

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

Chairperson
Mr. Tyler Blashko
Constituency of Lagimodière

Vol. LXXVIII No. 1 - 6 p.m., Wednesday, November 29, 2023

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Third Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALTOMARE, Nello, Hon.	Transcona	NDP
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KING, Trevor	Lakeside	PC
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA
THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Wednesday, November 29, 2023

TIME – 6 p.m.

LOCATION – Winnipeg, Manitoba

CHAIRPERSON – Mr. Tyler Blashko (Lagimodière)

**VICE-CHAIRPERSON – MLA Billie Cross
(Seine River)**

ATTENDANCE – 6 QUORUM – 4

Members of the committee present:

Hon. Min. Sala

*MLA Bereza, Mr. Blashko, MLAs Cross, Devgan,
Khan*

APPEARING:

Cindy Lamoureux, MLA for Tyndall Park

PUBLIC PRESENTERS:

Jason Wiebe, Snoman Inc.

Cam Dahl, Manitoba Pork Council

Michael Shaw, private citizen

Josh Brandon, Social Planning Council of Winnipeg

Gage Haubrich, Canadian Taxpayers Federation

Christopher Crawford, Canadian Propane Association

WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS:

Carson Callum, Manitoba Beef Producers

MATTERS UNDER CONSIDERATION:

*Bill 3 – The Fuel Tax Amendment Act (Fuel Tax
Holiday)*

* * *

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

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

Are there any nominations?

MLA JD Devgan (McPhillips): I nominate Mr. Blashko.

Clerk Assistant: Mr. Blashko has been nominated. Are there any other nominations?

Hearing no other nominations, Mr. Blashko, will you please take the Chair.

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

Are there any nominations?

MLA Devgan: I nominate MLA Cross.

The Chairperson: Are there any other nominations? *[interjection]*

Oh, sorry. MLA Cross has been nominated.

Are there any other nominations?

MLA Obby Khan (Fort Whyte): I nominate MLA Nesbitt.

The Chairperson: MLA Nesbitt has been nominated.

Are there any other nominations? *[interjection]*
So, nominees have to be on the committee; so, MLA Nesbitt is not eligible.

Are there any other nominations?

MLA Khan: I nominate MLA Bereza.

The Chairperson: Okay. MLA Bereza is nominated.

Recorded Vote

The Chairperson: Okay, so we will be proceeding with a voice vote.

We'll be—the motion put forward is will MLA Cross be the Vice-Chairperson of the Committee.

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Ayes 3, Nays 2.

The Chairperson: Okay. Congratulations, MLA Cross.

MLA Cross has been elected Vice-Chairperson.

* * *

The Chairperson: The meeting has been called to consider the following bill, Bill 3, The Fuel Tax Amendment Act (Fuel Tax Holiday).

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

or to consider clause by clause of a bill except by unanimous consent of the committee.

Written submissions from the following person have been received and distributed to committee members: Carson Callum of the Manitoba Beef Producers on Bill 3.

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

Public presentation guidelines: Prior to proceeding with these public presentations, I would like to advise members of the public regarding the process for speaking in a committee. In accordance with our rules, a time limit of 10 minutes has been allotted for presentations, with another five minutes allowed for questions from committee members. Questions shall not exceed 30 seconds in length and no time limit for answers.

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

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

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

Order of presentations: On the topic of determining the order of public presentations, I will note that we do have out-of-town presenters in attendance. With these considerations in mind, in what order does the committee wish to hear the presentations?

An Honourable Member: Be preferable to allow out-of-towners to go first—

The Chairperson: Sorry, Minister Sala.

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): I would ask if the committee supports allowing those who are from out of town to go first to ensure that they can get home at an earlier time.

Yes, I would recommend and—

The Chairperson: Sorry, Minister Sala.

MLA Sala: We'll figure this out.

My recommendation would be for those folks who are from out of town or are here physically, that they have the opportunity to go at the front end.

The Chairperson: Those on the committee, are we comfortable allowing out-of-town presenters in person going first? All those agreed? *[Agreed]*

Okay. Thank you for your patience. We will now proceed with public presentations.

Bill 3—The Fuel Tax Amendment Act (Fuel Tax Holiday)

The Chairperson: I will now call Mr. Jason Wiebe of Snoman (Snowmobilers of Manitoba) Inc.

Mr. Jason Wiebe, please proceed with your presentation.

Jason Wiebe (Snoman): Good evening, and thank you for having me.

I'm Jason Wiebe, and I'm the president of Snoman Inc. I'll start with an introduction of my organization. Snoman was incorporated in 1975 and provides strong leadership and support to its 53 member clubs to develop and maintain safe and environmentally sustainable snowmobile trails to further the enjoyment of organized recreational snowmobiling throughout Manitoba. Snoman's trail network is the largest trail system of any kind in the province of Manitoba and the only user-pay model.

Funding from the sale of 23,000 annual snow passes is allocated to clubs, based on their trail length for maintenance and kilometres groomed. In addition, Snoman allocates \$100,000 a year in trail improvement funding, which is paid on a per-kilometre basis. There are 13,000 kilometres of groomed trails in the province that's seen over 180,000 kilometres of grooming last year.

* (18:10)

It has been proven that the signed and groomed trails are the safest option for all riders.

A recent study by the University of Guelph shows that snowmobiling is a good form of physical activity and is beneficial for one's mental health. In fact, a single day of snowmobiling can benefit your mental health for up to a week after.

Our clubs maintain trails, build and maintain emergency shelters, provide equipment to groom trails, and the financial commitment is enormous. Clubs are made

up of volunteers and, in addition to extensive fundraising, members donate their time to ensure Manitoba has one of the safest trail networks in Manitoba.

Since preparing for this presentation, it has been noted by Minister Sala that all clear gasoline and diesel purchased in Manitoba will be temporarily exempt from the provincial tax, regardless of how or where it is used. Municipalities, tourists, boaters, snowmobilers and all other users will benefit, as quoted in the Free Press.

While this is good news, Bill 3, as it currently reads, does not allow for this to become a reality. The Fuel Tax Act, section 8, the rates of the tax are as follows: 14 cents a litre for any other fuel, does not specify on-road versus off-road vehicles.

However, in section 8.2 of Bill 3, it states: despite section 8, the rate of tax payable for fuel purchased for use in operating a motor vehicle on a roadway may be reduced by regulation for any period beginning after the tax holiday and ending before January 1st, 2025.

Section 8.2 of Bill 3 goes above and beyond by specifying motor vehicle on roadway.

Section 12.2(a), temporary exemption tax holiday, needs to be amended to read: a motor vehicle on or off a roadway. This will allow groomers and snowmobiles to fall in line with the fuel tax holiday.

Our rationalization is that the extent of snowmobile trail networks throughout the province comes at a substantial cost to maintain. The increase in cost of operating is having a dire impact on our clubs. Over the past two years alone, operating costs have risen by as much as 100 per cent, the greatest impact on our operations being fuel and equipment, which have risen by 60 per cent.

The cost of the carbon tax alone represents an increase in 2023 of \$5.34 a kilometre. That jumps to \$11.52 a kilometre by 2028.

Snoman, unlike other industries, is unable to pass these costs on to the consumer. Our last snow pass rate increase was in 2015, and Snoman is no longer able to fund clubs adequately to match their expenses and remain viable into the future. This in spite of seeking organizational efficiencies wherever possible.

If the gas tax holiday was applied to fuel for groomers, it would help with the cost of operation and grooming the 13,000 kilometres of trail that connect Manitoba.

In our opinion, it is unfair treatment and it pits different recreational activities against each other. If one family decides to go skiing, the commuter vehicle is rewarded with a fuel tax holiday. However, if another family decides to go snowmobiling, they are not getting the fuel tax holiday. Therefore, selecting a closer-to-home recreational option is being discriminated against, in our opinion.

The impact on tourism and the benefit to rural communities: the economic impact to snowmobiling in Manitoba is over \$332 million annually, and it creates 900 jobs. These numbers are from our 2013 economic impact study, and we know that our numbers today are much higher.

We know that many rural businesses rely on snowmobilers to sustain their operations in the winter months when other tourism is slow. By exempting snowmobiles from the gas tax holiday, it is, in turn, hurting rural businesses, and some cannot exist without snowmobile traffic.

In conclusion, we cannot stress the importance of this bill being amended to include or be specifically snowmobiles and/or grooming equipment.

Thank you for your time, and I'm open to your questions.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much, Mr. Jason Wiebe, and congratulations on being our inaugural presenter for this session. Thank you for that presentation.

Do members of the committee have questions for the presenter?

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): Thank you so much, Mr. Wiebe, for your presentation, and I want to thank you off the top for all you're doing to support Manitobans in their ability to get outdoors and enjoy our beautiful province, and for all of your volunteers and efforts.

I appreciate what you've shared here very much tonight, and you noted at the top of your presentation, but I just want to be clear for you here tonight, this bill does not exclude snowmobilers. This bill will ensure that the snowmobiler goes to the pump to fill up their snowmobile, they will benefit from that same 14-cent-per-litre reduction, and that's great news for Manitobans in every corner of this province.

J. Wiebe: You said snowmobiles. Will it apply to the diesel fuel for our groomers as well?

MLA Obby Khan (Fort Whyte): Thank you very much for your presentation, but also thank you very much for the work you and your organization do.

I've had the pleasure of getting out on the trails. They are beautiful; they are immaculate; they are a ton of fun. My neck hurt for a few days afterwards—jumping up and down—but it was one of the best weekends I've ever had. I look forward to getting out there again.

So, thank you and your organization for all you do.

You mentioned the economic impact of what Snoman has brought to the province: \$332 million, 900 jobs, and that's 2013.

Do you think that, if this gas tax was applied uniformly across and you had this savings, that this would further increase or bolster the tourism spend in industry here in the province?

J. Wiebe: Yes, absolutely.

Any time our snowmobilers can save a few dollars, we always say: snowmobilers travel with their wallets. So whatever money they don't spend at the fuel pumps is going to go directly into restaurants, hotels, direct and indirect impacts to industry.

The Chairperson: Thank you.

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Thank you, Mr. Wiebe, for your presentation, as well.

You spoke a little bit about how this legislation could pick—or pit recreational activities against one another. We've had a lot of debate on this so far, but it's the first I hear of that.

Could you speak a little bit more to that and just how that could affect Manitobans at large?

J. Wiebe: Yes, depending on which form of recreation you choose, if you were to choose a form where, say, you travelled a long distance in a car and you filled your car with gasoline, that recreational activity would benefit from the fuel-tax holiday, whereas presently, as the bill is worded, if you chose an off-road form of recreation, you would not benefit from the fuel-tax holiday.

MLA Khan: In your presentation, you state here that, you know, you quote Minister Sala as saying that this would apply for snowmobiles, boaters—in the Winnipeg Free Press—and yet you go on to talk about in the act in section 8 that will not be the case according to the way the current bill is written right now.

So, what would you look for, for the minister, in this bill—I mean, the newspaper's one thing and then legislation is one thing else in the bill.

So, what would you like to see in this bill to give you peace that you are actually—your organization and your snowmobilers are protected?

J. Wiebe: Yes, I guess we would look for a section 12.2 (a) to be amended to read—to read motor vehicle on or off roadway. That amendment would clean this up nicely.

The Chairperson: MLA Lamoureux, do you have another question? No? Okay.

MLA Khan: So, just to—what I'm reading—what I'm hearing from you, I just want to make sure that when you say section 12.2 (a), you don't believe the way the current clause is written is that you are covered, or your organization, your snowmobilers are currently covered in this clause the way it's currently written, so you'd like to see an amendment to that.

The Chairperson: Sorry. Mr. Wiebe.

J. Wiebe: Yes, that is correct. I can appreciate Minister Sala's comments that this does apply, but until it's written down, you know, we would like to see it in writing to believe it.

MLA Khan: So, I believe I have to cede the floor to my counterpart here for him to ask some questions or I have to give him the question. *[interjection]* He's on the—*[interjection]* Yes, so I—to you.

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): Thank you very much, Mr. Wiebe, for coming tonight.

You mention in here if the gas-tax holiday was applied to fuel for your groomers, it would be with the cost of operation and grooming 13,000 trails throughout Manitoba.

Do you believe that, if this isn't amended, that it would affect the \$332 million and create almost 900 jobs? Do you think it would have an effect on that?

The Chairperson: The time has expired.

Is there leave for Mr. Wiebe to answer the question? *[Agreed]*

J. Wiebe: Yes, it would definitely affect the spend. It would affect that—the way the spend is. So, you know, more money into tax and less money into other things: rural economic development, businesses, restaurants, hotels, all of those other businesses that could benefit.

The Chairperson: Thank you so much for your presentation. We appreciate it.

I'd like to call Mr. Cam Dahl.

* (18:20)

Mr. Dahl, please proceed with your presentation.

Cam Dahl (Manitoba Pork Council): I'd—first I'd like to congratulate Chair on your hard-fought election to the position. It is an important role, so congratulations.

My name is Cam Dahl. I'm the general manager of Manitoba Pork Council. And I'm here speaking on behalf of a ad hoc coalition that came together to look at Bill 3 'thwough' a rural lens. Coalition partners included the Keystone Agricultural Producers, Manitoba Beef Producers and the Canadian Propane Association, who you're going to hear from in a little bit.

I would like to begin by thanking you all for the time to be able to speak to you today, and I would additionally like to thank Minister Sala and Minister Kostyshyn and their teams for meeting with us yesterday. We appreciate your time and your openness to seeking feedback. Working together, we believe, is the key to our mutual success and the success of all Manitobans.

We would like to commend the initiative behind Bill 3. It has the potential to generate a very positive impact on farmers and our rural communities.

We do have some tweaks to suggest. The positive impacts of Bill 3 would be increased with the inclusion of propane and dyed gasolines in the list of eligible fuels for tax exemption, and we request that this be considered as the committee goes through clause by clause.

My focus for the rest of the presentation will be on the inclusion of marked gasoline, also known as dyed gas or purple fuel.

Fuel costs are one of the largest components of farmers' cost bills, and of course has a direct impact on their bottom line. Using Manitoba Agriculture's cost—production—of production models, some annual estimates are of about \$330,000 for gas and diesel fuel for grains and oil-seed farm of about 7,000 acres; \$12,000 for gas and diesel fuel for a 300-head cow-calf operation. So it's a significant number.

Currently, dyed gas has a 3-cent-per-litre fuel tax. As Bill 3 is written, dyed gas is not included under the list of exempt fuels for the fuel tax holidays, thus

meaning farmers will still be paying throughout the time that the provisions of Bill 3 are in effect.

I've had some in the media ask, you know, why don't farmers simply move to purchasing regular gasoline? Governments of all levels have chosen to reduce—excuse me—have chosen to reduce the tax burden on fuel used for farming operations for a number of reasons.

One is to support agriculture production, which of course you all know is a key driver of Manitoba's economy as well as the Canadian economy. And another reason for these exemptions is because farmers sell into international marketplaces, where competing commodities from other countries do not face the same taxes, such as the cost on 'carbor.'

Recognizing these points, the Government of Canada has chosen to exempt gas and diesel fuel used in farming operations from the price of carbon. As of January 1, this price will be 17.6 cents per litre.

So, shifting to clear gasoline will mean that farmers would save the 14 cents of litre from the provisions of this bill, but in turn they would be incurring the costs of the federal carbon tax. So there would be an increase in that regard.

Including dyed gas, or purple gas, would send a very strong signal to farmers that the government of Manitoba has actively considered their operating conditions when drafting the legislation.

Just to quickly summarize—and you'll hear from the Propane Association shortly—the collective ask from our partner groups is for the committee to amend Bill 3 to include dyed gas and propane as exempted fuels. The inclusion of these two fuel types would showcase Manitoba's comprehensive consideration of diverse fuel types and their multifaceted applications, in line with the bill's intent.

Thank you all again for your time; I look forward to your questions. And thank you for this legislation.

The Chairperson: Thank you so much, Mr. Dahl.

MLA Sala: Thank you so much for the presentation, Cam. It's good to see you.

I want to thank you at the top here for all the work you do in support of pork producers in this province and I know how incredibly important pork producers are to a lot of our communities across Manitoba. So thank you for the work you do, the good work you do.

You did mention the positive impacts that we expect that this bill will have on farm families. Hoping you can just elaborate on that a bit. *[interjection]*

The Chairperson: Mr. Dahl. It's all good; we're getting used to the mics.

C. Dahl: Out of practice, as well.

Just like all Manitobans, fuel is a considerable cost to rural communities and members of rural communities. Whether they're going to their farm or coming into the city, it's a considerable cost. And the 14 cent tax holiday is going to be something that, again, as has been mentioned around the committee here already, will free up scarce resources in a time when inflation has really eaten into disposable income.

So, the benefits that we see throughout Manitoba are also going to be experienced by rural citizens, and in fact more, because they probably drive a lot more; I know I do.

MLA Khan: Thank you very much, Cam, for coming out and all the work you do in this province, and all your counterparts and how much you guys provide and contribute to a growing and booming Manitoba. We want to keep that going.

In regards to this specific bill here, you mentioned, you know, fuel cost is one of the largest costs. And bill—I'm sure you've looked at—in 12.2 it talks about the temporary exemptions, motor vehicles and a farm truck. But I imagine with the industry you're in, a lot of fuel is used—propane, diesel, gasoline—maybe you can elaborate a little bit more on that. And the savings that that would add to that equipment which is now exempt from the law—the bill here.

So what are your recommendations on that and thoughts on providing those tax exemptions for various different types of fuel—

The Chairperson: I'll just remind all members that you have 30 seconds to ask your question. Your time is expired, yes.

C. Dahl: Thank you for the question.

So, first off, diesel fuel is—farm diesel fuel or dyed diesel fuel, purple diesel fuel, whatever you want to call it—is exempt. So, we're talking about a marked or dyed gasoline. And there is that 3 cents a litre that would be a savings.

And today, if you buy purple gasoline, the price is about—it's just under \$1.18; it's one one seven nine is my average that I came up with this afternoon.

So the savings would be about—that 3 cents a litre is about 2 and a half per cent of the price of purple gasoline today.

MLA Lamoureux: Thank you, Mr. Dahl, for your presentation and for the consultation that you did.

Do you believe that this bill should still pass, go through the House and become legislation, if the suggested amendment is not put forward? Is it still a good bill?

C. Dahl: That's a very good question. Yes.

MLA Khan: I'll cede to my counterpart here for a question, MLA Bereza. *[interjection]*

The Chairperson: Sorry, I'll—MLA Bereza.

MLA Bereza: Thanks very much for coming out tonight, Cam. Appreciate your presentation here.

When you said—and again, being in the agriculture business a number of years as well, too—you said that, again, a lot of our grain is exported and that.

Do you feel that, with this bill not going through as you've asked for, the amendments on, would it affect our exported grain?

C. Dahl: I think, from my perspective, you know, what the bill proposes is a positive, positive change, and we would still see some impact of those positive changes on farming operations. Again, that's for the price of purple gasoline, it is about 2 and a half per cent, is that 3 cents a litre.

So, yes the bill will have a positive impact, but that will be a little bit more if the dyed gasoline is also included.

The Chairperson: Just checking, MLA Lamoureux, you're good?

MLA Khan: You mentioned the 3 cents on the dyed gasoline. But according to the way the bill is written now, if a farmer was to switch from a dyed gasoline to a clear gasoline, they would then—

* (18:30)

The Chairperson: Sorry, I just have—time is expired.

Is there leave for MLA Khan to finish his question? *[Agreed]* Okay.

MLA Khan: Thank you to everyone for allowing me leave.

But January 1st is 17.6 carbon tax—cents on the carbon tax. So, if the farmer chooses to go clear gasoline, are they not then giving up the 17.6 cents in

federal carbon tax for the 3-cent savings on the clear gasoline that they could save? So three, 17.6—

C. Dahl: They would be hit with the federal price on carbon.

The Chairperson: Thank you so much for your presentation. We really appreciate it.

I will now call Michael Shaw.

Thank you for coming out, Michael Shaw. Please proceed with your presentation.

Michael Shaw (Private Citizen): Hi, my name's Michael Shaw. I'm from the faculty at biological sciences at the University of Manitoba, and I'm here to speak against the bill.

We are in a climate crisis. I was very hopeful when this new government formed that they were going to make data and policy decisions that were based on the science; they weren't going to hold back from safe injection and those sorts of things; they were actually going to do where public policy should be going based on the data.

And to have this bill out in front of us, when I walked here from my car, in this shirt, in the last week of November, and we know that the South Pacific will be making this another hot and dry winter here in Manitoba, reducing that tax is a short-term measure.

We have two crises. There is an affordability crisis. There were ways that this government could have tackled affordability crisis that didn't contribute more to climate change. Subsidies, reduced prices for Winnipeg Transit, would've gotten more people onto the transit buses and would've reduced Manitoba's carbon footprint. There are other options out there that policy experts would've told you about.

So addressing affordability by exacerbating the climate crisis is not good public policy, and I would encourage this bill not to go forward. It's going to, but it's only going to help those people who drive cars.

There's—we heard earlier from some of the speakers about how it would put—pit people against different people. There's nothing in this bill for people like myself who take the bus down Pembina Highway to go to work every day. There's nothing in it for my affordability. There's nothing in it for the thousands of Manitobans who use public transit rather than take a car—personal automobile every day. There's nothing in it for them to 'attract' that.

