

Fifth Session – Forty-Second Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
Standing Committee
on
Legislative Affairs

Chairperson
Mr. Ian Wishart
Constituency of Portage la Prairie

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Second Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA
THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

Monday, April 24, 2023

TIME – 6 p.m.

LOCATION – Winnipeg, Manitoba

CHAIRPERSON – Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie)

VICE-CHAIRPERSON – Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West)

ATTENDANCE – 6 QUORUM – 4

Members of the committee present:

Hon. Messrs. Nesbitt, Smith (Lagimodière)

*Messrs. Brar, Helwer, MLA Lindsey,
Mr. Wishart*

APPEARING:

Ms. Lisa Naylor, MLA for Wolseley

Hon. Jon Gerrard, MLA for River Heights

PUBLIC PRESENTERS:

Bill 2–The Official Time Amendment Act

Benjamin McGillivray, private citizen

Bill 8–The Off-Road Trails Safety And Maintenance Act

Jason Wiebe, Snoman Inc.

Gary Hora, All Terrain Vehicle Association of Manitoba

WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS:

Bill 13–The Wildlife Amendment Act

Chris Heald, Manitoba Wildlife Federation

Paul Conchatre, Manitoba Lodges and Outfitters Association

MATTERS UNDER CONSIDERATION:

Bill 2–The Official Time Amendment Act

Bill 8–The Off-Road Trails Safety and Maintenance Act

Bill 13–The Wildlife Amendment Act

Bill 24–The Wildfires Amendment Act

Clerk Assistant (Ms. Katerina Tefft): Good Evening. Will the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs please come to order.

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

Are there any nominations?

Hon. Andrew Smith (Minister of Municipal Relations): I nominate MLA Wishart.

Clerk Assistant: Mr. Wishart has been nominated.

Are there any other nominations?

Hearing no other nominations, Mr. Wishart is elected Chairperson. Will you please take the Chair.

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

Are there any nominations?

Mr. Smith: I nominate MLA Helwer.

Mr. Chairperson: MLA Helwer has been nominated. Are there any other nominations?

Hearing no other 'ominations', MLA Helwer is elected Vice-Chairperson.

This meeting has been called to consider the following bills: Bill 2, The Official Time Amendment Act; Bill 8, The Off-Road Trails Safety and Maintenance Act; Bill 13, The Wildlife Amendment Act; and Bill 24, The Wildfires Amendment Act.

I'd like to inform all in attendance of the provisions of our rules regarding hour of adjournment. The standing committee meeting to consider a bill will not sit past midnight to hear public presentations or to consider clause-by-clause of a bill, unless by unanimous consent of committee.

Written submissions from the following persons will be—have been received and distributed to the committee members: From Chris Heald, Manitoba Wildlife Federation, on Bill 13; Paul Concentrare [*phonetic*], sorry—Concentrare [*phonetic*], Manitoba Lodges and Outfitters Association, on Bill 13.

* * *

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

Prior to presenting to—proceeding with the public presentations, I would like to advise members of the public regarding the process for speaking in committee. In accordance with our rules, a time limit of 10 minutes has been allocated for presentations, with another five minutes allowed for questions from the committee members. Questions must not exceed 30 seconds in length, with no time limit for answers. Questions may be addressed to presenters in the following rotation: first, with 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, then 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 that person's name. This is a signal for the Hansard recorder to turn the mics on and off.

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

Bill 2—The Official Time Amendment Act

Mr. Chairperson: On Bill 2, I now call on Benjamin McGillivary, private citizen. [*interjection*]

He's online? Do we have him online? Here he is.

Okay, Mr. Benjamin McGillivary?

Benjamin McGillivary (Private Citizen): Yes. Good evening, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I thank you for the opportunity to speak with you tonight regarding Bill 2. I think it is—sorry, can everybody hear me?

Mr. Chairperson: Yes, we can hear you. Go ahead, Mr. McGillivary.

B. McGillivary: I think it is important to eliminate time change. From the news, it sounds that car accidents are more frequent around these—those times. It confuses babies, children and all of us. I also think it is important to stay with standard time. We'd be the same as Saskatchewan, and for me, it just makes more sense.

A vote is—vote for the same time failed because they want to stay with daylight saving time. I thank you for your time.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you for your presentation, Mr. McGillivary. We will have questions. I'll begin with the minister, Minister Smith.

Hon. Andrew Smith (Minister of Municipal Relations): Thank you, Mr. McGillivary, for your presentation. I appreciate that and, as you know, Bill 2 seeks to align Manitoba as a jurisdiction with United States if United States decides to adopt permanent daylight savings time. And we believe that's important because, of course, not only some of the issues you'd mentioned, we know that time change can cause some issues, and anyone who has children knows how what kind of impact that can have on their sleep patterns.

