



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 28th Legislature
First Session

Standing Committee
on
Public Accounts

Environment and Sustainable Resource Development

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Standing Committee on Public Accounts

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Standing Committee on Public Accounts

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Natural Resources Conservation Board

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9:33 a.m.**Wednesday, February 27, 2013**

[Mr. Anderson in the chair]

The Chair: All right. We will get started. Good morning, everyone. I'd like to call this Public Accounts Committee meeting to order. My name is Rob Anderson. I'm the committee chair and the MLA for Airdrie, and I'd like to welcome everyone in attendance.

We will go around the table to introduce ourselves, starting on my right with the deputy chair. Please indicate if you are sitting in on the committee as a substitute for another member. After we go around the room, we will remember our folks that are on the conference call and go to them, and I'll indicate that.

Mr. Dorward: My name is David Dorward. I'm the MLA for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Ms Calahasen: Pearl Calahasen, Lesser Slave Lake.

Mr. Stier: Pat Stier, MLA, Livingstone-Macleod.

Mr. Anglin: Joe Anglin, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

Mr. Kang: Good morning, everyone. Darshan Kang, Calgary-McCall.

Ms Yee: Good morning. I'm Bev Yee. I'm assistant deputy minister of ESRD, and I'm with the integrated resource management planning division.

Mr. Woodworth: Good morning. Dana Woodworth, deputy minister of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development.

Mr. Mayer: Good morning. Bruce Mayer, assistant deputy minister, forestry and emergency response division.

Mr. Ryan: Good morning. I'm Ed Ryan, Assistant Auditor General.

Mr. Saher: Merwan Saher, Auditor General.

Ms Fenske: Good morning. Jacquie Fenske, MLA, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

Mr. Allen: Good morning. Mike Allen, MLA for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

Mrs. Sarich: Good morning. Janice Sarich, MLA for Edmonton-Decore.

Mr. Amery: Good morning. Moe Amery, Calgary-East.

Dr. Massolin: Good morning. Philip Massolin, manager of research services.

Mr. Tyrell: I'm Chris Tyrell, committee clerk.

The Chair: Did I hear that we have a couple of people online? Four people on online. Who's there?

Mr. Donovan: Ian Donovan, Little Bow riding.

Mr. Hehr: Kent Hehr, MLA, Calgary-Buffalo.

Ms DeLong: This is Alana DeLong, MLA, Calgary-Bow.

Mr. Quadri: Sohail Quadri, Edmonton-Mill Woods.

The Chair: Mrs. Fritz.

Mrs. Fritz: Thank you. Yvonne Fritz, Calgary-Cross.

Sorry. I couldn't connect this morning. I've been trying for about 10 minutes here, but I'm glad I'm in. Thanks.

The Chair: You're in. We haven't done anything, so you're good.

Mrs. Fritz: Oh, great. Thanks.

The Chair: All right. Five folks on the conference call. That's great. If you want to be recognized during a discussion, when there's a pause, just pipe up, and we'll get you on the list.

Mrs. Fritz: Who else is on the line if I can ask?

The Chair: Mr. Quadri, Ms DeLong, Mr. Donovan, and Mr. Hehr.

Mrs. Fritz: Thank you.

The Chair: You bet.

Okay. Just a reminder before we begin that the microphones are operated by *Hansard* staff. Audio of committee proceedings is streamed live on the Internet and recorded by *Alberta Hansard*. Audio access and meeting transcripts are obtained via the Leg. Assembly website.

If everyone could please make sure to speak directly into the microphones when you're talking. That'll make it much easier for *Hansard* and for others to hear you.

Please do your best to do what I did not do last time and turn your cellphones on to silent. I've turned mine on to silent this time.

You've had the agenda circulated to you. Do we have a mover to approve the agenda for February 27, 2013?

Mrs. Fritz: I'll move that.

The Chair: All right. All in favour? Any opposed? Carried.

You've also had circulated to you the minutes from the February 13, 2013, meeting. Could I have a mover to approve those minutes?

Ms DeLong: I'll move that.

The Chair: Ms DeLong. All in favour? Any opposed? Carried.

The reports to be reviewed today are the 2011-12 annual report on environment and water as well as the '11-12 annual report on sustainable resource development. We'll be focusing, of course, on the reports of the Auditor General, as we usually do, for March, July, and October of 2012. Obviously, the 2011-12 annual report of the government of Alberta's consolidated financial statements and the Measuring Up progress report as it pertains to environment and water and SRD are also fair game, but we try in this committee to focus as much as possible on the Auditor General's reports.

Members should all have a copy of the briefing document prepared by committee research services, which was again very well done. Thank you very much, Philip and your staff.

Joining us today are representatives from Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, and I would ask them to please make a brief opening statement, no more than 10 minutes. Go ahead.

Mr. Woodworth: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm very pleased to be here today. You've already met several of my ADMs seated at the table. As well, behind is another series of assistant deputy

ministers from Environment and Sustainable Resource Development.

I'm going to take the opportunity to provide you with just kind of an overview, some of the highlights that the department has been working on for the past year or so, and also set the conditions, hopefully, for a brief discussion on integrated resource management.

Under Premier Redford's leadership in 2011-2012 the department moved towards the implementation of a new integrated resource management system, which is how we look at and develop our resources in an integrated and holistic manner. We've actually moved towards the use of the Alberta Land Stewardship Act, Bill 36, and have completed regional plans, in particular the lower Athabasca regional plan, and some of the frameworks associated with that. In the same vein, we are also now moving towards the South Saskatchewan regional plan in an advisory capacity, ultimately moving towards a broader provincial land-use framework for all seven regions.

9:40

We are building a province-wide environmental monitoring, evaluation, and reporting agency at arm's length to the government of Alberta. As you're probably well aware, we are building and creating a single regulator, which has an impact upon this particular department – thus, I raise it – under the regulatory enhancement project. All of this is about understanding the interplay and the exchange between economic, environmental, and social values and benefits for the entire province of Alberta in terms of how we develop our resources.

Environmental monitoring and more specifically with respect to that agency. We are building a comprehensive environmental monitoring system. It is, in fact, the first in Canada and arguably the first in the world with the capacity that it's envisioned to have in terms of independent science and objective analysis. It will begin its implementation with the lower Athabasca region. The foundational work is occurring. The governance model is being created as we speak. In October 2012 Minister McQueen named a management board to begin to set up and to build up that particular agency.

In addition, some time ago, February 2012, the Alberta and Canadian governments actually stood together and announced the implementation of a joint plan for an environmental monitoring program in the oil sands region. This plan will allow the two orders of government to actually be synchronized and integrated to avoid either gaps or overlap in terms of efforts as we build our capacity.

The lower Athabasca regional plan is an extremely important first step in the land-use framework. It was proclaimed in September 2012. We are now building the final frameworks to allow us to understand what happens on a regional basis in terms of cumulative effects. When I talk about cumulative effects, I'm thinking of air, land, and water biodiversity across a broad landscape.

The single regulator. The Ministry of Energy introduced Bill 2, the Responsible Energy Development Act, which was recently passed. This bill is part of a broader build of a single regulator for the upstream energy industry, which will allow them to have the tools, the capacity, and the authority to look at all aspects, again, of air, land, and water biodiversity from an approval and compliance perspective across the whole province of Alberta.

Obviously, this department has the responsibility for stewardship, in particular, of Alberta's public land base, its forestry, fish, and wildlife. We have many initiatives to achieve success in those areas such as BearSmart and FireSmart.

BearSmart, in particular, is an awareness program designed to reduce the human-bear conflicts which occasionally occur to help protect the public, so public safety and property, as well as to help protect the bears. The implementation of this program has been successful. There have been zero bear mortalities noted for the year in question, 2011-2012, in the oil sands region.

The FireSmart program is also proving successful. It's allowing the department to direct more than \$500,000 to 16 communities who have identified the need for projects to safeguard them from wildfires.

The species-at-risk program continues to ensure that we have adequate protection for endangered or threatened wildlife, fish, and plants in Alberta through legislation and stewardship.

As well, there's an ongoing threat to the wood basket, the fibre base, in this province. In 2011-2012 the department committed more than \$29 million to controlling the mountain pine beetle infestation. That resulted in the control of approximately 135,000 trees which had been infested primarily in regions south of Grande Prairie, north of Edson and Hinton.

Open and transparent data. In November 2011 the ministry launched an oil sands information portal. This award-winning portal is a comprehensive online resource that provides detailed information to all who access it on the environmental performance of Alberta's oil sands activities. The searchable database includes such things as facility-specific water use, greenhouse gas emissions, land disturbance, and reclamation.

In terms of climate change we continue to focus our efforts on mitigating the effects through investment in innovation, education, and awareness of energy conservation and efficiency as well as greening energy production. It has been four years since we released our climate change strategy in 2008. We have learned a lot. Under our comprehensive strategy Alberta was the first jurisdiction in North America to regulate emissions from all large industrial emitters, 100,000 tonnes or greater, and to put a price on carbon, initially at \$15 a tonne, and to establish a clean energy fund. Our actions have resulted in tangible results. In 2011 106 regulated industrial emitters reduced emissions by 3.6 million tonnes, with 2 and a half million tonnes due to cogeneration, a more efficient way of generating heat and power.

