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**Proceedings of the Standing Committee on
Resources**

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Department of Environment and Conservation
Office of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency

RESOURCE COMMITTEE

Department of Environment and Conservation

Chair: Brian Warr, MHA

Vice-Chair: Kevin Parsons, MHA

Members: Derrick Bragg, MHA
David Brazil, MHA
Jerry Dean, MHA
John Finn, MHA
Lorraine Michael, MHA
Pam Parsons, MHA

Clerk of the Committee: Elizabeth Murphy

Appearing:

Department of Environment and Conservation

Hon. Perry Trimper, MHA, Minister
Jennifer Collingwood, Director, Communications
Ross Firth, ADM, Natural Heritage Branch
Martin Goebel, ADM, Environment
Robyn Hayes, Departmental Controller
Colleen Janes, Deputy Minister
Colleen Johnson, Manager of Finance, Budgeting and General Operations
Ian Murphy, Executive Assistant
Melanie Thomas, Director, Policy and Planning
Emily Timmins, Director, Communications
Wanda Trickett, Departmental Controller

Office of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency

Chad Blundon, Director, Government Relations
Gerald Crane, Director, Research and Analysis

Also Present

Neil King, MHA
Barry Petten, MHA
Gerry Rogers, MHA
Megan Drodge, Researcher, Official Opposition Office
Susan Williams, Researcher, NDP Office

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Neil King, MHA for Bonavista, substitutes for Pam Parsons, MHA for Harbour Grace – Port de Grave, for a portion of the meeting.

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Barry Petten, MHA for Conception Bay South, substitutes for Kevin Parsons, MHA for Cape St. Francis.

The Committee met at 9 a.m. in the Assembly Chamber.

CHAIR (Warr): I just want to say good morning and welcome you all to the Estimates on Environment and Conservation and the Office of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency.

I just had a brief chat with the minister and we will be doing the Office of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency first, which is 2.6.

Before we get started this morning just some housekeeping. For staff members who are asked to respond to a question, please state your name before you do, just for the people in the communications centre. And I'll certainly invite our minister and his staff to introduce themselves first and we'll get underway.

MR. TRIMPER: Okay, well, thank you very much.

I thought we should do Climate Change and Energy Efficiency first given we've got a little storm outside. These guys need to hurry back and deal with that.

CHAIR: So if the introductions can be done.

MR. TRIMPER: Right on.

To my right is Chad Blundon with our department. He's the Director of Government Relations. On my left is Gerald Crane. He's the Director of Research and Analysis. And our departmental controller is Wanda Trickett.

Back in the corner I have Emily Timmons who's my Director of Communications, and my executive assistant, Ian Murphy. Mark Vardy, you're here in the capacity of budgeting, taking notes.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

Mr. Petten, if you could start the introductions on this side?

MR. PETTEN: Oh, sure.

Barry Petten, MHA for CBS and Environment critic.

Megan Drodge is our researcher.

MR. FINN: John Finn, MHA, Stephenville – Port au Port.

MS. ROGERS: And I'm Gerry Rogers. I work for the good people of St. John's Centre.

MS. WILLIAMS: Susan Williams, Researcher, Third Party.

MR. BRAGG: Derrick Bragg, MHA, Fogo Island – Cape Freels.

MR. DEAN: Jerry Dean, MHA, Exploits.

MR. KING: Neil King from the historic District of Bonavista. I'm filling in for Pam Parsons for the first hour or so.

CHAIR: I'm Brian Warr, I'm your Chair. I'm the MHA for the District of Baie Verte – Green Bay.

So we'll get started again on the Office of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency.

Will the Clerk please call the first subhead?

CLERK (Ms. Murphy): 2.2.04.

CHAIR: 2.2.04.

I'd invite the minister for some opening remarks.

MR. TRIMPER: Okay, well, thank you very much.

I thought that – we've got a couple of pages of notes here that I wanted to read out. I think people know a lot about the Office of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, but I'm not sure everyone has a full understanding of what goes

on there. So if I may take a couple of minutes just to read a couple of thoughts to describe what happens in this very important unit – small, but mighty.

As you're aware, climate change is one of the greatest long-term challenges facing the world and our province today. It is truly a cross-cutting horizontal issue with implications for all our people, communities and cuts across all sectors of our economy. Climate change will bring both risks and opportunities, and will affect all sectors of our economy in all parts of our society.

To be effective, government must seek to minimize risk and maximize opportunities. It must balance economic and environmental considerations to ensure that our province's approach is both environmentally sustainable and economically prudent.

The Office of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency has four lines of business. These include: to lead the development of policy and strategy to establish a path forward and advance sustained actions that effectively balances economic and environmental considerations, including deepening public awareness, understanding and engagement; second, to undertake focused research and analysis to enable the province to maximize opportunities and minimize risks from the impacts of climate change and the move towards a low-carbon global economy; thirdly, to work with departments to better integrate climate change and energy efficiency considerations into their current and future programs, services, legislation and regulations and ensure effective coordination across government; and finally, to advance the province's interests and priorities in regional, national and international forums on climate change and energy efficiency, and engage external stakeholders to deepen and widen government's dialogue on next steps.

Given the cross-cutting and complex nature of these issues, the office is positioned as a central agency in the Executive Council. This increases the office's effectiveness as the office is not aligned with the interests of any particular department, but is instead an independent voice on climate change and energy efficiency. It

addresses issues both within government and externally.

The office is a resource to support all departments and agencies, as well as coordinate policy across government. This requires working horizontally with many different entities simultaneously, ensuring that synergies are made and gaps are addressed.

In 2015-2016 the office advanced work in many sectors and with many partners – and I just wanted to mention these again, because I feel it's important to understand all that's happening here. First, the continued work on greenhouse gas emissions regulations for the large industrial sector. This is a key commitment in the Liberal Party's electoral platform and it's certainly on my mandate letter. We wish to act on it in the near term.

This work is ongoing and being formed by a new federal-provincial process on a pan-Canadian approach to climate change. The intent of these regulations is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the large industrial sector in an economically prudent manner.

A second project last year, and in partnership with Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro, was the completion of a pilot project to determine how and if individuals in the province change their electricity consumption behaviour when provided with real-time information about their electricity use. The project report will be posted on the government's website shortly.

Third, and in partnership with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, it completed the HotShots initiative which provided students and teachers across the province with new resources on energy conservation. While this project was not funded by the office it was funded through Education and Early Childhood Development. The office led the implementation activities.

Fourth – and you might have heard – the office has just completed a refreshing of the Turn Back the Tide website based on user data gathered since 2012. This is a very comprehensive website. I'd invite you to have a look. It's also in the form of a Facebook page. It contains practical tips, resources and information to help

inform residents and encourage them to take action.

The office also conducted stakeholder consultations regarding the potential adoption of the National Energy Code of Canada for Buildings. These consultations met a key commitment in the 2011 Climate Change and Energy Efficiency Action Plans. A report on these consultations is posted on the government's website. Internal engagement with other departments will be held during this fiscal year to determine the next steps.

Finally, in support of adaptation the office developed a single-window website portal that contains a host of climate data to support stakeholders in understanding and making decisions, bearing in mind the impact of climate change. The website portal includes historical Environment Canada data, weather data and updated intensity-duration-frequency curves that are used by engineers to design infrastructure and prepare temperature and precipitation projections.

The office will continue its important work to improve resilience to the impacts of climate change, reduce GHGs – greenhouse gas emissions – and improve energy efficiency in 2016-2017 based on the budget allocations we've set out in these Estimates.

I thank you and look forward to any questions you may have.

CHAIR: Thank you Mr. Trimper.

Mr. Petten.

MR. PETTEN: Pardon me, I have to stand. I have a bad back.

Minister, if you don't mind, I'd like to just ask a couple of general questions before –

MR. TRIMPER: Sure.

MR. PETTEN: What is the plan within the department for carbon control, carbon pricing, basically? Where are you to with that?

MR. TRIMPER: In terms of carbon pricing, I'm very pleased to say that we hit the ground

running. As I became familiar with this office we've started, first of all, to get myself caught up to speed with what's been ongoing.

The end of January I was in Ottawa at the first ever federal-provincial-territorial meeting of my counterparts addressing climate change. So in terms of climate pricing, what we are doing is exploring lessons learned from other jurisdictions. And as I just indicated, and as is indicated in my mandate letter, we're coming forward with a strategy to start with on large industrial emitters. So I look forward to speaking about that in the near future.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

With the new plan it seems to be – I know with the prime minister it's big on his agenda and it looks like all provinces are working towards an agreement. In the event of carbon pricing or some kind of control coming in, will all departments have to send their policy legislation through the office as a part of the development of this? If we come in with a carbon price, will everything be reviewed by Climate Change for all departments when they bring in their policy and legislation?

MR. TRIMPER: I believe the answer to what you're asking is yes. That interaction is happening now. This office crosscuts it. It's not necessarily affiliated with any one entity; it actually reaches into all departments of provincial government. What decisions are being made, they are certainly reviewed by everyone.

As I indicated in my opening remarks, it's very important to strike a balance between the environmental considerations and the economic fragility of our province right now. Finding that appropriate way to go forward in a measured progress that doesn't upset the apple cart – if I can use an analogy like that – is very important. So we certainly hear from pro-economic to very pro-environmental considerations.

MR. PETTEN: Well, yes, it's ironic. That kind of brought me to one other question I had on it. As you're well aware – and I learned it with my time I spent in Environment a few years back. We attended a climate change conference

actually. Minister Kent was the minister of the day.

There's a lot of concern over – we have very few polluters. And the polluters we have – our biggest polluters – are pretty fragile, especially in our economy now. You look at Come By Chance, down in Labrador, or the Holyrood plant up there – I guess that all depends on Muskrat too. But it is fragile; we have few polluters that cause – a small group of polluters.

A while back I was asked – actually, I was interviewed. And my answer was I believe in carbon – reducing the emissions, we have to protect our environment. But what kind of consultation, what kind of – we just can't just come in. Because, ultimately, the tax will come down, it all trickles on down. So it could have a detrimental impact, for instance, on Come By Chance. It could be the end of Come By Chance, who knows. It depends how it all unfolds. What kind of consultation process is happening in conjunction with the planned carbon tax?

MR. TRIMPER: I would suggest, and from my observation – I can turn to Gerald for a follow-up comment when I'm done, if I could ask you to do that – I don't know if I would even describe it as periodic. It's almost continuous between – we have about a half dozen of these sorts of large industrial emitters right now, land-based, in this province. And the interaction and dialogue is frequent if not, as I would say, continuous.

There's a key consideration here. Yes, we're very aware of their challenges economically, so we are striking the correct – I would say a very correct balance between the need to move forward. We have an obligation as a province, too, to join in with Canada's recent commitments in Paris. So it's very important for us to step forward with something that's going to be very appropriate for our unique circumstance, but at the same time sitting back is hardly a role model.

Certainly, if we were to do nothing, if we decided that we just didn't want to play this game, the federal government has an opportunity to come in and legislate. So we feel it's much preferred for us to go forward with a strategy that works for Newfoundland and Labrador, as

opposed to having some national edict come down.

