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Chair

Mr. John Aldag

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• (1535)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.)): Everyone is here, so let's get started.

We're now on session number four of our main estimates review today. I'll go through a bit of the formality for today's proceedings.

To begin with, pursuant to Standing Order 81(4) and the order of reference of Thursday, April 11, 2019, the committee will now consider the main estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020.

We will consider votes 1 and 5 under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, and with that, I'd like to welcome Mr. Hallman, who is here for CEAA.

We will consider votes 1, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30 under the Department of the Environment, and we have Mr. Lucas here for the department.

We will consider votes 1 and 5 under the Parks Canada Agency, and Mr. Nadler is here.

I'd also like to welcome our minister, Minister McKenna, and parliamentary secretary Sean Fraser.

I will now call vote 1 under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, which will permit general discussion of the estimates and questioning of witnesses. We'll go into the opening statement by the minister, and then we'll go right into our round of questions. It's like a regular session where each party will have six minutes at a time, we rotate, and we'll get as far as we can in our discussion by five o'clock.

I would also like to welcome Ms. Stubbs for the Conservatives, who's here today as our special guest; Ms. Mathysen for the NDP and Mr. McKinnon on the Liberal side.

Minister, you have 10 minutes for an opening statement.

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change): Thank you very much, Chair.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to the committee. It's great being back; I appreciate the work the committee does. It's really important that action to protect the environment and tackle climate change is not a partisan issue.

[Translation]

I want to acknowledge the hard work of the colleagues who have joined me today: Sean Fraser, parliamentary secretary for this portfolio; Dr. Stephen Lucas, deputy minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada; Michael Nadler, acting chief executive officer of the Parks Canada Agency; and Ron Hallman, president of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency.

Gentlemen, thank you for your work.

[English]

I want to start by recognizing that we're on the traditional territory of the Algonquin and Anishinabe peoples.

I also want to recognize all the people who are suffering with the flooding that's going on. That's people in New Brunswick, in Quebec, in Ontario and in the national capital region. I know our members of Parliament are working very hard; thank you for that.

On behalf of the Government of Canada and all Canadians, my department is taking strong action to protect our environment, fight climate change, conserve nature and grow our economy.

On April 11, the main estimates were tabled. For Environment and Climate Change Canada, the main estimates for 2019-20 are \$1.8 billion. This represents an increase in planned spending of \$312.2 million.

[Translation]

The increase is mainly due to new funding for two priorities. The first is to re-profile funds for the low carbon economy fund to support our work on climate change and clean growth. The second is to better protect Canada's nature, parks and wild spaces.

[English]

These main estimates also include four new votes that total \$26.3 million. This includes Canada's marine safety response and funding for strong Arctic and northern communities.

[Translation]

In addition, we will be implementing a federal carbon offset system to develop the information technology infrastructure and tracking systems required for a national carbon offset credit system.

[English]

It also includes ensuring better disaster management, preparation and response. Unfortunately, the annual economic costs of disasters around the world have increased fivefold since the 1980s, as events related to climate change have occurred with more frequency and severity. Canada has not been immune to this trend.

Our planet is in crisis. Canadians are deeply anxious about climate change. Under the previous Conservative government, these concerns were ignored. Our country is warming at twice the global rate, according to expert Government of Canada scientists, and our north at three times the rate. Canadians voted for leadership that would confront this crisis with action: it is a moral imperative.

We're working hard to make sure all Canadians are part of our cleaner future, from resource workers and their communities to the school strikers and other young people calling for bold climate action.

Climate change is creating real and present dangers. Here in Ottawa and Gatineau, our riverbanks have been breached by floods once again. What we called the flood of a century now happens every few years.

[Translation]

Across our country, you will hear more and more stories related to the environment. These extreme weather events are happening more and more often because of a situation our species, humankind, has created.

[English]

The simple fact is that in 2019, if you don't have a plan for the environment, you don't have a plan for the economy. Our made in Canada climate plan, made with all Canadians, includes phasing out coal-fired electricity and regulating greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles, methane emissions from oil and gas, and HFCs, which on their own could account for half a degree of global warming. We're also investing in energy efficiency across the country.

An important part of any serious climate plan ensures it's no longer free to pollute. Climate change is already costing us a fortune. Last year, extreme weather caused \$1.9 billion in property damage. That number is estimated to go as high as \$43 billion by 2050.

[Translation]

Putting a price on carbon is a practical and proven solution to reduce emissions. Let me also unequivocally remind you that all direct proceeds from federal carbon pricing will be returned to the jurisdiction in which they were collected. In Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and New Brunswick, taxpayers get the money back through the climate action incentive when they file their 2018 taxes.

[English]

Let me be clear that all money collected under the price on pollution is going back into the province, with 90% of the money going directly to families. Eighty per cent of families will be better off, so go file your taxes if you are in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan or New Brunswick.

Last week, the parliamentary budget office's independent analysis found that under the federal system, all but the wealthiest 20% of Canadians will get more back through the climate action incentive rebate than they pay. A price on pollution encourages Canadians to make cleaner choices, reduces pollution and helps Canada meet its Paris Agreement requirements. It is a practical and affordable way to fight climate change.

• (1540)

[Translation]

Leading economists from all over the world agree that putting a price on pollution and returning the money, as this system does, is one of the most effective ways to encourage people and businesses to reduce their pollution.

[English]

While we are standing on the precipice of a climate catastrophe, members of the opposition want to make climate action a partisan issue. We've been waiting a year—yes, today marks 365 days—to see the Conservatives' climate plan. They keep stalling, but time is running out. Worse, they're misleading Canadians about how the federal price on pollution works.

A number of our Conservative colleagues recently sent out taxpayer-funded householders—newsletters—that deliberately withheld details about how their constituents can claim their climate action incentive. That's hundreds of dollars that rightly belong to their constituents, to Canadians.

Conservatives are more focused on scoring partisan points than looking out for the people they're elected to represent and ensuring they are better off.

[Translation]

That's just one of the ways I have seen the members of the opposition use to mislead their constituents and to spread information that is partially, or even totally, false. Climate change is a serious and urgent issue that should not be used as a political forum by the opposition.

[English]

The children who are marching the streets may not be able to vote yet, but they know that we need to do more, not less. They do not inherit the earth from us when we are done polluting it. We are borrowing the earth from them.

Mr. Chair, protecting the environment and supporting a sustainable economy also means keeping our waters clean and our oceans healthy. That's why our departmental plan outlines strategies to protect Canada's freshwater resources and reduce marine litter and plastic waste.

[Translation]

We are continuing to work with international partners, all levels of government, indigenous communities, industry and the public to reduce plastic waste and its pollution.

[English]

We launched the ocean plastics charter during Canada's G7 presidency, to beat plastic pollution and keep it out of our oceans, lakes and rivers. Membership has expanded to 18 governments and over 50 organizations. We're working with the provinces and territories on a Canada-wide strategy to keep plastics in the economy and out of landfills.

[Translation]

Work also continues on implementing the recommendations of the committee's report on the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. Many of the actions require using new science, and actions are being taken to strengthen the use of new science in decision-making.

