



**Third Session – Forty-Third Legislature**  
of the  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**Standing Committee**  
on  
**Social and Economic Development**

*Chairperson*  
*Jelynn Dela Cruz*  
*Constituency of Radisson*



**Vol. LXXX No. 5 - 6 p.m., Tuesday, May 12, 2026**

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Forty-Third Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
ASAGWARA, Uzoma, Hon.	Union Station	NDP
BALCAEN, Wayne	Brandon West	PC
BEREZA, Jeff	Portage la Prairie	PC
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KINEW, Wab, Hon.	Fort Rouge	NDP
KING, Trevor	Lakeside	PC
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Dauphin	NDP
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	Ind.
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
LINDSEY, Tom, Hon.	Flin Flon	NDP
LOISELLE, Robert	St. Boniface	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Malaya, Hon.	Notre Dame	NDP
MOROZ, Mike, Hon.	River Heights	NDP
MOSES, Jamie, Hon.	St. Vital	NDP
MOYES, Mike, Hon.	Riel	NDP
NARTH, Konrad	La Vérendrye	PC
NAYLOR, Lisa, Hon.	Wolseley	NDP
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
OXENHAM, Logan	Kirkfield Park	NDP
PANKRATZ, David	Waverley	NDP
PERCHOTTE, Richard	Selkirk	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Turtle Mountain	PC
REDHEAD, Eric	Thompson	NDP
ROBBINS, Colleen	Spruce Woods	PC
SALA, Adrien, Hon.	St. James	NDP
SANDHU, Mintu, Hon.	The Maples	NDP
SCHMIDT, Tracy, Hon.	Rossmere	NDP
SCHOTT, Rachelle	Kildonan-River East	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield-Ritchot	PC
SIMARD, Glen, Hon.	Brandon East	NDP
SMITH, Bernadette, Hon.	Point Douglas	NDP
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WHARTON, Jeff	Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt, Hon.	Concordia	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	The Pas-Kameesak	

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**  
**THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**Tuesday, May 12, 2026**

**TIME – 6 p.m.**

**LOCATION – Winnipeg, Manitoba**

**CHAIRPERSON – MLA Jelynn Dela Cruz  
(Radisson)**

**VICE-CHAIRPERSON – MLA Jim Maloway  
(Elmwood)**

**ATTENDANCE – 6      QUORUM – 4**

*Members of the committee present:*

*Hon. Min. Moyes, Hon. Min. Smith*

*MLAs Dela Cruz, Maloway, Mr. Nesbitt,  
Mrs. Robbins*

*Substitutions:*

*MLA Loiselle for Hon. Min. Smith at 7:12 p.m.  
MLA Compton for Hon. Min. Moyes at 7:23 p.m.*

**APPEARING:**

*Derek Johnson, MLA for Interlake-Gimli  
Robert Loiselle, MLA for St. Boniface  
Philip Samyn, Acting Chief Legislative Counsel*

**PUBLIC PRESENTERS:**

*Bill 37 – The Environmental Statutes Amendment Act  
Tangi Bell, Our Line in the Sand Manitoba  
James Beddome, Manitoba Eco-Network  
David Grant, private citizen*

*Bill 16 – The Mental Health Amendment Act  
David Grant, private citizen*

*Bill 18 – The Waste Reduction and Prevention  
Amendment Act (Strengthening Enforcement)  
David Grant, private citizen*

**WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS:**

*Bill 18 – The Waste Reduction and Prevention  
Amendment Act (Strengthening Enforcement)*

*Denys Volkov, Association of Manitoba Municipalities*

*Bill 37 – The Environmental Statutes Amendment  
Act*

*Denys Volkov, Association of Manitoba Municipalities*

**MATTERS UNDER CONSIDERATION:**

*Bill 16 – The Mental Health Amendment Act*

*Bill 18 – The Waste Reduction and Prevention  
Amendment Act (Strengthening Enforcement)*

*Bill 37 – The Environmental Statutes Amendment Act*

*Bill 300 – The Winnipeg Foundation Amendment Act*

*Bill 301 – The Westminster United Church  
Foundation Incorporation Amendment Act*

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**Clerk Assistant (Ms. Katerina Tefft):** Good evening. Will the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development please come to order.

Before the committee can proceed with the business before it, it must elect a Chairperson.

Are there any nominations?

**MLA Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** I'd like to nominate MLA Dela Cruz.

**Clerk Assistant:** MLA Dela Cruz has been nominated.

Are there any other nominations?

Hearing no other nominations, MLA Dela Cruz, will you please take the Chair.

**The Chairperson:** All right. Our next item of business is the election of a Vice-Chairperson.

Are there any nominations?

**Hon. Mike Moyes (Minister of Environment and Climate Change):** I'd like to nominate MLA Maloway.

**The Chairperson:** MLA Maloway has been nominated.

Are there any other nominations?

Hearing no nominations, MLA Maloway is elected Vice-Chairperson.

The meeting has been called to consider the following bills: Bill 16, The Mental Health Amendment Act; Bill 18, The Waste Reduction and Prevention Amendment Act (Strengthening Enforcement); Bill 37, The Environmental Statutes Amendment Act; Bill 300, The Winnipeg Foundation Amendment Act; Bill 301, The Westminster United Church Foundation Incorporation Amendment Act.

I would like to inform all in attendance of the provisions in our rules regarding the hour of adjournment. A standing committee meeting to consider a bill must not sit past midnight to hear public presentations or to consider clause by clause of a bill except by unanimous consent of the committee.

Prior to proceeding with public presentations, I would like to advise members of the public regarding the process for speaking in committee. In accordance with our rules, a time limit of 10 minutes has been allotted for presentations, with another five minutes allowed for questions from the committee members. Questions shall not exceed 45 seconds in length with no time limit for answers.

Questions may be addressed to presenters in the following rotation: first, the minister sponsoring the bill or another member of their caucus; second, a member of the official opposition; and third, an independent member.

If a presenter is not in attendance, their name is called and they will—when their name is called, they will be dropped to the bottom of the list. If the presenter is not in attendance when their name is called a second time, they will be removed from the presenters' list.

The proceedings of our meetings are recorded in order to provide a verbatim transcript. Each time someone wishes to speak, whether it be an MLA or a presenter, I first, as the Chairperson, need to say the person's name. This is a signal to—for the Hansard recorder to turn the mics on and off.

Written submissions from the following persons have been received and distributed to committee members as well: Denys Volkov of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities on Bill 18; and Denys Volkov, again, from the Association of Manitoba Municipalities on Bill 37.

Does the committee agree to have these documents appear in the Hansard transcript of this meeting? *[Agreed]*

On the topic of determining the order of public presentations, I will note that we have out-of-town presenters registered, marked with an asterisk on the list. With this consideration in mind, in what order does the committee wish to hear the presentations?

**An Honourable Member:** Out-of-town presenters first.

**The Chairperson:** MLA Johnson has recommended out-of-town presenters first.

Is that agreed? *[Agreed]*

Thank you for your patience. With these guidelines, we will now proceed with public presentations.

### **Bill 37—The Environmental Statutes Amendment Act**

**The Chairperson:** Okay, so first up I'll call upon Tangi Bell to deliver a presentation. Tangi joins us in the room today for Bill 37, The Environmental Statutes Amendment Act.

Tangi, whenever you're ready, you may begin.

**Tangi Bell (Our Line in the Sand Manitoba):** Hello, my name is Tangi Bell. I'm chair of Our Line in the Sand Manitoba. Thank you for this opportunity to speak on Bill 37, The Environmental Statutes Amendment Act, which provides for some much-needed reform to expand and clarify the information that is made available on the public registry and to prohibit giving false or misleading information to a person administering these acts.

We are generally supportive of Bill 37, and it is good to see reforms that will strengthen transparency, accountability and enforcement. However, there are still many changes needed to ensure citizens are effectively included and protected by provincial environmental laws. We have engaged in numerous assessment and licensing processes, including for the Sio Silica project.

These assessment processes have been frustrating to participate in for a number of reasons. This includes the project being split and assessed separately despite direct connections between all proposed activities in the area. This has created a number of problems when it comes to transparency and access to information, as there are multiple different registry files and no direct links to make it easy for the public to find the information they need to meaningfully participate.

The proposed reforms that clarify the director can require additional information be added to the public registry and, quote, including information about monitoring, inspections, compliance, enforcement and appeals, do not go far enough to address these ongoing access to information problems. In our view, it is absolutely essential and appropriate that all monitoring, inspections, compliance, enforcement and appeals be posted to the registry and not subject to a director's discretion.