There's transit opportunities in Brandon for public transportation to become better in Brandon.

So, there were lots of ways that affordability could've been used and to use affordability by reducing the tax and then the first two presenters want even greater exemptions to the tax.

We know that pricing on things is the No. 1 way to discourage people from using those things. We have had great public policy on smoking. How did we achieve that? By making a pack of cigarettes way more expensive.

We know that the best way to change behaviour, from a governmental standpoint and from a public policy standpoint, is through price points. And if we are going to get ahead here in Manitoba, from the climate standpoint, making gasoline cheaper is not the solution.

We also know—I've lived in other jurisdictions that have given tax holidays. Oftentimes, what happens is your \$1.45 a litre gasoline is \$1.45 the next day and Co-op—I'm a member; that's fine—but, you know, ExxonMobil or Petro-Canada or whoever, just swallows up that 14 per cent, and your 14 per cent doesn't go to the Manitobans; your 14 per cent goes to the gasoline commodity purchasers and providers.

So it's—you know, I'm hopeful that the new government will be the difference in terms of listening to public policy, but this very first bill is not good public policy, and I hope it would be withdrawn.

I don't think that's going to happen. But I was complaining to my long-suffering partner, and she said, don't complain to me, sign up and go to the committee meeting and complain at the committee meeting. So that's why I'm here tonight, and that's what I have to say.

It's not good public policy, and I hope it will get better.

But that's my time. Thanks.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Michael.

MLA Sala: Thank you so much, Mr. Shaw, for being here, for being part of the process. It's great that you took time to present and share your thoughts on—and concerns.

I do just want to say that, as it relates to climate change, we share your deep concern about climate change, as the Manitoba NDP. And one thing that I'm very proud of is that we've brought forward policies that will help to electrify home heating through a geothermal program, which we've focused on and we've also committed to EV rebates to help electrify

transportation. That forms about 60, 65 per cent of emissions in this province.

So, you can see that our party is committed to moving forward on initiatives that will help to reduce carbon emissions in this province, while we bring affordability relief for Manitobans.

I really appreciate your presentation and I want to thank you for your time.

M. Shaw: Thanks for your response to that.

Rebates on electrical vehicles do not help the poorest Manitobans. The cheapest electrical vehicle out there, even with your rebates is in the 50K-plus category. That doesn't help with affordability.

That helps with the people that can afford fancy new cars but the climate crisis is real. And you'll hear people say: Well, what does—can Manitoba do on that?

Well, one thing we can do is not increase the driver for people to burn more gasoline and this bill, I don't think most of the 14 per cent is going to be passed onto the consumer anyway. But if it was, it's not—getting people to drive their cars more; not a solution to climate change.

MLA Khan: Thank you very much, Mr. Shaw, for your presentation today. And climate change is very, very important for those who have young families or living in Manitoba. Even if you don't have kids, it's—climate change is ever-important these days and for the future.

You mentioned, you know, public transportation, pitting Manitoba and government people against people, and, you know, we've said Manitoban against Manitoban with this. Very specific to cars—\$370 million a year is roughly budgeted for this in the tax.

What do you think some of the—how much of the money would you think needs to make—could have gone into public transportation to make a difference? What are your thoughts around that \$370 million for this tax affordability bill?

M. Shaw: That level of funding is something that is split between places like Brandon and, in Manitoba, could make public transit a dollar a ride rather than the over \$3 a ride it is now and get ridership up.

We know from other jurisdictions around the world that the No. 1 way that a city can make itself have a lower carbon footprint outside of home heating is by greater access to public transportation and active transportation.

So, take your \$375 million, if that was the number, put it into the—completing the Winnipeg bus system, in terms of the dedicated routes out into the east part of the city, make more active transportation routes for cyclists. All of those sorts of things would have—and those are permanent changes. Those sorts of infrastructure changes are permanent changes, as opposed to a one-time tax holiday.

So if we could spend those sorts of funds on better Winnipeg transit, the long-term affordability and just lower climate—more active society, win, win, win.

MLA Lamoureux: Thank you, Mr. Shaw, for your presentation. I really, really appreciated how you sort of broke it up into two different issues. It's an issue of affordability and it's an issue of environmentalism here in the province of Manitoba.

I'm wondering if you can speak a little bit to—do you feel that this bill could be a step backwards for fighting climate change in Manitoba?

M. Shaw: I spent most of my time saying, yes, this bill does do that. Again, the federal government has badly mishandled it more recently, but we do know from other jurisdictions that pricing carbon is the most effective way to reduce people's utilization of carbon. And this is reducing the cost of carbon, which is exactly the wrong message to send.

The Chairperson: MLA Barerra [*phonetic*].

An Honourable Member: Bereza.

The Chairperson: Bereza. Sorry.

MLA Bereza: That's okay.

Thank you very much, Mr. Shaw. I appreciate your comments.

The question I have to you, and you mentioned about the big oil companies and them not putting the dollars back into—or the 14 per cent being absorbed by them and the consumer not gaining anything by this, do you have evidence of that or what would your idea to amend the policies on this?

You mentioned that, you know, you think it's going to go through. How would you amend this?

M. Shaw: It's a—that's a tough question because it's got a premise that I don't agree with at the very beginning.

* (18:40)

But if the bill had a mechanism that required that, but then you're having government—you're no longer having a free market in terms of gasoline and—

The Chairperson: Sorry, time has expired.

Is there leave for him to finish? *[Agreed]*

Okay, there's leave.

M. Shaw: So, 14 per cent reduction. It seems very problematic to the mechanism to enforce a 14 per cent reduction in all of the petroleum stations across the province. It would likely cost about \$375 million a year, just as a rough example, so it's probably not the most efficient way to do it.

But, again, thank you all very much for your time.

The Chairperson: Thank you so much, Michael Shaw.

MLA Khan: Before the next presenter, because I'd like to ask for leave for a five-minute recess. I suffer from ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease, and sometimes that kicks in when the disease is acting up.

The Chairperson: Is there leave for a five-minute recess?

An Honourable Member: Absolutely.

The Chairperson: Okay. Leave granted. The committee is now recessed for five minutes.

The committee recessed at 6:41 p.m.

The committee resumed at 6:47 p.m.

The Chairperson: Order. The committee is back in session.

Our next presenter is Mr. Josh Brandon. We would invite him to join the meeting and turn his video and mic on. Okay, Mr. Josh Brandon, please proceed with your presentation.

Josh Brandon (Social Planning Council of Winnipeg): Thank you very much for the opportunity to present today. This is the first time I've had a chance to appear before you since the election, and so I'd like to take a moment to congratulate you all on your success and recognize the important trust your constituents have given you to make important decisions on behalf of all Manitobans.

I'd like to present some comments regarding Bill 3, The Fuel Tax Amendment Act. I'm here representing Social Planning Council of Winnipeg. We are a community organization that has been working

towards a more caring, socially equitable and environmentally sustainable city and province for more than 100 years.

This bill will provide a tax holiday of up to six months on eligible fuel for motor vehicles, and I recognize that the government is seeking to provide affordability relief to Manitobans. And this is an important issue for us at the Social Planning Council. We work closely with communities and organizations involved in the fight against poverty, and it's from this perspective that I offer my remarks this evening.

Affordability is a key issue for all Manitobans, and we've all been seeing the pressures of high inflation and increased costs over the past few years. But I'd like to note that these cost increases have been especially acute for those in low income, Manitobans in poverty.

And just for example of that, if you look at the market basket measure of poverty, that has increased between 2020 and 2022 alone. That level increased 12.1 per cent. So that's the basket of goods that people in low income need just to get by and so that's even higher than the general rate of inflation.

One of the reports that we are involved in producing each year is the Campaign 2000 child and family report card, and each year that I've been involved in the project we've unfortunately shown that Manitoba is the province with the highest rates of child and family poverty, with over one in four children living in poverty. Our recent report showed a correlation between child poverty and health effects.

The results are stark. Children growing up in poverty are more likely to face poverty-related illness, as well as lower preparedness for education, higher rates of infant mortality and moreover children in low-income neighbourhoods have higher rates of suicide.

This is preventable, but we need to dedicate the resources towards ending poverty, and especially towards ending child poverty. So my concern about the measure being put forward today is the lost revenue that will come from the gas holiday.

* (18:50)

A recent report by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives released just this week showed there's been over \$1.6 billion in lost revenue since 2016 due to tax cuts, and this cuts the funding available for our social priorities. The foregone revenue means that the Province will be less able to fund the revenue needed to address important priorities.

Last winter, the coalition Make Poverty History Manitoba conducted consultations among low-income communities about what is most needed around affordability. We asked Manitobans what are the priorities that will most affect the people in the deepest poverty, especially looking at the intersection between poverty and racialized communities, Indigenous communities, children, seniors, other groups—people with disabilities—other groups that are deeply affected by poverty.

And I have to say that cutting gas taxes did not come as a priority in those consultations.

We came up with a list of 10 priority areas that the government should focus on, and many of you received our correspondence about this campaign during your election campaign.

We talked about the need to act on the truth and reconciliation and missing and murdered indigenous women calls to action and justice; the implementing a provincial poverty reduction legislation; transforming EIA to a basic needs benefit; advancing inclusive, equitable and decent employment; implementing a comprehensive poverty—comprehensive housing strategy; supporting education, early learning and child care; increasing funding for mental health-care services; increasing support for restorative justice programs; increasing support for children in care and youth aging out in—out of care; and investing in equitable public transportation.

And I just want to focus on that last one a little bit, because it directly relates to what we're talking about here today. Two of the ideas that came up in our consultation were that Manitoba must increase funding for the subsidized U-Pass transit programs and invest in intercommunity transportation.

There's a need for increased support for public transportation here in Winnipeg, as well as other communities with transit systems, as well as support for people travelling between communities, especially from rural Manitoba, where people don't have a public transportation system anymore. Since the end of Greyhound, people travelling to Winnipeg for health reasons and job opportunities and other important things—if you're low income, very few opportunities to—for affordable travel.

I had a look at the 2021 census data most recently. And it shows that low-income communities, particularly in the inner city where we have the highest rates of poverty, have the lowest rates of commuting

by private vehicle and will be least likely to benefit from this policy.

Many areas of the inner city of Winnipeg, less than 50 per cent of commuters drive a vehicle to work or school, and these are the areas with the highest concentration of poverty.

And I'd like to note as well that this extends to other areas of the city. It's not just in the inner city. You know, I noted that in one area, in St. James—which will be dear to a couple of your hearts—in the Bruce creek area, just 58 per cent of people are driving to work, compared to 72 per cent city wide.

So, very few Manitobans, as well—I just wanted to note—very few Manitobans on income assistance can even afford cars. So, this policy will not meet the affordability needs of those who are in deepest poverty and in most need of affordability relief.

A couple of suggestions that I have to make the bill more equitable and in line with the Province's obligation to reduce poverty, I'd like to suggest a couple of additional measures that would be targeted to those most in need of economic support.

And so, we could look at funding a six-month pilot program for free transit in Winnipeg and other communities. We could look at establishing an inter-city provincial transportation service to service rural Manitoba in line with the policy priorities that we laid out at Make Poverty History Manitoba.

And also, we need to look at implementing a transportation benefit for recipients on EIA. I know that some people on EIA have, as part of their budget, a transportation allowance to help pay for a bus pass, but that needs to be a universal benefit. All Manitobans need transportation, need transportation that they can afford, and so that should be a universal program and a universal benefit.

Thank you very much for your time today, and I hope you'll consider these suggestions seriously.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much, Mr. Brandon.

MLA Sala: Thank you so much, Josh, for bringing comments and your presentation tonight, and thank you for all the important work you do in support of low-income Manitobans. You've been a—doing advocacy work for years and that work is greatly appreciated.

I appreciate your comments that you've offered here tonight and, you know, we've been clear about this: that this is really about supporting all Manitobans

who are driving right now, who are challenged with these very high prices that they've been paying at the pump and have been really getting hammered for years and haven't been getting help from the previous government.

We're proud to bring this forward; do appreciate your concerns, but we do think it's important that we do provide a break for those everyday Manitobans that are driving and need those cost savings.

The Chairperson: Mr. Brandon, would you like to respond?

J. Brandon: Well, I—as I said in my comments, you know, I understand that all Manitobans are feeling the pinch of affordability, and inflation has been at very high levels, but I think that we also need to recognize that there are especially grave concerns of affordability for low-income Manitobans, and this measure will not do enough to target the households that are in the greatest need.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Brandon. I'll just remind all committee members, you have 30 seconds to ask your questions, and I'll be a little bit more ruthless with the mic.

MLA Khan: Josh, thank you very much for the work you do and your comments today. In the interest of time, I'll get right to the question.

This is a fuel amendment tax holiday but—reality, it's an affordability bill. It's about making life more affordable for Manitobans.

Do you think that the government, if they're serious about affordability for Manitobans, that there would have been a better way for them to address affordability issues here in the province of Manitoba? And what do you think those would be, off the top of your head? I know you listed off some, but the best ones.

J. Brandon: Yes, I think that there's much that the Province could do around affordability. We did analysis last year of some affordability measures that were put in place by the previous government and found that they were—the main problem with them was that they were not targeted enough to the households most in need.

Similarly, with this bill, because it's a broad tax cut that affects all Manitobans who drive, it's not targeted enough to the households that are most in need. So there is specific tax initiatives that could be targeted to low-income Manitobans that would increase affordability and without as much expense.

But there's also much that the Province can do around rent relief, targeting programs that it has under its control around housing costs, child-care costs and other areas.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Brandon.

MLA Khan: Interesting that, you know, affordability is top of mind here in Manitoba for everyone, and this tax bill is one way to do it.

Was your group consulted with before this bill came forward, or groups like yours consulted before a bill that addresses affordability in this measure of the gas tax? But—were you consulted with other organizations like yours?

* (19:00)

J. Brandon: No, I believe that this announcement came up as a campaign priority during the—or a campaign commitment during the election campaign. And we weren't consulted about that during the campaign. We did have a chance during the campaign to address our concerns about that promise, as well as concerns about the need for more measures to reduce poverty in Manitoba.

MLA Bereza: Mr. Brandon, I'll be quick. Thank you for your 'advosky'—advocacy work that you do.

You mentioned about the most vulnerable people that are affected here. The gas tax is supposed to cut roughly \$250 for people that drive two vehicles.

What percentage of the people that we would call most vulnerable drive vehicles?

J. Brandon: Yes, I don't know where the \$250 figure comes from. I saw one figure saying that that was for—based on a family that was driving two large trucks: F-fifty-one trucks-F-fifty trucks-one fifty trucks, I think they're called. And the—

The Chairperson: Sorry, Mr. Brandon, time has expired. Is there leave for him to finish? [*Agreed*]

Okay.

J. Brandon: Yes. So I looked at the cost of those trucks and they—the new trucks are \$50,000 each.

So, most of the families that we're working with are unlikely to have—often don't even have a single vehicle, certainly don't have two vehicles and certainly don't have two luxury vehicles.

And so, the problem with this tax is—break is that it isn't targeted enough. It—and it does benefit families

that have larger vehicles, often more expensive vehicles.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Brandon, we really appreciate your submission.

Next up, I will call Mr. Gage Haubrich, which I believe he is online, so if he could please join the meeting and turn on his audio visual.

Mr. Haubrich, please proceed with your presentation.

Gage Haubrich (Canadian Taxpayers Federation): Relief at the pumps is what Manitoba taxpayers need, and they need it permanently.

I'm Gage Haubrich, and I'm here with the Canadian Taxpayers Federation. I'm here on behalf of thousands of Manitoba taxpayers who need relief from the provincial gas tax as soon as possible; permanent relief.

It's great to see the Manitoba government moving so quickly to cut the gas tax. As you know, cutting the 14 cents that the Manitoba government currently charges drivers will save them \$250 over six months or 500 bucks if extended the entire year.

The taxpayers have three key points when it comes to this relief and this proposed bill: (1) needs to be provided for all motor fuels, included dyed gas; (2) it needs to be permanent; and (3) it needs to be passed as swiftly as possible.

So, to the first point, needs to be provided for all motor fuels. No taxpayer should be left out in the cold on this relief. It doesn't make sense to give some drivers a break at the 'cump'—break at the pump and not necessarily for farmers who use dyed gas. Farmers use much more fuel to run their farms. They also need that relief.

This relief also needs to be in—permanent. That's my most important point. Manitobans aren't just feeling the pain from high fuel prices, but also from the rest of the taxes that they are forced to pay to provincial government.

A Winnipeg family who's making \$75,000 a year can expect to pay just about \$7,000 in provincial taxes. If that same family was living in Regina, Calgary, Vancouver, Toronto or Montreal, they'd be paying at least \$2,000 less in taxes. If you compare strictly with Calgary, that number jumps to \$4,000. That's money that those families can't use to make ends meet.

The governments of Alberta, Ontario and Newfoundland have all extended their gas tax cuts after an initial period. That's because those governments saw how much the cuts help out drivers directly with their transportation costs. Manitoba needs to follow the suit and go even further, making this gas tax cut permanent.

And all those provincial taxes, coupled with the federal government's plan to keep increasing the carbon tax, the pain at the pump will only become worse for drivers beyond the six months of this bill.

When the 14-cents-per-litre gas tax cut is implemented, it will spare drivers from the pain of the carbon tax, but only for a moment, because as soon as April 1, 2024, hits, drivers will again be punished for filling up their vehicles, because that's when the federal government is increasing the carbon tax on gas to 18 cents per litre. But by 2030, that number will be 37 cents per litre.

This year alone the carbon tax will cost Manitobans about \$400, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, and that includes the rebates. By 2030, that cost jumps to \$1,500 per Manitoban, and those costs don't include the second carbon tax that by 2030 will add about 13 cents a litre extra for the cost of gas as well. In 2030, filling up a minivan will cost \$40 in carbon tax alone. Manitoba will have to do more for relief than to temporarily cut provincial fuel tax to help Manitobans.

To start with, the Manitoba government can join most of the country and the provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia and push for the federal government to scrap the carbon tax on everything for everyone. And it also needs to be passed as swiftly as possible.

That's my third point. Manitobans don't just need relief when the government gets around to it; they need it right now. Manitobans can't put a pause on driving to get to work, driving to the grocery store or taking their kids to hockey practice.

Gas tax relief is a good first step to make life affordable for Manitobans, but the federal government—Manitoba government also needs to oppose the federal carbon tax as driving up the cost at the pump. Nearly 70 per cent of people say they are paying much more now on essentials than they were a year ago. Almost half say they are \$200 away from being unable to pay their bills. All the while, more and more people are turning to food banks to feed their families.

More tax relief needs to be—come soon, and it needs to be permanent.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Haubrich.

MLA Sala: Thank you so much, Mr. Haubrich, for your presentation. I greatly appreciate you taking time to be with us tonight. I want to say that our government agrees with you that we need to reduce the cost at the pump for Manitobans and we need to do that swiftly.

And that's exactly why we've prioritized bringing this bill forward to bring Manitobans those savings. So we do appreciate that you are in alignment with that.

And I do want to state, you know, the only question I think here is whether or not the opposition will be willing to help this go through quickly. So we are hopeful that they will support it and that we'll be able to bring these savings to Manitobans starting January 1st.

The Chairperson: Would you like to respond, Mr. Haubrich?

G. Haubrich: Sure, yes, I think that that's definitely great. We're definitely supportive of this move to save people money at the pumps, but what we're looking for is some assured relief that the—some assuredness that the relief is going to continue beyond the six months because that carbon price is going to be jacked up and the prices at the pumps are going to go even higher.

MLA Khan: You know, to the minister's point, he's right. He's one third of the way there. We want to get this done for affordability for Manitobans, but the other two thirds permanent and on all fuels. We called for those amendments as well. Let's make it permanent, let's get it on all fuels, and let's get this done for affordability for all Manitobans.

So I just, you know, I know you already mentioned that, but maybe you can reiterate your stance on those three points that we brought forward as amendments.

Just, what are your take on those three? And if the minister wants to support affordability for Manitobans, then let's get it done.

The Chairperson: Mr. Haubrich.

G. Haubrich: Oh, sorry.

I think you are definitely right on that. The first point doesn't even provide for all motor fuels. Our

farmers are the ones who feed Manitobans three meals a day. It makes no sense to exclude them from relief as well as other drivers.

But the most important point, again, to hammer home is that it needs to be permanent. There seems to be no end in sight for high gas prices, so a six-month break is only—it's not going to get the full relief that people need for the long times they're going to be driving. They're not going to stop driving after six months, so we need this relief to be permanent.

And we need it to be done as fast as possible because, like I said, tomorrow Manitobans are have to get up and drive to work; they can't stop doing that until they get this fuel tax holiday. So that needs to be done as soon as possible.

The Chairperson: Thank you.

MLA Khan: Thank you very much. I'm glad we're in agreement on that, so let's get this done for affordability for Manitobans.

You mentioned the carbon tax and how much that's going to go up to 18 cents and then in the near future 30 cents and onwards, and the carbon tax is affecting everything and affordability measures.

So do you think cutting the carbon tax would have a greater benefit on affordability or cutting this 14 cents on the gas tax? What's your stance on that?