[English]

Our departmental plan also highlights major investments in conservation. The world is home to 60% less wildlife than it was in 1970 and wilderness is disappearing rapidly. Canada is one of five countries that holds the world's significant remaining wilderness. We are in a unique position to lead. That's why our government launched the nature legacy fund; the single-largest investment to protect nature in Canada's history. We've also protected 11.8% of our land and fresh water and 8% of our oceans and coastal areas. We're well on our way to doubling the amount of nature being protected across Canada.

On that note, I'd like to speak now about the main estimates for the Parks Canada Agency.

[Translation]

Protected areas play a critical role in restoring the health of ecosystems and protect biodiversity. Intact wilderness absorbs twice as much carbon as other landscapes, helping to mitigate the impact of climate change.

[English]

The main estimates propose about \$1.65 billion in total funding for the Parks Canada Agency. This represents an increase of \$178 million. In addition, budget 2019 proposes \$368 million for capital projects to protect natural treasures in our national parks, historic sites and marine conservation areas.

To quickly highlight a few of Parks Canada's recent accomplishments, in October, Canada reached an agreement in principle with the Qikiqtani Inuit Association for the proposed Tallurutiup Imanga/Lancaster Sound national marine conservation area in Nunavut. It will become the largest protected area in Canada, covering 2% of our oceans.

• (1545)

[Translation]

In early 2019, the first-ever management plan for Rouge National Urban Park was tabled in Parliament. Meanwhile, budget 2019 proposed to take steps to legally establish Thaidene Nëné National Park Reserve in the Northwest Territories.

[English]

I'd like to speak about the vital work of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency. The government tabled Bill C-69, which proposes to put in place better rules to protect our environment and rebuild public trust in decisions about major projects. It also aims to restore investor confidence and ensure that good projects can move forward in a timely way. The agency plays a key leadership role in the development and implementation of this legislation and associated regulations, and can be very proud of the many contributions it makes on behalf of Canadians. The Senate is diligently considering this bill, as I speak.

The agency's total 2019-20 main estimates is \$74.2 million. The requested funding supports continued delivery of environmental assessments under the current act. It also anticipates new and expanded activities under the proposed impact assessment act. These activities would touch on impact assessment, partnering with indigenous peoples. They would work on cumulative effects and collaborating with other jurisdictions to make assessments more efficient, supporting the objective of one project, one review.

[Translation]

Mr. Chair, this concludes my formal remarks to the committee.

I thank you again for the invitation. I look forward to your questions.

[English]

The Chair: Excellent. Thank you for your opening statement. I'm sure that will give us lots to discuss. I also recognize a number of departmental officials in the audience, so welcome to many of the familiar faces who are also here to support the team.

First up, I have Mr. Bossio and Mr. Amos, who will take the first six minutes of questioning.

Mr. Mike Bossio (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you so much, Minister, for being here once again for the main estimates. Your presence is greatly appreciated.

I'll get right into it. The parliamentary budget office report has confirmed that low- and middle-income Ontarians get more money back in the climate rebate than they pay into the price on pollution, yet Doug Ford is continuing to waste taxpayers' money in court trying to make pollution free. It's astounding to me that Doug Ford and the Conservatives think we can fight climate change without having a plan. As you mentioned, we're a year into the promise for a plan and yet today we still don't have a plan.

Can you tell us how our government is ensuring that we're protecting future generations by fighting climate change?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Thank you very much.

I'd like to thank the Parliamentary Budget Officer for his ongoing work on behalf of Canadians and parliamentarians. His work confirms everything that our government has been saying about a price on pollution. Everyone but the wealthiest 20% of Canadians will get back more money through the climate action incentive rebate than they pay, but that is just a part of our plan.

We are also making historic investments in public transportation and renewable energy, phasing out coal, investing in clean technology solutions, supporting our inventors and entrepreneurs, and there are many other measures as part of our 50-measure plan that was developed with Canadians.

Unfortunately, you have Premier Ford and Andrew Scheer who are intentionally misleading Canadians. They are spending taxpayer money to fight putting a price on pollution in court—\$30 million. Also, there's a taxpayer-funded campaign in Ontario where, if you're an independent, small business owner, you face a fine of \$10,000 a day if you don't do the bidding of the Ford government, misleading Ontarians about the costs of climate change and about the climate action incentive rebate.

Unfortunately, Conservatives in Parliament are sending out taxpayer-funded householders that intentionally do not show to their constituents that among the tax measures, the newest one, the one that they can probably benefit the most from is the climate action incentive rebate.

We need to take action on climate change. I don't need to tell Canadians that because they are feeling the impacts right now. We look at the floods. One-in-a-hundred year floods are happening every few years.

Mr. Mike Bossio: Thank you, Minister.

Doug Ford is also cutting funding for flood prevention to our local conservation authorities in half. Organizations in Quinte, Lower Trent, Crowe Valley and Cataraqui play a pivotal role in protecting our regions from flooding, right in my riding and for Ontarians.

He is cutting funding to forests for tree planting that prevents soil erosion. He is cutting over \$280 million from OMAFRA—cuts, cuts, cuts. Can you tell us what kind of negative impacts this is going to have on the health and safety of Ontarians, in particular in rural Ontario where we are seeing so much of this flooding happening today?

• (1550)

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Thank you for your question. It's really important, and it's really timely because, as we all know, we are seeing flooding across the country. While we are seeing flooding, however, you have the Ford government that is cutting funding to support flood management by amazing conservation organizations with whom we work every single day.

We need to be doing more, not less, to protect our citizens, but the Ford government also made cuts to forest fire prevention and action. We know, as we saw last summer, the impacts of the fires across the country. This is about keeping people safe.

What are they spending money on? Stickers and \$30 million fighting climate action in court. We need to be serious about climate action. We need to make decisions based on the science, the science to both tackle climate change and also to adapt to the impacts of climate change. Nature-based solutions are critically important.

We also need to use evidence and use measures that we know work, which include putting a price on pollution. Unfortunately, Andrew Scheer and Doug Ford don't seem to understand the science behind climate change or the evidence of what policies, like putting a price on pollution, work.

[*Translation*]

Mr. William Amos (Pontiac, Lib.): Minister McKenna, our homes in Pontiac are flooded, our roads are crumbling and our communities are suffering from so many repeated disasters: two floods and a tornado in three years. This is our reality and it is not only in the Pontiac, but also in New Brunswick, elsewhere in Quebec and Ontario. You are fully aware of that. We are already seeing the impact of climate change and we continue to pay the price.

The Conservatives continue to bury their heads in the sand and ignore the reality of the impact of climate change on the lives of Canadians. Unlike the Conservatives, we have a plan. In the Pontiac, we do not have the luxury of claiming that climate change does not exist. Canadians know full well that there is a price to pay, now or in the future. The longer we fail to take action on climate change, the higher the price our children and grandchildren will have to pay. What the Conservatives are doing is unacceptable.

Minister, can you explain to my Pontiac constituents, but also to Canadians, how our climate change plan will improve the situation and how a price on pollution will prevent our children from paying tomorrow for the damage caused today?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Thank you for your question, Mr. Amos, and thank you very much for the work that you are doing.

I know how much the people in the Pontiac are suffering, as are the people in Quebec, Gatineau, Ottawa—I was in Constance Bay, where I filled sandbags with the people—and in New Brunswick. When we went through the 2017 flooding, we thought it was the flood of the century. However, this phenomenon is now happening every two years. These floods are extremely costly, not only in terms of rebuilding the houses. They are also very costly in people's lives. I see how much these people are suffering.

