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# **Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Thursday, May 29, 2014**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Harold Albrecht**



## Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development

Thursday, May 29, 2014

• (1545)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC)):** I'd like to call meeting 25 of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development to order.

We are honoured to have Minister Aglukkaq with us to speak to the estimates. Minister Aglukkaq, I know that you had some difficulty in traffic to get here and you are a bit rushed, so please take your time. We will have that 10-minute opening statement followed by questions from members.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good afternoon, everyone. First of all I want to thank you for rescheduling my appearance before this committee. I know we had to reschedule it about a month ago, so thank you for doing that. I want to begin by providing you a brief statement and after I would be happy to answer questions.

The opportunity to serve Canadians through the portfolios of Environment Canada, Parks Canada, and CEAA is a great honour for me. Environment Canada serves Canadians 24 hours a day, every day, and each year the department issues about 1.5 million weather forecasts, conducts about 8,600 inspections, and prosecutes over 340 violations of environmental law.

As you are aware, Environment Canada is a science-based department. For this reason, since 2006, our government has invested over \$4 billion in science and technology at Environment Canada alone. With this solid scientific foundation, Environment Canada is making substantial contributions to meeting the government's priority of a clean and healthy environment.

Two weeks ago Prime Minister Harper and I launched the national conservation plan. It will help to conserve and restore Canada's land and waters, and connect Canadians to nature. The plan provides a more coordinated approach for conservation efforts across Canada and will encourage on-the-ground actions and partnerships leading to tangible results.

The plan will also expand opportunities for partnerships including municipalities, environmental interest groups, hunters and anglers, land owners, and community groups to take practical actions to safeguard the lands and waters around them. It also builds on the actions and efforts of countless Canadians who are working to conserve and protect our rich natural heritage.

Last week, building on the priorities announced with the national conservation plan, I was in Halifax to announce further funding through the eco-action community funding program. This program helps to advance these goals and promotes the kind of effective collaboration work that is so important to the national conservation plan. The funding program will provide community groups with financial support for projects that have measurable positive impacts on the environment.

As well, last week I also announced in Fredericton further investments to the science horizons youth internship program, which also supports the national conservation plan. It will help post-secondary students gain valuable work experience while helping to protect Canada's environment. The national conservation plan is one of the many initiatives we have undertaken to safeguard Canada's environment.

Since we formed government, we have created two national marine conservation areas, three marine protected areas, three national wildlife areas, and two national parks. We are also making important investments to help maintain the infrastructure of our national parks. In budget 2014 we are investing \$391 million to maintain and repair the dams, bridges, and highways. In the main estimates this year, we are also allocating \$4 million for dams and locks along the Trent-Severn Waterway, and \$1 million for the historic canals.

In addition to these accomplishments, we are creating more parks. A few weeks ago the Senate tabled a new bill to establish the national park reserve in the Northwest Territories. This will result in more than 85% of the entire watershed being protected from development. The creation of this park has been years in the making, involving consultations with the communities, aboriginal groups, industry, and the Government of the Northwest Territories.

We are also working to create Canada's first national urban park, the Rouge national urban park in the greater Toronto area. Establishing the Rouge national urban park will further build on our government's success in expanding Canada's system of protected areas. The first of its kind in Canada, this new park will be 16 times larger than the size of New York's Central Park and will be readily accessible to 20% of Canada's total population. In our main estimates this year, we're allocating \$19.6 million to support the development of this park.

• (1550)

Environment Canada is also advancing its work to safeguard water resources, an area that I know is of interest to this committee.

In 2012 we signed a modernized Canada-United States Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. We renewed and expanded the Lake Simcoe-southeastern Georgian Bay cleanup fund. We are allocating \$7.6 million in our main estimates this year to help restore the ecological health of Lake Simcoe and southeastern Georgian Bay, and improve water quality for the residents and wildlife of the region. We're also continuing to implement the Canada-Quebec agreement on the St. Lawrence and helping to clean up Lake Winnipeg through the Lake Winnipeg Basin initiative.

To protect the air Canadians breathe, we work extensively with provincial and territorial governments, and industry, health, environmental, and non-governmental organizations to develop Canada's air quality management system. This provides a coherent Canada-wide approach to ensuring good air quality across Canada.

We're also working to reduce mercury, a toxic element in our environment that could cause serious health problems for Canadians. This past October, Canada signed the Minamata Convention, a new international treaty, to reduce major sources of global mercury emissions and releases to the environment.

We recognize the serious problems of climate change and are addressing them through our sector-by-sector approach, which advances both our environmental and economic objectives. We introduced the strict regulations that made Canada the first major coal user to ban construction of traditional coal-fired electricity generation plants. We also put in place greenhouse gas regulations for coal-fired electricity that are expected to remove 6,600 kilograms of mercury from the atmosphere between 2015 and 2035.

We introduced regulations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions for passenger vehicles and light trucks for model years 2011 to 2016. In 2012 we also proposed a second phase of regulations for model year 2017 vehicles and beyond. As a result of these proposed regulations, we can look forward to new cars and light trucks made in 2025 that emit 50% less greenhouse gas and consume up to 50% less fuel than the 2008 models. In addition we can expect to see reductions of up to 23% in greenhouse gas emissions from 2014 model heavy-duty vehicles and later model years, as a result of regulations we introduced last year.

Internationally, our government is continuing to work with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change to achieve a single new international climate change agreement that includes meaningful commitments by all major emitters.

Canada is also a founding member of the Climate and Clean Air Coalition. Its aim is to reduce climate pollutants that are potent global warmers and dangerous air pollutants. The coalition finances projects that will help to address climate change and improve the health of millions of citizens around the world. We are a founding member and a major financial contributor to an international coalition, taking action to reduce pollutants such as black carbon and methane.

That is not all. We fully delivered on our fast-start financing commitment of \$1.2 billion to support a range of climate change projects in over 60 developing countries. This is the largest contribution the Government of Canada has ever made to international climate change financing.

Turning to CEAA, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, and with the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012, now in place, Canadians can expect predictable timely review, reduced duplication, stronger environmental protection, and enhanced consultation with aboriginal peoples.

• (1555)

The act establishes legal timelines for environmental assessments. Instead of taking months, proponents receive a decision about whether a federal project assessment is required within 45 days. The agency is also coordinating consultation with aboriginal groups in a manner that is respectful, responsive, and consistent with the honour of the crown.

Moving forward, the agency will continue to deliver high-quality environmental assessments of major projects built on effective relationships with aboriginal peoples, and play a lead role in shaping the future of federal environmental assessments.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my opening remarks for this afternoon's committee appearance. I look forward to responding to your questions.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Minister.

It's great to have you with us.

Now we'll go to our first round of questions, and we'll begin with Mr. Carrie, for seven minutes, please.

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank the minister for being here.

One of the things you mentioned in your opening remarks is exciting for me. As you know, I'm from Oshawa, and there has been a lot of talk lately, and a lot of positive feedback from local stakeholders, on one of the initiatives you talked about in your opening remarks. What I'm talking about is the Rouge national urban park.

I am wondering if you could elaborate a little more about that. It's something that in my community we're very excited about. It's my understanding that this is the first national park of its kind, not only in Canada but I think in the world. Could you elaborate a bit more on the leadership in that regard, why this park is so unique and why it's so important to the communities around the GTA?

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you for the question, Colin.

You're correct that this is the first urban national park in Canada. Parks Canada has engaged with many Canadians and stakeholders in the Ontario region, including the first nations, in the planning process for the Rouge national urban park.

The participants involved in the process have expressed a passionate commitment to this initiative and the establishment of the park. The input we have received from the various stakeholders throughout our consultation process on the management plan is being used for the development of the plan.

We have a number of partners, and Transport Canada and the Ontario government have also officially confirmed their respective intentions to transfer land to Parks Canada. The June 2013 announcement basically formalized the partnership between provincial commitments to the initiative of developing the park. The process continues. As well, municipal partners have been involved in the consultation and development of it.

Parks Canada now is working towards finalizing the land assembly agreements with Toronto, the regional conservation authorities, and municipal and regional landholders. We're expecting that to be completed very soon.

The size of the Rouge national urban park, as I mentioned in my opening remarks, is 16 times larger than Central Park. I think this is very exciting. There will be many Canadians who will be able to access a park within an urban region. It's the first of its kind, and the many partners involved in this initiative are very excited and look forward to making it formal through the introduction of the legislation when we've finished the consultations with people from Ontario.

**Mr. Colin Carrie:** Minister, I want to thank you for that answer but also thank you for your leadership. This is something that I think people have been talking about for maybe 30 years now. The fact that you've been able to bring these stakeholders together...and we see it will be almost ready to go in the next few months. It's exciting for people in Oshawa, but also around the entire GTA.

