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**Improving Care for Dementia and Alzheimer's Patients**

MPP Laura Smith, Thornhill and MPP Natalia Kusendova-Bashta, Mississauga-Centre introduce Private Members' Bill

**QUEEN'S PARK - MPP Laura Smith, Thornhill, and MPP Natalia Kusendova-Bashta, Mississauga-Centre** tabled a joint Private Members' Bill today to start a meaningful conversation about how Ontario can provide better care for seniors, and those living with Alzheimer's Disease Related Dementia (ADRD). The Improving Dementia Care in Ontario Act, 2023 calls on the Ministry of Health to develop a provincial framework designed to support improved access to dementia care, and calls on the Ministry of Colleges and Universities to review its "Personal Support Worker Standard", to better equip health care providers with the best knowledge, skills and training for providing person-centred dementia care.

"The goal is to raise awareness and foster a discussion on Alzheimer's and Dementia," said MPP Laura Smith, Thornhill. "The silver wave is upon us and with the aging population, it affects so many people and families—this a conversation that should happen."

The 2022 landmark study shows that over 250,000 Ontarians are living with Alzheimer's Disease or Related Dementia, and the number is projected to increase to 400,000 by 2050.

"Dementia affects not only the patient, but also their family and community," said MPP Natalia Kusendova-Bashta, Mississauga-Centre. "We must prioritize support and advocacy to improve the quality of life for those living with dementia, their caregivers and caregivers. By increasing public awareness and enhancing support, we can strive towards a more inclusive province to ensure dignity, compassion, and meaningful support for those impacted by this difficult diagnosis."

The bill calls on the Ministry of Health to examine the current state of care, programs, and resources available to persons living with dementia, as well as identify dementia research and common data elements. This includes, among other things, identifying measures to facilitate equitable access to dementia care across Ontario, such as strategies to increase awareness of programs like the First Link program offered through the Alzheimer Society of Ontario; "Our government continues to make significant investments to support individuals with dementia and their caregivers," said Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, Sylvia Jones. "We will continue to work with our partners to connect all Ontarians to the care they need, throughout their lifetime."

This bill further calls on the Ministry of Colleges and Universities to review its "Personal Support Worker Standard" to determine if certain changes should be made, including whether to require in-depth learning about person-centred dementia care.

"Our government is continuously updating the standards so that Personal Support Workers are trained and equipped to provide person-centred dementia care," said Jill Dunlop, Minister of Colleges and Universities, "we will continue to collaborate with our postsecondary institutions to ensure healthcare training standards are up-to-date so that quality healthcare continues to be delivered in Ontario."

**QUOTES**

"Your proposed Improving Dementia Care in Ontario Act directly responds to challenges facing Ontarians living with dementia today, and better prepares the province to support those who will be impacted by dementia in years to come. The Alzheimer Society of Ontario fully supports this Act, and we urge your colleagues in government to move quickly to ensure its passage into law."

-Alzheimer Society of Ontario

"On behalf of the Ontario Retirement Communities Association (ORCA), I would like to offer our support for and commitment to dementia care education. As a sector, our members are continuously working to ensure their staff are well equipped with solutions to help residents with their health challenges, including cognitive issues."

**Crews fighting to protect Edson, Alta., as wildfire grows to more than 200,000 hectares**

Crews are still working to contain a wildfire threatening the town of Edson, Alta., and some parts of Yellowhead County, as the fire continues to grow.

"It's slower today, but that doesn't mean that risk is over," Edson chief administrative officer Christine Beveridge said Sunday in a fire update on Facebook.

Officials from the municipality said in an update Saturday night the area was now the top priority for Alberta's firefighting efforts, noting the resources pouring in from the province and other partners.

Yellowhead County chief administrative officer Luc Mercier said while the main fire had grown southwards, it had not moved north toward the town, thanks to the efforts of deployed crews and the weather.

"Our fear based on the weather, again, is that they can... flare up very quickly northward," he said in a live video posted to social media around 8 p.m.

Although municipal officials had previously floated Wednesday as a potential return date, Mercier said that would not be the case for most areas under evacuation.

The county is considering the removal of a portion of the evacuation zone north of Township Road 560 and west of the McLeod River sometime Monday depending on weather.