Doug Ford went to Constance Bay and said that something must be happening. Yes, something is happening and that is climate change. We must take action and tackle it. We must protect people. That is why we are investing in adaptation. We have a \$2-billion fund to help people adapt to climate change. We also have the new Canadian Climate Services Centre to help people and we have a plan to address climate change. We are working with the people in the Pontiac region. We stand by them, as we stand by all Canadians.

[English]

The Chair: Now we're going to move to Mr. Fast for six minutes.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to begin by noting the absence of our colleague Mark Warawa at this table. As you know, he is undergoing some very serious health challenges, and he would certainly covet your thoughts and prayers as we consider him a very valued colleague of some 15 years here in the House of Commons.

The Chair: Yes. Thanks for sharing that update with us. I reset your clock to six minutes, so you can start now.

Hon. Ed Fast: Thank you.

However, I did want to call you out, Minister, on the hypocrisy of your remarks.

You began by sanctimoniously suggesting that climate change is a non-partisan issue, and then you embarked upon a bit of a tirade against Conservatives and Andrew Scheer, as did your two colleagues here, Mr. Amos and Mr. Bossio. How is climate change a non-partisan issue when you immediately spend the next 15 minutes attacking your opponents, those who disagree with you on the merits of a carbon tax? We happen to believe that a carbon tax will not get us to where we need to go. We don't believe that you can tax your way to a clean environment; however, you're entitled to disagree. If you consider us to be partisan, but not you, that's a bit of a joke.

So I wanted to call you out on that: if you really believe that climate change is a non-partisan issue, then you should act that way.

Now let me get straight into the question on the carbon tax.

Your government signed on to the Paris Agreement and promised to meet Canada's agreed-upon targets. Are you on track to meet Canada's 2030 emissions targets?

•(1555)

Hon. Catherine McKenna: I want to also share my thoughts about Mark. What's happening is very sad, and we all stand together.

It pains me greatly. The Conservatives nowadays think that we can do more, not less, on climate change. They don't seem to understand the science on climate change and don't seem to understand the facts about what works. I'm going to stand up for—

Hon. Ed Fast: Minister, my question was on the targets.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: —climate action. I'm going to fight climate inaction and fight for good policies. I'm not going to apologize for that.

Hon. Ed Fast: Minister, mine was a yes-or-no question. Is Canada on track now to meet its 2030 emissions targets under the Paris Agreement, yes or no?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Canada is on track to meet our Paris Agreement targets. We have committed to that. We are three-quarters of the way there. We are implementing measures right now that have not been modelled yet. Those are investments in public transportation, clean innovation, doubling our nature, which we know is a carbon sink. But the question really would be: is Andrew Scheer going to show us a plan that meets the Paris Agreement target? He committed to that. You all voted for that.

Hon. Ed Fast: You know what, Minister, I want to remind you Andrew Scheer is not the Prime Minister of this country. You are the Minister of the Environment. The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, leads the government. We, as the opposition, are here to hold you to account. That's why we're asking you the questions. It's not for you to ask us the questions right now.

I'm asking you again, can you provide us with any supporting evidence that you're on track to meet the targets as you've just suggested?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to table the “Clean Canada: Protecting the Environment and Growing our Economy” document. We have also our “Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change”.

Andrew Scheer seems to think we don't have a plan. In fact, we have a plan that was negotiated with provinces and territories, with indigenous leaders, with input from cities, towns, businesses and all Canadians. We have a made in Canada plan—

Hon. Ed Fast: With respect, Minister—

Hon. Catherine McKenna: —for Canadians. If I could direct you to page 13—

Hon. Ed Fast: Minister?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: —of the clean Canada plan, it has how we plan to meet our target.

Do you know what? We need to do more. We all believe we need to do more.

Hon. Ed Fast: Minister, I'm familiar with that pie chart that you've got there. Much of that is unmodelled proposals going forward.

I would also suggest to you that the climate change plan that you have brought forward is not a climate change plan at all. It is a tax plan. It includes a carbon tax. It includes GST on our carbon tax. Imagine that, a Liberal government charging tax on a tax. On top of that, there's a clean fuel standard coming down the pike that is expected to add hundreds of dollars more to the effective price of carbon in Canada.

I want to remind you of something, Minister. The Auditor General, the commissioner of the environment, the United Nations and even your own departmental documents say that you're not going to meet your Paris targets. Even Saint David Suzuki says you won't meet your targets. How can you bald-faced sit here today, in the face of all the contrary evidence, and suggest that you're on track to meet Canada's emissions targets under the Paris Agreement? I'm gobsmacked.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: I am happy to read it again. We are committed to meeting our target. We transparently report every single year. We have a plan to meet our target and this is a plan that was negotiated with the provinces and territories. Is it harder? Yes, especially when you have provinces like Ontario that stop a price on pollution and then go back. That's like reopening 30 coal-fired units. Let's be clear, when there are provinces backtracking, we're going to continue to go forward and we owe it to Canadians to go forward. We're going to continue to be more ambitious.

It's ironic though that I'm hearing this on the 365th day since we were promised a climate plan from the Conservative Party. You all voted to support a plan to meet the Paris Agreement targets and we've seen no plan. We've seen backtracking, we've seen cuts by other governments that have spent taxpayer money in court fighting climate action—

• (1600)

Hon. Ed Fast: With respect—

Hon. Catherine McKenna: —instead of fighting climate change.

Hon. Ed Fast: With respect, the Conservative Party doesn't lead government. The NDP doesn't lead government. The Green Party doesn't lead government. It is the Liberals who lead government. They were elected to lead and elected to come up with a plan. It's a plan that's a tax plan, not an environment plan. We're holding you to account for that. I'm looking at that same pie chart you've got before you. I see things like "Implemented but unmodelled measures". Your plan is full of unmodelled measures. Canadians have no idea whether the carbon taxation that you're going to implement or the clean fuel standard that you're going to implement are actually going to reduce emissions in Canada. You haven't done the modelling, nor have you done the analysis.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: That is simply not true.

Hon. Ed Fast: It says "unmodelled".

Hon. Catherine McKenna: I am happy to give you the document that outlines how a price on pollution reduces emissions. Once again, it is with great regret.... We had a former prime minister who was a Conservative, Brian Mulroney, who used a price on pollution because he believed in the environment. He believed that we needed to protect nature because it was for all Canadians.

The Chair: With that, we're out of time but we'll come back around, so I'm sure we'll hear more.

We'll now go to Ms. Mathyssen for her six minutes of questions.

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I was looking forward to being here but, quite frankly, I am profoundly disappointed by this political wrangling. We have a flood crisis in this city. The water is at the door and you're wrangling about

who does the best job or who has the best numbers. I want some clear answers. I spent five years in the Ministry of the Environment in Ontario under a minister who had incredible integrity. She walked the walk. I want people here to walk the walk and I do have some questions.

Earlier this month we learned that Loblaws is being awarded \$12 million from the low-carbon economy fund for refrigerator retrofits. Ideally, the grant should enable GHG reduction projects that would otherwise not be able to go forward without government assistance. Now, Loblaws is the bread price fixing king of the country and Galen Weston is probably the second richest person here. Why on earth would Loblaws qualify for retrofit? I understand this business about the government adding in to what they were going to do, but why didn't Loblaws simply do it all and that \$12 million go somewhere else where there could have been a greater benefit?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: I wouldn't say there's wrangling. We're trying to explain our climate plan, which is a serious plan that we negotiated with provinces and territories and Canadians.