As well, the climate change and emissions management fund in the same period collected \$55.4 million, which has been redirected toward the Climate Change and Emissions Management Corporation, investing in tangible climate change initiative outcomes. To date \$312 million has been paid into a clean energy technology fund based on our climate change strategy. We have more than \$167 million already invested into 30 different clean energy projects, including innovations in renewable and alternative energy. The clean energy fund is leveraging approximately \$4 in private investment for every dollar that the government invests.

Water. Water is our most precious resource, and we are proud of our work to effectively manage our water resources. The water for life strategy continues to be a pillar of environmental sustainability in the province. The renewed strategy reflects the population increase, the obvious economic growth that Alberta has seen over the past years, and Alberta's changing water needs. A total of \$25 million in operating support has been allocated across the entire government of Alberta for water for life initiatives along with \$120 million in capital support for this particular strategy.

We are working to ensure water needs are met in areas with scarce resources. For example, the spring opening of the Harvie passage and the weir reconstruction in Calgary not only improved safety on the Bow River weir but ensured continued water diversion to the Western irrigation district.

We want to continue to ensure the quality and the quantity of our water as required to support the environmental, economic, and social needs of Albertans. In the same vein we're actually at this point in time undergoing a water conversation and visiting upwards of 20 communities across the province. This will take place in the coming weeks. It's actually unfolding as we speak. It's intended to be completed by the end of March. The entire intent of that process is to get ground-level analysis, advice, and, frankly, the policy perspective from Albertans who are close to the water resources and close to the challenges associated with it.

In conclusion, you can see that both environment and water and sustainable resource development undertook many initiatives and programs to protect air, land, water, and biodiversity during 2011-2012. Obviously, as you can see, the two ministries are now merged. That has allowed us to not only plan, think, and act in an integrated fashion but, really, to drive much of our policy development in a truly integrated manner in that in every particular conversation around air, land, water, and biodiversity we have experts from each field in the room, on top of that topic, and providing their advice as we build our policies.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak, Mr. Chairman. I suspect that's 10 minutes, and if you have any questions, we are happy to answer them.

The Chair: To our Auditor General. If you could give a brief statement.

Mr. Saher: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My comments relate to our October 2012 report, and I'll highlight four areas. First, starting on page 35, we included the results of our first follow-up audit on climate change matters. There had been satisfactory progress on data quality and offset protocols. We repeated our recommendation on improving public reporting on climate change.

Second, on pages 55 to 57 we have the results of our follow-up audit on reforestation. We found that the ministry had implemented the two outstanding recommendations, which related to performance measurement and monitoring and enforcement.

Third, our list of outstanding recommendations relating to this ministry begins on page 169 of that October report. These outstanding recommendations come from our audits on sand and gravel, confined feeding operations, drinking water, managing Alberta's water supply, financial security for land disturbances, and climate change.

Lastly, there were no new recommendations made to the ministry in our October 2012 or February 2013 reports. We issued an unqualified auditor's report on the financial statements of the former ministries of environment and water and sustainable resource development for the year ended March 31, 2012, and we issued an unqualified review engagement report on performance measures that had been selected for review.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

All right. We're going to go to questions from the committee now. How we're going to break this up: we do have a little bit of committee business, so we'll leave that to the end, and we'll stop the questioning at 10 to 11. That gives us about an hour. The government members will have 30 minutes; the Wildrose opposition, 15; Liberals, 7 and a half; and the New Democrats 7 and a half. If for some reason there's time at the end, we'll rotate one question each if people still have questions at that time.

We'll start with the government members, and I will let the deputy chair kind of referee how the first 10 minutes is broken up.

Mr. Dorward: Thank you.

I think we'll take about 10 minutes now, and Pearl Calahasen is first.

9:50

Ms Calahasen: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I have a few questions, and I'm going to just go from one thing to the other. First of all, welcome. It's good to see you again, Dana. I'm glad you're there, and I'm glad that there are going to be some changes made at this department. It seems like there are a lot of outstanding issues that haven't been dealt with through the Auditor General, and I know that under your leadership we'll start to see some things happen.

On page 54 there are allocated costs associated. Under ministry support services, forestry, Land Use Secretariat, lands, fish and wildlife, and quasi-judicial land-use and compensation decisions it talks about accommodation costs. Can you explain what that is all about?

Mr. Dorward: Reference the report, please.

Ms Calahasen: Reference to page 54 of the annual report, sustainable resource development.

Mr. Dorward: That's sustainable resources. We're dealing with two.

Ms Calahasen: Oh, right. Sorry.

Mr. Dorward: Just so the phone people know where you're at.

Ms Calahasen: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Dorward: While we're waiting for that, maybe I can just thank the department for using this paper. Everybody should note that on the inside cover it says the good stuff about using recyclable paper. I hope all the government departments pick up on this because not everybody does it.

Mrs. Fritz: Can I just ask for clarification, too, while we're waiting, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Sure.

Mrs. Fritz: It's just a clarification. As Ms Calahasen said, there have been a number of outstanding recommendations by the Auditor, and this is one of the most interesting areas of the department that she's questioning as well as water and other areas. Because of the limited time that you had mentioned as well, can we place our questions in writing and submit them to you or to our vice-chair with what's outstanding at the end?

The Chair: Yeah. Absolutely. There'll be time at the end of your 30 minutes if the deputy chair wants to give you time to put those into the record. Absolutely. That would be great.

Mrs. Fritz: Well, not even necessarily in the record. Can we submit them in writing?

The Chair: Oh, sure. Yeah. You bet.

Mrs. Fritz: Okay. Thank you.

Ms Calahasen: Mr. Chair, can I just continue on, then, in terms of my questions? While you're looking for the answer, I'd like to ask another question relative to water. If you look at the drinking water outstanding recommendation, 2006, there are some issues relative to the EMS being efficiently used. It appears that regional

users are not using it as efficiently as they should, and they're developing their own applications. Can you tell me what is happening relative to making this program more effective for other people so that it can be easily seen and Albertans can see what's going on regarding this? It seems like, when we're talking about water and potential contamination of water, each regional user is using a different system. I'm trying to figure out: is there going to be a way for us to be able to monitor that so that we don't have Albertans in jeopardy?

Mr. Woodworth: I appreciate the question. I believe I have the same page you're on with respect to the Auditor General report. We're talking about information systems, recommendation 4. I just want to make sure. Regionalization is a desirable outcome, obviously, but it takes time. Part of the learning and part of the process that we understand that we need to do is actually improve reporting capacity. Not only do you have to have a centralized system to gather the information in a way to analyze it and make meaningful decisions; there's actually a training build to a certain degree with the people that use it, and that takes time to co-ordinate and actually roll out.

I believe that the Auditor General in the July 2012 report indicated satisfactory progress with this particular issue. That said, I understand your point, and I believe there's still more work to be done to identify long-term solutions for redesign and replacement, frankly, of the EMS. There are really two pieces at play here. An environmental management system over time becomes dated, and you can only put so many patches on that. We have a fairly robust system, but at some point in time you have to actually recognize that there's a need for an upgrade. At the same time you have to have the ability to train people to make an effective use of regionalization to tap into the system.

So although satisfactory progress has been made, we are looking for better solutions, more joined-up regional actions, and a better ability of those in the province to actually benefit from the EMS.

Ms Calahasen: Are you working with the regional systems to see how it can be done? It's been since 2006, so it's been seven years.

Mr. Woodworth: There's no universal regional system in place. Part of it is the conversation where you encourage the regions to actually recognize their capacity limitations and on a voluntary basis to come together for their own benefit.

Ms Calahasen: Thank you.

Mr. Dorward: Just a quick one and then the rest of our time. Environment and water annual report, page 25, talks about municipal solid waste to landfills. With all of the things we hear in Edmonton, particularly with the progress that we're making, I was surprised to see that the level of municipal solid waste to landfill stayed the same and didn't reach the target of 700 kilograms. Any comments on that? How much work is spent in this area? Do we leave it to the municipalities to really do it and then just measure it?

Mr. Woodworth: Thank you for the question. It's quite insightful. It goes back to the pace of growth in the economy and the reality of economic growth in Alberta. We're going to have to have aggressive, innovative approaches, frankly, to keep pace with the growth, and there's always a lag time. Normally there's a lag time between a reality on the ground and the understanding of it and the analysis and the ability to put a new program or policy in place to assist. We recognize that the diversion policies and the

programs for construction, demolition, waste, packaging, printing materials, and organic materials are really key to achieving our targets. We know that we're being tested to a certain degree simply by the economic growth.

We have a number of ongoing initiatives to help in terms of beverage containers, electronics, paint, and tires, and we're having conversations with some of those agencies about possible expansion of their scope.

Mr. Dorward: That's good. Thank you.

Mr. Chair, back to you.

The Chair: You still have four minutes.

Mr. Dorward: Then we'll go to Ms Pastoor.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you, and I will be brief. You had mentioned the land-use framework. I wanted to know if it's been fast-forwarded, in fact, rather than do it region by region, to do all the regions at once so that we actually can get on with that. If it's not being done, what would be the challenge to do it?

Mr. Woodworth: Thank you. We're talking, frankly, about in-year activities at this point. Really, the first indication that the land-use framework was going to have a tangible effect on the ground was September 2012, with the proclamation of ALSA and the actual rollout of the LARP, which is still being built. You're probably aware that the round 2 consultation for the South Saskatchewan regional plan is actually occurring. That still leaves five if my math is good.

The reality is that collectively we, as Albertans, are learning as we go to a certain degree. We have policy in place. We have a framework. We have one regional plan through a consultation process of about three years that's on the ground, and we're building a second.

