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# **Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Tuesday, March 8, 2016**

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**Chair**

**Mrs. Deborah Schulte**



## Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development

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• (1305)

[English]

**The Chair (Mrs. Deborah Schulte (King—Vaughan, Lib.)):** Could we get started?

I want to remind everybody that we are in open session. Often these things are done in closed session, but I didn't necessarily want to do so unless you decide you want to have this in closed session.

Can I put that out first to the subcommittee: how we want to proceed, going forward? Do you mind whether it's open or closed?

**Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.):** Let it be open until it needs to be closed.

**The Chair:** I'm fine with that.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Yes, I think it's a reverse onus question, which is to say that if somebody needs to bring it in camera, they can propose that.

**The Chair:** The only reason is that often we will be discussing witnesses, and people's comments about the witnesses may impact upon the discussion. We'll go open, but be mindful, as we're discussing witnesses, that we're in open session.

I thought you had at least a day to go over what I sent you this morning. The reason it took me a little while is that we had just had the subject of looking at the sustainable development strategy added to our agenda, and we were asked to bring that study back by late June. I had to try to work that in, because at first we were going to do CEPA and do the natural spaces and the protected areas. I tried to work it in. We also have a bit of a change with the minister, so I wanted to make sure I got that in there.

I took a shot at it, but it is very preliminary. You can see on the sheet how many weeks we have. I really want to ensure that everybody understands what is happening this Thursday.

We have Environmental Defence, Maggie MacDonald, coming in. We have Ecojustice, Dr. Elaine MacDonald. We have Chemistry Industry Association of Canada, Bob Masterson and Pierre Gauthier.

Thank you very much to each of you for sending me your lists. Will Amos sent quite a few.

Thank you, Mr. Cullen.

Mr. Eglinski, you also brought some great suggestions in terms of the industry and how we may get them in front of us.

I want to make sure we're all good with it, because this is what we have planned.

Mr. Cullen.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** This is on the CEPA lists.

This is one we didn't add, but coming out of the meeting today, the suggestion was made by Ms. May—it seems that it will be difficult for her to ask witnesses—to include her on the list. Rather than go through emails, because I know time is tight, we'd like to add her to our list as a potential witness, which we've done in the past. We've had MPs come forward as witnesses, sometimes on their own private members' bills but occasionally on topics that in a previous life they had worked on, which is obviously the situation in this case.

**The Chair:** That sounds reasonable to me.

Does anybody have any opposition to that proposal?

We'll add her to the list of speakers or witnesses coming forward on CEPA.

If you're all good, then that is what we're going to do on Thursday.

Let's move forward with what I sent today. I know we talked about trying to do CEPA and trying to do the parks and natural spaces study, but we have this issue with sustainable development. I suggested that we might put it in after the ministerial mandate and estimates meeting that is going to happen on the 24th. We continue with CEPA, not next week but the week after, concerning review of past studies and recommendations—we were getting at a bit of it today with the questioning—and then do a scoping, because it's quite vast. I think we need to come to a handle on what we want to do with it and how we want to tackle it.

• (1310)

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** Is that the sustainability report?

**The Chair:** No. I'm sorry; I jumped. This is the CEPA review. Not this Thursday and not the following week, because we're back in the ridings, but after that, on the 22nd, we will be back on CEPA review and we would get a review of the past studies and recommendations.

Tim, you've been quite involved for many years on this. I don't know how you feel about coming forward and doing a bit of a review of past studies and recommendations that have been made. Is this appropriate?

**Mr. Tim Williams (Committee Researcher):** Certainly, if that's the committee's wish, I'm more than willing to do something like that. Penny might also help to make language a little more precise on the legal front.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Good.

Just to get your suggestion here, Chair, do you want to have a meeting on that or do you want a report submitted to the committee?

**The Chair:** We can have a report submitted to the committee, but what I also get is a chance for people to ask questions that we're all around the table hearing. I heard quite a bit of questioning today on past studies and what the challenges may have been for the staff, and you've been at it with different committees for quite a while.