Monitoring data helps improve—helps gauge the effectiveness of licensing conditions, validate mitigation measures and improve accountability of

operations. Inspection records and resulting actions encourages compliance. Appeals are vital to the assessment and licensing process as they reflect section 1(1)(d) of the act: Provide for public consultation in environmental decision making. Posting this material helps to embody a transparent, accountable and evidence-based decision-making process.

We request that the following material be also included as mandatory information and posted to the public registry: A list and amount of all hazardous waste produced as well as stored on site and the name of the treatment and or disposal facility used by the development; complaints filed to all departments on a development; written reasons for any discretionary decisions made by the director or minister; mineral claims and leases in the related department and developer communications and consultations; communications between departments and the developer from the pre-proposal planning stage to project closure; a list of the licences, permits, authorizations the project requires and a copy of such when attained—for example, advanced exploration permits, temporary authorizations for water use, highway access agreements and permits and so forth; the technical advisory committee and department review for minor alterations; information about section 35 consultations with Indigenous rights holders; the total amount of all public comments received and a separate total for those that requested comments be kept off the registry.

As for logistics, we request that information be posted to the registry in real time. For example, current practice is to publish the application for a minor licence alteration simultaneously with the department's decision. All information must be posted in real time. This would better reflect fulsome public engagement and department transparency.

From our viewpoint, a public registry embodies a development's full history, from the initial pre-proposal stage through the assessment, licensing, monitoring, enforcement and compliance and closure stages. The registry should serve both government departments and the public as an effective and timely source for information and assistance on a development.

We also feel that in order for the intended expansion of information to be realized, there are associated sections in The Environment Act that should also be reformed. We are concerned about the inclusion exceptions for confidential information. Too often, proponents are able to hide behind confidentiality protections such as those under section 47 and significantly limit public access to important

information. At a minimum, we think that if a confidentiality is claimed, there should be some kind of record of what has been withheld, verification that it is indeed confidential and a list of those who signed an NDA to access this confidential material, as it is vital to the decision-making process and public trust.

For example, Sio Silica declared their 2022 Stantec geotechnical report confidential and it was withheld from the public registry, suggesting that the department and provincial experts accepted that claim. However, when the report was sent to the CEC, Clean Environment Commission, their geotechnical experts disagreed. I quote: Based on our experience in other contexts, none of the information provided to Arcadis to support a review would normally be classified as confidential and withheld from the public record. This has the potential to limit the use of critically important information during EA decision making and to erode public trust.

\* (18:10)

Our Line in the Sand recommends additional reforms be developed to ensure confidentiality claims are validated and important information is not withheld from the public record. We also recommend adding language to The Environment Act that requires the director and the minister to provide detailed reasons for their discretionary decisions. That is particularly important when it comes to appeals under section 27 of the act. We request that it be amended to reflect a detailed response from the minister for each clause appealed.

When we have appealed decisions under the act, we have been required to provide detailed reasons and facts to support our position. When we received from then-minister Jeff Wharton, who was found guilty and fined by the Ethics Commissioner for his role in pushing this licensing of the Sio Silica project, was a boilerplate statement dismissing the appeal with no details. This was not helpful and does little to promote trust, transparency, confidence and credibility.

Having a mandatory requirement for detailed reasons for all decisions would promote trust, transparency, confidence and credibility. This would also provide for meaningful public participation and support evidence-based decision making.

The false and misleading information amendment. We are in support of this amendment. We interpret it that the amendment captures the assessment and licensing process, as it is important that claims, including market claims, made in a development's

licence application be subject to scrutiny. For example, claims that silica sand can be used as feedstock to produce silicon goes against current established science. Australia's Critical Minerals Strategy states: The grain size of silica sand is prohibitive to the silicon smelting process. It is hard rock sources of silica, quartz rock and quartzite that is the accepted feedstock for silicon production in the established carbothermic process.

Currently, there is no other commercial, mature, viable process for producing silicon—for producing solar-grade silicon from silica sand. This is in—this is confirmed in other countries' strategies and plans, as well as peer-reviewed papers on the subject. However, this misleading information was submitted as part of both provincial assessments in the CEC hearing on the extraction portion of the Sio Silica project and, to our knowledge, has not been addressed by provincial regulators.

To stop the loss of public trust in Manitoba's provincial assessment process that is made worse every time government officials fail to stop bad behaviour from industry, much stronger enforcement measures that—than those proposed in Bill 37 are needed. Prohibiting false or misleading information is a move in the right direction and incredibly important for the assessment and licensing process.

Although in agreement with this amendment, we believe it does not go far enough to ensure that the assessment and licensing process is not compromised and is a more fair and equitable process. We recommend adding language to The Environment Act that will limit developers' access to elected officials and public servants while their environmental licence applications are under review.

Recent CBC coverage on the attendance of a deputy minister alongside Sio Silica at a trade mission to the US has heightened the anxiety and the fear in our community. While a licensing application is being considered, proponents should not be allowed to interact with any government officials with the potential to influence decisions and create a conflict of interest.

The proposed prohibition on false and misleading information should also be expanded to cover advertising, sponsorship of and presentation at industry events that government officials and department staff are in attendance, and the petitioning of government while a development is under review. This will help address the imbalance of power and influence by

vested interests and their access to government decision makers.

Thank you for this opportunity to share our feedback on Bill 37 and help strengthen our provincial environmental laws to ensure, for evidence-based decision making, an accountable public service and transparent public processes.

Thank you.

**The Chairperson:** Thank you very much for your presentation, Tangi. And I failed to mention earlier, Tangi represents Our Line in the Sand Manitoba today as well.

We'll now proceed to questions from committee members.

Do members have any questions?

**Hon. Mike Moyes (Minister of Environment and Climate Change):** Thank you very much, Ms. Bell, for your presentation, as well as for your care for the environment.

I think that we are in an alignment in terms of wanting to modernize our legislation and strengthen our environmental protections, and I think that this bill—as you, in your words—is a step in the right direction. And so I appreciate everything that you're doing to encourage not just government but folks, industry, all walks of life, to ensure that we're doing the right things for the environment. And so I just want to thank you for your presentation and for your advocacy.

**The Chairperson:** Tangi, you're welcome to respond.

**T. Bell:** Thank you very much for that.

Yes, we have been not the only organization, but there's been many, many, many for decades, since the Filmon government, since the Doer government, since Selinger, Pallister, Stefanson. We need this government to establish the clear and thoughtful recommendations that organizations and commissions have brought forward for these decades. They can no longer be ignored; to do so is at all of our peril.

**The Chairperson:** Thank you for your response.

Further questions from the committee?

**Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain):** Thank you, Ms. Bell, for your in-depth and extensive remarks tonight. You compacted a lot into 10 minutes; it's a lot to pull out at this point.

I'm just wondering if you or your committee has had the opportunity to bring any of these concerns to the minister or to the Department of Environment prior to this evening.

**The Chairperson:** Tangi Bell, you may respond.

**T. Bell:** Prior to this evening, as I said during this, the entire process—and this was years ago as well, when it first came in 2016, the project, and—this one in particular and there's been other ones that have been divided and segregated for assessment. All of these, the public's role in it is to comment during the application; that is specific.

The previous government has not invited us to talk; nobody has from the government.

**The Chairperson:** Thank you.

Any further questions from the committee?

Seeing none, thank you again for your time today.

#### **Bill 16—The Mental Health Amendment Act**

**The Chairperson:** Moving on to our presenters for Bill 16, The Mental Health Amendment Act.

We'll proceed with the first on the list here: David Grant, private citizen. David joins us in the room here today. *[interjection]*

Apologies. David Grant, you may begin.

**David Grant (Private Citizen):** Okay. This bill updates and streamlines some processes; it seems like it was needed. One thing I noticed, it fails to recognize that errors may be made in making this designation for a person; even worse would be retaliation, somebody who falsely accuses and builds a case. I would suggest a safeguard system and an independent review of cases where this is being applied.

The system must be different than the current. Like, the college of physicians system has a complaint system that's very weak; they mostly get thrown out before they're even considered. And I would suggest that if we're going to have a review—a mandatory review of cases, to make sure that those two evil things didn't happen, that it be on every case, not just sometimes.

Having seen the way the other regulatory processes work, without this audit process, without any recognition of that, I would suggest that the whole system puts the public in danger—very tiny, infinitesimal danger—but it'd be good to have a review system where an advocate for the system could say, hey, wait a minute.