There is always a bit of a question around tempo. By going fast, some would say that you actually implement the entire land-use framework quickly and that you would reap the benefits. Others would say that you may be going so fast that you actually are missing some of the lessons learned in the previous processes and you might have some unintended consequences, so we're being rather deliberate about the rollout.

The current pace would see upwards of five, potentially, within the next three years total. But the reality is that each of these processes is a consultative model. If you go too fast, frankly, you will have a plan that will not be considered consultative and won't actually incorporate the lessons learned from the previous ones.

I'll just point out that within the department that I'm leading now, we've actually rerolled, integrated in a new division under Bev Yee's leadership, beside me. She's the commissioner of the Land Use Secretariat. She's responsible to sequence all seven plans, and she has a whole host of strategic planners and what I call ologists, whether they're biologists, limnologists, et cetera, people who are experts in air, land, water, and biodiversity.

So we recognize the importance of doing it right. We want to learn from the experience to date. We want to make sure that we take acceptable risks as we try and get the full benefit of the land-use framework.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you.

I guess my concern is that the longer it takes, the more good agricultural land we're losing to development. Thank you.

Mr. Dorward: Is that it?

Ms Pastoor: That's it.

The Chair: All right. I'm going to start with a quick question on our side, and then we'll go to Joe first. I want to talk about the lower Athabasca plan, up north by Fort McMurray. That has been implemented. I have yet to see a costing of what that would cost the taxpayers of Alberta to compensate, obviously, landowners for the changes in valuation, lost licences, and so forth. I've yet to see a costing of what that would cost the taxpayer. I still don't see it for the South Saskatchewan plan either, but that's this year, I guess. Certainly in the past – how do we know what this is going to cost taxpayers? It's a huge project, and it seems like we just have kind of an open-ended tag. Is there a reason for that?

10:00

Mr. Woodworth: Well, I think I got the question right. The actual land-use framework from a provincial government perspective is clearly about integrating kind of the effects on the ground, understanding them and managing them, but our primary role is with the Crown land base and the tenure associated with that. I'm not sure if that's what you're talking about.

The Chair: Well, there are lots of pieces to it. When you freeze somebody's use of land in a certain way, the value of their land goes down. There are all sorts of grazing rights, mineral leases, and so forth that the government has essentially seized under that plan and will have to compensate the owners for. I'm not asking the merits of doing it. I'm asking: what is going to be the cost to government to do that, and why aren't the reports outlining that for this committee and for taxpayers?

Mr. Woodworth: I'm just going to probe a bit. Are we talking about the lower Athabasca, SSRP, or the whole piece here?

The Chair: Well, let's start with what's already been done. Let's start with the lower Athabasca plan.

Mr. Woodworth: In terms of the lower Athabasca there is an ongoing process. In the primary I think if you're talking about potential effect on Crown land subsurface leases, there is a conversation and ongoing dialogue between the regional municipality of Wood Buffalo and the government of Alberta under a rubric that's called the urban development subregion.

So there is, as you indicate, potential for changes to subsurface tenure. There is potential for Crown land to be rededicated for a broader purpose. But those decisions, frankly, have not been taken in any firm manner with respect to the lower Athabasca regional plan. It's still an ongoing conversation.

The Chair: Well, we're asking what the numbers are for the lower Athabasca plan, which was implemented last year.

Mr. Dorward: Just ask them to point to where it is in the Auditor's report, perhaps.

The Chair: No, I'm sorry. That's a very legitimate question. We've implemented a plan here in the lower Athabasca that included seizing mineral leases and other things, and I'm still not seeing any costing for that anywhere in the documents.

Mr. Woodworth: I understand your question, and there is no costing in the documents. As I indicated, that conversation, that process, is still unfolding. So there are no final decisions taken with respect to the urban development subregion or potential leases associated with that.

What the land-use framework has allowed is for the conversation to occur inside a vision of desired outcomes and an end state that we're looking for. It doesn't necessarily go to that level of detail at the outset, but it creates a model where people can have informed conversations and recognize potential trade-offs. So it will always be difficult in advance of any broad framework to nail down the exact dollar value, but I understand your point. It's an ongoing conversation.

The Chair: All right.

Mr. Anglin.

Mr. Anglin: Sure. I'm going to ask a much easier question. Your ministry has estimated that it's going to cost between \$45,000 and \$75,000 per hectare to reclaim land. The Auditor General did the math on what's outstanding and has come up with a value based on what's in your fund, which is the MFSP, of \$18,365 per hectare. Now, the Auditor General actually made these recommendations quite a while back and wanted you to address the risks associated with insufficient financial security deposits for land reclamation. So my question to you is: are there sufficient funds for reclamation? If there are not, what's the plan to get sufficient funds? If there are sufficient funds, what is the Auditor General doing wrong in his math?

Mr. Woodworth: Thank you. The question goes to a very specific regulatory system, the mine financial security program. I'm actually going to ask one of my ADMs, who's quite expert in that field, to talk about the benefits of that.

Mr. Anglin: Absolutely.

Ms Flint: Thank you. Shannon Flint, assistant deputy minister, policy division, with Environment and Sustainable Resource Development.

Last year the government of Alberta introduced the mine financial security program, and it's an asset-to-liability program that looks at the assets of the oil sands operators. We don't collect a full security. What we do is that we have the mining companies actually file five-year reclamation plans, and there's ongoing progressive reclamation that occurs with that.

The other thing they do is that they file two different funds with us. One is \$30 million that we collect from new mines. We've retained the existing financial liability that was collected under the old programs for Syncrude and Suncor. So there's ongoing reclamation that does occur. What happens is that at the end of 15 years we start asking the companies to post a full security, but one thing that you need to recognize is that there's reclamation that is ongoing continuously through the life of these mines.

Mr. Anglin: Okay. I want to rephrase my question because I didn't get the answer I'm looking for, which is appurtenant to the question. The Auditor General calculated that there's roughly about \$18,365 available per hectare, and the ministry estimates that it's going to cost between \$45,000 and \$75,000. Now, I understand about the asset to liability, and there's another question in here. What happens if the asset value drops? Since these companies actually make their own determination of assets, what kind of auditing is going on to make sure that the asset-to-liability formula is consistent with the original filing?

Getting back to the original question: how do we make up the deficiency in this math under the existing program if – now, I'm going to make the assumption that the Auditor General is correct; it's a good assumption for me. Where do we make up the difference? What's the plan?

Ms Flint: We had a discussion with the Auditor General, and the Auditor General is coming in to audit the mine financial security program this year. We do have in place an auditing program that looks at the financial statements of the companies on a year-over-year basis, and we do an audit program internally to make sure that the asset-to-liability ratios do not go below 3 to 1.

Mr. Anglin: Okay. My original question: there's a deficiency between the \$18,000 and the \$45,000 calculations here. What's the plan with Alberta Environment to make sure that this fund is sustainable so it meets its criteria, which is to reclaim the lands?

Ms Flint: Yeah. The original intent of the overall program is an asset to liability, so the first thing you have to understand is that under the mine financial security program we do not collect full-cost security for reclamation.

Mr. Anglin: How are you going to make up the deficiency for that full cost?

Ms Flint: What happens, as I indicated, is that the mines file reclamation plans, and there's ongoing reclamation that does occur, so we do not collect full-cost security. It's an asset-to-liability program under the mine financial security program.

Mr. Anglin: Well, I understand that, but that doesn't answer the question.

I'm going to go on to my next question. This one has to do with the water for life issues and your regional plans. There are WPACs out there. There are 11 of those, all regionally based. Your ministry funds these and has been funding these as part of your policies and programs for managing water and water for life in particular. There seem to be questions. Now, are you still planning on utilizing the WPACs? Are you planning on funding these? If not, what is the contingency here? What are you going to put in their place? Clearly, they have come to me, and they don't know their future. I wonder what kind of communications you have, if you're planning on using them as a participatory, I want to say, subagency because there are some paid employees here. Are you planning on continuing to fund these and continue this program?

Mr. Woodworth: I'll just lead off. The WPACs have been funded for some time and have provided valuable policy advice on the ground. They also feed into the Alberta Water Council, which you're probably familiar with, so we understand the validity and the strength of what they provide.

I'll ask my ADM beside me, Bev Yee, to elaborate on your particular question about the future.

Ms Yee: Thank you. As you identified, WPACs were identified in the original water for life as an important partner in the region. As we've now moved into the world of regional planning, that points further to how important they are to us to feed into regional planning.

We're currently reviewing the work of WPACs that we originally had identified for them, which included education in the region in terms of promoting best-use practices with water users. It also included being the lead on watershed planning, to involve stakeholders in watershed planning. A really good example of how that has fed into regional planning is the Bow River Basin Council, one of the WPACs. Their work on water quality has been utilized in the South Sask regional plan process. Our commitment is to continue to work with them.

10:10

Mr. Anglin: Okay. That's my answer. Thanks.

The Chair: Excellent. That's it for this round. We'll come back to the next one.

We'll go to the Liberals for seven and a half minutes.

Mr. Hehr: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Before I turn it over to Mr. Kang for a few questions, my question is specifically around the Auditor General's briefing regarding specified gas emitters regulation and climate change. It's my understanding that a large part of our climate change strategy was the success of CCS, and it appears from the Auditor General's looking into the SGE regulation and the like that there may be some deficiencies in our programming.

I'm just going to steal the eminently good work of the Auditor General here and read three questions into the record. If the ministry could do its best to answer these, I would be eternally grateful.