I would draw your attention to the First Ministers' Meeting with our Premier and his counterparts in Vancouver just a few weeks ago. It was very important in some of the decisions that were made there that we did not want to jump in with some of the larger jurisdictions in the country which have, frankly, advanced their thinking, their legislation around climate change legislation. We're not there yet, we're not ready. This is actually our first move, so we want to move carefully.

That said, we didn't want to race to where Ontario and Quebec are and have a hurdle and a hill that we just couldn't climb without putting some companies in serious situations.

MR. PETTEN: So there will be a collaborative approach?

MR. TRIMPER: It is a collaborative approach. It has been and it will continue to be.

MR. PETTEN: Okay, so those are my questions.

MR. TRIMPER: Gerald, did you have any follow-up, if I could ask? Is there anything you'd like to say, or did I nail the –

MR. CRANE: The only thing I would add is we work, as well, very closely with the federal government and with other provinces to see what's happening in other provinces. The cost and competitiveness issues are constant across the country, it's not only here. We see a lot and hear a lot from other provinces and the approaches in other provinces, and the approaches in other provinces do make accommodation for competitiveness of export industries.

MR. PETTEN: Okay, thanks.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Petten.

Ms. Rogers.

MS. ROGERS: First of all, I want to thank you very much for all your hard work. This is such a crucial department and the activities are very,

very important. I fully understand, as a Newfoundlander and Labradorian, the necessity of that balance between our economic needs, our environmental needs and our social needs, and what a dance that is and the challenge to do the right thing and, sometimes, that's not so clear. So I appreciate the incredible challenge that faces the office and that faces us, as a province, perhaps now more than ever. I'd like to thank you for that work.

I have a few questions as well before we get into some line by lines. Minister, is there a ministerial advisory committee on climate change?

MR. TRIMPER: Yes.

MS. ROGERS: Who would be on that committee?

MR. TRIMPER: Go ahead, Gerald.

MR. CRANE: It's co-chaired by Ministers of Environment and Conservation, Natural Resources, Ministers of Finance, Municipal Affairs, Transportation, the Minister for the Housing Corporation and BTCRD. Am I missing anyone, Chad? I believe that's it.

MS. ROGERS: So it's ministers and –

MR. CRANE: There are also deputy ministers as well.

MS. ROGERS: And deputy ministers.

MR. CRANE: The Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs as well.

MS. ROGERS: So you have no one on your advisory committee that are from the activist community, no one from industry?

MR. TRIMPER: It's a ministerial committee. Since I've taken my role, we haven't convened a meeting yet.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

Is that something you would consider? For instance, with the Minister of Health, he'll have an advisory committee for mental health and

addictions made up of people from agencies, activists, people with lived experience.

MR. TRIMPER: I must say I'm very much of an open-door kind of guy, so I don't mind taking the idea under consideration. So if I could park that thought and come back to you, I'd like to do that.

We certainly are meeting with a lot of industry associations on climate change but, as a collective group, we can take a look at that.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

I would imagine there would be great resources as well in Grenfell College at the university in Corner Brook.

MR. TRIMPER: If I may, absolutely, we have some consultations we're planning for this year. So we're looking for ways to do that very efficiently. If we can reach out to industry groups, interested organizations, that would be a great way to reach a lot of people.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, great.

So if we could start the line by line. I'll have some questions as well as we go through some of the line by line. The other thing, I want to thank you very much as well for your opening statement. I'm wondering if it's possible to get a copy of that because we won't get the Hansard for this until months down the road.

MR. TRIMPER: You've got it.

MS. ROGERS: I assume anything I ask for or the Official Opposition asks for that we can assume that we will both get all of that.

MR. TRIMPER: We look forward to walking the binder across the floor.

MS. ROGERS: Great, thank you very much.

Under Salaries, 2.2.04 – it almost sounds sometimes like we're calling out a bingo, doesn't it? Salaries, we see that in '15-'16 the department didn't spend \$121,000. Can you tell me the loss there?

MR. TRIMPER: We had a vacancy position that it related to. Gerald, was it one or two?

MR. CRANE: We had two for several months.

MR. TRIMPER: It would be two for several months, primarily one.

MS. ROGERS: Now those are full?

MR. TRIMPER: Yes.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

MR. TRIMPER: By the way, we have eight staff now in the department, in the office.

MS. ROGERS: How many did you have last year?

MR. TRIMPER: Eight as well.

MS. ROGERS: Great, thank you.

Professional Services, we see in '15-'16 there was an increase of \$81,000 in the revised. Can you tell me a little bit about some of the professional services that you undertook in that category?

MR. TRIMPER: Why don't you take it, Gerald?

MR. CRANE: We had 10 projects in 2015-16. There were eight planned and two additional ones that were not planned. The eight that were planned – I will just list them and the amounts. We developed a technical GHG reporting guidance document. It's a precursor for some of the work we're doing with large industry. That contract was valued at just under \$41,000. It's completed and the report will be posted shortly.

There was \$150,000 for the pilot project with Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro that the minister referenced.

MS. ROGERS: Would it be metering so that people could see –

MR. CRANE: We purchased 500 meters, these real-time monitoring meters that go outside, to see what the impact would be on an individual's

use of electricity, if they got the information in real time.

MS. ROGERS: What was the outcome of that project?

MR. CRANE: For the 500 people who had the meters, they saved on average about 1.2 per cent off their electricity bills. All of the savings was concentrated in people who had multiple heating sources, so electricity plus wood or electricity plus fuel oil. Electricity heated homes only, there was no savings from that group.

MS. ROGERS: Was there a whole education program that went along with that?

MR. CRANE: Yes, most of the group – not all, for testing purposes – received leaflets in their bills, things like that, contest challenges as well.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, thanks.

MR. CRANE: The third project was energy efficiency in buildings training project. So we brought together almost 250 stakeholders and explained to them some of the technical work for the National Building Code in the residential and commercial building sector. That was about \$46,000 and that's completed.

The Turn Back the Tide refresh that the minister referenced, \$43,000; and a social media campaign for that, in support of that, was \$12,000.

We did some work on intensity-duration-frequency curves and these are curves that engineers use when they build a road or a bridge or a water system. We had done some work in the previous fiscal year. Feedback from users was that we missed a couple of things so we went back to the consultant and asked the consultant to do a couple extra pieces of work. That was valued at about \$10,000. That was just a carry forward, essentially, from the previous year.

Similarly, we did some work modeling the business case for the National Energy Code for Buildings in '14-'15. Last year, in response to user feedback, we went back and had some additional work done. There are actually two

separate contracts; combined, they were valued at about \$4,500.

That took us to \$306,000 out of the \$310,000. Because of the salary savings in the course of the fiscal year, the minister, at the time, indicated we could advance two priorities that we were scheduled to do some work on in this current fiscal year. Those were climate change adaptation tools and resources. So we consulted with municipalities, engineers, some others – Chad can speak about that in a bit more detail. That was valued at about \$60,000.

The last one, we did some work with the university around coastal archaeological resources. So the federal government funded a major project. They didn't fund a small element of that project, which was a user guide that others could use. That was valued at \$25,000. Because the federal government was not going to fund that, we stepped in and supplemented the budget for that.

MR. TRIMPER: That was a risk assessment.

MR. CRANE: That was a risk assessment, yes.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, thank you.

Do you have any evaluation or data on the outcomes of some of the projects? For instance, turning the tide, do we know how many people are using that? What's the rollout of that?

MR. TRIMPER: I'll get Chad Blundon to answer that. He works with that website.

MR. BLUNDON: Thank you.

We do have metrics in terms of the users that are tracked. So we know how many people are visiting the web pages and which ones they go to.

The development work of the new website is now complete, but the website itself is not yet live. That will be happening very shortly. We will be tracking the metrics from the old one versus the new one to get a sense of the improvements that have been made and what impact that's had upon users and the user experience.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you.

MR. TRIMPER: What kind of activity did we have last year?

MR. BLUNDON: I have some metrics here. For example, to September 4, 2015 – and there's always a lag in the numbers – there were 100,183 website sessions, just over 216,000 page views. There are other metrics in terms of we find out where people come to the website from. For example, almost half of them are from Google searches and so forth. By far, they would be the top one but we do have metrics to better understand how people are getting there and where they come from.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, thank you.

I think my time is up.

CHAIR: Order, please!

Ms. Rogers, do you still have other questions?

MS. ROGERS: I do, on that same line on Professional Services.

CHAIR: Excuse me.

Minister, do you mind if we –

MR. TRIMPER: Not at all.

CHAIR: Okay, thank you.

Ms. Rogers.

MS. ROGERS: On Professional Services we see a significant reduction. Can you explain? Is that deduction for this year?

MR. TRIMPER: The \$160,000, approximately?

MS. ROGERS: Yes.

MR. TRIMPER: That's a decrease in our budget. It relates to the removal of funding for a two-year pilot initiative to promote energy conservation in homes.

MS. ROGERS: So that's a program we won't be doing?

MR. TRIMPER: That's correct.

MS. ROGERS: It's a reduction – sorry, for a two year –

MR. TRIMPER: It's a two-year pilot initiative to promote energy conservation in homes; one of those difficult decisions.

MS. ROGERS: Yes, when we need it. It's unfortunate.

Is there any other work that will be done around the area of helping people to reduce energy use in their homes?

MR. TRIMPER: I think I'll turn to Chad.

We're constantly working in various kinds of incentives, attitude shifts, behavioural adjustments in all of our work, our public outreach sites and so on.

Chad, any particular comments as you –

MR. BLUNDON: Yes. The project the minister just spoke of was the one that Gerald had spoken to a moment ago in terms of that pilot project to determine whether or not the energy monitors and the various approaches were making any difference to energy use and energy efficiency in homes. That one is just complete. So we would take some time to assess the results of that to determine whether or not those sorts of approaches can work.

Certainly, as we referenced through the public awareness in Turn Back the Tide campaign, there's extensive information that's provided to homeowners, to businesses, to communities about what they can do to be more energy efficient. So I wouldn't characterize the nature of the work in that sphere as just being in that one particular pilot project. There has been work that's been ongoing and work would continue.

For example, the office also participates in various intergovernmental committees that work in the area of energy efficiency, since it is not just Newfoundland and Labrador but the federal government is also playing in that sphere, as well as all of the other provinces.

There is work, other than the pilot project, which was just intended to be one time to determine whether or not that particular approach would yield real results.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

Are there any grants available to groups that do education or work around climate change or energy efficiency for public engagement?

MR. TRIMPER: Yes, we currently have a grant with the Conservation Corps of Newfoundland and Labrador.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

How much is that?

MR. TRIMPER: We ran it through Environment and Conservation. We maintain that funding level.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

MR. TRIMPER: You might recall we made an announcement on that about a month ago.

MS. ROGERS: That's right.

Are there any other grants or monies, funding available to community groups who do work in this area?

MR. TRIMPER: No, we can't think of anything at this time.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

Thank you.

MR. TRIMPER: I might add, though, Gerry, if I could. We have a great rapport with the federal minister. She is gung-ho on getting more activity going in provinces, such as ours, which haven't really stepped up to date. So I look forward to that kind of dialogue and we're certainly watching for opportunities to access funding on a variety of initiatives such as that one.

Another one she talks a lot about is getting communities off diesel. This is another one that's got our interest.

MS. ROGERS: I met on Sunday with a group called Iron & Earth. I don't know if you know about them. They started in BC and Alberta. They are former workers in oil and mining, any kind of extraction industry –

MR. TRIMPER: I've heard of them.