But, beyond that, as well as synchronize ourselves with the United States for the benefit of trade. So we appreciate your comments and know that this bill would do two things: one, it would do a public consultation phase, and then two, then allow us, as a province, to align ourselves with United States if United States adopts permanent daylight savings time.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. And I'll just remind anyone asking questions that the time limit on questions is 30 seconds.

So, Mr. McGillivary, did you want to make comment to that?

B. McGillivary: No. I think he summed it up pretty nice.

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): Hi, Benjamin McGillivary. My name is Lisa. I just wanted to thank you for your presentation. I don't have any additional questions, but I appreciate you making the time to have your voice heard here tonight.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you. Mr. McGillivary, did you want to comment on that?

B. McGillivary: No. I just want to thank the member very much for saying that.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. McGillivary, I thank you for your presentation. I see and think you must have had a particular interest in time for quite some time. I wonder if you would elaborate a little bit on why you're so keen to present here and we're very keen to have you presenting.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, MLA Gerrard. Mr. McGillivray?

B. McGillivray: Yes. I just wanted my voice to be heard and in case you don't know, Mr. Gerrard, this is my first time doing it, so I'm very pleased to be doing this. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you for your presentation, Mr. Gerrard—Mr. McGillivray.

Any further questions? Thank you.

* (18:10)

We will call the next presenter, then. Mrs. Azra Husarik [*phonetic*], private citizen. She present? [*interjection*] Yes, accordingly, we'll drop—she will drop to the bottom of the list, and we'll—called again.

Bill 8—The Off-Road Trails Safety and Maintenance Act

Mr. Chairperson: Okay. I will now call on presenters for Bill 8, The Off-Road Trails Safety and Maintenance Act.

We have registered Mr. Jason Wiebe from Snoman. Mr. Wiebe?

Jason Wiebe (Snoman Inc.): I have copies?

Mr. Chairperson: Yes. We need to change ministers here; just give us a minute. Yes, the staff will circulate your copies, and when you are ready, you can begin.

Begin, Mr. Wiebe.

J. Wiebe: I'm here representing Snoman Inc. I'm the president. 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 snowmobile trail network is the largest trail system of any kind in the province of Manitoba and the only user-pay system in Manitoba.

Funding from the sale of snow passes is allocated to clubs based on their trail length for maintenance and kilometres groomed. This is tracked using GPS units in all groomers. In addition, Snoman allocates \$100,000 per year as a trail improvement fund, which is paid to each of our five regions based on kilometres of each trail in each region.

There are approximately 13,000 kilometres of groomed trails in the province of Manitoba, and it has

been proven that the signed and groomed trails that we provide are the safest option for 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, the mental health benefits of one day of snowmobiling can last for up to a week after.

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 that Manitoba has one of the safest and best trail networks in all of Canada.

This act includes a \$25 annual fee for registered ORVs, and it will ensure that our organization will have access to sufficient and sustainable resources for trail development, maintenance and safety training. This funding will also aid with emergency trail repair and rehabilitation, which is needed when we experience adverse weather events, as well as the increase in unauthorized ORVs on the trail, resulting in repairs.

There is a need to rejuvenate the club's grooming fleet to reduce emissions and put greener technology on the snow. The average age of our grooming fleet is 20 years old, which means equipment is becoming unreliable and maintenance costs are skyrocketing. There are currently 99 groomers in our fleet, and we would like to embark upon a replacement program focusing on more environmentally friendly Tier 5 equipment that have better fuel economy and up to a 90 per cent emissions reduction compared to what we are running today.

Safety is key to our organization, and we offer an online snowmobile safety course, which Snoman subsidizes 100 per cent of, for those under 18 years old. We also partner with Safety Services Manitoba, which offers in-person training in schools upon request. And during the snow season, we have safety-related advertisements on nine radio stations right across the province, airing multiple times on a weekly basis. In addition, we use social media as a means of getting our safety message to riders.

Currently, there are 38,000 registered snowmobiles in Manitoba, but only 22,800 of those purchase a snow pass, which is less than 60 per cent compliance. When compared to neighbouring provinces with higher levels of enforcement, we know that our compliance rates are far lower and that there are riders using our trail system illegally.

We appreciate the enforcement that the government has undertaken this past season; however, there are large gaps due to limited resources. In addition, approximately 50 per cent of the trail system is on private land, and this results in little to no enforcement of the snow pass requirement.

