



## GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

# Accessing information in the Lobbyists Registry

September 7, 2022

## PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

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### Notice

This document is for information purposes only and does not constitute a decision or finding by the Registrar of Lobbyists for British Columbia or their delegates. This guidance does not affect the powers, duties or functions of the Registrar of Lobbyists, or their delegates, regarding any investigation or other matter under the *Lobbyists Transparency Act*, respecting which the Registrar and their delegates will keep an open mind. Responsibility for compliance with the *Lobbyists Transparency Act* remains with each client, lobbyist, and public office holder.

Lobbying is a legitimate means of participating in a democratic system. BC's lobbying law promotes the integrity of the system by ensuring transparency in who is trying to influence provincial government level decision-makers.

The [Lobbyists Registry](#) (the Registry) is an online portal for the public to learn about lobbying activities with BC public office holders. Similar registries exist in other Canadian provinces, territories, and Federal jurisdictions.<sup>1</sup>

Citizens, journalists, organizations, and members of the public can find a wealth of freely accessible information in the Registry. This guide helps readers understand what information is available in the Registry and provides examples on how to search the Registry to access that information.

## WHAT IS LOBBYING?

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If someone is being paid to communicate with a *public office holder* at the provincial government level in an attempt to influence any of the following, it is lobbying:

- Legislation, a legislative proposal, or a regulation;
- A program, policy, directive, or guideline;
- A contract, grant, or financial benefit;
- Transfer of a government asset;
- A decision to have the private sector instead of the government provide goods or services

*Public office holders* include more than just elected officials. Public office holders include: Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), ministers, staff of MLAs and ministers, and any employee of the government of BC. Additionally, any person appointed by a minister or the

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<sup>1</sup> Exceptions at time of publication are Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

Lieutenant Governor in Council, as well as officers, directors, or employees of Provincial entities\* are considered public office holders under the [Lobbyists Transparency Act](#). Lobbying any of these individuals may require registration.

\*Provincial entities include crown corporations (like BC Hydro), school districts, public post-secondary institutions (colleges and universities), and health authorities.

## WHAT INFORMATION IS IN THE LOBBYISTS REGISTRY?

Lobbyists are subject to the [Lobbyists Transparency Act](#) (LTA). The LTA requires lobbyists to publicly report their lobbying activities in BC in a searchable Registry. The Registry provides the public with reports of lobbying activities and statistics with the click of a button. This includes information about who is lobbying, who is being lobbied, what the subject matter of the lobbying is, and whether any gifts were given, amongst other things.

The [Registry Dashboard](#) lets you see which organizations and individuals are currently lobbying government. The dashboard also houses the Registry's search and advanced search functions.

**Lobbyists Registry**

The Lobbyists Registry provides the public the ability to perform searches and view reports and statistics related to lobbying activities reported through Registration Returns and Lobbying Activity Reports.

**Search the registry**

Enter keywords

Last 12 months  Advanced search

**Just posted**

Lobbying Activity Reports  Registration Returns

- Ecotrust Canada**  
Senior Public Office Holders: Janet Routledge, Karin Kirkpatrick, Brenda Bailey, Renee Merrifield, Megan Dykeman, Harwinder Sandhu, Mike Starchuk, Ben Stewart, Henry Yao  
Lobbying Activity date: 2022-06-30
- Council of Forest Industries**  
Senior Public Office Holders: Melissa Sanderson  
Lobbying Activity date: 2022-06-07
- BC Teachers' Federation**  
Senior Public Office Holders: Jennifer Whiteside, Christina Zacharuk  
Lobbying Activity date: 2022-06-27
- BC Teachers' Federation**  
Senior Public Office Holders: Jennifer Whiteside, Christina Zacharuk  
Lobbying Activity date: 2022-06-29
- BC Teachers' Federation**  
Senior Public Office Holders: Brent Sarvi  
Lobbying Activity date: 2022-06-28

**Active registrations**

- Consultant registrations: 368
- Organization registrations: 601
- Total active registrations: 969

**Last reporting period statistics**

	Apr 2022	May 2022	Change
New Registrations	35	25	<span style="color: red;">↓</span> -29%
Updated Registrations	208	222	<span style="color: green;">↑</span> 7%
Reactivated Registrations	5	11	<span style="color: green;">↑</span> 120%
Ended Registrations	21	35	<span style="color: green;">↑</span> 67%
Lobbying Activity Reports	603	720	<span style="color: green;">↑</span> 19%

**Register for an account**

are you a **lobbyist** in BC?