Consider these questions:

1. Four years after releasing the 2008 Climate Change Strategy the government still does not have an implementation plan? How does the government monitor progress against the strategy targets?
2. Does the government know whether its climate change policies are effective?
3. When will the government have transparent reporting on progress toward meeting emission reduction targets and the costs of reducing emissions?

These are very important to our social licence to continue to operate in a very competitive global energy marketplace. It appears, at least from my reading of the Auditor General's recommendations, that we don't have a very good handle on our climate change policies. Could you answer those questions for me?

Mr. Woodworth: Thank you. I will start off with your first question, but before I answer, I want to make sure I got it right. You're concerned about the 2008 strategy and whether it's going to meet the targets and objectives that were originally outlined. Is that correct?

Mr. Hehr: Yes. It's straight from the Auditor General's briefing.

Mr. Woodworth: Right. The government of Alberta's policy is a 12 per cent reduction from 2005 by 2020 and further reductions by 2050. What that implies is that by 2020 50 megatonnes of greenhouse gas emissions will be reduced and that by 2050 200 megatonnes of greenhouse gas will be reduced. As of today we are not on the right trajectory to meet that commitment. What that means in combination with the shortfall in megatonnage in greenhouse gas emissions is that there's another requirement, which is obligatory, and it's the specified gas emitters regulation, with a September 2014 sunset.

The reality is that the regulation and the carbon intensity reduction regime were always meant to start the process with a 12 per cent carbon intensity reduction at \$15 a tonne, to be revisited on a periodic basis. That process is actually unfolding as we speak in terms of refreshing the strategy to ensure that we have a trajectory that will meet our targets. The reality is that since 2007 we have reduced just over 32 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions from the business-as-usual model. That still leaves us with another 18 megatonnes to reach by 2020, so we're aware of that. We're aware of the targets. We're aware of the current trajectory and the need to review on an ongoing basis the

stringency, which would be how much in terms of carbon intensity reduction in dollars per tonne to meet those targets.

It's a valid question. I understand the implications of what you're saying, and we're actively looking at that exact issue as we speak with a view to meeting our projected targets for 2020 and 2050.

I think your second question was about effectiveness.

Mr. Hehr: Does the government know whether its climate change policies are effective? How does it know this?

Mr. Woodworth: The reality is that we measure the reductions. There's a variety of ways that you can substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions, obviously, at source or with new technologies. It could simply be as well less economic activity. It could be an environmental performance credit, which is internal to the corporation, or it could be through purchase of an offset, which is another industrial activity which determines a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. We actually have a number of different mechanisms. We have a number of registered offsets, and we have a process within the department to track the megatonnage on an annual basis.

Mr. Hehr: You will admit that right now, in your opinion, we're nowhere near meeting those targets as laid out in that plan. Is that a fair comment?

Mr. Woodworth: No, I won't say that. I would say that the current trajectory is not turning towards 50 megatonnes. We're at 32. I actually believe there is sufficient time and flexibility within the carbon intensity reduction regime to achieve success on that target. That's the intent.

Mr. Hehr: Okay. I'll turn it over to Mr. Kang.

Mr. Kang: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thanks, Mr. Hehr. In the AG's October 2012 report the recommendation to review the reclamation security deposits and other issues surrounding gravel mining came up for a third time. What has been done in the year under consideration to ensure better monitoring, control, and enforcement of issues in this department?

Mr. Woodworth: I'm going to lead off with just kind of an introductory comment, and I'm going to ask the relevant ADM to cover the actual detail. The surface material resource program, which is how we administer the extraction of sand, gravel, peat, and other surface materials, is actually under the process of review and enhancement. It's part of a broader piece we call the land management inspection program. It allows us to prioritize through a risk-based model where we should put our approval and compliance inspectors on the public land base. Part of being capable and efficient in that regime is actually having the right information on the risk management model.

I will ask Matt Machielse to talk about that model. Introduce yourself, please, Matt.

Mr. Machielse: Thank you. Matthew Machielse, ADM of operations, ESRD.

Thank you for the question. In regard to the processes that have been put in place, substantial work has been done as protocols have been put in place to monitor. Annual operating reports by the sand and gravel industry are now required. We've recently established an audit protocol that will follow up on those reports. We've done additional hiring, two new auditors who will follow up with those reports as well. In regard to the Auditor General

we've initiated the conversation, and we've invited the Auditor to come and review the progress that we have made to date to address the concerns that were identified.

Mr. Kang: My second question is: what has been done in the year . . .

The Chair: Just read this into the record for the time being.

Mr. Kang: What has been done in the year under consideration to ensure that the licensing and permitting of oil and gas development is taking a serious look at the impact on caribou and their habitat requirements?

Thank you.

The Chair: All right. Thank you very much. If you could get that answer to Mr. Kang and to the committee chair, he'll circulate it to the committee. That would be great, deputy minister, if that's okay.

All right. Back to the government.

Mr. Dorward: Thank you. Mr. Allen, followed by Mrs. Sarich.

Mr. Allen: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. Thank you for your presentation today. First, I'd like to acknowledge, I guess, as the representative from Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo the work your department did on both the lower Athabasca regional plan and the upcoming work that's ongoing with the urban development subregion. It's not only critical to the future growth of my riding and my constituency, but I think it is really going to be a strategic component to the sustainable growth of the energy sector for the future of Alberta. I think they're exceptional pieces of work.

I want to do kind of a follow-up question on what Mr. Anglin had asked about the mine financial security program and probably put a slightly different question. Mr. Woodworth, this may be directed more towards Shannon Flint. I'm aware that there are really only two areas of oil sands mines that have been certified as fully reclaimed, and those are Wapasu and Gateway park. I don't know if you actually term Buffalo park separately. As you mentioned, the reclamation of the lands is ongoing as development is occurring. Quite often, I think, once the reclamation is complete, it can take quite a number of years before it is certified as complete. Perhaps, Ms Flint, can you explain how you reconcile that against what is showing as outstanding for land reclamation, and is that financially accounted for?

10:20

Ms Flint: Shannon Flint, assistant deputy minister, policy division, Environment and Sustainable Resource Development.

One of the other things that the department actually instituted over the last year was a greater reporting out of the different stages that reclamation goes through, and that's posted, actually, on our website. We went from just reporting disturbed lands to reclamation lands to actually having eight stages of reclamation so that people can see that there's actually public reporting and accountability of ongoing reclamation so that it accounts for understanding the various stages of reclamation. It does take up to 50 years to actually get these sites back into what we would call a functioning ecosystem.

Mr. Allen: So if we were to consider how much was at the 50 or 75 per cent reclamation stage or whatever stage that would be called, would that be still considered part of the 51,000 hectares that were outstanding as of September 30, 2011?

Ms Flint: Sorry. I'm not sure I understand the question.

Mr. Allen: Some of the numbers that Mr. Anglin had quoted were about the financial security deposits that we held versus the amount of disturbed land that was showing as outstanding, which then suggested that there were insufficient funds on deposit because it worked out to \$18,000 per hectare. Of the 51,000 outstanding hectares would that include some of this land that has already gone through 50 or 75 per cent of its reclamation process?

Ms Flint: I would have to actually check on that, but I would suspect that it's in various stages of reclamation.

Mr. Allen: Okay.

I guess part of the work of this committee is to determine the risk to Albertans. If some natural disaster happened or if an oil sands company suddenly became insolvent, we want to understand what the risk to Albertans is if we don't have sufficient deposits on hand to complete the reclamation.

Ms Flint: Right.

Mr. Allen: I guess that's kind of an open-ended question. I'll look deeper into the website to see what those stages are. Good. Thank you.

Mr. Dorward: Just a little bit of clarification on that; there seems to be a little bit of confusion. It was the committee researcher that did the work on tossing numbers at you that you haven't had total access to. It was a number calculated from the annual returns and may have been more from the March 31, 2011, returns. It was a compiled number.

I would ask our researcher, actually, to just quickly comment on that if he could.

Dr. Massolin: Yeah. You know, it was a calculation that was done based on the report that there was \$936,596,075 as of September 30, 2011, in financial security deposits available from companies operating oil sands mines, and there is an estimate that there are 51,000 hectares of disturbed land. There's a guideline that there is approximately \$45,000 to \$75,000 per hectare required. So using all those figures, we calculated that around \$18,000 per hectare is available, and that doesn't quite meet that \$45,000 to \$75,000 standard that was quoted in this guide to mine financial security program.

Thank you.

Mr. Dorward: Thank you.

We've read that into the record. So what we'll do is endeavour to get you that information, and then if you could form that part of the written response back to us in that area.

Mr. Woodworth: Mr. Chairman, if I could. We will certainly analyze the figures and give you a response, but I think it goes back fundamentally to what ADM Flint has talked about, which is the 3 to 1 ratio. I was just thinking to myself: \$18,000, \$45,000 to \$75,000. At that point in time it was probably in line with the policies in place. I just offer that as a comment.

Mr. Dorward: Thank you.

Mrs. Sarich.

Mrs. Sarich: Thank you, Deputy Chair. Also, thank you for the information provided to the committee thus far. I'd like to also cycle back to the mine financial security program. It's my understanding that approval holders are required to submit to the ministry an annual report containing the MFSP calculations for the reporting year and that those calculations include assets and

liabilities and the financial security deposit is revised according to any reported change in the financial circumstances of the corporation.