This legislation can ensure that every rider pays something towards the trail system. This \$25 fee is a step towards enabling the financial sustainability of the trail network and the volunteer clubs, which is what our members need and want.

There is a threat of loss of trails due to lack of funding. With the shrinking volunteer base, clubs are more frequently having to hire some services. The costs of maintaining and grooming have increased significantly with the rise in inputs, such as signage, fuel, repairs and equipment. Additional funding will help to offset some of these costs.

In looking at the club financials, it shows that our clubs are underfunded by over \$1 million a year, and currently Snoman is unable to fulfill that—to fill that gap under our current voluntary user-pay funding model.

There has not been an increase in the Snopass fee since 2015, and we are not able to keep up with inflation; and clubs are the one who are forced to bear the brunt due to lack of funding. We have one of the lowest Snopasses in all of Canada and, at the same time, having the third largest trail network in Canada, only behind Quebec and Ontario.

Important initiatives in the area of risk management, protection of the environment, trail planning and auditing and awareness for public safety regarding snowmobiling require additional funding at the club level.

The increasing cost of operating is having dire impact on our snowmobile clubs. Over the past two years alone, operating costs have written-risen by as much as 100 per cent. Over the past—the greatest impact to our operations is fuel and equipment, which have risen by 60 per cent. Our organization cannot survive these cost increases without additional funds.

The cost of the carbon tax alone represents an increase in 2023 operation costs by \$5.34 a kilometre. That jumps to \$11.52 a kilometre by 2028, and Snoman is unable to pass that cost on to consumers, like other industries.

Inadequate funding at the club level is detrimental to the entire trail system. The loss of one club can

create a huge void in the provincial trail system. Clubs need a minimum of \$17 per kilometre for grooming and, with the current funding, we are only able to pay out 12. We know that this past season with the kilometres groomed being over 180,000, we are not going to be able to pay the clubs for their actual cost of grooming, since the costs exceed the money received from the sale of Snopasses.

The legislation also enables proposed changes that would allow for online sale of short-term Snopasses, which would boost tourism for those coming into Manitoba. We often hear that accessing three-day and seven-day Snopasses in person is an issue in rural Manitoba, and online access would make the process smooth for visitors and result in increased short-term Snopasses. For example, currently Ontario residents snowmobiling into Manitoba cannot get a pass before entering the province.

The economic impact of snowmobiling in Manitoba is over \$332 million annually and creates 900 jobs. These numbers are gleaned from our 2013 economic impact study, so today's numbers are likely much higher. We know that many rural businesses rely on snowmobilers to sustain their operations in the winter months when other tourism is slow.

We have trails throughout all regions of the province and are proud partners with SledMB53, which focuses on promoting snowmobile tourism in the North, including The Pas, Cranberry Portage, Flin Flon, Snow Lake, Thompson, Gillam and Swan River.

In working with SledMB53, it will help to enhance the trail system and provide much-needed connectivity in the North. There are currently exemptions, and those exemptions would continue under this bill. The exemptions that are currently in place will apply to this fee, and they will include northern Manitoba's isolated communities, where there are no designated trails; landowners operating snowmobiles on their own land; travelling to work from a place of residence where the designated trail is the only reasonable means; commercially licensed fishermen using snowmobiles for their fishing business; and trappers using snowmobiles in their registered traplines or special trapping areas.

In closing, we cannot stress enough the importance of this legislation becoming a reality for the future sustainability of the snowmobile trail network in Manitoba. The pandemic resulted in an increase in snowmobile traffic, showing registrations up by over 3,200; and, while this is good for tourism, it in turn puts extra burden on the volunteer clubs to

keep trails in tip-top shape for snowmobilers by having to undertake extra groomings.

I thank you for your time, and I welcome any questions you may have.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much for your presentation, and, following the format we have determined, the first question will go to Minister Nesbitt.

Hon. Greg Nesbitt (Minister of Natural Resources and Northern Development): Thank you, Mr. Wiebe, for your presentation.

In the short time I've been responsible for Parks, which this falls under, I've certainly been very happy to meet with you and Yvonne Rideout, and discuss this with you, and see the need for the additional funding.

I must say, as a rural MLA, I've always been impressed with Snoman and the local clubs, and I know how much effort and volunteerism they put into maintaining trails in Manitoba. And I'm very hopeful that this fee will allow you too meet your financial obligations to your clubs and expand the network across Manitoba moving forward.

So, once again, thank you very much for your support of this bill.

* (18:20)

Mr. Chairperson: Mr. Wiebe, would—do you want to respond to that?

J. Wiebe: I'd just like to thank the minister for his comments and the co-operation on this matter.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you.