[Are you a Lobbyist in BC?](#)  
[Create an account](#)

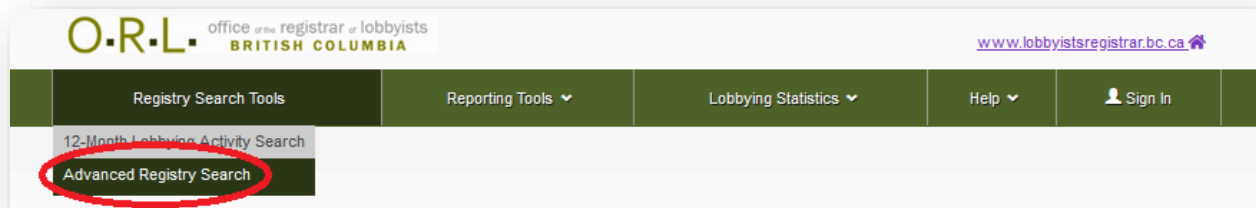
**Related links**

- [LTA Guidance Documents](#)
- [Using the Registry](#)
- [Legislation](#)
- [LTA Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

## SEARCHING THE REGISTRY

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The main search tool is found on the Registry Dashboard and can be used as a simple, free-text search, much like any online search function. To get a more precise search tool, go to the “Registry Search Tools” tab then click on [Advanced Registry Search](#) in the drop-down menu.



The advanced search lets you focus your results by document type and date range and also allows you to set search criteria to focus in on organizations, lobbyists, specific subject areas, and ministries or provincial entities.

### Did you know?

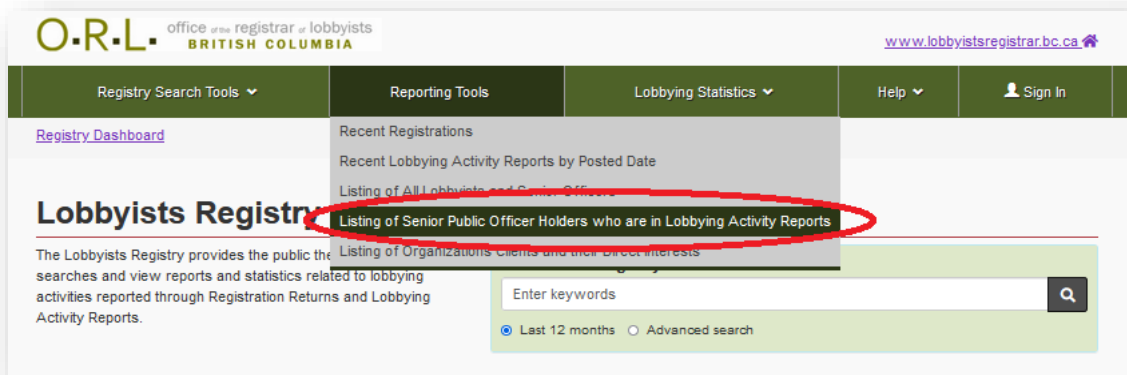
*Not all lobbying activities need to be registered*

- Volunteers are not required to register their activities, as they are not being paid to communicate with public office holders.
- Citizens may communicate with public office holders on their own behalf without registering.
- Requests for information, or responding directly to a public office holder’s written request for advice, do not require registration.
- Submissions that are made on the public record to a committee of the legislative assembly, as well as communications from other levels of government, do not require registration.
- It is also possible that a lobbyist has not properly registered their activity in the Registry. If you think this may be the case, please contact the ORL at [info@bcorl.ca](mailto:info@bcorl.ca).