**Mr. Tim Williams:** Just this one.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** If that's the case then my recommendation was going to be that we receive a report from Tim and the analyst, similar to what I think we're going to get from CEPA, which is that of the 31 recommendations this is what was done. That's going to be from a departmental point of view. Our analysts will go through the history of the committee's work. I don't know if we need to discuss it at a meeting because our time is going to be so short.

**The Chair:** Mr. Eglinski.

**Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC):** I follow Nathan's train of thought. If we asked the questions and they came back with the answers, do we want to waste a lot of valuable time going over each one of those specific things? I think we have a tight schedule and not a lot of time.

I don't know what we would gain by having a discussion here if they did 20% of what they were supposed to do, and they tell us what they did in that 20%.

**The Chair:** In that session, I was going to do the scoping and figure out how we want to peel this onion and which way we want to go. Maybe we only want to do one piece of it. How do we want to tackle this big beast? I thought we would potentially do that together with the advice and support of Penny and Tim, but that's up to you.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Sorry, Chair. That feels like a subcommittee thing to me again. What we've done in the past is important, and what recommendations were and weren't followed through on, but in terms of what we want to get into on CEPA, it's just informed by what was done in the past. It's not directed by what we've done in the past because times have changed since the last committee reviewed this 10 years ago.

That's scoping out, "Oh, we want to do pest management control acts for a meeting because that seems important, or if we want to look at CEPA's implication on air quality then that's a meeting."

I think that comes back to this type of a forum rather than have witnesses and the whole committee here discussing it. It's strategizing how we would want to tackle CEPA.

**The Chair:** I'm fine with that. We can do that in the subcommittee meeting and do a strategy together with the support of the staff.

Okay, if that's the case, what would you like to do with the idea that we're looking at CEPA review for March 22?

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** I think we can start to bring people in. As a subcommittee, we can develop those broad themes if we have something in hand from the analysts suggesting key categories.

What works best for me in looking at an act this big is themes. You can have a panel of witnesses drawn from the witnesses we've already submitted. We will say this aspect of CEPA will be studied today, and if there is anything we want to recommend to the government in terms of changing the act, we can go theme by theme.

• (1315)

**The Chair:** I agree.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Air quality seems to be a big piece of what they do. Pesticide management was a big piece. I'm referring to the environment commissioner's report that also looked at the administration of some of these things. I think our analysts could probably come up with three or four broad themes, or at least one broad theme to get us started on that March 22 meeting.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Tim.

**Mr. Tim Williams:** We've had a meeting with the departmental officials. On Thursday we'll have some fairly central figures and stakeholders bring forward their ideas. Perhaps we can come up with a summary of testimony based on themes from that discussion, and it'll at least start a focused discussion of where the committee wants to go.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** I feel very comfortable with that, Madam Chair, with your proposing, "If we have  $x$  number of meetings to look at CEPA, here is our suggestion: one on this, half a meeting on this."

**The Chair:** We have quite a few witnesses who weren't able to make it on March 10. We can continue with the list that was presented with witnesses for March 22. At the end of the 22nd, we will have another meeting like this, because we are planning to do them every Tuesday after the meeting. At that point, I will have sat down with Tim and Penny, and we will put forward the themes and try to focus the effort a bit more. We won't necessarily have that in place for the 22nd, because we have to start calling people now. We already have called some, and some people may be available.

We'll keep going with the list we started with. If you have some other people you didn't let us know about, please let us know, and we'll see if we can pull four more witnesses in on the CEPA review. We will do that on the 22nd.

After the 22nd, we will discuss something that we've put together, how we might go ahead with the CEPA review in a theme-based approach. Is that right? Is that what I am hearing?

**Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.):** Could we get a list with all the names that have been submitted? I don't think I have seen that. It would be useful to see who has been put forward, so we can identify possible gaps in witnesses.