While you're here, I want to ask you something about a recent announcement that you made with the Prime Minister. I want to commend my colleagues on the environment committee. We've recently wrapped up a number of great conservation studies, and we've heard from a myriad of witnesses who have provided us with some very valuable testimony.

I am wondering if you could explain to the committee how our government is contributing to the conservation of our country's rich natural heritage by following through on our government's throne speech commitment of creating the national conservation plan.

• (1600)

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Again, it's the first of its kind in Canada. We introduced on May 15, the national conservation plan. I also want to thank the environment committee for the study that has been done around this idea. Many of the ideas came from the working of this committee as well, so thank you for that.

To launch the initiative, the national conservation plan, on May 15 the Prime Minister announced the plan in Fredericton. The government, to launch this initiative, is investing \$252 million over the next five years in the plan in order to advance the work in the three priority areas that have been identified under the national conservation plan—to conserve Canada's land and waters, restoring Canada's ecosystem, and connecting Canadians to nature.

The plan itself builds on the existing successful efforts across the country of many organizations. The conservation-related investments announced in budget 2014, including the conserving of recreational fisheries, as an example, and supporting family-oriented conservation activities, have also been incorporated in that. Many of the initiatives identified celebrate the work of many Canadian stakeholders and new partnership opportunities as well, but bring it under one envelope so that we all work together in our collective efforts to deal with protecting our environment. The investment in this budget of \$252 million will be used to launch that plan this year.

**Mr. Colin Carrie:** Excellent. I know I don't have a lot of time.

**The Chair:** You have one minute.

**Mr. Colin Carrie:** A minute....

Minister, I was recently in China and I got to experience their environment first-hand. You see people wearing these masks. It just makes me feel very proud that I'm a Canadian, but I think a lot of Canadians take our air quality for granted. I was wondering if you could take a minute to tell the committee about our government's clean air regulatory agenda, and how our government's going to ensure that we have some of the cleanest air in the world.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** In the initiatives under the clean air regulatory agenda that we've taken, we have taken actions to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions and air pollutants that have threatened the health of Canadians, degraded the environment, or contributed to climate change and smog.

I'll just highlight some of the funding that we have renewed from the clean air regulatory agenda—

**The Chair:** In just a minute, could I get you to follow up with another questioner?

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Sure.

**The Chair:** We were running out of time on that question. Because of our tight timeline, we're going to try to stay pretty close to the seven-minute rounds.

We're going to move now to Ms. Leslie, for seven minutes.

Thank you, Minister.

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Madam Minister, welcome back.

The last time you actually appeared before this committee, you and I had a bit of a chat afterwards offline. We were talking about the Arctic Council, and you encouraged me to bring forward an idea to study the Arctic Council here at committee. I did, tabled a motion, but we can't seem to get it passed at this committee.

I wonder if your office would be supportive of a study on the Arctic Council here at our committee.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Some of the initiatives that are being undertaken by the Arctic Council relate to this committee. One example that we're undertaking, under Canada's leadership, is around black carbon and methane. The work is progressing well.

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** We'd love to do a study on it.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Yes.

The committee responsible for the initiatives around that.... It's a bit split. Some of it's under the Indian Affairs minister, who's also appearing before another committee right now as we speak. In terms of a committee on the Arctic Council, I'm also presenting to the foreign affairs committee on that because it falls under their initiative.

The work under the Arctic Council related to the environmental portfolio is certainly black carbon, methane. Some of that falls into the work of the Arctic Council—

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** Maybe we'll try to draft—

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** —and we are studying those. We are studying those and we are moving on that domestically and internationally through this process. But the work of the Arctic Council—

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** Maybe I'll just try to redraft it.

•(1605)

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** —is quite broad, and it's not environment-specific. There's mental health, suicide, climate change, traditional knowledge of indigenous people, safe shipping. So it's quite broad—

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** Okay, well, that's great. That's all the answer I need.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** —in that it falls into different committees, so it's...yes, go ahead.

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** We'll redraft the motion.

I'd like to move on to endangered species because a federal court judge has ruled that you, as the environment minister, and the fisheries minister both broke the law by failing to enforce the Species at Risk Act. The judge pointed out that there's a pretty big systemic problem in the fact that the two ministries that are charged with protecting endangered and threatened species aren't working together. He also said that it's not acceptable that the two ministers

continue to miss deadlines. All I can see is that the only reason you've acted on these files is that you've been brought to court, dragged to court, and forced to follow your own law.

Now in 2013, the environment commissioner said that there were 146 recovery strategies overdue, over a quarter of them were more than three years overdue. I wonder how many are still overdue and how many more have become overdue? What are the numbers that we're at?

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Mr. Chair, may I?

**The Chair:** You can proceed.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** As you know, the introduction of SARA in 2003 created an initial backlog of 233 species. An additional 112 were added to that list in 2005. To deal with the backlog, budget 2012 allocated \$50 million over two years to move forward.

Thanks to the hard work of many individuals and the investments we've made, the recovery strategies and management plans are posted now online with the registry, and 70% have had their documents posted in the last four years. Environment Canada continues to develop the plans to address the current backlog. The current number now—

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** If you don't have them, I don't mind if they're tabled.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** He can....

**Mr. Bob Hamilton (Deputy Minister, Department of the Environment):** I can't tell you the exact number, but it's around 180.

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** Thank you.

**Mr. Bob Hamilton:** I can get back to you with the specifics.

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** That would be great.

Could you also table by how much they're all overdue, whether it's a year or three years?

**Mr. Bob Hamilton:** Sure.

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** Thank you. Thanks very much for that.

**Mr. Bob Hamilton:** I can also say, as the minister indicated, that in the last three or four years we've really ramped up in the number we've put up. Our plan over the next three years is to make a very intensive effort to get them out, because we understand we're overdue.

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** Thanks very much. I look forward to that.

I wonder, Madam Minister, if your department has done any cost analyses to determine whether it's cheaper to pay out to groups who are forced to take you to court, than it is to actually fund the species at risk. It seems as if there are a lot of court fees being paid here. Have you done any costing of this?

**An hon. member:** What do you have against lawyers?

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Bob Hamilton:** No, we have not done that cost assessment. I think that for the moment we are just trying to make sure we undertake our statutory responsibilities. Our goal is to try to get the recovery strategies out. We're cognizant of the fact that there's an increasing court pressure. But our focus is not so much to pay anybody out as it is to get the job done.

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** That's good to hear.

Madam Minister, I ask if you would commit to adequately funding the program and clearing the backlog.

**The Chair:** Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We are committed to dealing with the backlog of course. This is important to us, to get through the backlog. When the initial legislation was introduced, that created a backlog. We're trying to get through that in order to protect the species at risk. Through this process, I can tell you that we are working hard to get through some of these backlogs.

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** Great. Thanks.

My next question is on the oil and gas regulations—you had to know I'd ask. When will the oil and gas regulations be announced?

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** We're continuing to work with Alberta to develop the oil and gas regulations. When we complete them, as I said before, we'll announce them. As of right now I can't come up with an exact time and date. But what I can say is that we are working hard to come up with those regulations.

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** With the time I have left, oil and gas regulations.... We have these targets that we've set—and I brought a handy chart. Here we have the orange line, which is where we're supposed to be. This is our target. The blue line shows our current measures. You can see that we are nowhere near our target.

So we're waiting for these oil and gas regulations. I do not believe that the sector-by-sector approach is what we need to take. But if we are taking it, through this Conservative government, how in the world, without oil and gas regulations, are we actually going to meet that target?

• (1610)

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** As I mentioned earlier, we remain committed to moving forward in addressing the targets and achieving our targets. Going sector by sector is making a difference in our country. We have to target our efforts in the worst emissions that we see in our own sector, in the whole coal-fired electricity, the transportation industry. Oil and gas is another component of that.

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** So what's next?

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** This is a national target. We have to work with the provinces, territories, municipalities, and so on to deal with

the greenhouse gas emissions. Once we are ready to table these, they will be released.

**The Chair:** Thank you. We're well over time on that one. Thank you, Minister.

We'll move now to Mr. Sopuck for seven minutes.

**Mr. Brian Storseth (Westlock—St. Paul, CPC):** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair. It's just a quick inquiry. Would Ms. Leslie mind passing that chart around? I didn't get to see it.

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** Absolutely. Oh, it's only in one language.

**Mr. Brian Storseth:** Could I see it afterwards?

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** It's on the Environment Canada website.

**Mr. Brian Storseth:** Okay, thanks.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Storseth. I'm not sure that was a point of order, but we'll let it go.

