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Chair: Mr. George Chalal



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• (1530)

[*English*]

The Chair (Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.)): I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 84 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Natural Resources.

Pursuant to the order of reference of Tuesday, October 17, 2023, and the adopted motion of Wednesday, December 13, 2023, the committee is resuming consideration of Bill C-49, an act to amend the Canada—Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Act and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

Since today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, I would like to make a few comments for the benefit of members and witnesses.

Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. For those participating by video conference, click on the microphone icon to activate your mic and please mute yourself when you are not speaking. For interpretation, those on Zoom have the choice at the bottom of their screen of floor, English or French. Those in the room can use the earpiece and select the desired channel.

Although this room is equipped with a powerful audio system, feedback events can occur. These can be extremely harmful to our interpreters and can cause serious injuries. The most common cause of sound feedback is an earpiece worn too close to a microphone. We therefore ask all participants to exercise a high degree of caution when handling the earpieces, especially when your microphone or your neighbour's microphone is turned on.

In order to prevent incidents and safeguard the hearing health of the interpreters, I invite participants to ensure that they speak into the microphone into which their headset is plugged and avoid manipulating the earbuds by placing them on the table away from the microphone when they are not in use.

I'll remind you that all comments should be addressed through the chair. Additionally, screenshots or taking photos of your screen is not permitted.

With us today for the first hour is Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change. We also have witnesses from the Department of Natural Resources. We have Abigail Lixfeld, senior director, renewable and electrical energy division, energy systems sector, and Annette Tobin, director, offshore man-

agement division, fuels sector. From the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada, we have Terence Hubbard, president, and Patricia Brady, vice-president, strategic policy and programs. From Parks Canada Agency, we have Ron Hallman, president and chief executive officer.

Minister Guilbeault, the floor is yours for five minutes. Welcome.

[*Translation*]

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

I am very pleased to be here with the members of the committee today to discuss Bill C-49.

Since you have already named everyone who is here with me, Mr. Chair, I won't repeat that information.

Before I begin, I would like to note that we are gathered here on the traditional lands of the Anishinabe Algonquin nation, which has long been the guardian of the environment that we share today.

[*English*]

The accord acts have enshrined decades of close collaboration between the federal government and the provincial governments of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador, and benefit communities in both provinces and Canada's national interest.

[*Translation*]

The amendments now before the committee will secure many lasting benefits for generations to come.

[*English*]

According to the International Energy Agency, investment in clean energy has risen by 40% since 2020. More than 500 gigawatts of renewable generation capacity are set to be added globally in 2023, which is a new record. Renewables are set to contribute 80% of new power capacity by 2030.

Tripling renewable energy capacity, doubling the pace of energy efficiency improvements, ramping up electrification and slashing methane emissions from the fossil fuel operations together will provide more than 80% of the emissions reductions needed by 2030 to put the energy sector on a pathway to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, which is one of the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Offshore wind alone will be a \$1-trillion industry by 2040. Effectively managing offshore petroleum activities has been key to protecting the environment while also capitalizing on an important resource. The Canada Energy Regulator estimates that wind power has the potential to provide about 30% of total electricity supply in 2050, compared to less than 6% in 2021. According to a recent study by the Public Policy Forum, offshore wind could be for Atlantic Canada what oil was to Texas or hydro power to Quebec. It could supply the region—6.5 million average homes—with almost twice the electricity currently consumed in Atlantic Canada annually.

Bill C-49 represents an important shift towards accomplishing net-zero goals by unlocking our full power potential and building renewable energy projects in Canada's offshore.

• (1535)

[Translation]

My experience at COP28 this past fall made me realize that it is even more important to co-operate in achieving climate objectives. That is particularly important in Canada since the environment is a jurisdiction that the federal government shares with the provinces.

[English]

Bill C-49 is built on a spirit of co-operation with the governments of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador, aligning jurisdictional processes, leveraging their decades of experience in petroleum management and strengthening our long-standing commitment to the joint management of the offshore, which includes a balance between ocean activities like energy production and the protection of our ocean's environment.

[Translation]

Bill C-49 will be important in clarifying the joint roles of the federal and provincial regulatory bodies in the impact assessment process, by clarifying opportunities for consultation between federal and provincial departments and agencies during key phases in the process. It will also help ensure that the positions of both management partners are reflected in the process, which will maximize co-operation.

[English]

Recently, the Supreme Court came out with an opinion on the Impact Assessment Act. It is important to recognize that the Supreme Court explicitly upheld the right of the Government of Canada to implement impact assessment legislation and collaborate with provinces and territories on environmental protection. Respecting these roles in partnership with provincial governments is a priority for the Government of Canada. These amendments to the accord acts represent a necessary and ambitious advancement of the principle of joint management in service to our shared economic and environmental goals.

[Translation]

This bill will also support the commitment that Canada made in the 2022 Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework to protect at least 30% of our oceans by 2030.

In conclusion, the amendments to accord implementation acts will strengthen the principles for the joint management of Atlantic offshore resources and provide a regulatory pathway to harmonizing the many uses of our oceans.

Thank you very much.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Minister Guilbeault, for your opening statement.

Colleagues, I will use these cards to give you a 30-second warning. Red means the time is up. I will try not to cut you off, but I will if I have to in order to make sure we keep the meeting on time.

We will start with Mr. Small from the Conservative Party of Canada for six minutes.

Mr. Small, the floor is yours.

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses and minister for coming today.

Offshore wind energy production in Europe has grown from 11,000 megawatts in 2013 to close on 40,000. That's in the North Atlantic nations, which Canada also is. You have the U.K., Denmark, Ireland, Finland, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Portugal, Sweden and Spain all producing wind energy, and Canada is not. You've had eight years to table this legislation. That's eight years of lost opportunity for the people of Atlantic Canada.

Is it because you want to do it right, or is it because you don't care about Atlantic Canada?

• (1540)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Thank you for the question.

I'm frankly a bit puzzled by it, since your party opposes a bill that would allow us to build thousands of megawatts of offshore wind for the economic, environmental and energy benefit of Atlantic Canadians and, by default, the rest of Canada.

Mr. Clifford Small: With all due respect, Minister, you had eight years to come up with this framework, so I'm assuming you want to do it right.

Is it because you want to do it right? Is that why it took you eight years? Is that what it is?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: There are many reasons why.

We wanted to make sure, since we haven't developed offshore wind in Canada. Although there's been a lot of on-land development and it has increased substantially since we took office through a number of federal supports for the development of renewable energy across this country, obviously, offshore is a—

Mr. Clifford Small: You took eight years to come up with this framework, and you're criticizing the Conservative Party because we want a couple of weeks or months to analyze this and make sure all those competing for that same space in the ocean have a seat at the table.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Through the elaboration of this bill, there have been consultations with indigenous nations. As you know—I'm sure others have done so—I could quote the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Premier of Nova Scotia, who are very supportive of this bill. We've been in discussions with fishermen to ensure this is done right. We've already started regional impact assessments in both Nova Scotia and Newfoundland—

An hon. member: We were told...

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: —to ensure that, when we develop this, we do it in the right way.

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): I have a point of order.

We seem to run into this every time. Members ask questions, and the minister or witnesses attempt to answer and are not given the time and the courtesy to respond to the questions being asked. We seem to be repeating that pattern again today, so I just ask that perhaps you'll remind all members that there's time for asking questions and time for answering them.

The Chair: Colleagues—

Mr. John Aldag: If you ask a good question, you get a good answer.

The Chair: Thank you for your point of order, Mr. Aldag.

Colleagues, I would just ask you to ask your question but to allow the minister to provide his answer. I do ask colleagues to give an appropriate amount of time for the minister to answer the question, so I don't have to interrupt anybody and so we don't have points of order delaying our proceedings.

We will go back. I believe you were finishing your answer or just finished your answer, Mr. Guilbeault.

We will proceed with the question.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: When we came into power in 2015, there was no system in place to support the development of renewable energy, so we had to build this from the ground up. There was nothing. There were very few projects being done in a few provinces. Now we're seeing this booming all across the country, and now we're moving to the next step, which is the development of offshore wind.

Mr. Clifford Small: Minister, I'm sorry, but I'd like to remind you that your previous two colleagues, Minister O'Regan and Minister Wilkinson, came to this committee and told us that you extensively consulted with the fishing industry. Now, I have information, and you probably have it by now as well, that One Ocean—

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.): On a point of order, Mr. Chair, those were not the exact words that were used.

The Chair: Hold on, Mr. Small. We have a point of order from Ms. Jones.

Ms. Jones, colleagues, I just want to remind everybody as well—

Mr. Clifford Small: Did I say, “and I quote”?

The Chair: Can I ask you to hold for a second, Mr. Small, until I complete my ruling?

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Carry on.

The Chair: Ms. Jones, thank you for your point of order.

Colleagues, I'll just remind you not to turn on your microphones. If you do have a point of order, state the procedural relevance of your point of order and do not use points of order to engage in debate. Thank you.

Mr. Small, we'll go back to you.

Mr. Clifford Small: Minister O'Regan and Minister Wilkinson told us that there was some consultation. I won't say, “heavy”. I guess I will have to take that back, because I didn't say, “and I quote”.

The FFAW and One Ocean received a presentation of eight slides for less than a half-hour on October 13, I think it was. They didn't have any opportunity to provide feedback, and they weren't even requested to provide any comments in writing.

Do you call that consultation?

• (1545)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: As you pointed out, it was not my department, Environment and Climate Change Canada, that was responsible for that part. The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada has done consultations on the regional impact assessment for offshore wind development. Those consultations ran over a two-year period, roughly.