Ms. Irene Mathyssen: Minister, I heard nothing but wrangling and nothing but promotion of self.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: I'm happy to share the clean Canada plan.

Look, let's be clear that we need to take action on climate change and we all need to be acting together. That's why we are working with provinces, territories, hospitals, schools, municipalities and businesses.

The low-carbon economy fund, which is administered in a transparent way by the department, is a competitive process. It looks for bang for the buck. You said you don't think that we're getting emission reductions? This particular project is like taking 50,000 cars off the road every year. The government puts up 25% of the money, and it involves the HFCs, which are the most polluting greenhouse gas emissions.

Canada was very proud to help negotiate the Montreal protocol to remove these greenhouse gas emissions from the atmosphere. It's like half a degree of warming. If we can take serious action on those....

Let's be clear. We all need to be working together, and if you don't have a plan for the environment, you don't have a plan for the economy. We need to be working to create good jobs. We need to be working with provinces, territories, hospitals, schools and businesses, big and small.

Ms. Irene Mathyssen: I think if Galen Weston can fix the price of bread, he can fix his refrigerators.

I have another question. A recent Parks Canada Agency report found that 40% of the agency's real estate is in poor condition, with repairs being estimated at \$9.5 million, plus an additional \$3.3 billion estimated as being needed for climate change adaptation. We're hearing more and more about the need to adapt to what is coming, this tsunami of disasters.

Budget 2019 doesn't allocate any new funds to either of these issues. I wonder if you could advise if Parks Canada has sufficient funding to make the necessary repairs and adapt to the climate change that we know is on the way?

• (1605)

Hon. Catherine McKenna: I certainly agree that nature-based solutions are critically important to adapt, but also to tackle climate change.

We continue to invest in Parks Canada and also in protecting nature. We made a \$1.3-billion investment in protecting nature, expanding parks and protected areas. We continue to work to manage our assets. If I'm not wrong, we are actually the third-largest asset holder in the country.

I will now turn it over to Michael Nadler, acting head of Parks Canada.

Mr. Michael Nadler (Acting Chief Executive Officer, Parks Canada Agency): In fact, budget 2019 allocates \$368 million over two years for capital asset renewal at Parks Canada. That funding will be spent in 2020-21 and 2021-22 and allocated to the kinds of issues that you raise: maintenance of our assets in the face of a number of challenges, including challenges that arise from climate change and other environmental factors.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: However, \$368 million ain't \$9.5 billion. It seems there's going to be a shortfall here.

Mr. Michael Nadler: You're right. In fact, we are working with the Department of Finance on a longer-term plan for asset management and asset maintenance and recapitalization at Parks Canada, well into the future. We're hopeful that in the coming months we will have developed, collaboratively, a solid plan for the long term.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Thank you.

Minister, I have been listening to the news. The Philippines are threatening to send back tankers full of garbage. I wonder if you've taken any steps to ensure that the manifestos of ships actually reflect the cargo, because the complaint is that instead of recyclables they're getting hideous waste that they simply cannot use.

Has that particular situation crossed your desk?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: It certainly has. This is an important issue. It's also an important diplomatic issue, so let's just be clear on the facts. This was something that happened under the previous government in 2013, with a company that is no longer in existence.

We changed the rules around waste management in 2016, which is incredibly important. We've also appointed a committee to negotiate to find a solution with the Philippines. We're clearly committed to handling a problem that was not of our own creation but that it is important that we solve.

The Chair: We'll now go over to Mr. Fisher and Mr. McKinnon.

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Thank you again, Minister, for being here.

Minister, as you know this committee produced a unanimous report on protected areas. In that report, we recommended that the federal government partner with municipalities, indigenous governments and stakeholders to protect more land across Canada, and to meet and exceed our Aichi targets. We also asked the government to deliver more funding for nature conservation across Canada.

Last year's budget delivered on these recommendations. You spoke about it earlier: \$1.3 billion in funding. I know you're tired of hearing me advocate for Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes, but this area is near and dear to the hearts of Nova Scotians and it's worth protecting.

Minister, as you know, last week I also had the honour of announcing a \$860,000 contribution to the Halifax Regional Municipality so it could acquire and protect 135 hectares of land in this amazing park. This was huge news back home. Can you tell us a bit more about the successes of the Canada nature fund and what it will mean for our future generations?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Thank you very much, Mr. Fisher, for your tireless efforts on this file.

I and our government are always happy to consider solutions for how we can protect more nature. It's because of your advocacy, because you spoke very often about the importance of protecting the Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes wilderness area, that we're doing so and offering Haligonians a greater opportunity to connect with nature for generations to come. Protecting nature is not just in far-flung places, it's where people can actually get to it.

As you mentioned, we have a \$1.3-billion historic investment in protecting more nature. It's been very exciting to see the interest across the country from indigenous peoples, conservation groups, towns, cities and Canadians. Canadians believe we have a chance to protect what we love but also, as we know, nature is very important as we tackle climate change, a natural sink of climate change as we adapt to the impact of science.

My deputy has pointed out we have many different successes, but one of the most powerful ones was protecting Edézhzié, over 14,000 square kilometres in the Northwest Territories, from work by the Dehcho. It was very moving to be there while the snow was falling, while they talked movingly about how long they had worked to protect this area.

Scott Islands off the coast of B.C., the greenbelt area in Montreal, the Isle Haute, which I know is very important to our colleague Bill Casey.... There are many examples of how we can work together.

We also announced a \$100-million investment to support conservation groups like the Nature Conservancy, working with partners like Ducks Unlimited.... I think there's a huge opportunity to work with all Canadians to protect more of the nature that we love.

• (1610)

Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.): Thank you, Minister, for joining us here today.

Thank you for the work you're doing on helping us transition into a green, 21st-century economy.

I want to talk to you about plastic pollution. I noted that in your remarks you mentioned the ocean plastics charter as a result of our G7 presidency. You also mentioned the zero plastic waste strategy with the provinces and territories.

I'm wondering if you can speak more broadly on what this government is doing to combat the growing issue of plastic pollution.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Thank you very much, Mr. McKinnon.

I know this is an issue that is deeply in the hearts of all Canadians. We want to see less plastic pollution and tackle seriously, for the first time, plastic pollution that is choking our waters, our lakes, our rivers, our oceans. If we don't act, we will have more plastic pollution by weight in our oceans than fish. That's why we're working on innovative solutions. That's why we're pushing internationally through our ocean plastics charter, but we need to do work at home.

I was really pleased last year on Canada Day when we banned microbeads. We've also put federal government suppliers on notice that we'll be working with suppliers who are committed to a zero plastic waste vision. We can use our procurement power. We're reducing plastic waste from government operations. I'm working with MP Fillmore on this: limiting unnecessary single-use plastics from the federal government, including from our cafeteria. They're doing great things but we still have some work to do.

We need to be supporting developing countries, because plastics know no borders either, and waste management facilities are extremely important. That's why we're investing \$100 million to support developing countries to develop and implement sound waste management systems.

