to find out, kind of, what . . . There was something planned to happen this current year, but I've kind of lost track of what that was.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — So we launched our single-use battery recycling program January 1, and our household hazardous waste was just initiated April 1.

Ms. Ritchie: — Is there any other ongoing consultation at the present time? Well here's a better question. I know that in the recent audit report there was a finding of the need for a waste reduction target. Maybe you could update us on, you know, the work that's been done to address that finding.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Just a couple of things. Just I do want to get on record that we do have an advisory committee that we have just formed, just finishing kind of dotting the i's, crossing the t's. And it's a cross-sector committee that has members from FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations], from Métis Nation, New North, SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities], SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association], private collectors, recycling program coordinators. So it's a very comprehensive waste management advisory committee, and we're quite excited to task them with some responsibilities to help us, you know, move further along a waste management strategy.

Let's see. Oh, you had asked about auditor reports, and I'm just wondering if we can just table that for you, just some responses. I'm assuming it's 2020 auditor reports, would it be? "Regulating Waste Diversion Through Recycling," is that your request? Okay. Well we'll provide a written response for that, if that's all right.

Ms. Ritchie: — I'm wondering about the plans to include mercury-containing devices and appliances as part of the recycling extended producer program. Are there any plans, I guess I would ask? I mean I don't believe that they're currently on the books but, you know, I am hearing from stakeholders that they see that as a priority.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — No, and I would expect that that's . . . Those are some of the items that our advisory committee is going to bring forward, is some of these. Very excited about our household hazardous waste program because that does take into account a number of those items that you've probably been hearing about. And I'm certain that those will be brought up by our advisory committee and certainly be tasked with a strategy to

help us deal with those.

[20:00]

Ms. Ritchie: — Is there a report to provide a status update on landfills in terms of number of compliant, non-compliant, abandoned — financial liabilities associated. Is there a report that provides that information? I know it's something that you're actively working on, but just in terms of what the current state of the, you know, compliance and liability is.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — I think we can provide that for you. There is certainly a high level of statistics involved in that. And I know I have a lot of that here, but I think if we could provide that to you as a written document.

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you. I'd appreciate that.

The Chair: — Ms. Ritchie, having reached our agreed-upon time of consideration of business today, we will look to adjourn consideration of the estimates for the Ministry of Environment at this point in time. And I'll look to the minister if he wants any closing comments or remarks at this point in time.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Well I certainly thank everyone for the engagement tonight. I appreciate the support that we had from our ministerial staff. We have the A-team here, definitely when it comes to the environment. Certainly appreciate the attention of the committee, the very respectful dialogue by Ms. Ritchie. Certainly appreciate Hansard and the Legislative Assembly Service for what they've been able to provide in a very unique and different situation. And just appreciate the opportunity to talk about Environment.

The Chair: — Thank you, Minister. Ms. Ritchie, do you have any closing comments you would like to make?

Ms. Ritchie: — Yes. Thank you for the opportunity. I appreciate the time that you've all taken here this evening to entertain my questions for the minister, and appreciate all of the support that your staff, Mr. Minister and deputy minister, have provided to provide those answers. So thank you all very much. And I look forward to receiving some of those requested items in the coming days. Thank you.

The Chair: — All right. Thank you to everyone. And that concludes our business for this evening. So I'll look to a member to move a motion of adjournment. Mr. Francis so moves. All agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. This committee stands adjourned until Thursday, April 29, 2021 at 7 p.m.

[The committee adjourned at 20:02.]