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Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

Infrastructure

Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, the minister stated that the infrastructure bank would be arm's length from government, but the legislation clearly states that the Minister of Finance and cabinet approves and guarantees the loans, appoints the board of directors, and approves the CEO. They can fire these people at any time without cause.

As well, they used BlackRock executives to develop the legislation, so not only is there a blatant conflict of interest. There is potential for significant interference.

Could the minister tell the House exactly what he meant by arm's length?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, I am pretty sure the hon. member, who served on city council as mayor, would like to join me in welcoming the Federation of Canadian Municipalities delegates to Ottawa. These are the people who are helping build sustainable communities in partnership with the federal government.

As far as the member's question is concerned, we have been able to create the right balance between making sure the bank is accountable to Parliament, and at the same time, its being a crown corporation that makes decisions on its own to build the infrastructure that our communities require.