We also have a huge economic opportunity. Plastic waste has value. We're literally throwing out hundreds of millions of dollars every year. We can do much better with a circular approach to the economy. We're working with producers. Producers need to be responsible for the plastics we produce. We need to be working with cities, towns, provinces—and that's why we're developing the first-ever national zero plastic waste strategy.

Mr. Ron McKinnon: Thank you, Minister.

The Chair: There's still a minute left, if anybody on this side wants.

Mike.

Mr. Mike Bossio: I know that the Conservatives like to talk about a tax on a tax. They like to drill away at this all the time. I'd like to remind everyone that ever since Brian Mulroney's Conservative government brought in the GST, there has been GST on the whole price of gasoline, including the excise tax. This is not new, Minister. Could you maybe address that, that once again, it's not the importance of whether it's a tax, it's the importance that we're doing something to address climate change?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: You know what I think about? I think the biggest tax and the biggest deficit we can leave for our kids is climate inaction. We are passing on to our children and grandchildren billions and billions of dollars in cost. That's why we're acting. That's why we're making it no longer free to pollute, and we're doing it while we're growing our economy and creating good jobs.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Stubbs, it's over to you for your six minutes of questions.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Minister, in the spirit of ensuring that policy achieves outcomes, can you explain exactly the cost per tonne that will be imposed by the new Liberal fuel standard?

• (1615)

Hon. Catherine McKenna: We do an analysis of every policy. We look at interactive impacts and we make sure that we're getting emission reductions bang for our buck. Putting a price on pollution, as you probably know, is the lowest-cost measure that you can bring in when it comes to tackling climate change—

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: What specifically will be the cost per tonne imposed by the new Liberal fuel standard?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: I will pass it on to my deputy to talk about the clean fuel standard. We have taken the time to understand the clean fuel standard and to receive comments from industry, because we need to all be working together. I'll ask my deputy to answer.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: That's okay. My question was to you, Minister, and you made the announcement before Christmas, so I would expect that by now you would know.

Of course, the reality is that you don't know the impact, because the cost-benefit analysis on your own departmental website says, quote, that "there are no models within the Department designed to model", one, "emission reductions", two, "credit supply", "or", three, "economic impacts of" your new Liberal fuel standard "policy in detail." It also says, "The Department is currently developing a Fuel Lifecycle Assessment Modelling Tool", I understand, "and... may use new and updated models for publication in the Canada Gazette, Part II, should they become available in time..."

In your own internal documents, I think they are estimating a carbon tax of around \$230 a tonne—that would be the equivalent of it—on industry. The Chemistry Industry Association says that your fuel standard will be the equivalent of a carbon tax of "\$200 a tonne" on industry, and Ontario manufacturers, as you must know, are warning that it could kill their ability to sell exports to the United States.

What's really curious about this is that you gave large emitters an 80% exemption from your carbon tax, your carbon tax of \$30 a tonne, specifically because, you said—and as Conservatives have been warning for years—your new carbon tax would kill jobs and drive businesses out of Canada, but you're imposing a cost four times greater with your new Liberal fuel standard.

If I'm a truck driver and driving a truck 50 hours a week, how many cents per litre will the new Liberal fuel standard add to the cost of diesel?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: There are a lot of things that you've put out there that are simply inaccurate.

Of course, we're going to do proper modelling. Of course, we're going to understand the costs. That's why we are still consulting on our clean fuel standard. We're always transparent on what we do. We've been transparent on the costs of putting a price on pollution: it's four cents.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: But you announced—

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Unfortunately, Conservative politicians are always misleading. We are going to continue working—

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: But you announced the new fuel standard in December. You are imposing it. Your own department says you—

Mr. Mike Bossio: On a point of order, Chair, can the minister please be allowed to answer the question?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: My question was, how many cents per litre will the clean fuel standard add to the cost of diesel?

Mr. Mike Bossio: Let's give her a chance to answer.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Let's be clear: the clean fuel standard is not in place. We have put out a regulatory framework paper on which we are consulting and receiving feedback. We want to make sure that everything we do is done in a thoughtful way that protects the environment and grows a clean economy.

We believe that, yes, we can use cleaner fuels and that is a smart thing to do, but we have to do it in a responsible way. We're going to continue to do that transparently. We always report transparently. We make decisions based on science, evidence and facts. We consult broadly, including with industry, but I'm happy to ask my deputy to

explain the process so that we are extremely clear on the record on what we have done.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: That's okay. I'm sure you can table it to the committee later. My job is to ask you questions.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: We will table it to committee because I think it's important that Canadians have the proper information.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Here's what the concern is. This is why your position is concerning. In October, in question period, you admitted what Conservatives have been warning about the carbon tax for the entire time: that the 80% to 95% exemption from the carbon tax you've granted for large emitters—and you've said this—is "to stay competitive and keep good jobs in Canada."

If these businesses, according to your analysis... We agree that it's the risk of your carbon tax: that you will do economic harm to Canada without reducing emissions and will drive businesses and jobs out of Canada. If your argument is that those businesses will shut down if they pay more than 5% of your carbon tax, then how do you justify the dramatic and multiple times more cost of your Liberal new fuel standard for those same companies?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Once again, I would like to repeat that we have not brought in our clean fuel standard. I hope you would agree that what we do should grow the economy, should move to a cleaner future and should tackle climate change and create good jobs. We should ensure that our companies are more competitive, that we are creating good jobs in Canada and that we are creating incentives for clean innovation. That is what our climate plan is all about.

Once again, it would be great, 365 days to the day that we are in committee, and while there's flooding, that we would see an actual climate plan from Conservatives. Canadians deserve no less. We have been very clear about our climate plan. We negotiated it with Canadians. It is right here. Every single measure is out. Everything we do is modelled with the department. We put things out in a transparent way, including emission trends. We work with industry to find solutions. Everyone pays the price on pollution because we believe that's the right thing, and we will continue implementing our plan with Canadians.

• (1620)

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Minister, you've granted major exemptions to the carbon tax, which you said yourself was for keeping jobs and businesses in Canada, but you are getting those companies and that industry on the back end with your escalating plans for a Liberal fuel standard. This is unprecedented in the entire world. It's going to apply to solid and gaseous fuels and to industry, businesses and facilities. It's very alarming that you're imposing a policy and then doing the modelling on the back end after you've already announced it.

Can I just ask you a question about the thousands of jobs that are at risk in my riding and across Alberta if you impose your federal methane regulations on the timeline you've outlined? I wonder if you'll grant equivalency to Alberta's methane regulations, which were finalized by the previous NDP government.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Tackling methane emissions from the oil and gas industry is one of the most cost-effective measures that we can take. You can actually capture what you don't want and create products. We have amazing Canadian companies doing that. We've been working with provinces and we've been working with industry to do this.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Yes, and Alberta has been a long-time leader—

Hon. Catherine McKenna: We have a standard—

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: —in emissions reduction in Canada. Will you—

Hon. Catherine McKenna: —and the expectation is that provinces will meet the standard.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Will you grant equivalency to the previous—

The Chair: We're out of time.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Should the provinces meet the standard, we are happy to grant equivalency.

The Chair: We are out of time in this round.

There were a couple of issues that were touched on by Ms. Stubbs, and if you would like to submit the follow-up documentation, I think we can share it on the website or with committee members so that everybody will have the information.

We are moving next to Mr. Amos and Ms. Dzerowicz.