The wildfire, known as EWF031, has grown to more than 200,000 hectares, up from 130,000 hectares on Friday.

According to the Alberta Wildfire dashboard, there are 81 fires burning across the province as of Sunday evening, including 79 in the forest protection areas. Twenty-three of those fires are listed as out-of-control.

Edson's 8,400 residents were

**Conservatives Will Ensure Paul Bernardo Rots in Maximum Security Prison**

Ontario, ON - The Hon. Pierre Poilievre, Leader of the Conservative Party of Canada and the Official Opposition, released the following statement announcing Conservative plans to keep Paul Bernardo in maximum security prison:

"Conservatives, like all Canadians, were shocked to learn that the vile serial killer and rapist, Paul Bernardo, one of the most evil monsters in Canadian history, had been moved from a maximum-security prison to a medium-security facility. This is outrageous. He should rot in a maximum-security prison for the rest of his life."

"As usual, Justin Trudeau and his useless Public Safety Minister refused to take any responsibility. They claimed that the decision was out of their hands and that there is nothing they could do about it. This is a lie. More dangerous, violent criminals are getting out of maximum security because of Trudeau's Bill C-83, which requires prisons to be chosen for inmates to give them the 'least restrictive environment' possible. Trudeau and his minister could have reversed the decision on Bernardo by issuing a directive or order in council to the Correctional Services Commissioner requiring that all out-ordered dangerous offenders and multiple first-degree murderers be kept in maximum security for their entire sentence."

**Crews fighting to protect Edson, Alta., as wildfire grows to more than 200,000 hectares**

Hot temperatures are expected to last until Wednesday. Evacuees have been told they may not be allowed to return home before then.

Firefighters have been putting structural guards in place and patrolling neighbourhoods. They have been moving combustible objects such as propane tanks, barbecues and hanging planters away from houses.

The county is getting help in the form of additional sprinkler systems and water bombers.

"Not again!" Edson residents Calvin Bootsman and Pamela Holden made their way to the Edmonton Expo Centre, which has been set up as a reception centre for evacuees.

"They said having to evacuate again is a reminder of how uncertain the situation is in the province."

"Not again, I just couldn't believe we were having to do it again," Holden said in an interview.

"I looked like the apocalypse was coming," Bootsman said. "The fire was about three kilometres from where we lived and by midnight when we left, you can see the glow and the tip of the flames."

While Bootsman appreciates the help being provided, he said he hopes more crews will be brought in to process evacuees more quickly.

"The only thing is they needed to process in teams with people because there's so many people stressed out angry."

**Crews fighting to protect Edson, Alta., as wildfire grows to more than 200,000 hectares**

Fortis Alberta - the company that manages the electricity distribution system in the Edson area - confirmed 342 customers are without power in the areas of Cadomin and Robb.

Fortis is working with the emergency operations centre in Yellowhead County to access the wildfire damage to power lines.

"We have been able to safely get into the fire areas to assess damage to our facilities and we have sustained damage to 20 structures," Tanya Croft, communications manager for Fortis, said in a statement to CBC.

"Our crews are on the ground working to isolate and restore power in those areas. The town of Edson has not lost power and the town is energized ready for people to return."

AtlasLink - Alberta's largest regulated electricity transmission company - said transmission infrastructure that supplies power to areas west of Edson, including Jasper and Hinton, has not been impacted by wildfire damage.

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# Higgs attack on Trudeau and Holt bears hallmark of N.B. premier's new social media guru

A new partisan attack by Premier Blaine Higgs on Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau and Ontario Premier Doug Ford is strikingly similar to the tactics of a Prairie communications guru that quietly started working for the premier's chipping.

Derek Robinson, a key player in western Canadian conservative groups, is advising the premier through his communications firm MASI Strategy.

In 2019 one of those groups helped defeat longtime Saskatchewan Liberal MP Ralph Goodale by running aggressive advertising highlighting his connections to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

On Saturday night, Higgs linked Trudeau's stand on LGBTQ issues to Holt - even though Holt himself is keeping her distance from the prime minister.