Is that right, Terence?

Mr. Terence Hubbard (President, Impact Assessment Agency of Canada): And they continue.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: They continue, so we have been engaging with many stakeholders, including the fisheries industry, on the development of offshore wind.

Mr. Clifford Small: We were told that, in creating this bill, the fishing industry was consulted and well consulted, but we're finding out that's not the case. FFAW-Unifor has told us basically that it was not talked to at all prior to the tabling of this legislation, versus what your colleagues told this committee.

Why is your government misleading the public and this committee by talking about how good the consultations were?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: As you rightly point out, it wasn't me who made those statements. It was my colleagues, the Minister of Natural Resources and Minister O'Regan. I would be happy to take your comments back to them and ensure that a response is provided to the committee.

Mr. Clifford Small: If we don't get the framework that the fishing industry wants in this bill, what kind of message is that going to send out to the investors in the wind energy world?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I have spoken with many potential investors who are interested in investing in offshore wind either off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova—

Mr. Clifford Small: I'm sure you're aware of the conflicts that exist worldwide.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: They're very interested.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister, for your answers.

Thank you, Mr. Small, for your time and questioning. Your time is up.

We will now proceed to Ms. Jones from the Liberal Party of Canada for six minutes.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank you, Minister, for appearing before committee today and for the great work you do in energy transition in Canada.

First of all, the amendments to the Atlantic accord that we're dealing with today impact only two provinces: Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia. The amendments are before the committee today because these provinces asked for them. Any other provinces or territories that are looking for offshore wind development would take a completely different process. That is my understanding, Minister.

On the bill that we're dealing with, we're dealing with it today and not eight years ago because this is when the provinces of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador are seeing an opportunity to develop offshore wind. They want to change the regulatory process to include it in their provinces, under their bodies' regulatory regimes. That is my understanding.

Can you confirm that this is the case and that, if this were not the case, we probably wouldn't be sitting here with this bill today?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Thank you for the question, MP Jones.

It is a fact that, in Canada, energy development is a provincial and territorial constitutional power. It's not the federal government that decides what gets built and where and by whom.

You're absolutely right that it's those two provinces that came to the federal government to say that they wanted to work with us on the development of the offshore wind resource.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Next, we've heard a lot about the fishing industry and the impact on the fishing industry. It's a huge concern for us. It's a huge concern for me. I'm a former fisheries minister. I grew up in a fishing region. I also know that a lot of good industries can coexist in the ocean. We've seen that with oil and gas in offshore Newfoundland and Labrador, and the consultations, the networking and the working together with the fisheries union and the fisheries enterprises themselves.

Minister, is there anything in this bill that you think compromises the fishing industry? My understanding from reading the legislation is that, if Newfoundland and Labrador or Nova Scotia were to develop an offshore wind project, they would be subject to all the environmental regulations that exist in the country today. They would be subject to all the regulatory processes under the Fisheries Act as well as the environmental assessment process. They would not be able to develop these projects without the full consultation of the fishing sector.

Can you confirm that this is the process that has to occur for consultation before we ever get to an offshore wind project?

• (1550)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Thank you for the question.

In essence, what we're trying to do for offshore wind is what we're already doing on land, where we already have to tackle these issues of different users wanting to use the land for different activities. We can think of forestry, mining, energy development and conservation. We weigh those and we do consultations when we evaluate energy projects on land. We've done that for a great many years.

It's no different. We will basically be transposing the system to offshore. You're absolutely right that the laws and regulations we have for the development of energy projects will apply offshore, as they apply onshore.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Minister, you're a staunch environmentalist. I've gotten to learn that from you. I know that when you look at development of any sort, you look very heavily at what the impact is on the land, on the ocean and on all creatures and species that occupy the planet on which this is happening.

Can you outline for me whether the department has looked at any particular data that would help fishers feel a bit more comfortable? We know that offshore wind is happening in other places. I know that fishers have expressed concerns over what it means to the marine ecosystem. I'm just wondering if you or your department has any data or information that you might be able to share with us around that.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Thank you for the question.

You're right that I have been interested in environmental issues for a very long time. The first time the organization I worked with published a report on offshore wind, it was in 1997 in front of the Quebec energy board. I've been paying very close attention to the development of this file in both Canada and around the world.

I was talking earlier about the regional impact assessment that the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada has undertaken. It is examining these specific questions thoroughly. It is looking at potential impacts and mitigation measures and gathering data on offshore wind projects around the world. The findings of IAAC will be presented publicly.

It is unfortunate that the Conservative Party voted against funding to conduct marine data collection to further our understanding of wildlife and environmental considerations. That being said, you rightly pointed out that we see in a number of countries in the world, as MP Small was talking about, the blooming of offshore wind energy. For example, in Europe, in the United Kingdom and in other North Sea countries, we've seen lots of offshore wind development, and we're still seeing a thriving fishery industry.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: I have only five seconds, so maybe I'll take the time to.... Is that it?

The Chair: That was about five seconds. Thank you, Ms. Jones.

We'll now go to Monsieur Simard for six minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Chair, Ms. Jones wanted to yield the rest of her time to me because we appreciate each other.

Mr. Guilbeault, I'm glad to see you here. I'm going to ask you a similar question to the one I put to your colleagues.

Personally, I don't think Bill C-49 is about the energy transition. As far as I'm concerned, the energy transition is about switching from high carbon-intensive energies to low carbon-intensive energies.

To explain to you what I see in Bill C-49, I'm going to paraphrase what Normand Mousseau said when he testified before us. I'm sure you know him. Ultimately, Bill C-49 would put renewable energy sources and fossil fuel sources on the same footing. Nothing in this bill suggests that we're looking for a fossil fuel reduction plan. Instead we're seeking to develop wind, which is a good thing, despite all the stumbling blocks that entails. The experts we've spoken to, such as Mr. Mousseau, have told us that many elements weren't taken into consideration.

I don't believe that Bill C-49 is genuinely about the energy transition. Apart from the superficial amendment to change the name of the Offshore Petroleum Board to the Energy Regulator, I see no genuine willingness on the government's part to get out of fossil fuels.

I don't know whether you agree with me on that.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Thank you very much, Mr. Simard.

I don't think my answer will surprise you. I don't agree with you.

Bill C-49 doesn't exist in a vacuum in a closed universe. It's part of a suite of policies and measures, financial measures in particular, that our government has put in place to promote the development of clean technologies and renewable energy and increasingly to reduce federal government support for the development of fossil fuels.

As you know, we are the first and only G20 country that has eliminated fossil fuel subsidies; no other country has done so. And yet we are the fourth largest oil producer in the world. We are the only oil-producing country that's in the process of introducing a plan to limit, cap and cut greenhouse gas emissions in the oil and gas industry.

Going back to Mr. Mousseau's comments about stumbling blocks, as I told Ms. Jones, the development of offshore wind, like that of wind generally speaking and land-based renewable energy sources, must be conducted in a context of trade-offs in which we need to examine a set of factors and land uses for which decisions have to be made. That, incidentally, is the business of the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada.

• (1555)

Mr. Mario Simard: I'm going to add to what you just said.

From an energy standpoint, Canada is unfortunately a prisoner of its own fossil fuel resources. I say that because you said your government had eliminated fossil fuel subsidies. However, that's not

true; you've eliminated the subsidies you considered inefficient. I even perceive a definition problem here since I still don't understand what you mean by inefficient subsidies.

In addition, your government constantly exploits a new hobgoblin, reducing the carbon intensity of oil. We're talking here about reducing the carbon intensity of oil using carbon capture strategies. So we're going to invest billions of dollars in projects that are technically very hard to carry out. When I was in Berlin with Mr. Wilkinson, we visited the Siemens corporation, and its officers told us it was so technically risky to produce hydrogen based on a carbon capture strategy that the company would never do it. And yet your government is headed in that direction.

Furthermore, what really bothers me is that your government is making clean energy compete with fossil energy. That's also what Normand Mousseau told us.

My impression when I look at the budget is that fossil fuels are getting the lion's share. You invested more than \$30 billion in a pipeline. When I look at this bill, what I see is a kind of greenwashing. I know what it costs to build the infrastructure to distribute clean electricity. Quebec is really good at that. In my region, Rio Tinto is able to do it to produce clean hydroelectricity. However, if you put dirty fossil fuels in competition with clean energy sources, I don't see how we can develop that industry.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: It's a fact that Canada is a major oil and gas producer. The energy transition isn't a revolution. It's something that will happen over time. There will be less and less government support and more and more investment in clean and renewable energy sources. Federal funding for those sectors has quintupled in the past few years. You may tell me we started off from not much after 10 years of Conservative government, but the fact remains that we're committed to the energy transition.

I don't agree with you on carbon capture and storage. It won't solve all our problems, but even the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the International Energy Agency refer to it as an essential technology in achieving our carbon neutrality objectives.

As for fossil fuel subsidies, it's really quite simple. According to the World Trade Organisation, we have to wonder whether those subsidies favour one sector over others. However, we've eliminated all direct subsidies to the oil and gas industry. Carbon capture and storage is good for steel, it's good for cement, and it's good for oil and gas too, but it isn't a subsidy that's intended for any single sector.

I never refer to reducing the the intensity of our emissions; I talk about reducing our emissions in absolute terms, and that's what we're doing.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

Time is up, so maybe you'll get another opportunity.

We'll now go to Mr. Angus from the New Democratic Party for six minutes.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Minister Guilbeault. You seem like you belong at our committee, and we'll have a permanent seat for you. We'd love to have you come, so we could ask you all manner of questions.