So that was all I had to say, is that it would be nice to see a review process and that it have teeth and not be just waived when somebody feels like it. Anytime there's a complaint on anything important, I believe that the complaint should be followed through and the results of the investigation published.

So thank you very much, and glad to see you here.

**The Chairperson:** Thank you, David.

We'll proceed to questions from the committee.

**Hon. Bernadette Smith (Minister responsible for Mental Health):** Thank you, Mr. Grant, for coming to present today.

There is a regulatory body that these clinicians and physician assistants will be under. So there will be some oversight, as well as, you know, ensuring that we are streamlining folks to get to—access to services and supports that they need. This is coming from the regulatory college; they are in support of this, and this has been done in eight other jurisdictions, and it's gone remarkably well.

\* (18:20)

So we're just, you know, looking at other jurisdictions, what they've done, and ensuring that we're doing due diligence here in Manitoba and listening to the experts.

So thank you for your presentation.

**The Chairperson:** David, if you would like to respond?

**D. Grant:** Sure, and thank you, Minister, for pointing that out.

But as I mentioned, I've been deeply involved with the regulatory system, and I noticed that the Minister of Health, one of the first bills this government brought in, dealt with the issue of doctors having valid complaints against them, and it gets swept under the rug. So Minister Asagwara was very emphatic, and the Justice Minister, with getting that one in because every so often there's a valid complaint and it gets ignored or not investigated.

And I would just like to see this one—it's one thing when a doctor fixes the wrong toe or something, but in this case, the consequences are extremely serious, and I've learned not to trust the regulatory process because it throws good stuff out.

But thank you very much for recognizing that fact, Minister.

**The Chairperson:** Are there further questions from the committee?

**Mrs. Colleen Robbins (Spruce Woods):** I don't really have a question, but I just want to thank you very much for your information that you brought here today and your concerns.

Thank you

**The Chairperson:** David, would you like to respond?

**D. Grant:** Just to say thank you.

**The Chairperson:** All right. Thank you so much for your presentation, David.

Moving along, again, Bill 16 presenters. Next we have Mrs. Fernanda Vallejo.

Seeing as Mrs. Vallejo is not on Zoom, we'll be dropping her name down to the bottom of the list.

Next for Bill 16, we have Mrs. Natividad Dinulos. Is Mrs. Natividad Dinulos present in the room or on Zoom?

We will also be dropping her name—their name down to the list—the bottom of the list.

#### **Bill 18—The Waste Reduction and Prevention Amendment Act (Strengthening Enforcement)**

**The Chairperson:** Moving on to Bill 18, The Waste Reduction and Prevention Amendment Act.

The first and only presenter we have for this bill is David Grant. David, please join us at the podium once more.

David, you may begin.

**David Grant (Private Citizen):** Thank you. And, again, I'm in support of the bill.

The—one of the things I noticed in some of the wording of the bill is that it too often uses the word may. I had this discussion with the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) that if a bill is doing something that's important, I see no reason why it doesn't require the person handling the matter to do a report or whatever; the idea of making it conditional reminds me of past governments where people have let things just slip.

So that was—the main question I had was the idea of inserting the word must wherever it says may. And I don't have specific examples. But I note that the first speaker tonight—the first delegate tonight on Bill 37 pointed out the need to make public the results of any review and that no requirement should be optional.

I'm reminded of a number of governments ago, since somebody else went into long-ago history, and I'm not sure if it's changed, but Manitoba's law about polluting allowed the minister to declare the slimiest, most horrible piece of land green, you know, without proof and without sampling and so on. And I thought that was a paragraph from generations ago. It should never be in there. I could probably find it again if it hasn't been removed.

But I did mention it to a few environment ministers since the Doer days, and I don't think anybody took me seriously. But I would think we'd be—if we found that wording and got it out of there, I think everybody would be happy. Because if land, like the land behind where my son used to live in Lord Roberts—if that land is pretty much known to be polluted and horrible, it shouldn't be declared green just to benefit a developer or, in the City's case, they want to put houses there.

So I'm reminded of Love Canal in New York, where horrible wasteland and residue dump was declared green. And they built up houses, and then horrible stuff happened that seeped into basements.

But I'd just as soon not see that one. That's—again, the idea of the actions that people must take, developers must take, are a must. And if there's a may in there for government action, I'd like you to consider throwing in a must instead of a may.

So, again, that's my main comment on 18, and thank you very much.

**The Chairperson:** Thank you, David. We'll move on to questions from our committee.

**Hon. Mike Moyes (Minister of Environment and Climate Change):** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Grant, for your presentation and for bringing forward your concerns.

I just want to reassure you that in the instances I've been kind of flicking through the bill to try to scan for some of the things that you're referencing, like the may, different instances where it says may, and I just want to reassure you that that does not mean that the act is not going to be enforceable.

Like, I'll give you an example: One of the pieces where it's discussing whether records can be removed, it says: An environment officer who's not able to make copies of a record being inspected may remove the records from the premises. And it's in instances like that where it's not necessary to say they must take the records off, but if the environment officer was looking

at it, they would—they could potentially take it if they wanted—

**The Chairperson:** Thank you, Honourable Minister.

David, would you like to respond?

**D. Grant:** It's a great example and I agree with you entirely. It's just in the spousal murder bill it kept saying may, and it should have said must, and that's a different description. But if that's the only cases of may in your bill, then I'd be in support of it entirely.

Thank you.

**The Chairperson:** Thank you, David.

Further questions from the committee? Before I let you go I will just mention I did allow the honourable minister to go five seconds over. We'll allow that across the board for this presenter as well.

**Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain):** Again, thank you, Mr. Grant, for coming out again and joining us this evening and doing your due diligence on this bill and pointing out what you've seen should perhaps be noted in the bill. And it's always refreshing to hear from citizens on the bill. We read it all the time but you point out things that maybe we don't see.

So, again, thank you very much for taking the time to come out this evening.

**The Chairperson:** Thank you, Mr. Nesbitt. I see we didn't need the extra five seconds.

Mr. Grant, would you like to respond?

**D. Grant:** Just thank you, Mr. Nesbitt, and thank you, Minister. Thank you.

**The Chairperson:** Thank you very much for your presentation.

**Bill 37—The Environmental Statutes  
Amendment Act**  
*(Continued)*

**The Chairperson:** We'll revisit this list, so next we'll be moving on to Bill 37, The Environmental Statutes Amendment Act. We have one presenter left on this list. That is James Beddome from the Manitoba Eco-Network, and he will be joining us on Zoom.

**James Beddome (Manitoba Eco-Network):** Are you able—okay—are you able to see me and hear me?

**The Chairperson:** Yes, James. You may proceed with your presentation.

**J. Beddome:** Thank you very much. Thank you to the members of the Standing Committee on Social and

Economic Development for considering our comments on Bill 37, The Environmental Statutes Amendment Act.

My name is James Beddome, as already announced. I'm delivering comments tonight on behalf of the Manitoba Eco-Network, but I'd be remiss if I didn't acknowledge my colleague and policy advocacy director with the Manitoba Eco-Network, Heather Fast, who assisted with the preparation of these comments; and Heather herself is an expert on environmental law and public participation, and she would have presented tonight except she is busy teaching decision-making for sustainability at the University of Manitoba this week.

Now, the Manitoba Eco-Network has long been advocating for improvements to Manitoba's environmental regulatory framework—a call for better transparency, accountability, access to information and better enforcement. Examples include The Burden of Concern, our final report to a Healthy Environment, Healthy Neighbourhood project, which was released in 2023; our Statement of Environmental Governance in Manitoba report that was released in 2024 and, most recently, our Putting People and the Planet First: What Manitobans Expect from Impact Assessment, the final report of our Empowering Impact Assessment product that we released in 2025. Through this product we engage with nearly 500 Manitobans on impact assessment, and I'll be sharing some further details of what we heard from them tonight.

Now, with respect to Bill 37, we appreciate the government of Manitoba's attention to the issue of strengthening environmental laws through this bill, including strengthening investigative powers, holding people accountable for providing false or misleading information and some effort to improve public access to information.

\* (18:30)

However, simply put, we do not feel these reforms go far enough. Many of the proposed reforms simply extend or clarify the scope of the director's discretionary powers, especially in terms of information that may be added to the public registry. See, for, instance clauses 7 and 11, subsection 2 of the bill.

As recommended by the Manitoba Law Reform Commission in their 2015 report focused on The Environment Act, mandatory obligations are preferable to discretionary authority. In relation to the public registry, the commission called for mandatory inclusion of a range of different documents in the public

registry, including: an index of all materials contained in each file, including material not yet available; additional regulatory approvals associated with the development, such as permits and licences issued under the other acts; appeal information and post-law licensing monitoring, auditing, enforcement; and review information produced by both the proponent and government. See recommendations of the Manitoba Law Reform Commission 2.5, 7.3, 8.4 and 9.5.