"Susan Holt & Justin Trudeau don't believe parents need to be involved in such critical discussions as gender identity, even in children as young as

4," Higgs said in two tweets posted Saturday night at 6:53 p.m. and again at 9:18 p.m.

Hired same month review of Policy 713 began.

Higgs's spokesperson Nicole Carlin recently confirmed that Robinson's firm is providing "communications services" to the New Brunswick government.

"Most of their work is dealing with the Premier's Office," Carlin said in an emailed statement.

The firm started advising the premier's office in April, the same month the government began reviewing Policy 713, which sets minimum standards for ensuring safe and inclusive schools for LGBTQ students.

Trudeau called out the province's changes to the policy at a Pride event in Toronto last week.

The changes announced last week remove an obligation teachers had to respect a child's choice of name and pronouns in the classroom whether

parents consent or not.

"Trans kids need to feel safe, not targeted by politicians," Trudeau said.

Higgs's initial response Friday was mild.

He told reporters it was "not unusual" for Trudeau to wade into provincial issues and said it was "unfortunate the prime minister wouldn't look at the big picture" and was "playing to the audience" at the Pride event.

Saturday's tweets went further, invoking four-year-olds and linking Trudeau to Holt, Higgs's main opponent in the next election - even though Holt distanced herself from the prime minister on Friday.

"It's not clear to me why Trudeau would be commenting on provincial education policy," she said.

Higgs's social media accounts generally avoid direct political attacks on the prime minister.

Carlin said the premier's office works "with many people in

communications" but the Saturday tweets were written by Higgs himself.

Campaign in Manitoba subject of complaint.

Robinson was the chief of digital strategy for Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall from 2011 to 2018.

After leaving Wall's office he got involved with the Buffalo Project, an initiative aimed at having Alberta and Saskatchewan take control of some policy areas now under federal jurisdiction, including pensions and immigration.

He was also part of the Canada Growth Council, which ran the 2019 third-party advertising campaign to defeat Liberal MPs in Western Canada.

That campaign included large billboards in Regina with photos of Trudeau and Goodale, who was a minister in the prime minister's cabinet at the time.

The group is now the subject of a complaint from the Manitoba NDP about pre-election ads in Manitoba tying that party's leader to Trudeau and federal NDP leader Jagmeet Singh.

After Goodale lost his seat in 2019, Robinson warned the west needed more autonomy - and many people there would consider separating - in response to federal Liberal policies.

# Canada to help Ukraine with another \$500M and weapons, Trudeau says

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau says Canada is committing another \$500 million to help Ukraine's military fight back against Russia's invasion, including by sending more weapons.



Trudeau made the announcement during an unannounced visit to Kyiv to show Canada's support for the fight against Russia, and told the country's parliament they are in a battle for "the future of us all."

"You are the tip of the spear that is determining the future of the 21st century," Trudeau said during a 25-minute speech before a special session of the national legislature, known as the Verkhovna Rada.

Pledging more weapons and fighter-pilot training for Ukraine, Trudeau also told the lawmakers that Canada will support their country's bid for membership in the NATO military alliance.

"We want peace on Ukrainian terms," he said. "Russia must completely and unconditionally withdraw all its military forces from Ukraine."

Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland is with him on the trip, which began with a wreath-laying at a memorial wall to honour Ukrainians who have died while defending their homeland.

This is the second time Trudeau has made an unannounced visit to the embattled country since Russia began its large-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Trudeau last travelled to Ukraine just over a year ago, where he reopened the Canadian Embassy in Kyiv and met Zelenskyy in person for the first time since the war began.

Trudeau and Zelenskyy also spent some time together just last month on the margins of the G7 summit in Hiroshima, Japan, where the Ukrainian president continued his campaign to shore up support among western allies for the defence of his country.

Some media outlets, including The Canadian Press, were made aware of today's trip ahead of time on the condition that it not be reported until it was made public, for security reasons.

As of early Saturday morning, the Prime Minister's Office had not published its usual itinerary for

Trudeau's day.

Earlier Saturday, Britain's defence ministry reported "significant Ukrainian operations" in the country's east and south since Thursday morning, with gains in some areas.

The ministry reported mixed results from the Russian army, with some units holding ground "while others have pulled back in some disorder, amid increased reports of Russian casualties as they withdraw through their own minefields."