On the issue of the transition, five years ago, it seemed it was hopeful, and there were a bunch of ideas. The fact that it has moved so fast is really, I think, the surprising factor. The Biden administration is now going to have twice the solar capacity by 2030 than was predicted three years ago. The wind capacity will be 43% higher. This is what the Americans thought was possible, and it's happening.

My concern is that when I look at what's happening in Europe, in Aberdeen—where my people are from—there were 42,000 new jobs, and 1,500 last year were in offshore wind. We've lost 45,000 jobs in the oil sector, and we lost 1,500 this year at Suncor alone. There is a real sense from some of the people I'm talking to that we're sitting at the side of the road while the rest of the world is moving ahead.

How urgent is it for Canada to actually get in the game with our competitors on clean energy?

• (1600)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I agree with you. The transition is happening faster than many had anticipated.

Definitely, the Inflation Reduction Act in the United States, which doesn't have a whole lot to do with inflation but has a whole lot to do with the transition, is an international game-changer. Everyone has had to adapt their investment plan and fiscal plan in light of it. We've had to do that in Canada, as have the Europeans, the Japanese and so many others. It is creating an acceleration towards clean tech and renewable energy.

We want to be part of that, which is why we're investing massive, historic amounts in Canada in new technologies, in renewable electricity production and in the transmission grids that we will need to decarbonize in many parts of the country.

Mr. Charlie Angus: The issue here is the scope of the offshore projects in the Atlantic, which are by our nearest competitors in the United States. These are massive projects. One project could power 700,000 homes, and we're still talking. We have our Conservative colleagues who don't want this bill to pass.

Why would investors come to Canada if they don't see these projects moving ahead? We still don't have our tax credits in place. There are so many places you can go to invest, so why here, if we can't get this up and running now?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Investors and foreign investors are clearly looking and paying attention to what Canada is doing. We're

the third in the world now for foreign direct investment, after the U.S. and Brazil. That's an absolute number. It's not per capita. Per capita, we are number one. I think investors are looking at what we're doing and saying that Canada is an interesting place to invest.

I agree with you. We need to hurry up while we make sure we do things properly in terms of consultations with indigenous nations and with fishermen when it comes to offshore oil, which is what IAAC has been doing.

I'm confident that in terms of the impact assessments, consultations and the fiscal framework with the tax credits, by the end of this year we will be in a position where we can see projects moving forward.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you for that. I guess the question is also a question of accountability for what we have. There's a recent report that came out that says that pollution coming out of the oil sands is 6,000 times higher than is officially reported. It's a staggering number. In any other industry or any business, there would be recalls, yet the Pathways Alliance spokesman said, the oil sands industry "measures emissions using standards set by Environment and Climate Change Canada".

How is it that Environment and Climate Change Canada allowed such a vast discrepancy in terms of what is actually coming out and polluting and making people sick?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: This is a very good question. In the monitoring of emissions, whether in that case volatile organic compounds or CO₂ or methane, the techniques to detect and measure these are ever-evolving. In fact, you speak of that study that points to a 6,000% higher number than what is reported. Environment and Climate Change Canada was part of the group that made that study. We invest massively as an institution to ensure that we have the best possible science when it comes to measuring these things, and now that we have this new science, we will be forced to take actions to make sure—

Mr. Charlie Angus: That's actually what I want to get to, because we also have a 2023 study that said methane emissions coming out of Alberta are underestimated by 50%, and I think we would agree that methane is a planet killer.

You're talking about creating a cap. Is that cap going to include the new data on 6,000% higher emissions, or are we going to cap on the previous data? Because if your data was that wrong, how do we reassure the public that we're going to have a plan in place to address what is actually coming out and affecting the planet?

• (1605)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: The study you referred to is not about greenhouse gas emissions, but is about another form of pollutants. I'm not saying it's less important, but—

Mr. Charlie Angus: [Inaudible—Editor] plus the other organics.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: In terms of methane, we used a methodology that was developed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the IPCC. We just revised it two years ago. We've redone all of our inventories based on new methane methodologies, and we will continue doing that as science evolves over time.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Would the cap include that new data?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: The more up-to-date data will be included for the cap.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister and Mr. Angus, for your round of questioning. I'm sure you'll get another opportunity to continue that line of questioning.

We'll now move to the next round of five minutes with Mr. Small.

Go ahead, the floor is yours.

Mr. Clifford Small: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Guilbeault, I'll ask you a similar question. I won't quote the question that I asked Mr. Tessier.

How important is stability and certainty of regulations in world-wide energy in terms of investment? How important is it?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Can you specify the question? It's a rather broad question. I can give you a very broad answer, but do you have anything more specific in...?

Mr. Clifford Small: You can give me a short, broad answer if you like. How important is stability and certainty of regulations in the development of and the investment in worldwide energy?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: As I was telling your colleague earlier, Canada ranks third in the world for foreign direct investment. That means that investors from all around the world are looking at all the investment opportunities they have, and they chose Canada as the top three place to do that. I think that speaks volumes about investors. I can't speak on behalf...but money talks—

Mr. Clifford Small: Do you know what? In the Gulf of Mexico last year, nearly \$400 million was committed to the purchasing of offshore leases. We had a record offering in Newfoundland and Labrador last year, and we had zero purchases. It was one of the very few times in the history of our offshore oil and gas, and in a year that we had record numbers of parcels offered up.

Does that sound like confidence in Newfoundland and Labrador's offshore oil and gas?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I can say it again. International investors are looking to Canada as one of the top places in the world to put their money. That's what we're seeing. In terms of the oil and gas sector, you've probably seen the reports, as I have, from the International Energy Agency or even our own independent energy regulator, which estimate that, by the end of the decade, demand for oil will peak by around 2028. I think investigators are starting to wonder if they should continue investing in the development—

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Guilbeault, I'm sure it warms the cockles of your heart to see what your government's done—

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I'm talking about international figures—

Mr. Clifford Small: —to destroy the confidence in Newfoundland and Labrador's offshore oil and gas industry with Bill C-69, on which we're waiting to see version two, because it's unconstitutional. That was referenced over 30 times.

We have this bill—

Ms. Yvonne Jones: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to point out to the committee that following testimony last week by the C-NLOPB—

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Chair, this is debate.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: —we asked if they felt that the industry was being held hostage by any legislation in this bill or previous bills—

Mr. Ted Falk: This is not a point of order. This is debate.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: —and they answered “no”. The same answer was given by the CNSOPB as well.

Mr. Ted Falk: This is debate.

The Chair: Colleagues, I want to hear the point of order from Ms. Jones.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I have a point of order.

The Chair: Colleagues, I'll ask you once again—

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: I have the reference point.

The Chair: I will ask you not to turn on your mics. I will ask you to speak when you are acknowledged by the chair.

I've addressed this before. Our interpreters can't interpret when we have multiple microphones on. It's very difficult.

Mr. Patzer, if you let me finish hearing the point of order, then I can rule on the point of order.

Ms. Jones, I would ask you, on your point of order, not to use it as debate but to provide the procedural relevance when you or anybody else on the committee around the committee table has a point of order in future.

Colleagues, I would appreciate it if you not interrupt until I can hear enough to make a ruling on the point of order.

Now, we have a point of order from Mr. Angus.

Mr. Angus, go ahead on the point of order.

● (1610)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you, Chair. You just answered my question. I couldn't hear whether it was a point of order.

I've heard a lot of non-points of order. I couldn't actually hear whether it was or was not. I was asking you to let it be heard so that we could hear whether it was a point of order or not.

I appreciate—

The Chair: I'll remind everybody once again to use a point of order for procedural relevance and also to let the member speak enough so I can determine whether it is a point of order and whether or not it's relevant.

Thank you.

We'll now go back to the point we were at with Mr. Small.

Mr. Clifford Small: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

There's no question about how the oil and gas industry feels about the stability of regulations now in our offshore oil and gas industry, at least among those who would invest, because they invested nothing last year.

We have a lack of stability and clarity with respect to where the future lies for offshore oil and gas. When you don't bring in the fishing industry and build in a framework that makes them comfortable, don't you think they will be protesting if they're not consulted properly?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I answered that question before. I'd be happy to answer it again.

As part of the regional impact assessment that is being conducted by the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada, we have been meeting on a regular basis with a number of stakeholders. I took part in some of those consultations myself, including—obviously—those with fishermen from Newfoundland and Labrador as well as Nova Scotia.

Mr. Clifford Small: Minister, how do you identify where the prime fishing grounds are?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: We work with a number of different federal departments, including the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. We work with fishermen and fishermen's organizations.

That's what the regional impact assessment is about, to look at where fishing is currently happening—

Mr. Clifford Small: It's doing vessel monitoring.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Mr. Chair, I'm going to speak in French. That'll make it easier for me to express myself, if I can answer the question.

What I was trying to explain was that the work of the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada is obviously to work with all stakeholders, in particular—

[*English*]

Mr. Clifford Small: You've gone way over the length of time that I took to ask you a question, Minister.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Mr. Chair, I don't know if it's up to you to decide whether I can answer the question.

[*English*]

The Chair: I will ask you, Minister, to finish your answer, because I know you did go into French as well, and it takes a moment for the interpreters to kick in. Please go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: What I was saying was that the business of the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada is to define existing fishing zones and areas where energy development projects—offshore wind, in this instance—could be carried out to determine whether there are any conflicts and, if so, to figure out how to resolve them.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll now go to our next round of questioning. We will go to Ms. Lapointe.