Bill 37 does create some mandatory obligations under The Environment Act with respect to the filing in the public registry regarding appeals: see clause 10. Making a requirement to post appeals on the public registry was something that we heard from Manitobans through our Empowering Impact Assessment project, so this is a positive step forward.

But to truly improve transparency and accountability with respect to environmental appeals and other important decisions made under The Environment Act, we need legislative decision-making criteria and required information that must be provided in written reasons for the decision; and those written reasons should be made public and filed in the public registry accordingly.

In their 2015 report, the commission made numerous recommendations calling for the addition of decision-making criteria for a number of decisions under the act to be included in the public registry; see recommendation 7.1. The commission also recommended mandatory requirements for publicly available reasons for a range of decisions under the act; see recommendations 7.2 and 8.3.

Through our Empowering Impact Assessment project work, Manitobans told us what they expect from a public registry. They indicated they wanted public comments on the registry right away so that they could see what others were saying. They indicated they wanted the technical advisory council, or TAC, better supported and, likewise, wanted the TAC comments posted right away, preferably before the comments deadline. They wanted more information on social media, including information sessions and other information outlining where to find more information. They indicated there was a need for plain language information from a trusted third-party independent source because government and the proponent cannot be trusted.

They raised concerns that pre-application conversations take place behind the scenes with proponents and government staff, and that these take place over the phone or through other informal means

with no minutes kept. They indicated these conversations should be documented and made available on the public registry, and that the need for pre-application conversations could be avoided through better application guidelines. They indicated they need access to better information for Indigenous-led follow-up.

There is also a need for reforms that address the lack of publicly available enforcement data. There is limited public information to Manitobans about investigations, prosecution orders and enforcement, beyond a table that provides consolidated numbers in the department's annual report. Information regarding particular prosecutions and enforcement should be put in the public registration; if the prosecutions and/or enforcement actions pertain to an Environment Act licence holder; as well as regular updated enforcement data which should be available on the government's website in a manner similar to the federal Environmental Offenders Registry. This is also something that we heard through our Empowering Impact Assessment project work.

Manitobans indicated that enforcement was a major weak spot; that there was a lack of enforcement data and the information in departmental annual reports about enforcements and which licences and alterations have been approved had gotten worse over time; that enforcement on follow-up remediation and adaptive management is required, not just something written in the licence and never acted upon.

We also received creative suggestions on enforcement such as in addition to fines requiring stewardship powers and restorative justice 'initutes'—justice initiatives. Others suggested work stoppages and criminal charges.

Another reason the Manitoba Eco-Network felt compelled to respond to Bill 37 relates to the addition of a new prohibition on the submission of false and misleading information. We have heard from Manitobans that recent behaviour of certain proponents have exasperated local concerns and significantly increased worries of bias and unfair access to government by industry within the government of Manitoba; or in other words, regulatory capture. This includes aggressive advertising campaigns seemingly intended to influence government decision makers, ill-timed travel delegations including government officials and company executives and the participation of government officials in industry-sponsored—in events sponsored by proponents that are actively engaged in the licensing process.

Proponents already have unequal access to department staff during the impact assessment process, and recent events have provided direct evidence of such interactions. We recognize that proposed changes of Bill 37 to 'prohibit' the submission of false and misleading information—see clauses 4 and 14 of the bill—may create an enforcement opportunity to address unethical behaviour from proponents and the obstruction of persons carrying out their statutory duties.

However, we believe stronger measures are needed to protect Manitobans. We recommend developing additional reforms that could be made to The Environment Act and other applicable legislation that would prevent a broader range of unethical behaviour from proponents undergoing the impact assessment and licensing process in Manitoba. For example, one option could be a limitation on the advertising that's allowed to take place while the proponents' proposed development is under consideration by decision makers, similar to the advertising ban governments face during election periods.

A final suggestion for Bill 37 is there's a need for clarity with respect to who can be charged the fees outlined in clauses 3 and 13 of the bill. The text does not preclude that members of the public could face fees for asking the department to perform an inspection, which, for instance, could require an environment officer to attend to a site or for asking department staff to review documents, which takes department time. The public already faces hurdles to participate, but charging citizens or environmental groups for the submission of information could have a chilling effect on public participation in this province. We do not consider it adequate to simply state it is not the intention of the government to charge the public because intentions can change. Therefore, there needs to be clear wording that these fees are intended to apply to proponents and their agents, not members of the public.

Overall, the reforms of Bill 37 seem to have positive intentions and could improve accountability and transparency, environmental and enforcement tools in Manitoba. However, none of these measures go far enough to modernize Manitoba's environmental regulatory framework and ensure that we are a truly—an environmentally friendly Manitoba.

With the federal government increasingly moving away from environmental impact assessment, it is incumbent for the Manitoba government to do more. This requires more substantive change to our

environmental laws than what has been presented tonight. This requires more investment in enforcement and department staff because we do not presently have the capacity to step in and fill the role previously performed by the federal government. It requires iterative and ongoing consultation with Indigenous rights holders and engagement with the public.

Manitobans already know what they expect from impact assessment and they have great ideas to share if the government's willing to listen and do the follow-up work of improving public trust and our environmental laws at the same time. And our first presenter tonight, Tangi Bell, was the perfect example of that.

So, thank you again for your consideration of these comments—subject to any questions you may have.

**The Chairperson:** Thank you for your presentation, James.

We'll proceed to questions from the committee.

**Hon. Mike Moyes (Minister of Environment and Climate Change):** Thank you, Mr. Beddome, for your presentation and for all the work that the Eco-Network does—excuse me—as well as some of your other colleagues, like Heather Fast. Always happy to meet with you again, and I look forward to our next meeting where we can kind of unpack some of the many things that you have outlined there.

So thank you very much for your ongoing work and looking forward to continue to work in the future.

**The Chairperson:** James, would you like to respond?

**J. Beddome:** Yes, please.

**The Chairperson:** James, go ahead.

**J. Beddome:** Thank you very much to the minister for their question, and we also appreciate the ongoing engagement. I'll look forward to meeting, constantly making suggestions of how we can reform and improve environmental law in Manitoba.

As you know, we're looking for major changes, but we also have suggestions for small regulatory changes as well. So we appreciate the ongoing engagement but also want to encourage this government to get moving. Major substantive reforms like this do require—our major—three major recommendations as the minister knows from our impact assessment report was to engage with Indigenous rights holders, engage with the public, come up with reforms and take those reforms back to the public and Indigenous rights holders. Engage more. That's how you build

trust. That's how you make the major substantive reforms.

And we do have to acknowledge that we're running out of time in this term of this government, and we don't want to make—wait to see this happen 'til after the next election. So we really do need to get moving on that. So I don't know if you got time on your schedule tomorrow or the day after that, but the work needs to start right away.

**The Chairperson:** Thank you, James.

Well, that sounded like a direct question to the honourable minister. We'll proceed with questions from the rest of the committee if there are any.

**Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain):** Thank you, honourable Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Beddome, for your—pointing out your concerns and offering suggestions here tonight on Bill 37.

\* (18:40)

This NDP government always says it's a listening government, and I'm just wondering if the Manitoba Eco-Network was consulted on Bill 37 or any other bills brought forward by the Department of Environment and Climate Change during this session.

**J. Beddome:** Yes, we did have some—we had some engagement throughout the release of our report and our study on our Empowering Impact Assessment. So we have been reaching out and making attempts to engage with the department on an ongoing basis. I'll also note that departmental staff reached out to us, encouraging us to register for this bill.

With respect to the particular drafting of this bill, I can't say that we were directly engaged with this specific bill, but we have been directly engaging, and we actually can see some of our recommendations reflected in this bill, so we do want to acknowledge that. There are not as much of the recommendations as we would want.

I also will note that we did invite the Leader of the Opposition, as well, to our report released back in October 30 and would be happy to engage with any member of the public, so that includes, of course, any member of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

So we'd also be happy to engage and talk about some of our thoughts on how we can improve environmental law in Manitoba, with a particular focus on improving public participation, accountability and transparency.

**The Chairperson:** Thank you, James.

Are there any further questions from the committee?

Seeing no further questions, I'd like to inform the committee—well, first of all, thank you very much for your time, James, and for your presentation.

I would like to inform the committee that we've received a walk-in registration to present for Bill 37, The Environmental Statutes Amendment Act, and that is David Grant, who I will call upon now.