Ms. Dzerowicz, we'll go first to you.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Thank you so much, Mr. Chair.

I just want to say thank you so much, Minister, and thank you so much, parliamentary secretary and all of you, for being here today. I really appreciate it. This is an issue that is super important for the residents of my riding of Davenport. I would say that it's one of their top issues. I want to make two comments because, Minister, I think you've done a really wonderful job of saying this, and this is something that's near and dear... Because of the publicity that's in the media today, there seems to be some idea that the only thing the federal government is doing to tackle climate change is putting a price on pollution, and that's not true.

I want to say thank you so much for saying that under the pan-Canadian framework we have a rich number of urgent climate action measures that we are putting into place to combat climate action. You've mentioned the clean fuel standard, the elimination of the coal-fired plants and the historic investment in transit. You haven't mentioned the zero emissions and car infrastructure, but the list goes on. To me, that was important to reiterate. I do think that through your answers you've been mentioning that and I don't think we should wait for a perfect plan to take action on climate change. We should put in as many measures as possible.

There was also an earlier question about whether we are meeting our Paris accord targets. I know that this comes up in my riding of Davenport. It's been less than three years. We're not going to see massive emissions reductions in less than three years, but that doesn't mean we stop. If anything, I know that people in my riding say to keep on moving forward, that they know you have all the right elements. They say to keep on moving forward and keep on moving as fast as possible. I want to say thank you so much for all of these efforts. I believe that at least in my riding, they feel they're the right efforts and, if anything, they ask me to go faster, as fast as possible.

Formally, my first question is actually for the parliamentary secretary, just because I want to get his voice in here. Davenport residents, especially the youth in my riding, are very concerned about the number of species that are disappearing on a daily basis. In Canada we have listed on our website I think 521 plant and animal species at risk under the species at risk registry. I just wonder if our parliamentary secretary, Mr. Fraser, can update us on how Environment and Climate Change Canada is moving forward with the protection of species at risk.

Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.): Thank you very much.

The young people in your riding should be very concerned. As the minister pointed out during her opening remarks, since the 1970s about 60% of our wildlife is gone. Canada is one of five countries that represents about three-quarters of the world's remaining wilderness, which positions us uniquely to take serious action and set an example for the world.

In budget 2018, we set aside \$1.3 billion for nature and conservation efforts. To put that in perspective, that's the largest single investment of its kind in the history of our country. We're moving forward with protected spaces. We're moving forward through the nature fund to partner with different organizations that are going to establish protected areas that are key habitat.

The specifics on all the different species at risk that you mentioned may be listed would vary, whether it's the steelhead trout, the southern resident killer whale or the different caribou species. I'd be happy to deal with them in more specificity if you wish.

•(1625)

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: That's great. Thank you. I do have one more follow-up question.

There have been other questions in my riding, and often they talk about corridors between the U.S. and Canada and making sure that species stay alive. I know that they are also particularly concerned about certain types of species that are at risk and that are some of our historic animals in our country, such as the southern mountain caribou in British Columbia. I wonder if you could talk to us about what approaches our government is taking to ensure the survival of species at risk, such as the southern mountain caribou in B.C.

Mr. Sean Fraser: Sure. On the cross-border issue, it's a big deal, whether you look at sage grouse or whether you look at the porcupine herd that crosses the Yukon-Alaska boundary.

With respect to southern mountain caribou, this is something that should alarm all Canadians. Of course, there are different species, but we should all recognize that the caribou is on our currency. It's a charismatic species that, in my mind, is something we can't lose.

If you look across the species, there are about 4,000 or so—I think I'm close—animals still alive today. That's a reduction of more than one-third in the past five years. These are dire circumstances.

I was in northeastern British Columbia last week for meetings with communities and different groups that were trying to restore efforts. The situation is a little different, depending on where in the province you sit, but we have serious efforts going on to partner with the Province of British Columbia to establish a province-wide conservation framework under section 11 of the Species at Risk Act.

In the central region, I really want to draw attention to the leadership role that the Saulneau and West Moberly First Nations have been playing. They're starting to reverse the trend of decline and are actually seeing recovery efforts through a combination of maternal penning and predator control measures that they're putting in place. It's not going to last, however, if we don't restore the habitat as well.

We're partnering right now with the Province of British Columbia and those first nations communities, to ensure that we create the conditions that will allow the population to not just come back but to sustain itself over time.

I know there is some anxiety in communities that use the backcountry for recreational purposes or for economic purposes. Rest assured that we're working with communities and with the province to establish the best path forward that will mitigate any social and economic consequences, with the primary goal being preventing the extirpation of these herds.

Just one final note—there are herds that have existed for thousands of years in southern British Columbia that are gone today. This is something that should shock the conscience of every Canadian.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Thank you so much.

The Chair: Monsieur Godin.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for being here with us this afternoon, Minister.

Like my NDP colleague, I find it unfortunate that the Liberal government is currently playing politics with climate change. Stop saying that the Conservative Party is not aware, is not informed that these changes exist. I can confirm that we, the Conservatives, are aware of this.

Minister, with respect to your much-touted environmental plan, I would like to know—and the question is simple—whether or not you will be meeting the targets of the Paris Agreement, which seeks to reduce greenhouse gases.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Yes.

Mr. Joël Godin: Thank you, Minister.

Again today, during questions, you said that the official opposition party, the Conservative Party, had not tabled its environmental plan. Let me inform you that Canada now has a Liberal government in power, and that you are the Minister of Environment and Climate Change. You have the power to make a difference. You have been waiting for our plan for 365 days and you have been in power for 1,230 days.

Why are you waiting for our plan? Why didn't you take action beforehand? Although you claim otherwise, are we that good at the environment?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: I'm not the only one waiting for the plan.

Mr. Joël Godin: Who is waiting?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Canadians are waiting for it. You don't have a climate change plan. That's inconceivable.

Mr. Joël Godin: Minister—

Hon. Catherine McKenna: You need a climate change plan.

Mr. Joël Godin: Minister, you are the one in power.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: If you really believe in science, in the facts, come up with a plan. We have been aware for decades that climate change is real.

I know why it's taking you so long to prepare the plan.

•(1630)

[*English*]

It's because you're developing that plan with oil lobbyists. You had a secret meeting. Andrew Scheer had a secret meeting with oil lobbyists with the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers. Your plan is not a plan for workers.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Godin: Minister—

[English]

Hon. Catherine McKenna: It's not a plan for Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Chair, I would like to have the right to speak.

Minister, you know that time is running out. The same is true for climate change. You say that we have not done our job, that we have not been rigorous in our climate change plan. I can tell you that the plan has been drafted.

Now, I'm going to ask you the question.

[English]

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Show it to Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Godin: You will have it when we are in power or during the election campaign.

[English]

Hon. Catherine McKenna: So you're waiting for the oil lobbyists to approve it?

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Godin: Minister, you are in power right now.

We did an outstanding job, since you have taken up the targets set by the Conservatives. The scientists who worked under the Conservatives did a good job.

Minister, you will not meet the greenhouse gas reduction targets of the Paris Agreement. How is that possible? If you have any respect for scientists, you will set the carbon tax at \$300 per tonne. That is hypocrisy on the part of the Liberal Party. What we are getting from the Liberal government right now is smoke and mirrors.

Minister, how can you tell Canadians that you will take the necessary steps to improve their quality of life and take concrete action on climate change? According to the public discourse, this is an emergency.