**The Chair:** Sure. We don't really have our theme strategy, so it is hard to know whom to call. We have made quick calls to everybody to see who is available. We will pull in whomever we can on the 22nd. Then we'll start fitting it into themes after our next subcommittee.

We will send the names around, but I just want to give you what we have, John. We will send that out.

That puts us into April. We now have the responsibility to review the sustainable development strategy. We had it as third on our list. We can leave it, but we were supposed to get back by June. I thought it would be helpful to get started with it. It doesn't necessarily need to be huge, but I want to tell you what I have in mind.

The strategy is one thing, and the act is another. As we are listening to some of the witnesses talk about the strategy, I am sure some things about the act are going to come up in those discussions, in terms of its effectiveness and how it might be monitored. If we are going to do the strategy anyway, do we just tack on any improvements we might make to the act and get it done? That's what I was thinking.

I am opening the floor for discussion.

Mr. Cullen.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Madam Chair, could you refresh my memory on the committee's responsibility and where this responsibility came from? Is it that the minister has asked us to look at the strategy and wants us to report back?

**The Chair:** We have the Canadian Environmental Protection Act that we agreed we were going to look at. We were going to look at federally protected areas. We were going to try to do those in parallel.

Then we had an assessment of the Federal Sustainable Development Act, with a view to improving the effectiveness and implementation of the legislation to ensure environmental accountability of federal institutions. That was the third one we had identified.

Last week, the minister referred this report to our committee. We knew it was coming; we didn't know when it was coming. It's the 2016 to 2019 strategy, and it is a consultation. We have to get back with any input by June 24.

Rather than doing this and then going to the Federal Sustainable Development Act later, I thought we might combine the two.

• (1320)

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** I'll lay out my concerns.

One is that it's fine that the government wants input from us, but they also have this up on their website and are asking for input from Canadians, for some broad input on the federal sustainable development strategy. This is a heavily bureaucratic exercise. There's a general mandate given to each of the federal departments to have a green lens on their policies. What we've already heard from

the different departments is that they're working on that. My concern is that there are way too many meetings spent on this. For the most part, it's entirely an internal exercise.

My second concern is about the collegially adopted motion where we put all of these things together. We incorporated Mr. Fast's motion into mine and the Liberals then incorporated my motion into Mr. Amos's motion, so we have this one motion. My concern is that, under this calendar, the piece around clean technology and climate change is not until the fall, so I would make a secondary suggestion for discussion here. Obviously, we have to hear from the commissioner, which will be very important. For the minister and the estimates, it's a combined meeting. Is that right, Chair?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** We've allocated five meetings for CEPA, which seems appropriate, and then five on protected areas or conservation areas. I'm not sure which exact term we're going to use for that one broad category.

I'm going to suggest two on the FSDS. One of the options we've done in the past—it's mostly departments that will be testifying, I assume, or maybe there will be some others who care—is that sometimes we've done three-hour meetings, where you have two sets of five witnesses each half-hour. The idea that there would be more than 20 witnesses for this thing is a bit beyond me. The FSDS is not a strategy that many at this table had even heard of before a couple of months ago. Maybe I'm wrong and everybody is intimately familiar with the federal sustainable development strategy.

Then we do five on the clean tech and climate change piece. That brings us to 19 meetings until the summer recess. I'm trying to find some balance in that compromise piece that the government talked about in terms of trying to get all objectives onto the table.

I'll run through it again just so everyone has the map: one with the environment commissioner; one with the minister and the estimates; five on CEPA; five on protected areas; five on clean tech and climate; two on FSDS, with the option that if it's mostly department officials, we do what we've done in the past, which is a three-hour meeting split into an hour and a half for each part, and with five witnesses for each one, which would give us 20 witnesses if needed.

