



OFFICE OF THE
INFORMATION &
PRIVACY COMMISSIONER
for British Columbia

Protecting privacy. Promoting transparency.

News Release

**For immediate release
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Statement from B.C. Information and Privacy Commissioner on Right to Know Week

VICTORIA— B.C. Information and Privacy Commissioner Elizabeth Denham released the following statement in recognition of Right to Know Week, Sept. 28 to Oct. 4, 2015:

“I am delighted to join my colleagues across Canada and around the world in celebration of Right to Know Week. This international movement raises awareness of the rights of all citizens to access information that is held by public bodies. It also showcases the benefits of open and accessible government.

“Today, as the pace and intensity of technology amplifies, protecting access to information rights has become more important than ever. Every day, government employees and officials create hundreds, if not thousands, of digital records. Given the transiency of digital records, I also continue to remind all public bodies of their duty to preserve records, to be transparent about their operations and to routinely disclose information without a formal freedom of information request.”

B.C.’s *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (“FIPPA”) was first enacted in 1993 to promote accountability and build public confidence in the information-handling practices of public agencies. An all-party Special Committee to Review the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* is currently seeking written, audio and video submissions from individuals and organizations as they undertake a review of the legislation. Public hearings will take place in Victoria on Oct. 9, 2015, in Vancouver on Oct. 16, 2015 and Nov. 9, 2015, and by videoconference in Nelson and Prince George on Nov. 18, 2015.

“The B.C. law offers a sound foundation on which we can build an even stronger legislative framework,” said Commissioner Denham. “I encourage citizens and organizations to add their voices to this important review.” The deadline for written submissions is Jan. 29, 2016. The Committee will submit a report to the Legislative Assembly on or before May 27, 2016.

“British Columbians expect open, transparent and accessible government. This Right to Know Week, I ask citizens to reflect on the importance of access to information to a free and democratic society, and I call on public bodies to recommit to the principles of access, openness and transparency.”

For more information about Right to Know Week, including events happening across Canada, visit www.righttoknow.ca

For more information about the Special Committee to Review the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, visit <http://www.leg.bc.ca/cmt/foi>

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Backgrounder: Right to Know Week

Purpose:

The purpose of Right to Know Week is to raise awareness of our rights to access government information. Right to Know also promotes freedom of information as an essential element to both democracy and good governance.

Fast Facts:

- Right to Know Week is celebrated in Canada from Sept. 28 to Oct. 4, 2015.
- In 2002, the decision to dedicate Sept. 28 to the promotion of freedom of information around the world was made on the final day of an international meeting of access to information advocates held in Sofia, Bulgaria.
- Representatives of freedom of information (FOI) organizations from 15 countries took part in the first International Right to Know Day (Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Georgia, Hungary, India, Latvia, Macedonia, Mexico, Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, South Africa and the United States) along with representatives of international organizations active in the FOI field.
- Since then, the popularity and scope of the day has grown immensely. In Canada, for example, Right to Know Day has expanded into a coast-to-coast, week-long event. Celebrations include awards, conferences, panel discussions, workshops, seminars, and the tabling of special reports and studies on access to information.
- Approximately 40 countries and 60 non-governmental organizations participate in the annual celebration of Right to Know Day.

Did you know?

In 1766, Sweden became the first country to adopt FOI rules with the *Freedom of the Press Act*. Today more than 90 countries around the world have introduced freedom of information legislation. British Columbia's *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* was first enacted in 1993.

More Info

Click [here](#) for more information about Right to Know events occurring across Canada. For more information about Right to Know Week, visit www.righttoknow.ca