

**ORAL QUESTION—KEVIN O'REILLY, MLA FRAME LAKE**  
**QUESTION 137-19(2): ANTI-STRATEGIC LAWSUIT AGAINST PUBLIC**  
**PARTICIPATION (SLAPP) LEGISLATION**

**March 3, 2020**

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Madame la Presidente. My questions are for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. One of the recommendations from the standing committee in reviewing the Environmental Rights Act and approved in this House was the passage of anti-SLAPP legislation, or a law to prevent strategic litigation against public participation, and that that should be introduced in the 19th Assembly. Can the Minister tell us whether or when anti-SLAPP legislation will be introduced in this House? Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is my understanding anti-SLAPP legislation is outside the scope of the work performed for the Environmental Rights Act and most likely would not be the responsibility of Environment and Natural Resources. However, in getting a heads-up with this question and understanding and looking at that one part of the report, I have reached out to my honourable colleague, the Minister of Justice, and we are more than willing to have conversations and with the Member, as well.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I am feeling kind of SLAPP-happy right now. I want to thank the Minister for that, but talk is cheap. I am happy to be part of that conversation. My next question: I have reviewed the ENR website and could barely find any mention of a public registry for the Protected Areas Act, let alone some of the other legislation that the department is responsible for, including the Environmental Rights Act. Can the Minister tell us when or whether his department is considering a central environmental public registry to capture all of the reporting requirements found in the various environment and resource management bills, allowing the public a one-window access point to information, as is done in Ontario, for example?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** The Environmental Rights Act and the Protected Areas Act are bills that were passed in the last Legislative Assembly, including registries. To implementation, ENR would start by meeting the information required in each of the acts. When implementation occurs, we will be looking for opportunities to centralize

information as resources allow while not duplicating the comprehensive land and water board registries.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I want to thank the Minister for that. Look, I am trying to find ways to save this government money, and having a central registry is one way to begin to do that. There is similar reporting that is required from ENR around the Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program. That is under the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. There is state of the environment reporting under the Environmental Rights Act. Can the Minister tell us how all of this environmental reporting is going to be coordinated?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** The purpose and process and timelines for the environmental audit and the state of the environment reports are different. A state of the environment report is required to be tabled within three years of the revised Environmental Rights Act coming into effect and every four years afterwards. An environmental audit is conducted every five years by an independent body, and the next audit is due to be completed in 2025. The department continues to ensure that it meets reporting requirements in our environmental legislation and that this report is coordinated where appropriate.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Madame la Presidente. I want to thank the Minister for that. Just because he says it's coordinated, it doesn't actually mean it actually is coordinated, so I am going to have to push that with him. There is nothing, though, on the ENR website about the Environmental Rights Act. There is a general page that talks about how the bill or the legislation was going to be reviewed in the last Assembly, but there is nothing there to help promote the understanding of the new legislation. Can the Minister tell us when his department will finally take a more proactive role in promoting this legislation, and will a plan be shared with the relevant standing committee?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** I thank the Member for these questions. I've heard that ENR's website needs to be improved, and we're looking at that to make sure we have the information and we can easily find out, including the Environmental Rights Act. The environment website does include a web page for the Environmental Rights Act. The department plans to conduct a public awareness campaign on the Environmental Rights Act, and the department has already updated its plain-language summary of the act to support the public awareness campaign. Thank you, Madam Speaker.