MLA Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Well, I'll thank you for coming out tonight and presenting. It certainly is one of the unique things that Manitoba offers is the opportunity to come to these committees.

Couple questions. You talked about enforcement for people that are using the trails that may not actually have the proper registration to do that. Is that an issue because of the number of conservation officers that we have, or is there someone else that does that enforcement?

J. Wiebe: I believe enforcement is jointly shared between Conservation and RCMP, and I can't speak to their numbers or their workload or where their priorities may lie.

We know that they did put an increased effort in this year, which certainly helped to get the message

across, but Manitoba is a very big, vast province, and being everywhere is hard, and we can certainly appreciate that.

Mr. Chairperson: Following the order, MLA Gerrard.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, two points maybe you could address. You mentioned the mental health benefits. I'm curious as to what happened during COVID. Was there a lot of use of the trails and was there any comments on the mental health benefits of riders?

Second, maybe you could tell me just what is Tier 5 emission standards. Is that still a fossil fuel or is that a hybrid of some sort or electric?

J. Wiebe: Yes, so, to the first question, we certainly seen an uptick during the pandemic, which was tremendous. I believe it gave people an out during a time when there wasn't a lot of options. To get out in Manitoba's beautiful nature was a huge benefit for people's mental health at a time when, frankly, you couldn't do a lot else. So, I think Snoman and our clubs and our trail network provided an option that didn't exist in a lot of other places.

As for the Tier 5 emission standards, those are still a—fossil-fuel based currently. There are no hybrid models yet. But, as I stated, the Tier 5 models emit 10 per cent of the emissions of our current fleet, which is averaging 20 years old. So it would be a tremendous step forward in environmental sustainability.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Wiebe.

MLA Lindsey, follow-up question?

MLA Lindsey: Thank you for everything so far.

So, there are some exemptions for snowmobiles to use some of these trails like trappers and fishers. Does this exemption also apply to, like, off-road vehicles that may be allowed to use these trails?

J. Wiebe: The current legislation does not speak to OR vehicles, to my knowledge.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you.

Any further questions? Oh, sorry; MLA Gerrard.

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, just once more back to the Tier 5 emissions standards. Presumably, if it is much more efficient, that it would burn only about 10 per cent of the fossil fuels of current machines operate. Is that what you're saying?

J. Wiebe: I'm not certain on the fuel-use reduction, but the emissions reduction through after treatment and those kinds of things, the emissions reduction is less.

Mr. Chairperson: Any further questions?

Thank you very much for your presentation, Mr. Wiebe, and we will now call the next presenter, Mr. Gary Hora.

Mr. Hora? Do you have written material, as well? Okay.

Begin when you're ready to proceed.

Gary Hora (All Terrain Vehicle Association of Manitoba): First off, I'd like to thank everybody for allowing us to present.

Mr. Chairperson: Mr. Hora, go ahead.

G. Hora: My name is Gary Hora, I'm the president of the All Terrain Vehicle Association of Manitoba. I'm here this evening to provide some more background information on ATVB and proposed Bill 8, the off-road trails safety maintenance act.

ATV Manitoba was incorporated 2009 for the purpose of bringing organization to the sport of off-road riding. We currently have seven clubs and approximately 155 kilometres of designated trail that we maintain by our ATVMB clubs.

For the past 14 years, we have managed to operate on a very meagre grant that we received from the Canadian off-road vehicle distributors council, and we've been lobbying for methods of sustainable funding as long as we've been in existence.

It has been our mission to grow the organization; however, the lack of funding has been a huge obstacle. There are other clubs in existence in Manitoba that are not currently under the ATVMB umbrella, and our hope is that once ATV has something to offer, these clubs will realize the benefits of coming and affiliating with a provincial federation.

There are many areas of Manitoba that have a long history of ATV travel-trail use. But riding in these areas are also unmanaged, primarily due to lack of funding to become organized in order to properly maintain, sign and develop the trail system.

The user-pay system that was presented here would meet our needs of our organization as we strive to provide safe, well-maintained trails for ORV riding in Manitoba and will allow us to expand our club base throughout the province, maintain existing trails, develop additional trail systems, manage trail systems

that are currently not maintained at all and provide much-needed rider-safety education.

Once the bill has been enacted, ATVMB would—will recruit new clubs; we'll have to work on expanding the trail, the ultimate goal of having a connected system throughout the province. Initially, ATVMB will not be in the position to use all the funds that will be realized through the \$25 levy for each registration. And in recognition of that, excess funds will be set aside in three different categories: trail rehabilitation fund, trail emergency fund, capital fund—trail funds. These funds will further contribute to the maintenance and repair of all trails.