David Grant, you may begin.

**David Grant (Private Citizen):** Well, I spent a lot of my life as an engineer whose factories polluted a bit. I did—my training at university was at the very beginning of the study of ecology and environment studies. That's back in the late '60s, when it wasn't a topic. So I'm quite familiar with some of this stuff.

But one of the things that Mr. Beddome mentioned was that Bill 37 deals with the issue of reports that are misleading. And I think anybody that publishes a report, or that speaks up here, and has not obliged to tell the truth—I think that becomes an issue. I've asked—I believe we had to swear in to speak here like 20 years ago. I don't remember exactly, but remember having to promise to tell the truth. And I—at that time, I had tried to push that on city hall, because you had people—enthusiastic people—blurting out stuff that didn't make sense and wasn't true, and I was thinking we should, at—in that forum, impose a certain degree of credibility and honesty.

So, certainly, I would support that element of this bill, and—but it does remind me that it wasn't that long ago that engineers in Manitoba—and quite often, a person filling out one of these reports that Bill 37 deals with—might be a professional engineer.

And up until recently, it was a violation of their code of ethics to write a report that misled. And then the foxes got to write the rules for the hen house, and away goes the rule demanding honesty from them. There isn't—there are no more words governing them that say misleading reports are a violation.

You know, that's something that I found particularly troubling. And I would suggest that it'd be valuable for either somebody in the room, or Mr. Beddome or whatever, to look at the list of professionals who fill out these reports and see which ones of them have professional codes of ethics that forbid issuing an unverifiable or untrue report.

And because—I think we certainly all grew up in the days when professionals—doctors, lawyers, engineers and architects—all had to tell the truth and had to issue reports that were entirely—were not at all misleading. And I think we have to recognize, as we write new laws, that there are people who get hired because they'll write a flowery report and ignore the bad stuff.

And so that's the one issue that I think that others have touched on. And I think checking that—in this case for Bill 37, which professionals would write this report, and if they are professionals regulated by the Province of Manitoba, almost certainly, they have a code of ethics. And I think that code should require honesty.

And, I guess, also related to that is that when we are doing something, if we are going to put houses on rail yards or houses on the backyard of a nasty factory, there are standards for how you sample the earth and drilling a hole and slurping water from the bottom of the hole. So there are standards for testing to make sure there's nothing evil seeping through the soil. And to an extent, we have professionals who know how to do that stuff. But what I've seen in bills before this—before this year—was no standard.

Now, we're not North Dakota. In North Dakota they could just say, pursuant to EPA bill, item whatever, quote the US law. We can't do that as easily here and it wouldn't look good, but I think that using existing data and existing practices would be a shortcut to doing it right. And we can't expect—small province, small budgets and stuff—we can't expect to invent everything or develop everything perfectly. But I would suggest that what's there in the US EPA rules is a good starting place.

But—so those are the points I wanted to make, is there are standard ways of doing stuff and I would really like to see not just this, thou shalt not mislead, but let's look and see if the professionals doing this stuff are governed that way.

And that's all I wanted to add.

Thank you.

**The Chairperson:** Thank you, David.

Are there any questions from the committee?

**MLA Moyes:** Just thank you, again, Mr. Grant, and for highlighting the importance of honesty. And that's what this is all about, is that accountability piece as well, so that if people are knowingly misleading an environment officer, an investigation, what have you, that there is accountability.

And so I really appreciate you flagging the need to ensure that professionals are, you know, adhering to their codes of conduct and whatnot, and just know that that is the intent behind a lot of—or that section of this bill.

So, thank you very much.

**The Chairperson:** David, would you like to respond?

**D. Grant:** I'd support the minister on that, and as I say, it would be an interesting exercise for anybody in the room. They've got a little time to, you know, look at the code for the various organizations that license professionals in these fields.

And, as I say, the engineers, I've been working with them to try and bring back honesty, and if they did it, there's a good chance that some other regulator has also lopped off their—because if you leave it up to the foxes, the hen house won't be locked at night.

So, thank you.

**The Chairperson:** Further questions from the committee?

**Mr. Nesbitt:** Again, thank you, Mr. Grant, for coming out tonight and joining us at committee. It's always a pleasure to hear your insights into bills, and I thank you for the recommendations you're making to the minister tonight.

**The Chairperson:** David, a final response?

**D. Grant:** No. Thank you to you both.

**The Chairperson:** Thank you, again.

Returning to our list of names that have been dropped to the bottom of the list: Bill 16, we have Mrs. Fernanda Vallejo of Latinas Manitoba, I will call upon once more.

Seeing that Mrs. Vallejo is not in the room nor is she on Zoom, she'll be dropped from the list.

Next we have Mrs. Natividad Dinulos, private citizen. Also not online, so we'll be removing her name from the list as well.

That concludes the list of presenters before the committee today.

\* \* \*

**The Chairperson:** In what order does the committee wish to proceed with the clause-by-clause consideration of these bills?

**An Honourable Member:** Numerical?

**The Chairperson:** It's been recommended by MLA Loiselle that we proceed numerical. The will of the committee? *[Agreed]*

**Bill 16—The Mental Health Amendment Act**  
(Continued)

**The Chairperson:** We'll now proceed with the clause by clause of Bill 16.

Does the minister responsible for Bill 16 have an opening statement?

**Hon. Bernadette Smith (Minister responsible for Mental Health):** I want to thank the presenter who came tonight and presented. We appreciate your time and your expertise that you brought as well and the suggestions that you recommended. We know that mental health is something that touches every Manitoban, that there's not one person in our province who hasn't experienced a mental health issue, and every Manitoban deserves to have the supports when they need it and experience through that with someone that they love.

\* (18:50)

So the proposed amendments to Bill 16 are about modernizing The Mental Health Act so that our system can respond more effectively when people need help the most, no matter where they are. So these changes would essentially expand the authority of qualified health professionals, including physician assistants, clinical assistants and nurse practitioners to conduct the necessary exams and apply for involuntary psychiatric assessments when an individual may be at risk of harming themselves or harm to others due to a mental health disorder.

So, currently, only physicians have the authority to apply for involuntary psychiatric assessments under The Mental Health Act. In practice, this has really created delays at critical moments, particularly in emergency rooms, crisis response situations and rural and remote communities where access to physicians are limited. We listened as we went around the province to—especially to our rural folks that said that this was needed—and, of course, you know, in collaboration with others.

So, these amendments will help ensure people receive timely assessments and care when they are in crisis by enabling other highly trained and regulated health professionals to carry out these responsibilities. We can improve access to urgent mental health-care services, reduce delays and help alleviate pressure on

our emergency and crisis-care services right across our great province of Manitoba.

So with these event—amendments, we join, like I said earlier, eight other Canadian jurisdictions that have already expanded this authority beyond physicians, and their experiences have really shown that doing this so improves patient flow, strengthens patient and public safety and helps reduce wait times in emergency departments.

So I want to note that the regulatory colleges responsible, they will be overseeing these professions and ensuring that practices are safely done and in the public interest. And they have also expressed support for Bill 16.

Another important part of these amendments is the recognition of virtual care. Although it's not stated, it doesn't—it does not prohibit the use of virtual technology. These changes would clearly confirm the authority of qualified health professionals to conduct examinations and assessments remotely when appropriate. It would also confirm the authority of Mental Health Review Board to hold hearings remotely as well, so, again, expanding services to rural folks. And this is particularly important for people living northern and remote communities, where distance and travel can be—can often create barriers to accessing timely care and review processes.

So, honourable Chair, the amendments proposed in Bill 16 are ensuring Manitobans can access urgent medical—mental health care when they need it, no matter where they live in our province. These changes will strengthen our system, improve timely access to psychiatric assessments and review hearings and ultimately support better outcomes for individuals and families right across our great province.

Miigwech.

**The Chairperson:** We thank the minister.

Does the critic from the official opposition have an opening statement?

**An Honourable Member:** No, I'd just like to thank—oh, sorry.

**The Chairperson:** Oh. Mrs. Robbins.

**Mrs. Colleen Robbins (Spruce Woods):** I'd just like to thank the ones that came out and everyone to hear and to listen to their concerns. And I will take those concerns back to the actual critic that couldn't be here tonight.

**The Chairperson:** We thank the member.

During the consideration of a bill, the enacting clause and the title are postponed until all other clauses have been considered in their proper order.

Also, if there is agreement from the committee, the Chair will call clauses in blocks that conform to pages, with the understanding that we will stop at any particular clause or clauses where members may have comments, questions or amendments to propose.

