



OFFICE OF THE  
INFORMATION & PRIVACY  
COMMISSIONER  
*for British Columbia*

Protecting privacy. Promoting transparency.

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 22, 2011

### **Privacy Commissioner Confirms Investigation of ICBC's use of Facial Recognition Technology**

VICTORIA – British Columbia's Information and Privacy Commissioner is investigating the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia's (ICBC) use of facial recognition technology to ensure that it complies with privacy law.

Commissioner Elizabeth Denham's investigation comes in the wake of ICBC offering its facial recognition technology to assist police in identifying individuals subject to an investigation into possible criminal activity during the Stanley Cup riot.

The photograph of every citizen in BC who possesses a driver's licence is stored in ICBC's data base. Using facial recognition technology, the photo of any individual can be entered into the system to determine whether it matches an existing one in the data base. ICBC has said it will support a police investigation by confirming if there is a match – but will not disclose personal information until the police obtain a subpoena, warrant or order.

“There is a fine balance to be struck in weighing a citizen's privacy interests and the use of personal information for law enforcement,” said Commissioner Denham. “This balancing of interests must be undertaken within the confines of existing law.”

The Commissioner will investigate whether ICBC's use of facial recognition technology complies with its obligations under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, including disclosures of personal information to the police that may occur.

ICBC has committed to co-operate fully with the Commissioner's investigation.

The Commissioner will release a public report when the investigation is complete.

#### Contact:

Maria Dupuis  
Communications & Research Officer  
Tel: 250-953-4191 Email: mdupuis@oipc.bc.ca