When we look at the asset to liability ratio, the liability calculations are based on third-party costs. However, the asset calculation is on the commodity prices, which fluctuate quite considerably. I would like you to comment about the impact of the changing commodity prices on the asset to liability ratio. How do you as a ministry mitigate those types of impacts? We'll start with that one, please.

Ms Flint: What we do is monitor the asset to liability ratio. If the asset to liability ratio drops below 3 to 1 for any one company, we have triggers in place that would ask for full-cost security to mitigate against evolving and changing prices.

Mrs. Sarich: Okay. Has the ministry ever requested that in the history?

Ms Flint: No, we have not.

Mrs. Sarich: And why would that be? Because you're satisfied with . . .

Ms Flint: They have not gone below 3 to 1.

Mrs. Sarich: If a company operating oil sands mines becomes insolvent or bankrupt or a disaster occurs prior to collecting the full deposit required by the ministry, who's responsible for the additional costs for land reclamation, and are there sufficient financial security deposits in place to respond appropriately to that?

Ms Flint: One of the things that we would look to is the \$933 million that we have on the books to actually look at that. The other thing that we would do: typically, if there's a failure of any company, depending on what the price of oil is at, we have the ability to take that \$933 million on security to help carry the facility moving forward.

Mrs. Sarich: Okay.

Mr. Dorward: We can move on? Thank you.

Do we have enough time, Mr. Chair, for a question?

The Chair: Sure.

Mr. Dorward: Ms Fenske, can you take a moment?

Ms Fenske: Thank you. I would like to move to the Natural Resources Conservation Board, page 171 of the October 2012 report. Certainly, the Auditor General has indicated that there has been satisfactory progress on the groundwater recommendation that was made prior, but this is a new recommendation asking for a proactive approach to managing CFOs, confined feeding operations, in their control of the surface water. How do you measure that, and what are you doing to meet those recommendations by the Auditor General?

Mr. Woodworth: Well, thank you for the question. I'm actually going to ask the chair of the NRCB to respond. Peter.

Mr. Woloshyn: Peter Woloshyn, CEO, NRCB, not the chair, not yet.

In terms of surface water what we've asserted to the Auditor General is that surface water risks at the CFO facilities themselves are easily detectable. We have a good response in place in terms

of a complaint, but we did agree that our documentation in terms of the potential impact and the risk present at CFO facilities needed to be better documented. That's what we're doing now. What we'd do is use that data in future years to inform our compliance and enforcement policies. If we find that risks are not as we expected, we would react to that and modify or change our compliance enforcement policy. If it's confirming what we know or what we believe to know now, that the current process is working effectively, then no change would be necessary.

10:30

Ms Fenske: Do you monitor that quite regularly? What's your timeline as far as auditing those operations?

Mr. Woloshyn: That is different with groundwater versus surface water. The groundwater process is risk based. You can't easily see or detect potential groundwater issues, so we've used and implemented a risk-based compliance approach for groundwater whereas on surface water it's done through the application process. Any operations coming to us for either a new greenfield expansion or expanding an existing operation go through a risk assessment through the permitting process, and then for existing operations it's dealt with on a compliance and complaint basis.

Ms Fenske: Thank you.

The Chair: All right. We'll go to Mr. Anglin – you had a question – and then to Mr. Stier. We've got about five, six minutes left for both of you. Maybe we'll start with Mr. Stier and go to Mr. Anglin.

Mr. Stier: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, but I think the last speaker just addressed where I was going. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Go ahead, Mr. Anglin.

Mr. Anglin: Okay. Good. With regard to carbon credits and carbon offsets the verifications of these offsets are posted on the Internet. They are publicly available, but the reverifications are not. These are your ministry's audits. They're not publicly available. My first question is: why are these not publicly available? Will the ministry make them publicly available on the Internet? This would be the Alberta emissions offset registry, where the initial verifications are posted. Now, that's the first question.

I'm just going to ask you a series of questions, and if you get to all the answers, great. With these various projects that are pending, particularly the reverification, this is significant for the companies that are on the hook for this. Some of these companies are still waiting for the finalization of this reverification, in some cases up to a year. Is there a reason why a determination has not been made?

My third question is dealing with reverification, where there has been some sort of material deficiency in the process and it has been ruled to be that. Why are these companies still participating in the process when there's not been the settlement of these material deficiencies? There are companies out there that are issuing these, participating in the market, yet their verifications are not passing the proper audit. They're still in business out there on the carbon credit system trading.

Last but not least, the ministry has the authority to override these types of recommendations. The minister can override any material deficiency reported in a reverification. How many times has this happened? That's a key number. What is the value of this override? That's important also to the industries involved. Will

that information be made publicly available? This is significant in making a market that is supposed to be verifiable and liquid for all the participants.

If you need me to restate any of those questions, happy to do it.

Mr. Woodworth: I think I got all four. We're talking about the Alberta offset registry and the reverification primarily and some of the things around that. I actually do not know why it's not public or if it could be, but we can certainly find out in terms of the reverification process itself.

Mr. Anglin: Absolutely.

Mr. Woodworth: On the time it takes in terms of if there is a material deficiency or a concern, I can say this. Some of those combinations do occur. They are occurring, you know, in the present. They're somewhat illegal in nature, as you could probably well respect, so they take a financial liability turn rather quickly. The government of Alberta does pursue in the interests of Albertans the right approach, so we do not sit back and knowingly allow verifications that fail and those companies that are actually publishing them to benefit from that. We do pursue with vigour, but it takes time. I do not know if the minister has ever overridden – I can find out; I do not know at this point in time – and, if she has, how many times or what dollar value that would be, so I can't answer that question at this point in time. I will ask my ADM, Shannon Flint, if she wants to amplify.

Ms Flint: Shannon Flint, assistant deputy minister, policy division in Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development. We do run an offset system as part of the specified gas emitters regulation. We do have over 30 offset protocols posted on the website. What we're in the process of doing is validating them every five years. We have some that are currently under review, and we work with stakeholders to actually make sure that we have the most robust offset protocol in the system. We do actually do audits.

What happens is that our large final emitters actually purchase offsets through a variety of mechanisms, through a variety of folks. They submit those as part of their compliance protocol.

Mr. Anglin: I understand all that, yeah.

Ms Flint: What happens when we do an audit of the large final emitter program and find deficiencies in information that they've provided: we actually have that discussion with the large final emitter who is on the hook for that, and then they deal with the offset verifier or the individual that actually supplied them the offset credit.

Mr. Anglin: Well, my question . . .

The Chair: Actually, Mr. Anglin, you're going to have to just read this last one into the record because we're over time.

Mr. Anglin: Okay. You would agree with me, then, that these are significant in nature to these businesses involved. What I would like to know: with some of these large companies which have purchased large amounts of offsets to participate in this system, why does it take as long as it does? Should there be timelines so they can get on with business? That's where I'm going with my question. If you could look into that and get back to me on the issue of why this reverification sits in limbo for a year or more. If it's legitimate, it's legitimate. I don't have a problem with that. But it's an issue for some of these companies, and they need answers.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Anglin.

Seven and a half minutes for the government party members. Go ahead, government. You're up.

Mr. Dorward: All right. Is there anybody on the telephone that wants to make any comments or questions?

Mrs. Fritz: Thank you very much. I was going to, but my questions have been answered. I think I'm just going to have two that are arising about water and that I'm going to put in writing because they're fairly detailed from the reports that we've had. Thank you.

Mr. Dorward: Thank you, Mrs. Fritz.

Ms Calahasen, you have a follow-up question to your first question. Please reference the annual report and the page.

Ms Calahasen: Well, actually, the first question I asked wasn't answered, but I expect an answer from the department through that in terms of page 54 of the Sustainable Resource Development annual report.

Of course, I can't let you get away without talking about fish. If you notice, on page 13 of the SRD annual report we're talking about fish, healthy fish and wildlife, participation. You talk about participation, which is okay, and it looks like there's been an increase of 4 per cent in terms of fishing licences. I see that the prior results were in the negative, and now it is on the increase. I just want to walk you through this. On page 14, then, we talk about 2(d), on healthy fish and wildlife populations, percentage of species at risk. It appears that we have now gone up to 3.6 per cent, so I'm wondering what kind of species at risk there are regarding this.

10:40

Now move on to page 15, 3(c), healthy fish and wildlife, stewardship. It appears there is some performance measures methodology that has been used to determine what the stewardship is and how it is going. Now, the question I have relative to that is on the percentage change in anglers under 18 years of age. Can you explain to me how that performance measure is used to identify how the good stewardship is happening?

If you can identify for me, number one, the types of species that are at risk – it appears to be there – and, number two, what kind of performance measures were being used to be able to identify healthy fish and wildlife and how that stewardship is being used in the performance measures.

Mr. Dorward: We will just have you come back on a written basis on those questions. I think that's much easier for you. Please report back to the committee unless there's a quick comment you want to make now.

Mr. Woodworth: Actually, I think we can handle those two questions now if time permits.

Mr. Dorward: Then go ahead, please.

Mr. Woodworth: I'll ask one of my ADMs, Rick Blackwood, to address both.

Mr. Blackwood: Thank you very much for the question. Rick Blackwood, assistant deputy minister of integration with ESRD. To your first question, the species at risk issue, there are a number of different species at risk, and you can imagine that the breadth of species in Alberta that are covered under species at risk includes

everything from mosses, lichens, grasses, so vegetative-type species, all the way to different fish or wildlife.