On the surface of it, I think getting into the act itself would be tempting. There's also the real potential of a rabbit hole, because it's about very broad governmental directives on having sustainable development strategies based in each and every department. I'm sure Health Canada has a fascinating report they want to give us, and I'm sure Transport does, and Justice, and all the way down the line. It just doesn't feel like the gripping issue, especially when we're comparing that to climate change, which is the central issue for the government right now, and to the clean tech issue, which Mr. Fast and others on all sides of the table are very curious about.

**The Chair:** I'm not sure I'm completely agreeing with you. Let's open the document.

I understand how you're viewing it, but the very first goal is to take action on climate change, and it says, "In order to mitigate the effects of climate change, reduce GHG emissions and levels, and build resilience...". It then says:

Targets that contribute to this goal focus on meeting Canada's international commitment to reduce GHG emissions; helping other jurisdictions, communities and individual Canadians become more resilient to climate change impacts; working with provinces and territories to advance the Canadian Energy Strategy; and increasing the use of clean technologies in federal government operations.

I'm sorry, but I don't see it as so distinct. I think there's a contributory piece of this that helps with what you were bringing forward, which is looking at technologies to try to make a difference. I know that we're not looking at the technologies in this. We're just trying to make sure that we have the right strategies in place to get us to where we need to go. I'm not totally seeing them as distinct. There are elements of both.

If we're going to actually implement things that we're going to come up with in the technology, we want to make sure we have a strategy that's going to do that. I'm hearing you, but let me see if there's anyone else around the table who wants to comment.

Mr. Eglinski.

• (1325)

**Mr. Jim Eglinski:** I'm afraid I have to concur with Nathan here. I think we need to break things up. We did agree on the three topics, and I think we should be reasonably fair on each one of them and try to get them done during this session. Leaving one out completely until the fall, which I think we all had some concerns about, is not really appropriate. I wrote down his breakdown. It seems reasonably acceptable to me. I think it would be acceptable to our side.

**The Chair:** Are you thinking that we're going to get everything done on CEPA in that number of meetings?

Do you think we're going to complete our CEPA review in four or five meetings?

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Well, it's one less than what the committee has suggested.

**The Chair:** No, you have to understand. Maybe this isn't clear. I am not making a plan for completion of each of these projects. What I was trying to do is make a plan on how we were going to proceed with them over this number of months, right? I did not expect that CEPA would be completed and that we would have a report all ready to go back. The only report that is completed and ready to go back would be the one relating to the federal sustainability development strategy, because we have a requirement to do that and it has been

referred. We could ignore it, but we do have a request to respond to it and get back to the minister. I would like for us to do that as a committee.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** If the pressure is off CEPA, and we go to the fall before we get to a report and our recommendations, and do a thorough job of CEPA, that's great. That takes the pressure off the spring, frankly, in terms of how many CEPA meetings we have, because right now there are at least six categorized for a non time-pressured event.

My question would be, why?

To your point, Chair, about climate change being a goal within the sustainable development strategy, it is one of many goals. We could be talking about aquaculture with DFO, clean technology, jobs and innovation—but not really. We could talk about waste water management in the federal operations. We could be talking about national parks' protected areas and ecosystems. If you wanted to make an argument you could say, "Everything environmental is in this so why don't we just study this?" Yet if this were the solution, they would have figured it out already. Clearly it's not, because it's been around in various forms for 30 years and we're not doing a great job when it comes to climate change.

**The Chair:** That's exactly my point. I don't think it has been as effective.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** No, and I would suggest that investing time into it will be great, but this is not a climate change study. It is not a clean tech study. It is an everything study, which I would argue has a real risk of being very general and very heavily bureaucratic. Who are we going to hear from in doing this? Most of the industry groups and environmental groups that we engage with don't engage with this thing because they don't find it effective. It is the mechanism and the machination of government, which is fine. I am downgrading it a bit simply because it's been around for so long and doesn't get used by most departments at all.

So could it be the tool? Potentially, but of all the advocates we want to hear from on things like clean technology and climate change, none of them refer to this, ever. So do we then say that we believe this is the answer? It's part of it.