* (19:10)

G. Haubrich: Well, I don't think that too much tax relief is ever a problem. In an ideal world we would like to do—we would like to cut both. So what we would like to see here is the government moves forward in cutting this 14-cents-per-litre gas tax. But then the clock starts and when the carbon tax is going to be higher than that gas tax cut. So the Manitoba government needs to come out and demand that the federal government scraps it to actually save Manitobans money at the pump and not simply try and make excuses for what Ottawa's doing.

MLA Khan: So, how would you word an amendment, if you wanted to see an amendment coming forward for this bill here when it comes to the gas tax? I know you mentioned permanently; I know you mentioned dyed already; carbon tax, a combination of thereof.

What would you think would be the best way to amend this going forward if affordability was really at top of mind for this bill for Manitobans?

G. Haubrich: Well, I mean, I'll leave the specific wording to the legislators, who are experts on that, but

the fact of the matter is that the gas tax needs to be gone for good. Gas prices have never been higher, and they'll continue—they seem like they're going to continue to stay high. Inflation isn't usually something that goes the other direction.

So as long as Manitobans have to drive cars and pay gas, they shouldn't have to be paying a gas tax on that.

MLA Bereza: Again, thank you, Mr. Haubrich. Once again about the carbon tax: what type of an effect do you think it's having on Manitoba farmers?

G. Haubrich: Oh, the carbon tax as a whole is hurting Manitoba farmers and farmers all across the country. For example, I've talked to chicken farmers here where I'm from, and it's getting cold outside, you know, and they have to heat their barns, so they're getting huge gas bills to heat those barns, and it's only going up as it gets colder.

So scrapping the carbon tax would provide affordability in so many other different ways, because as you know, it's not applied to just gasoline, but also natural gas, propane and everything else. So getting that scrapped would go a long way to help affordability for Manitobans.

The Chairperson: And time has expired. Thank you for your presentation.

And next up we have Mr. Christopher Crawford, who is virtual. So if he could join the meeting and turn on your audiovisual please.

Okay, Mr. Crawford, you can proceed with your presentation.

Christopher Crawford (Canadian Propane Association): Thank you, appreciate the time. So just following up on what Mr. Dahl said earlier this evening. The Canadian Propane Association is with coalition partners—has coalition partners with Keystone Agricultural Producers, the Manitoba Pork Council and the Manitoba Beef Producers. And as we've said, we support the premise of—we support the bill, and we just—there's some amendments that we would like to see going forward.

Just so everyone knows, the Canadian Propane Association is a national association with 400 member companies that represent all facets of the propane industry, from large producers to family-owned operations, including those in Manitoba.

Propane has been in existence as a fuel source for well over 100 years. For a fuel that is so well known,

however, propane is not very well understood, including its use as a transportation fuel. Most people think about propane for their cottage or for their barbecue, but don't think about it for powering or fuelling automotive vehicles.

However, people who operate farms, drive a courier vehicle such as UPS or a school bus in the Brandon School Division are very familiar with propane as an important transportation fuel.

Propane is subject to a 3-cent-per-litre fuel tax in the province of Manitoba. Propane is used in many automotive settings, which includes school bus fleets, and across Canada there are about 96,000 propane vehicles on the road, and approximately 800 retail fuel outlets across the country. Natural Resources Canada reports that there are about 50 propane fuelling stations across the province of Manitoba.

Just so everyone knows, there is a different nozzle mechanism to fill propane vehicles versus a small cylinder, so that would be used for a barbecue or patio fireplace, which should address the concerns raised with respect to using auto propane for non-automotive purposes. Propane is also—propane in automotive applications also has a lower carbon footprint than gasoline, up to 26 per cent less life cycle greenhouse gas emissions, and up to 98 per cent less particle matter than diesel-fuelled vehicles.

And our requests, just to keep this nice and short, our requests from the Manitoba Legislature is to add propane as a list of fuels in Bill 3. And that's my remarks.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Crawford.

MLA Sala: I want to thank you, Chris, for the presentation and the information, and I also want to thank you for the good meeting that we were able to have yesterday with yourself and others from KAP and it was a great discussion. I appreciate your support for the bill and, again, thank you for making time for the committee tonight.

The Chairperson: Mr. Crawford, would you like to respond?

C. Crawford: No. Just a thank you to the minister for his time yesterday as well.

MLA Bereza: Mr. Crawford, thank you so much for your presentation this evening. You mentioned about the Brandon School Division switching over to propane vehicles.

What will be the cost of savings versus gasoline to—what would they be saving on their fleet?

C. Crawford: I don't have that number offhand, but I can definitely provide that to the committee. I just don't have that number on me right now, but I can get that over to you or to the Chair.

MLA Khan: You mentioned the environment and the effects that propane has on the environment and that propane is a much cleaner gas—or fuel—than traditional fuel.

If this government is serious about environment, environment concerns as they claim to be, wouldn't it make sense to have propane on this if propane burns cleaner?

C. Crawford: Yes, sorry—I jumped the gun. Just want to—yes—so we're looking to get this added to the list of fuels just to make the bill more encompassing of all types of fuel. Natural gas, diesel and gas were included as a list of fuels. We're just asking for propane to be included because we often get—the fuel often gets forgotten. It's not just in the province of Manitoba, but in other jurisdictions that have done similar gas holidays.

MLA Khan: When it comes to affordability measure on the tax amendment as we're bringing it forward, or as the government's bringing forward here today, if we're looking at affordability measures, would it make sense to have propane added to this list for the cost of, let's say, grain drying for farmers and other operations? How proportional, I guess, the usage of propane for farmers for equipment and the cost and affordability that would—impact it would have on them?

C. Crawford: Yes. So—oh, sorry—so I wonder if saying the purpose of this bill is just for the road—automotive use and road tax, but our association has been pretty adamant about getting C-234 passed by the Senate federally. So we'd like to see that relief for farmers that use propane for grain drying and for heating their barns.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Any more questions? Okay. Thank you for your time, Mr. Crawford.

C. Crawford: Thank you.

The Chairperson: That concludes the list of presenters I have before me.

* * *

The Chairperson: We will now proceed with clause by clause of Bill 3.

Does the minister responsible for Bill 3 have any opening statements?

MLA Sala: Thanks to everyone for being here tonight to talk about this important bill, and I want to thank, as well, all the presenters who made time tonight to be part of this process. This is a unique process we have in Manitoba where the public can participate and offer comments, and that's something that we want to honour and it's great that folks took time to share their concerns tonight.

You know, for many years in this province, Manitobans struggled with affordability challenges and a government that really was not concerned or did not demonstrate any concern or a willingness to take action. But things have changed, and Manitobans elected our government into the Legislature to help make life more affordable. That was one of the key things I think that led to us being elected. There's people in this province feeling like they really weren't being listened to for many years.

So we're really proud to have brought this bill forward. This is an important measure for families that are struggling with inflation, higher prices at the pump for years, and this will make a big difference for families.

* (19:20)

And so, you know, really hopeful that the opposition recognizes the importance of this, that they're willing to support it and to make sure that Manitobans can get this benefit starting on January 1. And, ultimately, that will be up to them if they want to ensure that Manitobans can get that benefit. We're hopeful they will support.

And I do want to highlight, again, you know, tonight we heard some good presentations. Again, greatly appreciated, and the insights were helpful.

But we do want to, you know, I do want to take this opportunity to again state that this measure will help Manitobans in every corner of this province, and especially those families living in rural and Northern communities, and especially the families of farmers who live in our rural communities, who have long distances to commute to work, to school. This will really provide great benefits to the families of those farmers and producers in this province, as we've heard tonight unequivocally from Mr. Dahl.

So, you know, I do want to just wrap by saying, again, I want to encourage the opposition to support

this measure, to embrace this measure, to see the value it's going to provide to Manitobans.

And I also just want to take a second to thank our team in the Department of Finance for their work in developing the bill and helping to move this important initiative forward.

So with that, I thank the committee.

The Chairperson: And we thank the minister.

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

MLA Khan: I do.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Thank you very much to the minister for his remarks and bringing this bill forward.

And thank you to all the presenters that came out tonight, virtually or in person, who drove in. And thank you for all the great work you do in making Manitoba better, whether it be from a tourism aspect, from an agriculture aspect, from a social services impacts here in Manitoba. Thank you all for the great work you're doing.

You know, it's really, I guess, frustrating or upsetting to sit here and, you know, listen to the talk of, you know, previous government did this and this, and they didn't do this, and they could have done this, and you know, when people in this room know that this government made historic—historic—investments in affordability. I mean, it's well known. Average Manitobans received \$5,500 in affordability measures. It's well known.

It's also known that, you know, this bill is being brought forward to help with tax at the fuel pump. That's true. We don't deny that on this side of the House. We're in favour of tax cuts. We're in favour of making life more affordable for Manitobans.

I've said it over a dozen times, 20, probably, times in the House, in the media—on social media for those who follow. We want affordability measures. We stand for lower taxes. Previous government was the one that personal tax exemptions. You know, the tax brackets. Two affordability cheques were sent out, along with many other measures were done along the way. It's well documented.

But we're here today talking about this tax bill. So, we want to go back and say that the previous government do anything; you know, we all know that's not the case. We—the previous government did a lot of

work to make life more affordable for Manitobans. Historic investments. And we all know that.

Now, when it comes to this bill specifically, we heard from speaker time in and time again, and we've heard in the House, and we've seen the commentary, that this bill does not include all Manitobans. It's clear. It's clear as day, if we can read this bill, and we'll have an opportunity to go through it clause by clause, and I'm really looking forward to that, and taking some of the comments that the speakers brought forward today.

This bill does not take into account all Manitobans. We know it doesn't. The language is not inclusive of everyone. The language is not inclusive of farm vehicles, off-roading vehicles, fisheries, fishermen. I mean, I can go on and on about what's not—and I really look forward to doing that in the clause section—but we're advocating for an affordability measure for all Manitobans.

I don't know why we're not open to—I mean, I really hope the minister is open to some amendments after today. That's our job as the opposition, is to hold the government accountable to Manitobans. And I think we're going to do that.

And hopefully we'll be successful tonight, with the presenters we've had tonight, that making this bill with amendments that we've heard from presenters, we've heard in the House—if this bill is about affordability—and the minister has said it time in and time out again, we've heard it from his leader, the Premier (Mr. Kinew)—then let's make it affordable. Build in measures.

Minister's on the record saying that inflation, cost of living, gas, will not go down in the next six months—paraphrasing, sorry—that it won't go down in the next six months. Cost of living's not. So if we know that, then why aren't we raking real affordability measures? Why are we not moving this forward to an indefinite or permanent timeline? Or tying it along with inflation or cost of living or the carbon tax—I mean, there's many mechanisms to do this.

But to do a six-month pause on this when, on April 1st, the carbon tax is going to go up to, I believe, 18 cents—what's the point?

Now, again, on this side, we are in favour of affordability measures and lower taxes. We've done it time and time and again. But it has to be a measure that includes all Manitobans. We can't pick and choose who's going to 'bene' from this.

We've heard from speakers today that, you know, the hardest hit people in these affordability measures are people on lower income. And yet, this bill completely leaves them out of it.

And then, you know, the commentary from the other side is, well, this is a—the—a tax bill. It's for roads. It's about transportation.

Well, is it about roads and gas tax, or is it about affordability?

Because if it's about affordability, there's lots of ways in which this can get done. If it's about roads, that's different. If it's about gas tax and this is specifically the gas tax, then call it the gas tax, then, and talk about gas tax.

But if you want to talk about affordability measures and what is being done for affordability measures, affordability affects all Manitobans. Everyone, whether you drive a car, electric car, you take the transit, you're a farmer, you're a fisherman—it affects everyone.

We need to look at amendments to this bill to encompass everyone.

The minister may say, oh, you know, snow—Snoman, you're allowed; and ATVs, you're allowed; and boats, you can pull up—the bill clearly states they are not. The bill clearly states they are not.

And we'll be going to go through line by line on this, but when the bill specifically says a motor vehicle on a roadway, I don't know how a boat is a motor vehicle on a roadway. I don't know how a farmer's combine is a farm truck. And we'll go through this, but we need to look at affordability. We need to amend this.

We're saying let's amend this. Let's make this better for all Manitobans. This is what we want. This is what the minister has gone on the record saying. This is what the Premier (Mr. Kinew) has gone on the record and saying. And this is what I, myself, as the Finance critic, I am saying. We want affordability measures for all Manitobans. Let's make it for all Manitobans. Let's get this permanent. Let's make this—six months from now, it doesn't do—it does good in the short term, but six months when the carbon taxes will go to 18 cents and then they'll get hit with the 14-cent provincial gas tax.

What are we talking about? Are we really talking about affordability measures and we're going to have that happen to Manitobans in six months from now?

Permanent—they've called for permanent dyed gas. Dyed gas is clearly left off this bill. Now, I know this bill was rushed forward. They ran on this in the campaign. They should have had time to do their due diligence and understand what dyed gas is, but it's obvious they didn't. And they—maybe they've never heard of dyed gas before it was brought up in the House, but dyed gas is what farmers use. Three cents is what they pay. So, that's great; they save 11 cents on that. So instead of paying 14, they pay three. But they also save the carbon tax, which is 14 cents. So now they're saving 25 cents.

And the minister proposes the newspaper yesterday, well, the farmers can just switch to clear gasoline. Well, sure. They can, but they're going to pay 11 cents more. And come April 1st, they're going to pay 15 cents more. And the next time the carbon tax goes, they're going to pay 20-plus cents more and 30 cents plus more.

So why would they do it? It doesn't make sense.

Amend the act to allow a further reduction of the dyed gas. Not rocket science.

We're sitting here, we're elected officials to help Manitobans make it—life more affordable. I understand there is, you know, different parties and different views on this.

But when it comes to affordability measures, if we're talking about affordability measures—we're not talking about a road, as been alluded to. Was—if the purpose was about roads—it's not about roads. It's about affordability.

We want affordability for all Manitobans. Agreed. Well let's do it. How do we do it? We make it permanent. We include all gases. We help out the farmers. The farmers who are being squeezed day in and day out because of carbon tax and cost of labour and food costs. We help them out with their grain drying. We help them out their farm equipment. We add propane to the list. It's not hard amendments.

There are a lot of qualified people in this building, in this province, that have been elected to make these changes. And we're merely saying—we're saying, let's make these changes to amend this bill so that it is 'representative' of all Manitobans.

* (19:30)

We've heard it from the speakers, we've heard it from our side, you've probably heard it from your own colleagues. I understand this was rushed forward;

I understand it's the first bill by the government. First bill. They had to get it out. It's a complicated bill.

You've realized that there were some mistakes in here, so let's fix the mistakes. That's why you have the opposition here. Our job is to hold you accountable, so this is what we're doing. We're making this bill better for all Manitobans.

Again, I want to thank the presenters for all coming out tonight and having their say in it, every one of them had a valuable insight in their industry and the people they represent. There are better ways to do this; we need to look at that. We need to look at how we can make this affordable for all Manitobans. This temporary measure does not go far enough.

We know it does not go far enough, we've heard from everyone it does not go far enough and if you look at it, just looked at the surface of this bill and what it represents, it is not far enough. It's not good enough, it's not worded well enough. The government can do better. We're going to hold them to do better. Manitobans have elected us to hold them accountable to doing better, so let's do better for all Manitobans and make this a real affordability bill like they claim it is.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson: We thank the member.

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

Shall clause 1 pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

An Honourable Member: No.

The Chairperson: I hear a no.

The floor is open for questions. *[interjection]* Is it you that has the question? Yes? Yes, like *[interjection]* Yes.

So MLA Khan, if you have a question. Yes.

MLA Khan: In clause 1 here, The Fuel Tax Act is amended by this act.

Does the minister believe that the wording around affordability should be included in this act?

MLA Sala: Not quite clear on the question that's been asked here.

Could the member provide more clarity on exactly what it is that he's asking?

MLA Bereza: The Fuel Tax Act, again, we're talking tonight about it being an affordability as well, too. And I think that's what Manitobans want, is they want a clear indication of what we're doing.

When we were elected here, and I sat with most of you that are in the room here, that we talked about wanting to work together on this as well, too. And I don't think there's any doubt that, you know, affordability is important to all people that are out there.

So I would suggest that we amend this by adding the word affordability in there as well.

MLA Sala: To be clear, are the members proposing a change in the title of the bill?

I'm still not—and I don't mean to be, you know, petulant here. I'm just trying to understand what is being asked specifically.

MLA Khan: I think we can just move on past that. I was reading another line in that act. So I believe, you know, we can withdraw those questions and the minister—we can leave clause 1, we allow—or, approve as is, I guess.

The Chairperson: Okay. So seeing as there's no other questions.

Clause 1—pass.

Shall clause 2 pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

An Honourable Member: No.

The Chairperson: I hear a no.

The floor is open for questions.

MLA Bereza: Under the word roadway, again, we heard presentations tonight regarding from Snoman and the cost of the economic impact, that it could cost the recreation industry. We also talked to several farm groups as well as a number of different farmers on this as well, too.

A combine can't go to a gas station and fill up and then go to the field, do its work. That—there, same thing with a swather or a tractor, or anything like that. So I think the word roadway, if we are looking at adding in other things here, roadway is not defined properly.

MLA Sala: Yes. One second, please.

Yes, I do want to point out that you mentioned combines and the use of that type of equipment. That would use diesel fuel, marked diesel. That is already

exempt from the fuel tax, so there's no—there would be no proposed changes there because they're already exempted fully from the fuel tax.

To your question specifically about this section, I would say again, we've been very clear when—we've been clear in the media, been clear in the House.

If you pull up to a fuel station in Manitoba retailing clear gasoline, you will receive a 14-cent-per-litre reduction, regardless of whether or not you pull up with a trailer behind you with a jerry can on it or with some kind of an outdoor vehicle, you will still get those benefits. And so, that's been crystal clear, and I don't know that we can do much more to make that any clearer.

The Chairperson: Just a quick reminder to the room to address all comments through the Chair.

MLA Khan: Thank you very much for that reminder, Mr. Chair.

To my colleague's question, the roadway definition, The Highway Traffic Act. I mean, the definition is clear on The Highway Traffic Act.

And the minister, you know, says that, you know, vehicles, ATVs, motorbikes, snowmobiles, boats, et cetera, will be allowed to take use of this tax act as defined on the roadway, which he alluded to in 12.2, where he says a motor vehicle on a roadway.

And yet, the definition of a roadway here says, roadway as—this is in The Highway Traffic Act, as his department is probably well aware of—roadway means the portion of a highway that is improved, designed or ordinarily used for vehicular trafficked. I can go on, but it pretty much just goes on and on about, you know, shoulders of the highways, et cetera.

That is not Snoman. That is not ATVs. That's not off-roads. That's not boats.

So, will the minister not address the need for an amendment in this bill to add more than just simple roadway to this, as he's clearly saying that they will be allowed to pull up.

Why is it not reflected in the bill?

MLA Sala: Appreciate the question from the member.

I would just say, again, with clarity, if you're a Manitoban and you want to save money, you can pull up to the pump after January 1st once this bill is passed and save money when you purchase clear gas in Manitoba.

Appreciate that the members are continuing to ask about this, but again, I'll just continue to offer the same answer. When you show up to a pump in Manitoba, if this bill passes, to buy clear gas, you will save that money.

So, you know, we can talk about this 50 different ways, but again it—I don't know what's not clear about what's being said here.

You will save the 14 cents per litre should you guys support the passage of this bill. So, we can talk about definitions all day long here. What I'm communicating is that you will save that money if you go to the gas station and buy clear gas. All Manitobans who go to that gas station will save those dollars.

MLA Bereza: So, let me get this straight here. So, the government is saying that it's okay for Manitobans to break the law.

So, if a Manitoban comes with an ATV without a licence plate on it, he's driving on a roadway. So, he's got to drive on a roadway to get to a gas station. If an—if a person is coming with a snowmobile that doesn't have a licence plate on it, he's breaking the law by going to a gas station to fill up.

So, if that is correct, then do we put in here that we're breaking the law in order to save this 14 cents?

MLA Sala: The bill proposes no such thing. Manitobans will not be breaking the law. There's no compliance or enforcement mechanism outlined in the bill.

Manitobans who show up at a gas station will save money should this bill pass. Very simple.

You know, again, you could be driving a small vehicle, a large truck. You pull up, you got a trailer behind you. You will ultimately benefit from those savings come January 1st, should the opposition decide to support this bill.

* (19:40)

The Chairperson: Okay. Just for information for the committee, it is practice that the critic holds the floor.

So—[interjection]—yes. Basically meaning government has opportunity for questions after—if you don't have any more questions. Yes.

So MLA Bereza, did you have a question?

MLA Bereza: Yes. So I just want to be straight with this, and again, minister stated there that all people that want to pull up to the pump can, whether they're breaking the law or not by not having a licence plate

on their vehicle or whatever vehicle they're driving. I just want to make sure that that is the clarification.

MLA Sala: We are not proposing that people without licences pull up to gas stations. We're proposing that vehicles pulling up to gas stations—or, licensed vehicles of some kind that are pulling up to gas stations—will benefit from those savings. There's nothing illegal being proposed here, or encouraged.

MLA Bereza: What about Snoman, with their groomers? Again, how does this fit here? Again, when we're talking about—I can't stress this enough, is that a person driving a vehicle without a—Mr. Chair, a person driving a vehicle without proper insurance and registration, again, is risking going to that gas station in order to save 14 cents.