MS. ROGERS: – and who are retraining and wanting to work in areas of green technology. So they're electricians and plumbers and pipefitters. They had their founding meeting here in Newfoundland and Labrador, in St. John's, on Sunday afternoon. They expected about 60. There were over 30. Almost all of them were guys, mostly men who had been working in the oil industry and in mining, who are really gung-ho, well-educated and have some great ideas. It's already going great guns in Alberta and BC, but we know for every one job in the oil industry – in terms of the amount of money – there are three in the green technology industries.

I hope, Minister, that you have a chance to meet with them.

MR. TRIMPER: I've heard of the group.

MS. ROGERS: Iron & Earth.

MR. TRIMPER: As I said in my opening remarks, it's an opportunity. If we step up we can be a leader.

MS. ROGERS: Yes. A great resource, I think.

MR. TRIMPER: Okay, good.

Thanks.

CHAIR: Order, please!

Ms. Rogers, anything further? I would like to move on if we can.

MS. ROGERS: Yes.

What are our greenhouse gas emission targets for 2020? Do we have those?

MR. TRIMPER: The objective is to be 10 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

MR. TRIMPER: So we've got some work to do.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

Is the waste audit of the West Block for 2014 available?

MR. TRIMPER: It's on the website now.

MS. ROGERS: So that's on the Office of Climate Change website?

MR. TRIMPER: Yes, you can go in there and find that.

MS. ROGERS: Great. Thank you.

The research that's been done around energy efficiency and government vehicles is there any movement there? Is there anything planned there?

MR. TRIMPER: Well, I bought an electric car. There's one start.

Certainly, dialogue and discussion; I'm very keenly interested in moving that forward.

Gerald, anything particular to comment that we –

MR. CRANE: We've explored putting in charging stations at the West Block and in the other government offices within the city where an electric vehicle may be appropriate to be located.

There have been some fiscal challenges. We've done the research in the background but we haven't taken any concrete steps.

MR. TRIMPER: If I may, just to add, you might recall this office released a report in November on electric vehicles in this province and the infrastructure that's available, the needs and so on. That's a very handy, useful reference.

MS. ROGERS: There's also a national group of activists and postal workers who are looking at our post offices across the country. I think there are 60,000 of them across the country, an

incredible infrastructure. They're looking at how do we use our post offices – they could be charging stations – how do we use them for energy efficiency.

It's kind of interesting. I'll give you the information I have.

MR. TRIMPER: Perfect.

MS. ROGERS: Just one last question. Bringing the national energy building code to Newfoundland and Labrador, where are with at that?

MR. TRIMPER: Do you want to take that, Gerald?

MR. CRANE: We committed to doing some stakeholder consultations and produce a report, which we did. That was released the last fiscal year.

Right now, we're in the process of meeting with the Departments of Municipal Affairs, SNL and Transportation and Works to determine what an appropriate path forward is. For us to do it, it would have to come in through a regulation or a piece of legislation somehow, so finding the appropriate tool and the appropriate timelines for doing that.

The other challenge for us right now is that we're looking at a 2011 code. These codes are updated every five years. The 2011 code will shortly be outdated so we have to build that into our work as well.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

Thank you very, very much.

MR. TRIMPER: Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you, Ms. Rogers.

Before we call the subhead, Mr. Petten, do you have any final questions? Just to be fair.

MR. PETTEN: No, that's fine. She did a great job actually. She asked a lot of the questions I had to ask anyway.

There was one thing just when Ms. Rogers asked. That pilot program, the home energy efficiency program, what was the name of that?

MR. CRANE: The formal name; it was the residential real-time monitoring energy conservation program.

MR. PETTEN: You provided grants or you provided –

MR. CRANE: Five hundred monitors to go on meters. It was actually a Blue Line monitor. The monitor would go on the outside of your home. There would be a little credit card-sized monitor that would go inside the home, and as the meter was churning, you could see how fast it was churning in real time.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

Was there was big uptake on that?

MR. CRANE: We had funding for 500 monitors and all 500 were installed.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

That's good. I just wanted to clarify that.

Thanks.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Petten.

Would the Clerk please recall the subhead?

CLERK: 2.2.04.

CHAIR: 2.2.04.

Shall the subhead carry?

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: Carried.

On motion, subhead 2.2.04 carried.

On motion, Office of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, total head, carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the Estimates of the Office of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency carried without amendment?

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: Carried.

On motion, Estimates of the Office of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency carried without amendment.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Again, just in the interest of time, if we could get started.

Welcome to the Estimates Committee of the Department of Environment and Conservation. I welcome everyone here this morning. I'd first turn it to the minister to introduce himself and his staff, please.

MR. TRIMPER: Perry Trimper, Minister Responsible for Environment and Conservation. I'm very pleased to have a very high-quality team with me here this morning. It's a great honour to work in this department. As with all of them, I'm so impressed with the caliber of people at the top of the game.

To my right is Mr. Ross Firth. He's the ADM for the Natural Heritage Branch. He's based in Corner Brook. To my immediate left is Ms. Colleen Janes. She's the deputy minister of the department. Beside her is an ADM responsible for the Environment Branch, Mr. Martin Goebel.

Behind him – yes, everybody is sitting where they should be – Ms. Colleen Johnson, she's our manager of finance and budgeting. Our controller, Ms. Robyn Hayes, is right behind us. Ms. Melanie Thomas, right behind myself, is the Director of Policy and Planning.

As I introduced in the back, doing the heckling, is Ms. Emily Timmins, Director of Communications and Mr. Ian Murphy, my executive assistant.

That's our team.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Mr. Petten, we're just doing the introductions right now.

MR. PETTEN: Barry Petten, MHA for Conception Bay South and Environment and Conservation critic.

MS. DRODGE: Megan Drodge, Researcher, Official Opposition caucus.

MS. ROGERS: I'm Gerry Rogers and I work for the good people of St. John's Centre.

MS. WILLIAMS: Susan Williams, Researcher, the Third Party.

MR. KING: Neil King, MHA for the historic District of Bonavista. I'm filling in for Pam Parsons.

MR. DEAN: Jerry Dean, MHA, Exploits.

MR. BRAGG: Derrick Bragg, MHA, Fogo Island – Cape Freels.

CHAIR: My name is Brian Warr. I'm the Chair of the Resource Committee. I'm the MHA for the District of Baie Verte – Green Bay.

Before we get started, just again in housekeeping, if one of the staff are asked to answer a question on behalf of the department, I'd certainly appreciate if you'd say your name first and wait for your tally light, then you can go ahead and answer the question.

Thank you very much. We'll get started.

Would the Clerk please call the first subhead?

CLERK: 1.1.01.

CHAIR: 1.1.01.

Minister, your opening remarks, please.

MR. TRIMPER: Thank you very much.

Chair, members of the Committee, I'd just like to say a few words about the process and the decisions that lead to the creation of our departmental budget for 2016-2017.

When our government began the Government Renewal Initiative in January, the executive team sat together to plan a way forward and to set guiding principles for the difficult decisions that were to come. As a team, we decided we would be guided by the principles of environmental stewardship in Newfoundland and Labrador. In other words, we would maintain the core priority areas of safe and sustainable drinking water, big game and wildlife management, do protection of species of conservation status, protected areas and overall environmental protection.

These decisions were made with the utmost consideration and with the best advice possible. We welcomed and encouraged input from department staff. We gathered information and suggestions from the government-wide, open-dialogue initiatives.

Our senior management team, which is around me now, includes highly-skilled engineers, biologists and other experts entered this process with an open mind and provided measured and sound advice on how we could do things differently while saving public money and generating much needed revenue.

We recognized we must contribute to revenue generation and bring our fees more in line with other jurisdictions. As part of this exercise, department officials conducted reviews of our fees and jurisdictional scans to inform our decisions. In many cases, our fees have fallen behind other provinces, particularly in Atlantic Canada. In others, the fees do not achieve cost recovery or did not fairly reflect the tremendous value of our natural resources.

For example, the budget sees the first increase in environmental assessment fees in 18 years. We are raising the water rental rate for hydro-electric developments to come in line with other provinces and better reflect the value of this natural commodity.

If I may say an additional word about the most difficult aspects of the budget, some of the hardest decisions were those that led to an elimination of a public sector position. Beginning on budget day, our officials began the difficult task of giving notice to 11 employees that their positions were being eliminated. Three

other employees were notified that their positions were changing from full-time to seasonal. In addition, six employees were advised that their positions are in effected out years, in the coming years.

We are acutely aware that budgets are not merely exercising in mathematics and with every choice people are directly affected, both within the public service and within the public we serve. Our team took this charge seriously, and while we have reduced funding and shifted focus in some areas, we sit before you today knowing we have made the best choice, the best possible decisions, decisions that preserve the core functions of the department for the benefit of the people of this province.

I thank you and we welcome your questions.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

Mr. Petten, we're currently speaking to 1.1.01.

MR. PETTEN: Good morning, everyone.

Some familiar faces from my previous times. Thank you all for coming here to answer our questions.

Again, Minister, if you don't mind, I have some general questions before we go into line items.

MR. TRIMPER: Please.

MR. PETTEN: I guess I'll start off where you just finished there first. You say about positions – where were those positions you cut? What divisions were they cut from?

MR. TRIMPER: I have a line by line. Do you want me to go through each of those or sort of a general –

MR. PETTEN: Just a general.

MR. TRIMPER: Perhaps I'll go to – Colleen, do you want to just describe in general where, please?

MS. JANES: Good morning.

Our positions are generally dispersed throughout the department in a number of examples in terms

of environmental scientists. We have a couple of administrative positions that were impacted as well. We have some park rangers that were impacted in terms of full-time to seasonal capacity. I would say fairly dispersed in Pollution Prevention. We restructured the division and moved from six sections down to three. So there were some positions removed in that process. There were several we were able to achieve through natural attrition, retirements or the elimination of vacancies.

But as the minister reflected in his opening remarks, there were 11 individuals who were in occupying positions that were notified of position eliminations and three that we're moving from year-round to a seasonal occupation.

MR. PETTEN: During the budget they announced it was 650 positions. Are those part of the 650?

MR. TRIMPER: That's correct.

MR. PETTEN: Those 11 positions?

MR. TRIMPER: Absolutely, yes.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

It was announced in last year's budget, the attrition plan, were there any positions identified under the attrition plan or any elimination because of the announced attrition plan last year?

MR. TRIMPER: I'll let my deputy take that.

MS. JANES: Yes, in addition to initiatives that we undertook through the budget in GRI process, we also identified three positions as part of the former Attrition Management Plan. So that's not reflected in the numbers the minister just referenced, in terms of our overall 19 that arose from budget and GRI processes. We did have three positions associated with the Attrition Management Plan that were also put into effect near the end of March.

MR. PETTEN: So that makes it 14 then, does it?

MR. TRIMPER: That's actually a total of 19 positions.

MR. PETTEN: Nineteen.

MR. TRIMPER: Nineteen positions overall are affected by the budget; three of them were through attrition, 11 are being eliminated. We had five vacant positions that are being eliminated.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

MR. TRIMPER: If I could, the deputy wants to clarify a point.

MS. JOHNSON: The 19 positions that the minister has referred to arose from decisions from the budget and GRI processes. In addition to that, we also had our attrition management plan that we continue to implement. That was three additional positions.