Ms. Lapointe, you have five minutes.

Ms. Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

[*Translation*]

Good afternoon, Minister.

Many Canadians have shared their concerns with me about the capacity of our electrical grids, particularly in view of our objectives for electric vehicles. So I was happy to hear witnesses say this past Monday that offshore wind energy could power Atlantic Canada's grids from there to Ontario. That came as a surprise to me, but it also made me very happy.

Would you please tell us more about how offshore energy will make electricity more available? How would Bill C-49 help further decarbonize the grid while increasing capacity?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Thank you for your question, Ms. Lapointe.

Yes, we anticipate that we will at least have to double the production, transmission and distribution of Canada's grid. That's more or less true of most of our G7 partners, whether it be the United States, Europe or Japan. And as I said earlier, according to the International Energy Agency, most of that new energy capacity, 80%, will come from renewables. Which is why the offshore wind potential of the Atlantic provinces, particularly Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador, is so promising.

We will obviously see what happens in the next few years, but potential offshore wind production could far outstrip local and even regional electricity needs. So it could be possible for those provinces to export clean electricity to other provinces such as Quebec, in addition to Ontario, which you mentioned.

That's why, in addition to all the effort the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada has made to lay the groundwork for wind energy development, we are also working with several Atlantic provinces, notably Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador, to reinforce power grids in order to expand capacity to transmit power to those provinces or from the Atlantic provinces to provinces more to the west.

• (1615)

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: Outside Atlantic Canada, would Bill C-49 have any positive impact on the economic development of Canada as a whole, more specifically on supply chain issues?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Yes, it would. That's a good question because the offshore wind development we're anticipating in Atlantic Canada will generate economic benefits for many other regions of Canada, such as Gaspésie, for example, which already has significant manufacturing capacity in the wind field and is located near prominent seaports as well as Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia. Engineering work will obviously be done in those provinces but will involve talent from various Canadian provinces.

In short, the economic benefits will be felt far beyond the borders of the Atlantic provinces.

[*English*]

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: We know the move to clean energy is necessary, and we know that the world will move ahead without us. We've talked about that a lot at this committee. I think it is imperative for Canada to lead and define our clean energy future.

If Canada doesn't increase clean energy projects like the offshore projects in Atlantic Canada, what do we stand to lose in terms of jobs and economic opportunities for future generations?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: The potential economic and job loss fallout for not moving to a cleaner electricity grid... We already have a pretty clean one, and that's a competitive advantage, but the reality is that... Wayne Gretzky used to say that you need to skate where the puck will be and not where the puck is. Right now this is a competitive advantage, but everyone is investing to decarbonize their grids, so we need to continue doing that.

The reason we've been able to attract, in Canada, business deals like Volkswagen, Stellantis and Northvolt is because of our clean grid. That's one of the main reasons why these companies are saying they're coming to Canada. However, unless we continue to invest in the decarbonization of our grid, we will lose that competitive advantage to some of our economic competitors, because they are also making this move. Potentially, we could put at risk tens of thousands of jobs and billions of dollars of investment in Canada.

The Chair: You're right on time. The time is up.

Thank you, Ms. Lapointe.

Thank you, Mr. Guilbeault, for answering the questions.

We'll now go to Mr. Simard for two and half minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Guilbeault, I know you had to accept the North Bay project, perhaps against your will, but there's something that really bothers me about that and it comes up in Bill C-49: non-compliance with marine biodiversity requirements. Permits would be issued for projects in marine refuges.

You and I have previously discussed the Quebec caribou issue on a number of occasions. I think there's a double standard here. In connection with the Species at Risk Act, you briefly spoke about the possibility of making an order in Quebec. I understand how complex the caribou issue is, but I believe the logging industry enables us to sequester carbon in forests, whereas the hydrocarbon industry makes no contributions to reducing the intensity of our greenhouse gas emissions.

I'd like to hear your opinion on that.

In addition, don't you have any concerns regarding the preservation of marine biodiversity?

• (1620)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Of course I do. That's why Canada offered to host COP15 and why we managed to reach an agreement with our international partners that many have characterized as historic, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which provides that we must protect at least 30% of our lands and oceans by 2030. That means we'll have to make choices and trade-offs regarding the kind of offshore development and land-based projects we engage in.

Mr. Simard, we both know that virtually every human activity has an impact on the environment, whether it's a transmission line or a wind farm. What we need to do is decide to support activities that have the least impact on the environment. That's the role we have to take on as a society.

Mr. Mario Simard: You said we would have to make choices and trade-offs. The problem is that I get the impression the oil and gas industry often comes out on the winning end in these processes.

You nevertheless reacted promptly and requested that Quebec propose a solution to the caribou issue. You even indicated on many occasions that it would be possible to protect the caribou by means of an order. However, in all the give and take, I never heard you speak that firmly when it came to protecting marine refuges.

That's consistent with what I told you earlier, that Canada is a prisoner of its own oil industry.

[*English*]

The Chair: Just give a very brief answer, please. We are at time.

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: We have introduced new directives respecting marine refuges and even oil exploration. We will be pleased to follow up on this subject, in writing, with your office, Mr. Simard.

Mr. Mario Simard: Thanks very much.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll now go to Mr. Angus for two and half minutes.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you.

I don't know of another time when we've been so dependent on looking at what the Americans are doing, but the Biden administration is really setting the mark for whether we are going to be in the game or not.

Recently, the Biden administration did something very surprising. They put a pause on LNG. President Biden said that the pause on new LNG “sees the climate crisis for what it is: the existential threat of our time”. We know that LNG is 90% methane and that there's a lot of leakage along the whole way.

Then he said that the Republicans who were supporting ever-expanding fossil fuel infrastructure “willfully deny the urgency of the climate crisis”. I certainly know that my colleagues in the Conservatives are there, but I guess I'm going to ask you this: Is Canada willing to put a moratorium on LNG because of the issues of methane and the leakage and the fact that we are having to deal with the climate crisis at every level?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Thank you for the question.

As you know, the constitutional power of the federal government versus the states in the United States is different from what it is in Canada. We don't have power over the development of energy projects, but where we can act and are acting is on the pollution. In the cap, the framework that was announced in December, we have announced that emissions from LNG terminals would come under the oil and gas cap that we're in the process of putting in place.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Good to know.

My colleague from Cumberland—Colchester made a pretty declarative statement that there was absolutely no economic case for hydrogen. He said that everybody knows that. Well, I met with the German chancellor, and he seemed to think that Canadian hydrogen was very interesting to him.

Can you say what your government's view is? Is there an opportunity for hydrogen in Atlantic Canada—in Nova Scotia and in Newfoundland and Labrador—in making jobs? Is there an economic case for hydrogen, or are the Conservatives right that this is just another crazy scheme and that we shouldn't be supporting it?

• (1625)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I've also had the pleasure of speaking with the German chancellor and the deputy chancellor on this. Certainly, when it comes to Germany and to many other European countries, there is a very high level of interest in the potential for Canada to produce hydrogen using renewable energy, like the project that we're seeing Newfoundland that, for reasons that elude

me, is opposed by the Conservative Party of Canada. This is a first, and I believe that we will see many more of these types of projects moving forward.

The Chair: Thank you.

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

Mr. Patzer, go ahead. The floor is yours.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Thank you very much for coming today, Minister. I'll just correct your dishonest opinion about the Conservative Party. We do actually support the provinces to be able to—

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I have a point of order.

It's unparliamentary to refer to someone as being dishonest. It's just not correct language to be using in a committee.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Dabrusin, for your point of order.

Colleagues, I would ask that we not use language that is unparliamentary or that accuses a member.

You can proceed with your questioning, Mr. Patzer. Just be a bit more careful on some of the words that you use.

Go ahead.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Sure.

Your misleading statement that Conservatives don't support offshore wind development is actually factually incorrect. We do support the provinces' ability to develop whatever types of resources they want. What we object to is government legislation that is going to hamstring the provinces' ability to do that.

This bill has no fewer than 30 references to the unconstitutional parts of the Impact Assessment Act. Conservatives want to see this bill corrected so that there won't have to be a constitutional challenge to it because of the fact that there are largely unconstitutional parts referenced in this bill.

Therefore, Minister, when will you fix the Impact Assessment Act so that it is, indeed, constitutional?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I would beg to differ in your characterization of this bill with regard to provincial powers.

I have here a quote from Premier Andrew Furey: “Newfoundland and Labrador is perfectly positioned in the green energy transition. Part of that transition requires offshore wind so our province can become a world leader in green hydrogen. We continue to support the Government of Canada on Bill C-49”. That doesn't seem to me like we're forcing someone to do something.

I have another quote from Premier Tim Houston.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Minister.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: He says, “Bill C-49 is a necessary first step in unlocking our energy potential. There will be many steps along the road but we are hopeful that Bill C-49 passes so we can get started.”

That is coming from a Conservative premier.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Yes, there are certain regulations in this bill that are needed and necessary. We all know that. However, what we also know is that there are over 30 references to the unconstitutional elements of the Impact Assessment Act that, so far, your government has done absolutely nothing to address.

Therefore, one more time, Minister... When will you fix the Impact Assessment Act so that it is constitutional?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: You say that there are elements in this bill that are needed and supported by Atlantic premiers, yet you continue to say that you will vote against this bill. I find these two statements difficult to reconcile.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Minister, if this bill passes as it is, it will be unconstitutional because of the largely unconstitutional parts of it. That is a pretty obvious reason why one would vote against this bill. There would be continued uncertainty for investors and also for the provinces. The provincial stakeholders want this bill because, yes, there are updates to the regulations that need to happen. We all get that, and we all agree with that.