Ms Calahasen: It's only fish, page 14.

Mr. Blackwood: So specifically fish?

Ms Calahasen: Yeah, on fish only.

Mr. Blackwood: From a fish perspective, the two primary fish in Alberta that are considered under species at risk right now are bull trout and a small species of fish that is found only in Waterton park and the eastern edge of Jasper national park. It's a type of whitefish, a very specific type of whitefish. Those are the only two fish species right now that are considered in the species-at-risk category.

As to your second question, on the stewardship, and particularly the licensing piece, within Alberta the stewardship component and the measure of under 18 have predominantly been focused on trying to increase the education of Alberta's youth in regard to the wise use and management of Alberta's fish and wildlife populations. Through groups like the Alberta hunter education program and the ACA they put a number of different programs towards educating Alberta's youth, so again under 18, in regard to wise angling methods, hunter education, and conservation programs. Those are the types of programs where we measure if, in fact, we're influencing younger Albertans into the angling sport or the hunting sport in terms of becoming wiser stewards and sharing that information with their peers as they go through life.

Ms Calahasen: And not with commercial fishermen?

Mr. Blackwood: No. They're not targeted in that regard.

Ms Calahasen: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Dorward: All right. I would like to switch gears to confined feeding operations and the Auditor General's comments in that regard. The Auditor General had made comment that there was satisfactory progress on some groundwater recommendations. However, coming up with a proactive approach to managing surface water risk was a question that he had. Can you make any general comments about how this risk is being mitigated or an update for us in that regard? How high up the ladder is it of concern for your department?

Mr. Woodworth: Certainly, and I'll ask the CEO of NRCB, Peter, to step forward.

An Hon. Member: Mr. Chair, didn't we just go over that?

Mr. Dorward: Oh, did we already? Oh. Okay. Sorry. I was tuning out, getting ready for the next thing, then.
Anything you'd like to add?

Mr. Woloshyn: Peter Woloshyn, CEO, NRCB. Surface water issues are important to us. What we've been reluctant to do is to jump into new programming without, really, a full understanding of the severity of the problem, in particular because surface water risks have been easily identifiable. Operators see them when they occur, the public sees them when they occur, so we've been relatively comfortable with that approach but have agreed and proposed to the AG department that we would look at collecting better data, managing that data better over time, and then adjusting programs, depending on what that data shows us over the next year or two.

Mr. Dorward: Good. Thank you. Better things twice than not enough.

Mr. Fraser: Hi. I'm Rick Fraser, MLA for Calgary-South East. Just a couple of questions. When we think about Alberta and we talk about the regional plans – and I think the chair had mentioned in terms of the value that we receive in Alberta, particularly in your department – is there a place in the world right now that is leading by best practices? Perhaps that's Alberta. If that's the case, how is Alberta sharing information or receiving information in terms of creating best practices or using best practices from another region similar to ours, you know, to prove to Albertans that your department is providing value?

Mr. Woodworth: Thank you for the question. We're very proud of the land-use framework. We believe it is actually leading world-wide in terms of an integrated approach to managing cumulative effects on the landscape. I'm talking about air, land, water, and biodiversity. Even as I say that, I recognize that it's early days for Alberta. We receive a lot of interest from many jurisdictions not only across Canada but internationally.

I have, you know, created this particular division, the integrated resource management planning division, that Bev Yee is leading. She's also the secretary of the Land Use Secretariat, so she's well placed to actually give you more detail on this.

Ms Yee: Thank you very much. In terms of your question about how we share information, there are a number of forums that we very deliberately and strategically use to share information. One of them is the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment. This would be the collaborative effort of all departments of environment across the country, including the federal government as well. Through them we share information about what we're doing in regional planning and what our approach is to integrated resource management and cumulative effects management. To be honest with you, the feedback is that we're far ahead of any other jurisdiction. As a result of that sharing of information, we've been to B.C., to Yukon, to Saskatchewan, and to Ontario to share specifics on how we're doing things like developing management frameworks to deal with air quality and surface water quality.

We've also used another forum called the Pacific Northwest environment directors' forum. This involves Oregon, Washington, Idaho, B.C., Yukon, Alberta as well as Environment Canada and the EPA. Most recently, just before Christmas, at that forum we shared what we were doing, and again they would like to invite themselves to come to Alberta to actually see on the ground what we're doing in the lower Athabasca, see how it's playing out in terms of the kinds of tools that we're using. So the sharing of information is an important part of what we're doing in addition to developing the plans.

The Chair: All right. We're good. The government there: a total of 32 and a half minutes. Excellent. That's a little bit over. That's okay because we had a little bit of extra time.

I'm going to give a minute to Mr. Stier to ask a question. We have just about two minutes left.

Mr. Stier: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to get into gravel pits and gravel pit reclamation a little bit. It was mentioned by the Auditor General, some recommendations from '08 and '09 with respect to enforcement on reclamation, similar to the conversations we've already had on the larger projects. I'm just wondering how the department goes about watching the phasing of these gravel operations. Are there proper royalty rates

involved? Are there proper security deposits involved? Is there phasing on these things, and how is it monitored? Do we have an information database that can tell about the life of the pit? I know that from time to time these things are operated, and then a lot of times they remain stagnant for sometimes even years. How are we proceeding with that? If someone wants to address those questions, that would be great, either now or later on in writing.

Thank you.

Mr. Woodworth: I'll just preface with: we have a very robust approval and compliance cadre within the department. We have probably one-third of our full-time equivalents actually in the operations division under ADM Matt Machielse. Their entire focus is on the ground with stakeholders and on actually being stewards of air, land, water, and biodiversity. Right now they're structured in a construct that mirrors the land-use framework so that they have an overlap and a connection to how we're actually doing our regional planning.

I'll let Matt talk about some of the approval and compliance and the actual phasing and database that you'd indicated.

Mr. Machielse: Assistant Deputy Matt Machielse, ADM operations, Environment and Sustainable Resource Development.

Specific to the sand and gravel, I had talked earlier about annual operating plans; those are submitted. Our electronic system for capturing data on where we're at with that is the GLIMPS, the geophysical land information program. That has been updated to monitor that information. Our audit staff and our compliance staff review those reports as they're submitted, and if changes need to be made or followed up on, it's their responsibility to do that. Again, I think we're welcoming the Auditor to come and have a view of that review process.

10:50

The Chair: If you could just read your last question into the record, Mr. Stier.

Mr. Stier: Yeah. I'd just like a little follow-up, if I could, on that response with respect to royalty rates and the amount of security deposits that are being held, if they're appropriate for the marketplace and for the costs of the current times because, as I said, these projects last for years and years and years.

Thank you.

The Chair: Very good question.

There were, obviously, a lot of questions read into the record there. Our clerk will provide you with a list of the ones that you didn't have time to answer. Thank you very much for your time, Mr. Woodworth, Ms Yee, and Mr. Mayer.

If everyone could stay put for about five, six, seven minutes, we're going to do some business here, and we'd like to not have too much interruption.

At the last Public Accounts working group meeting with the Auditor General we discussed which additional departments we should call before the Public Accounts Committee. Based largely on the contents of the Auditor General's latest report, the working group suggests inviting Alberta Health Services; the office of the Public Trustee to appear at the same time as Alberta Human Services; and the Northern Lakes College, NorQuest College, Olds College, and Alberta College of Art and Design to appear all on the same day. The working group also suggested inviting Alberta Energy, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, and Alberta Enterprise and Advanced Education to have a closer look

at specifically enterprise as opposed to advanced education, which we've kind of already looked at.

Finally, the working group recommends that we cancel the briefing with the Auditor General and research services on the days we would be meeting with AHS and the postsecondary institutions so that the meeting could run from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. We could have a two-hour meeting since we think that those are going to be very large. There's a great amount of material there. I'll also endeavour to make sure we don't do any business on those days so that we have the full two hours to question AHS and those postsecondary institutions that are having issues. The briefing materials will still be posted on the internal committee website well in advance of the meeting dates, so you'll still get the materials.

In the case of AHS a longer meeting would give us more time for questions as there was a lot in the latest AG's report concerning them. As for the four colleges mentioned, we'd want to invite them all on one day and split them into two panels for questioning, grouping Northern Lakes College and NorQuest College together in the first hour and then Olds College and Alberta College of Art and Design together for the second hour.

Those are the suggestions from the working group. Does anyone have any comments or questions regarding that?

Mrs. Fritz: I just have one question, Chair. Is that during the normal meeting days of session that you're discussing, or is it on the Fridays?

The Chair: The intent is to have it at our normal meeting time with the exception of the two meetings being extended from 8 to 10 instead of 8:30 to 10.

Mrs. Fritz: Thank you.

The Chair: Any other questions?

Mr. Dorward: If I could just comment, we had a really thorough discussion about this, and we're happy, obviously, or we wouldn't recommend it, but it does require all the members to – if I could just say it one more time, there are two meetings in there on consecutive Wednesdays, Alberta Health Services and the colleges, that we would not meet for in committee room B at 8 o'clock. We'd meet here and get at the business right away because we just feel there's so much there.

The Chair: Ms Pastoor.

Ms Pastoor: Yes. But we would still get the briefing from the Auditor General, that we would have at our disposal.

Mr. Dorward: We would still get it on the committee website.

Ms Pastoor: Yeah, the written one.

Mr. Dorward: We just wouldn't sit with them.

Mr. Quadri: I just wanted to confirm one thing, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Yeah, you bet. You'll be on the list.