The ministry also noted "unusually active" Russian strikes in southern Ukraine, where it is easier for Moscow to fly planes.

Trudeau's visit follows major dam collapse.

Earlier this week, a hydroelectric dam on the Dnieper River ruptured, flooding a large part of the first line in southern Ukraine and worsening the humanitarian situation - including the need for drinking water - in an area that was already undergoing shelling.

It remains unclear how the dam collapse happened. Kyiv has accused Russia of blowing up the dam and its hydropower plant, which Russian forces controlled. Moscow said Ukraine did it.

Trudeau and Zelenskyy also spent some time together just last month on the margins of the G7 summit in Hiroshima, Japan, where the Ukrainian president continued his campaign to shore up support among western allies for the defence of his country.

Canada has joined other countries in condemning Russian President Vladimir Putin's regime for the incursion, including through economic sanctions.

Ottawa has also contributed more than \$8 billion to efforts related to the war in Ukraine since last year. That

# Hundreds of European firefighters joining Canada's wildfire battle

A battalion of nearly 350 firefighters from the European Union will soon be on the ground in Quebec to help their Canadian counterparts tackle a devastating and unprecedented wildfire season.

One hundred and nine fire crews from France arrived last Thursday and spent the weekend dosing flames in Quebec, where fires have forced nearly 14,000 people to flee their homes. Another 140 firefighters from Portugal and 97 from Spain are due to arrive in Quebec City on Wednesday, said Claire Kowalewski, the European Union Emergency Response Coordination Centre's liaison officer in Canada.

It's the first time in the centre's 22-year history that it has sent firefighters to help in Canada, Kowalewski said. "There is this solidarity," she said. "Today, unfortunately, it's Canada that is facing these terrible fires. But last year in Spain, it was also a terrible year."

The firefighters understand each other, even if they don't speak the same languages or even use the same techniques, Kowalewski said, adding: "In the end, they have the same objective."

Canadian officials have described the destruction from this year's wildfire season as "unprecedented." Nearly 430 forest fires roared across the country on Sunday, 210 of which were burning out of control, according to the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre.

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# Why is Canada seizing a Russian cargo plane? Here's what to know

The long-running saga of a large Russian plane grounded in Canada since the start of the Ukraine war entered a new phase over the weekend.

After more than 15 months, the Canadian government ordered the seizure on Saturday of the Russian-registered cargo aircraft as a direct response to Moscow's invasion of its neighbour that began in February 2022.

This is the first physical asset of Russia that will be captured by Ottawa under the asset freeze law and the second under Canada's overall sanctions regime.

Here is a look back at the developments, and at what happens next.

Why was the Russian plane grounded? The Antonov 124 aircraft landed at Toronto Pearson International Airport on Feb. 27, 2022. It had arrived from China, flying through Russia and Alaska to deliver a shipment of COVID-19 rapid antigen tests.



The plane, believed to be owned by a subsidiary of Volga-Dnepr Airlines LLC and Volga-Dnepr Group, was initially supposed to depart shortly after making its delivery.

But on the same day, Canada - like many other countries - closed its airspace to Russian aircraft in response to the Ukraine war, forcing the cargo jet to remain grounded indefinitely.

A Russian-registered Antonov AN-124 is towed at Pearson Airport in Toronto on Monday, Feb. 28, 2022. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Frank Gunn. At the time, a transport ministry spokesperson said the Russian plane

Global Affairs Canada said in a statement Saturday.

The plane seizure was made possible by the new asset seizure and forfeiture authorities under Canada's autonomous sanctions regimes put forward in Budget 2022, GAC said.

"Canada is sending a clear message to the Russian regime that there will be nowhere left to hide for those who support and profit from the Kremlin's war of aggression," Foreign Affairs Minister Melanie Joly said.

Speaking with Global News last year, Clark said the Russians had been using Antonov 124 aircraft for military transport and to support the assault on Ukraine, even though the plane is not registered as a military aircraft.

Clark was hired by an unnamed Canadian cargo company looking to help Ukraine by keeping the plane out of the war - an aspiration Russia has denied.