Mr. Sopuck, you have seven minutes, please.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC):** As you know, Minister, I'm a strong supporter of the national conservation plan. I am very pleased to be part of a government that has put forward such a tremendous initiative, which will have conservation benefits for decades to come.

I'm especially interested in conservation work by grassroots organizations, for example. I am really pleased to see that our government is providing funding to a group that does terrific on-the-ground conservation work, especially young people, and that's the Earth Rangers. Could you provide a brief background, for those who don't know, about the work done by the Earth Rangers and how our government is supporting grassroots organizations such as these?

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Yes. Thank you, and thank you for that question.

Environment Canada, with the new funding for Earth Rangers, will expand its current programming to help children and their families learn about biodiversity and conservation across the country. Again, those programs, and programs of this nature, also support on-the-ground action in many communities such as raising funds to conserve and restore ecologically sensitive habitats.

By encouraging many young Canadians to get involved at an early age, and encouraging them as well as their families to spend time outdoors, the Earth Rangers programming is helping to connect Canadians to nature and to educate young Canadians about nature, which is also, as you mentioned, a priority under the national conservation plan the Prime Minister announced on May 15. We're very pleased to have partners like the Earth Rangers to be able to promote projects of this nature and the appreciation of the outdoors, and connect our young people.

Thank you.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** One of the things that separates this Conservative government from our NDP friends across the way is our very strong emphasis on delivering real conservation results that actually improve the environment in measurable ways. One of my pet interests is landscape conservation, because one can see the benefits of landscape conservation for biodiversity, carbon sequestration, water management, and so on.

Representing an agricultural area like I do, I'm a very strong supporter of the ecological gifts program whereby landowners can make donations of ecologically sensitive lands to be conserved in perpetuity to deliver environmental benefits for Canadians. There was a significant announcement in budget 2014 to extend, for income tax purposes, the carry forward period for donations of these kinds of lands under the ecological gifts program. Can you elaborate on that and what your vision would be for this program?

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you for the question.

The ecological gifts program has resulted in donations of over 1,080 ecological gifts covering an area of more than 164 hectares, and the value of that is about \$680 million. A wide variety of land has been protected under this particular program, including forests and grasslands across the country. In 2013 the program celebrated its 1,000th eco-gift and that was in Manitoba, in your province, which also consisted of 59 hectares as an example, making a huge difference on the ground.

By extending the carry forward period for those donations from five years to 10 years, certain donors will be able to gain greater tax credits for the program. The rate of contributing to the ecological gifts program, we're expecting, will also increase with that extended timeline. It is making a huge difference on the ground. Again, individual organizations of this nature are partners in the national conservation plan in protecting and restoring our own land, so it is making a huge difference.

•(1615)

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** While I appreciate the need for recovery strategies for species listed under the Species at Risk Act, a strategy is just a piece of paper in this modern world, just bits in a computer. In terms of delivering real on-the-ground conservation benefits for species at risk, these kinds of programs actually deliver the real thing. I'm very pleased to see that this is our government's emphasis in terms of actually delivering real on-the-ground results.

I have the pleasure of living next to a national park, Riding Mountain National Park. I was very pleased to see in the recent budget funding commitments for the improvement of the infrastructure in our national parks. Could you please talk about the parks infrastructure investments that will be going in over the next little

while, these investments that were announced in the most recent budget?

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Budget 2014 provided \$391.5 million in infrastructure money over the next five years to make improvements in the areas of highways, bridges, and dams located within our national parks and along our heritage canals to deal with the aging infrastructure that we have.

Investments will significantly benefit many of the communities along, as an example, the Rideau Canal corridor, the Trent-Severn Waterway. Basically it's to deal with our aging infrastructure in parks, but at the same time those will also be opportunities to create jobs in those respective regions. It's much-needed investments that we're delivering in addressing infrastructure in our parks.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** I don't want to embarrass your parks director, but rest assured that there will be a wish list from Riding Mountain National Park.

Thank you very much, Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Actually, you have 30 seconds to give them the wish list now.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** I'll be glad to transmit it at a later date. Thirty seconds isn't enough.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Sopuck, and thank you, Minister, for your response.

We move now to Mr. McKay, for seven minutes.

**Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.):** I'll be happy to take Mr. Sopuck's 30 extra seconds.

Minister, are you aware that the federal government paid out \$2.6 billion in disaster relief assistance last year, almost entirely from climate change-driven catastrophic weather events?

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** I'm going to pass that on to the deputy minister.

**The Chair:** Mr. Hamilton.

**Mr. Bob Hamilton:** Personally I'm not aware of the figure, but it doesn't surprise me that the amount we pay out to accommodate for disaster relief would be a significant amount. We have programs for that.

**Hon. John McKay:** It is a massive number, and it is climbing. Over the last four years it has averaged about a billion dollars, and it's getting off the chart.

If that is true, and the federal government is having to backstop climate change, we've gone from some sort of theoretical idea about climate change to a hit on the fisc, as Mr. Hamilton would know better than most. In fact, this one was about a \$2-billion hit on fisc, which arguably kept the government from going into balance this year rather than next.

So what provision is being made for the almost inevitable increases of hits for disaster relief?

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I can speak to the initiatives of Environment Canada around the climate change adaptation initiatives that we administer. I can't speak to the Public Safety budget for disaster compensation to jurisdictions that are hit hard by natural disasters or to that particular program itself.

What I can say is that since 2006 we have invested adaptation initiatives in the range of \$235 million to improve our understanding of climate change and to help Canadians plan. The funding support initiatives on adaptation in areas of human health are an example, as well as those for the north and for vulnerable communities. We're also working with programs to adapt our standards of building codes in the north and in other areas.

•(1620)

**Hon. John McKay:** Minister, your line item for climate change and clean air in the main estimates for 2014-15 is \$154 million. In your plans and priorities, you go from \$154 million in 2014-15 to \$54 million two budget cycles later.

How is it that your ministry can drop \$100 million for climate change initiatives and expect to deal with ever-escalating climate change catastrophes?

**Mr. Bob Hamilton:** If I have your questioning correctly, what you're pointing out is that we have a number of programs in Environment Canada—climate change and clean air being examples—for which we get time-limited funding, so we get it for five years or some other period of time. What you see in the projections going forward are the cases in which that funding is due to expire. It runs out at a point in time, and then a decision is made as to whether it is renewed and at what level.

**Hon. John McKay:** But Mr. Hamilton, your funding has been flatlined for five or six years now, and your projections in both the overall program and the sub-program.... You project, in the sub-program, where you are actually doing the GHG emissions regulations, that you're going from \$95 million to \$35 million.

**Mr. Bob Hamilton:** But that's the issue I'm trying to explain. When we get that funding, we get it for a period of time, so it expires, say, after five years, which is exactly what's happening here, and it is to be renewed.

**Hon. John McKay:** I get the point, but this is an extremely significant file, and the Government of Canada's projection at this point is to go from 609 people working on the file to 284, and on the overall file, from around 700 people down to 338. You can appreciate that this doesn't inspire a lot of confidence that the government is prepared to deal with what is arguably an existential issue.

**Mr. Bob Hamilton:** I guess, Mr. Chair, what I'd have to say is that the reporting requirement we operate in doesn't allow us to assume that Parliament gives us money at the end of a five-year period. So in our projection, we have to say, if it is due to expire in five years, that it will expire. There will be a decision about whether to extend it, and if it's an important priority, it will be extended.

So it's really a feature of our reporting that shows us having to drop that off, because the decision on the matter will be made at a future time. That is just reflected in the numbers.

**Hon. John McKay:** You have to take note of the concern that Canadians have about the climate change initiatives. Rather than dealing with the reporting requirements as having a huge drop-off—and I would say a \$60-million drop-off is pretty serious and another \$100-million drop-off here is another pretty serious drop-off. Rather than actually budgeting now and dealing with the funding requirements that are going to be necessary going forward, we end up with an anticipated drop-off in climate change initiatives by your department.

Does that make any sense?

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** I can respond to that. I think what the deputy said is very clear. Main estimates processes are time-sensitive, a snapshot in time. Decisions on the renewal of programs are yet to be made. We can't anticipate what the next budget will be. Decisions on those programs are reflected on an annual basis, on renewals and so on.

We are taking a leadership role on climate change. We've done more to address the issue of climate change than the previous government. I think that's evident in the work we are doing and the investments we are making in Environment Canada. When the decisions are made on the issue of the new budget renewal, those will be reflected in the main estimates. But what is before us today is a snapshot in time, and the member knows full well the process of how we produce these reports in the House.

•(1625)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. McKay. Your time is up.

We'll move now to Mr. Choquette for five minutes.