Again, we're all about affordability, too. But my concern here is, are we encouraging Manitobans to go out, you can pull up to the pump; it doesn't matter if you have a registration, doesn't matter if you have insurance on the vehicle, but as long as you get to that pump, you will save 14 cents.

Is that correct?

MLA Sala: Look, there is infinite possibilities that can be explored by the opposition, and I know they're going to cook up a variety of different directions here to try to, you know, find examples of whatever it is they're looking to demonstrate here. And again, I'll just say for the record, if you pull up to a gas station post-January 1st, should this bill pass, you will save the money.

This is a measure that was brought in to improve affordability of life for Manitobans. We're proud of this. We think it's important, and we encourage you guys to get on board and to support this bill so we can bring these savings to Manitobans.

MLA Khan: Mr. Chair, the purpose of bills is to codify the law in words, what we, as a society, have to live by.

The question to the minister is simple: why are they so opposed to simply amending the words where the minister has clearly said tonight and in the House, over and over and over again, that this bill will apply to vehicles that do not only go on the roadway?

So, if the minister has said it, why are we simply not codifying it in the bill? I don't understand why—the nuances back and forth.

It is a simple matter of saying, hey, let's change the definition of this; let's make it larger so that everyone's safe. If a Manitoban is to go by the word of the law, which is a bill passed in this building, then we are giving Manitobans legal course and precedent to argue and go against each other. The minister may say, oh, just pull up and you can get what you want, get the 14-cent savings. Great. The bill clearly states that is not the case on a roadway.

You are not taking snowmobiles on the roadway; they have their own. You are not taking a boat on a roadway; it's on a trailer.

Why is the minister so opposed to just changing some of the definitions in here, or amending them, to protect all Manitobans so we avoid this in the future? We're just struggling, like, dumbfounded, on this side to understand why there's just this—dig our heels in to not change or modify and amend this simple definition of what a roadway is when the minister himself has said—and again, I'll take him—you know, I'd like to take him at his word. I've gotten to know the minister over the fast—past few years and, you know, we've had some pleasant conversations, and I just don't understand why—what the hesitation is to changing it.

MLA Sala: You know, I—again, we appreciate that the opposition is bringing this forward. We can repeat it all night, if we want. I'll go until whenever we want here. It's fine. If we want to keep repeating the same question, I'll say that your proposal has been heard. I appreciate that you've brought it forward and I think our response to that has been clear tonight.

So, again, we want to keep repeating this we can continue to have that same back and forth. I'm open to that and looking forward to hearing concerns brought forward by the opposition.

But, again, they've brought this proposal forward. I think it's clear that they feel that should be amended, and we've brought our response. There's not a lot more to add, but, again, we can do this all night, if that's what they want to do.

The Chairperson: Just a little gentle reminder to keep everything coming through the Chair.

MLA Khan: And, you know, I mean we're happy to stay here all night. It's what we're elected for, is to hold the government accountable to make bills and laws for Manitobans that are representative for all Manitobans. So we're more than happy to stay here all night. I can continue this into tomorrow if need so be.

So the minister has made it clear that he's heard from us and he hears what we're saying. He's processed what we're saying, so just one last time I would like the minister, on the record, to say why the minister is so opposed to amending the roadway as in definition in this bill as he has clearly stated time and time again that—verbally—that, yes, that pull up and you're good.

So, one last time, maybe then we can move on and maybe we won't be here all night if the minister can clearly state why he and his government and his Premier (Mr. Kinew) are so opposed to amending this definition of the roadway, as he said to the various speakers, they would be allowed.

MLA Sala: I appreciate the comments from the member, and I'll just say again one more time clearly: this bill will provide savings at the pump for all Manitobans. Hopefully, the opposition will support it and we'll see these savings being brought to Manitobans come January 1.

MLA Khan: Mr. Chair, so again, you know, when asked will the minister go on the record and say why, they won't. It's a non answer. We've heard from presenters tonight that they do not believe this bill applies to them based specifically on the wording. Presenters said that.

So, not us, elected officials. Presenters, Manitobans who want to make Manitoba better, who are making Manitoba better, said that they do not believe this bill applies to them based off the wording.

Why not amend it to ensure all Manitobans believe it does what it says, unless there's some other hidden agenda here. I can't understand it. It's a very simple ask on this one. I mean, we have multiple pages to get through and we're on 2(a).

So, the minister gave a non-answer as to why he will not be willing to—or what his response is. Obviously, he's not willing to modify it, so I'm trying to get an understanding as to why they are not willing to amend the definition of what a roadway is when he has verbally stated that this will apply to everyone that pulls up to a gas station in Manitoba no matter what you're driving.

So, just again, I'll simplify the question down: Why will the minister not amend the definition of what a roadway is when he has verbally said everyone's allowed to do it and pull up, and everyone's on a roadway and boats are on roadways, and snowmobiles are on roadways, and combines and tractors are on

roadways, and everyone applies to The Highway Traffic Act, why the minister just won't modify that.

MLA Sala: You know, I think it's worth commenting on the fact that the opposition's bringing forward a whole bunch of ideas tonight about how to make this bill better, and they've got a lot of things that they're bringing forward. But they didn't take any action for the last seven years. They didn't do this. They didn't take action to bring savings for Manitobans in terms of helping them with their cost of fuel. They did not act.

So, you know, it's worth just sort of highlighting that, you know, this—the concerns being brought forward, I appreciate them. It's good to hear the ideas being brought forward, but let's highlight at the same time that they did not take action for seven years in this area.

So, lots of big ideas that we're hearing today, but we didn't see any of these ideas over the last seven years. We're bringing forward affordability measures. They should get on board.

* (19:50)

MLA Khan: You know, affordability measures, as we heard from speakers today, include all Manitobans. We heard that from every presenter tonight. You know, we heard from presenters in the \$250 of savings over six months were forecasted on a family of two, family driving two vehicles, believe to be two F-150s, the bill was quoted, average family would consume \$250 of gas in six months.

Okay. So \$250 in gas, in savings, for sure it is. Over a year, \$500. Okay. And the minister goes on the record saying that the previous government has done nothing to combat affordability measures.

The minister goes on to say that the previous government had an opportunity to handle affordability, or address affordability for Manitobans, I believe is paraphrasing roughly what the minister had said. And yet, the minister fails to acknowledge that the previous government historic investments in, Mr. Chair, in affordability measures for Manitobans.

So we're talking 250 bucks over six months, \$500 a year for someone who drives two F-150s, or a family that has two F-150s. I don't know who that is, but, I mean, God bless them. So, 500 bucks a year, and the previous government did on average a \$5,500 in average savings.

So we're talking \$5,500 in average savings. We're talking increasing the basic personal exemption.

We're talking income tax brackets. Two affordability cheques that went out roughly, actually, I think some of them were larger than what this rebate is based on: \$250 for two F-150s; \$5,500 in average.

So the minister wants to say that, Mr. Chair, the minister wants to address that the previous government didn't do anything to really help with affordability, and yet I would say that \$5,500 on average is a lot more than \$500 in average savings.

Now, that all being said, this still all circles back to the simple question on definitions within this bill. And the reason why this is so important now, because it's going to come up later in section 12.2—I'm not sure if they've gotten that far ahead—but it's going to come up later, where it's important that we define a motor vehicle on a roadway.

That's why it's important now, because the definition needs to be changed now, because it's going to come up in 12.2, where we talk about motor vehicles. So if we talk about ATVs, and we're going to have to address, you know, what a—the definition of a motor vehicle is, because I've also tabled that for the minister as well. That the definition of a motor vehicle is not also as inclusive as the minister likes to believe it is.

Just like the definition of a roadway, according to The Highway Traffic Act, is not as inclusive as what the minister says it is. So the simple ask is, why will the minister not be willing to adjust the definition of a roadway to better reflect what Manitobans are asking for, what our presenters—asking for, what the bill clearly lacks.

Anybody can see this at its surface that this bill is not written for all of Manitobans and it does not give Manitobans peace to know that when they go to pull up at the pump, that they will be, that, you can't say, look, the minister said it is.

I mean, as great as that sounds, I don't know if little Bobby working at the gas station in Dauphin or in Sifton or, you know, is—that's going to suffice.

So, again, getting back to all of this to land the airplane and saying, you know, the minister is really, has dug his heels in on a simple definition matter, and I think it's important that Manitobans realize this, that the sheer lack of ability to adjust the definition in this bill, let alone the rest of this stuff, really shows where, you know, this government and minister's priority are when it comes to affordability for Manitobans, and when it comes to helping Manitobans, that we are so stuck with our heels in the ground that we do not want to simply modify the definition of what a roadway is.

That gives me a lot of concern as opposition. It should give Manitobans concern. That's the reason why we're not moving on past this point. As much as I love sitting here and debating and talking and hanging out with my colleagues and opposition and then government and civil servants, you know, I can think of other things.

But here we are. It shows that the minister is refusing to modify the definition within this bill. It shows that even when brought forward by presenters, the minister is refusing to address it; that we're just supposed to take him at his word.

And if that's what the minister says, that we're just going to take him at his word, then I guess so be it, and we don't need to 'beleager' this point anymore unless my colleague has something to add afterwards.

MLA Sala: Again, I appreciate the comments from the opposition.

MLA Bereza: Minister talked about affordability, working together, looking for us to do things together. I think what we're trying to do here tonight is to make this less complicated for Manitobans. I don't think anybody in this room is talking about not wanting affordability for Manitobans.

What we want is a clear understanding of what's going on here. Because again, if we don't define this right now, then we're going to leave it up to Johnny [phonetic], or we're going to leave it up—Bobby [phonetic], or FCL, to decide who gets filled up or not. Do they have to check licence plates, as well, too, when they're there? You know, does a person from Saskatchewan get this as well too?

Again, or do they have to have two sets of pumps with two separate prices on it? Again, I think it comes down to the affordability thing and coming to some agreements here. Otherwise I'm with MLA Khan on this as well, too. We've got to work for all Manitobans. I think we all want to work for all Manitobans. And that's what we want to look at tonight with amending what we're looking at here as a definition here of a roadway.

MLA Sala: Again, I appreciate the comments from the opposition, and I'd say there is only one party who's trying to make things more complicated here than they need to be. We've been crystal clear, and we think Manitobans have heard that message.

And we're looking forward to bringing these savings to Manitobans every time they go to the pump, who I

think understand what we've communicated very clearly.

MLA Khan: Oh boy, oh boy, Mr. Chair.

You know, it's—we are here as elected officials, Mr. Chair, as you know, and everyone else is—is to try to make Manitoba better. Let's remove the tensions, hostilities that we might put Manitobans in. Let's remove any ambiguity, any confusion over what it might be so we don't have these problems out in Manitoba.

This bill, and the minister's digging in of his heels, just simply shows that he is refusing to listen to what presenters say, what colleagues are saying, what Manitobans are saying on this issue. He just refuses to move forward on that. So, you know, the minister—and I guess it's evident that this was maybe going to be the course for the remainder of the evening tonight.

The minister told media today he was not willing to amend this bill before listening to presenters. So before tonight even started, the minister, in a scrum, said he is not willing to amend this bill—said it in the scrum—before presenters tonight; before hearing from presenters tonight.

So, I mean, I guess that's clear. The minister's made up his mind on what the definition of a roadway is, and I guess a boat can travel on a 'roadray' and I guess so can 'snowdoos' and ATVs and combines and unlicensed vehicles—that the minister's already dug his heels in.

We're trying to be reasonable, we're trying to just simply understand the definition wording framework of what this bill is setting up forward, and the minister refuses to do that. So, I guess, maybe that's going to set the tone for the rest of the evening here, because we have a lot of other points to debate and go back and forth on. So, you know, it's unfortunate that, you know, he sends a strong message to Manitobans that he's already made up his mind before hearing them tonight, and even when we're trying to have reasonable debate back and forth, the minister is not engaged.

So, you know, it's unfortunate, but while I regret we don't get an answer, you know, on the definition of a roadway or amending that to include more, I believe we should probably move on to the next clause because it seems like the minister is not moving on. As I guess, you know, should've listened earlier in the conference—press conference.

So that, Mr. Chair, I guess the question has to come forward again then, I believe?

The Chairperson: The honourable minister has a chance to respond.

* (20:00)

MLA Sala: Appreciate the comments from the members of the opposition. Looking forward to further questions. Hopefully, we can continue on, here.

The Chairperson: Any further questions?

Seeing none, shall clause 2 pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

An Honourable Member: No.

The Chairperson: Okay. I guess the floor is open—*[interjection]*—sorry.

Voice Vote

The Chairperson: All those in favour of passing clause 2, please say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

The Chairperson: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Clause 2 is accordingly passed.

* * *

The Chairperson: We're just going to take a tiny moment to consult the authorities.

An Honourable Member: Mr. Chair, can we have a two-minute break?

The Chairperson: There's a request for a five-minute recess.

Okay, so after consulting with the authorities, we are not going back to clause 2, but for clarity we are redoing the vote.

Shall clause 2 pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

An Honourable Member: No.

Voice Vote

The Chairperson: All those in favour of the clause 2, please say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

The Chairperson: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Clause 2 is accordingly passed.

Recorded Vote

MLA Khan: A recorded vote.

The Chairperson: A recorded vote has been requested.

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Ayes 3, Nays 2.

The Chairperson: Clause 2 is accordingly passed.

* * *

The Chairperson: Clause 3—pass.

* (20:10)

Shall clause 4 pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

Some Honourable Members: No.

The Chairperson: I hear noes.

The floor is open to questions.

Are there questions?

MLA Khan: So, in the clause here, 4–6(2.3): No tax is payable by an operator under subsection (2), and no single-trip permit is to be issued under subsection—and you can read the rest there.

Can the minister please clarify what constitutes a single-trip permit?

MLA Sala: One second. Happy to answer the question.

Single-trip permits are a method of collecting fuel tax from out-of-province carriers that are not operating under a carrier licence.

MLA Khan: I apologize for that. I must be getting old in my age. Can the minister just please repeat that a little louder and maybe a little slower?

Please and thank you.

MLA Sala: Single-trip permits are a method of collecting fuel tax from out-of-province carriers that are not operating under a carrier licence.

MLA Khan: So, to clarify that, single trip is out-of-province carrier, and no single-trip permit is to be issued under subsection—so, just a clarification, is the minister saying that no tax is payable by operator and no single permit—so, an operator coming from Saskatchewan through Manitoba to go to Ontario and onwards to greener pastures in Cape Breton, let's say,

would that operator then not—or, would they be exempt or they would not be exempt from this 14-cent tax—fuel tax holiday, as listed here?

So, a little clarification on that, please, from the minister, Mr. Chair.

MLA Sala: I want to apologize to the member, because I didn't catch a significant portion of your question. I dug into some information there.

I would ask, if you would, repeat it for my benefit.

MLA Khan: Sorry, just to be clear, again, minister, just the last preamble I went on or the one before that? Just the last one, right? [*interjection*] Okay, yes.

Okay, so the question was, so, the single—from what I understand, the non-single-trip permit would be for a out-of-province operator coming through, let's just say from Saskatchewan.

So, does—is this clause here, 6(2.3), saying that no tax is payable from a single-trip permit? So, if you have a truck from Saskatchewan coming through, they fuel up here, they're not—they—no tax is payable. So they don't have to pay that tax and then they can proceed on through Ontario without paying that tax.

Is that what this clause is clearly stating here?

MLA Sala: Yes.

MLA Khan: Okay, so, again, that same example, you have a—hundreds, if not thousands, of trucks I imagine coming from Saskatchewan, either west to east or you have east to west coming through, you have people coming south to north, States, and thousands and thousands of vehicles coming here.

So these vehicles that are now coming here have no intention per se of staying in Manitoba; they're passed right through, are going to fuel up in Manitoba and take advantage of this tax savings, is that correct?

MLA Sala: Most trucks would be covered under the International Fuel Tax Agreement. This is for those trucks that are not covered under that agreement.

MLA Khan: Can the minister please indulge us in what the International Fuel Tax Agreement is?

MLA Sala: I'd be happy to. Just give me a second. So the agreement essentially works to ensure that truckers pay the relevant fuel taxes in whatever jurisdictions they're driving through.

MLA Khan: Okay, so just to be clear here, so this clause here is referring to single-trip permits. So a truck coming from Saskatchewan through Manitoba,

the minister has stated that most trucks would abide by the International Fuel Tax Agreement, which means they would then abide by the relevant tax.

But that, again, that is most trucks, so we still have to deal with what's not most. But most trucks would deal with an International Fuel Tax Agreement, and relevant tax. So does that mean they would pay the relevant tax, or they would take advantage of this tax holiday according to the International Fuel Tax Agreement.

* (20:20)

MLA Sala: Just relating to this section, just going to reiterate. This means that truckers will not pay tax for the mileage they incur in Manitoba, right. So, there's the truckers that operate under the international agreement, which we referenced earlier. This clause ensures that those trucks that are not part of that agreement can still continue to see those savings. That's what this specific clause gets at.

Is that clear?

MLA Khan: Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Honourable—Mr. Chair—*[interjection]*—Mr. Chair, sorry, it's getting long—late night now—Mr. Chair. And I want to thank the minister for clarification on that.

So, again, just to be clear: so, a truck coming from west Canada, let's say Moosomin on the No. 1, is flowing through a border. They get to Manitoba because they know that we don't have a tax, or we—they save 14 cents. They pull up; they load up their 18-wheeler, and they continue on all the way through Manitoba, and now they get to, you know, they're just about to enter Kenora, about to exit Manitoba, and they're going to fill up again.

So, those fill-ups, they're not paying the tax. They are exempt from the tax holiday. They get the 14 cents off. I just want to be clear that that's what we're saying.

Correct?

MLA Sala: That's accurate. *[interjection]*

The Chairperson: MLA Khan.

MLA Khan: So, these thousands and thousands of trucks are coming through Manitoba in the course of a year. I'm sure the minister could probably get numbers on that or, you know, it would actually be nice if we could get numbers on how many trucks actually flow through Manitoba on a six-month and an annual basis, what this bill's going to reflect.

Those trucks are coming through. They're going to take advantage of the tax, but this has nothing to do with affordability for them, because they don't live in Manitoba.

So, this tax is a tax fuel holiday designed for affordability for Manitobans, and yet we're saying, come on through, truckers, and anyone else that might be going through; fill up and get out of here, and we're not going to get any taxes off of you, but you're going to use our roads; you're going to use our infrastructure; you're going to damage those with the thousands of trucks that are moving through this province, and we're not going to get anything from you. So, just, you know, maybe stop off at a convenience store and buy a bag of Cheetos or something and get going.

Just want to make sure that this is what this clause is stating in here and I'm not missing anything.

MLA Sala: I don't remember saying anything about Cheetos, but I think we were clear about what this clause indicates.

MLA Bereza: For the record, and again, in case I'm missing something here, I'm driving through from Saskatchewan. I stop in Virden. I fill up with fuel. I'm going through into Ontario. I stop before the Ontario border, fill up again with fuel.

So, I'm being able to fill my truck twice in Manitoba. The good people of Manitoba are going to be absorbing this. They're going to be paying for it. They're going to be parrying for the wear and tear on the roads.

So, the question, through you, Mr. Chair, to the minister: Are you okay with people coming from out of province, filling up their trucks or vehicles once, twice, ten times while they're in Manitoba, yes or no?

MLA Sala: I appreciate the question.

I think we've been clear about what this clause implies and what it provides for. There is this North American agreement for truckers to ensure that they pay fuel taxes reflective of where they are.

We in Manitoba are reducing our fuel tax from 14 cents to zero, should your party decide to support it. And I think, again, the implications to the clause are clear.

MLA Khan: You know, I want to be clear, we are—we think it's fantastic we have a North American agreement and that we encourage trade and we encourage transportation through the province. We think this is wonderful.

But what's not wonderful is that that agreement now would take advantage of affordability measures or what a bill is supposed to be for affordability measures for Manitobans. This is a bill designed to be a tax relief for Manitobans, and yet, clearly, in this clause, this is not the case. Clearly, in this clause, again, because the bill has been rushed through, that they're—they haven't thought of this.

And that's okay. I want to be clear: it's okay to make mistakes in a bill, and that's why we have these committees to address these.

So, to my colleague's question, thousands of trucks coming through—also, a town right on the border—Moosomin, right, it's pretty close on the border? What's stopping someone from Saskatchewan—how many kilometres is that roughly?—from the border, 15 kilometres, 12 miles, saying, hey, we got to fill up, mom and dad, let's go get gas; come fill up and then go back. And then hey, when we fill up, let's go back. And coming back to Saskatchewan, doesn't have this.

So, what's stopping someone from doing that, and is the minister okay with that? Is that what this bill is designed for?

MLA Sala: Yes, I appreciate the comments.

I'd say, you know, we're part of this international agreement. I can hear that the opposition wants us to just go ahead and break up that international agreement. They're making proposals that would suggest that, or speak to that. Whether they'd like to acknowledge that or not, that's effectively what they're suggesting.

We are part of this agreement, and this is what needs to be done here to accommodate our participation in that agreement.

MLA Bereza: What we are saying is, you know what, we are for affordability for Manitobans.

We are not for paying for somebody's damages that are being—happening to our infrastructure here. We are not for millions of dollars leaving this province when we're talking about businesses that may be operating in Manitoba, but being—but having head offices in other provinces.