**The Chair:** Fair enough. I do think that it has potential more than it has garnered in the past. It isn't effective. It doesn't have teeth. I was wondering if we couldn't work on giving it some teeth and giving it some real purpose. It sets the targets. It sets a plan, but it is not happening.

I was hopeful that we could try to give better governance, good governance, and accountable governance, and this would be a tool to do it.

If you don't believe in it, I understand.

• (1330)

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** No, it's not that. We'll reverse the thinking.

If you said that climate change is today the most important and pressing issue facing this country and the globe, we need to look at that. This is one of the tools within that study and we need to look at it. But if we reversed it and said that, starting with this tool we have here and have generally not used for 30 years, we are now going to put a lot of emphasis on and hope in solving one aspect of what this tool is, which is climate change, we would not be able to limit it because it deals with so many different things across the breadth and scope of government.

It would be a very broad study about the sustainability of the federal government. That is great, but if the hope is to address the greatest crisis facing the globe today through this study, I would be very doubtful, just because anybody can take us in any direction they want while we're studying this thing, and it's all valid.

Do you see what I mean? When you're starting a study, if it's too broad, you get those answers. If climate change is important, which both sides of the table say it is, then let's tackle that. That's my suggestion. Let's put some time into the FSDS. I'm not saying we should get rid of it, but let's just balance it out.

That's the proposal. I wouldn't have a lot of faith that at the end of four or five meetings on FSDS we're going to have any notion at all as to what Canada's potential strategy and potential opportunities are on climate change. There is no way, because we could spend an entire meeting on human health, well-being, and quality of life, which is a huge part of the FSDS strategy not at all related to climate change.

We could go on to chemicals management. It goes on and on. This is a very broad strategy. I want to focus right now. This is where my orientation is.

**The Chair:** Mr. Eglinski.

**Mr. Jim Eglinski:** I just want to add, Madam Chair, that we have a six-month time frame here, and it's pretty time-sensitive. I think what Mr. Cullen was saying is that it's important that we deal with it.

**The Chair:** Absolutely. There was an email earlier from Mr. Cullen, saying that you haven't got this other piece in it. What I'm trying to do is make sure that we are effective on this committee and that we actually get things done. If you throw too many balls up in the air, and we're trying to do too much in parallel, we're not going to get there; we're going to be very distracted and unfocused.

I'm trying to find a schedule that will give us chunks that we can focus on in a period of time and get things done. Recognizing that CEPA is huge and that we're not going to get that done, I believe, in this six months, how much can we get done? I know we all had an interest in the green lands, conservation, and parks. We all talked about that, so I wanted to give us a chunk of time, and I've done that. I've put a very large chunk of time in May that will focus on that, to see if we can make some progress on that one while CEPA chugs away in the background.

It also gives Penny and Tim a chance to put a report together from whatever we've come up with in sustainable development. If you want to cut the time down on a federal sustainable development

strategy, I hear you. I was just thinking that it's an opportunity to try to get some teeth in the act. It's very broad, I get it, but can we put some teeth in here that will help us get some more accountability in making progress?

Right now, you're right. People do not pay attention to it. We heard that from the commissioner. She audited, and very few people have paid any attention, so how do we get attention on it? I think that it is a determining factor of success for the government and for the country if we can get people to pay attention to this thing.

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** [*Inaudible—Editor*] between CEPA and the sustainability report?

**The Chair:** What I said was if CEPA is churning away, as we're turning away from it, I'm trying to give chunks of focus to the committee so that we don't have all of the balls up in the air, and everything's going on. What are we doing today? My mind's still on the one from last week.

I'm trying to give chunks of time. I'm trying to give a good chunk of time to the parks and conservation lands, because I think we all agreed that we wanted to try to move that, and we want to move it in conjunction with CEPA. CEPA will be going along. We won't finish it in the spring term. We will try to see if we can get some significant progress made on the green lands and conservation areas.