[Translation]

**Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Minister, thank you for joining us today.

I'd like to discuss the 2014 climate summit taking place this September in New York. Do you know whether the Prime Minister will be in attendance?

[English]

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** I think that's a question you should be raising with the Prime Minister. I'm not aware.

Thank you.

**Mr. François Choquette:** Okay. Are you going to be present at this summit?

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** I believe I'm going to be there.

**Mr. François Choquette:** Perfect.

[Translation]

Discussions during the summit will focus on post-2020 commitments. What post-2020 commitments does Canada plan to make in regard to climate change?

[English]

**The Chair:** Mr. Choquette, I'd just like to remind you and the rest of the committee that we're here today dealing with the estimates, and to project into 2020 is a little beyond the scope of the estimates for 2014-15. I would urge you to try to keep as close....

I know I give a lot of latitude. I have given a lot of latitude in questioning to members on all sides of the House today, but I think we're going beyond the scope. I'd urge you to try to stay to questions on the estimates.

[Translation]

**Mr. François Choquette:** We know what's coming up as far as the negotiations are concerned and we also know that a budget is needed to prepare for post-2015 talks. The year 2015 isn't far away at all. So I think the issue does pertain to the estimates, but that's fine, I will abide by your decision.

To what extent do climate change reductions reflect steps taken by the provinces? What percentage of those reductions is due to the economic downturn?

If you don't have the figures with you, could you send them to the committee in the coming weeks?

[English]

Do you have the number?

**The Chair:** Minister, you can respond to that, or Mr. Hamilton.

Mr. Hamilton.

[Translation]

**Mr. Bob Hamilton:** I don't have those numbers right now, but I will send them to you.

You're interested in the percentage attributable to the provinces. Would you mind repeating the last part of your question?

**Mr. François Choquette:** The percentages attributable to the economic downturn, basically those tied to the federal government.

Thank you kindly, Mr. Hamilton.

I'd like to congratulate you, minister, on creating national marine conservation areas and marine protected areas.

On that note, I'd like to talk about an area that has been proposed as a marine protected area for some ten years now, around the St. Lawrence. Things are at a standstill.

When do you expect to create a marine protected area in the St. Lawrence?

It's fine if you don't have the answer today. You can consider the matter and get back to us with the answer.

**Mr. Alan Latourelle (Chief Executive Officer, Parks Canada):** I'm not exactly sure of the area you're referring to.

**Mr. François Choquette:** I'm referring to the St. Lawrence marine protected area. It's near Rimouski, where a marine park already exists. In fact, I will send you the question in writing, if you like.

Mr. Chair, I am going to split my time with Mr. Bevington.

[English]

**The Chair:** Mr. Bevington, you have one and a half minutes.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):** Thank you, Minister, for attending here today.

You mentioned black carbon. Black carbon is an important element in the fight against climate change. You know we both come from the two ridings that represent the high Arctic in Canada. In Canada today we produce 98,000 tonnes of black carbon a year. That's excluding that which is produced by forest fires and flaring from oil and gas production.

In a speech you gave in October to Yukon College, you said:

It's critical that the [Arctic] council help people adapt to these changes, including by sharing best practices. We must also explore together how best to advance work on short-lived climate forcing agents, like black carbon.

Since it is critical that the Arctic Council does this and explores together how best to advance work, why did you boycott the meeting of the Arctic Council task force on black carbon and methane last month? Particularly, when at the March senior Arctic official meeting in Yellowknife, Canada and the other Arctic states were adamant that the Russian military action in Crimea would not affect circumpolar cooperation. We've seen the cancelling of the meeting in Iqaluit....

Will you continue to refuse to cooperate in future meetings of the Arctic Council on these very important issues surrounding the environment?

• (1630)

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** In terms of the work on the Arctic Council, I appreciate the member asking the question. It's been a while in the House since I've actually gotten a question on the Arctic Council.

It is important for the Arctic Council to tackle issues related to black carbon and methane, which is why I introduced it as a priority item during our chairmanship for Arctic nations, from Arctic to Arctic, to tackle the issue of black carbon and methane. Not only that, we introduced and were the lead in creating the Climate and Clean Air Coalition, and we have contributed \$1.2 billion to an international fund to support other countries that contribute to the development of black carbon and methane that affect the Arctic nations.

Canada is a founding member along with Sweden. There are now about 70 organizations that are members of the Climate Clean Air Coalition, which tackles those two areas, and to be a member of that organization you have to work and develop a plan to reduce black carbon and methane. So, linking that initiative to the Arctic Council, it's also important for the Arctic nations to work together and put plans in place and do our part as Arctic nations to mitigate the production of black carbon and methane and to work in partnerships, which is what we're doing. We'd be happy to report on that during our chairmanship, which will conclude next year.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** We went way over time on that one for Mr. Bevington.

We move now to Mr. Toet for five minutes.

**Mr. Lawrence Toet (Elmwood—Transcona, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to address quickly some of Mr. McKay's concerns about an investment in climate change. In the national conservation plan that we just unveiled, there's \$50 million for wetland rehabilitation, \$50 million for uplands, and \$100 million for natural area conservancy. All these areas work as flood protection, especially in the case of wetlands. There's great flood protection aspects to that and there's also carbon sequestration that's occurring with all this. So, there's a huge investment in the national conservation plan directed to all the concerns that Mr. McKay brought forward. I think he'll be very happy to hear that today.

Also, Mr. Carrie talked about clean air and the air that we breathe as Canadians. I think that's a very important aspect of what we do in our environment and in the protection of our environment. Mr. Carrie asked you a question about the clear air regulatory agenda, but you never had the opportunity to answer.

Would you like to have the opportunity to answer that question he brought forward?

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you for that.

On the clean air quality management system, since October 2012, following a four-year, comprehensive, multi-stakeholder process with the federal-provincial ministers of environment, it was agreed to start implementing a new air quality management system to further protect the health of Canadians—and the environment—from air pollution. The federal government is responsible for implementing two key elements of that system, which are the new ambient air

quality standards and the base level for industrial emission requirements for major industrial sectors.

In May 2013 we established a more ambitious air quality standard for fine particulate matter and ground-level ozone under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act of 1999, and currently we're working on the development of the air quality standards for nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide. The completion date for that is expected next year.

We're also preparing for the publication of the first phase of the industrial emission requirements. Once that's published, for the first time ever, we will be nationally consistent on the emission performance standards for the industrial facilities across Canada.

We're also continuing to collaborate with provincial-territorial counterparts on the reduction of air pollution through the local regional air quality management initiative, and we expect the implementation of the air quality management system to provide us with information that will be used to help us develop initiatives across Canada to protect the health of Canadians, as well as the environment. We are making progress in those areas.

● (1635)

**Mr. Lawrence Toet:** That's good.

There's another thing we heard a lot about as we were working through our different conservancy studies in working towards the national conservation plan. We talked a lot about the protection of our natural treasures by creating national parks. Mr. Latourelle will be very happy about that. From the testimony we received, and also from the work of the committee through our report, the need for future generations to be able to appreciate and enjoy these spaces was very clear.

I'm wondering if you also could give to our committee a bit of an update on our government's unprecedented funding, which we've brought forward for new national parks.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you.

Under the budget, as part of the national conservation plan, of course, we're committed to conserving our natural heritage. That includes the creation of national parks such as the Nááts'ihch'oh park, which is now being debated in the Senate, and the Bathurst Island and Mealy Mountains parks. The creation of the new national parks is funded through a specific budget allocation. For example, budget 2012 is a source of funds for the new Bathurst Island and Mealy Mountains parks' budgets. They're all incorporated.

In expanding our world-class national park system, our government provides Parks Canada the necessary funds to establish, develop, and operate new national parks. Since 2006, our government has protected 50,000 square kilometres of natural areas in Parks Canada's system. On May 14, Bill S-5 was tabled in the Senate on the Nááts'ihch'oh park, which is again one example of our commitment to protecting our areas. We'll continue to make investments in park development nationally.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister.

Thank you, Mr. Toet.

We'll move now to you, Ms. Leslie and Mr. Choquette. I believe you're sharing your time.

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** Thanks, Mr. Chair.

I have one quick question. Earlier we were cut off in a question asking about the budget that will be allocated to get us to our 2020 target, but I'd like to talk about the \$391 million that you talked about for park infrastructure in your opening statement.

There has been much fanfare about this \$391 million. You will acknowledge, Madam Minister, that \$1 million of that money is budgeted for this year—correct?—and that \$385 million is actually for after the next election. Isn't that right?

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** No, that's incorrect.