One of our primary goals is related to ATV and side-by-side safety training. We plan to bring the Canadian ATV Safety Institute, CASI, training program into Manitoba. This is a hands-on program that would be opened up to anyone who wanted to, for the training, but primarily we want to focus on the training of the youth under 16. This is to ensure that riders of the future are educated in safe riding.

The funds collected through the levy will be a step forward to financial stability of the trail network and our volunteer clubs, which are the backbone of the organization. We have been experiencing a shrinking number of volunteer base and a significant rise in cost to maintain the current trails we have. Funding will also allow some of the work that needs to be done to be contracted out, relieving the heavy burden that currently faces our volunteers.

Without sustainable funding in place, the work that has been accomplished to date will be lost. Further organizations of riders in essential northern Manitoba will not be possible. And there is a potential to lose some clubs that currently exist and possibly our provincial federation as well.

And that's the end of my presentation.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you for your presentation, Mr. Hora.

Mr. Nesbitt: Thank you, Mr. Hora, for your presentation. And I know that you're a rather new organization in terms—compared to Snoman, but I know your sport is really growing in Manitoba with ATVs and side-by-sides. I see them all over the place, and it will be good to know that this user fee will allow you to expand trails across Manitoba so people will have safe trails to ride on all the time.

And, you know, and I'm also very excited that you're going to undergo a safety program for riders, especially young riders that are getting into the sport

and ensuring they have the proper training before they operate these vehicles, and then once they do, they'll have safe trails to ride on moving forward.

So I know that it's been a pleasure working with your organization in the development of this bill, and I look forward to it being enacted and get the user-fee money into your hands so you can start the good work you want to do.

Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Mr. Hora, would you like to respond to that?

G. Hora: Yes, I thank you very much, Minister, for your—for all your help and efforts that we've done. And we've had several meetings, and you are right; we are a small organization compared to Snoman. Snoman's been around a lot longer than we have. We're just trying to grow and develop and support, as I said.

So, thank you very much.

MLA Lindsey: Thank you very much for coming to present tonight, certainly appreciate what you've had to share with us.

* (18:30)

A question: So, all off-road vehicles now will have to pay this fee, and I appreciate the previous presenter when he talked about Snoman and, certainly, a lot of the good work they do, I know, in the North, maintaining trails and all of that stuff.

Is the trails for ATVs different than the Snoman trails, and if so, will this money go towards enhancing some of those trails, because I know, particularly, in the North, there's any number of trails, almost personal trails, if you will, that people use to get to their favourite lake with ATVs, to get to their remote cabins. So, are we talking about the same trails, or two different things there?

G. Hora: We're talking two different things. We're trying to develop a designated ATV trail system, ideally that is not on the Snoman system, because they already incur a lot ATV traffic damage to their trail system as a result of it. That's part of the contingency fund proposal that we have as well. We really encourage the clubs, that wherever possible, to have a trail system on Crown lands separate from the Snoman trails and try to alleviate that traffic. And if we do have to have a shared section, then the clubs should, you know, work together, collectively, so that you would close down the ATV trails full-time and then, you know, snowmobile time. That would be

the ultimate goal, to develop more up North as well. We'd like to see that.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Hora, for your answer.

Remind all the questioners, 30 seconds, please, or as close as you can get.

Mr. Gerrard: I'm curious as to the relative proportion of ATVs versus snowmobiles and whether there's been any discussion about how the funds which are raised will be shared between the two organizations.

G. Hora: Yes, like we've had a large increase from COVID, just in population or members of ATVs that are registered. We've gone from about 36,000 a year to 52, I believe right now.

In the proposal, we also have some of the funds we want to put into where Snoman could—if there's damage on some of their sled trails, they're in an area where we have no ATVMB club that would help maintain or fix that trail, and they can, you know, apply for a grant instead of coming out of their own funds to repair that trail damage done by ORVs in the summer.

So, we want to also give back and help other user groups. Our trails currently are classified as multi-use, which means we don't just have ATVs and ORVs on our trails; we will have hikers, bikers, fat bike associations, stuff like that, dirt bikes, utilizing the trail as well. But we're the ones fixing it, so.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Hora.

MLA Lindsey: Just to be clear, sir, somebody, particularly in the North, and that would be where I would have more knowledge of is the North, that uses an ATV to access their remote cabin, for example, that's not using an official trail, would still pay this registration fee even though probably none of that money is going to come back to help maintain that particular trail, although at some point it may expand trails for the North. Is that correct?

Mr. Chairperson: MLA Hora—sorry, presenter Hora.