Is that agreed? [*Agreed*]

Clauses 1 and 2—pass; clause 3 through 6—pass; clauses 7 through 10—pass; clauses 11 through 14—pass; clauses 15 through 18—pass; clauses 19 through 21—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

**Bill 18—The Waste Reduction and Prevention Amendment Act (Strengthening Enforcement)**  
(*Continued*)

**The Chairperson:** We'll now be moving on to Bill 18, The Waste Reduction and Prevention Amendment Act.

Does the minister responsible for Bill 18 have an opening statement?

**Hon. Mike Moyes (Minister of Environment and Climate Change):** I'd, once again, like to thank all the presenters for sharing your perspectives, your—and providing your feedback. It's an important part of the legislative process and it does help strengthen our laws that serve Manitobans.

Bill 18 updates and modernizes the enforcement tools under The Waste Reduction and Prevention Act to ensure that compliance expectations are clear, oversight is transparent and regulated parties including stewards, stewardship program operators and landfill owners and operators, are accountable for meeting their obligations.

These amendments establish a clearer, more effective and progressive enforcement framework that aligns with recognized best practices, including the automatic application of interest on overdue waste reduction and recycling support, or the WRARS Levy payments.

Environment officers will have clear authority to issue written compliance orders when a contravention occurs, outlining the required actions and timelines to return to compliance. When compliance orders are not followed, the director's authority to issue administrative monetary penalties provides a proportional and flexible enforcement tool that encourages timely correction without relying on prosecution.

The bill clearly defines what constitutes an offence, including non-compliance with the act or with issued orders, providing false or misleading information and obstructing officers. This ensures that expectations, consequences and enforcement pathways are transparent and consistent. Modernized inspection powers ensure that officers can access electronic records, obtain necessary documents, take photographs and bring qualified experts when needed, while maintaining appropriate privacy protections.

Transparency measures enable the publication of compliance information such as orders and administrative penalties to support public accountability. Stewardship program plans, approvals, suspensions and cancellations will also be shared. Third-party audits enable the director to require independent reviews of stewardship programs when necessary to verify performance and compliance.

Bill 18 does not introduce new reporting burdens. It also does not expand the scope of the act beyond enforcement and compliance modernization. The department has considered the operational realities of the regulated parties and ensured that the proposed tools are practical, fair and proportional. Feedback received through the committee presentations are going to help ensure that the final legislation is effective and balanced as much as possible.

Honourable Chair, Bill 18 represents a measured and practical update to an aging legislative framework. It strengthens Manitoba's ability to ensure compliance, provides greater clarity for regulated parties and enhances transparency for Manitobans.

And I thank the committee members for reviewing this bill.

Thank you very much.

**The Chairperson:** We thank the minister.

Does the critic from the official opposition have an opening statement?

**Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain):** Bill 18 is largely administrative in nature, but that does not mean its impacts are insignificant. Bill 18 proposes substantial changes to how Manitoba enforces compliance under its waste reduction and stewardship framework, including expanded inspection powers, compliance orders, administrative monetary penalties and increased public reporting requirements.

We recognize the importance of ensuring that environmental laws are respected and enforced effectively. Manitobans expect a waste reduction

system that is accountable, transparent and capable of delivering meaningful environmental outcomes. In that respect, there are elements of this bill that may improve consistency and strengthen oversight.

However, enforcement must also be fair, balanced and proportionate. The expanded authority granted to environment officers, including the ability to conduct inspections and require records and electronic information, places significant responsibilities in the hands of regulators. It is essential that safeguards, review mechanisms and clear standards are in place to ensure these powers are exercised reasonably and consistently.

\* (19:00)

The introduction of compliance orders and administrative monetary penalties also raises important concerns. While these tools may encourage timely compliance, the legislation leaves many details to future regulation, including how penalties will be calculated. Stakeholders deserve greater clarity and predictability, particularly municipalities, stewardship organizations and small operators that may lack the financial or administrative capacity of larger organizations. These concerns are especially important in rural and northern Manitoba, where communities often face additional infrastructure and resource challenges. Enforcement approaches must recognize these realities and avoid creating disproportionate burdens.

Ultimately, effective waste reduction requires more than stronger enforcement tools alone. It also requires collaboration, education, infrastructure investment and support for the municipalities and organizations responsible for delivering these services on the ground.

Thank you, honourable Chair.

**The Chairperson:** We thank the member.

During the consideration of a bill, the enacting clause and the title are postponed until all other clauses have been considered in their proper order.

Also, if there is agreement from the committee, the Chair will call clauses in blocks that conform to pages, with the understanding that we will stop at any particular clause or clauses where members may have comments, questions or amendments to propose.

Is that agreed? [*Agreed*]

Clauses 1 through 3—pass; clauses 4 through 6—pass; clauses 7 through 9—pass; clause 10—pass;

clause 11—pass; clause 12—pass; clauses 13 through 15—pass; clauses 16 and 17—pass; clauses 18 and 19—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

### **Bill 37—The Environmental Statutes Amendment Act**

*(Continued)*

**The Chairperson:** We'll now move on to Bill 37, The Environmental Statutes Amendment Act.

Does the minister responsible for Bill 37 have an opening statement?

**Hon. Mike Moyes (Minister of Environment and Climate Change):** I do.

Bill 37 is an important step in modernizing Manitoba's environmental legislation. The bill fulfills four significant legislative aims: It enhances public transparency by enabling a broader range of information to be made available on Manitoba's public registry; it strengthens enforcement through the inclusion of updated offence provisions and an extended period for initiating prosecutions; it holds polluters accountable by providing authority to charge fees for inspection as—and other compliance-related activities; and it modernizes the regulation-making authority for the Waste Reduction and Recycling Support Levy.

For the first time, appeal notifications and decisions will be shared through The Environment Act public registry, giving Manitobans a more complete picture of how environmental decisions are made and how concerns are resolved. This is transparency in action. The same approach applies to appeals of minor alteration decisions. These appeals, which were previously difficult for the public to track, will now be reflected on the registry so that Manitobans can clearly understand how these concerns were considered and resolved.

The bill also addresses long-standing gaps in public access to environmental information. Under the current framework, post-licensing information is not consistently available through the public registry. That creates barriers to public oversight and forces people to rely on file searches or formal requests. This bill addresses that issue. It recognizes that transparency should extend beyond the licensing phase, as it gives the director the authority to post additional information related to the ongoing oversight of a development, including monitoring results, inspections, compliance activities and enforcement actions while protecting proprietary information.

This authority is discretionary. The intention is to use it responsibly by focusing on the information that matters most to Manitobans. Instead of posting every single document, the department will prioritize the monitoring and compliance information that helps the public understand how projects are performing. This ensures the registry remains clear, useful and focused on the issues people care about.

The bill also clarifies the authority to publish similar compliance information for hazardous waste disposal facilities regulated under The Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Act. These facilities undergo the same licensing process as The Environment Act developments.

These amendments improve reporting, increase accountability and transparency and enhance public access to information. To ensure posting remains fully compliant with The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the registry will not include private or personal details.

The goal is to inform the public about the existence and outcomes of appeals and to enforcement-relevant information at the company or facility level, rather than information about individuals. In addition, the bill modernizes the obstruction provisions to clearly prohibit hindering, obstructing or interfering with the department, the director or an environment officer.

Bill 37 also strengthens enforcement by creating offence provisions for knowingly providing false or misleading information. These provisions reinforce the reliability of information used in regulatory decision making and ensure that the department has appropriate tools to respond to non-compliance—excuse me. Extending the statute of limitation for prosecutions from one year to two years provides additional time to complete complex investigations and pursue appropriate enforcement actions.

Furthermore, this bill introduces regulation-making authority to charge fees for inspection and related activities under both acts. Inspections are an important part of oversight, yet Manitoba's current fee structure does not account for the cost of these activities. Introducing fees for inspections and related compliance work helps ensure that the proponents being monitored, and not citizens, pay for these services. Other provinces, including British Columbia and Newfoundland and Labrador, have long used

inspection fees to support cost recovery and ensure that the regulatory system remains sustainable.

Honourable Chair, the bill also proposes targeted technical amendments to The Waste Reduction and Prevention Act to modernize the WRARS Levy framework. The current act contains a legacy provision that defaults the levy to a fixed amount of \$10 per ton when no prescribed formula exists. The amendment repeals this outdated default and clarifies the Lieutenant Governor and council's authority to prescribe levy formulas or tariffs. These amendments strengthen Manitoba's broader waste management system by ensuring the WRARS Levy can sustainably support waste reduction and recycling programs and initiatives across our great province.