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** That's incorrect.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** That \$391 million is announced in this budget to deal with the parks infrastructure for this year.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** It was announced in the budget, but the plan to spend is \$1 million this year and the rest for after the next election, is that correct?

**The Chair:** Mr. Latourelle can answer that for Parks Canada.

**Mr. Alan Latourelle:** No, it was announced in the February budget and it will be reflected in our estimates through the supplementary estimates later this year. But they're for this year and then for future years.

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** Am I not understanding the budget? In the budget it was written out \$1 million scheduled for this year and \$385 million for after 2015.

**Mr. Alan Latourelle:** No, there's \$391 million over five years and through the supplementary estimates, again, the numbers will be reflected.

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** Okay, well, I stand corrected. I read it in black and white, so that's interesting. I'll have to come back to that.

**Mr. Alan Latourelle:** The only thing I could say is that you're probably reading the section that's on an accrual basis, that shows that even if you invest, for example, \$50 million this year, the depreciation would be close to \$1 million this year only. So it could be the difference between your interpretation.

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** I still have trouble with that, but I'll pass on the rest of my time to Mr. Choquette.

**The Chair:** Mr. Choquette.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. François Choquette:** Thank you again, minister.

Everyone has said that you won't be able to reach the low climate change targets by 2020. Even Environment Canada officials have said so.

How many megatonnes are you short as far as reaching your 2020 target goes?

● (1640)

[*English*]

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you for that.

As I stated, we remain committed in dealing with the targets that we had identified domestically through our government. We are taking a sector-by-sector approach to reaching those targets. We have taken actions in the two areas where we see the most emissions domestically. That's in the transportation and electricity system. I think I mentioned that in my statement.

Since 2005, we have seen a real decrease in that. Greenhouse gas emissions have decreased by 5.1% while the economy continues to grow. Emissions per capita have also been decreasing since 2005. This trend is projected to continue to 2030.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. François Choquette:** Thank you, but I would appreciate it if you would provide us with the answer in writing, in other words, how many megatonnes you are short in order to reach your target by 2020.

I know you work very hard with the provinces and municipalities. Quebec and California are collaborating on a fantastic initiative, a carbon exchange. Ontario is also interested in such a system.

What are your thoughts on the initiative?

[*English*]

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** I don't know about the bursary program of Quebec. If you want to share that information I'd be happy to review it.

Thank you.

**Mr. François Choquette:** You don't know about the cap-and-trade system with Quebec and California...?

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** I thought you were talking about a bursary program through the translation.

In terms of the efforts of provinces related to greenhouse gas reductions, I commend every jurisdiction for doing their part to deal with reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. If we did nothing, as a country we would not be seeing the reductions in the greenhouse gas emissions. We are seeing the evidence of reductions in that.

I think it's also important to know that the footprint of Canada on the global stage of greenhouse gas emissions is less than 2%, and the efforts we're undertaking in Canada involve the provinces, the territories, as well as industry and our targeting areas of our own footprint. So our sector-by-sector approach to dealing with our footprint, to dealing with a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions is working.

As an example, we are the first country to introduce the coal-fired regulations and to ban that. Internationally, we were the first of its kind. It is also important to recognize that provinces are a partner in any efforts that we do.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister.

We have about four minutes left. The minister needs to leave. We kept her for another 15 minutes, because we were late starting.

For the last four minutes we'll be going to Mr. Woodworth.

**Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Minister, for your attendance with us here today.

As you know, my riding is Kitchener Centre, which is in the middle of southern Ontario, southwest Ontario. It's a region rich in ecosystems, both natural, urban, and agricultural. It literally supports millions of people. So I have great interest in the Great Lakes water quality, which supports all of those activities and people.

The committee, at my request, is just wrapping up a study on Great Lakes water quality. We have learned that much of the heavy lifting has been done, but there is work yet to do. A multilateral approach is the best approach. I have the idea that our government's Great Lakes action plan, in fact, adopts that approach.

I wondered if you could give us some details about the Great Lakes action plan.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you.

Before I begin I also want to thank the committee for the work that you've done related to this initiative. I know that many hours were spent dealing with the issue of water quality.

On the Great Lakes action plan, as you're well aware, the sheer size of the Great Lakes and the watershed that feeds into them means that we have an area that requires all levels of government—municipal, federal, provincial—as well as society to do their part. For their part our government continues to work with local and provincial partners to protect and restore the water resources for the benefit of all Canadians.

This is why we have renewed the funding for the Great Lakes action plan in budget 2010. To restore the quality in the area, \$8 million was invested in that per year and it's ongoing.

As well, in 2012 our government also announced it would commit \$46.3 million to support its part of the project to clean up the contaminated areas in Randle Reef in Hamilton Harbour with Ontario, the City of Hamilton, Hamilton port, and U.S. Steel. As well, in the main estimates we are spending an additional \$19.1 million to speak to the Randle Reef initiatives. Again, the total cost of the project is being shared equally with Canada and Ontario. As well, investments related to contaminated management projects have been completed in some areas.

Investments are being made to address the very concerns that have been raised by the committee as well. Again, we wouldn't be able to do this without the partnerships of various stakeholders and governments in addressing that. We are moving forward in this important initiative.

Thank you.

• (1645)

**Mr. Stephen Woodworth:** Thank you, Minister.

One of the emerging issues recently in the Great Lakes, particularly in the west of Lake Erie, is a recurrence of algal blooms. We learned in our study that this is in part related to phosphorous discharge of nutrients into the Great Lakes.

We've also learned that the government has pivoted to deal with that and has something called the Great Lakes nutrient initiative, which is at least in part addressing that. I wonder if you could provide us with some of the details of that important initiative.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As an update on that, in October 2012 we announced the Great Lakes nutrient initiative and \$16 million was invested to specifically address the toxicity of the algae in the Great Lakes and with an internal focus on Lake Erie.

The Great Lakes nutrient initiative will also assist the Government of Canada in delivering on its commitment under the recently amended Canada-United States Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. The Government of Canada in conjunction with the United States will review the International Joint Commission recommendations as we work together to try to address the issues related to what you've just identified.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Woodworth.

Thank you, Minister, for the time you've given us today and for staying a few extra minutes.

We're going to suspend for just a few minutes while we allow the minister to leave. Then we'll reconvene with her officials hopefully in one and a half minutes.

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\_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

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• (1650)

**The Chair:** I'd like to reconvene as quickly as possible, please.

We are going to proceed with our witnesses from the Department of the Environment, Bob Hamilton, deputy minister, and Carol Najm, assistant deputy minister and chief financial officer; from the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, Ron Hallman; and from Parks Canada, Alan Latourelle.

Because we've had the opening statement from our minister, we will not be having opening statements from our officials. We will proceed immediately to the seven-minute rounds. We'll begin with Mr. Woodworth.

**Mr. Stephen Woodworth:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Hamilton, I'll perhaps direct this to you, but if someone else is familiar I don't mind it going to them. I ran out of time asking the minister about the Great Lakes nutrient initiative. I am particularly interested in that because I have a bit of brief information or a review of it that suggests to me that it is heavily oriented toward scientific research and monitoring, and there may even be something in the order of 30 or 40 different projects that are being funded to get a grip on the challenge of the Great Lakes nutrient flows.

Can you tell me in any more detail about some of that? Am I right in understanding it that way?

**Mr. Bob Hamilton:** Perhaps I can say that, at one level, you're right. There's a lot of scientific activity to try to understand this problem we have with nutrient levels in the Great Lakes.

There are actually some people behind me, one of whom might want to come forward to the table, who could talk a little bit more about the science or the actual programming. Otherwise, if I don't have the people here who know that in detail, I can get back to you with the specifics of our nutrient program, how the money and the effort is being broken down in terms of the science, where the money is going. But I can't break it down for you.

**Mr. Stephen Woodworth:** I would be happy if you could file that with the clerk for distribution to the members.

**Mr. Bob Hamilton:** Yes.

**Mr. Stephen Woodworth:** Thank you.

I'd like to go back a little bit to the question that Mr. McKay raised, just to make sure I've understood the answer correctly. As I understand it, looking at the main estimates that we have before us, we are not looking at necessarily the end expenditures that we might expect for the year. There isn't a necessary connection between the main estimates and what we will eventually end up spending.

Is that a correct general statement?

**Mr. Bob Hamilton:** I think in general what we see is that, yes, there are the main estimates, and then through the year there are the supplementary estimates that add to that. If you look at it at the end of the year, you'll see usually more money spent than was in the main estimates, because we got additional money.

A good example this year would be the national conservation plan, which might not show up in the main estimates but would likely show up in supplementary estimates (B) or (C), where we'd get that money.

That's one issue. The other issue, though, that's tied up there....