We also had a position that was contractual for a short-term period. We concluded that at the end of March which was its designated end. Then we had six positions that were clean up from prior years. They'd been vacant for a while and it was really getting the positions off the books.

When you add all of those together, the impact on '16-'17 is 26 less positions, but that doesn't mean 26 people were impacted.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

I have some general questions I was going to get to, too. Park fees; how much extra revenue is expected to be generated from the increase in park fees?

MR. TRIMPER: What I could do is give you a couple of examples. We don't have Estimates for all of them just because of the nature. For example, in Pippy Park campground fees, we're estimating an additional \$9,000 incremental.

I'm going to go to Colleen Johnson. She's looking like she has an idea there.

MS. JOHNSON: Estimated additional revenue in '16-'17 for Parks and Natural Areas is \$83,600.

MR. PETTEN: Eighty-three thousand dollars?

MS. JOHNSON: Eighty-three thousand and six hundred dollars.

MR. PETTEN: You just mentioned Pippy Park. Fees from that park – that goes directly to the government accounts, general revenue?

MS. JOHNSON: No.

MR. PETTEN: No. It goes to Pippy Park?

MS. JOHNSON: Yes.

MR. PETTEN: Right. My other question is what kind of impact does the cut – because they got their grant cut as well. What kind of impact is that going to have on Pippy Park?

MR. TRIMPER: If I may, well, obviously it's a cut in their operations, but they do receive revenues from other sources. We work very closely with the folks overseeing the Pippy Park Commission and its operations. So as painful as it was, it is a plan that we feel we can work with and continues to operate the facility.

MR. PETTEN: Again, with fees, I notice there were a great deal of fee increases in your department as opposed to a lot of others. Is there any perceived impact? I know that (inaudible) fee increase something, but there are a lot of fees increased, from license renewals to the full gamut. In asking impacts, what the impact will be is a broad, broad statement, but I guess are you anticipating to have much negative – do you anticipate that will be accepted negatively?

MR. TRIMPER: Obviously, no one likes to pay more, but as I said in my opening remarks – and I'd like to elaborate a little bit just on some of the rationale for the fee increases – we found a lot of them were very much out of sync with Atlantic Canada and across the country. We found some of them had not been moved since 1998.

Our environmental assessment fees, for example, hadn't been touched in years. You've got entities coming forward with multi-million dollar undertakings and it's a huge demand on our staff. So we wanted to move to, first of all, increase after almost 20 years, but also a

tremendous amount of time and energy is demanded of government to provide these services. So we're moving towards some cost-recovery opportunity.

I think by way of example, if I could, just in the last two days we have launched our online camp reservation system with new rates and fees and so on. I would point that within one to two minutes in each of the different regions that we went online with we completely sold out. So it doesn't seem to have slowed down, at least those aspects of what we do. A tremendous interest and I feel it's really a recognition of the important natural commodities that we offer in this province.

MR. PETTEN: What operational changes were made in the game management? How is this money going to be saved? I can't remember the exact figure, but in game management there is a – is it how we do our census?

MR. TRIMPER: I'm going to put out some opening thoughts and then I'll turn to Ross Firth for a comment.

Many jurisdictions are moving more to habitat modelling, using the data and the information that has been collected for many years, and many decades in our case, to better understand what's on the ground, and more or less work with that information to forecast in the future, for example, what harvest rates should be, where populations are going and so on.

Traditionally, wildlife ecology and management has been one of very much inventory based; counting animals, coming up with adjustments and then setting quotas. We're shifting away from that somewhat. So there will be less frequent inventory. For example, in moose management areas we'll be doing fewer of them each year and they will not be done as often; nevertheless, we still will be out there. We're moving more to more habitat based and other population modelling.

Ross, did you have a comment on that?

MR. FIRTH: Just in addition to what the minister mentioned, just to give you an example, we're going to be stopping the coyote carcass collection program. As you know, we've been

collecting coyote carcasses for a number of years and have built up an incredibly robust database. We've been collecting a number of variables such as body conditioning, age, sex of the animal and reproductive status. We have quite a strong database right now which allows us to do analysis and, as the minister indicated, project trends over time in the future. So we do have some good strong databases right now and that's an example right now.

CHAIR: Order, please!

Just in the interest of adding some order to our deliberations here this morning, we are on 1.1.01. I noticed that the minister and his department are flicking back and forth in their books because there are sections on the park, there are sections on wildlife, so if we could just stick to the headings. There will be an opportunity where we will go inclusive from a certain heading to another heading. They'll be inclusive and you can ask questions pertinent to those different sections, but if we could stick it would be just a little bit of order for everybody in the interest of time.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

I want to go to the Minister's Office, 1.1.01. My question is what caused the revised numbers to go over budget by \$78,000 – Salaries, sorry, by \$78,000? How will the savings be achieved in this fiscal year?

MR. TRIMPER: The increase over the projected budget for last year was a result of a retirement and we had leave payouts for two political staff. The slight decrease is in relation to my executive assistant. We pay him less but I would suggest he's worth more. I'll just enter that into the record.

MR. PETTEN: In Transportation and Communications, I see there's an increase of \$24,000. Why the increase this year over last?

MR. TRIMPER: I happen to live in Labrador and it's a pretty expensive place to come back and forth, versus my predecessor who was able to be home at night. It's a fair dollar to go back and forth.

Welcome to my reality. I'm doing my best to keep the cost down but that's the reality.

MR. PETTEN: Under 1.2.01.01, Salaries, there was a savings last year, I guess, of \$73,000 in the revised. Was there a vacant position that caused this to drop? If it was, is it being filled? Because it looks like it's gone back up a bit this year.

MR. TRIMPER: The \$76,300 you're talking about?

MR. PETTEN: Yes.

MR. TRIMPER: Okay.

We had a vacancy. It was a secretary to the ADM, and we had a communications director at a lower step level than budgeted. Again, worth more, paid less.

MR. PETTEN: A question under Executive Support, Revenue – Provincial, where does that revenue come from? What is this revenue?

MR. TRIMPER: We handle the salary for the chair of the MMSB.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

MR. TRIMPER: The CEO, I'm sorry.

MR. PETTEN: That's the salary portion there.

MR. TRIMPER: Yes. That flows through our department for his position.

MR. PETTEN: Mr. Chair, how far are we along? What's the –

CHAIR: We're just on 1.1.01.

MR. PETTEN: My time is up.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Ms. Rogers.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you very much.

I would like to thank all of you for your dedication and hard work. Some of our most precious treasures are in your hands for your stewardship. Your leadership is so important to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador in how we also all handle the incredible treasures that we have in our province of Newfoundland and Labrador. So I thank you for your work. I know how hard it is with the present fiscal situation.

I've come to start calling the GRI exercise, the grim exercise, because I know how tough some of those decisions are. I guess my role is to try and push for as much as we possibly can so that we can all do the work to our best ability, and particularly in this area of protection and stewardship and looking to the future and how to best handle the wonderful treasures that are part of our province. So thank you for your work; thank you for being here today.

I just have one question that was raised earlier before we continue on with the line by line. When the deputy minister said we had 26 fewer positions, are any of those outside of the number of jobs – was it 600 or 650 – government had announced that would be directly cut?

MR. TRIMPER: Colleen Janes.

MS. ROGERS: Thanks, Colleen.

MS. JANES: The 650 that was referenced by the Minister of Finance as part of the budget; my understanding, at least our component of that, would be that those numbers would have been reflected of the budget and GRI decisions. The other numbers I referenced are a contract position that was coming to a natural end. That concluded March 31, which was prior to the budget. There were six positions identified in prior years for that, as no longer required. So really it was getting the position numbers off our books.

MS. ROGERS: Right. So those six, would they be part of the 650 or those are outside?

MS. JANES: Not to my understanding. What I believe was included in the 650 are the 19 positions that the minister would have referred to.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, thank you very much.

So if we continue on our line by lines, 1.2.02, Administrative Support. The Salaries, we see a reduction in '15-'16 of \$45,000, \$46,000. Did we lose a position there?

MR. TRIMPER: It just reflects less students that were anticipated for this fiscal.

MS. ROGERS: Summer students working in the park area?

MR. TRIMPER: Yes, summer students.

MS. ROGERS: So that was '15-'16. There were fewer students there were there?

MR. TRIMPER: I'm sorry. We had four co-op students there, too.

MS. ROGERS: Okay. We've lost those four co-op students but the anticipation for '16-'17 is that those numbers will go up again?

MR. TRIMPER: Colleen Janes is going to take that.

MS. ROGERS: This is under Administrative Support, yes?

MS. JANES: Yes. So what you're seeing there is a reduction in our revised expenditure from what was budgeted for '15-'16. That was reflective of the fact that we only had two summer students plus four co-op students last year and we had anticipated eight summer students and four co-ops. We had achieved the level of co-op students but underachieved on our number of summer students. We are anticipating and have budgeted for the eight, plus four again for this fiscal year.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

So try again.

MR. TRIMPER: Yes.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, thank you.

Grants and Subsidies, can you give me an idea to who the grants and subsidies go to? What kinds of work that would be?

MR. TRIMPER: Sure.

In 2015-2016, for example, the two CCME, the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment, there was \$16,794, and to the Canadian Parks Council an additional \$2,000.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, thank you.

1.2.03, Policy Development and Planning, under Professional Services there was a budget for \$35,000 and it was revised to zero in '15-'16 and also zero in '16-'17. Can you tell me the type of professional services you had anticipated and now there's no budget for that there?

MR. TRIMPER: I'll get Melanie Thomas to comment on that.

MS. THOMAS: Typically, the policy division would, as required, undertake evaluations of departmental programs and research. So, traditionally, that's how our Professional Services dollars have been used. Those were not required in '15-'16 and it's not anticipated in the current year either.

MS. ROGERS: Can you tell me, Melanie, a little bit of what kinds of programs you would have had evaluated?

MS. THOMAS: It has varied over the years. More recently, and I believe it was in concluding, in '14-'15 there would have been a review of the Green Fund, which was a funding initiative the department had launched a number of years ago, a cost-shared program with the federal government.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, thank you.

And then, moving on to General Administration, 1.2.04, can we just have an idea of what the plans are for some of the capital expenses?

MR. TRIMPER: Some of the capital expenditures?

MS. ROGERS: Yes. I guess in '15-'16 there was nothing budgeted but then there was an expense of \$16,000.

MR. TRIMPER: I can go through each of those items. First of all, that \$16,100 reflects an

infrastructure piece at Butter Pot park. We were putting a bridge in. That work is done.

The next line item, \$55,000, that's actually a redeployment of vehicles within a department. It had initially been proposed to buy them. We were able to find them within our fleet, so we just redeployed them.

Then finally, we had an additional line item of \$2,900. That was where we used less funds than required to replace a vehicle and a generator at Butter Pot, so small items there.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, thank you.

1.2.05, Pippy Park Commission, we see a reduction this year of \$142,300. How will that affect Pippy Park? What is that reduction based on?

MR. TRIMPER: This was an amount that we collaborated with the folks running the park, as I indicated earlier. It represents that effort to reduce expenditures throughout government.