One more time... What is the date on which you'll fix the Impact Assessment Act so that it's constitutional, so that there will be certainty for investors to come and invest in offshore wind off of Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I do not know if you took the time to read the opinion of the Supreme Court on the Impact Assessment Act, but the Supreme Court specifically said that there were elements of the Impact Assessment Act that were very constitutional and that there are elements on which we need to work. My government and my department, in collaboration with Parks Canada and the Impact Assessment Agency, will be coming forward very shortly with amendments to the Impact Assessment Act.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: I look forward to seeing what those are because I think that will be needed for this bill to actually pass without there being any issues, as your former Bill C-69 has encountered.

Now, Minister, does the government measure the annual amount of emissions that are directly reduced from the federal carbon tax?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Absolutely. We produced a report before Christmas that's publicly available. We produced an annual report called the greenhouse gas inventory report, which measures where Canada is in terms of reducing our greenhouse gas emissions.

You will be pleased to know that, since we came into power in 2015, we've managed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 7% below our 2015 levels. When we came into power, they were going to be 12% above the 2015 level by 2030.

• (1630)

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Minister, you just told a completely different version of an answer that you previously gave. You said that the

government does not measure the annual amount of emissions that are directly reduced by federal carbon pricing. It seems we have two different versions of the facts here.

I'm very much aware that the government produces the national inventory report. The last year that it is available is 2021, which shows that emissions actually went up over 2020, but you'll also recall that in 2020 and 2021, the country was locked down. The only reason that your emissions went down is that the country was undergoing massive lockdowns and people were not travelling due to the COVID pandemic, so—

The Chair: Mr. Patzer, your time is up. I'll ask the minister for a brief response.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: We were no longer in a pandemic in 2021, and Canada has the best performance of all G7 countries. Our emissions in 2021 were below 2019, which was before the pandemic.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

We have our final round of questioning from Mr. Battiste for five minutes.

Welcome to committee, Mr. Battiste. The floor is yours, sir.

Mr. Jaime Battiste (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to start off by reading something into the record, because I want to correct the record.

As part of the honour of being the member of Parliament for Sydney—Victoria, I get to represent the Mi'kmaq community of Membertou, which is a part of the EverWind project. The EverWind CEO said:

Without the passage of Bill C-49, a powerful message will be sent to industry that politics killed a critical green industry and denied Atlantic Canada a chance to join economies around the world investing in Offshore Wind.

We implore our political leaders to support this critical work with the passage of Bill C-49.

I know that the minister just read off that the premiers are very much in support of this in the Atlantic. We have indigenous communities calling for it, as well as industry. It seems like there is quite a bit of support for this, and I just wanted to correct the record from what the Conservatives were saying on this.

Also, I wanted to contrast a little bit from their general narrative on this legislation, starting off, Minister Guilbeault, by thanking you for your environmental activism in your life. As a Mi'kmaq person, I've grown up with the indigenous knowledge that we are connected to the land. We belong to it and we consider ourselves the original stewards of the land. Within our language, we have a word, *netukulimk*, which makes it clear that we have a duty and responsibility to our environment.

Like yourself, I was an activist. I remember, during the Conservative Harper era, being a part of the Idle No More protests. The Conservatives had gutted environmental regulations, and they had failed to protect our oceans. In fact, they had only protected 1% of the oceans that were out there.

I wonder if you could give a little bit of a sense of why it's important for us to take steps to protect our oceans and to ensure that we are reaching our goal of protecting 30% of our marine protected areas by 2030? Why is this going to have a tremendous benefit, not only to the world but to the Atlantic?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Thank you for the question.

I obviously agree with the statement that you read, for the first part.

The goal that was adopted in Montreal at the end of 2022 at COP15, which was to protect at least 30% of land and waters by 2030, is not a number that was picked out of a hat. It's based on a number of international scientific studies that show that this is the minimum. It's not a ceiling; it's a floor. It's the minimum that is needed to help our ecosystems, globally, start to recuperate from decades of overuse of our natural resources across the globe.

If we want our kids and grandkids to have access to a healthy planet with clean water, clean air and fewer impacts of climate change, this is the first thing we need to do. There are many things we need to do, but this is the first step. Nature, in our fight against climate change, is our biggest ally.

Mr. Jaime Battiste: Thank you for that, Minister.

I'm a Cape Breton member of Parliament, so I appreciate your words talking about our fight against climate change. We're dealing with day four of an extreme weather event in Cape Breton, where we've seen more than 150 centimetres of snow, something that no elders in my community or in our records can show has ever happened before. This is just 16 to 18 months after Hurricane Fiona, which we had never seen before. We're seeing rivers wash away the Cabot Trail because of climate change.

What are the steps we're taking now to address what's going to be happening later? We know that climate change is real. We know that it's happening, and it's hitting coastal communities harder than most areas. Why is it so important for us to do the work we're doing for the environment?

• (1635)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: There are three things I'd like to say.

First, we can't fight climate change unless we reduce our dependencies on fossil fuels. That's in Canada and that's around the world. That's number one, so we need to reduce our emissions.

Second, we need to have a strategy to prepare Canada and Canadians for the impacts of climate change. They're here; we're seeing them. You mentioned many of them. We could talk about the forest fires across the country. We could talk about the droughts that we're seeing in the Prairies. Right now in Alberta, we're talking about rationing water because of low precipitation.

The third thing I'd like to say is that, just before Christmas, the Conservative Party voted against a half-billion dollar program to

support victims of natural catastrophes. I find it unconscionable that they would prevent money going to people in times of need as we face the ever-increasing impacts of climate change.

The Chair: Thank you, MP Battiste, for your line of questioning.

Thank you, Minister, for your answers today. Thank you for joining us for a full hour. It's always great to see you come to the natural resources committee.

Thank you to all the officials who also came to join the minister. You're all welcome to come back again, and we hope to see you again soon.

Thank you again, Minister, and have a great evening.

Colleagues, we'll now suspend to change panels.

• (1635)

(Pause)

• (1644)

The Chair: I call this meeting back to order.

Pursuant to the order of reference of Tuesday, October 17, 2023, and the adopted motion of Wednesday, December 13, 2023, the committee is resuming consideration of Bill C-49, an act to amend the Canada—Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Act and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

In accordance with our routine motions, I'm informing the committee that all remote participants have completed the required connection tests in advance of the meeting. We do have two witnesses who are providing testimony and are still undergoing their connection tests.

We will start with our first speaker today, while the others get everything in order. Hopefully it's in good working condition when they begin.

Our first witness for the second hour, from the Fish, Food and Allied Workers Union, is Katie Power, industry relations representative. We also have Oceans North with Susanna Fuller, vice-president, conservation and projects. From SeaBlue Canada, we have Jennifer Josenhans, national coordinator.

We will begin with Katie Power from the Fish, Food and Allied Workers Union.

You have five minutes for an opening statement. The floor is yours.

• (1645)

Ms. Katie Power (Industry Relations Representative, Fish, Food and Allied Workers Union): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

On behalf of over 14,000 of our members from Newfoundland and Labrador, thank you for the opportunity to address the standing committee on Bill C-49.

The Fish, Food and Allied Workers Union represents every inshore fish harvester in our province, encompassing approximately 3,000 owner-operator enterprises and over 7,000 crew members. As the union representing fish harvesters and processing workers, FFAW is a primary advocate for the economic and social growth of coastal communities throughout our province.

Today, as the sole fisheries representative from Newfoundland and Labrador to address the standing committee on this bill, I am here to underscore the concerns expressed by other regions and share a critical perspective for mitigating potential impacts to the inshore fishery of our province.

I will note that I was given approximately 24 hours' notice to speak today. This feels dismissive and rushed, which is comparable to the legislation to be discussed.

Our inshore fishery contributes over \$1 billion annually to the provincial economy from a renewable and historically significant marine resource. Offshore wind energy expansion has a direct impact on fish harvesters, who will be faced with competition for ocean space and who will be absolutely affected by new infrastructure. Co-location and coexistence of the existing commercial fishery and new offshore wind energy represents a major unanswered concern for our province's fishing industry.

To clarify, FFAW, in its representation of the owner-operator fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador, has not been consulted or engaged, by governments or otherwise, on Bill C-49 but serves to be directly impacted by it. In the absence of the appropriate consultation framework not currently built into this bill for adherence, undue conflict amongst fisheries stakeholders, other ocean user groups, future investors and developers of offshore wind energy is inevitable.

FFAW has been thoroughly engaged in the ongoing regional assessment for offshore wind. Participation on both a staff and harvester level has been immense, reflective of the magnitude of potential impacts and indicative of a desire to be involved. However, this regional assessment has no application in this legislation, and the recommendations of the regional assessment committee to governments are not legally binding.

This, coupled with the complete lack of communication from local governments, leaves the fishing industry with no reassurance, no safeguards for mitigation and an overall lack of trust or faith in the process as it is presently being pursued.

Had our provincial government participated in any aspect of the regional assessment, it would be profoundly aware of the vocal opposition to offshore wind in our province at this time. Insufficient communication and the lack of transparency for offshore wind means we must look to other jurisdictions for support. FFAW has met with existing players in offshore wind to better understand the realities of fisheries interactions.