Did you want to deal with that one, or did you want me to talk about the forward-looking one?

**Mr. Stephen Woodworth:** Just carry on, please.

**Mr. Bob Hamilton:** The forward-looking one is that when you look at our projections going forward in the report on plans and priorities, it shows a path for what we anticipate expenditures, budgets, to be in future years. That's where we run into this reporting issue, which is that if money is due to sunset because the government provides, say, five-year funding, we show that as ending after five years.

Typically what you see...and in the clean air program, it did sunset at one point, and then it was renewed. That may or may not happen again. It's just that we can't assume that. The money hasn't been given to us yet, so we show it as going off, but as that money expires, there will be a decision made on whether to renew it at that level or at a different level.

**Mr. Stephen Woodworth:** I guess the point I want to be clear about, without belabouring it too much, is that someone I think said that the main estimates are simply a snapshot, but the actual budget process is dynamic and may well end up at a different place from what we see in that snapshot. Is that right?

• (1655)

**Mr. Bob Hamilton:** Exactly. We may be coming back in front of this committee to talk about supplementary estimates (B) or (C), and it will be those things added to the budget through the course of the year.

**Mr. Stephen Woodworth:** Very good.

I noticed a significant reallocation of funds to the sustainable ecosystems program. I must confess that I sometimes get a bit cross-eyed looking at the numbers, but it looked to me as if it was being reallocated from \$66.589 million to \$92.013 million, a difference of 38.2%.

That looked to me like a significant strengthening of this program. I wondered if you could give me the reasons for that reallocation and give me some details about the sustainable ecosystems program itself.

**Mr. Bob Hamilton:** I'll let Carol, who is our CFO, comment on that.

I would note that one thing that's covered in that line is money that we've put toward the Randle Reef project. I think that's about \$19 million. That's some money that was reallocated.

So yes, it was a significant increase, but there are probably other things going on in there as well.

**Ms. Carol Najm (Assistant Deputy Minister and Chief Financial Officer, Finance Branch, Department of the Environment):** Part of that increase can be explained by a reallocation of grants and contributions to O and M. For the cleanup of the Randle Reef site, the funds were originally provided in grants and contributions and then throughout the estimates process were reallocated to O and M; hence, you see the increase in the funding.

**Mr. Stephen Woodworth:** In a sense, then, it's kind of a bookkeeping transfer of funds.

**Ms. Carol Najm:** Correct.

**The Chair:** Just for the record, would you mind defining what "O and M" is?

**Ms. Carol Najm:** It's operating and maintenance funds.

**The Chair:** Thanks.

**Mr. Stephen Woodworth:** Do I have time left?

**The Chair:** You do. You have about one minute and three seconds.

**Mr. Stephen Woodworth:** Thank you.

Could you tell us a little bit about the Lake Simcoe-Georgian Bay cleanup? There is some money going into that this year. What is this new money going to be used for? Why is the government injecting such significant amounts into the Great Lakes cleanup efforts?

**Mr. Bob Hamilton:** This is the Lake Simcoe-southeastern Georgian Bay cleanup fund. It used to be the Lake Simcoe fund and it was expanded to include southeastern Georgian Bay. A lot of that money goes to community-based projects. We look at things like how to reduce phosphorus inputs. It's part of a continuing effort that we had with Lake Simcoe, and we've expanded it to southeastern Georgian Bay. It's really trying to come at issues not unlike we talked about earlier, the Great Lakes nutrients initiative. It's trying to look at projects that can come up with solutions to those problems.

**Mr. Stephen Woodworth:** Very good.

I should say we did hear evidence at the Great Lakes water quality study hearings from people who were describing the changing challenges in Georgian Bay. I'm very glad that your department is alive to that and is responding to that.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Woodworth.

We move now to Mr. Bevington, for seven minutes.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, you're very generous.

**The Chair:** Thank you. Enjoy it while you can.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** Okay.

Thanks to all the witnesses here, of course. I'm pleased that you're here to talk to us.

Mr. Latourelle, we've had a number of commitments in the Northwest Territories to expand national parks. What has been the global expansion of the national parks budget in the Northwest Territories?

**Mr. Alan Latourelle:** I can speak specifically...for example, we have what we call a northern model. When we establish a new national park in northern Canada, the Government of Canada has been investing \$1.4 million ongoing for this new park, between \$1.4 and \$1.6 million. In the Nahanni expansion, which I'll use as a practical example, there's an \$1.4 million additional annual investment in Parks Canada to manage that expansion, plus close to \$5 million in terms of the capital infrastructure for that park. For each new national park, we get additional funding that's allocated to us. It doesn't affect our existing budget or existing programs.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** How much of that \$5 million that was promised has been spent? I think it was almost six years ago when Minister Prentice wrote me a letter promising me that money would be spent on capital facilities.

• (1700)

**Mr. Alan Latourelle:** The money that's been spent so far is about \$224,000, but I'll explain why. We don't just go out and put infrastructure as we feel is required from a Parks Canada perspective

only. We work, in this case, for example, with the community, in terms of the cooperative management body we have. It's the cooperative management body that identifies where we should be spending or investing those resources. But the \$5 million is still going to be invested.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** Are you augmenting the \$5 million? Over the last seven years, the price of construction of facilities in the north has gone through the roof. If you're talking about \$5 million that was earmarked in 2007, what are you going to get for that in 2014? You're talking almost 10 years by the time you start building. The inflation in capital buildings is enormous in western Canada. So you're still sticking with that \$5-million figure?

**Mr. Alan Latourelle:** Mr. Chair, when we establish a new national park, we never spend the full amount the first year. The information that was provided at that time by the minister—the \$5 million—was the investment, not in year one. It takes a period of time because we work with the community, and the community works with us, to decide where to invest.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** The point is that you have certain things you have to build with that money. In 2007, \$5 million was earmarked for a new office building in Fort Simpson, a suboffice building in Nahanni Butte, neither of which has been done. It's going to be 10 years before you actually build. How is that \$5 million going to handle the work that you have to do in those two capital facilities?

**Mr. Alan Latourelle:** Well, I'll just use Fort Simpson as a very practical example. We could have gone on our own, spent \$5 million, and built the building year one. I think what we're doing is the prudent responsible thing. We're working with the community to jointly deliver together and develop a new facility. The Government of Canada put its money forward, and then the community matches their funding and we have a new building that's occupied by both. That's the approach we've taken there based on the community consultation.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** With the commitment for the new national park, what's the capital commitment there?

**Mr. Alan Latourelle:** The funding will be very similar. I can get you the exact numbers for that specific park.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** Right.

How is the progress on the East Arm national park?

**Mr. Alan Latourelle:** There's been a lot of progress. We're working with the GNWT to work together to identify what the proposed boundaries are for consultation. We have an agreement in principle with the Dene and we are starting the consultation with the Métis of the GNWT.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** Further to that, within the whole national park structure in the Northwest Territories, are you actively engaged now in a larger project to bring tourism into the area? We have these very large national parks that are occupying a great deal of the space of the Northwest Territories and there needs to be economic benefit returning to the people of the north.

**Mr. Alan Latourelle:** There are economic benefits. The last study that was done in 2008-09 showed \$53 million in economic benefits for the three territories as a result of our national parks. What we're doing now, though, is putting more emphasis on—I call it unleashing the economic potential of our national parks up north.

We have new partnerships with the GNWT government, for example, and with the airline industry, because one of the challenges that we heard from visitors is how to plan a visit from Toronto, for example, to Ivvavik. We're working with the airline industry and having full package tours, so people leaving from Toronto can get right there and get services on site by the local community.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** Those are my questions on national parks and I thank you for your answers.

I appreciate the work that national parks does in the north, but I am concerned that the investment amounts that you've identified are simply not going to be adequate for the future, that they're not going to do the job that we need to see for the investment that the indigenous people of the north have made by agreeing to these large tracts of land being turned over for the good of the people of Canada. That has to be recognized and it has to be properly funded. We can't have this shortfall going on forever.

**Mr. Alan Latourelle:** I want to be clear, Mr. Chair, that from our perspective there is not a shortfall. But I think there has been a shortfall, to be frank, in that I think we haven't been as aggressive as we could have been in terms of economic development in the area. We are dealing with that now.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I'm going to move now to Mr. Toet for seven minutes.

● (1705)

**Mr. Lawrence Toet:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to our witnesses for being here, because it is very important subject matter that we're covering here today.

One of the things I know is always a real challenge when we deal with main estimates is that there's this real desire for people to go back and check main estimates from the previous year to the main estimates for this year, which fundamentally does not function and does not work.