What happens next? It still remains to be seen where the plane will go next. The federal government said, "should the asset ultimately be forfeited to the Crown, Canada will work with the Government of Ukraine on options to redistribute this asset to compensate victims of human rights abuses, restore international peace and security, or rebuild Ukraine."

# Deadly drug just 'a click away,' warns grieving Ontario family

Aidan Tate died by himself, but not alone.

His family was upstairs, asleep. Earlier that night, they had enjoyed a meal together. Then the 19-year-old went down to his basement bedroom to play his guitar. His father, Phil, popped in to say goodnight and bring his son something to drink.

"We had people calling us thinking he had died on the street or something. That's not how it happened," said Phil Tate. "We have our street problems here in Peterborough, for sure, but the addition is in the suburbs."

Aidan Tate fell victim to a suspected drug overdose in March. The tragedy is so raw and recent that toxicology results are still pending. But authorities believe they know at least part of the answer - a benzodiazepine he purchased off the Internet.

Bromazolam was never approved for medical use, anywhere in the world. Yet the powerful sedative is being sold and shipped openly in Canada. Used by dealers to enhance other street drugs, it often proves fatal when mixed with opioids, because it both depresses the respiratory system and counters the effects of antidotes like naloxone.

Phil Tate was all too aware that his son was battling a dependency on benzodiazepines - medicine he was first prescribed as a young teen to treat anxiety and panic attacks. Aidan had sought help, but was booted from an outpatient program after he admitted to buying drugs on the street.

Phil and his ex-wife, Sarah Budd, had done their best to help him as he struggled through withdrawal, relapse and experimentation with other substances. What they couldn't protect him from was easy online access to the benzos he craved.

"It's a click away," said Tate. "Whatever you want ... and you can get it sent from anywhere."

Deeply high, heightened risk. Benzodiazepine-laced opioids - or "benzodopes," as they are commonly called - have washed across Canada like a wave, with users embracing both the deepened high and heightened risk.

In Ontario last year, benzodiazepines were detected in the blood samples of almost half of all overdose fatalities - helping kill 1,170 people. In B.C., where the wave



began, the figure decreased from a similar 2021 peak to closer to 28 per cent - still another 643 deaths.

But no part of the country has been immune. Public Health warnings about Bromazolam and other benzos in the drug supply have been issued in New Brunswick; Sudbury, Ont.; Brandon, Man.; the Northwest Territories; across Alberta; and B.C.

In March, Peterborough, Ont., followed suit in the wake of several Benzodiazepine-linked deaths, including Aidan Tate's.

"The reality is the drug supply right now is shifting very fast. It's difficult for people who use drugs to know what they're getting. It's a roulette with their life," said Dr. Thomas Piggott, Peterborough's medical officer of health.

Piggott says benzos and opioids form a particularly dangerous combination. One is a modest bungalow in Sudbury, Ont. CBC News spoke with the owner - a retired barber - who says he was completely unaware of the website and has no connection to it.

(Domain registration and server data suggest that particular site, and many of the others, are actually located far offshore, in China.)

This is an example of one of the dozens of websites illegally offering Bromazolam - a controlled substance - for sale to Canadian consumers.

In their Frequently Asked Questions sections, the websites often make it clear it's all a ruse. Buyers are told the only way to communicate with - and pay - the company is via email. And a heavy emphasis is placed on how the drugs will be sent domestically via XpressPost, out of the reach of sniping customs and police officers.

"Absolutely not. It's impossible," is the answer provided. "All mail shipped inside Canada does not go through customs therefore domestic mail cannot be seized."

Strictly speaking, this isn't true. In a statement, a Canada Post spokesperson noted that postal inspectors who are "trained to detect and remove non-allowable matter from the postal system." Efforts to intercept fentanyl and other drugs were beefed up in 2019, with more inspection teams added and the deployment of scanning technology at sorting sites in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto and Montreal.

However, it's all looking for needles in a very large haystack. Last year, Canada Post delivered 6.6 billion parcels and letters to 17.2 million addresses across the country.

CBC News asked for interviews with representatives from Health Canada, the Canada Border Services Agency and the RCMP to learn about their efforts to control illegal online sales of benzodiazepines. All declined, instead providing statements highlighting the challenges in tackling digital and transnational crime.