We've been asked by the minister to look at the federal sustainability development strategy, and I thought if we're going to have to do that, we had a third. We have to move it up, so why don't we try to do it, finish it, and get it off our plate, so that we can do the strategy, give her what she's looking for, and look at putting some teeth into it, so that it can be a viable tool for us to move some of this agenda in Canada forward?

• (1335)

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** I think we have the same concern, which is having too many balls up in the air. My very point on this federal sustainable development strategy is that it's every ball up in the air. It's all of government.

The question that you're asking, I think, is the only one that we need to answer, which is why aren't you using it? That's not six meetings. That's a meeting. It is Privy Council and PMO.

**The Chair:** I don't have six meetings, let's be clear. I have four meetings, and then we have the report that's coming back to review what we're going to submit.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Sorry, I meant five meetings with the report included.

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** My point is this. “How would you give it teeth?” would be the central question. The list of witnesses, because this is so “unreferred to”, is very small.

I guess there are two things. One is that it was a concession from the opposition that we combine two opposition motions, put them into one, and put it forward. It was adopted by the government, and it doesn't appear until the fall. Just in terms of the dynamic of how a committee works, that's a thing.

You're trying to answer it through the FSIDS, and I'm saying it's unacceptable in the sense that it doesn't do what we hoped it would.

**The Chair:** Mr. Cullen, in fairness, I'm trying. Fair enough. If we all decide that the fourth one moves to.... Honestly, the committee agreed unanimously to move two things along simultaneously, and it wasn't the one that you're talking about. It was trying to do the protected spaces, so I am trying to move that one along.

You're right. I think we do have a problem if we're going to have four things up in the air all at the same time. I'm just telling you that I put it this way because we had that point that you're making as fourth on the list. Unless we all agree to change the priorities, it's hard for me to move the other one forward.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Was FSIDS the first one?

**The Chair:** It was third.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** It was bumped up by somebody else.

The government gave us a timeline.

**The Chair:** We prioritized them at the last meeting.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Right, so it was third and now it's moving up.

**The Chair:** Okay, I hear you.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** My point is that it's nice the government has asked us to comment on this, as it has asked the entire public to comment on it. That's fine. I don't know about the rest of you, but I didn't hear about this thing on the doorstep once. We could go out knocking on doors this afternoon and find out yet again no one knows what this thing is. Many people working in government don't know what it is, and that's a problem that we should identify and fix, absolutely. Wonderful.

There's one central question: why don't you use it, and how would it be effective? Great. I can see a panel of witnesses, former PCO and current people leading the federal bureaucracy, who could help answer that question.

My suggestion is that the elephant walking around the room for the federal government, and for the Environment Minister...her mandate letter emphasizes and clearly states that climate change is the issue. Trying to mush that into this sustainable development review is a square peg in a round hole.

Coming out of this and saying this thing will have teeth is not a climate strategy. It is not an opportunity and a look at the economic side of things. I'm going to continue to argue that we should take on climate change this session, before the summer. The fall is an unknown beast. We will have CEPA to continue and to finish, which is great. I have no idea why we'd want to spend that kind of time on FSIDS. The government can ask for it whenever it wants. The

committee, being the master of its own fate, chooses how to allocate its time. I'm suggesting that a tool that has gone underutilized for three decades creates an interesting question. Why doesn't it get used? We can answer that.

I'm saying what Canadians want to know from this committee, and from this government, is what are we doing about climate change? What kinds of opportunities are out there in the clean tech sector? Why did our investment drop 50% last year while it went up globally? Those are good questions to ask that are relevant to people's lives.

I've made a suggestion in terms of timing. If the committee or chair want to refuse it, or adapt it, or whatever, that's fine. To go over it one more time, it's that we'd hear from the commissioner of the environment. We'd hear from the minister, who will also speak to the estimates. There would be five meetings on the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, five on protected areas, five on clean tech and climate change, and two potentially longer meetings on the federal sustainable development strategy, with an emphasis on why no one uses this act and how we can put teeth in it.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Mr. Aldag.