We have \$142,300. That represents one grounds maintenance position. It was an equipment operator, so that was lost through attrition. We cancelled the purchase of two vehicles, but I'd like to note that we, again, found some more vehicles in our fleet. So we provided to Pippy Park two vehicles they were looking for; moving them around so they'd be better used.

There's a reduction in building and equipment maintenance projects, a reduction in some maintenance supplies, reduction in park signage, a reduction in lumber for picnic tables, travel and some reduction in training.

MS. ROGERS: It's a bit of a hit there for Pippy Park, isn't it? When we look at the additional fees we will only anticipate bringing in \$9,000.

MR. TRIMPER: Yes.

MS. ROGERS: So that's, what, almost – it's over 25 per cent or 25 per cent reduction.

MR. TRIMPER: It's 25 per cent of what we provide, but not in their overall budget.

MS. ROGERS: Oh, okay. So there's more – they have more money coming in from other places in the department?

MR. TRIMPER: That's correct.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, all right. Thank you very much.

And if we move on to 2.1.01, Environmental Management –

CHAIR: Order, please!

Can we just stick to 1.2.01 to 1.2.05, and then we'll –

MS. ROGERS: Yes, absolutely.

CHAIR: Okay.

Any further questions, Ms. Rogers, on 1.2.01 to 1.2.05?

MS. ROGERS: I guess back to Pippy Park, do you anticipate – no, it's okay. I'm satisfied with the answers.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Okay.

Thank you, Ms. Rogers.

Mr. Petten, anything on 1.2.01 to 1.2.05, inclusive?

MR. PETTEN: Yes, just one question, actually. I just wanted to ask on Pippy Park, what's the total operational budget for Pippy Park? I know that's what we provide as the government, \$2.6 million I guess. What is the total operational budget of Pippy Park?

MR. TRIMPER: We're looking around to see; it may be one of those ones we'll have to get back to you on. We'll come back to you on that, if we could. Make a note of that. You stumped us.

CHAIR: Okay, would the Clerk please call the next subhead?

CLERK: 2.1.01.

CHAIR: 2.1.01.

Ms. Rogers.

MS. ROGERS: Oh, is it not my colleague's –

CHAIR: He's finished with –

MS. ROGERS: The line by lines?

CHAIR: – 1.2.01 to 1.2.05. We are only on 2.1.01 now.

MS. ROGERS: Yes. Okay, thank you very much.

So under Salaries, we see the revised budget for '15-'16, an increase of \$174,000, and then in '16-'17 a decrease of \$153,000. Can you just explain that?

MR. TRIMPER: I'll take the increase first. That reflects retirement and leave payouts for the director and the manager. That represented some \$306,300. That was offset by vacancies for a portion of the fiscal year. We had two environmental engineer positions and one manager position. So on balance, that represents an increase.

The decrease you referenced, the \$2,339,000 and why that number is down from the budget of the previous year, that decrease of about \$153,600 reflects reductions during our GRI, our budget process. There are two positions of which one is vacant. So that's a manager and an environmental engineer. That's offset by salary costs arising from the JES representing another \$27,000.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, thank you.

Professional Services; we see an increase of \$77,000 in '15-'16 and then another increase of \$150,000 in '16-'17. Can you explain the types of professional services those increases might represent?

MR. TRIMPER: Sure. I'll make a comment and then I'll probably turn to Martin Goebel for a little follow-up.

First of all in the increase of the \$77,000 that reflects costs associated with contaminated sites

contracts at Shoal Point, Hopedale, Butter Pot, Camp 33, Come by Chance and New Harbour. It's a monitoring and an ISLAP, Phase I ESA reports on old military sites in Trinity Loop. There's a variety of sites that's involved there.

Is that what you were looking for?

MS. ROGERS: I think so, yes.

MR. TRIMPER: Martin, anything further to add?

MR. GOEBEL: Thank you, Minister.

No, that was just pretty well exactly what it is. They're professional services where consultants are engaged to do site assessment type work for the most part.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

Then under Purchased Services we see quite a reduction there of \$223,000 in '15-'16 and \$338,000 in '16-'17. Can you explain anything you may have had to discontinue?

MR. TRIMPER: This relates to work going on at Hopedale. It's a former US military site. To date, government has spent some \$12 million. This year we're anticipating spending another \$1.46 million – I'm getting nods, \$1.46 million. We did pull back on an anticipated some \$200,000. There are two elements to that project. One is dealing with the remediation of contaminated soil such as PCBs and so on. We are proceeding with that. That's a human health issue. We're very concerned about it, so we're complete status quo. We're progressing on that.

The other element is a site called the Old Dump Pond and there's metal and debris that is not contaminated. It's certainly a bit of an eyesore, but it's not a health issue, so we've foregone that activity this year. That had been earmarked, but we pulled back to address this fiscal situation.

MS. ROGERS: The Old Dump Pond – is that one location or is that a number of locations?

MR. TRIMPER: I turn to Martin.

MR. GOEBEL: It's one location near the community of Hopedale.

MS. ROGERS: Right. Okay, thank you very much.

The Revenue from the federal government, we see there was a dip in the revised for 2015-16 and anticipation once again for \$25,000. What would that revenue be?

MR. TRIMPER: That's related to site inspections for Health Canada.

MS. ROGERS: Our province does them and Health Canada pays for them. Is that it?

MR. GOEBEL: That is correct. It's an MOU we have with Health Canada, under pesticides actually, to do site inspections, as the minister mentioned.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you.

The Revenue on the provincial level, what would that be for? We see quite a jump there in the anticipated revenue in '16-'17.

MR. TRIMPER: Thank you.

It's interesting; our department actually oversees a variety of fees that are out there.

What you are seeing here is an increase of some \$922,500 reflecting our increased revenue due to those modifications that we projected and implemented, as well as revenue from MMSB, Multi-Materials Stewardship Board, for environmental initiatives. So we've received \$1 million from them and we'll be using it on programs.

MS. ROGERS: What kinds of programs might you be using that for?

MR. TRIMPER: That is going towards the Hopedale remediation work that I just indicated, for this example.

MS. ROGERS: Okay. Thank you.

I'm just seeing if there are any other questions I had in that area. No, I think we're fine.

2.2.01, Water Resources Management.

CHAIR: No, we're still on 2.1.01.

MS. ROGERS: Okay. I'm done there.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you, Ms. Rogers.

Mr. Petten, 2.1.01.

MR. PETTEN: My colleague asked most all of them. I just have one brief question under Employee Benefits. What changed for the budget to change from \$10,000 last year to \$900 this year?

MR. TRIMPER: Yes, that's just reflecting a line-by-line review, just looking for efficiency in there. We were just rightsizing.

MR. PETTEN: What's included in Employee Benefits? What would that be?

MR. TRIMPER: Okay.

Colleen Janes is going to answer that one.

MS. JANES: Typically, under Employee Benefits we would pay out things such as conferences that are related to our mandate that include opportunities for staff to avail of new information and take that back to deploy in the workplace.

So in terms of the expenditure under this activity last year, there was a backyard composting conference, there was a Department of Fisheries and Ocean Fisheries Act workshop; things of that nature is what you would expect under Employee Benefits.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

That's all I have on that section.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Petten.

Would the Clerk please call the next set of subheads?

CLERK: 2.2.01 to 2.2.02.

CHAIR: 2.2.01 to 2.2.02 inclusive.

Mr. Petten.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Salaries, it appears Salaries are increasing. Could you explain that for me, please? It might not be a lot but there has been an increase.

MR. TRIMPER: There's an increase of some \$54,900 that reflects both JES and some reclassification costs.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

MR. TRIMPER: There's some sun setting of funding from the Atlantic Climate Adaptation Solutions Association, or ACASA. So that's a decrease of \$48,000. We've also identified some savings through our GRI in our budget process of \$44,800. There's a Clerk Typist III and other departmental centralization of administrative services in the St. John's location. So it's a combination of things, moving parts in there, and you're seeing a slight increase.

MR. PETTEN: Okay, thank you.

Under Professional Services, what type of services is included here?

MR. TRIMPER: Well, we're talking about – okay, I'm going to give it to Martin Goebel.

MR. GOEBEL: The current budget for Professional Services has four components: \$821,000 is for the Hydrometric Agreement, which is a cost-shared program that measures water quantity; \$275,000 is for a flood damage reduction study of the Waterford River, which will be continued. It's ongoing now and it will be continued in 2016-17; \$180,000 is for contract work for a new project to look at adapting standard operating procedures for boil-water advisories. This is a drinking water initiative. Another \$50,000 will be for a contract to look at dam safety.

MR. PETTEN: What accounts for the \$500,000 in the revised for 2015-16? I see it's gone back up a bit but it's still not what the original budget was of last year of \$1.553 million.

MR. TRIMPER: We have a hydrometric agreement. There's some savings there due to

decommissioning of several industry funded stations. We have reduced projects under ACASA, as we mentioned, and as well we have a delay in the flood risk mapping project for the Waterford River.

MR. PETTEN: There is a delay in that you say?

MR. TRIMPER: That's correct.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

Purchased Services, I guess the question there is what type of things would be there under Water Resources when you look at Purchased Services? What's included in that?

MR. TRIMPER: Do you want to take that, Martin?

MR. GOEBEL: The Purchased Services are used for such activities as drinking water testing, the hurricane flood alert work and other activities related to the mandate of the division.

Basically, it's mostly drinking water testing for the most part. It's the provision of the laboratory services that are required because we do the testing at accredited laboratories.

MR. PETTEN: It was \$60,000 over budget last year and it's \$100,000 less this year. What was the reason? Why did it go over budget? Why did we have to revise it in 2015-16?

MR. GOEBEL: There was some money transferred into that account for the purpose of working on the hurricane alert system.

During the hurricane season, our department models the anticipated rainfall and converts that in terms of flooding in communities. We alert communities that are in a hurricane trajectory – a weather trajectory – to alert them not just of the rainfall precipitation but whether there could be flooding. That work is a purchased service because we use a weather service consultant for that.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

Under Grants and Subsidies, I see there's nothing there this year. What's been eliminated?

MR. TRIMPER: It's reflecting the sun setting of the funding for that ACASA program. It was a period of time – how many years? Three years?

OFFICIAL: Three years.

MR. TRIMPER: It was set up for three years. So it's just that program has ended, just not ongoing anymore.

MR. PETTEN: Under your Revenue, what program was the federal revenue supposed to be from? There's nothing there now.

MR. TRIMPER: Did you refer to federal-provincial?

MR. PETTEN: In the Revenue, under the federal line it says there's nothing there this year. It was \$30,000 last year.

MR. TRIMPER: That's all related to that same ACASA program.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

What about the provincial portion, what's –

MR. TRIMPER: That's a rightsizing, just based on historical revenues. It's offset by fee modifications. So there are a couple of things going on there, but it's just reflecting the past and an estimate of what we would probably see this year.

MR. PETTEN: In the 2.2.02, Salaries, were dollars saved by positions being vacant – \$123,000 in savings? Are the positions being removed? Is that what happened here or retirements?

MR. TRIMPER: I'm going to get Colleen to –

MR. PETTEN: Sure.

MS. JANES: There are a couple of things occurring here as well. The overall decrease from last year to this year is \$123,200. That's reflective of reductions through the budget GRI process of \$78,000 associated with an environmental scientist in Water Resources Management. We also have the Attrition Management Plan that we referenced earlier, in

terms of a position that came out in '15-'16 that is no longer budgeted for now in '16-'17.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

Flip down to the Revenue on this section here too. So the federal revenue on this one, what's this federal revenue from here? We see it's \$76,000, down from \$121,000?