They may have licensed vehicles that are operating in Manitoba, but the money is all going out of the province. So, I just want to make clear that this government is okay with millions and millions of dollars of—exiting the province on—from the border communities.

MLA Sala: Yes, I appreciate the question.

I'd say, you know, we're here, and we were elected—big part of why we were elected was to help make life more affordable for Manitobans, right?

So, again, I know the opposition, you know, they're driving at something here. I'm not quite sure where they think that's going, but I'll say this: we are bringing \$163 million in estimated tax savings for Manitobans as a result of this measure; an estimated \$100 million in fuel tax savings for households; \$60 million for businesses across Manitoba; and an estimated \$3 million for municipalities.

This is about improving affordability for Manitobans, and, you know, we're really proud of that. And I think that, regardless of the, you know, the comments from the opposition, I think Manitobans understand what it is we're doing here. It's clear to me that they understand that.

And I think if the members opposite went back to their communities and they spoke with folks, and they asked them, will life get better for you if we reduce the fuel tax by 14 cents a litre on January 1, the answer they're going to hear is yes.

So, again, we can talk about these various scenarios that they're referencing here and bringing up. Appreciate that they're bringing this to this committee.

* (20:30)

But I'll say again for clarity: this is about affordability for Manitobans. We're proud to bring this forward, and, again, I hope that the opposition chooses to support it.

MLA Bereza: I am listening to my constituents in Portage la Prairie. I am also listening because I am the agricultural shadow minister as well too.

I understand there's \$163 million that you say that is being saved here for Manitobans. How much money is going into Saskatchewan and Ontario or other provinces? Do you have any estimate on that?

The Chairperson: A gentle reminder about questions through the Chair.

MLA Sala: So, again, this is for—it is for Manitobans. We've got an estimated \$250 over six months that Manitobans can expect to save.

And I just want to clarify. You know, I know the opposition was having a little bit of fun with that, but that's not two F-150s. This is according to Natural Resources Canada, for an average fuel consumption

for a family with two vehicles. Mr. Chair, \$250 is a lot of money for an average family in this province.

And I know, you know, again, the member says he's in close contact with his constituents; I appreciate that. I get the sense that he does care about their concerns. And I would encourage him to go back and ask your constituents, what does \$250 in your pocket over the next six months mean to you and your family? And I think what he'll hear back with clarity is, that is incredible news for us; that is a great-news story.

So, again, you know, I really encourage the members to consider what that \$250 means for families and their community, and I hope they choose to support this bill because people need this help now.

And, again, for years that party, the opposition party, was not willing to take action like we are here. We're taking action to reduce energy costs for Manitobans. And I'd say not only energy costs on fuel, but we're—we brought forward a number of other great initiatives that we've talked about in the House, and are—we're focused on helping everyday Manitobans reduce their cost of living.

That's something we didn't see from the government in years past, the previous government.

MLA Khan: Just a couple of pointers here. Not once at one point did we ever suggest that we weren't in favour of the North American agreement or trade, or ever insinuated once that we want to violate that or break that.

You know, and I know some of these questions are pretty in depth and, you know, very in the weeds with the bill, and, you know, I'd see the minister at times has to, you know, ask his staff. So, if he wants, when I ask a question, if he wants a pause, I'm more than happy to pause, let the minister get the proper information, because it is a big file, and then come back because that wasn't mentioned.

So, maybe at times where, you know, the minister's getting pointers from his staff on how to answer these complicated questions properly, he's been actually missing what we say. But we never once said that we want to violate the North American agreement.

What we did say is that we want affordability for Manitobans. The minister also said he wants affordability for Manitobans. So, we agree on that: we want affordability for Manitobans.

I don't see how someone living in Saskatchewan, driving here to fuel up their tank 10 miles away and

then going back to Saskatchewan is affordability for Manitobans. I might be wrong. Maybe the minister can tell me if I'm wrong on that point. Or someone from Ontario coming here, filling up and going back.

You know, I don't see how a trucker, thousands, tens of thousands, maybe even hundreds of thousands, I'm not sure; I'm not the infrastructure guy. You know, maybe if the member from Turtle Mountain was here he would know. But, you know, driving through Manitoba, I don't see how that's affordability for Manitobans; it's not. It's wear and tear on our roads in Manitoba.

If this bill was thought out properly we could simply just simply say that we want to apply this to Manitobans only and have a mechanism for Manitobans only instead of rushing it through on January 1st.

Affordability is No. 1. We agree affordability has to be, and we are—this is why we're here; this is why we are both passionately debating this, is because we agree for more affordability for Manitobans, not for out-of-province people, not for people who are driving through, not for truckers. It's clear that—and now this minister might want to send cheques to millionaires outside of the province; that's concerning.

You know, as he knows the talking points. And when he talks about affordability, you know, I apologize, I took the two F-150s from the previous speaker, but it was two vehicles, \$250 in six months, \$500 a year; that's a lot of money. He's right, it's a lot of money, and we should—we—affordability is top of mind.

But, you know what's a lot more money than 500 bucks a year? Eleven times that. Eleven times that is what the previous government did for the average Manitoban last year, '22-23; \$5,500 in average savings. Eleven times.

So, the minister wants to talk about savings, I agree, we agree; affordability, No. 1. Got to make it affordable for Manitobans.

A bill that allows people to drive through Manitoba to fill up their car or drive here and go back is not affordable measures for Manitobans. They're destroying our roads, our infrastructure, and Manitobans are paying the costs from that.

I can see the minister, you know, isn't—*[interjection]* You have one more question? Okay. So, my colleague has one more question. But when it comes to the question on this one here, can the minister just simply

justify how, you know, he believes that applying a tax credit, and we're not talking about violation of international law or the North American agreement, that's a good thing. But when we're talking about other—and the minister wants to say, oh, they want us to talk about different scenarios and different situations. Yes, that's what you do. That's what bills do. That's what we're supposed to do. That's what committee is. That's why we have presenters.

I mean, if that's not what the minister wants to do, then I don't know what he's—what we're doing here, Mr. Chair—sorry, address through the Chair. That's what we do, we talk about scenarios and we try to identify issues within the bill that we can make better for Manitobans. This is about affordability for Manitobans. We agree, let's get it done, let's do it for Manitobans, not for people that are coming and going and destroying our roads and driving through. That's not what it's for.

So, question: Is the minister okay with this bill going forward the way it is, knowing that there will be a portion, potentially a large portion, we don't know—I would love if the minister has numbers on that—but there will be a portion of people that take advantage of this tax break that has nothing to do with affordability for Manitobans.

MLA Sala: Appreciate the question and, again, the opposition may want to look at us, you know, disassembling the North American agreement with truckers. I mean, they can't have it both ways, I'll say that. That may be something they want to entertain. What we're focused on here is affordability for families, that's why this bill has been brought forward, that's what our government is here to deliver on, that's why Manitobans removed the previous government from office.

We're here to deliver affordability improvements and we're going to do it.

MLA Bereza: Mr. Chair, I just want on the record that over 400,000 transport trucks travel through Manitoba in a year. Not all of those people are going to follow the rules, and I think we need to be aware of that. So 400,000 transport trucks pass through Manitoba. We will be giving money away to other provinces.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: Can I ask, is there a question?

An Honourable Member: No, I just wanted to put that on the record.

The Chairperson: Okay. Okay.

Would you like to respond, Minister Sala?

MLA Sala: I appreciate the comments from the member.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: Any other questions?

MLA Khan: Just, again, this is one of those points that I think it's fair to say that the minister is not willing to, you know, Mr. Chair, or—let me rephrase that, sorry, to not—to go through the Chair. I think this is one of the points that we can agree that we're not going to agree on this one, I guess, and it's okay not to agree sometimes. I guess that's what democracy is, that's why we're here to debate these important bills and to point on the record that the minister is okay with a large number, or a number, of people coming to Manitoba to take advantage of this tax credit and have no consequence or no benefit to affordability measures for Manitobans because they're not Manitobans.

I just want to be clear that the minister is okay with that, and then we can move on to the next point because it seems like we're not going to agree on this point here.

MLA Sala: Yes, I'm happy to provide clarity that we're participants in a North American agreement for truckers and, again, if the opposition doesn't like that agreement or they have concerns with it, that's their prerogative. We are focused on bringing forward solutions to reduce the costs of living for Manitoba families.

* (20:40)

MLA Khan: Sorry, I guess there was some confusion on that. I think the minister thought I was referring to the North American agreement. I was not referring to North American agreement. I think we've agreed that we don't want to violate the North American agreement. The question had nothing to do with the North American agreement.

The question had to do with people who aren't Manitobans, who aren't Manitoban residents, taking advantage of this tax credit. They may live on the border of Saskatchewan and Manitoba, or Manitoba and Ontario, or, you know, Manitoba and the States—although I don't know what the gas pricing in the States is, so let's leave them out, but let's just say east and west—that the minister is okay with—we're not talking about the current American agreement—but the minister is okay with people, average Joes, coming

here and taking advantage of our tax credits, designed, like he just said in the last question, for affordability measures for Manitobans, and clearly, I am asking the question about non-Manitobans.

MLA Sala: Yes, I've never stated anything along those lines, so appreciate that the members opposite want to, you know, put some words in my mouth here and makes some claims about things that were said that weren't said.

What we're saying is we want to bring savings for Manitoban families. This is an important bill that will do exactly that during a time of high inflation, during a time when Manitobans have been struggling with high energy costs, and frankly, during a time where governments—or where Manitobans have been struggling with high energy costs for years with a previous government that wasn't willing to take action.

Times have changed. I encourage the opposition to get on board with this bill.

An Honourable Member: Point of order.

Point of Order

The Chairperson: MLA Cross, on a point of order.

MLA Billie Cross (Seine River): We're discussing a clause that has nothing to do with people from Saskatchewan coming over the border. So, I think your argument is flawed in that respect. We're talking about something very specific here, and you've gone off topic.

So, you know, in the interest of doing things properly, I don't think we should be discussing people coming over the borders to get gas.

The Chairperson: MLA Khan, on the same point of order.

MLA Khan: I appreciate the member's opposite point of order, and the question that the member opposite is bringing up.

But I—there is relevance here, because this clause is clear, if the member looks to the third line, where it says no single-trip permit. So, I believe, if the very first question I had asked the minister was could he please define what a single-trip permit was, and that single-trip permit definition was relevant to our line of questioning.

So, it had to do with out-of-province vehicles travelling through the province. That is exactly what we are referring to, so I believe the relevance—I don't know if the member wasn't here when we had

discussed single-trip permits, but it is exactly clear on the relevance within this.

That being said, I believe the minister and I have concluded—we have, on our end, and that we agree to disagree that the minister is okay with out-of-resident, non-Manitobans taking advantage of a credit designed for affordability for Manitobans, and it's clear the minister is okay with that, so we can agree to move on.

The Chairperson: So, I will rule on the point of order.

I do not see a point of order here, seeing as the critic has explained how his comments and questions are relevant to the clause.

* * *

The Chairperson: But I will ask if there's any more questions regarding the clause itself.

Okay. Then we will call the question on the clause.

Shall clause 4 pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

The Chairperson: Okay, so, all those in favour of clause 4, please say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

The Chairperson: All those opposed, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

The Chairperson: In my opinion, clause 4—oh, sorry. In my opinion, Ayes have it.

Clause 4 is accordingly passed.

Recorded Vote

MLA Khan: A recorded vote please.

The Chairperson: A recorded vote has been requested.

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Ayes 3, Nays 2.

The Chairperson: Clause 4 is accordingly passed.

* * *

The Chairperson: Shall clause 5 pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

Some Honourable Members: No.

The Chairperson: I hear noes.

The floor is open to questions.

MLA Khan: All right. Okay.

So, section 5 here, 8.2, Temporary reduction following tax holiday: Despite section 8, the rate of tax payable for a fuel purchase for using in operating a motor vehicle on a roadway. I just want to highlight that point there because this is a line we're going to be coming back, probably for the next hour or two, at least.

This ties in to the initial definition of roadway, which I had begged and pleaded for the minister to simply add an amendment to the roadway definition. But now this is going to become even more concerning now, and then maybe we'll have to ask for leave to go back and modify the roadway, which we could've just done in the first section without spending an hour on it. But nonetheless, here we are.

Motor vehicle on a ray—roadway may be reduced by regulation for any period beginning after the tax holiday and ending before January 1, 2025. So, this one here, we're going to start off with a simple one. And the motor vehicle on a roadway, we heard Snoman talk about this, that they were deeply concerned that they would not be covered under the definition of a roadway, and now they have the motor vehicle on a roadway.

So the question to the minister is: Is the minister willing to amend this to allow for a broader definition of a motor vehicle on a roadway as defined within the—defined in The Highway Traffic Act. Do we table stuff here? We can table stuff? Okay. I don't have—do you guys have photocopies? Okay, I don't have—I'll get photocopies.

As defined in The Highway Traffic Act, I read it earlier, roadways means a portion of a highway that has improved design in ordinary use for vehicle traffic. Motor vehicle means a motor vehicle as defined by The Highway Traffic Act, let's take a look at what that is, but does not—driver vehicle act does not include a farm tractor, special mobile machine and off-road vehicle.

There are many examples within The Highway Traffic Act that do not allow for a motor vehicle on a roadway.

Question to the minister: Is the minister now finally realizing the error of his ways in the very first definition and will be willing to amend this?

MLA Sala: Yes, I thank the member for the question. I can see they want to go back to the roadway definition. Again, we—I thought we'd covered that

ground pretty extensively earlier. So I'm just—I'm not really going to go back there.

But what I will say is the intent of this clause is quite simply just to clarify that we have the capacity to extend the tax holiday beyond a six-month period beginning January 1, and this clarifies that, as the minister, I will have the ability to increase those taxes to whatever level, or to decrease them at any point prior to January 1, 2025, through the regulations. So it's just clarifying that.

* (20:50)

I will go a little further to say we've been clear that this is initially a six-month holiday, as the members will know, and we are going to be re-evaluating as we get closer to that six-month mark to determine the state of inflation, state of our economy, to determine whether or not we extend it. And this clause gives us that control to be able to make that determination.

Thank you.

MLA Khan: So, just to be clear, I know the minister was here earlier when Snoman presented. So I just want to ask the minister a very simple question.

Does the minister agree or disagree with the statements made by Snoman when they specifically said that they do not believe clause 8.2 would—is reflective of them and their members and all the great work that they do in this province and bringing in hundreds of millions of dollars of tourism and economy and safety and health and wellness, that the minister disagrees with Snoman and their interpretation of what they believe they—should be included in the clause 8.2.

Just want to be clear that the minister disagrees with them.

MLA Sala: No, as we stated clearly—well, as I stated in response to the presentation, this measure does not exclude folks who ride snowmobiles. So, again, I don't know how much clearer we can make that to the members opposite. We can continue to go around and around on that, but it does not exclude them.

And frankly, for those folks that enjoy time outdoors and drive a lot and, you know, attach the trailer to the truck and head out, if that's part of their lifestyle and that's how they enjoy their time and that's how they enjoy time outdoors, this will bring them significant benefits.

And so, I think that was made quite clear in the response to the presentation. This will not exclude them.

MLA Khan: Can the minister explain how a motor vehicle on a roadway—motor vehicle on a roadway—and again, I'm sure his staff can provide him with the definition of a roadway and the definition of a motor vehicle. If they don't have it, I can get my staff to print off four copies so I can table it, but I'm pretty sure the staff can take care of what a definition of a vehicle and a motorway—a vehicle—motor vehicle on a roadway. So—

An Honourable Member: Point of order.

Point of Order

The Chairperson: Point of order, MLA Cross.

MLA Cross: I just want to point out that in clause 2, which we passed and we've gotten past that point, we've already discussed what the definition of roadway is, so I think we don't need to further discuss the definition of roadway.

The Chairperson: MLA Khan, on the same point of order.

MLA Khan: I want to thank the member opposite for bringing that forward. And yes, we did discuss what a roadway is, but we never combined the three words—or, I guess the—one, two, three, four, five words: motor vehicle on a roadway.

So I believe that's what this clause is referring to. It's referring to a motor vehicle on a roadway, which we are having a discussion about specific to this clause, not specific to the definition of a roadway, as the member is alluding the point of order towards.

The Chairperson: So I would rule that this is not a point of order, because the comments are still relevant to point—or, sorry, clause 5.

* * *

MLA Khan: So getting back to my previous point, can the minister explain how a motor vehicle on a roadway, as defined by The Highway Traffic Act, covers Snoman's groomers or their members.

MLA Sala: And again, I mean, I—you know, what would be good is if we could focus on the intent of the clauses here, right? We could focus on the—what the clauses are actually stating.

So I'm happy to repeat for the members: this clause is to offer me, as the the Minister of Finance, the power to raise or lower fuel tax rates during the

period indicated in the clause. And we've done this so that we can ensure sufficient control over this fuel tax rate. We've committed to six months to put \$250 back in the pockets of families. Once we get closer to that date, we'll determine if that needs to be lengthened. That's the purpose of the clause. That's clear.

MLA Khan: And the minister won't get any agreement. I think we've said it dozens of times tonight. We are in favour of affordability measure for Manitobans. I don't know how many more times I can say it clearly. Like, I don't know, like, I can say it in French, I can say it in Punjabi, if you want; I can say it in Arabic, if you want; a little bit of Farsi maybe. We are for affordability measures for Manitobans. It's clear.

But if that's the intent of what the minister wants to do, then words need to reflect intent. These words do not reflect what Snoman and their organization brought forward tonight. These words do not reflect what other presenters say—said tonight. These words do not reflect the intent of what constituencies have brought—constituents have brought forward to MLAs.

We agree. The intent is affordability for Manitobans. Amazing. Minister, you are correct. We agree for affordability measures for Manitobans.

So, I believe if we have that out of the way, we don't need to back to that over and over again. We agree. We want affordability measures for Manitobans.

The previous clause was clear that the minister was okay with affordably measure—affordability measures for non-Manitobans. It was clear; asked him: 400,000 trucks flowing through here; people on the border coming back and going, clear. Not for Manitobans. Got it. Minister was okay with that.

We're saying motor vehicle on a roadway. Words need to reflect intent and the intent is affordability measures. We agree. We want affordability for Manitobans.

Why is the minister so hesitant to make amendments to simply reflect the intent, as agreed upon by him and myself as the critic, for affordability measures for Manitobans? Why is the minister so opposed to that?

MLA Sala: Again, I appreciate the comments and, you know, as I stated earlier, the message that you've brought forward here has been brought forward. We've had a chance to discuss this point repeatedly.

We can do that all night, if you'd like, but you've been—you've made your—you know, you've made the

case there. We've heard this at this committee. I appreciate what you've brought forward but, you know, at this point, that horse has been beaten, right?

So—no, it's okay. I'll just say again, I do want us to focus here. We're talking about a clause that is quite clear. This is about ensuring that we can, in a very controlled way, you know, either extend the tax or, depending on economic conditions, perhaps not, but this is what this clause allows that—the powers to do, right? So that's what this clause is focused on.

Again, the members opposite want to continue going back to points they drilled at earlier in the night. They can do that. I get a sense they want to do that and if that's the case, we can continue to have that conversation. I'm a very patient man.

The Chairperson: We can continue having that conversation through the Chair.

MLA Khan: I just want to comment, you are doing a great job of keeping this civil and respectful for this dialogue of debate here.

And, you know, again, I want to thank the minister for his intent. I'm simply asking that the words reflect his intent. Snoman's asking that the words reflect the tent. Other presenters are asking for that, as well.

Now, when it comes to, you know, the beating of a horse, as the minister alluded to, that's what this is for, right? That's what committee is for. Committee is for this process. Committee is designed for the back and forth, the healthy debate, the healthy discussion on how we can make this amendment—this bill better. How can we amend it to make it better?

The horse is not dead; it's not going to die. We still have to go to third reading and then royal assent. And affordability for Manitobans is top of mind for everyone in this room and everyone in this province. So the horse is being beat, we're going to get some good answers out of it and we're going to work forward to making affordability for Manitobans. But that is what we are committed to working towards. That's why we're here. That's what this process is all about.

Now, in regards to this process, if we're asking about that, why will the minister simply not amend—why is the minister digging his heels in—and it might have to do with the earlier press conference he had, where he said he wasn't going to make any amendments. And he made that announcement before—comment before even coming to tonight.

So, the question then is a simple: Why will the minister not amend the wording of motor vehicle on a roadway so that Manitobans feel like Manitobans are heard and respected and reflected in the words in this bill, which simply are for the intent of affordability for Manitobans?

* (21:00)

Simple question for the minister.

MLA Sala: Yes, again, I just want to clarify for the record, just because I think it's important: I never made the statement that the member opposite is claiming I made. They can go back to the tape from those—that scrum and learn that—the truth of the matter, which is that I never made that statement. I just think it's important just to clarify for the record, because he continues to repeat that.

We're a listening government. We're here to listen. It was great to hear presentations from community, from business, from various advocates.

And, you know, I agree with the member. This is an important process. It's good to see that they are taking it seriously and asking these questions. This is great, have a discussion.

But, look, we've been clear about the intent of this bill. We've been clear about how it will benefit Manitobans. There is nowhere—I have seen zero evidence of confusion, of any lack of clarity. And, you know, we've been very clear about how this will benefit Manitobans.

So, again, we can continue to talk about these various points and encourage the members opposite to continue asking questions and looking forward to further discussion.