G. Hora: Yes, no, I understand where you're going with that. Oh, I have to wait for a second?

Mr. Chairperson: Go ahead.

G. Hora: Oh, and yes—no, I understand your question a little better now. There are exceptions when it comes to even plating ORVs. For example, I have family up in Churchill—

Mr. Chairperson: Excuse me for a moment. Time is expired, so we'd ask for leave for him to continue. Leave granted? *[Agreed]* Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Hora.

G. Hora: Sorry about that. You know, we do have family that are up in Churchill, for example, and they don't have to currently plate their ATVs because they're staying within the community. It's a fly-in community essentially; well, and rail.

So, up North, like you say, the private trails, if there were trappers and stuff, there are exemptions for plating on machines. I believe, even with Snoman, for example, if you're an active trapper, but you have to access a little bit of a designated Snoman trail, you are allowed to do that; there is that exemption without buying the Snopass. However, yes, it's private trail, if it's in your—not on Crown lands, not on the designated area, we don't have control of that, but, essentially, yes. If anything that is plated across Manitoba, the levy would be added to that, but there would be a list of exemptions that could be detailed out.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Hora, for your presentation.

That concludes the list of presenters for this—*[interjection]* That's—yes, concludes the list of presenters for this bill.

Bill 13—The Wildlife Amendment Act

Mr. Chairperson: We will move on to Bill 13, The Wildlife Amendment Act.

And we have Ms. Carlyn Mendoza—not registered. Dropped to the bottom of the list, and we will look at that one in the future—come back to that one in the future. Any more?

Yes, go back to that one. We will call again Ms. Azra Husric *[phonetic]*. Not here?

That concludes our list of presenters.

And we need to call Ms. Mendoza, Ms. Carlyn Mendoza, second time. Not here?

That concludes our list of presenters before us for the evening, then.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: In what order does the committee wish to proceed with clause-by-clause consideration of the bill?

An Honourable Member: Global.

Mr. Chairperson: Global? *[interjection]* In the order? *[interjection]* Numerical. This is not Estimates.

Is it agreed, then, that we will do the bills in—as they are listed numerically? Okay, and that's going to take us a minute.

Okay. Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Bill 2—The Official Time Amendment Act *(Continued)*

Mr. Chairperson: Does the minister responsible for Bill 2 have an opening statement?

An Honourable Member: Yes, I do.

Mr. Chairperson: Mr.—Minister Smith.

Hon. Andrew Smith (Minister of Municipal Relations): Thank you, everyone, for attending the committee today, and especially to those members of the public who have come to speak to The Official Time Amendment Act.

This bill will amend The Official Time Act to allow Manitoba to consider adopting permanent daylight saving time and our neighbours—if our neighbours in the United States do the same and a majority of Manitobans agree to the change.

Adopting year-round observance of daylight saving time would mean that sunrise and sunset occur later in the winter. For example, in Winnipeg, on the winter solstice, the sun would rise one hour later at 9:23 a.m. and set one hour later at 5:29 p.m.

We know that many Manitobans have strong opinions on time change, and of course, we've heard from some presenters tonight on that itself. Engagement will begin when neighbouring jurisdictions take meaningful action to adopt permanent daylight saving time to ensure that perspectives gathered from Manitobans are timely and relevant.

Manitoba has historically maintained a consistent time zone approach with our United States neighbour, easing business relations, trade and travel, and this bill will ensure Manitoba is in a position to maintain that approach should the United States choose to observe daylight saving time year round.

Other Canadian jurisdictions, including Ontario and British Columbia, have also prepared for this possibility, tabling legislation preparing for a potential shift to permanent daylight saving time.

Municipal Relations continues to closely monitor developments in each of these jurisdictions and evaluate the best possible options for our province of Manitoba.

Mr. Chair, I am pleased to present this bill today and look forward to engaging with all Manitobans on this very important topic.

Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: And we thank the minister.

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

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): Making daylight saving time permanent in Manitoba has become an issue that many people feel passionately about one way or the other, and there are pros and cons to both making daylight saving time permanent and making standard time permanent.

We have heard from many Manitobans who have concerns about everything from walking children to school in the dark to potential health concerns related to daylight saving time.

Unfortunately, Bill 2 does little to provide clarity on the issue, as it does not commit to establishing a permanent daylight time unless the United States does so.

* (18:40)

Instead of the government just following the lead of the US, it is important that all Manitobans who care about this issue—families, business owners, health professionals and more—are consulted before a final decision is made on daylight saving time.

Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank the member for her comments.

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.

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

**Bill 8—The Off-Road Trails Safety
and Maintenance Act**
(Continued)

Mr. Chairperson: Does the minister responsible for Bill 8 have an opening statement?