Most recently, we met with Xodus Group, a global energy consultancy, with interests in Boston and Scotland. Its take-home mes-

sage was entirely in hindsight, explaining that it had done things wrong. In Canada, we have a great opportunity to learn from its mistakes. It said the fishing industry must be deeply engaged in the earliest phases of offshore wind to increase trust and understanding and to ensure all avoidance mitigation can proceed.

The fishing industry will be the most disrupted, as the succession of the industry relies on sustainable practices that preserve biodiversity and sensitive habitat conditions. Subversion of this habitat, which is often irrevocable, will directly cause the displacement of valuable fisheries. Governments must ensure they support locally relevant research initiatives ahead of any installations, and thoughtfully and meaningfully consider fisheries as a priority. From a Newfoundland and Labrador perspective, none of that has occurred.

Our province is unique in many ways, perhaps the most prolific being our geography as an island. Our rural and coastal communities have relied on fish harvesting to provide sustenance and economic stability for generations, and this practice continues as a vibrant industry. Insights and experiential knowledge provided by fish harvesters will serve as an invaluable resource. It is reckless and irresponsible to jeopardize this rural reliance, given the vast uncertainty of potential negative effects.

FFAW members in coastal communities will be negatively and disproportionately affected if their fishing grounds are displaced by offshore wind. Without a robust plan for potential workforce transitions, these communities risk collapse.

In closing, it is grossly dismissive of the adjacent fishing industry to assume a bill written for the oil and gas sector can be cut and pasted into a bill for an entirely new and fundamentally different renewable energy sector. Appropriate and concise language on how fisheries groups may be compensated for losses is virtually non-existent and discredits the value and importance of our industry completely.

• (1650)

As elected officials, you have a fundamental responsibility to protect the valuable resources that those affected rely on for economic prosperity. While I understand the CNSOPB has a fisheries advisory committee for fisheries consultations, no such entity exists in Newfoundland and Labrador or within the C-NLOPB. The ocean topography, the coastlines, the commercial species and their distributions in our respective provinces are vastly different and need to be approached as such. We have no mechanism to support imperative consultations for offshore wind and fishing industries, and to date, there have been none. We fear that the committee may pass this bill without sufficient, necessary and meaningful consultations.

As a key stakeholder, FFAW-Unifor is committed to all consultation that will be required moving forward in support of a just transition to greener, less fossil fuel-dependent technologies; however, the growth of one industry cannot be at the expense of another.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you for your opening statement.

Colleagues, we'll suspend for a moment to do connection tests for the other two witnesses.

• (1650)

(Pause)

• (1654)

The Chair: We're back.

We will now go to Susanna Fuller from Oceans North for her opening statement.

You have five minutes.

Ms. Susanna Fuller (Vice-President, Operations and Projects, Oceans North): Thank you for inviting me here today.

I'll briefly introduce myself. I work for Oceans North as the VP of conservation and projects, but I also grew up in rural Nova Scotia and I sit as an adviser to the Minister of Environment in Nova Scotia on the round table for the Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act. Almost exactly 10 years ago, I had the pleasure of releasing an economic report for Nova Scotia that really spoke to having to take some leaps and bounds of faith as we moved forward to changing the economic outcomes and future for Atlantic Canada.

I very much appreciate speaking to you today on this important bill. I think we want to express our general support for the amendments to the Atlantic accord agreement as proposed in Bill C-49. We hear the concerns of our colleagues in the fishing industry and look forward to working with them to make sure there are adequate community benefits and consultations. There are many lessons learned around the world—from as nearby as Rhode Island to as far away as across the pond in Scotland—with respect to how to make sure that communities benefit and that fishermen are the beneficiaries of rather than being impacted by new industries in the ocean.

Our support comes from the following interests and areas of work: first, advocating for and demonstrating the potential for zero-emissions marine industries and the necessity of energy transition; and, second, strengthening the protection standards for the marine

protected areas that we have put in place, often in collaboration with and working closely with the fishing industry.

On the first item, we are involved in the regional assessment process for offshore wind in both Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, and we are advocating, again, as I mentioned, for community benefits but also thinking about the opportunities for the marine industries and inshore fisheries, in particular, to start to electrify nearshore work boats and then to build out this bidirectional charging infrastructure at fishing wharves. Offshore winds can help us do that, as long as the communities that are nearby are the beneficiaries of some of that energy.

We know we need to do energy projects differently from how we have done them in the past. The recent and landmark Blueberry decision in B.C. requires the Impact Assessment Act and project proponents to address cumulative environmental impacts at all stages of projects. We're not seeing this yet as part of the regional assessment, but we need to. Bill C-49 can help with this. We also must work with the communities, as we mentioned, to make sure they are benefiting from public resources. We know that electricity prices are going up, and we know that in Atlantic Canada we rely on oil more than any other—

• (1655)

The Chair: I'm sorry, Ms. Fuller, but we're getting a signal from interpretation that your sound quality is not up to the level they need to interpret.

I would ask that you send a brief with your opening statement to the clerk, which you may already have done, so that we can provide that.

Ms. Susanna Fuller: Yes, I've done that.

The Chair: We will translate it and distribute it to the members.

Ms. Susanna Fuller: Okay.

Do you want me to stop now, or do you want me to continue more slowly?

The Chair: Yes, you can stay on. Unfortunately, we will have to ask you to stop at this point.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I have a point of order.

Given that we're getting testimony on what's happening and that the provincial regional assessment is really important, is there a way we can actually do another test? I feel like I'm losing out on a chance to ask questions.

I can read her brief, but I want to find out more details about the provincial assessment process, whether or not the feds are living up to it and how it works. Not having her testimony would be very problematic for me.

The Chair: I understand that your testimony is important, Ms. Fuller.

What we can do, colleagues, is that, if you could, provide your questions and we can get a response back. I know it can be challenging or difficult, but unfortunately we do need interpretation for all colleagues to be able to participate.

Ms. Fuller, I'm just going to ask you to hold for a moment.

We have another point of order from Mr. Patzer.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Mr. Chair, I'm just wondering if there's any way that we could take 20 seconds. I noticed that she adjusted the boom on her mike down a considerable amount, and I do think there's a chance that her interpretation might be clearer now.

I'm just wondering if we could just offer her a quick 20-second courtesy to try again quickly and then—

The Chair: Sure.

We'll try that, Ms. Fuller. We're going to suspend and recheck.

• (1655) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1701)

The Chair: I'm going to unsuspend the meeting.

We'll start with your opening statement, Ms. Josenhans, but you can stay on the line, Ms. Fuller.

Ms. Jennifer Josenhans (National Coordinator, SeaBlue Canada): Thank you, Chair.

On behalf of SeaBlue Canada, I would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to provide input on Bill C-49.

For some context, SeaBlue Canada is a coalition of eight of Canada's most active and well-respected environmental non-governmental organizations. We work collaboratively to ensure that Canada's marine protected area commitments are ambitious, equitable and ultimately provide meaningful protection to marine species and habitats. This is not only for the health of the animals and plants within the ocean. It's also for the people on the coast and beyond who rely on the ocean for their well-being.

I am the national coordinator, and I will speak on behalf of the coalition, outlining the key points from our written submission. While I am here to provide input through the lens of a coalition working on supporting the delivery of the government's marine conservation targets, on a personal note, I am also a resident of Nova Scotia and more specifically the small coastal town of Lunenburg. I have a vested personal interest in maintaining the health of the ocean in Atlantic Canada and also beyond. Many livelihoods within my town rely on a healthy ocean. Our community can only thrive when the seas around us thrive.

Let me preface by saying that SeaBlue Canada supports the development of marine renewable energy as part of the clean energy

response to the climate crisis. However, marine renewable energy projects must be managed responsibly and sustainably to minimize impacts to the marine environment and in a way that benefits local communities. Furthermore, to address the climate crisis, the introduction of marine renewable energy in Canada must be complemented by an equitable transition away from offshore oil and gas production.

SeaBlue Canada supports the amendments—specifically, the amendments proposed under clauses 26 to 28 and clauses 135 to 137 in the bill—that would protect the marine environment by enabling the prevention of offshore oil and gas and renewable energy activities within areas that have been identified for conservation or protection. These amendments are essential to protect marine biodiversity. They will also help to facilitate the clean energy transition through the development of offshore renewable energy while supporting marine wildlife. We strongly believe these two priorities can coexist and are indeed compatible.

Bill C-49 and the offshore accord acts that it amends form an important part of Canada's ocean management framework and will contribute to achieving Canada's conservation goals on the Atlantic coast. As you will know, and as was referenced earlier in the session, Canada has committed to protecting 25% of the ocean by 2025, to working towards protecting 30% by 2030 and to working to halt and reverse biodiversity loss.

In line with the federal minimum protection standard—incidentally, announced exactly one year ago today at IMPAC5—the federal government has committed to prohibiting oil and gas activities within all new federal MPAs and avoiding or mitigating industrial activities that pose risks to biodiversity outcomes within OECMs.

There is significant evidence to support that oil and gas activities are incompatible with marine conservation. As well, a growing body of evidence indicates that offshore renewable energy projects can have the potential to impact marine ecosystems without careful management. Notably, there is no legal mechanism under the current offshore accord acts to allow for the surrender or cancellation of oil and gas leases within areas set aside for environmental protection.

Bill C-49 would address this gap by enabling the federal and provincial governments to pass regulations that prohibit offshore oil and gas or renewable energy projects within areas that have been identified for protection. It would also allow the government to negotiate for the surrender of interests within these areas. The passing of this legislation with these provisions will allow the Government of Canada and provincial governments to demonstrate their strong commitment to marine protection and will assure stakeholders that the government has the legal tools required to ensure that protected areas are truly protected.