Mrs. Sarich, go ahead first, then Mr. Quadri.

Mrs. Sarich: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just for clarification, when we get the additional materials provided by the Auditor General and research, if we have any clarification questions, are we able to

pick up the phone and get questions clarified in preparation for the meetings? Would that be appropriate?

The Chair: The Auditor General is nodding at me. Certainly, with research it is. No doubt about it. The Auditor General, I'm sure, if he's got . . .

Mr. Saher: Absolutely. Feel free to call us, and we'll do our best to answer.

Mrs. Sarich: Okay.

The Chair: Could we have a mover that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts invite the office of the Public Trustee to appear before the committee with Alberta Human Services on Wednesday, March 13.

Do we have a mover of that motion?

Mr. Quadri: I move that.

The Chair: Mr. Quadri moves it. All in favour? Any opposed? Carried.

Oh, sorry, Mr. Quadri. I forgot. Sorry. My bad. Did you have something to say?

Mr. Quadri: Yes. Actually, I just wanted to confirm that – I'm just very confused here – next week, March 6, we have an 8:30 to 10 o'clock meeting with Justice and Solicitor General. It is still on, right?

The Chair: Yes. Correct. It is.

Mr. Quadri: On the 13th we also have 8:30 to 10 with Alberta Human Services.

The Chair: That's correct. It's the motion we just passed. That's right.

Mr. Quadri: Okay. That's okay.

The Chair: That was carried.

Could we have a mover that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts invite Alberta Health Services to appear before the committee on Wednesday, March 20, 2013.

Ms Calahasen. All in favour? Any opposed? Carried.

Next, could we have a mover that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts invite Northern Lakes College, NorQuest College, Olds College, and Alberta College of Art and Design to appear before the committee on Wednesday, April 10, 2013.

Mr. Amery: I so move.

The Chair: Mr. Amery moves that. All in favour? Any opposed? Carried.

Could we have a mover that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts invite Alberta Energy to appear before the committee on Wednesday, April 17, 2013.

Mrs. Sarich: I so move.

The Chair: Mrs. Sarich. All in favour? Any opposed? Carried.

Could we have a mover that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts invite Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development to appear before the committee on Wednesday, April 24, 2013.

Moved by Mr. Anglin. All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Finally, do we have a mover that

the Standing Committee on Public Accounts invite Alberta Enterprise and Advanced Education to appear before the committee on Wednesday, May 8, 2013.

Mr. Quadri: I move.

The Chair: Mr. Quadri moves. All in favour? Any opposed?

As I'm sure you all remember, back on October 24, 2012, I asked that all research requests from this committee be submitted to your caucus representative on the working group. Those requests would then be brought back to the committee in the form of a motion. For the sake of efficiency – and we discussed this at our last working group meeting – I would suggest that the committee delegate the handling of research requests directly to the working group without having to come back and do an official motion at the committee level. This would give committee research services more time to conduct research by allowing them to get started on requests sooner.

So if you have a research request, how it would work is that you'd just give it to your rep on the working group, and we would just make the assignment. If there was ever any reason for not making the assignment, we'd have that person get back to you as to why that is, but I don't foresee that being an issue. That is just to make it more efficient rather than having every research request go through a committee motion.

Is there any discussion on that?

Mr. Fraser: I feel a little bit uncomfortable with this simply because the working group will be submitting research without the whole committee being able to discuss what it is. I think, certainly, things can start being researched that I believe do not necessarily fit the mandate of the committee as a whole. For my constituents I'd like to know what's being researched. Is it fitting the mandate of Public Accounts? I think the current practice that we have right now should stay in place.

The Chair: Just so you know how the working group works, we don't do anything unless it's unanimous. The deputy chair is on that committee. I don't think he'll let us get away with researching, you know, best ways to balance the budget without raising taxes or something like that.

Mr. Dorward: Yeah, but I would like to hear from the members of the committee because subsequent to our meeting, Mr. Chair, I didn't sense anything solid one way or the other from the committee members. So I'd prefer to hear them.

The Chair: Okay. Sure.

Mrs. Sarich.

Mrs. Sarich: Well, thank you, Mr. Chair. I think it's really important that for the record Public Accounts tries to be very open and transparent in their direction, just like the proposal of who we would be calling to the committee, and we're voting on that so that it is not only well understood by the committee but also the public, who is watching with interest the directions of the Public Accounts Committee as well as the level of inquiry around questions that the committee would like to pursue. This, I believe, is no different.

11:00

We should set a strong framework so that if there are directions that need some extra work in terms of research, it be clear, that the proposal comes forward, and that the committee has an

opportunity to articulate diverse perspectives. As well, there might be something supplemental to that to ensure that it is comprehensive, that it is moving in the correct direction, and that there is support by the committee for that piece of research. I appreciate that the working group could have initial dialogue, but proposals need to come back to the committee for further exploration so that we ensure that we're applying top-notch, great tone-at-the-top rigour around those directions. That would be my preference on behalf of the constituents of Edmonton-Decore.

The Chair: All right. Any other discussion on this?

Ms Calahasen: Yeah. Mr. Chair, if I may, I think that's a really good point that Mrs. Sarich has brought forward. Sitting on the committee, I think it's important for us all to be involved. I know the working committee works really hard, and I know they try to make sure that they represent us on our end. However, I think it's important for us to be involved at all levels, especially when we're talking about research. I love what research does because they do such a fantastic job – I'll say that again and again – but I would like to also be part of that discussion. I think I would prefer the way it is at the moment.

Mr. Dorward: If I could comment as well, we did briefly discuss this, for sure, but I think I've crystallized it in my mind's eye, and the fact is that we will meet more than the working group; you know, as the committee. Not only that, but we have done a great job of pushing out ahead, up to May, the meetings with the people we're going to be meeting with. Really, we should be able to come up and do our work earlier, and not the night before, as much as possible. Then we know the questions, and we can get them to the researchers.

The Chair: Okay. That's fine. I thought this was from the working group.

Go ahead, Philip.

Dr. Massolin: Yeah. I mean, I think it can work for us, but there's a practical point. As the deputy chair just mentioned, for the most part it would work well in that when the regular meetings are being scheduled, you could have that motion passed, and that's usually not a problem. But there are occasions when the working group meets outside of session, and the next meeting may not be for as much as a month or six weeks hence. In that case I would propose a compromise situation, where perhaps the committee clerk could e-mail these requests out to the committee members or something like that in order that the committee members would get exposure to what those requests are and could respond. In that way, we could start our work. If we had to wait a month or six weeks or whatever, obviously that would hinder our work.

The Chair: All right. That seems reasonable. I see a lot of nodding heads. Can we agree, then, that when we're in session, we'll bring all of these research requests before the group? When we're out of session, the research requests will be e-mailed out to the group. Are we allowed to do an online vote? How does that work?

Dr. Massolin: I can speak to that. It's not necessarily a vote. It's just sort of: if anybody raises concerns or whatever, then you deal with it as it comes. It's just a practical scenario.

The Chair: All right. The working group will make the research request, but they'll all be circulated between sessions without the need for a formal motion.

Mr. Dorward: Translating that into practicality would mean that, for example, the PC caucus could say to me as the person sitting on the working group, “I don’t think that question should go to research,” and then I would say, “I don’t think that question should go to research,” and it wouldn’t go to research, I guess.

The Chair: Right.

Ms Fenske: Mr. Allen and I were speaking here. You know what? There’s no hurry to do this. Could we have the written resolution that you’re asking be put forward?

Mr. Dorward: Yeah. We meet next week.

Ms Fenske: Yeah. We’re meeting next week, so I’d rather deal with that once it’s in a written format. Thank you.

The Chair: Sure. We’ll get our clerk to put a motion together based on what we talked about here and make sure it’s all legally wonderful and everything else.

Well, we’ll move on. Oh, Mr. Saher.

Mr. Saher: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Just one more minute. Your motion for calling Enterprise and Advanced Education before the committee on May 8 was not specific in the sense of the committee’s desire to focus on the enterprise piece. I’m just wondering whether it’s important that that be a part of the motion.

The Chair: You’re right. It wasn’t part of the motion. I think we have enough flexibility, though, that we can inform Enterprise and Advanced Education that we’ll be focusing on the enterprise side. That shouldn’t be a problem.

Mr. Dorward: In the letter?

The Chair: In the letter, yeah.

For sure, we’ll take care of that, Mr. Saher.

Mr. Saher: Thank you very much.

The Chair: I forgot that we do have a research request. We may as well get to it right now. Moved that the committee research look into how much is being spent year to year on pensions for former health executives. That was one of the research requests that came forward in the working group.

Mr. Dorward: Can you read that again?

The Chair: It would be moved, in preparation for AHS coming in, that committee research look into how much is being spent year to year on pensions for former health executives. Were there any questions or concerns with doing research into that?

Mr. Fraser: Well, I think I understand where the working group is going on this. I guess the question is, particularly: what does it have to do with former health executives? I think it’s probably more important to drive, you know, within Alberta Health Services what’s the current pension and what’s currently being spent with current members as they understand that perhaps in that public forum. I mean, particularly these people are retired, and that’s a contract issue. I think that’s something between Alberta Health Services and their labour relations. Again, I think that possibly this motion needs to be amended to focus more on what’s currently the practice and what it looks like currently versus other governments, other agreements, other economic types.