● (1340)

**Mr. John Aldag:** The only question I have is related to the proposal. When we were first talking about the priorities and the schedule, there was a question that we were going to put to the innovation group about how much of the clean tech they're going to be taking on. I wonder if we heard back.

**The Chair:** I have pursued that with the innovation group. They are not yet where we are with our committee in terms of exactly what they're going to be doing. They didn't have an answer for me. I think probably this week we'll have more information about what they're taking on and in what order.

Can we get this week under our belt? I think they'll have a better handle on what they're doing. This is a cross-committee initiative. The science and technology that's going to be involved in climate change is going to be handled by different committees in different ways. My intention was that if we leave it a little then we'll have a better handle on who's doing what and how we may come forward together and support each other in our initiatives at the different committees.

**Mr. John Aldag:** While we're waiting, I'm supportive of what Mr. Cullen has put forward in this breakdown and trying to tighten up the FSDS piece. Instead of firming up five clean tech and climate change ones, then yes, but if somebody else is going to be championing a huge piece of that, it may free up time to move some of these other ones. Let's plan to front-load with some of the other pieces. We have the commissioner of the environment, and we're working on CEPA, so let's try to do the FSDS earlier on so we can meet the timeline, get it done and off our plate, and start into the protected areas and into the clean tech climate change. I'm agreeing with that. I would just like to know who else is also working on it.

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you.

I'm still trying to get a handle on what the other committees' agendas are and how they may affect what we're doing here.

Mr. Fisher.

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** I am just wondering. Nathan is putting a time frame on some of these things. Is that a thing that would continue if five meetings turns out not to be enough? I would hate to say, "Okay, this is the end of the fifth meeting. We are 10 hours into this, and we've had all our people through. We are not really finished with this, or some people feel we are not finished with this." Unless there is a mandated date by which we must have a report prepared, I don't think we should have a solid five. What happens if we do it in four? What happens if we need six or seven?

I know you are not putting forward a solid motion. What you are doing is throwing it out there for discussion. I am new to this, but how do we know we are going to get the work done in five? Do you mean, based on your experience?

**The Chair:** I will turn it over in a minute.

Can I make a suggestion? Part of my problem is that I don't have as much experience as you may have. I was trying to figure out how many people may want to come forward and what we might need to know and ask questions about before we feel comfortable that we can come forward with the report. We took a shot at it, just for this spring period. Hopefully, we'll keep going as a committee and we'll have a chance to have a whole fall session.

I think we need to get a sense of what some of the other committees are doing as well, before we go too far out. Maybe I am trying to plan too far out, and maybe we should back it up a bit. I just wanted to put it out there, so we have a sense that everybody is going to get some time. Your point is, "Well, the issue that was really burning for me is not going to happen until the fall, and I am not happy with that." Is that right? That is what I am hearing. How do we try to address that in some way without having so much in a state of being incomplete that we are starting to spin in a variety of different directions?

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** To speak to your last point, and to what Darren had to say, I agree. What typically happens with a committee is that you get into something and then you leave it because, if you are writing a report for example, the analysts have to go away and write it. That takes time, and then a few weeks later we come back. It is quite normal for committees to have a few things up in the air, because otherwise you just have to wait for the report to be written and do nothing in the meantime, so you are working on other things.

As for the question of how you close it and know that when you're done, you're done, it goes both ways. The one we have on CEPA is a bit open-ended because it is large. It's a big act, and it is going to go into the fall.

I sat on finance before this. In finance, everybody and their dogs want to testify, and you just have to put a limit on it. Otherwise, you'd never get to actually finish, and it becomes quite additive after a while. You'll get one industry group that repeats what the one before it said, which is nuanced off the one before. At some point you say, "Okay, we get it. You want this tax measure." It's the same on the environment. You could have 40 environment groups in here talking about water, and 60% to 80% or more are going to be very similar, so you cut the list. Otherwise you'd be here forever. In the past, sometimes governments have used that as a tactic where you get 15 meetings on something that needs three, just as way to not talk about something that they'd rather not.