There is currently no explicit or clear law or policy in Canada that addresses offshore renewable energy in MPAs. Bill C-49 would provide Canada and the Atlantic provinces with the legal tools to sustainably and responsibly manage offshore renewable energy in the offshore accord act areas, and set a precedent for a similar legislative framework in the rest of Canada's ocean estate.

In conclusion, SeaBlue Canada recommends that the committee pass Bill C-49 in a timely manner to ensure that these marine conservation provisions may be implemented as soon as possible and in time for Canada to achieve its conservation targets for 2025.

• (1705)

On behalf of the coalition, I would like to reiterate my thanks to the committee for the opportunity to present our views. We very much look forward to seeing the proposed offshore renewable energy provisions in Bill C-49 passed into law.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you for your opening statement.

Colleagues, I'll remind everybody that I'll be using these cards. The yellow is the 30-second warning, and the red means time is up.

We will start. I think we'll get through one round, starting with Mr. Small from the Conservative Party of Canada for six minutes.

Go ahead, Mr. Small.

Mr. Clifford Small: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My first question is for Ms. Josenhans.

Ms. Josenhans, are you in favour of wind farms going inside marine protected areas?

Ms. Jennifer Josenhans: Thank you very much for the question, first of all.

Speaking on behalf of the—

Mr. Clifford Small: Just give a short answer, because I only have a few minutes here.

Ms. Jennifer Josenhans: Thank you.

We believe offshore energy should be scoped out of marine protected areas. We believe these two things can coexist with proper marine spatial planning.

Mr. Clifford Small: Thank you for that answer.

I am going to direct my next question to Katie Power.

Katie, you just heard Ms. Josenhans' testimony, and you heard the minister earlier.

How do you compare the interaction between the fishing industry and oil and gas offshore with what you see going on worldwide with the fishing industry and offshore renewables?

Ms. Katie Power: Thank you for the question.

If I understood it correctly, my response is this: Compared with our experience with fisheries and the oil and gas industry in Newfoundland and Labrador, we have been forced out of traditional fishing grounds. As an example, we can look at the Grand Banks, a traditional cod ground we no longer have access to. It's very similar

to areas in the offshore near Scotland and other places we've consulted with. It's global. Fishing grounds where wind turbines now stand are not accessible to fisheries. The gear is not compatible with the turbines. Access to the grounds for fishing activity has been totally lost in a lot of instances.

Mr. Clifford Small: I'll ask you this: When you look at spatial considerations, how does the scale of ground coverage for wind energy compare with that of an oil production platform?

Ms. Katie Power: Wind farms are vastly larger. They take up an immense.... It's thousands of square kilometres of space offshore.

• (1710)

Mr. Clifford Small: Have you heard how prime fishing grounds are being identified? Have you heard anything coming from your counterparts in the Maritimes about how areas of interest are being sorted out?

Ms. Katie Power: I'm not entirely familiar. I have been wholly focused on the Newfoundland and Labrador process. We haven't even been given an opportunity to do that in Newfoundland and Labrador, so I wouldn't be able to answer with certainty on how processes are going elsewhere.

However, in my experience, we're not even that far yet.

Mr. Clifford Small: What we're told by the fishing industry in Nova Scotia is that VMS data is being used to identify areas of high-intensity fishing.

Do inshore lobster and halibut boats use VMS data?

Ms. Katie Power: Using VMS data to identify areas of high fishing concentration is not helpful, particularly in Newfoundland and Labrador. It will miss, essentially, our entire membership, since we are representative of the inshore fleets, which are small boats—35 feet or less. Those vessels are not required to have AIS technology, so none of their fishing activity is recorded through DFO fishing science data.

There will be no record to use, of course, when you're spatially planning to overlap these fishing areas. There is no way to capture that data if you use VMS.

Mr. Clifford Small: Ms. Power, if this is not done right, do you foresee some conflict between the fishing industry and renewables?

Ms. Katie Power: I think that, without proper consultation processes and the enhanced measures that are clearly required—which are not being conducted right now—conflict is inevitable, because there are complete fisheries that are being dismissed and not acknowledged in these processes. They are, frankly, being ignored. That is the sentiment of our membership.

It's scary for them, because their voices and concerns are not being heard. They want to be engaged. They want to be involved, but an enhanced level of communication with our industry in Newfoundland and Labrador is not happening.

Mr. Clifford Small: You may want to provide a written submission on this, but I'm going to ask you this: What would you and your stakeholders like to see in terms of consultation and a compensation framework built into C-49? What does that need to look like? If we're to have amendments to this bill that give stability to offshore wind and to the fishing industry, I think it's going to be very important for you to be involved in creating some amendments, which I would support.

Thank you.

Ms. Katie Power: First, I'll say this—

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Power, time is up. As the member stated, it might be a lengthy brief to provide lots of context there, so you're free to provide that.

We'll go to Ms. Jones for six minutes.

Ms. Jones, go ahead.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank all of our witnesses today for their tremendous presentations. I think you all gave us lots of great insights and information, and we certainly appreciate that.

I'm going to start my questions with you, Katie, from my home province of Newfoundland and Labrador. As you know, I grew up in the fishery, and I understand it very well.

I'm really disappointed to learn the FFAW was not consulted in a much more in-depth way. It does disappoint me, I'll be honest with you. I really believe that the fishing industry in Newfoundland and Labrador has been a strong support for the offshore oil and gas industry, and they've worked very well together as ocean industries to see those developments go in different directions. I understand the important role that the FFAW plays, and I want to note that for the record here in committee today and to say that I agree that you should have been consulted in a much more in-depth way.

I know you're at the table with the regional assessments, and I know it's not the same as being consulted on the bill or being consulted on a project down the road. First of all, were you aware of the bill? Have there been discussions with your members in FFAW about it?

• (1715)

Ms. Katie Power: I was made aware of the bill. I believe that we received an overview presentation in October. I think that was my first introduction to what was going on. Then, of course, there are these proceedings. That's essentially what's been brought to FFAW as an organization in terms of what's happening and where it's going. I was aware that processes were ongoing and that the bill was being written, but in terms of anything else, I'll echo your sentiment of disappointment in that we very much have felt like an afterthought in a lot of the planning for this legislation.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Obviously, I can't change what has happened, but as a member on the committee, I'm happy to work with the government to set up any kind of consultations or briefings that your organization might like to have in advance of any votes that take place in the House of Commons. I make that offer to you, and I'm happy to do my best as one MP to try to arrange that.

My other questions are around the regional assessment process. I understand that the regional assessment process, although a different platform, was a good opportunity for a number of stakeholders to feed into what the initial piece would look like in offshore wind. Have you been engaged at that level at all? Are you a part of that process?

Ms. Katie Power: Yes, we've been deeply engaged in that process from the very beginning, as it's really been our only opportunity to provide feedback on offshore wind and to ask questions.

There have also been some challenges within the regional assessment process due to the unique demographic of Newfoundland and Labrador, our coastal communities and these rural outport communities where people with concerns about offshore wind live. The virtual meetings and computer literacy needed have presented as very challenging for our membership. That's been a major concern.

The overall lack of trust and transparency that's been given by governments has hindered the collection process as well. We've been getting a lot of apprehension from our membership in terms of being more forthcoming with information, because they don't know how it's going to be used or what it's going to be used for. There's a clear lack of understanding of the intentions of the regional assessment and how it will be used because there's been no transparency. We've been very much left in the dark in this process, and I really think that it's doing the regional assessment and perhaps this legislation a disservice and a discredit, because it's really unfortunate how it has unfolded.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: In Bill C-49, the amendments are around the regulatory process. We had the offshore oil and gas industry. We had a regulatory process that we set up, the C-NLOPB, in which they set up the One Ocean concept—of which you are a part of—and they consult back and forth.

This bill is basically focused on offshore wind. I know that, and there may be different factors. However, we are looking, again, at the regulatory process. You might want to have this discussion with them, but my understanding is that the reason the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador want the amendments in the bill is so that, if they decide to move forward with offshore wind at some point, there will be a regulatory body in place that can work with all the different groups and organizations to ensure that people's interests are protected.

In passing this bill, we're not saying that we are going to put a wind farm in Bonavista Bay tomorrow or in the gulf. I think what we're doing is laying a regulatory process, so that any wind development would still go through an environmental assessment process.

One of the things I want to bring up today is that there will be some amendments coming in the bill to ensure some stakeholder engagement. If there are other amendments that you'd like to look at for your members, we'll be happy to entertain those as well. We are open to suggestions and to making sure that we make it strong and protect the interests of fishers, as well as those who want to see clean energy grids and offshore wind developed.

I just wanted to let you know that and to let you know that there are other opportunities to strengthen this to ensure that your members are protected.

• (1720)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Jones, for this round of questions, and, Ms. Power, for your answers.

We'll now go to our next member, Mr. Simard.

The floor is yours, sir.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Power, I understand that your group wasn't adequately consulted in the context of this bill. I find that appalling. Since I come from Quebec, I may not understand all the subtleties of your sector. However, I appreciate what you said at the end of your presentation, that the growth of one industry can't be at the expense of another. I understand why you feel we're going to develop the wind industry at the expense of the fishing industry.

In that connection, I can only encourage you to send us suggestions for amending the bill. I don't know whether you've had any consultations within the group you represent, but you could also send us the results of those consultations and the impressions of the members of your group. I promise I will consider any documentation you can send us, and we will definitely be able to make certain amendments to the bill. However, I can't deny that it's a bit late and that it's really unfortunate that the government didn't bother to consult you. I wanted to tell you that because your voice has been heard.