The Chair: I think that would be a fantastic piece of research to

request as well. The reason that I certainly would like to know this number is because it’s kind of hard to assess how much flexibility you have in making cuts at AHS and where they’re spending the money if we don’t know how much is being spent on this. I mean, they can’t do anything about it, but if we don’t know that, then it’s pretty difficult to know what to ask them to do or as a committee if they’re spending money wisely. If the pension number is just X amount, well, how much of that is stuff we can do something about, and how much of it is something we can’t do anything about? Your research request is, I think, fantastic as well, but I don’t see any reason why we couldn’t have both.

Mr. Anglin: I’ve got a question, Rob.

The Chair: Yeah. Sure.

Mr. Anglin: Just a comment on that. You’ve got to know where we’ve been to know where we’re going to go. I understand your concern, but we’re not dipping into information that is of privacy. What we’re looking for are outstanding liabilities, how they’ve been accrued, how we’ve dealt with these things, and really a breakdown so that we know if there are questions on manageability, which is a part of our job in dealing with our own finances. I get a sense that some people don’t want to look into certain things. The reality is that we need to look to formulate questions.

Mr. Dorward: Okay. If I understand it correctly, you want to ask AHS how much they are currently spending on pension expense and break that down between current employees and former employees or executives.

The Chair: Yeah. I was just looking for former, and then we could kind of extrapolate.

Mr. Dorward: Okay. I think it’s entirely appropriate to ask a question on the annual return for Alberta Health Services at March 31, 2012 – they have a line item in there, I’m sure, called pension expense – relative to that line item. I think it’s appropriate to ask our researcher to do some digging into that so we have the number beforehand. I don’t have a problem with that.

The Chair: Would it be okay if we expanded it to include the other research request we just heard?

Mr. Fraser: Relevant to Mr. Anglin’s comments I think it’s important, too, to put some relevance and some perspective to what we’re asking here, right? I think that if we’re going to be fair – and I agree that you need to know where you’ve been to know where you’re going. However, there also needs to be a fair comparison of what that looks like, particularly when we look at the management of close to a hundred thousand employees relative to the position that they held or hold.

11:10

I think that if we’re going to have that discussion, let’s have a fulsome discussion. That research should be, you know, entire, not just partial to one particular line item. If the committee wants to drive that agenda in terms of what that looks like, what it is in comparison to other corporations that manage a hundred thousand employees, and certainly the largest part of our provincial budget in managing that money, if there’s a fulsome discussion on that, I think it’s important for the public to know that.

The Chair: Okay.

Ms Calahasen: On this point, Mr. Chair, I'm just wondering what you're talking about in terms of the management of a hundred thousand employees compared to other places. I'm just wondering if we could go back and see how it's changed from what was to what is and find out if there's been an increase in the executive component and be able to see what percentage of that it is, just following on what you have identified.

The Chair: With that, again, you know, one of the things we do need to start doing is getting some of this into proper motion form. We just have one motion before us, and it's kind of difficult to just on the fly put other motions together. But in this case could you put together a motion with regard to what Ms Calahasen and Mr. Fraser were just talking about?

Mr. Dorward: I will. I'll put forward a motion that our researcher analyze the line item regarding pensions for the March 31, 2012, financial statement of Alberta Health Services and determine what the expense is and what it relates to as it pertains to past and current employees and executives of Alberta Health Services. Now, I think that will give us the framework to be able to then get into some discussion relative to what you said, Mr. Fraser. I don't think the discussion part has to be in the motion. I'd ask our researcher if a motion like that would give him enough flexibility to work within that line item to get us some information.

The Chair: Mrs. Sarich.

Mrs. Sarich: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There are a couple of things I'd like to pick up on here because the discussion loosely has described going back in years, in those years previous to 2012. If this is the intent of the motion and direction, we have to keep in mind that there was an amalgamation of regional health authorities into one authority, so there could be some pension liability issues on that transition. That is, you know, possibly one of the questions or directions I'm not too clear on. I would like to ask the Auditor General if there was any work from his particular lens done on the pensions or risk management of pensions from the amalgamation to 2012, as an example. Would he have any helpful information or insight that could help us draft the true intent of this motion?

Mr. Saher: I'll try and help. I think I understand the motion that you're wrestling with. I would just suggest that the deputy chair's wording be amended in a way to look at the pension expense that's going through the financial statements today with respect to current employees and former and to look at the liability and break that down into: what is the liability that's been accrued with respect to former and with respect to current? There was focus on the line item. There are really two. There's an expense, and there's an obligation, too. If the researcher was able to split that into previous and . . .

Mr. Dorward: Thank you. I'll amend my motion to include the liability for pensions and then comment, Mrs. Sarich. This is totally something, exactly, that we should be doing, taking that exact line item, in my opinion, and diving down into it and asking questions. This is a good thing.

Mrs. Sarich: Just a supplemental, Mr. Chair. I did ask if there was any former work done on this particular issue from the lens of the Auditor General.

Mr. Saher: No. Well, the work we did in the past was to advocate for a much clearer articulation of the pension costs and liabilities

in the financial statements. I believe that the researcher's job, if I can put it that way, will be relatively easy. He and his team will be working with information in the financial statements, simply just reorganizing it, I think, to help the committee understand the pension expense and the obligation.

Mrs. Sarich: Okay. Just a further follow-up to be clear: would this include from the point of amalgamation, that transition, and moving forward? I've heard some comments by other committee members suggesting that. So it wasn't clear to me.

Mr. Dorward: As it pertains to the way that we've structured the motion, it would be irrelevant. I guess it will reach back into the previous, but that is a valid liability of Alberta Health Services and, therefore, of the government. Therefore, it's perfectly good to do that. That may come up in the discussion that we have that day, but we can deal with it then, in my opinion.

Mrs. Sarich: Okay.

The Chair: The motion, as I understand it, from the deputy chair is that

research will look into the past and current pension expenses and liabilities of former board executives for Alberta Health Services as well as preamalgamation.

Okay?

Ms Pastoor: Would that liability be on the AHS books, or would it be on the health and wellness books?

Mr. Saher: The answer is: in Alberta Health Services. All of the past cumulative effects of pensions in all of the former regional health authorities were all amalgamated and now are an integral part of AHS's financial statements.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you very much.

Mr. Dorward: Can we vote on that motion, Mr. Chair? There is a small side discussion going on whether to strengthen the motion or not.

The Chair: All in favour of the motion, please say aye. All opposed? Carried.

Ms Calahasen: What is the cost factor that's been associated with moving from the amalgamation to now relative to the employees that have been hired? What has that translated into? Is it more middle management and those kinds of things?

Mr. Dorward: Are you seeking numbers on how many executives there were before and how many executives there are now relative to overall wage costs and salary costs?

Ms Calahasen: Yes.

Mr. Dorward: So not just pensions but overall.

Ms Calahasen: Not just pensions. Salary costs.

Mr. Dorward: Well, now we could ask our researcher. I would suggest that

you take a look at the line item for salaries and wages for Alberta Health Services and ask them a particular question relative to the rip apart of that.

That's valid, too.

Ms Calahasen: I want an analysis of that from before to now. What has changed?

The Chair: That sounds like a good motion, Phil. What do you think?

Dr. Massolin: Yeah. Sure.

The Chair: Okay. All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Any other research requests? We're not telling the Leg. to do anything here, guys. This is just research. Let's, you know, keep these guys busy. More information is better.

Mr. Fraser: Just to clarify, in terms of the research I think it would be really important, again, to compare former health regions as they were separated from Alberta Health Services to currently in Alberta Health Services in terms of wages, how those changed, and how the pensions changed relative to that and benefits and everything else accordingly and then, further to that, a comparison to other, you know, large corporations that would manage roughly a hundred thousand people. We talk about supplies. Again, I think it would be really important for us to compare that in its entirety. You're kind of going to evaluate all things, but it gives, I think, the committee an opportunity to look at, "Okay; is this correct or not correct," and be able to report to our constituents and, certainly, to the greater public of Alberta.

Mr. Dorward: Not only that; in my opinion, you really have to be careful that you deal with apples and apples in any comparison scenario. If you took a corporate entity of a hundred thousand employees or whatever the number is, I'm not so sure that that would relate totally to a health care organization of a hundred thousand employees. I'm not sure you could find a comparative in the United States of health care-related to health care-related. I would just caution that a hundred thousand employees in a corporate

sense could be radically different from running a health care organization of a hundred thousand. You'd have to kind of stay within a sector.

Comments from our researcher?

11:20

Dr. Massolin: Yeah. I think you've encapsulated some of the things that I would have said, the apples to oranges and the difficulty of making those comparisons, right? What corporation do you select as the comparator? Is that indicative in any way? I would be reticent to undertake that, to be quite honest.

The Chair: Going back to Mr. Fraser's comment, could you please do some research and give some examples of, perhaps, what types of compensation packages were given prior to AHS coming into being and now, if the practice has changed?

Dr. Massolin: Yeah, I think that would be all part of it, you know, making the transition from the former health regions to AHS. I mean, that's valid.

The Chair: Yeah, absolutely, and easier to find.

Okay. Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, March 6, 2013, with Alberta Justice and Solicitor General. The prebriefing with research services and the Auditor General will be back in our usual time slot of 8 a.m. in committee room B, with the main meeting starting at 8:30 here in committee room A.

Would a member like to move that this meeting be adjourned? Ms Fenske. All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Thank you very much, everyone.

[The committee adjourned at 11:22 a.m.]