What have you been doing for the past 1,230 days?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: I won't take lessons from the Conservative Party.

Mr. Joël Godin: What's that?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: I won't take lessons from the Conservative Party.

Mr. Joël Godin: So why are you taking the Conservative Party's greenhouse gas reduction targets?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: You have—

[English]

Mr. Mike Bossio: I have a point of order, Chair.

Can the minister please be allowed to answer a question?

[Translation]

Hon. Catherine McKenna: I would be happy to see a Conservative Party plan achieving its targets, because you voted for it. We have a plan—

Mr. Joël Godin: Yes, absolutely.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: It's not a plan from the Government of Canada, it's a plan from Canadians. We spent a year negotiating a plan with the provinces and territories, indigenous peoples, small and large businesses and environmentalists. It is a plan for Canadians, by Canadians. It is a plan to achieve our targets, and we will continue to do so.

What are the Conservatives doing? Every day in question period, the Conservatives—

Mr. Joël Godin: We are not in power, Minister.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: —say they are having problems with the plan, but they don't have a plan.

Mr. Joël Godin: We are not in power, Minister.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: You want pollution to be free. Brian Mulroney, a Progressive Conservative, is the one who put a price on pollution. We learned Mr. Mulroney's lesson and it worked.

Mr. Joël Godin: Thank you for learning from the Conservative Party.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: When I was a child, acid rain was the biggest environmental problem, and Mr. Mulroney put a price on pollution. That worked and good jobs were created. It was a Canadian innovation. He showed leadership.

You have no leadership on climate change. I'm not going to take any lessons from you.

Mr. Joël Godin: Minister, let me just remind you that greenhouse gas emissions decreased the most while we were in power. Are you aware of that? Are you able to admit it? I am not asking you to take lessons from the Conservative Party and the previous Conservative government, I am asking you whether you are aware of that fact.

[English]

Hon. Catherine McKenna: You know what happened? There was a recession. If you want to take credit for that, you can.

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Godin: Ha, ha! That is how you see things, Minister. I find it unfortunate that you say that. It's smoke and mirrors and you're not serious about it.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[English]

The Chair: You have 20 seconds left if somebody can fit something in. We've been consistent about sharing time.

Hon. Ed Fast: Minister, I want to remind you that in 2016 under your plan Canada fell 44 megatonnes short of meeting its Paris targets. In 2017, we fell 66 megatonnes short. In 2018, we fell behind 79 megatonnes.

How can you say that your plan is working? Yours is simply a tax plan. It has nothing to do with the environment. This is about taxing Canadians: GST, carbon taxes, clean fuel standards... At the end of the day, Canadians are simply going to find it more and more difficult to find affordability, to find housing, to be able to raise their families.

How can you justify that? The evidence shows your plan is failing. How can you sit there and in a bald-faced way suggest that you're meeting the targets?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: The targets are 2030 targets. We have a plan. We report our mission reductions transparently, and that plan will get us to the targets.

Hon. Ed Fast: It's not getting you there now.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: What makes me really sad, and I say this with great honesty, is that we can't come together. This was the plan that was negotiated with provinces and territories. But Conservative premiers, what are they doing? They are going back on the commitments that were made.

As I said, when the Province of Ontario cut their cap and trade system, when they made it free to pollute, that increased the amount of pollution by 30 coal-fired units. Doing less, not more, in the face of what we are seeing right now is unconscionable. We have a responsibility to Canadians to tackle climate change and grow our economy, and we can do it in an affordable way while it creates good jobs. That is exactly what we're doing, and we're going to continue to do.

• (1635)

The Chair: Thank you.

We will now move over to Mr. Amos and Mr. Fisher.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Thank you.

Minister, this committee heard overwhelming evidence that putting a price on pollution is the most effective way to reduce emissions while protecting Canadians' pocketbooks.

Back on January 1, the Province of Nova Scotia enacted a plan to tackle climate change by putting a price on pollution through a cap and trade program. Because of their efforts, Nova Scotians did not see noticeable increases in costs. Instead, Nova Scotians are benefiting from increased efficiency programs.

Last week—you referenced this earlier—news broke that Andrew Scheer had been secretly meeting with oil lobbyists, yet the Conservatives still have not put forward a plan to combat climate change. They've not even really joined the conversation, and we see Canadians heavily impacted today. We see wildfires in B.C. and across the country. We see massive flooding in New Brunswick, Ontario and Quebec and serious sea level rise in Nova Scotia. Canadians are demanding action on climate change.

Minister, can you please detail how our government's approach to combatting climate change is different from, say, maybe the Conservatives'?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: We're already paying the cost of climate change right now. We've gone from \$400 million in costs a

decade ago to \$2 billion. The costs are estimated to rise to \$43 billion or more.

We're paying the costs, and we have a huge economic opportunity of clean growth. You can tackle climate change, grow the economy and create good jobs, and do it in an affordable way. Let's be clear: with a price on pollution, we're giving the money back. All the money is going back to Canadians. That means that 80% of them are better off; it is the Parliamentary Budget Officer who is saying that the 20% who are going to pay more are the wealthiest.

We need to take action on climate change, but the way you develop a climate plan is by actually working with Canadians. It's doing the hard work over a full year, negotiating with provinces and territories, indigenous peoples and cities, hearing from Canadians of all sorts—environmentalists, young people. You don't make a climate plan in secret meetings with oil lobbyists. You simply don't. That is not what the future looks like.

I am the environment minister for energy workers as well as young people, people who live in the north and people who live in the south, and we have a responsibility. We can show the world how you can tackle climate change while you're a natural resources-based economy, and how you can do it in an affordable way by creating jobs. I'm proud that we have the Carbon Pricing Leadership Coalition, where you have the major companies in Canada stepping up and saying, yes, we have to put a price on pollution. I'm proud that we have young people marching on the street demanding more of us, not less.

We all need to take climate change extremely seriously. It is not just an environmental issue. It is an economic issue. It is a health issue. It is an existential issue for indigenous peoples and for people who live in small island developing states where they are literally going under water, and, as the Pope has said, it is a moral issue.

We need to continue acting on climate change. We have a plan that we are working hard on. We will meet our targets and then, you know what, we're going to do more because we need to do more. The whole world needs to do more, but hard things are hard. It's hard for countries around the world. I was really pleased to be hosting a nature summit last week in Montreal, where governments were talking about how we can do more on climate change through nature-based solutions. That's amazing.

That's why here in Canada we have Stephen Guilbeault,
[Translation]

a leading Quebec environmentalist who is helping us do more by telling us how Canada can reduce its emissions in the transportation sector and how to build greener buildings.

[English]

Tamara Vrooman, who is the head of Vancity, is also providing us solutions. I was in Vancouver seeing an affordable housing build that is net zero. How awesome is that? We can do amazing things. We have the ingenuity. We are Canadians. We can tackle climate change. We live in one of the coldest—and sometimes one of the hottest—countries, and we can build better. We can get around better. We can do it all while creating good jobs and making life affordable and bringing folks together. That is what we are committed to doing. That is what I will continue spending every single waking moment doing. I am a competitive swimmer. We have a goal. We've set the goal. Every single day we're going to continue working on this goal. I'm going to do everything I can, my damndest, to bring people together so we can do this.