Finally, these changes reinforce Manitoba's commitment to holding polluters accountable. A modernized levy framework supports the principle that those who generate waste and thereby place demands on the waste management system contribute fairly to the costs of operating and improving that system.

Altogether, these amendments align with the 'speech'—the Speech from the Throne that outlines: to continue to protect more of Manitoba's important areas to ensure the health of our land, air and water.

And I thank all committee members for considering this bill.

Thank you.

**The Chairperson:** We thank the minister.

Does the critic from the official opposition have an opening statement?

**Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain):** Bill 37 proposes amendments to several important environmental statutes in Manitoba, including The Environment Act, The Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Act and The Waste Reduction and Prevention Act. While many of these changes are administrative in nature, they carry significant implications for transparency, enforcement, regulatory costs and oversight.

There are provisions in this legislation that are reasonable and consistent with practices seen in other jurisdictions. Strengthening penalties for knowingly providing false information, prohibiting obstruction of officials and extending the limitation period for prosecutions may improve the Province's ability to address serious environmental violations.

However, the bill also places substantial authority in regulation and in the discretion of the director. That raises legitimate questions about accountability and predictability for the people, municipalities and businesses affected by these decisions. One example is introduction of new fees for inspections, document reviews and related services. The legislation authorizes these fees, but the details are left to future regulation. Without clear parameters in the bill itself, it is difficult to understand the financial impact these changes may have, particularly for small operators and municipalities already facing resource pressures.

These concerns are especially relevant in rural and northern Manitoba. Smaller municipalities, agricultural producers and local businesses often operate with limited administrative capacity and tighter margins. Additional compliance costs or reporting requirements may have a disproportionate effect on these communities if flexibility and support are not built into the system.

The expansion of the public registry is another important feature of this bill. Greater transparency can strengthen public confidence and improve accountability. At the same time, consistency matters. Manitobans deserve assurance that important information will be reported clearly, fairly and consistently across all regions of the province.

\* (19:10)

Ultimately, Bill 37 raises important questions about how Manitoba balances flexibility with oversight and enforcement with fairness. These are issues we will be carefully watching to ensure the legislation works effectively for all Manitobans.

Thank you.

**The Chairperson:** We thank the member.

During the consideration of a bill, the enacting clause and the title are postponed until all other clauses have been considered in their proper order.

Also, if there is agreement from the committee, the Chair will call clauses in blocks that conform to pages, with the understanding that we will stop at any particular clause or clauses where members have comments, questions or amendments to propose.

Is that agreed? [*Agreed*]

Clause 1 and 2—pass; clauses 3 and 4—pass; clauses 5 through 8—pass; clauses 9 through 11—pass; clauses 12 through 14—pass; clauses 15 and 16—pass; clauses 17 through 19—pass; clauses 20 and 21—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

### Committee Substitution

**The Chairperson:** Order, please.

I would like to inform the committee that under our rule 84(2), the following membership substitution has been made for this committee, effective immediately: MLA Loiselle for Honourable Ms. Smith.

Thank you.

### Bill 300—The Winnipeg Foundation Amendment Act

**The Chairperson:** We will now move on to Bill 300, The Winnipeg Foundation Amendment Act.

On Bill 300 we will first hear a report on the bill from Philip Samyn, Legislative Counsel, in accordance with rule 149(1).

Philip Samyn, you may begin.

**Mr. Philip Samyn (Acting Chief Legislative Counsel):** As required by subrule 149(1) of the Rules of the House, I now report that I have examined Bill 300, The Winnipeg Foundation Amendment Act, and have not noted any exceptional powers sought or any other provision of the bill requiring special consideration.

Thanks very much.

**The Chairperson:** We thank Legislative Counsel for that report.

Does the bill sponsor, the honourable member for St. Boniface, have an opening statement?

**MLA Robert Loiselle (St. Boniface):** I do.

I'm very happy to see Bill 300, The Winnipeg Foundation Amendment Act, move to second reading. In fact, I think The Winnipeg Foundation is also very happy.

As we all know, The Winnipeg Foundation was established in 1921 and strives to be as representative of all Winnipeggers as possible. The foundation wants to create a community for all, and this is why it's important for the foundation to remain current in the work that it does so it can continue to meet the unique needs of each community.

These amendments will support The Winnipeg Foundation in its modernization and accessibility efforts. Removing the mayor from the board will support the foundation in its goal of being as apolitical and as inclusive and diverse as possible. Digitizing their financial recordings will allow the foundation to be more accessible to the people of Winnipeg.

The act was previously—had previously been amended in 1943, 1980, 1990, 2004 and 2011, and The Winnipeg Foundation wants to stay current with the times. So I'm very happy to see this move to second reading, as I said, and hopefully the third reading and to royal assent as soon as possible.

Thank you, honourable Speaker—Chair.

**The Chairperson:** We thank the member.

Does any other member wish to make an opening statement on Bill 300?

**Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain):** First, I want to acknowledge the tremendous contribution that The Winnipeg Foundation has made to Winnipeg and Manitoba over more than a century. The foundation has supported countless charitable organizations, community projects, heritage initiatives, environmental programs and social services that improve the lives of Manitobans every day. Its reputation for stewardship and community leadership is well established and widely respected.

Our concern today is not with the foundation itself, but with the principle of maintaining strong and accessible public transparency measures in legislation. Currently, section 22 of the act requires the foundation to publish a summary of its audited financial statements and the auditor's report in a newspaper with general circulation in the city of Winnipeg. Bill 300 would remove that requirement and instead require the information be published on the foundation's website only.

Certainly, we recognize that communication methods have evolved and that digital publication is now an important and practical tool for public asset—access. Posting audit information online may reduce costs and improve convenience for some people. However, there is also great value in maintaining broader public notice requirements that ensure financial information is actively brought to the public, rather than relying solely on individuals to seek it out online.

Newspaper publication has traditionally served as one way of ensuring openness, visibility and accessibility to a wide audience, including Manitobans who may not regularly access information digitally, some seniors or lower income households that rely on newspapers and traditional public notices to stay informed.

This is not about resisting modernization. It is about recognizing that accessibility means ensuring

information reaches all members of the public, not only those who actively seek it out online. For those reasons, we believe maintaining the newspaper publication requirement remains an important and worthwhile public accountability measure.

And we would expect that this government would agree with ensuring the publication requirement remains, seeing as the Premier (Mr. Kinew) struck an all-party committee to make recommendations on how to ensure the sustainability of Manitoba media. We also think that the member for—from St. Boniface, who was the chair of this all-party committee and is the sponsor of this bill, would also see the value of advertising in Manitoba media.

Thank you, honourable Chair.

**The Chairperson:** We thank the member.

During the consideration of a bill, the preamble, the enacting clause and the title are postponed until all other clauses have been considered in their proper order.

Clause 1—pass; clause 2—pass.

Shall clause 3 pass?

**Some Honourable Members:** Pass.

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**The Chairperson:** I hear a no.

The floor is open for questions.

**Mr. Nesbitt:** Again, as in my opening statement, clause 22(2) allows the foundation to only post the information on the website, which, in our view, is not public notice, and we are recommending that the bill sponsor make a friendly amendment to this bill to include publication in a general circulation newspaper in the city of Winnipeg.

**The Chairperson:** Are there any further questions? Other speakers to this point?

Seeing no further questions or comments on this point, I'll put the question to the clause one more time.

Shall clause 3 pass?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**The Chairperson:** I hear a no.

### Voice Vote

**The Chairperson:** All those in favour of clause 3, please say aye.

**Some Honourable Members:** Aye.

**The Chairperson:** All those opposed, please say nay.

**An Honourable Member:** Nay.

**The Chairperson:** In my opinion, the Ayes have it.

Clause 3 is accordingly passed.

\* \* \*

**The Chairperson:** Continuing on with the clause by clause: clause 4—pass; preamble—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

I now understand there is a motion for the refund of fees with regards to this bill.

\* (19:20)

**MLA Loiselle:** I move,

THAT this committee recommends that the fees paid with respect to Bill 300, The Winnipeg Foundation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la fondation dénommée « The Winnipeg Foundation », be refunded less the cost of printing.

#### *Motion presented.*

**The Chairperson:** Is the—oh, the floor is now open for questions. Oh, the motion is in order.

The floor is now open for questions.

Are there any questions from the committee?

**Mr. Nesbitt:** Can the member tell us what the fee was?

**MLA Loiselle:** I don't have that information in front of me, but I can get it for you.

Yes, so I can add that there are fees associated with the deposit of the bill. And, once again, I can get, you know, whatever those fees are for the member.