MR. TRIMPER: It's a reduction of federal funding for some special projects, and I'll turn to Martin to comment on those.

MR. GOEBEL: That reflects some contributions that Environment Canada would have given to us for water quality programs, but there were no special studies carried out under that activity, if you will.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

What about the provincial portion? What does that involve? Where does that come from?

MR. GOEBEL: That revenue reflects cost-shared revenue that we get, largely from industry, for real-time water quality monitoring stations. We have stations that measure water quality at some of the major mine sites and dam sites. There's always changes that gets reflective of the industry. There were a few stations that were removed. That reflects less income in that category.

MR. PETTEN: Okay, thank you.

CHAIR: Order, please!

I just remind the Member that his time has expired. Is there a closing question that you'd like to –?

MR. PETTEN: I just have one left, if you don't mind, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. TRIMPER: That's fine.

CHAIR: Thank you.

MR. PETTEN: Under your Purchased Services up here, there's a noticeable drop, obviously. It

was budgeted for \$100,000. It's down now to \$45,900. I notice last year it was only \$27,000 used. What's included there and how are these savings achieved? I guess it's all a part of the same question.

MR. TRIMPER: That is actually a decrease of about \$72,400. It's reflecting – we cancelled a real-time workshop and some other related activities that were associated with the mining industry because of that slowdown. We decided to cancel the workshop. There was associated downsizing of industry-funded network as well.

MR. PETTEN: Okay, thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Petten.

Ms. Rogers, 2.2.01 to 2.2.02.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you.

I'm good with the line by lines. I just have a few quick questions.

The groundwater pollution study around the Torbay Airport, has that been completed?

MR. TRIMPER: I'll turn to Martin Goebel.

MR. GOEBEL: I can't say for sure, I'm sorry.

MR. TRIMPER: We're not sure. We can get back to you.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, great. Thank you.

Do we have any idea whether the federal government is going to take responsibility? Because I know the pollution was due to the federal firefighting training over the decades. Is there any idea of what's going on there?

MR. GOEBEL: We've been discussing this with the federal government. Of course, they're more than aware of this, but there has been really no discussion as to that aspect of it. We have to, I guess, first really delineate the extent of that plume and whether it's having an impact downstream and to what extent.

MS. ROGERS: So, Martin, is it that we're just not sure if the study is finished or it's finished,

we just don't quite have a handle on it yet. What do you think?

MR. GOEBEL: I'm just not quite sure if we have the final report that I could say, yes, it's finished, and then I could give you the report. But I'm not quite sure about that aspect.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, great. Thank you.

It's an interesting area.

How many boil-water advisories do we have now? Do we have a sense of what's been happening in the past year? Have they been changing? How many communities are affected?

MR. TRIMPER: While Martin is looking – the number changes quite frequently.

MS. ROGERS: Yes, I know.

MR. TRIMPER: But I'll flip over to Martin, maybe, for the latest update, if you're able.

MR. GOEBEL: Yes, as the minister mentioned, this is a number that changes quite frequently in each community's circumstance. But just to answer your question, more specifically in total in 2015-16 – this would be up to March 31 – there were 336 boil advisories issued. In that same period, there were 324 boil advisories that were lifted. So there are actually many cases where a community would have a boil advisory, they correct the problem. So that's not reflective of the number of communities, but that's just the raw number of boil advisories.

The difference between those two numbers is 12. There's a constant turnover of boil advisories for various reasons. It could be anything from routine maintenance that requires a boil advisory because water is being flushed through the system, to testing results where there are inadequate chlorine residuals or whatever the case may be.

MS. ROGERS: Okay. I imagine some are short in duration, some can be longer.

MR. GOEBEL: Absolutely, yes.

MS. ROGERS: Do we have any communities that are on a permanent boil order and how many?

MR. GOEBEL: Well, we define long-term boil advisories as boil advisories that are five years or more. Yes, we do have a number of those. In some cases, they've been on for many years; they simply don't have a chlorination system. But we are working towards reducing those long-term ones.

We've had fairly good success in a couple of examples where we've used standard operating procedures, a study that was completed just last year. There was a pilot done on two communities to see if standard operating procedures would help and, in fact, it has. So we're hopeful that with the upcoming study I mentioned earlier that we'd be able to put in place standard operating procedures that would address many of the long-term boil advisories.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

And about how many would be on long term, about how many communities? Just sort of a ballpark.

MR. GOEBEL: I want to say roughly about 150 or so. That's a very round figure if you don't mind me saying it that way.

MS. ROGERS: And has that number been consistent over a while, the number of communities?

MR. GOEBEL: Well, it's been consistent because obviously it's longer than five years. The total number of boil advisories at any given time has dropped from over 300 when we first started tracking boil advisories in 2001, to roughly right now around 220 boil advisories that are in place on average. Again, as I mentioned earlier, the actual boil advisories come and go, but on an average we're around that number.

They tend to go up a little bit more in the summertime because you have a couple of factors such as warm water temperatures combined with more maintenance being carried out. So we tend to get a bit higher number during the summer and then during the winter

that drops off. But that number has been somewhat steady. It's been a bit hard to get that below 220 simply because there are a fair number that are on the long-term basis where it's a bigger problem to correct the boil advisory.

MS. ROGERS: So the 150 communities – that's been pretty steady for a while, has it, around that number of communities that are on a long-term boil order?

MR. GOEBEL: It's been fairly steady. It's largely the same communities. We do have a very comprehensive list that we maintain on our website so the public can, at any time, access that list and can get all the information about that boil advisory such as what the reason is and why it's been placed to the community that's affected, the water supply in that community.

You have to remember that some communities have more than one water supply and that's not always a given that each water supply in that community has a boil advisory, or even a boil advisory for the same reason. So that information is maintained very accurately and is the best source of information on a daily basis.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, thank you.

I'm fine thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you, Ms. Rogers.

Would the Clerk please call the next subhead?

CLERK: 2.3.01

CHAIR: 2.3.01.

Ms. Rogers.

MS. ROGERS: 2.3.01, Environmental Assessment and Sustainable Development. When we look at Salaries we see a reduction in the revised amount in '15-'16 and then also a significant reduction in 2016-17. Can you just please identify what that represents.

MR. TRIMPER: The first reduction from the 2015-2016, that's about \$119,800. That reflects vacant positions for a portion of the fiscal year; there was an environmental scientist and a wildlife project biologist.

Then for our Estimate for 2016-17, that's a decrease of \$320,700. It reflects reductions that comprise four positions of which one was vacant. So there's a sustainable development research scientist, an administrative officer, environmental scientist and a WPEO is a word processing equipment operator.

MS. ROGERS: Do we still have word processors? No.

MR. TRIMPER: It's the classification I guess.

MS. ROGERS: It's a classification, yeah.

MR. TRIMPER: It's a new acronym for me.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, thank you.

Transportation and Communications; we see a significant drop in both the revised amount and then for 2016-17. Is there anything in particular that was planned for and not undertaken? What are we not doing there now?

MR. TRIMPER: No, not at all. It's really just rightsizing. It's our line-by-line review in both cases. We're just anticipating less travel this year.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, thank you.

Purchased Services we see – what kinds of purchased services would be there and what are we anticipating not doing?

MR. TRIMPER: We have a little reference here. I'll get that for you.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, thanks.

MR. TRIMPER: For last year, for example, it refers to things like leased accommodations, vehicle maintenance and there are shredding and copier charges.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

Thank you very much.

In the revenue we see a significant drop in provincial revenue. What would that revenue be and why has it dropped so much?

MR. TRIMPER: The first one, the 2015-2016, that's just less revenue received from the permits as well as recovery costs from industry. It's project-based, so it depends on what's happening at the time.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, yes.

MR. TRIMPER: Then, projecting this year, we're just rightsizing. Looking back you only see one year here, but we've gone back several, of course, to say let's just put our hopes where they should be in our anticipated amounts.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, good.

Thank you.

I'm fine, thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you.

2.3.01.

Mr. Petten.

MR. PETTEN: I'm fine as well.

CHAIR: Okay. Thank you.

Would the Clerk please call the set of subheads?

CLERK: 3.1.01 and 3.1.02.

CHAIR: 3.1.01 to 3.1.02 inclusive.

Mr. Petten.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The first one I want to ask about is Salaries, of course. Why the increase in Salaries from the budget of 2015 to the revised '16? Yeah, it's not a big increase, but there is an increase.

MR. TRIMPER: First of all, referring to what happened in the previous year, there's an increase of \$41,200. That's reflecting the extension of some seasonal staff. We kept them on for fall maintenance and then there were severance costs associated, offset by vacancies. There was a manager and an environmental scientist involved there.

The amount that you're seeing here now projected in our Estimate for '16-'17, there's an increase of \$69,400. That's reflecting salary costs arising from a JES which amounts for \$85,000, as well as a variance in the year-two funding for Mistaken Point. That represents \$125,800.

There are five additional positions. Again, moving parts – partially offset by our budget exercise and initiatives, which represent \$141,400. There are operational efficiencies. So as I indicated earlier, we've moved back away from the year-round operations at Butter Pot, Notre Dame and Barachois. We are proposing to no longer operate this winter coming.

MR. PETTEN: Under your Professional Services, I noticed nothing was budgeted, but \$29,000 was spent in 2015-2016 under revised. So what's being forecast for 2016-17 to go from zero to \$286,000?

MR. TRIMPER: Okay, so a couple of things here. They all relate, frankly, around the T' Railway and the trestle at Terra Nova.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

MR. TRIMPER: The \$29,000 actually reflects a contract for the Terra Nova trestle plus the legal fees.

The \$286,500 reflects new funding that we've allocated for an assessment of T' Railway structures across the Island. So we've allocated a quarter-million dollars to complete an inventory of the state and condition of some 130 overpasses that comprise this park.

MR. PETTEN: And the T' Railway.

MR. TRIMPER: And the T' Railway.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

Purchased Services; I noticed that's increased, too, by a fair amount, \$262,000 or close on it. What's contained in this line item?

MR. TRIMPER: That's the other part. We break up the repairs to the Terra Nova trestle. There are consulting fees that I just described

and this is the actual contractor. We've allocated some \$243,500 for that.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

MR. TRIMPER: Then there are some other small things associated with it, electricity costs, and we have an increase in funding allocated with year two for Mistaken Point.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

Under Grants and Subsidies, where do these grants go? It's \$154,000 straight across the board.

MR. TRIMPER: We provide \$150,000 to the Newfoundland and Labrador T' Railway Council and we provide \$4,000 to the Canadian Parks Council.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

Where would the revenue – I know it's not big amounts there under your federal and provincial. What are those revenues and where do they come from?

MR. TRIMPER: The provincial one, there's a slight decrease. That just reflects a reduction in the sale of inventory items, so books and posters.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

MR. TRIMPER: We talked about this the other day. We shot rather high in terms of what we thought we might receive. So we've rightsized that based on looking back over several years.