Hon. Greg Nesbitt (Minister of Natural Resources and Northern Development): Well, good evening. I'd certainly like to thank the two presenters we had this evening from Snoman and ATV Manitoba for their remarks on the importance of Bill 8, The Off-Road Trails Safety and Maintenance Act.

Bill 8 establishes a \$25 user fee for registered ORVs, with revenue dedicated to ORV trail development, upkeep and rehabilitating lands damaged by ORVs, ensuring safety for all.

Our upcoming provincial trail strategy and action plan will provide a co-ordinated approach for managing Manitoba's trails network with ORV user fees contributing to key priorities. All revenue will support ORV-related activities, not the Manitoba government's ongoing operations. Funding will be granted to organizations like Snoman Inc. and ATV Manitoba for trail development, maintenance, safety training and driver education.

Funds will also rehabilitate lands and trails damaged by ORV activity, preserving Manitoba's landscapes and ecosystems.

This initiative aims to provide safe riding experiences, attract ORV enthusiasts and create economic development opportunities for rural and northern communities.

Besides the ORV user fee, this bill enables collaboration between Manitoba and Snoman to improve the snow pass snowmobile trail permit program, creating a short-term snow pass option and additional purchase methods including online.

Bill 8 is crucial for maintaining improving ORV trail networks, ensuring safety and preserving the natural environment.

Thank you. I certainly look forward to the passage of Bill 8.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the minister.

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

MLA Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): I also want to thank the presenters that took time out of their busy lives, I'm sure, to come and present to this committee.

Really, the only thing I wanted to try and clarify was that there was some issues with everyone paying for the registration but not everyone using the trail; we've clarified that now. So it was an issue when the Snoman trail system was first being groomed as well, that there were people that were upset that they were going to be forced to pay for something they weren't going to use. I appreciate the exemptions in there, which take a lot of those concerns away, but I know up North, there may still be some people that have a trail that they use to get to their favourite hunting spot, their favourite fishing spot, their remote cabin that

may have some issues with this bill. I haven't heard from them, so those are my remarks.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the member.

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

As—also, is there agreement for—from the committee that the Chair will call clauses in blocks to conform to pages, with the understanding that we will stop at any particular clause or clauses where members may have comments, questions or amendments to propose? Is that agreed? [*Agreed*]

Clause 1—pass; clauses 2 and 3—pass; clauses 4 and 5—pass; clause 6—pass; clause 7—pass; clause 8—pass; clauses 9 through 12—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

That concludes that bill.

Bill 13—The Wildlife Amendment Act
(*Continued*)

Mr. Chairperson: Does the minister responsible for Bill 13 have an opening statement?

Hon. Greg Nesbitt (Minister of Natural Resources and Northern Development): I do.

Mr. Chairperson: Minister Nesbitt.

Mr. Nesbitt: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Bill 13, The Wildlife Amendment Act, streamlines residency definitions for hunters and anglers, aligning them with Manitoba's fishing regulations and simplifying online licence purchases.

The primary change is that permanent residents of Canada will now qualify for Canadian resident licences instead of non-Canadian licences. Additionally, Bill 13 removes an outdated clause prohibiting Sunday hunting, reflecting its authorization under Manitoba's hunting regulations since the 1990s. Lastly, the bill clarifies the distinction between guiding and outfitting services in Manitoba's regulations, offering increased flexibility for the outfitting industry and their clientele.

Thank you, and I look forward to moving this Bill 13 on, through committee. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the minister.

Does the critic for the Official Opposition have an opening statement?

MLA Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Thank you very much, and there were some initial concerns expressed

by folks that, generally, from the US, that have property that they've bought specifically to use for their personal hunting grounds and that they invite friends to come and join them every year. They had some concerns that that may be a problem going forward. I think we've addressed those at some of the other stages of the bill presentation.

So, the only other concern was that perhaps maybe this bill was designed to help outfitters get ahead. And I'm not sure that's actually the intent of the bill. So, those few words, we'll let the bill go.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you. We thank the member for his comments.

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

Clause 1—pass; clause 2—pass; clause 3—pass; clause 4—pass; clause 5—pass; clause 6—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

That concludes that bill.

Bill 24—The Wildfires Amendment Act

Mr. Chairperson: Bill 24—does the minister responsible for Bill 24 have an opening statement?