• (1640)

Mr. William Amos: Minister, you'll recall that in early 2018, along with several colleagues here on the environment committee, I wrote a letter to the finance minister, Bill Morneau. One hundred and fifteen MPs and senators signed. The one Conservative was in fact a senator. They signed nonetheless. We had all sorts of support and we urged for much higher levels of financing for protected areas. You've spoken about this a bit today.

When \$1.3 billion was allocated, a whole bunch of us were just so proud of our government because it took courage. That put our money where our conservation mouth was. As a member of Parliament for Pontiac, I was just so proud.

[Translation]

I know that my constituents want more conservation measures in their region, the national capital region. Through the Canada nature fund, \$175 million is available. There is a very interesting proposal from the Outaouais region. What can you tell us about the decisions on that matter?

[English]

When can Canadians expect decisions from the Canada nature fund, and particularly what would you have to say to those people in the national capital region and in the Outaouais?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: As you know, I'm a member from the national capital region. I'm very proud to represent Ottawa Centre. I think we have an opportunity to be the greenest capital, and I think that includes our national capital. That has value. Having a brand in which you are the greenest capital will attract more tourism, will create more jobs, but it's also just an awesome thing for people to be able to go and enjoy nature. We need nature-based solutions to the impacts of climate change, and those help us mitigate emissions.

We have a process through which we're accepting applications right now. You heard from your colleague. He was very excited about the success of the Quick Start money that will help support conservation for Haligonians. We have announced a number of

different initiatives including protecting the greenbelt in Montreal. Also, there will be big pieces in our north with indigenous people.

So stay tuned. We're certainly looking at all of the applications to make sure they are consistent with the guidelines, but we think there's an opportunity to do a lot more.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Mathysen, you have the final round of questions for three minutes.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I've been listening with great interest in regard to the various reports that are received. I have a question about the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development, who recently tabled two audits that found that the government does not have a complete inventory of fossil fuel subsidies and is not considering environmental factors on a basis equal to that for economic considerations, and that's troubling.

When will the department be transparent about fossil fuel subsidies and phase them out?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: We've been clear that we need to eliminate inefficient fossil fuel subsidies, and we've said we will do so by 2025. Through the tax system, we've already eliminated nine out of 10 fossil fuel subsidies. We know we need to be doing more.

We have also looked at and put out a consultation paper to hear from Canadians about what would constitute a non-tax inefficient fossil fuel subsidy. I think we need to have serious reflection on that, because that might include diesel. We provide support for indigenous communities that are on diesel in the north. Many communities have not transitioned to renewables. I think we need to have a serious discussion across the board, and we do everything in a transparent way.

We have an opportunity to move to a cleaner future, and we're going to continue to look at all the opportunities to do that and to make the investments. We understand that the environment and the economy go together, and Canada has a huge opportunity to showcase to the world our innovation and our clean solutions. I see those solutions across the board from Enwave in downtown Toronto, which is actually taking water from the deep dark part of the Great Lakes, from Lake Ontario, where it's extremely cold, to cool our buildings in downtown Toronto, saving 80% of the GHG, which is much more energy efficient.

I have seen CarbonCure in Mr. Fisher's riding. This is an amazing company that takes emissions from industry and injects them into cement to make cheaper, stronger cement. We need to create the incentives.

One of the greatest incentives we can provide to foster clean solutions is to put a price on pollution, because guess what? That makes it more efficient for people to choose clean solutions. If you believe that we need to grow the economy, that we need to transition to a cleaner future, that we want to have the technology and the solutions right here in Canada from our inventors and our entrepreneurs, then everyone here should support putting a price on pollution, because that's exactly what it does.

We are doing it in an affordable way. We are giving the money back to families so that life is affordable, and we are creating the incentive for them to save even more money using LED light bulbs, using smart thermostats in their homes. There are many opportunities for folks to save money, for us to innovate and to create the solutions the world desperately needs.

•(1645)

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Thank you, Minister.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Next week I'm in the G7 in France, and I'm going to be promoting Canadian solutions and jobs.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: I do have another question.

You mentioned phasing out coal. Does Canada still sell coal internationally?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: I think it's really important that we phase out coal and also ensure a just transition for workers. We need to be making sure that as we move to a cleaner future—it's much healthier to get out of coal for folks and communities—that everyone is part of the solution.

I'm very proud that we are working with labour, and that labour has gone to communities that will be impacted to look at the opportunities for those communities, the way we support workers, and the way we ensure that they are part of the transition to a cleaner future, and we're going to continue to do that.

The Chair: I'll give you a last quick question.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Thank you.

You talked about the stewardship of plastic and the fact that we're drowning in plastic. Are you looking at stewardship in terms of packaging and the excessive packaging we see in virtually every part of this country?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: I think that is a huge opportunity for us. We can do a lot better. We shouldn't be wrapping utensils in

plastic and putting them in plastic bags. We're working with industry. I've had good conversations with industry across the board who understand that they have a responsibility to do better. We are going to push them. Extended producer responsibility is really important. It's really great, because you're seeing new opportunities for businesses. Many of you live in Ottawa Centre, I believe, where you can go to Nu Grocery. They have no plastic in the shop. Nothing is wrapped. You can bring your own containers or they will provide paper bags.

We have an opportunity to do a lot better while creating good jobs, while growing our economy and while not throwing out value. With plastics right now, we are throwing out value. That makes no sense. We can do a lot better and we need to do a lot better.

The Chair: That takes us slightly over your time, Ms. Mathysen, but since all of the other parties also went slightly over on their round or two of questioning, I think that levels it out for everybody.

That takes us to the end of our rounds of questioning. To the minister and officials, thank you so much for being here.

To tidy up this part of the meeting, we still need to go through 12 votes as committee members. We don't need our witnesses here for that, so at this point, as we move into the votes part of this process, anybody at the table who wants to pack up can do so.

That doesn't include the members of the committee. I expect that the 12 votes will take us to five o'clock, at which time we are scheduled to go in camera for some committee business.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: It's always a pleasure.

The Chair: Thank you.

Members, I was going to move right into the votes.

Mr. Bossio, we...

Who else did I lose?

We'll now turn to the votes.

CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AGENCY

Vote 1—Operating expenditures.....\$53,511,120

Vote 5—Grants and Contributions.....\$14,525,184

(Votes 1 and 5 agreed to on division)

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Vote 1—Operating expenditures.....\$837,298,834

Vote 5—Capital expenditures.....\$82,322,680

Vote 10—Grants and contributions.....\$787,558,681

Vote 15—Canada's Marine Safety Response.....\$2,535,478

Vote 20—Ensuring Better Disaster Management Preparation and Response.....\$790,033

Vote 25—Implementing a Federal Carbon Offset System.....\$4,739,890

Vote 30—Strong Arctic and Northern Communities.....\$18,280,000

(Votes 1, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30 agreed to on division)

PARKS CANADA AGENCY

Vote 1—Program expenditures.....\$1,433,900,120

Vote 5—Payment to the New Parks and Historic Sites Account.....\$13,423,000

(Votes 1 and 5 agreed to on division)

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

The Chair: All right. That took slightly less time than I had expected.

● (1650)

Hon. Ed Fast: Call back the witnesses.

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: We'll now suspend the meeting, clear the room and go into the in camera business we have scheduled.

[Proceedings continue in camera]

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