MLA Bereza: Again, affordability, as we talked about here, is top of mind for all of us, I believe, in the room here tonight.

So, again, what we want to make sure, though, too, is there's no questions that are being asked by Manitobans—am I doing the right thing, am I not doing the right thing in order to get my rebate. The other thing, too, is that I—the other question I propose through the Chair is we are talking about an end date of January 1, 2025, at the latest.

Again, me being the agricultural critic, a lot of the work that the farmers do—again, because of markets, exports and stuff like that—they're planning ahead two, three, five years ahead.

Is the minister—through the Chair—interested in moving this bill from January 2025 to a permanent bill? A non-date, sorry.

MLA Sala: I appreciate the question.

And the measure that we brought forward, as you know, is for a six-month period, initially. We wanted to be sure that we were bringing forward a good balance between fiscal responsibility and improving affordability for Manitobans.

The Vice-Chairperson in the Chair

The six-month initial period, as I've said, we are—we think that's a big win for families, \$250 for the average family. As we get closer to that six-month period, we will look at inflationary conditions, overall economic factors, to make a determination as to whether or not we extend it.

And, again, the entire—the intent here of limiting this to a year, at least within this legislation, is to bring a balanced approach that recognizes both the fiscal realities and the affordability challenges that Manitobans are facing, and we feel that this bill achieves that.

MLA Khan: So, the minister mentions that he's not willing to amend the motor vehicle on roadway wording, even though he says he didn't—he hasn't heard from anyone that that's a concern, and yet Snoman was here tonight, along with other presenters, and we have voiced numerous times that that is a concern.

So, you know, maybe the minister wasn't fully engaged with Snoman when they were talking, but they did say the—almost those exact words. It's in Hansard; we can take a look at what they said, but something along those lines.

Now, to my colleague's question about the end date, does the minister—and he can—simple answer is yes or no, if he believes—does the minister believe that inflation, cost of living, affordability measures will be back in line, even if this is—stand out for a year, January 1, 2025?

Does he believe that the affordability, inflation, interest rates, high taxes will be back in line by January 1, 2025?

MLA Sala: I appreciate the question.

We, of course, have indications from the Department of Finance and others about what the likely direction is of our economy and inflation, but, at this

point, they are predictions. Right? We don't know what's going to happen.

We've seen that over the last many years, that there's a lot of economic unpredictability right now in our current environment. And, you know, I don't think things will be any different in six months in terms of that lack of predictability.

So, we are approaching this cautiously, again, with an eye on balancing fiscal concerns with affordability concerns. And this clause allows us to do that.

MLA Khan: And I can appreciate that, that they're predictions, and it's uncertain times, and we're not sure what's going to happen. So, I can completely appreciate where the minister's coming from on that point.

So, my question, then—what is the mechanism for after January 1st—or, I would assume before January 1st, 2025, if the economic conditions are not where the minister believes they should be, what is the mechanism for extending this past that time?

MLA Sala: Thank you for the question.

So, we will be reviewing again the overall direction of inflation and economic conditions to make a determination as to how we proceed.

You know, as we get closer to that six month mark, that's when we'll be starting to examine those questions, and at that point, we will make a determination.

MLA Khan: So, I think that question's now diverged into two separate questions. We have economic conditions, and then we have the mechanism for extending this.

And so, first, I want to concentrate on what the mechanism is. What is the mechanism, after six months, to extend this, and what is the mechanism, after the year—so we'd say December 31st, 2024—to extend this if the economic conditions have not been met?

We're not going to talk about economic conditions right now, we can talk about that later. I want to focus on what is the mechanism for extending this?

The Chairperson in the Chair

MLA Sala: Again, I appreciate the question, and this was an important election commitment that was made. It's in my mandate letter. I'm very pleased that we're able to move so fast in bringing this bill forward, and we know how important it is right now.

You know, again, we've selected a six-month period initially because we wanted to approach this cautiously and be judicious. We will, as we get closer

to that six-month mark, have much better sense of where we're headed in terms of inflation. There's going to be a lot of indicators we're going to be able to watch to make that determination.

And the members opposite will, as we get closer to that date, will learn, as will all other Manitobans, about our decision, and that will be dependent on overall inflationary conditions and the direction of our economy.

MLA Khan: Oh, he's back. Mr. Chairperson, thank you. Caught me off guard there, sorry.

* (21:10)

So again, just to be clear, I appreciate the minister's answer. *[interjection]* Oh, sorry. I appreciate the minister's answer, I appreciate the economic uncertainty, I appreciate this is an affordability measure. All fine and dandy; love it.

But we're asking about the mechanism. What is the mechanism for this minister when we—when the minister approaches close to the six-month period, to extend this as this holiday date—tax holiday will allow him to, and then what is the mechanism if, after a year, we are not at that? And there might not be a mechanism, and that's okay.

So I'm just asking the minister if he's aware of how he would go, at six months, saying okay, economic factors, the conditions are not back to normal—or, back—not back to 'affordabilimies' and inflation interest, we need to extend this. What's that mechanism? Is there a mechanism?

And No. 2, at the end of the year, when this bill—tax holidays end, what is that mechanism at that point? What happens at that point?

MLA Sala: Yes, appreciate the question.

We will be tracking the direction of inflation as we get closer to that six-month mark, and that will assist us in making a determination as to whether or not we should be extending this.

MLA Bereza: Is there a number, is there—what is this mechanism? What is this number that we have to get to, or not get to, in order to trigger moving on, stopping. What is the number?

MLA Sala: I appreciate that the members opposite are looking for us to be very prescriptive. That's what I'm hearing us say.

It's discretionary. That's the nature of this, right? So we want to make sure that we retain that control to

be able to make a determination as to whether or not we extend this for Manitobans. That will be based on, mainly, inflationary concerns.

And again, as we get closer to that six-month mark, the opposition will—as will all other Manitobans—learn about our decision. Again, there'll be a number of factors that will play into that, and it will be mostly driven, of course, by inflation and those cost-of-living realities that Manitobans are facing, and the direction of those costs of living.

MLA Khan: And I appreciate that. Again, I think the minister's going back and thinking that we're trying to trick him into something that we're really not trying to do.

What I'm merely asking is like, you know—and I can appreciate that there's some discretionary terms there. I can appreciate that there's uncertain economic conditions there. I can appreciate that there's climate and world conditions that we can't—I get all that.

My question is, what's the mechanism? Does the six months—does the minister wake up the day before the six month and says, I want to extend this, and it's extended? He just comes to the House and says to the Legislature, says, this is going to be extended six months?

Or, you know, is there a process where he has to bring a motion forward, he has to bring a—he has to bring something forward, he has to have debate.

Or is it just, he just says, I want to extend this, and it's extended. That's the first question.

So I'll boil the question down, I'll make it even simpler. Just—and I get it, it's discretionary; I get it. I've sat on that side briefly. I get it; there's a lot of—happening. But is the mechanism the minister just said—let's just talk about the six months. The minister just says, this needs to be extended, we're not there yet, affordability is still uncertain, we need to extend it.

That's the question. It's a simple one.

MLA Sala: Yes, and I mean, the clause very clearly states that I, as the Minister of Finance, will have the ability, through regulation, to either raise or lower the tax up until January 1, 2025, should this bill pass.

So, to answer your question, the answer is—this clause specifically states this—that yes, I would have the ability to raise it. And again, we will be making that determination based on inflationary factors and cost-of-living factors that we're seeing here in Manitoba.

MLA Khan: Okay, so that's great. That's what I was getting to. So that's that mechanism, and it's built in.

Now, the second part of the question—which now I've broken into another section, so there's a third part now—but the second one now, is, what happens at the end of the year now?

So we're at the end of the year, is it still—is there still a mechanism for—and I can respect if there is, I'm just trying to understand, is there. So December rolls around and Manitoba is still, you know, affordability is still top of mind.

Is that afforded in here, and I'm just asking the minister, that he can say in December of 2024, we're not—we need to extend again, or does this process need to happen again.

I'm just looking for clarification on that.

MLA Sala: I appreciate the question. I mean, it states very clearly that: Despite section 8, the rate of tax payable for fuel purchased for use in operating a motor vehicle on a roadway may be reduced by regulation for any period beginning after the tax holiday and ending before January 2025.

What that means is that should we want to extend it, an amendment would be required.

MLA Khan: I feel like we're getting somewhere; I'm liking this.

So just to be clear again, so if we get to January 2025 or I would assume before that, we're not in there, the minister would then bring forward an amendment to the House, asking for an amendment to extend this. And then we would then have to vote in the House. Just looking for that mechanism right around there. Keep in mind— I know this it's a big question, so I'll let him do his thing.

MLA Sala: Yes, to respond to the question, we would have to amend the act again. So, it would be the same process as we're going through here; another act would be required.

And I do want to add, like, again, we've brought forward a six month, you know, an initial six-month period here, with the option to extend, and the maximum length of time that this could possibly be in place without further amendments is a year.

MLA Khan: Mr. Chairperson—got it right this time—agree with the minister. I—the ability for him to extend this after six months due to many economic factors, conditions that we can't anticipate and we can't predict. We can extend it six months, okay. We get to the year, and

now it's got to come forward. Now we got to bring a motion forward or an amendment to do this, and then we got to go through process again.

Why doesn't the minister just increase this to January 1, 2027? We could save some time. We don't have to worry about coming back. It's up to the minister's discretion, as he says, that we should trust him at six months to make the right decision for Manitobans.

So what is stopping the minister from just going to 2027 and then saying we're going to look at these economic factors that he's talked about—conditions—can't predict it, uncertain times. We're supposed to trust him at six months; why not trust him until 2027 because, you know, affordability, interest, inflation, cost of living probably not going to come down in a year.

So let's save us all some time and Manitobans' time, headache, uncertainty. I know that was a big concern in Alberta. People were really wondering what's going to happen there, and that caused a lot of uncertainty, stress, tension for families struggling to pay bills, that why don't we just extend it to January 1, 2027? We all save some time.

Manitobans know with certainty, a minister who's been elected to do this, we're supposed to trust him at six months; let's extend it to 2027. On this side of the House we're all—we are for affordability measures. We want affordability for Manitobans. We want this to reflect all Manitobans. Obviously, we're not going to agree on a lot of the points we're going back and forth on, but I think this is something we can agree on. We could actually—could amend this today to go forward to 2027 with this date and we put it in the minister's hands to make those decisions going forward.

MLA Sala: We've brought forward a balanced approach here. And this is a balanced approach that, again, the core focus here is about saving Manitoba families money: \$250 over six months. This is a great opportunity for the opposition to demonstrate that they understand the challenges facing everyday families.

And, again, we're encouraging them to get on board. I know they've—they haven't demonstrated that in the past, but this is an opportunity for them to show that they understand the challenges facing everyday Manitobans.

MLA Bereza: Thank you so much, Honourable—is it Honourable Chair?

An Honourable Member: Mr. Chairperson.

MLA Bereza: Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

An Honourable Member: -person.

MLA Bereza: Mr. Chairperson, you know, I think affordability, for all of us, I think we can all agree on that that we all want to see affordability for Manitobans. But we also want to see predictability for Manitobans as well, too.

So, along with my colleague here, again, when we're talking about affordability, to look only a year out, I think we'd all like to see things change fairly dramatically in that year. But you know what? Instead of coming back to this again, let's move forward, let's put an end date that is further out so people can predict, can be prepared, can make decisions based on this affordability tax holiday that we are talking about here.

* (21:20)

Will you—through the Chair—will it—will a—through the Chair, to the minister, will you look at amending out further so that people can have proper predictability and so that, again, we can give Manitobans assurance that we are working together on this affordability act?

MLA Sala: Lots of ideas being brought forward now. We didn't see those over seven years that they were in government.

And, again, I'm inviting the members opposite to join us in bringing this measure to benefit Manitobans on January 1. They have the ability to do that. They have the opportunity here before them to support a bill that will reduce the costs of living for people living in all of their constituencies, whether they represent folks in rural, northern, urban Manitoba—every corner. Let's work together to reduce those costs.

And I really hope that they'll consider supporting this bill.

MLA Bereza: So, just a simple yes-or-no answer. We're wanting to ask for an amendment to extend this out to 2027. So that is a no, or a yes?

We heard about what we haven't done. We're trying to help with what's in the future.

Can we have an answer, yes or no?

MLA Sala: Again, I think the only question Manitobans want to know the answer to is will the opposition support the bill. Will they deliver these savings to Manitobans? That's what people want to know the answer to.

And that's up to them. We're looking forward to hopefully seeing them come on board and support the bill.

MLA Khan: So, another non-answer by the minister. I won't put words in his mouth and say it's a no; I won't put words in mouth, say it's yes, but it's another non-answer. It's clear for Manitobans watching at home, for those that will watch tomorrow, that—and Hansard—that it's a non-answer.

So I'll ask the minister again: If the minister is concerned about affordability and this act is—this amendment is supposed to be about affordability for Manitobans, will the minister amend the end date of this and push it to 2027 so that Manitobans can have certainty and affordability measures until 2027; yes or no?

MLA Sala: We're bringing forward a balanced approach. That's important. Whether or not the members of the opposition want to accept that, that is very important.

We want to ensure that we balance affordability interests with, again, broader economic concerns. This is a great opportunity to reduce costs of living.

Again, the opposition is finding, you know, a lot of reasons to say no to this bill. Manitobans want to know: will they support it?

MLA Khan: And, you know, the minister is now mixing words, and the minister is saying that—I don't even know what the minister is saying.

We have said—I'll tell you what we've said. We've said that we are for affordability. We are for tax cuts. We are for helping Manitobans.

What the minister is clearly saying is—well, he's not answering the question.

Yes or no, will the minister extend the end date of this 'til 2027 so that Manitobans can know with certainty that this tax—this gas tax will be taken off until 2027? Yes or no?

MLA Sala: We're very proud to bring forward a measure that will offer these savings for a period of at least six months. We are very proud to have been elected to government, largely on the basis that Manitobans needed relief after many years of not getting it under the past government.

This is a great measure, a six-month initial fuel tax holiday will bring real relief. And that's the message we're bringing to Manitobans, and I think

Manitobans welcome that message, because they have not been listened to for way too long.

MLA Khan: Okay, so the minister will not commit to extending this to 2027, that's clear. Affordability will not be in line by the end of this year—six months, the end of this year, and he will not commit to extending to 2027.

So does the minister aware that we're actually not sitting in the last couple weeks of January of 2024—or sorry, of December of 2024? We're not sitting January 1st of 2025. So what's the minister's plan or mechanism for extending this if we're not sitting in the House at that time?

MLA Sala: The clauses are clear about timing. I don't think we need to dig back into those clauses. And I appreciate the questions from the members opposite, but the bill is very clear about the time frame that this—that we're proposing to bring this relief during.

MLA Khan: Again, I think the minister misunderstood what I said. Maybe it's getting late. He's getting tired. I understand that this is set out for six months and then the end is January 1st, 2025.

What I'm saying is that if affordability measures are not in line for Manitobans in January 1st, 2025, I'm sure the minister is aware we're not sitting on New Year's Eve or in the last three weeks of December. How does the minister plan on extending this if we're not sitting in the House at that time?

MLA Sala: Again, the bill is clear. This is relief that the last government was not willing to bring. We're bringing it. We're bringing affordability measures forward to make life—to improve the cost of living for Manitobans. They didn't have that for years under this previous government. We're doing things differently.

MLA Bereza: So the answer is no, the minister will not change the date. Is that correct?

MLA Sala: We've been clear about what this bill seeks to achieve and the time periods during which we're proposing that it be brought in. And I don't know that there's much more to add.

MLA Khan: So it's clear the answer is no. I'll ask the minister another easy question: What is a larger number—\$500 or \$5,500?

MLA Sala: What's a much smaller number than \$500 is the zero dollars of relief on energy affordability that the last government brought forward. They did not support making life more affordable when it comes to

energy. In fact, they spent an enormous amount of effort raising energy costs on Manitobans.

And again, with all these questions and all this effort to make it appear as though they're champions of affordability, I do want to remind the members opposite that their party brought forward a piece of legislation, bill 36, that was focused explicitly on raising hydro rates, raising energy rates for Manitobans, as quickly as possible.

MLA Khan: That was a very decent sidestep, but not as good as Brady Oliveira can do with his shuffle, but a decent sidestep. But my 10-year-old son—I texted him earlier and asked him that question and said, son, what number is bigger, \$500 or \$5,500, and he said, Dad, don't be silly; of course it's \$5,500. That number is bigger.

So the minister might not know the answer to that; I'll answer it for him. Five thousand, five hundred dollars is larger than \$500. He wants to talk about affordability measures in previous governments. Our previous government here in Manitoba—11 times—that's 11 times \$500. That's what affordability measures really are.

When we get back to this bill specifically, if we're talking about affordability, I ask the minister again: If it's about affordability, and the minister believes—and I believe everyone on that side of the House and everyone in the world believes that affordability measures won't be in line by the end of this year, by January 1st, 2025, will the minister amend the act to go until 2027 or later as needed, at his discretion, because of economic conditions and predictions that he also won't share with us what those are, which will get to my third last question before we move on?

Again, will the minister amend the act to 2027 so Manitobans can have clarity of what is happening with this tax in the future?

MLA Sala: The proposal to reduce costs for Manitobans here is clear. Will the opposition support is the only question that I really—I think Manitobans want to know the answer to here. Yes or no.

MLA Khan: And it's really, really unfortunate tonight, and I don't think anyone's going to actually watch—well, actually, no; I hope people watch. I hope Manitobans watch this whole four hours and a couple of more hours to come, about the sheer reluctance and the inability of this minister and this NDP government to understand what Manitobans are saying.

* (21:30)

To understand and to listen to the words—

An Honourable Member: Point of order, towards the relevance.

Point of Order

The Chairperson: Point of order from member—or, sorry, MLA Devgan.

MLA JD Devgan (McPhillips): I feel like we're really moving away from the relevance of the clause here.

Does the member have a question direct to the minister on this?

The Chairperson: MLA Khan, on the same point of order.

MLA Khan: And I can appreciate that the members opposite want to call a point of order at every opportunity they can get, but what they might not know is that you have 10 minutes to ask the question in regards to this proceeding.

And if the member would have allowed me to continue further on, I would have got to the message, which again, this whole committee is about this tax bill amendment for affordability for Manitobans. So everything we are discussing is about affordability for Manitobans.

The member might not see that, but I believe—I don't know what the time was—but I think I was only a minute into the question, and he cut me off on the relevance or point of order, but it's all about affordability for Manitobans. The end date is relevant to the affordability for Manitobans.

The member opposite might think that affordability might—

The Chairperson: Order. Points of order are not to be used for debate.

So this is not a point of order—or, I will rule it not a point of order.

* * *

The Chairperson: But I would ask the member to keep his comments relevant to the clause.

MLA Khan: I think we're—we've made is abundantly clear that—and the minister has made it abundantly clear—that he does not want to extend this end date; that he either believes affordability will be aligned within a year, or he just doesn't want to extend the end date to make life more affordable to Manitobans.

I believe the minister is smart enough to know that affordability will not be back in line. Interest rates, inflation will not be back in a year. So the simple answer is he does not want to extend this. And if you ask yourself why doesn't he want to extend the end date, it's because it's not really about affordability. If it was about affordability, he would extend it.

Now, to the minister's point earlier, he had said in his mandate letter—so the relevance of this for the member opposite, because—probably wondering what's the mandate letter; well, the minister brought it up as a mandate letter, so there's relevance to bring up a point that the minister had alluded to earlier in this line of questioning.

And, you know, as he said, it's outlined in his mandate letter. So he has to do everything his mandate letter says, I guess, according to that logic.

So, does—the minister also going to freeze hydro rates for one year, as is outlined in his mandate letter? So I will leave that question for the minister there.

MLA Sala: I don't see any relevance with those comments to the clause at hand.

MLA Khan: I mean, the minister had referenced his mandate letter earlier. I thought I would just bring up the mandate letter, but he doesn't want to talk about the fact that his mandate letter says freeze hydro rates, and he will or won't. And maybe he won't now, even though his mandate letter says.

But his mandate letter does say that they have to bring this tax amendment forward, but they're not going to do the hydro freeze, but they want to do this when they've heard from Manitobans and they see blatantly—or clearly, that there is a ton of holes in this bill.

Again, I want to be very clear: we on this side of the House are for affordability measures for Manitobans. We are for tax cuts for Manitobans. We want to make this bill the best bill it can possibly be. That is our job. My job is to hold the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) accountable for Manitobans, to make this the best possible bill for all Manitobans.

It is sad that the minister can't see that and is digging his heels in and does not want to extend the end date on this. We have asked numerous times. He doesn't want to do it.

The motor vehicle on a roadway clause; he seems to think that boats are a motor vehicle on a runway.

It's concerning. Snowmobiles, combines, as clearly defined in The Highway Traffic Act, are not, but this minister wants to say they are. So that's the situation we're in now.

Minister won't answer the simple question of what is larger: \$5,500 of savings or \$500 of savings. I don't know. It blows my mind that you can't get a simple yes or no: \$5,500, \$500.

The minister wants to talk about living in the past, about previous governments. Well, if you want to go there, sure: \$5,500 is the average savings the previous government did, '22-23; \$500 is what this is proposing.