Hon. Greg Nesbitt (Minister of Natural Resources and Northern Development): I do. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Bill 24, The Wildfires Amendment Act, proposes amendments to The Wildfires Act, aimed at strengthening officer powers and enhancing wildfire risk mitigation requirements in Manitoba. Our Manitoba Wildfire Service plays a vital role in protecting lives, property and natural resources from the adverse affects of both natural- and human-caused wildfires. The current wildfires act, enacted in 1998, is now outdated and requires modernization to align with neighbouring jurisdictions.

Wildfires can lead to significant social and economic disruptions, displacing families and causing property damage. Nearly half of all wildfires in Manitoba are human caused, costing up to 10 million per fire to suppress.

To address these challenges and ensure officers have the necessary tools and authorities for effective wildfire prevention, mitigation and investigation, Bill 24 proposes amendments such as updating officer designations and appointments, adding separate officer inspection and investigation provisions, and granting officers the ability to issue stop work orders for activities that contravene mitigation requirements.

Moreover, the bill proposes increasing maximum summary conviction penalty amounts to \$100,000 for individuals and \$1 million for corporations to better reflect the social, environmental and economic costs of human-caused wildfires, aligning our penalties with other provincial jurisdictions.

* (18:50)

This legislation also seeks to replace the outdated wildfire work-permit system with a new regulation that prescribes fire-safety requirements for industry and individuals, ensuring consistent standards across all sectors.

This change will streamline the process and improve accessibility to crucial information for both industry professionals and individuals.

In summary, Mr. Chair, Bill 24 will modernize The Wildfires Act, aligning Manitoba with other provinces like Saskatchewan and Alberta by providing the necessary tools and resources for officers to mitigate human-caused wildfires and protect our communities and natural resources.

I commend the Manitoba Wildfire Service, officers and department staff for their dedication to protecting our communities from wildfires.

This bill demonstrates our government's unwavering commitment to keeping Manitobans safe.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the minister for his comments.

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

MLA Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): I appreciate the minister's comments. Throughout the process of this bill, through debates in the House and one thing and the other, there has been some concerns expressed, which really haven't been properly addressed.

One of the big issues that always comes up when we talk about wildfires is the province has privatized the water bomber fleet. They've reduced the number of initial attack workers in communities throughout the North, making all those jobs that much more difficult.

Even getting rid of government air services itself has made initial attacks more time-consuming, because now we have to contract a private carrier to try and get the crews there, when previously the initial crew could call up government air services and be there right away. So we know that a lot of what this government has done has not aided in forest fire fighting.

The other concern that has been expressed here is that, really, getting rid of the permits system or changing it so that it's left up to individual corporations or companies to determine if they're following the regulation or not, without anybody actually going there and saying these are the things you have to do, these are the things you have to comply with, it may—I'm not saying it will—but it may lead to problems in the future, where lack of knowledge will cause potential fires.

One of the other things, of course, of concern is that this bill adds some specific duties to conservation officers, and we all know that there's a dearth of conservation officers presently. Although the minister claims to have hired some, we haven't seen them in the field. Adding duties and not increasing pay probably isn't going to assist the minister in his stated goal of getting more conservation officers.

And just a final comment that, while the penalties do increase, penalties can't replace doing things properly upfront, and I believe this bill may weaken some of what needs to be done upfront.

Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: I thank the member for his comments.

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

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

Is that agreed? [*Agreed*]

Clause 1 and 2—pass; clause 3—pass; clauses 4 through 7—pass; clause 8—pass; clause 9—pass; clauses 10 and 11—pass; clauses 12 through 14—pass; clauses 15 through 17—pass; clauses 18 through 20—pass; clause 21—pass; clauses 22 and 23—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

The time being 6:55 and the business before the committee being concluded, what is the will of the committee?

Some Honourable Members: Rise.

Mr. Chairperson: Committee rise.

COMMITTEE ROSE AT: 6:55 p.m.

WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

Re: Bill 13

The Manitoba Wildlife Federation supports the Bill 13 because it addresses issues in the elicensing system. We received complaints in regard to hunters/anglers' frustration in purchasing their hunting and angling licences simultaneously without the need to re-confirm their residency and having to log out and back in before completing purchases. This will greatly simplify things.

Chris Heald
Manitoba Wildlife Federation

Re: Bill 13

The MLOA supports Bill 13, because it addresses some general housekeeping issues. Firstly, some of our clients experienced issues with the elicensing system in relation to residency and purchasing multiple licenses. These amendments address this. Secondly Waterfowl outfitters provide more services than just being a guide for their clients. Numerous outfitters have expressed concern that the current regulations do not reflect their existing operations as they also provide outfitting services such as accommodations and or hunting equipment. Bill 13 provides for flexibility in future regulations with regards to outfitting in Manitoba.

Paul Conchatre
Manitoba Lodges and Outfitters Association

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>