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April 28, 2021

The Honourable David Eby,
Ministry of the Attorney General
PO BOX 9044
STN PROV GOVT
Victoria BC, V8W 9E2

SUBJECT: BC Lobbying act 2020 – implications for non-profits, smaller organizations & Chambers/Boards of Trade

Dear Minister Eby:

We thank you for the taking the time to meet with the Surrey Board of Trade, the BC Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce, and the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce on March 31, 2021.

The BC Government's new Lobbyists Transparency Act (2020) (LTA) has placed a considerable burden on the not-for-profit sector, and smaller organizations including Chambers of Commerce/Boards of Trade. In addition, this legislation undermines the democratic process that enables organizations to lobby and advocate to government. It significantly constrains communications and collaboration with government on the impact of key decisions and direction on regulations, law, policy and programming.

Government relies on boards of trades/commerce (and other not for profits) to inform them of the issues of the day – either through policy or advocacy – the current requirements limit smaller organizations from findings resources and funds to adhere to Act – as such they will either reduce or cease to do this good work – and as a result, government becomes less informed of issues of the day. To both the organization and governments detriment.

Resourcing and support must be considered in the context of the not-for-profit sector, recognizing that they are typically small organizations, with additional burden and differences related to organizational size and capacity for reporting compliance. With regards to Chambers of Commerce/Boards of Trade, their genesis was specifically to enable advocacy from SMEs to government, and require an exemption to much of the LTA. When it comes to economic recovery, to identify gaps and opportunities to the government, there should be no red tape and administrative burden to the chambers of commerce/boards of trade to speak to government.

We ask that the Provincial Government:



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1. Update the definition of “small organization” under the **Lobbyists Transparency Act 2020** from 6 employees or less to 25 employees or less.
2. Amend the Act to provide full exemption for all “small organizations”, regardless of membership-base composition or issues-based organization.
3. Alleviate the degree of obligation under the Act for organizations if sector or cross sector-based vs singularly company focused:
 - a. Only require the registration of an actual act of lobbying (letter, meeting, policy decision) upon completion, increase the 50-hour threshold to 200 for charities and not-for-profits, and eliminate the requirement for Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade altogether;
 - b. Establish a more streamlined lobbying tracking report form and process; and
 - c. Removing accumulated lobbying reporting requirements when working with other organizations.
4. Provide greater resources for education and training in the not-for-profit sector, small organizations and Chambers/Boards of Trade to understand the new Act and comply including on how to fulfill reporting requirements.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Huberman'.

H. Captain (Navy) Anita Huberman
CEO, Surrey Board of Trade

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fiona Famulak'.

Fiona Famulak
President & CEO, BC Chamber of Commerce

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colleen Clark'.

Colleen Clark, ACE
CEO, Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Katerina Anastasiadis'.

Katerina Anastasiadis
CEO, Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce

cc: Michael McEvoy, Commissioner of the Office of the Information and Privacy / Office of the Registrar of Lobbyists info@oipc.bc.ca