The federal revenue, that's related to costs at Gros Morne that are shared with the federal government. We're no longer incurring those costs.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

Under Park Development, under Salaries there, again, not a big drop, but there seems to be somewhat of a variance there. There's less –

MR. TRIMPER: Yes, you've got a line-by-line review. The other activity going on there is just

less overtime costs than budgeted. This is what you saw in the revised for 2015-16.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

I guess the drop in Transportation and Communications, is that less?

MR. TRIMPER: Yes. There's nothing necessarily removed, it's just a line-by-line review. The \$8,000 drop in the \$3,300, that's just a reflection of less travel than was anticipated.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

One more question. Up on top under 3.1.01 in Supplies, what type of supplies? It's a fair amount of money.

MR. TRIMPER: Okay, I'll just look this up for you.

Supplies; we have things like office supplies, heating fuel, propane, food items, small tools, appliances, first aid kits, some of the larger items and construction and maintenance supplies associated with cleaning in the parks. We've got some machinery, fuel for government services, personal and household supplies, construction and field safety. It's quite a wide range.

MR. PETTEN: Mishmash.

Okay, Mr. Chair, I'm good on those two sections.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Petten.

The Chair would request that we take a five-minute recess prior to 3.1.01 and 3.1.02 for you Ms. Rogers. Five minutes, so if we could be back by 11 o'clock.

Thank you.

Recess

CHAIR: Okay, we'll get started. We're on 3.1.01 to 3.1.02 inclusive.

Ms. Rogers you're up.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'm satisfied with the line by line; I just have a few questions. We know that the ecological reserve managers that we lost were removed in 2013 in Cape St. Mary's in the Witless Bay ecological seabird reserve. We've been hearing a little bit about an increase in violations. Without the on-site managers, is there any plan to return those, reinstate those?

MR. TRIMPER: First of all, we're unaware of an increase in violations. Do you have somebody just mentioning this to you?

MS. ROGERS: Yes.

MR. TRIMPER: I guess as the department responsible for issuing, we're missing that part of that equation.

No, we're not.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, maybe we can talk a little bit further about that outside of Estimates.

MR. TRIMPER: Sure.

MS. ROGERS: Is there any plan at all to return those on-site managers?

MR. TRIMPER: Not at this time.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

Thank you.

But none of the ecological and wilderness reserves have monitoring or protection. Will the natural areas system plan that your government has committed to moving forward with consider assigning conservation and wildlife officers to these reserves?

MR. TRIMPER: I guess, first of all, the task before us is to identify those areas and make sure they represent the various ecosystems in the province. Then, through that planning process, I guess at that time we'd undertake to see what steps will be required to ensure their integrity going forward.

Ross is perhaps going to add a comment.

MR. FIRTH: Just to add to your comment that none of those reserves have any monitoring or management. I would suggest that, in fact, they do. We have staff that do, in fact, do monitoring of our wilderness reserves and our ecological reserves. And there are management plans in place for many of those reserves as well.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

I guess this stems from folks who are concerned about perhaps not enough – in their eyes – monitoring and are concerned about the status of that for our parks, for our reserves.

The wilderness and the ecological reserves advisory committee, will that be meeting regularly and working on the natural areas systems plan?

MR. TRIMPER: Absolutely. Actually, they were in my office just a few days ago. I know several of them; I've worked with them prior to my own political situation.

No, I see this as an extremely important group. We've had a very productive discussion just last week and are in regular contact. So I see it being a key source of information and support as we go forward.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

Will there be public consultations?

MR. TRIMPER: There are actually public consultations happening now, that they're overseeing and supporting us on, regarding a particular aspect of some work in Central Newfoundland.

MS. ROGERS: All right, great.

I must say I'm very excited about the T' Railway development as well. I use different parts of it a lot, biking and hiking. It's such a treasure and the potential there is so great.

MR. TRIMPER: Well it was hours I was on the job and I was certainly hearing about the importance of that facility, so yes.

MS. ROGERS: Great. Thank you very much.

I'm fine there.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you Ms. Rogers.

Would the Clerk please call the next set of subheads?

CLERK: 3.2.01 to 3.2.06.

CHAIR: 3.2.01 to 3.2.06.

Ms. Rogers.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you very much.

Under 01, Transportation and Communications, we saw an increase of \$303,000 for the revised for '15 – '16. Can you just elaborate on that?

MR. TRIMPER: So that's associated with mail-out costs of licences and applications for big game for two fiscal years. We had a delay in the mail out so it just got carried over.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

Delay in carry-over. Thank you.

So then you were back again to what would have been anticipated for the year.

MR. TRIMPER: Yes, that's correct.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you.

Purchased Services – an increase in the revised amount in '15-'16 and a decrease of \$51,000 for '16-'17. Can you just talk a little bit about that? What kinds of Purchased Services would they have been?

MR. TRIMPER: Sure.

First of all, the increase, that's about \$63,600. That's associated with banking fees and the preparation of the mail out of the big game applications. That's a big activity in our department. And the decrease, we've identified savings there. We're using more online tools for the Hunting and Trapping Guide, so there's a savings of \$21,000 there, and further reductions

that we identified during our budget GRI process of \$30,000.

I'll just look to see if my colleagues have any additional comments.

MS. ROGERS: It's great that the licensing is going online for hunting and fishing, but will there still be print copies and mail-in registration?

MR. TRIMPER: We've provided print copies in all of our offices across the Island, a limited supply. But, yes, they were available for hard copy.

MS. ROGERS: Okay. And will be this year as well, this coming fiscal year?

MR. FIRTH: You're talking about the Hunting and Trapping Guide, are you?

MS. ROGERS: Yes.

MR. FIRTH: Yes, they're available this year.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, great.

Thank you very much.

3.2.02, Endangered Species and Biodiversity; so the revised from '15 – '16 was a drop in \$80,000. If I could just have some information on that.

MR. TRIMPER: You're referring to the Salaries?

Yes, that's a reflection of two vacant ecosystem management ecologist positions for a portion of the fiscal year. One was due to maternity leave.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

And Transportation and Communications, there's a small drop there.

MR. TRIMPER: Yes, similar to my earlier comment on one of the other sections. It's just a reflection of less travel. It was anticipated in that line-by-line review, so there's nothing that was necessarily removed; it was just rightsizing.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, thank you.

Now, the previous government removed the guardians at the Burnt Cape Reserve on the Northern Peninsula. That was for the protection of the rare Braya plants.

MR. TRIMPER: Yes.

MS. ROGERS: Will the guardians be reinstated this year?

MR. TRIMPER: At this time we have no plans to do that.

Correct?

OFFICIAL: Yes.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

Can we have an update on the Species Status Advisory Committee and how often they meet?

MR. TRIMPER: Perhaps I'll turn to Ross for that comment. I could describe elements of it but Ross is more familiar.

MR. FIRTH: The SSAC, the Species Status Advisory Committee, meets on a pretty regular basis, I believe. Most recently, they met, I think, it was in February or March of this year. They remain active.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

In terms of the corridor for the transmission lines for Muskrat Falls, I understand it's a 600-metre corridor, so over half a kilometre. Do we have any idea the effect that has had on the status of our wild flora and fauna? How has the collection of our wild flora and fauna been going because I know there were significant cuts over the past few years?

So I'm interested in the collection of it and the preservation. Can you talk to me a little bit about that?

MR. TRIMPER: I'm going to take the first part of the question, and Ross, I'll turn to you.

In terms of the impacts from that line; as you know, the project went through a thorough environmental assessment, along with a very robust mitigation program. Now, as the

construction proceeds, there are environmental monitors on site making sure those promises and commitments, including what we directed, are being carried out.

In terms of the collection of fauna and flora, I'm not sure what you're – are you relating to just an inventory of – instead of trying to guess, could you just elaborate on that question?

MS. ROGERS: Yes, we used to have a very specific program where we had a scientist who would collect and catalogue. I'm just wondering where that is now.

MR. TRIMPER: Well, the department certainly has very trained, experienced botanists based in Corner Brook, primarily, who are engaged in this work on a regular basis. So they are monitoring – especially the species that are on our species of conservation status list concern. We're keeping a close watch on those.

Ross, do you want to –?

MR. FIRTH: The minister is correct in stating that we do have a botanist on staff.

MS. ROGERS: We have one botanist, is it?

MR. FIRTH: There's one botanist, yes, within the Wildlife Division who is based in Corner Brook. That particular position does build and administer a plant collection. So there is a plant collection and space, a dry area within our laboratory space within Corner Brook and that collection is maintained there.

MS. ROGERS: So we don't have any public displays of flora and rare species, anything like that?

MR. FIRTH: We have, in the past, loaned out some samples and specimens to The Rooms. If, from time to time, The Rooms want to display or have certain galleries which they wish to display, either flora and fauna specimens from time to time, they will seek specimens from us and we'll do a temporary loan for them.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you, Ms. Rogers.

MS. ROGERS: (Inaudible) but my time is done.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Mr. Petten, on 3.2.01 to 3.2.06.

MR. PETTEN: Okay. Thank you.

3.2.01, I have just one question up here. Salaries, why are they over by \$50,000 last year and this year they are less \$70,000? Is that a position eliminated there as well?

MR. TRIMPER: Yes.

Mercifully, this was before my own time, but my sympathy for my colleagues.

The \$52,300 reflects overtime costs associated with the defective salmon tag issue, and we had a privacy breach that occurred. Big game application packages were received by incorrect individuals in 2015; so two little challenges there that resulted in the increase in cost.

The decrease you see, that's reflecting our budget moves; I think I indicated that. We've got a Clerk Typist III that implements the new licence validation seal for hunting and angling, and that's partially offset by increasing salary costs from the JES.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

3.2.03, Stewardship and Education; again, with Salaries. Is that a position? How do we account for the savings there? Was a position eliminated, because it was less revised but then it is back up again? Last year in revised it dropped to \$100,000, so it's still like \$56,000 less than what it was last year.

MR. TRIMPER: The revised; first of all, that decrease that's \$107,300, that's reflecting vacancies for a portion of the fiscal year. There's a senior manager, and what's classified as an Animal Herder and Trades Worker I. That's for a position at Salmonier.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

MR. TRIMPER: The Salaries under our Estimates for this year, there's a decrease of \$55,800, and that's reflecting one less funded position due to an attrition move, a retirement.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

Just one small item, but just out of curiosity; Property, Furnishings and Equipment, there's nothing budgeted in the year, yet it was close on \$10,000 went into revised. What would that be, office furniture or –?

MR. TRIMPER: Yes, it's the purchase of stackable chairs and folding tables for the new interpretation centre.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

3.2.04, Transportation and Communications; it's a big drop from what was budgeted last year. How were these savings achieved?

MR. TRIMPER: What you're seeing is less helicopter time there. In the \$587,000 reference there, the revised from last year, there's a decrease of \$136,300 and that's associated with our moose management plan. So less air services for the South Coast, and there was also a caribou survey that we've pulled back on.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

MR. TRIMPER: This year the Estimates, there's a reprofiling of funds to the research associated with the moose management plan. We've reduced expenditures around operational changes in game management and research. As I indicated in my opening remarks and we spoke about a little bit, the new management approach to how we're monitoring our wildlife populations and completing our population estimates; a lot more working with data and computer simulation and modelling.

We do have an offset because we are still – we have some increased funding associated with year two of our implementation of the moose management plan that government released last year.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

Under Supplies, again from last year's budgeted amount to this year is a substantial drop. Is that all tied to the same thing?

