

**May 4, 2020**

## **BC's Lobbyists Transparency Act Comes into Force**

VICTORIA – Today, British Columbia's *Lobbyists Transparency Act* (LTA) comes into force as the remaining sections of the Lobbyists Registration Amendment Act, 2018, take effect. The amendments, passed back in November 2018, incorporate recommendations made by the Registrar of Lobbyists. "These amendments, will result in greater transparency for lobbyists and the public about activities that influence decisions made by government," said Registrar Michael McEvoy.

A new Lobbyists Registry, accessible from the Office of the Registrar of Lobbyists (ORL) website, went online at 8:30 this morning. The new registry supports the changes in the LTA and was designed to be easier for lobbyists to use and for the public to look up lobbying activities in the province. By providing an overview of lobbying activities by way of an online searchable registry, the ORL supports transparency and trust in BC's lobbying process.

One of the more significant changes in the legislation is the introduction of Monthly Returns. Lobbyists are now required to submit these reports to the Lobbyists Registry. As a result, it's possible to search the Lobbyists Registry for information such as who has lobbied senior public office holders about gifts given or promised to public office holders, and about political contributions made by lobbyists.

The registrar anticipates more organizations will be required to register their activities as a result of the changes in the LTA. Non-governmental organizations, societies, unions, corporations, and not-for-profit organizations that have not needed to register in the Lobbyists Registry in the past may now have to do so. Prior to May 4, organizations that lobbied under 100 hours in the previous 12 months were not required to register in the Lobbyists Registry. However, under the LTA this 100-hour threshold has been eliminated.

The ORL is committed to making it as easy as possible for lobbyists to comply with the changes to lobbying rules in BC. New guidance documents, Lobbyists Registry user guides, and a frequently asked questions section are available on the ORL website to assist lobbyists with compliance to the new legislation.

A transition period from May 4, 2020, to June 15, 2020, is provided for lobbyists to update their current registrations in the new Lobbyists Registry and to file their first Monthly Return for any

lobbying activity. For lobbyists responding to the COVID-19 epidemic who may require more time, a transition period to September 15, 2020, is available.

“Some lobbyists associated with organizations on the front lines of the response to COVID-19 have told me it may be challenging to meet the June 15 deadline,” said McEvoy. “As long as these lobbyists keep track of their lobbying activities and related information required under the new Act from May 4 onward, they have until September 15, 2020, to submit to the registry. Lobbyists who can set up their registration by June 15, 2020, are expected to do so.”

To protect the health of employees and to help slow community transmission of the COVID-19 virus, Office of the Registrar of Lobbyists staff are working remotely. The office continues to carry out the Registrar’s mandate, including providing service to the public and lobbyists, and the Lobbyists Registry continues to be monitored.

**Learn More:**

Office of the Registrar of Lobbyists for British Columbia: <https://www.lobbyistsregistrar.bc.ca/>

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