We know through the supplemental process of the year before that there are a lot of adjustments to those main estimates we saw for the year before. We also know we cannot allocate funds to a particular program or a particular fund until that is actually ready to move forward.

So we always have these challenges with the supplements and trying to compare. I think it's really important that there is an understanding of that as we go through this process, because so often as I sit on these committees, I see this desire to compare main estimates from one year to the next year and it really is something

that fundamentally is impossible to do. Would you agree with that statement?

**Mr. Bob Hamilton:** I agree that you have to be careful in how you do it. It is our reporting system, but you're right. The main estimates at the beginning of the year can be quite different and typically are quite different from what you actually spend at the end of the year. So you do have to compare them with caution and recognize that they are a point in time and that there will be other sources of funds that come to fruition as the year goes by.

**Mr. Lawrence Toet:** Great, thank you.

I think it's important to have that on the record, that there is that note, because I see and hear it so often in these committees that there's the desire to do that and it really isn't very functional.

I wanted to turn to the federal contaminated sites program, the action plan we have on that. Obviously, the federal sites that are contaminated are an area of concern for many Canadians. There is a lot of work that needs to be done, but also has been done. I know there are some record investments that have been made in these programs for cleaning up these sites.

Mr. Hamilton, I'm wondering if perhaps you could give us a little detail on where we're at with the federal contaminated sites action plan and where we're looking to be going as we move forward on this.

**Mr. Bob Hamilton:** Yes, it's actually a very significant program and we play an important role at Environment Canada, but it does involve a number of different parts of government to look at these sites, whether it's Aboriginal Affairs or others.

It's a program that started in 2005 and it's scheduled to run for 15 years and it has three phases. We're investing \$4.2 billion to clean up the federal contaminated sites. As of March of last year, \$1.8 billion had been spent. We had remediated 1,500 sites, we had assessed 9,700 sites, and actually had created about 11,000 jobs in that process.

So it's something we take quite seriously in terms of doing a good job of assessing the sites and the need and the level of contamination, and then doing what we can to clean it up. We'll be coming up to the start of another phase of this program and it'll be important that we identify the highest priority sites and move on those. Yes, it's a very big program.

**Mr. Lawrence Toet:** Briefly, you talked about the highest priority sites. What do you use as your measuring rod or your measuring stick for your priorities? What do you look at when you're coming up with priority cleanup sites?

**Mr. Bob Hamilton:** There are a couple of things. First, we have to decide which ones we're going to assess, and then we do an assessment on those. Then we look at things like the degree of contamination, who's going to be affected by it, and frankly some of the practical realities of addressing the situation. We try to identify those sites where we think spending the dollar will give us the biggest bang for the buck.

It's always a little bit difficult when you put competing pressures in there, but we do try to find the ones where we think each dollar we spend gives us the maximum benefit. I don't have the full list of criteria we use but that would be the basic element, where the contamination is the most serious and where we can have the biggest impact by cleaning them up.

**Mr. Lawrence Toet:** Thank you.

Mr. Chair, I'll pass the rest of my time to Mr. Sopuck.

**The Chair:** Mr. Sopuck, you have about two minutes and forty seconds.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** Perfect.

I want to take up on something Mr. McKay talked about, the notion of volatile weather events causing damage and great harm.

I'm more familiar with the Canadian prairies situation. Not that I was around then, but looking back at the records, and looking at records is the only way to determine whether weather has gotten more volatile or not—impressions are simply not good enough—the dry years we had were in the 1930s. Then 1961 was a dry year. The 1980s were dry. The 1990s were wet. The 2000s were a combination of wet and dry years.

In terms of flooding, 1826 was the worst flood in prairie Canada that we had, then the 1950 Winnipeg flood, the 1997 flood, the 2011 flood, and the 2013 Calgary events.

The reason I'm bringing that up is that weather volatility has been with us for a long time. When people talk about extreme weather events and linking it to doing something about these extreme weather events, who immediately dive into the topic of reducing carbon emissions and dealing with climate change, there's an obvious question that arises.

The minister made the point that Canada has 2% of carbon emissions in the world. That's a fact; it's not an opinion. So if Canada, for example, were to completely eliminate carbon emissions—or, say, cut them in half so we are now 1% of the world's carbon emissions—would we change the weather? That's the implication of those kinds of statements. Would we see any change in this volatility?

• (1710)

**Mr. Bob Hamilton:** I'll take a couple of angles at that.

Yes, it's true that we are 2% of global emissions. It is a global problem, and if we're going to be tackling it, everybody has to contribute. In fact, that's been an approach that Canada has taken to the international negotiations for a number of years, that it's important to get all of the emitters around the table. We all have a role to play, but everybody has to be there. We're a player, but we're

relatively small. By ourselves, we are not going to influence the course of climate change.

At the same time, we take our commitment seriously in terms of trying to meet our targets for Copenhagen and do what we can on mitigation. But the other side of what we're looking at that's in the global discussions for our domestic plans is adaptation and doing the best we can to put information out there and help people adapt to these extreme weather events, because when they happen they do cost money. They obviously cause people discomfort and distress, and we need to figure out ways to help adapt to those situations.

We do try to take on mitigation where we can, in the context of all the other and admittedly some much larger players than us. But on the adaptation side, as the minister said, we've put a significant amount of money toward adaptation to try to help deal with this whenever we have it. Because no matter how successful we are on the mitigation front, we're probably still going to have to deal with some adaptation issues in Canada and elsewhere.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Sopuck.

Mr. McKay, you have seven minutes.

**Hon. John McKay:** Thank you.

For the benefit of Mr. Sopuck, I recommend him reading the Insurance Bureau of Canada's policy report, which is where I was getting my figures from. The insurance folks are taking it pretty seriously.

I agree completely with the latter part of your answer that the mitigation and adaptation needs to get going and get going quickly, because the taxpayer of Canada is going to be the backstop. This leads to kind of an interesting theoretical question because the insurance industry is starting to recognize this and is figuring out what products they can actually price, because they see it as, if you will, a market opportunity. The more they price the market, the less is the chance that taxpayers will have to pick up the tab.

Out of curiosity, is Environment Canada engaged in any conversations with the insurance industry about, as you say, the burden of the risk of extreme catastrophic weather events?

**Mr. Bob Hamilton:** Yes, it's a good point. We do actually have discussions with the insurance industry. As you say, their business is dealing with these things when they happen, so they're conscious of trying to figure out what they predict will happen in the future and trying to map out what they should be doing in terms of premiums and policies, etc. So we do talk to them.

The other people who are quite interested in this are really those who have significant investments in infrastructure going forward, and the federal government would be one party, whether it's a hydroelectric dam.... Even business operations out there are starting to look at weather pattern changes. If they see these, does that have any impact on how they are going to operate in the future? I think there's a number of not only insurance companies but business interests and others that are looking at what we know about the future and what the climate will present to us, extreme weather events and otherwise, and it's a prediction. It's still something that isn't black and white, but you can actually do some modelling—

**Hon. John McKay:** But there are trend lines....

**Mr. Bob Hamilton:** —and try to predict what you think can happen. At Environment Canada, we're looking at ways to improve the information we can put out there about what we think might happen, so that others, whether it's a business, a municipality, or an insurance company, can use that to better understand, at least, what the models are telling us.

• (1715)

**Hon. John McKay:** That's my core point. As you flatline your budget, or you hope in the next couple of years to get back to baseline funding, you're actually going behind, because the events are reasonably predictable. To go on a flatline budget is actually to go behind. So your ability to contribute to the data needs, at least, of the insurance industry is becoming more and more circumscribed.

**Mr. Bob Hamilton:** I would say as you look at running an organization like we are, sometimes you have to deal not just with a flatline budget but a declining budget. It's to find ways to do your job and allocate your priorities such that you can deliver on them. In a world of a flatlining budget, it doesn't mean we have to spend the exact same amount on every activity, so it's part of the challenge to do that.

**Hon. John McKay:** I don't disagree that you move things around, but overall, for the last six years, this budget's been a flatline budget.

In the little time I have left, Rouge Park, how many square kilometres are we working on now?

**Mr. Alan Latourelle:** With the boundary that's been identified, 58 square kilometres is what we—

**Hon. John McKay:** How much are you negotiating for? Anything else?

**Mr. Alan Latourelle:** We have agreement now with everyone except Markham, which we're still having discussions with.

**Hon. John McKay:** Is there additional...beyond the 58 kilometres?

**Mr. Alan Latourelle:** No, that is the boundary of the park that we have consent on.

**Hon. John McKay:** So there's no chance of getting anything more than 58 kilometres.

**Mr. Alan Latourelle:** As with any park anywhere in Canada, things may change over time, but we always have a boundary that we work with in terms of the initial establishment, and that is the boundary.