MR. TRIMPER: What you're seeing there is particularly associated with the Labrador Caribou Initiative. A lot of these programs involve upfront purchases, for example, of satellite collars and so on, very expensive items. Once you have those deployed you're costs go down dramatically as you roll through your program.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

3.2.05, Transportation and Communications; would that be as a result of the moose management as well or research, the transportation increased by a substantial amount. Was that another –?

MR. TRIMPER: Yes, that's air services, the revised in the 2015-16. We've got an increase in air services.

We've also got an increase in the reprofiling of funds from the Habitat, Game and Fur Management, the Moose Management Plan, some \$200,000. It's offset by reductions through our budget – the inland fish program. We've announced that we're phasing out the inland fish program. We've retained the staff but the field component is not going to occur.

MR. PETTEN: So I guess that answers why there's been a \$200,000 drop in Salaries as well?

MR. TRIMPER: That's associated with a game and fur management position with the Moose Management Plan.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

Supplies, why such a – you only have \$68,000 in this year's budget but it was over \$300,000 last year?

MR. TRIMPER: That's reflecting less supplies and equipment required during this fiscal.

I'll turn to maybe, Colleen. Do you want to elaborate a little? Why not?

MS. JOHNSON: The minister spoke to it in Habitat, Game and Fur as well. When we have different programs, different years of the programs, we purchase different items. Our supply requirement for this year was less than required.

MR. PETTEN: Okay. Thank you.

Under Grants and Subsidies, where do these grants come from? I know this year there is more budgeted; quite a bit more than what was last year.

MR. TRIMPER: Grant payments, \$10,000 went to Memorial University. The program is called legacy effects of moose browsing and multiple spatial scales.

MR. PETTEN: But this year there is \$125,000 budgeted?

MR. TRIMPER: Okay, so what we've done is we've phased out the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Science – we're going to get to that item, I would assume. The contracts that were administered there, we've moved into this element of our operation.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

MR. TRIMPER: So what you're seeing is about \$110,900 moving in to this particular aspect of our budget.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

MR. TRIMPER: There are four contracts that are ongoing. We're fulfilling our obligations there to see them to their completion.

MR. PETTEN: Okay. Thanks.

Under 3.2.06, Revenue, where does this federal revenue come from? What is this grants or projects or – it's federal money for something. What does it entail?

MR. TRIMPER: I'm going to get Ross Firth to explain that.

MR. FIRTH: Could you just repeat the question, please?

MR. TRIMPER: He wanted to know where the revenue came from, the federal revenue (inaudible).

MR. PETTEN: Revenue, where does it come from?

MR. FIRTH: There are a number of different sources for that.

As the minister indicated, one of them is the Eastern Joint Habitat Venture funding. That's part of a broader North American Waterfowl Management program. We get money to support waterfowl management through our stewardship program.

We also get an annual contribution through our firearm safety program from the federal government. As you know, part of our Firearm Safety/Hunter Education program is based part on that safety aspect, so the RCMP provides a level of grant funding for us to actually deliver that program.

MR. PETTEN: Okay. I'm almost done there now.

I guess one other question on Purchased Services. It's not so much a drop but what's involved in Purchased Services under the Cooperative Wildlife? What would be –?

MR. TRIMPER: For example, some of the increases are a result of vehicle maintenance. I think that's primarily just keeping our gear in place and operations.

Go ahead, Ross.

MR. FIRTH: Under the Purchased Services for the Cooperative Wildlife Projects there are things such as vehicle and equipment maintenance, equipment rental, satellite usage fees, contribution to the Atlantic Canada Conservation Data Centre as well. So a variety of expenditures related to that heading.

MR. PETTEN: In Purchased Services, a lot of things don't fit that goes there.

I'm good, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Petten.

Would the Clerk please call the next subhead?

CLERK: 3.3.01.

CHAIR: 3.3.01.

MS. ROGERS: (Inaudible.)

CHAIR: I'm sorry.

MS. ROGERS: (Inaudible) it's just I haven't had a chance to ask any questions here yet on the 3.2s.

CHAIR: On 3. –

MS. ROGERS: Some of the 3.2 categories.

CHAIR: I was of the understanding that you started off at 3.2.01 to 3.2.06, but if you have further questions – Minister, you have no issues?

MR. TRIMPER: Sure.

CHAIR: Okay.

Ms. Rogers.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, great. Thank you very much.

The wilderness program for women, Becoming an Outdoors Woman, used to be two days. I understand this year it's one day. Is it?

MR. FIRTH: I think you're referring BOW, Becoming an Outdoors Woman.

MS. ROGERS: Becoming an Outdoors Woman, yes.

MR. FIRTH: My understanding is it's still two days. I can check on that and get back to you for sure, but my understanding is it's two days.

MS. ROGERS: Okay. I've been told that it's one day and I was just curious about that.

Can we get an update, or perhaps it's online, I'm not sure, for instance the number of moose and caribou we have, the number in the herds across the province? If that's online or if you want to give that to me afterwards, that would be fine, in the interest of time.

We have the numbers for 2015 or we had them previous to that.

MR. TRIMPER: Do you want total provincial population?

MS. ROGERS: Yes.

MR. TRIMPER: We have a variety of herds, locations –

MS. ROGERS: Yes.

MR. TRIMPER: It would be online but I'll – go ahead, Ross.

MS. ROGERS: If it's online, I can find that. Thank you very much.

Why is the Inland Fish Research Program being eliminated?

MR. TRIMPER: I'm going to start this and I'll get Ross to come along behind. In recent years, the federal government pulled back from that aspect of its responsibility, so the province stepped in to fulfill that.

We're anticipating much better co-operation with Ottawa. We're implementing a gradual pullback from this, as we are in discussions right now with federal fisheries for them to go back and acquire their mandate.

Ross, anything to add there?

MR. FIRTH: No, I don't think I have anything further to add, other than just to reiterate the fact that the management of inland fish is a constitutionally mandated federal responsibility. So this reflects that.

MS. ROGERS: And if they don't step up as much as we would hope that they would and we're somewhat retreating, what's going to happen there?

MR. TRIMPER: Well, we're going to give it our best shot and we'll see what we can do.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, thank you.

Why is the small game and furbearer research program being cut?

MR. TRIMPER: As I indicated in my opening remarks, we had some difficult decisions to make. We felt, in similar ways, as we looked at the province, socially, we really wanted to make sure our resources were there for the most vulnerable parts of the aspects of what we do in Environment and Conservation. It's not to say that these species are not important but the work that goes on there tends to be not so much preoccupied with species of special conservation status and so on. So we've pulled back on that aspect of our work.

MS. ROGERS: Some tough decisions.

MR. TRIMPER: These tend to be populations that are stable and doing well, we've pulled back on associated research.

MS. ROGERS: I'm fine, Mr. Chair.

Thank you very much.

CHAIR: Thank you, Ms. Rogers.

Would the Clerk please call the next subhead.

CLERK: 3.3.01.

CHAIR: 3.3.01.

Mr. Petten.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I don't have a lot of questions on this one. I was somewhat familiar with this division from my previous life. It's more of an impact question. Undergraduates, there was a program offered for graduates students, wasn't it, to come in – Ph.D. students and whatnot, out in Grenfell College. They would come in and do their studies in this –

MR. TRIMPER: I'll let Ross – he's more familiar with the particular situation.

Go ahead, Ross.

MR. FIRTH: Yes, you're correct. The research projects were really focused on Memorial University graduate students, so masters and Ph.D. levels, yes.

MR. PETTEN: Yes.

Is there any opportunity now – is this moved over? Is that also still available to those students?

MR. TRIMPER: As I indicated, we are fulfilling the commitments that we had with these four ongoing programs. We've taken the administration of these contracts to other aspects of the department, but the work will proceed and we're going to continue to support it.

MR. PETTEN: That's still going to be available to the students?

MR. TRIMPER: Yes.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

How many positions were eliminated as a result of this being moved or this division being –

MR. TRIMPER: Two positions.

MR. PETTEN: Two positions?

MR. TRIMPER: Yes.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

As we said, the research will be done but we have that moved over into the Wildlife Division now, right? It's just incorporated?

There was a director of that division. Are they still employed? Is that one of the positions that was eliminated?

MR. TRIMPER: The positions have been terminated, both of those positions.

MR. PETTEN: As a result of the budget?

MR. TRIMPER: Yes.

MR. PETTEN: Okay.

That's all I have to ask there. I think everything else is pretty well okay.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Petten.

Ms. Rogers.

MS. ROGERS: Just a point of clarification for myself. In fact, the research monies that were available through this program, that same level of research monies will be available but administered elsewhere in the department. Is that it?

MR. TRIMPER: For the ongoing contracts and just for '16-'17. For the ones that we had accepted, were funding to a certain period of time, we are going to fulfil those obligations, but in terms of having money available for future opportunities, no.

MS. ROGERS: So, no.

MR. TRIMPER: No.

As I said, we decided we needed to pull back to our core services. As important as this work is – and we want to complete these existing contracts. To fund additional research questions at this time is just not warranted with all the choices we had to make.

MS. ROGERS: So there was \$80,000 that was in the pot there for research for the students, is it?

MR. FIRTH: Yes, I think there were four separate research projects which totalled in the region of that amount.

MS. ROGERS: And what kinds of research projects were they, Ross?

MR. FIRTH: There were four different ones. One was around greenhouse gas emissions in peatlands, there was another one on mink farming and house flies, there was a third one on metapopulation in Labrador caribou and a fourth one was on Mistaken Point Ecological Reserve.

MS. ROGERS: So that would be a total elimination of that kind of money for that kind of research in the province. Do we know if there is an increase in research money available through MUN, through Grenfell, for those kinds of research projects?

MR. TRIMPER: I'm not aware at this time, but as I said, we saw these programs as being

important. Given that they had already started and were doing good work, we were not going to leave them high and dry. We wanted to see them completed so we've committed to doing that.

Research questions are always out there. It's important to tackle them; it's just that within the department's budget at this time we had to pull back.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

Thank you very much.

CHAIR: Thank you, Ms. Rogers.

Would the Clerk please recall all the subheads?

CLERK: 1.1.01 to 3.3.01 inclusive.

CHAIR: 1.1.01 to 3.3.01.

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

Carried.

On motion, subheads 1.1.01 through 3.3.01 carried.

CLERK: The total.

CHAIR: Shall the total carry?

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

Carried.

On motion, Department of Environment and Conservation, total heads, carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the Estimates of the Department of Environment and Conservation carried without amendment?

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

Carried.

On motion, Estimates of the Department of Environment and Conservation carried without amendment.

CHAIR: Just some housekeeping

First of all, I need a mover for the minutes of the Resource Committee for April 21.

MR. DEAN: So moved.

CHAIR: Moved by Jerry Dean.

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: Carried.

On motion, minutes adopted as circulated.

CHAIR: Again, under housekeeping, I just wanted to remind the Resource Committee that we will be meeting again on Monday evening at 6 with Advanced Education and Skills here in the Assembly.

I'd certainly like to take the opportunity to thank the minister and his staff for your co-operation this morning, and certainly want to thank all Members again for their co-operation as well.

I would entertain a motion to adjourn.

MR. BRAGG: So moved.

CHAIR: Derrick Bragg.

On motion, the Committee adjourned.