But we're not living in the past, we're talking about now. I want to talk about the bill now. I want to talk about making this bill better for Manitobans, which this minister refuses to acknowledge. This minister refuses to acknowledge that the end date needs to be pushed out. This minister refuses to acknowledge that motor vehicles on a roadway is a very bad definition. It's a very bad description of vehicles that are using this.

But, nonetheless, I will digress, and I will simply ask the minister one last time, and before I pass it off to my colleague for a question.

Again, I'm giving the minister another opportunity to—if this is really about affordability for Manitobans, will the minister simply extend the end date of this until January 1, 2027, to help Manitobans with affordability. Yes or no?

The Chairperson: Before I pass it off to the honourable minister, I'll just ensure that the committee knows that there's an expectation that questions aren't repeated over and over. So questions are very welcome, but the repetition of questions is very much frowned upon.

MLA Sala: I encourage the opposition to support this important affordability measure. Looking forward to seeing them vote in support.

MLA Khan: I can appreciate—thank you, Mr. Chairperson—I can appreciate that the Chairperson has cautioned not to repeat the question over and over again, but it is difficult when you don't get the answer. When you don't get a answer. When you give a yes or no answer—question, and you don't get the answer, you ask the question again and again and again, until you get an answer.

But regardless, as I said, we'll digress. The minister does not want to extend this. Minister

believes boats are on a roadway. So I believe we will now agree to disagree once again and move forward with the next question?

The Chairperson: Would minister Sala like to respond?

MLA Sala: No. No comments to that.

The Chairperson: Seeing no further questions, I will—*[interjection]*

Seeing no further questions I will call the question.

Should clause 5 pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

Some Honourable Members: No.

The Chairperson: Hearing no.

Voice Vote

The Chairperson: All those in favour of the clause 5, please say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

The Chairperson: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Clause 5 is accordingly passed.

The Chairperson: MLA Klein—or, Khan.

MLA Khan: Klein, wow. I don't know how you possibly get that one in there. *[interjection]* No, I'm not; I'm just confused, like, I'm just confused, like, generally. Like, that's like—I get, like, someone else, but that's a—sorry, I don't even know what the question was, I was so blown away.

I had my hand up.

Recorded Vote

MLA Khan: Recorded vote.

The Chairperson: A recorded vote has been requested.

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Ayes 3, Nays 2.

The Chairperson: Clause 5 is accordingly passed.

* * *

The Chairperson: Shall clause 6 pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass

Some Honourable Members: No.

The Chairperson: Hearing no, the floor is open for questions.

MLA Bereza: Temporary exemption tax holiday 12.2(c), firefighting equipment by municipality or local government district, there—does this also include Hutterite colonies, or can there be an amendment put in there to include Hutterite colonies, as they do do a number of firefighting off-colony for the safety of Manitobans.

MLA Sala: I mean, Hutterite colonies are invited to purchase clear gasoline from fuel stations, and to obtain the same benefits as are being extended to anyone in Manitoba who would be purchasing clear gas during a fuel tax holiday.

MLA Bereza: If it's as easy as that, then can we—you know, again, so it is clear for the colonies that are involved there; they're large farmers, they're large contributors to the economy, but they're also large contributors to looking after the safety of the province, especially in rural areas of Manitoba where there isn't a lot of firefighting equipment.

I would ask that we amend that to include Hutterite colonies.

MLA Sala: I appreciate the comments, and again, we—just like Hutterite colonies and their members and the families that live within those communities are welcome to go to the pump and save 14 cents a litre.

* (21:40)

We encourage them to do that, and that'll help those families like it will help all Manitoban families, should your party decide to support this bill.

MLA Khan: Just curious if, in the clause here—gasoline, diesel or natural gas—is there a reason why the minister did not include propane?

MLA Sala: Yes, I appreciate that question. And I did speak to this in the media. The concern is that propane has uses far outside the use of transportation, and there's significant usage in heating and a variety of other purposes.

My understanding is that for the purposes of transportation, is a very small percentage of overall propane use is used for transportation purposes. And again, it's—I think there's real concerns about the risks of this—of propane being used for purposes outside the focus, the goals of this bill, which is ultimately to improve the affordability of living for Manitobans.

MLA Khan: And I can actually somewhat agree with that answer that the minister gave there, so we are

moving forward. But the question regards to propane, is the minister aware of the mechanism of how people actually fill up their cars with propane at the propane tank—or, propane station, sorry?

MLA Sala: No, I—again, I appreciate the questions from the members opposite. It's getting late in the evening and we're kind of going in circles here. And I just want to ask the members if they're going to support this bill or not?

MLA Khan: You know, the minister had said earlier, we're going to be here all night, or 'til midnight, and I'm—we're happy to be here. I—it's an honour for me to be elected and represent Manitobans and to debate this all night. If the minister wants to go home early, then I mean, the minister can ask to go home early if he wants, if he believes it's late. I'm more than happy to stay here 'til midnight or 'til whenever to have all these issues heard. So if the minister wants to go home early, I mean, I guess I can leave that up to the minister to answer that.

Does the minister want to go home early? *[interjection]* It's not about—I don't know, he asked me, I don't know. Okay, all right. Okay, so the minister says he doesn't want to answer the question on propane. So I'll get back to the question.

And I can appreciate that propane is used in other—heating homes, maybe. But the question was, is the minister aware of the actual mechanism of how vehicles are filled up with propane, yes or no?

MLA Sala: We've brought forward a bill that we feel ensures that Manitobans—everyday Manitobans—are going to benefit significantly. They're going to see huge savings from this bill. We invite the opposition to get on board.

MLA Bereza: Just to explain to everybody in the room here how the mechanism works for filling up a vehicle versus home heating that we might be referring to here: home heating is if there's a tank outside of your home that is put in there. You cannot fill your vehicle from that home fuel tank.

In order to fill up with propane, there has to be—it's at a gas station or, in the case of Brandon School Division, that has 34 busses that are operating on propane, it's a completely different mechanism. So there is no opportunity for somebody to be using the propane that might be heating their house versus putting in a vehicle.

So my question here again is, do you under the—understand the mechanism of that, and will propane

be included in this, or in the—could this be amended to include propane? Again, if we are talking about the affordability for Manitobans, then we are looking at propane as a fuel for a vehicle. And it's—one place that it's very evident is the Brandon School Division.

MLA Sala: Yes, we've brought forward a bill here that accounts for the, you know, the vast majority of fuel usage in this province. This bill is a great bill that will reduce the costs of living for Manitobans. I don't know if the member knows, personally, anyone that drives a vehicle that's fuelled by propane. I personally have not had occasion to, so I assume this is a very small number of folks in this province.

There are complexities involved in including propane, and again, we've ensured that this bill will provide benefits to Manitobans every time they go to the pump, 14 cents a litre. We hope the opposition signs up to support that.

MLA Bereza: Again, we're here tonight. I think it's been very clear we're all concerned about affordability of Manitobans. Yes I do know a number of people that operate propane vehicles. If you like, I could give you their names and their plate numbers on that.

But where it is very clear is, again, if we are talking about affordability for all Manitobans, the Brandon School Division has decided to change their fleet to propane. So how do we explain to them that they're going to be—that they are not going to be able to take advantage of this program?

Thank you, Chair.

MLA Sala: Again, appreciate the comments. This is a great bill. It's a great bill that will save Manitobans money across the province. This is to support the reduction of costs for families in this province. It's to reduce the cost of living for families. Whether that's the family of a farmer, whether that's a northern family, whether that's an urban family, that's what this bill is seeking to do, to reduce the cost of living for families.

MLA Khan: So we can clearly see that the minister is now getting a little bit tired; it's late; we all might be a little bit tired, but now the minister's just completely not even answering the questions or coming remotely close to answering the questions and dealing with what we're bringing forward. He keeps repeating over the same thing, that he hopes that we are going to support this and that we're on the side of affordability. And I've said a hundred times in the last couple of months, we are in favour of tax cuts. We are a party that is favour of making life more affordable. That is

evident by the 11 times savings that the previous government did last year: \$5,500 into the average home versus this proposed \$500 in savings.

Now, regardless of that, the minister is just simply not even answering the questions anymore. So we're going to keep going though, because that's our job. This bill covers fuel purchased for use in operating three—for operating in three specific-use cases. However, there's nothing about off-road vehicles. There's nothing about agricultural machinery. There's nothing about recreational maintenance vehicles. This bill is simply not clear. This bill is rushed.

Now, the minister wants to say, oh, just go to the gas station; you'll get 14 cents off. This bill is not clear. Presenters have showed that. We have voiced that concern. The public has said it. If his intent is really what he says it is, then why won't he let the bill simply reflect his words and make a few amendments? I don't understand why the minister has dug his heels in so much that he simply just won't amend the bill to reflect the words of what Manitobans are asking for.

MLA Sala: I didn't hear a question there.

MLA Khan: Do you want me to repeat the question now, Mr. Chairperson? Would you like me to repeat the question? Okay, all right, I'll repeat the question again. I'm going to try to go—so, it is—I know the questions are kind of blurring together now. So I might have to go back two questions here. But say, you know, the minister's just not even answering questions anymore. He just keeps using the same talking points over and over again, it's more affordability, it's a good bill, we want to do this, this.

And we are the party of tax cuts. We are for tax cuts. We are for making life more affordable. This minister has said \$500 is what this bill is going to save. We saved over \$5,500 for average Manitobans last year. Five hundred, \$5,500.

So this minister now is saying, oh, we don't need to amend the words; it's the intent of the bill. Words matter. This bill clearly does not reflect the intent of what it's intended for. He refuses to add propane for some reason. He wants to punish Brandon School Division for switching their fleet. He wants to punish the people who are driving propane tanks. Now, he might not know anyone that have propane vehicles; he might not know anyone that drives propane, but that doesn't matter; people do. I know some people. My colleagues know some people. I'm sure some people on other side know some people that drive vehicles.

He's punishing them. Why? I don't understand. It's a simple addition to this: add propane in here.

So will the minister add propane to the temporary exemption tax holiday, clause 12.2?

MLA Sala: The bill clearly outlines the fuels we're proposing to include. I suggest the opposition get on board with the bill.

* (21:50)

And if I could add, it would be—I think it would be advisable that, given it seems we're going to be here for a while longer, if we could take a 10-minute recess for everyone to just maybe have time and do whatever it is they need to do. I would ask if that's possible or if there's support for that.

The Chairperson: Is there leave for a 10-minute recess? *[Agreed]*

The committee will recess for 10 minutes.

The committee recessed at 9:50 p.m.

The committee resumed at 10:05 p.m.

The Chairperson: The committee's back in session. Will the committee please come to order. The committee is back in session. We'll resume on questions for clause 6.

Are there any more questions for clause 6?

MLA Khan: It was nice to take a little break and get back at debating this very important bill for Manitobans and affordability for all Manitobans.

So we left off on really the specifics on the type of gasoline that this will—this bill will cover, and the minister's made it pretty clear that he's not willing to amend the act to add in propane, even though the mechanism for dispensing propane for vehicle or transport is very different and that that mechanism can't really be used for houses. He's made it clear that he is willing to punish the Brandon school board by not allowing them to have this tax—gas tax exemption.

You know, he's made it clear that, apparently, a motor vehicle on a roadway, as in this act—as in this clause here—can be defined as a boat or a snowmobile.

He's made it clear in this 12.2 section (b) that a motor vehicle, right, a farm truck that, you know, a combine or a tractor or an aerator or swather can just pull up to the gas station and they'll get it, which, you know, transitions me into my next point, which is, you

know, it's really unfortunate the minister won't add propane to this.

I don't know why he's got his heels so dug in that he's just unwilling to amend anything. But, you never know. We'll see what happens. To take his words, we're beating a horse. Horse is going to live until third reading and hopefully at third reading this horse will rise from the ashes and carry—I don't know—it's tired—it's late.

Let's talk about some dyed gas, marked fuel. The minister made a comment in the media where he said that if the farmers want to take advantage of marked fuel then they can. Sorry—if the farmers want to take advantage of this tax break then they can do that, and that the farmers should just pull up to the gas station and then take advantage of this proposed 14 cent tax cut.

The question for the minister is: Had he ever heard of marked fuel before he brought this bill forward? It's a simple question. Had he ever heard of marked fuel or dyed fuel?

MLA Sala: Appreciate the question and can share just briefly that my family on my mother's side are all from Dauphin, Manitoba, and we run—the family runs a century farm out there, and I know that I can remember the sort of fuel tanks on my grandfather—now my uncle's—property, and they certainly had marked fuel there. So I am definitely familiar with marked fuel.

And you know, again, the—back to the other comment that was made by the member opposite. We're not in the business here of directing anyone to do anything. Should farmers, the families of farmers, want to benefit from a 14 cent reduction on clear fuel, they're encouraged to do so. That's up to them. They'll make those decisions.

It's a great opportunity to lower their cost of living and that is going to, hopefully, be a benefit that we'll be able to bring to all Manitobans. And my hope, again, is that the opposition here will support this bill, this important bill.

What's becoming clear here is that it seems as though we're seeing evidence that they're seeking to filibuster this bill and to stop this bill from moving forward. They have voted on the record now, tonight, on several occasions, against clauses that support bringing this affordability measure to Manitobans.

So, I think it's important that they recognize now that on multiple occasions tonight they've voted against

clauses that will bring those cost reductions to support Manitobans. I hope that they decide to support this bill. The evidence, or what we're seeing so far is that it seems like they don't want to support it. That's concerning.

MLA Bereza: Mr. Chairperson, thank you for the opportunity to do that.

I can assure you that the reason we're asking these questions is because we're not understanding this bill in places. We're looking for clarity on it.

* (22:10)

And one of the questions that I do have to ask, too, is: What does the minister say to the Brandon School Division, whose new propane-fuelled buses won't see a tax saving?

They're doing the right thing by pursuing low-carbon alternatives. Why are they being punished?

MLA Sala: You know, school divisions and municipalities across this province will benefit significantly from this reduction in the fuel tax on clear gas. This will bring benefits to municipalities and school divisions across the province.

MLA Khan: I just want to go back to a comment the minister made, and then we're going to move on, next question.

You know, he accuses us of filibustering the bill. I would actually accuse us of going through the democratic process. That's what we're doing here. And if the minister takes objection to the democratic process, then maybe he shouldn't bring a bill forward with this many holes. If the minister doesn't want to sit late into the night, and he wants to go home, as he's alluded to, that he's tired, then the minister is free to do that.

This isn't filibustering. This is a healthy, democratic debate of concerns from Manitobans. And the minister wants to dismiss them with simple answers and saying, oh, we've already talked about this, oh, we've already talked about this, and in reality, he hasn't. He hasn't answered any of the questions.

We're bringing concerns from Manitobans. We're voting against clauses because we fundamentally disagree with the way the clauses are worded. And the definitions are not correct, as were demonstrated by speakers tonight. As—plain logic would let you understand that this wording needs to be amended.

And we've said repeatedly on the record that we are for tax cuts, we are for affordability measures, and for the minister to just assume and to fearmonger that

we're heading the direction that he doesn't know, is actually a disservice to Manitobans and the democratic process.

So, again, if he wants to accuse of filibustering, then maybe he's in the wrong line of work. But if you ask me, I think we're actually paying a real service to the democratic process of what we're doing here tonight, and that is discussing committee for this bill.

Now, in regards to this specifically: dyed gas, marked fuel. So, the minister again just said that farmers and—if they want to take advantage of the 14 cents, then they can go get clearer—clear gas. Great. You're right. They can.

But does the minister know that when that farmer does that—and as he alluded to in the newspaper twice, which I will have for my next question—that they can just go get clear gas.

Does he know that—is he aware that when he said that, that they would then be giving up the federal carbon tax—the NDP-Liberal federal carbon tax that is making life more unaffordable for all Canadians? Was he aware that when he said farmers should just go get clear gas, that they would then be giving up that 14 cents? And on April 1st, when this bill, the six months is over, so around around April 1st, the carbon tax will go up to 18 cents?

And I know the minister had problems with simple math questions earlier—5,500, 500; what's greater. Well, 18 cents is more than 14 cents.

So, simple question: Was the minister aware that when he had suggested—or he had said this is an option for farmers to go, that he was actually going to be—end up—if the farmer did take his advice, you know, you'd think the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) would advise Manitobans of the best way—financial literacy was addressed this week in the Chamber—for Manitobans to—the best way for affordability measures that when he said that, he was actually proposing to farmers that they would end up paying more money—11 cents more on their tax because there'd be giving up the federal carbon tax exemption, but they could take advantage of the 3 cents that this minister is offering.

MLA Sala: It's a lot of words there. I'm going to ask the member to restate the question.

MLA Khan: I'll simplify the question.

Was the Minister of Finance aware that when he said that farmers can get clear gas and suggested and encouraged them to take advantage of that, that he was

actually telling farmers if they did that, they would be paying 11 cents more by going that route?

MLA Sala: Appreciate the question.

And, you know, what we're saying, and what we're being clear about, is that if you're a Manitoban and you want to save 14 cents a litre on clear gas, this bill will allow you to do that.

Again, but it will only allow us to do that if the opposition supports it. So far, we're seeing this opposition party voting against clause after clause, here. Showing that they're—there are a lot of signs that they're not looking to support this bill to bring these savings to Manitobans.

Seeing a lot of evidence of filibustering, talk about, you know, they want to be here endlessly. That's fine; we're going to continue to do that work.

I will say, too, on an important note, I'm hearing the member, sort of, devolve into schoolyard-type accusations about math skills, et cetera. And I would ask him to show respect and be respectful here. And I think that's what Manitobans want to see out of their legislators, and I encourage him to do that.

MLA Khan: As the Minister of Finance, there is—I can only imagine the responsibility that is put on his shoulders to deal with affordability measures for Manitobans. And it's a big job, and this is a big bill.

The questions that we're asking on this side are not for filibustering purposes. I want to be very clear: they are for clarification purposes and understanding of the bill to help all Manitobans. Now, when the minister said—and I quote, on CBC, November 27—what we're saying is all clear gasoline in this province—which farmers can use, are welcome to use, and we encourage them to use, should we be able to bring this measure—will see a reduction from 14 cents to zero cents.

But the minister conveniently left out that if they're to do that, they would then be paying the 14 cents of the federal carbon tax. So my question to the minister is, when he made this comment on November 27, was he aware that—when he said this—that the farmers, if they took his advice, would then be paying 14 more cents for the federal carbon tax?

MLA Sala: I want to thank the member opposite for giving me another opportunity to talk about how much money this bill will save for the families of farmers who have to drive, in many cases more than anyone else in this province. So if you're a, you know, a farmer and you've got to drive into town to get

groceries or you've got to drive into town to go to school or to work, or you're the family of a farmer, son, daughter, wife, family member of any kind, you will save big as a result of this.

So this bill is particularly great for rural and northern Manitobans, especially for families of—farmers and their families.

MLA Bereza: Again, I want to make it clear that, again, we can talk about filibustering; this is not about filibustering. This is about helping Manitobans to know what's exempt, what's not exempt, what works, what doesn't work.

Under 12.2(c), regarding it again—I'm going to go back to this again—you've included here firefighting equipment by municipalities or local government districts. I have eight Hutterite colonies in my constituency that I've visited. Will you amend and include in there Hutterite colonies—

An Honourable Member: Point of order.

MLA Bereza: —also, here, because in this situation—

Point of Order

The Chairperson: A point of order has been called by MLA Devgan.

MLA Devgan: I believe this question has been asked and answered. [*interjection*] But to the point of repetition of questions, almost verbatim.

MLA Bereza: The reason why I'm asking it is I feel a—the relevance of it, and again, it goes towards, again, are we treating somebody else like a second-class citizen? The question wasn't answered, and all's I'm looking for is an answer of can we, for safety reasons, also to let the colonies know that they're important to us as any other firefighting group is or any other municipality, because they are contributing to our economy, they're—in contributing to our safety by fighting fires in our—

An Honourable Member: Point of order.

MLA Bereza: —municipal—in our municipality.

* (22:20)

The Chairperson: So, we can't consider another point of order during a point of order.

An Honourable Member: Just for clarification, earlier you said we cannot debate on a point of order, as well. Sounds like a debate.

The Chairperson: Could MLA Bereza please keep his comments specific to whether this is a point of order or not.

MLA Bereza: I believe it's not a point of order, as the question was not answered.

The Chairperson: So, I will rule that it is not a point of order, because the comments are relevant to the clause.

* * *

The Chairperson: But, I will ask MLA Bereza to ensure that he is not repeating questions, because we are getting very close to that.

MLA Bereza: I have a number of Hutterite colonies in my municipality, and I want to make sure that, when we're talking about this clause of 12.2(c), that we are looking at not only the economic fairness within the province, but also making sure that they are able to fight fires, that they can at the same time.

So, will the minister amend this to include Hutterite colonies, 12.2(c)?

The Chairperson: Okay, so, for the last time, this question will be asked to the Honourable Minister Sala.

MLA Sala: I'm not sure where there's a lack of clarity here in that what we've said with—I think, repeatedly this evening is that all Manitobans who go to the fuel pump will save 14 cents a litre. Doesn't matter if they're from a Hutterite community. Doesn't matter which community they originate from. If you go to the fuel pump, you will save the 14 cents a litre.

And we encourage all Manitobans, again, should we be able to pass this bill, and I'm seeing—Manitobans are seeing—that it's looking as though there's an interest in filibustering and stopping this from going forward. Manitobans will see those savings should your party decide to support this bill.