"Websites selling illegal substances often appear online for short periods of time and subsequently the sites shut down or move to a different online host. Often it is not possible to determine whether the site is located (hosted) in Canada or not," wrote Health Canada. "Transnational crime has no borders; we live in an increasingly global and interconnected world," said the RCMP.

Still, the source of the majority of synthetic drugs flooding North American markets isn't hard to pinpoint. Early on in the fentanyl crisis, Chinese chemical firms were identified as the prime global exporters of the powerful opioid, even offering multi-scale overseas deliveries via the post.

China's answer. Under U.S. pressure, the Chinese government banned fentanyl exports in 2019, but the companies remain deeply involved in the illicit trade. Now, they ship out precursor chemicals in great quantities to countries like Mexico, where local labs synthesize opioids and methamphetamine, which are then smuggled into the U.S. and Canada by drug cartels.

It's likely that Bromazolam, which is often out into fentanyl, is arriving by the same route, says Louise Shelby, director of the Terrorism, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center (T4C) at George Mason University's campus in Arlington, Va. But knowing where it's coming from doesn't make it any easier to stop, she notes.

# Canada's worst spring wildfire season could set housing construction further back

Canada's worst-over spring wildfire season has forced its forestry industry to shutter sawmills, driving up lumber prices and setting production back for months just as housing construction has slowed due to higher costs and tight labor markets.

Canada has the world's third-largest forest area and is the second-largest softwood lumber producer, according to Canadian government estimates, making it a key supplier of a critical housing material. This year's unprecedented fires have already consumed at least 4 million hectares, or 1% of Canada's forest, according to the Forest Products Association of Canada (FPAC), an industry group.

The fires are blazing through Alberta, British Columbia and Quebec, all provinces with active forestry industries.

The fires have also forced thousands of people to evacuate their homes and blanketed cities with smoke as far away as Toronto, New York and Washington.

Fires in British Columbia and Alberta have forced significant downtime at sawmills, and "ground zero" has now shifted to Quebec, FPAC CEO Derek Nighbor said.

"It's significant. Closing mills and having to reassign them is a lot of work and that's people who have to be laid off temporarily," said Nighbor, who has not had an overall estimate of lost production.

Chicago lumber futures for July delivery LKRN3 have climbed 7% since June 1.

The unexpected disruption to the lumber industry risks further slowing new home construction, adding to Canada's acute housing shortage. Investment in residential building construction, after adjusting for inflation, fell in March to its lowest level since June of 2020.

Workers were digging trenches near the facility to suppress the fires. Kurnman said it was premature to say if the company may need to declare force majeure - unexpected circumstances that prevent a business from meeting contract obligations - or could make up the lost production later in the year. The closed mills mainly produce softwood lumber for North American markets.

Sawp's comments. Resolute has also paused harvesting activities in areas near fires. Long-term damage to forests will require up to eight weeks to assess once the fires abate, Nighbor said. "Is there anything that's salvageable? Is it younger trees that have been taken out or is it 60-to-80-year-old trees, because that will impact future operations," he said.

Wildfires can temporarily boost lumber prices as supplies are constrained and buyers increase inventories, although prices tend to revert later in the year, RBC Capital Markets analyst Paul Quinn said in a note.

Chantiers Chibougamus was forced to shut its Nordic Kraft pulp mill in Leduc on Quebec. Quebec after the spread within 500 meters (1,640 feet) of it, but it expects to resume production this week, company spokesperson Frederic Verreault said. Forest fires are partly a natural phenomenon, cutting debris and creating new growth. But big blazes can also reduce timber supply for the long term, Quinn said.

Nighbor said as Canada's wildfires worsen, federal and provincial governments should allow for expanded tree harvesting, especially of older trees, to reduce fire risk.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government has set a goal of protecting 30% of Canada's lands by 2030. About 13% is currently protected, Nighbor said.

"There's this sense in some political circles that protecting trees is going to be some solution for climate. We need to be looking at forestry through a fire lens," he said.

Forests can become more fire-resistant by thinning them of dying trees, prescribed burning and retaining tree species that are fire-resistant, said Michelle Ward, vice president at Canfor CFP. TO. The forestry company has not had to shut facilities due to fire.

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