I don't know whether you want to add anything.

[*English*]

Ms. Katie Power: Thank you. I appreciate your comments.

I understand that it is late to rewrite. We had been of the position that we owe it to the fishery and to all other ocean users to write new legislation, specific and directly involving and engaging this situation in renewable energy, in order to not do a disservice and to fully support the industry in the right way possible.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard: Thanks very much.

Ms. Josenhans, I believe I understood from your presentation that you would like Bill C-49 to be passed quickly. I have some reservations about this bill. I see from reading it that it would put renewable energy and the hydrocarbon industry on an equal footing. If this is in fact a bill concerning the energy transition, I think it should contain clear indications of a gradual exit from hydrocar-

bons. However, that's not what we're seeing from the government, which in recent months and years has agreed to permit new drilling.

Would you have any ideas for amendments that would help balance that dynamic between renewables, wind energy in this instance, and the hydrocarbon industry.

[*English*]

Ms. Jennifer Josenhans: Thank you very much for the question.

I should be very specific that my remit here today is to speak about the coalition. The coalition's mandate is very specific to the marine conservation targets as promised by the Government of Canada.

While our groups, as separate entities, work on things like renewable energy, the just energy transition and a lot of the topics that are more specific to what you're asking, our statement was really focused on how this legislation would move along the marine conservation targets and specifically the ability of the federal government and the provinces to work together to rescind existing oil and gas leases.

While I would love to comment on that personally, speaking for the coalition, I can't really give a specific answer, for which I apologize, but thank you for the question.

• (1725)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard: Thank you, I understand.

However, the objective of your coalition is to propose marine conservation targets. Could you provide the committee with data on the impact of exploratory drilling on species and biodiversity. Do you have data on those points?

[*English*]

Ms. Jennifer Josenhans: We do. In the key points of the brief we submitted, which I summarized in my opening statement, we go into a bit more detail on the effects of oil and gas on marine biodiversity as well as some of the effects of renewable energy installations on marine biodiversity.

If you would require any information outside of what we have submitted or any more detail, I would be more than happy to provide that. Please don't hesitate to get in touch.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard: So you can provide that to the committee. I would also ask you to provide the committee with suggested amendments to the bill, if you wish, just as I asked Ms. Power to do.

Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll now go to Mr. Angus for six minutes.

Mr. Angus, the floor is yours.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you to our witnesses. This has all been excellent.

This legislation is being driven very much by the Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia governments. We're at a point where, if there are concerns, amendments to legislation are really important. This is the task we have. This is why we have witnesses. Witnesses come and tell us when there are problems. There's never been, in all my years, legislation that was perfect. It always has things that aren't seen, so your testimony matters a lot.

Ms. Fuller, I know they've asked that you put your responses in writing. I have many questions for you, but I'll sort of just do an overall frame of them.

With the situation with the provincial consultation process in Nova Scotia on this, do you feel the process is working? Do you feel this will help avoid conflict with fishers and other users in Nova Scotia? Will this bill, the way it's been written, allow the federal and provincial governments to protect marine areas when they need to be protected?

We saw the situation with Sable Island oil leases, where there had to be a huge public outcry to stop that and protect that area. Will this legislation, from the perspective of the province of Nova Scotia, represent the needs of the province and the protection of the environment and protection of the fragile marine ecosystem?

If you could respond to us on that, it would be very helpful, going ahead.

Ms. Josenhans, I want to ask you similar questions.

One is whether you're able to talk about Sable Island, because that was the last oil lease, I think, off Nova Scotia. It was a huge public outcry.

Do you believe this legislation puts in place the ability to protect fragile marine ecosystems while allowing wind project development?

Ms. Jennifer Josenhans: Yes, in short. Speaking for the coalition, we do believe those two things can coexist—that we have a lot of ocean real estate and we can still pursue the goals of the 30% by 2030 and the 25% by 2025 while transitioning toward clean energy.

It will involve an all-in approach and it will involve rigorous marine spatial planning, but yes, absolutely these two things can coexist. They must coexist because really we have the same goal. Conserving our ocean and transitioning away from fossil fuels are all for the betterment of future generations, so these two things must coexist.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I know that you're here to represent a coalition and you're going to be super careful. I'm going to ask you this as a resident. You're from Lunenburg, are you not?

Two years ago, I got an invite to speak at the Lunenburg writers festival. I was all pumped, and then there was this terrifying hurricane and nobody could get in. They said, "Don't worry, we'll do it next year." Then, the next year, I had to cancel at the last minute because there was a terrifying hurricane.

I'm from the land of rocks and trees. I mean, I like the pictures of the Atlantic, but it scares the hell out of me. When that water moves and decides it's angry, you have serious issues. Are you seeing, in real time, changes in the ocean because of what's happened with the climate?

• (1730)

Ms. Jennifer Josenhans: Unequivocally yes...and not just in the ocean. I mean, we have just dealt with a massive snowstorm. That was also referred to by one of your honourable members.

The winds here are stronger than I've ever seen. Yes, I sit on the board of our local museum, and we've had to replace sections of the wharf much more often than we've ever had to in the past. Yes, unequivocally.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I was in St. John's a couple of years ago when I was running for NDP leader. I came in second, by the way, if you want that in Trivial Pursuit, but that doesn't matter.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: You're saying you lost.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Coming in second is what it is, but I have thick skin.

An hon. member: Don't give up.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Will you guys be quiet? I'm trying to do serious work here.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Charlie Angus: When I was in St. John's, I was talking to fishers who couldn't get their boats out into the North Atlantic, they said, because there was so much ice coming down. The melting ice was affecting the fishery. We know that last June the water temperature in the North Atlantic was 1.36°C above average. That was really staggering.

We now have a new study that the gulf stream is at its weakest in 1,600 years. In an El Niño year, they worry about a tipping point.

What does that mean for the ability of our fishing industry if they're going up against those odds of a changing climate in the ocean?

Ms. Katie Power: Was that directed to me or to my colleague?

Ms. Jennifer Josenhans: I wasn't sure who the question was for. I'm sorry.

Mr. Charlie Angus: It's for Ms. Josenhans, because she was in Lunenburg.

I'll start with her and then we'll go to you, Ms. Power, if we can.

Ms. Jennifer Josenhans: Thank you very much. I'd also like to hear what Ms. Power has to say.

Yes. I mean, I'm down at the docks all the time speaking to members of the fishery. The concerns are real—absolutely. It's not even just the extreme weather but the change in migration patterns.

To answer your question, yes, it is a great concern of the fishery to see what's happening with respect to our climate.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Just finally, Ms. Power, you represent the people who are out there, day in, day out. Are they seeing changes?

Ms. Katie Power: I'll try to keep it brief, but I could talk about this for a really long time. The answer, of course, is yes.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I wish you would.

Ms. Katie Power: We are seeing definitely more aggressive frequent coastal storms, notably hurricane Fiona, which not only destroyed wharves and vessels but also swept harmful materials like insulation and oil tanks into the water, which will likely impact recruitment rates for some marine species well into the future. There's an immediate need for improved coastal infrastructure.

We see changing temperatures. This is affecting the life cycles of certain species. They're being disrupted. We're seeing an increased prevalence of albino, blue and orange lobsters, which indicates changes in their moulting cycle. Many species are moving into deeper patterns of water, instinctively seeking out colder temperatures.

Yes, the changes we're seeing now are rampant.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you so much for that.

The Chair: Thank you to our witnesses today for your testimony. I will remind witnesses that you can provide a brief to committee members if there's anything you missed or if there's additional information. Thank you for joining us today. Your insights were greatly appreciated.

Colleagues, we are at the end of a meeting, but before we finish today, I want to raise an important item. Our analysts have been waiting for drafting instructions for quite some time for Canada's clean energy plan.

Mr. Angus, go ahead.

Mr. Charlie Angus: You know, I certainly trust our analysts. I always like to let them put the stuff out and let us look at it. Then we can decide if there are problems. I think they have the expertise. They've heard it all. I'm very keen to just let them bring a plan forward.

The Chair: Mr. Simard, go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard: Pardon me, I don't know if we discussed this at the last meeting, but I haven't prepared anything. We can dis-

cuss the issue and then send our comments to our analysts in writing. We would just have to know the deadline for that. It's hard to respond to this quickly. It's a bit more complex. If we want to provide intelligent comments, we have to do a bit of thinking. It would be a good idea to set a deadline.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Simard.

Colleagues, how about February 16? That gives us a week to provide drafting instructions. You can send that to the analysts. It gives us enough time to consult with members from all parties.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: That's very good. Thank you.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Can I ask one question?

The Chair: Yes, go ahead, Mr. Patzer.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: I believe there was some talk—Mr. Angus mentioned it to us earlier at the start of the meeting—about travel to Newfoundland and Nova Scotia.

I'm wondering whether there's any update on that or thoughts around it.

● (1735)

The Chair: No, I don't have any updates on that. Our committee moved it forward to liaison and the House. If any of you would like to, please ask the whips to quickly give us a decision so we can prepare accordingly here at the committee. I know our analyst and clerk are eagerly waiting, as we all are. That's a little nudge to all committee members to nudge your whips to quickly make a decision and let us know, so we can plan our schedule and business.

It's February 16, folks. Get your information in for drafting instructions so our analyst can continue the great work she's doing.

Once again, thank you to all witnesses for attending today and for providing testimony.

Is it the will of the committee to adjourn the meeting today? It sounds like it.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Thank you. It is.

The meeting is adjourned.

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