MLA Khan: You know, as the minister alluded earlier to the comments on math, literacy—or, financial 'literasly', respectfully, I take those comments and I hear him. And I would kindly ask him to reflect on those same comments when he keeps referring to filibustering.

There's a democratic process here. We have an hour and thirty-six minutes still, until the night is over. I would appreciate if the minister engaged in that hour and thirty-six minutes instead of just repeating and filibustering. We're here 'til—we have here 'til midnight, let's see this through and let's have some good,

healthy debate. As the minister makes requests of us, we go back at that.

To get the question here on motor vehicles in still the clause on 12.2, registered as a farm truck. So, the minister has said on the record that farmers can take advantage of this, that they can fill up their 'trucktors', their tractors, their combines, their vehicles, their equipment.

How does the minister propose that the farmers actually do take advantage of this with their tractors and combines and equipment on the farm that he claims. Are they just supposed to pull up to the Esso station and fill up their tractor?

MLA Sala: I think—I'm not a farmer—but I believe almost all the agricultural equipment that was just referenced by the member opposite would be the type of equipment that would operate with diesel. Marked diesel, likely, which is—currently does not have any type of fuel tax applied to it. So, I fail to understand the relevance of the question.

MLA Khan: So, just want to be clear on this again. The minister is saying that—we are requesting to make an amendment to the act that the minister add propane to this. And this has been discussed wholesomely, fulsome, that the mechanism for dispensing propane to vehicles, as this bill is intended for vehicles, is very different than the mechanism for propane for heating homes and equipment, that we asked the minister to make an amendment to include propane for a motor vehicle on a roadway.

Will the minister make that amendment?

The Chairperson: Okay, last time for that question.

MLA Sala: If the member opposite has a proposed amendment to this clause, they're welcome to bring that forward here instead of just continuously asking about it. Can't bring forward any type of amendment?

MLA Khan: And I can respect and appreciate where this is, generally respectfully, that the minister is in a new role in the government and we're in a new role in opposition, but from what I've been reading is that opposition cannot bring forward amendments to a money bill.

The money bill, that involves money, that would have to be an amendment that is done from the government's side. I may be mistaken on that, so maybe look at some clarification from the minister or the 18 people he has on his side. *[interjection]*

I am right? Okay. So I am correct. Oh, sorry. I thought that was the question. I mean, that was the question and then so I asked for clarification from the minister. I know you answered it, but maybe the minister can add some more. *[interjection]*

Oh, okay. So the question would be then—thank you, Mr. Chairperson—the question would then be in the

The Chairperson: Sorry, MLA Khan.

MLA Khan: Thank you. So, as we've now covered that, Mr. Chairperson, the minister had asked previously that he'd welcome an amendment proposed by us. On this side is that we cannot bring those forward. It's for the minister.

We can voice those, we can discuss those, we can bring them up. That is for the minister, as he's in government, to bring it forward because it's a money bill—but, it's a money-spending bill so only government can do that. Opposition can't bring that forward.

So, if that was the question that was from the minister then, we would ask for amendments to be that the bill be amended: that the tax holiday, meaning the period from January 1, 2024, be—and ending at date prescribed by regulation, we would strike out before January 1, 2025 and must—would strike out 2025; 31.1 striking which must be done January 1, 2025.

Amendment 2: we repose replacing 12.2 with operator exemption and no taxes payable by the buyer of gasoline, diesel or natural gas, including all marked and specialty fuel.

And amendment 3 would be, bill be amended as follows, a new section at the end: home heating carbon tax relief. The Minister of Finance shall instruct Manitoba Hydro to not collect the federal carbon tax for the duration of any tax holiday date.

So, those are the amendments we bring forward. The minister asked if we want to bring amendments forward. Those are the three amendments that we propose to bring forward: to remove the end date of this proposed bill; to include no taxes on any fuel—gasoline, diesel, natural gas—including all marked and specialty fuel; and to the Minister of Finance to instruct Manitoba Hydro to not collect federal carbon tax for the duration of any tax holiday.

Those are the amendments we bring forward since the minister asked for us to bring amendments forward, that's what we're bringing forward for affordability for Manitobans, so that Manitobans

know what is happening in a time of uncertainty, that we bring this forward to the minister.

* (22:30)

The Chairperson: So, just to clarify for all committee members, the suggestions put forward by MLA Khan are just that, suggestions. They are not official amendments, but minister Sala is welcome to respond if he would like.

MLA Sala: Appreciate what the members of the opposition have brought forward, and again, we're proud to have brought forward a bill that will have a huge impact on a massive number of Manitobans.

I hope that the opposition will support to bring this relief to Manitobans in every corner of the province.

The Chairperson: Are there any more questions?

I'll call—I'm going to call the question.

Shall clause 6 pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

The Chairperson: All those in favour of clause 6, please say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

The Chairperson: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Clause 6 is accordingly passed.

Recorded Vote

MLA Khan: Recorded vote, Mr. Chairperson, please.

The Chairperson: A recorded vote has been requested.

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Ayes 3, Nays 2.

The Chairperson: Clause 6 is accordingly passed.

* * *

The Chairperson: Should clause 7 pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

An Honourable Member: No.

The Chairperson: I hear a no. The floor is open to debate.

MLA Khan: I have a, Mr. Chairperson, just a clarifying question maybe so we don't run into the same problem that we ran into the first one.

In this one here there's a clause 7(1) and 7(2). Are we discussing 7-1 and 7(2), or is 7(1) separate and 7(2) is separate?

The Chairperson: They are together.

So we are discussing 7(1) and 7(2).

MLA Khan: So in reading this clause here, maybe the minister can add some clarity on—this is obviously to deal with tax paying regulations from the seller or the buyer. Could maybe the minister add some light into the actual mechanism by which the vendor would pass the tax savings on to the customer? Or the vendor would remit the payments to the province if needed to for the tax?

MLA Sala: I'm just thinking I have to consult here.

So this—these clauses are to provide clarity on how we'll deal with situations where a retailer, for example, has an amount of fuel in a tank in advance of the law coming into effect, and we want to ensure that, on both ends, at the front end, before this comes in, that if a retailer has gas in their tanks that they've paid tax for, that then—they're then retailing without a tax on it, that they're made whole there and visa versa on the other end.

Whenever this measure is sunsetted, we're going to have retailers who are going to have gas in their tanks that they will not have paid tax for, that then they'll be retailing with a tax applied. The mechanism for collecting and for making retailers whole will be the Manitoba Finance tax C-E-S system. So it's a digital system, and my understanding is that it should be very simple for retailers to use.

MLA Khan: Thank you very much to the minister for adding clarification on that, that it is a little confusing in the wording there. So just to be clear again, just to reiterate what I understand is, retailer has a 100-gallon tank of fuel. Let's say there's 50 gallons of tank in there by January 1st. Then it gets filled up another 50 gallons. These clauses—and vice versa, same thing on December 31st, 2024, 50-50, 50 gallons are gone and left, that there would be a mechanism for there to charge the tax or not charge the tax accordingly, according to the bill. Is that correct, from what I understand the minister's saying.

MLA Sala: It's to make the retailers whole. So they'll have paid tax on that fuel in those tanks. When they

sell it, they won't be able to recoup that, and we don't want them to be out those dollars.

MLA Khan: Would that be a self-reported amount left in their reservoirs or will there be a process in which an audit will be done to determine how much fuel is left in—especially the larger—you can imagine these larger distributors of gasoline.

MLA Sala: Yes, I appreciate the question. So all retailers will be required to measure their fuel stocks in advance of December 31st or on December 31st, again, should he pass this—decide to help support this bill. And then those larger retailers will be verified.

MLA Bereza: Sorry. It wasn't—I wasn't having a stroke there.

Question being, is we know that a lot of the gas companies deal with companies like FCL, UFA and that, that have major distribution points.

* (22:40)

Is there a mechanism in place to make sure that that fuel that's going into FCL or that's at FCL. Is there a way—a mechanism of knowing what's going to Manitoba, what's going to Saskatchewan and what's going to Alberta?

Like, will they define what's in their tanks that are going to Manitoba? That's my question.

An Honourable Member: Could I just respectfully—point of order.

Point of Order

The Chairperson: MLA Devgan, on a point of order.

MLA Devgan: Respectfully, I'm unclear as to the relevance to the actual clause there. Maybe if the member could clarify.

The Chairperson: Would MLA Bereza like to respond to the point of order on relevance?

MLA Bereza: On relevance of that. So, again, the reason I was asking that question was to determine if somebody is moving gas into Saskatchewan—or sorry—moving gas from Saskatchewan to Manitoba from a place like an FCL or a UFA, is there a mechanism in place to make sure that somebody isn't overstating or understating what they have in that tank, according to clause 7.

The Chairperson: I would say it's not a point of order.

* * *

The Chairperson: And the second version of the question helped me understand the relevance.

An Honourable Member: Point of order.

Point of Order

The Chairperson: MLA Khan.

MLA Khan: I'd like to call a point of order to the members opposite. I understand that this is a learning process and that we're trying to go—oh, thank you, Mr. Chairperson—I understand it's a learning process and we're trying to go through. This is five point of orders now being called by members opposite and all five have been ruled as not a point of order.

There is a 10-minute clock for us to ask questions in regards to this. Every point of order has been ruled against them as not a point of order.

So, I'd caution—or, I'd ask the Chairperson to direct members opposite—or, point of order on not points of order. How about that? There you go.

The Chairperson: So, I will rule that—I will—*[interjection]*

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Chairperson: Order. I'll use the mallet. I'll rule that point of order out of order, in that there's no limit on the amount of points of order people can call, and there's been no breach of the rules. Yes.

* * *

The Chairperson: Let's all listen to the minister, honourable Minister Sala.

MLA Sala: Just in response to the question from Member Bereza: FCL and larger retailers like that, the destination of their fuel is tracked and reported.

An Honourable Member: Thank you.

MLA Sala: Your welcome.

The Chairperson: Any further questions?

Seeing none, should clause 7 pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

The Chairperson: All those in favour of clause 7, please say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

The Chairperson: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Clause 7 is accordingly passed.

* * *

The Chairperson: Should clause 8 pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

An Honourable Member: No.

The Chairperson: I hear a no. The floor is open to debate.

MLA Khan: In regards to clause 8, section 31.1, Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations fixing the day on which the tax holiday ends, which must be before January 1, 2025.

Again, this question goes back to a previous conversation we had, but this is in reference to the Lieutenant Governor now making regulations.

So does—is this stating that the Lieutenant Governor now is also bound by this to make the last day of the holiday January 1, 2025?

MLA Sala: What this references is that those regulation changes would be made by Cabinet OIC.

MLA Khan: Thank you, minister, for that clarification. Nice and simple for an answer. Thank you.

January 1, 2025: is there a reason why this one—this date—was selected here as well?

MLA Sala: I'd ask for the Chair to just maybe offer an opinion as to whether or not this is again repeating a question that was asked about 50 times earlier this evening.

The Chairperson: So, because it is relevant to the new clause, it is in order to ask it. Repetition of this question within the clause would be frowned upon.

MLA Sala: Thank you so much, Mr. Chair. I will add you are doing a fabulous job managing this evening.

You know, again, back to this question about the timeline. We've been very clear. We're bringing forward a six-month fuel tax holiday to save Manitobans \$250, an average family, \$250.

We will determine, as we get closer to that six-month date, whether or not there are—whether we need to extend that tax holiday, and we're excited to bring this measure to Manitobans. We're excited to help them save money.

And, again, we've seen a lot of evidence tonight that the opposition is looking at just—vote against

every single clause in this bill, a bill that is focused on reducing the cost of living for Manitobans, Mr. Chair.

That's a concern. Will they support it? Yes or no.

MLA Khan: Mr. Chairperson and Minister of Finance, there's still two clauses left, so I don't know if that statement is 100 per cent accurate. We've got to see what happens until the strike of midnight. So let's not dot the I's and cross the T's just yet. We'll see what happens the last two.

In regards to fixing the date on which the tax holiday ends, which must be before January 1st, 2025, can the minister elaborate on what type of economic conditions would be required to either extend—yes, to extend this gas tax amendment.

What would economic conditions be for that?

MLA Sala: I thought that the member was part of the conversation earlier where we discussed this question multiple times. And again I'll state it again for his benefit here. Depending on the direction of inflation and what we're seeing happening in terms of the cost of living for Manitobans, we'll make a determination as we get close to that six-month date.

MLA Khan: Does the minister have any benchmarks or metrics that he is looking for to determine the direction of inflation, interest rates, and what not, or is this just at his whim to decide how he feels that morning?

MLA Sala: It is, as we said earlier, it's discretionary. We'll be looking at those indicators that will tell the tale of the struggles that Manitobans are facing, again, as we get closer to that six-month date.

We spent years with a government that was not focused on improving affordability for regular Manitobans. Those times have changed. We've got a new government and we're here to make life better, and that's exactly what this bill does.

We want to see them support it, and I—hopefully we're going to see them extend that support so that they can show Manitobans that they actually understand the challenges that they're facing.

MLA Khan: So the minister has said, again, repeatedly, that—discretionary—so does he have any number at all? Is there any number at all that he's looking for in inflation, interest rates, anything at all that's benchmarked for whether it be the six month ability for him to extend this, or would it be for the—in a year, January 1, 2025? Any number at all, or is this just completely discretionary at the minister's whim?

MLA Sala: So, again, we are going to be looking at those indicators that will speak to the challenges that Manitobans are facing and we'll make that determination as we get closer to that six-month mark.

* (22:50)

MLA Khan: Can the minister please elaborate on what some of those indicators might be?

I don't need the number of what they might be—he's made it clear that we don't know what those numbers are, that there's—there is no number that he has set, but what are some indicators he's looking for?

MLA Sala: Well, there'd be any number of important indicators that we'll be looking to. Inflation, statistics Manitoba, CPI.

There's a number of data points that will tell the tale of the challenges Manitobans are facing, and as we get closer to that six-month mark we'll be using that information, and we'll make a determination as we get close to that date.

MLA Khan: So, I think we're coming up to a conclusion here pretty shortly, just a few closing questions.

Will the minister share those indicators with Manitoba on what—the indicators he's looking for and what those numbers are?

An Honourable Member: Point of order.

Point of Order

The Chairperson: Point of order, from member Devgan.

MLA Devgan: I believe this is the same question again. He's asking for the same indicators.

I believe the minister has answered that question repeatedly. It's the same question.

The Chairperson: Would the MLA like to respond?

MLA Khan: Sure—yes I would, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson: MLA Khan.

MLA Khan: Respectfully—thank you, Mr. Chairperson—respectfully to the member opposite, I understand he is new, but the Chair did rule earlier that this is a new clause, so you are allowed to ask the questions and—member opposite might actually know that I never actually specifically asked for the indicators, and if the minister would be sharing that with the public.

I never asked the minister if he'll be sharing that, so this is a new question. Regardless, it's on a

completely new clause, which the Chair has already ruled was allowed.

The Chairperson: Okay, so I will rule the point of order out of order because it is relevant to the clause.

* * *

The Chairperson: However, the question is getting wildly close to repetition, so we would ask for the next question to be on a different topic of some kind.

I think we're—*[interjection]*

MLA Khan.

MLA Khan: The question was, specific to this, so: Will the minister share with Manitobans what indicators he's specifically looking for as we approach closer to the six month—of the year and what those targets or numbers are?

MLA Sala: Yes, what I'm very happy to share is that we're going to be keeping a close eye on those indicators of cost of living for Manitobans. And should we make the decision that we're going to need to extend this, as we get close to that six-month mark, that's exactly what we'll do.

And, you know, this is—I understand it's an important point, and that the members opposite want to continue focusing on, here. But I'll say it as many times as needed: we will be looking at those important indicators that will tell us the story of the cost-of-living challenges that Manitobans are facing, and we'll make a determination at that point.

MLA Khan: Just one last one, and—just want to make sure that—just to clarify that the minister will share that story with us, of indicators.

MLA Sala: I think, you know, what we want to know here is will they vote for the bill? Are they going to vote for the bill, yes or no? It's that simple.

And again, tonight we're seeing a lot of evidence that they are not wanting to support this important affordability measure. Will they support it?

The Chairperson: Seeing—MLA Khan. Yes? Yes.

MLA Khan: We still have an hour and six minutes to go until this convenes, here, so we're going to try to repeat some of the—I'm just teasing.

You know, as the minister has said that, you know, this bill was designed for, really, affordability for Manitobans. This was put forward for a fuel tax savings to be passed on to all Manitobans, to make life more affordable for Manitoba.

Now, we can—it seems that we can agree to disagree on the mechanism and the bill and the wording on how this is done.

We've had presenters come through tonight to discuss this, to discuss how this impacts them and their industries or their community, and now we are in the final stages of committee for this bill here.

I would again bring forward that, since we are not government and this is a money bill, that we cannot bring amendments forward, but I will bring a suggestion forward to the minister, that the minister does look at and listen to what Manitobans have said, and that we kindly and respectfully—if this is done for affordability for Manitobans, that we would ask that the timeline on this looks to be extended.

The minister has agreed that inflation and cost of living is probably not going to come down in a year, maybe two. Extend it, so we don't have to go through this process again. The minister is entrusted by the people of Manitoba, and his duty here with the title of Minister of Finance to make the decision. Extend it for a few years.

Also, make the gas available for everyone. All types of gas. These are amendments—suggestions we bring forward for affordability measure as this bill—because I'll come back to that, because I know you're going to answer that—so come back to the bill here on tax amendment, fuel tax amendment and affordability for Manitobans, that we include the carbon tax.

I would suggest that the minister reconsider and put the carbon tax in here, to remove the carbon tax on Manitobans, on heating homes.

These are the suggestions that we bring forward to hold this government accountable to the people of Manitoba. That is our job. Some people might not like the way and process in which it was done and have questions and what our duty is. But the duty of opposition is to hold government accountable.

It's His Majesty the King and the people of Manitoba. I believe we've done that forward, we've done that tonight, with strong, valid arguments and points in this democratic process, so hopefully the minister can take those points back and look at what's best for Manitobans and make the required amendments.

I believe now I bring the question forward for clause 8.

The Chairperson: So, Minister Sala is welcome to respond.

MLA Sala: I just want to say I appreciate the questions brought forward by the opposition. I'm glad we had an opportunity to have this important discussion here at committee tonight. It was great to hear presenters talk about their concerns, their feelings about the bill. And let's work together to bring these savings to Manitobans.

So, hopefully we'll see the opposition support this bill, and we're looking forward to continuing to make life more affordable for everyone in this province.

MLA Khan: We were going for six hours, I'm just going to ask one last question.

So, the last question is, to the minister is: Will the minister consider the suggestions/amendments that we have brought forward, and that many of the presenters have brought forward for its consideration in this bill?

MLA Sala: Yes, we appreciate the concerns brought forward, and the recommendations and again, we look forward to bringing forward these savings to Manitobans every time they head to the pump.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: Seeing no other questions, we'll call the question: Clause 8—pass; clause 9—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

The hour being 10:59, what is the will of the committee?

Some Honourable Members: Adjourn.

The Chairperson: Committee rise.

COMMITTEE ROSE AT: 10:59 p.m.

WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

Re: Bill 3

Manitoba Beef Producers (MBP) thanks the members of the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development for the opportunity to provide some written comments regarding Bill 3 - The Fuel Tax Amendment Act (Fuel Tax Holiday).

MBP represents approximately 6,000 Manitoba producers, including those in the cow-calf, backgrounding and finishing sectors. Our mission is to represent all beef producers through communication, advocacy, research, and education—within the

industry and to governments, consumers and others, to improve prosperity and ensure a sustainable future for Manitoba's beef producers.

Beef production is Manitoba's single largest livestock commodity in terms of the number of individual farm operations. These farms and ranches are widely geographically dispersed across the province, reaching as far north as The Pas. The sector is an important economic driver, with cattle and calf receipts rose reaching \$688 million in 2022. Privately-owned and leased agricultural Crown lands managed by beef producers also generate considerable environmental benefits, including carbon sequestration, preservation of wetlands which help provide resilience during times of floods and droughts, and provision of biodiversity critical to a wide range of plant, animal and insect species, including endangered species.

MBP supports in principle the government's stated rationale behind Bill 3, that being to "provide direct relief to Manitoba families struggling with rising costs and is a crucial step in our government's plan to make life more affordable for all Manitobans." Affordability is a certainly top of mind issue for our producer members.

MBP appreciates the recent engagement it had with the Hon. Adrien Sala, Minister of Finance and the Hon. Ron Kostyshyn, Minister of Agriculture and their respective departmental staff about the proposed legislation and how it intersects with Manitoba's agricultural community and how various types of fuel are accessed and utilized on farms and ranches.

As noted in those discussions, MBP is respectfully seeking consideration for possible amendments to Bill 3. As drafted, dyed gasoline and propane are not listed as fuels eligible for the tax exemption. These are currently subject to a 3-cent per litre fuel tax. We ask that their potential inclusion as eligible fuels be further analyzed and considered. MBP believes such an adjustment would be beneficial to primary producers and others.

MBP again thanks you for considering this request for potential amendments to Bill 3 - The Fuel Tax Amendment Act (Fuel Tax Holiday).

Carson Callum
Manitoba Beef Producers

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

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