Time is what we play with here.

• (1345)

**The Chair:** Yes, our time is precious—

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** —as it is right now.

**The Chair:** We are trying to make this committee have a conclusion.

Picking up on what you said, I still think this has to be flexible. If we ask each of you to think about the witnesses we might want to bring forward, that will inform our decision on the time, because right now I am completely guessing.

Why don't we go back and see what witnesses we might want to hear from on the federally protected areas review and on the federal sustainability development strategy? Let's look at that and see. Of course, as we are going forward on CEPA, we have some already, but I am sure there are going to be some more. Let's look at our witness list for these issues and do the same thing for climate change as well. Let's put that out there. Let's look at our witnesses on the four topics that we are planning and see if that will help inform us on how many meetings we might need to have.

I am guessing. I don't have the experience. You are guessing, to a certain extent, with your perspective. What do you think about that? I am trying to find a way we can get a comfort level on the plan.

**Mr. Jim Eglinski:** I'm comfortable with what you just said.

Why don't we move the Federal Sustainable Development Act ahead to the 22nd and get going on it, bringing in the key people so that we can ask those relevant questions?

You said it's a priority.

**The Chair:** Are you talking about the federal sustainable development strategy?

**Mr. Jim Eglinski:** Yes. I'm suggesting that, instead of filling the 22nd, why don't bring in the key people we need to question then, as Nathan said, about why they haven't been following through, what's wrong, and so on, then follow through on the 12th again with sustainable development?

At the end of that meeting on the 12th, we'll decide who we need or what we think we need.

Let's get this thing put aside so that we can deal with the stuff that I think we're all really interested in here. I'd like to see it gone, because we have a deadline to get that report in as asked.

**The Chair:** Okay.

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** We're never going to get this all done, if we don't give the chair a little bit of leeway to make these decisions.

**The Chair:** I think it's a reasonable suggestion. I didn't want anybody to think I was cutting the CEPA review off too fast. If you're all comfortable with it, we'll take a shot at seeing whether we can get witnesses for the sustainable development strategy.

I need your help, so by Friday of this week, can you please, all of you, identify who you believe would be good to have in front of us for these four topics?

Let's prioritize them, please. Don't just give us a vague list. Can you say, I think we should definitely have this person and this person, and here are some extra ones we think might be helpful?

At the following meeting, not next week but the week after, we'll come back and hopefully have a better handle on the witness list. We can try to schedule more time, and then, taking into account what you have all said today, we'll try to come up with another approach

to making sure that all four of these at least are addressed in some form in this session, before the summer.

Is that fair?

**Mr. Jim Eglinski:** Which were the four?

**The Chair:** The four that we're talking about are CEPA, the sustainable development strategy—and I need that really soon, because we're going to try to get that done quickly—the federal protected areas review, and the one we did on the 4th, which is the climate change one.

In terms of agreement on the witnesses we're going to have on the 22nd, are we all okay with my doing it via phone or Internet? We won't have a chance to meet again as a subcommittee in preparation for what we're going to bring forward on the 22nd.

• (1350)

**Mr. Jim Eglinski:** [*Inaudible—Editor*] that unit?

**The Chair:** Well, we had the commissioner already come in to talk to us, and I know she would like to come back to tell us how she thinks we can put more teeth in it.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** That may be; I'm not sure. She tends to stay away from policy recommendations, as a rule. If she's indicated that, then maybe; it would be great.

**The Chair:** I'll pursue it and I'll let everybody know via email.

Are you all okay with our doing this on an email basis?

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Yes, I am, very much.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Thank you very much, everyone, for your time. Now we have to run to question period.

This meeting is adjourned.







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