**The Chairperson:** Further questions?

**Mr. Nesbitt:** Thank you, Mr. Loiselle. Will you table that once you have that information?

**The Chairperson:** As a reminder before allowing MLA Loiselle to respond, I have to remind members of the committee to ask questions and voice their statements through the Chair, though—MLA Loiselle.

**MLA Loiselle:** Yes, we can table that once we do get what those fees are, yes.

**The Chairperson:** Any further questions from the committee on this motion moved by the member for St. Boniface, MLA Loiselle?

Seeing no further questions, is the committee ready for the question?

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**The Chairperson:** Question before the committee is as follows:

THAT the committee recommends that the fees paid with respect to Bill 300 be refunded less the cost of printing.

Shall the motion pass? [*Agreed*]

The motion is accordingly passed.

#### **Bill 301—The Westminster United Church Foundation Incorporation Amendment Act**

**The Chairperson:** We will now be proceeding with the clause by clause for Bill 301, The Westminster United Church Foundation Incorporation Amendment Act.

#### **Committee Substitution**

**The Chairperson:** I would also like to inform the committee that, under rule 84(2), the following membership substitution has been made for this committee, effective immediately: MLA Compton for honourable Minister Moyes.

Thank you.

\* \* \*

**The Chairperson:** On Bill 301, we will first hear a report on the bill from Philip Samyn, Legislative Counsel, in accordance with rule 149(1).

**Mr. Philip Samyn (Acting Chief Legislative Counsel):** As required by subrule 149(1) of the Rules of the House, I now report that I have examined Bill 301, The Westminster United Church Foundation Incorporation Amendment Act, and I have not noted any exceptional powers sought or any other provision of the bill requiring special consideration.

**The Chairperson:** We thank Legislative Counsel for their report.

Does the bill sponsor, the honourable member for Tuxedo, have an opening statement?

**MLA Carla Compton (Tuxedo):** I'll just take a few moments here to share a little bit about this bill. So this bill makes practical updates to the governance of Westminster United Church Foundation, ensuring

continuity and clarity in its leadership structure. It strengthens the accountability by clearing—by clearly outlining trustee succession and ensuring decisions can continue without disruption.

The legislation also ensures that if the foundation is ever dissolved, its assets will continue to serve the public good by being directed to registered charities. This bill respects the long-standing history and legacy of Westminster United Church, while ensuring its foundation is equipped to operate under modern governance standards.

It supports the ongoing work of a community institution that has served Manitobans for generations through outreach, cultural programming, and supports for families. Strong community organizations play an essential role in building connected, resilient communities, and this legislation helps ensure that they can continue that good work.

This is about stewardship, making sure resources are managed responsibly and continue to benefit Manitobans now and into the future, and our government is committed to working in partnership with community organizations and ensuring that they have the tools and structures needed to succeed.

And I would like to give a special acknowledgement to Ted Barnett, member of the board who has been working with steadfast commitment year over year, bringing this forward to government, wanting to make sure that it gets updated. So, thank you, Ted, for your unwavering support and ongoing commitment to this.

And I do also just want to lift up—I know we unanimously passed the second reading earlier today. I look forward to this passing unanimously this evening, and hopefully third reading as well.

So, thank you very much.

**The Chairperson:** We thank the member.

Does any other member wish to make an opening statement on Bill 301?

**Mrs. Colleen Robbins (Spruce Woods):** Hi. I got to speak to this today in the House, and I told you I basically supported everything, and I think it's basically modernizing the way things should be with the board of today, so yes, we will definitely agree to pass this bill today.

Thank you.

**The Chairperson:** All right, we thank the member.

Does any other member wish to make an opening statement?

Seeing none despite the enthusiasm, during the consideration of a bill, the preamble, the enacting clause and the title are postponed until all other clauses have been considered in their proper order.

Clause 1—pass; clause 2—pass; clause 3—pass; clause 4—pass; preamble—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

Similar to Bill 300, I understand there's a motion for the refund of fees with regards to this bill as well.

**MLA Compton:** So I move,

THAT this committee recommends that the fees paid with respect to Bill 301, The Westminster United Church Foundation Incorporation Amendment Act, be refunded less the cost of printing.

*Motion presented.*

**The Chairperson:** The motion is in order, and the floor is open for questions.

**Mrs. Robbins:** I would ask that we could have this tabled also—the fees, just like for Bill 300.

**MLA Compton:** I believe, similar to my colleague, we can get those numbers and then table them when we receive them.

**The Chairperson:** Further questions from the committee?

Seeing none, is the committee ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**The Chairperson:** The question before the committee is as follows:

THAT this committee recommends that the fees paid with respect to Bill 301 be refunded less the cost of printing.

Shall the motion pass? [*Agreed*]

The motion is accordingly passed.

This concludes the business before the committee. The hour being 7:29 p.m., what is the will of the committee?

**Some Honourable Members:** Rise.

**The Chairperson:** Committee rise.

**COMMITTEE ROSE AT:** 7:29 p.m.

#### WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

Re: Bill 18

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM), I am writing to provide some comments regarding Bill 18: The Waste Reduction and Prevention Amendment Act (Strengthening Enforcement).

Firstly, the AMM would like to thank the Department for meeting with our organization in April to provide a technical briefing on the proposed legislation. We also appreciate the Department's efforts to communicate details of the legislation through the monthly CAO call hosted by the Department of Municipal and Northern Relations, which helped ensure municipal feedback and insights could be shared and provided municipalities with an opportunity to ask questions directly.

The AMM understands that enforcement activities are already occurring and that municipalities have not been identified as a primary concern. However, we are concerned that the proposed legislation could apply a broad enforcement framework to municipalities that work diligently to meet evolving environmental and operational standards. Municipalities also continue to face significant financial and administrative pressures in operating and maintaining waste disposal grounds—concerns that have been consistently raised with the Province.

The AMM is concerned that enhanced compliance, reporting, and enforcement requirements could create additional administrative burdens for municipalities, many of which already face limited staffing capacity and growing operational demands. Increased enforcement powers and the potential for penalties may also expose municipalities to added financial risk despite their ongoing efforts to remain compliant and deliver essential services responsibly.

As Manitoba approaches the 2026 general municipal election, the AMM believes there is an opportunity to prioritize education and capacity-building over punitive

enforcement measures. Supporting municipalities through guidance, training, and proactive communication will help achieve stronger long-term compliance outcomes.

Municipalities are already facing rising costs associated with landfill management, waste diversion initiatives, and infrastructure upgrades. As such, the AMM encourages the Province to ensure that any new requirements introduced through future regulations are accompanied by adequate funding supports and sufficient resources to help municipalities meet any new obligations in a practical and sustainable manner.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments. We look forward to continued collaboration with the Province to ensure that the implementation of Bill 18 is practical and reflective of municipal realities.

Respectfully and sincerely,

Denys Volkov  
Executive Director  
Association of Manitoba Municipalities

Re: Bill 37

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM), I am writing to provide some comments regarding Bill 37: The Environmental Statutes Amendment Act.

Firstly, the AMM would like to thank the Department for meeting with our organization in April to provide a technical briefing on the proposed legislation. We also appreciate the Department's efforts to communicate details of the legislation through the monthly CAO call hosted by the Department of Municipal and Northern Relations, which helped ensure municipal feedback and insights could be shared and provided municipalities with an opportunity to ask questions directly.

While the AMM and municipalities support transparency and environmental accountability, we encourage the Province to ensure that any information available through an expanded public registry is implemented in a balanced and collaborative manner. In particular, consideration should be given to the operational realities municipalities face in managing increasingly complex environmental and engineering

obligations. Municipalities continue to face significant financial and administrative pressures in operating and maintaining waste disposal grounds and other environmental infrastructure—concerns that have been consistently raised with the Province over the years.

Therefore, the AMM encourages the Province to maintain an education-first enforcement approach focused on awareness and compliance support rather than punitive measures. We also recommend establishing clear criteria outlining when information may be publicly posted, as well as providing municipalities with an opportunity to respond prior to publication to

ensure appropriate context and procedural fairness are considered.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments. We look forward to continued collaboration with the Province to ensure that the implementation of Bill 37 is practical and reflective of municipal realities.

Respectfully and sincerely,

Denys Volkov  
Executive Director  
Association of Manitoba Municipalities

The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Debates and Proceedings  
are also available on the Internet at the following address:

**<http://www.manitoba.ca/legislature/hansard/hansard.html>**