**Hon. John McKay:** At this point, are you having any other negotiations with any other entity like the airport to acquire any other lands?

**Mr. Alan Latourelle:** We have identified the boundary that we were interested in at the outset of this process. We are continuing that work, and until we've completed that process, we are not supposed to be anywhere—

**Hon. John McKay:** So the answer is no, and 58 kilometres is the ceiling right now.

**Mr. Alan Latourelle:** That's what we're working on now, yes.

**Hon. John McKay:** I don't know who to direct this to, but since climate change seems to be the issue du jour, can any one of you tell me what meetings you've had with the oil and gas industry in the last six months? What was the state of the negotiations? Is there any chance that we are going to actually have a price per tonne?

**Mr. Bob Hamilton:** We meet regularly with members of the industry and environmental groups. I can't really elaborate on what the minister said. We don't have the regulations now. We're working on them. There have been good discussions with the province. It's a complicated area to try to get right, and when they're ready we'll put them out, but there has been a significant amount of work.

**Hon. John McKay:** So meetings but no negotiations.

**Mr. Bob Hamilton:** No, but just to be clear, that's not to say there aren't discussions. But there's no negotiation today—

**Hon. John McKay:** There's nothing on the table.

**Mr. Bob Hamilton:** If I meet with the CAPP, the issue of GHG regulations comes up—

**Hon. John McKay:** Megan's been on this committee a lot longer than I have, and she keeps asking the same question since I've come on the committee, which is, what's the state of the negotiations? We're going to keep on getting it right. Well, this is three, four, or five years now, and we still don't have it right. These must be incredibly complicated.

**Mr. Bob Hamilton:** I look forward to the day when we have them done.

**Hon. John McKay:** So do I, then I won't have to ask the question.

**The Chair:** I'm going to give three minutes each to the last two questioners, so we have a bit of time to actually approve our estimates.

Ms. Leslie, for three minutes, and then Mr. Sopuck, for three minutes.

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** Thanks.

I have a question about the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency. That's Mr. Hallman.

The main estimates indicate that the actual expenditures were \$3 million less in 2012-13 than current main estimates due in part, and I quote, “to lower than expected payments under the Participant Funding Program due to transition from the former Canadian Environmental Assessment Act to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012.”

Can you help me out and help me understand what happened there? Is it that there were lower payments, or fewer people participating? What aspects of the 2012 act have caused this difference? Or is it the 2012 act that caused the difference?

**Mr. Ron Hallman (President, Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency):** It's not the act per se, but it's the transition in terms of what we were funding, and how. Now we focus participant funding on certain stages of the EA process. It's based on take-up and need when a proponent is moving through those different phases of a project. If it's at the EIS stage, the environmental impact statement stage, if the proponent delivers on time as per their forecast, then the participant funding would go out to first nations or other aboriginal groups to participate at that—

• (1720)

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** I just want to pick up on a word that you used, though. You used the word “transition”. If this is because of the transition, does it mean it will continue like this or is this just a hiccup with the transition?

**Mr. Ron Hallman:** There was probably a little bit of a hiccup in terms of the transition at that time because of projects that were already in process or assessments that were in process were transitioned. However, I would like to make clear we do have with the participant funding program, and the EA process in general, an inherent inability to predict when projects will be completed, when a proponent will deliver an EIS, etc. We make commitments with first nations groups for the funding that they will get, but they only get that money when a project reaches the stage for which it's being funded, and we carry those commitments forward into future years.

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** Okay, thank you very much.

Is that it?

**The Chair:** Thirty seconds....

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** Thirty seconds....

Conservation plan, I think it would be Ms. Najm.

Do you have any idea what money's attached to this? Is this new money? How is this being allocated? There was a number thrown out, \$252 million. Is it money already awarded to other programs, like fisheries conservation, or is this new money?

**Ms. Carol Najm:** It is new money.

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** Okay, we didn't know that.

**Ms. Carol Najm:** It was announced in budget 2014 and is not yet reflected in these main estimates.

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** So it's not in the estimates. That would have been my follow-up.

**Ms. Carol Najm:** Not in the estimates.... It's going forward.

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** Thanks.

**The Chair:** You're at 3:01, Ms. Leslie.

We're moving now to Mr. Sopuck.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** I only have 2:59 now.

I'm going to go back to my thread again.

Mr. Hamilton, when you answered my question you immediately segued into the concept of adaptation to extreme weather events and so on. I want to zero in on the issue of whether, if Canada reduces CO2 emissions by a significant amount, will we ameliorate extreme weather events?

**Mr. Bob Hamilton:** I think I started my answer by saying, no. We're 2% of the total global emissions. I think your example was if we went down to 1%; I guess that would have an impact, but it's not going to change the course of events.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** Okay, so crippling the Canadian economy with a carbon tax or putting a price on carbon and so on, I can very well see, possibly, in the world that the opposition parties inhabit, they'll believe that carbon emissions will go down. That may be the case, but what you're basically saying is if we reduce carbon emissions in Canada, it's basically going to have no effect.

**Mr. Bob Hamilton:** Can I just nuance that a little bit? But, yes, you're right, the actions in Canada alone are going to have a modest impact. We're 2%. The actions of Canada, in conjunction with other countries and in the global forum, can have a big effect. If you get China and the U.S. doing things, then you could actually accomplish something.

But the other point that you're making is that it's important for us. The economic impacts of what we do are an important consideration.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** I understand.

**Mr. Bob Hamilton:** But that's what makes this tricky. You see it in how we've approached the auto sector, how we've approached the coal-fired electricity, where you're trying to balance the environmental objective that you want, but recognizing the economic impact.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** I understand that, but, again, I want to go back to the simple point, to zero in on it, because our government is being criticized all the time on the climate change issue. You're basically saying if we did everything that the opposition demanded us to do, demanded of the Canadian economy in terms of significantly reducing our standard of living while at the same time reducing carbon emissions, in terms of Canada itself, and what we're doing in Canada here, it will have little or no effect on, for example, extreme weather events, or indeed, climate change in Canada?

**Mr. Bob Hamilton:** All I can do is repeat the facts that you have said, which is we are 2% of global emissions, roughly, so that's how much of the problem we're contributing to. If you reduce that, it's going to have a relatively modest impact overall.

But I would just let the facts speak for themselves. I'm not going to comment on what policy is right or wrong, but the facts are just as you've described.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** I'm not talking policy. I'm talking atmosphere or chemistry here, so it's not policy.

**The Chair:** Your time is over.

I want to remind committee members, however, of the statement that made by our minister on page 13. We're not only addressing issues in Canada but also committing \$1.2 billion to support a range of climate change projects in 60 developing countries. This is part of our international efforts as well. That's part of the equation.

We need to move now, committee members, to the actual voting on the estimates. You have this in the briefing notes from the Library of Parliament, pages 1 and 2, under Environment Canada and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, as well as Parks Canada.

I'm going to proceed down through these.

ENVIRONMENT

Vote 1—Operating expenditures.....\$687,165,091

Vote 5—Capital expenditures.....\$52,789,150

Vote 10—Grants and contributions.....\$107,286,053

(Votes 1, 5, and 10 agreed to on division)

CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AGENCY

Vote 1—Program expenditures.....\$28,227,786

(Vote 1 agreed to on division)

PARKS CANADA AGENCY

Vote 1—Program expenditures.....\$451,381,399

Vote 5—Payments to the new Parks and Historic Sites Account.....\$3,500,000

(Votes 1 and 5 agreed to on division)

**The Chair:** Shall I report the main estimates to the House?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** I will report these main estimates to the House on Monday when I file the report.

• (1725)

**Hon. John McKay:** You're going to do a double-dipper.

**The Chair:** Yes, I am.

**Hon. John McKay:** Do you get extra pay for that?

**The Chair:** Double time.

I will do so when I report the results of our great study on Great Lakes water quality. I think that concludes our time for today.

Thank you to our—

Mr. Hamilton is having a last word.

**Mr. Bob Hamilton:** Can I just have 30 seconds? I think I may have committed to providing something that I can't provide.

There was a question earlier, I believe from Mr. Choquette, who asked if I could attribute the actions of provinces to the GHG reductions. I can certainly show how much the provinces' GHG emissions are, but I don't think I can actually provide the attribution of "they did this and that produced that change". I will give the information that I can, but I didn't want to mislead the committee in saying that I would be able to provide that.

**The Chair:** Thank you for that clarification, Mr. Hamilton.

Again, my thanks to Mr. Hamilton, Ms. Najm, Mr. Hallman, and Alan Latourelle. Thank you for being here today.

Thank you, committee members. The meeting is adjourned.







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