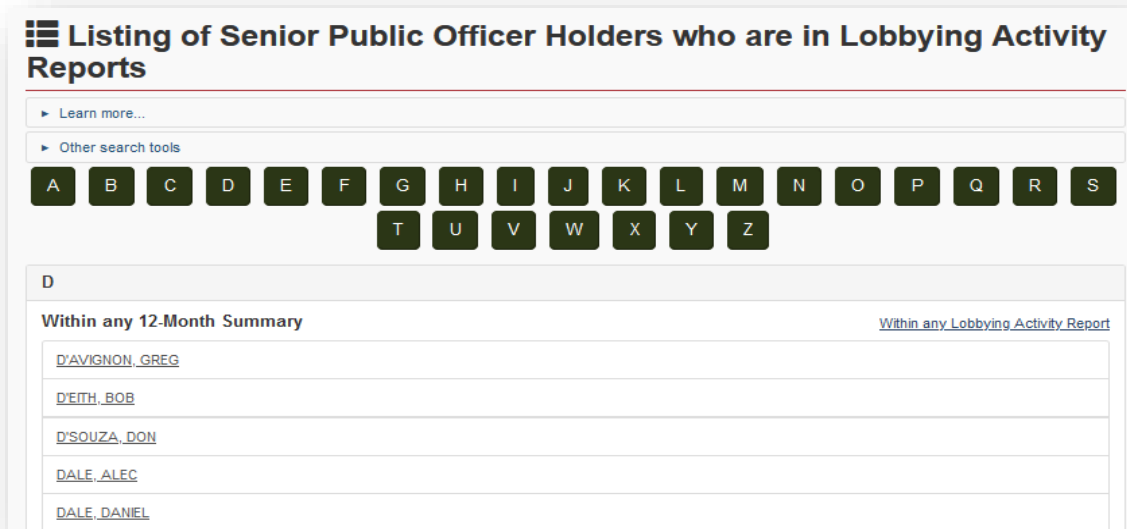
## Using the Registry – Example #1

**Scenario:** The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about several changes to public health policies and you are interested in finding out which organizations are lobbying public health officials.

- 1) From the [Registry Dashboard](#), click on the “Reporting Tools” tab and then scroll down to [Listing of Senior Public Office holders who are in Lobbying Activity Reports](#) in the drop down menu.



- 2) You can browse by last name to find the Provincial Health Officer, Minister of Health or other senior public office holder you are seeking.



- 3) After selecting a senior public office holder, you will see a list of the organizations who have lobbied them over the past 12 months. If they have only been lobbied by a single organization in the past 12 months, you will see a summary of that organization's activities.

**Q 12-Month Lobbying Activity Search Results**

**Search Criteria**

1. Senior public office holder (SPOH) last name: DIX AND;
2. Senior public office holder (SPOH) first name: ADRIAN

[Start over](#) [Modify criteria](#)

**Refine By**

**Activity Status**

[Active](#) 67

[Inactive](#) 2

**Activity Type**

[Organization](#) 60

**Search Results for the Last 12 Months**

Results: 1-50 of 69

1 2 Next →

**The British Columbia College of Family Physicians (A Chapter of the College of Family Physicians of Canada)**  
Organization: Toby Achtman  
Lobbying Activity Reports: 19  
● Currently active [View Summary](#)

**Thrive Health Inc.**  
Organization: David Helliwell  
Lobbying Activity Reports: 21  
● Currently active [View Summary](#)

**The Association for the Protection of Fur-Bearing Animals (The Fur-Bearers)**  
Organization: Lesley Fox  
Lobbying Activity Reports: 16  
● Currently active [View Summary](#)

## REGISTRATION RETURNS AND LOBBYING ACTIVITY REPORTS

Lobbyists are required to register their activities via two primary forms: *Registration Returns* and *Lobbying Activity Reports*.

- *Registration Returns* contain all the basic information for the lobbyist, such as contact info, topics the lobbyist intends to lobby on, their intended outcomes, and which parts of government, crown corporations, or other provincial entities they intend to lobby.
- *Lobbying Activity Reports* are statements of individual instances of lobbying with senior public office holders. These reports include details about specific dates that meetings took place, the subjects discussed, and which senior public office holders and individual lobbyists were involved.

### Did you know?

#### *Rules for social media and lobbying*

- Social media content, such as Tweets or Facebook posts, can be considered lobbying.
- If a lobbyist uses social media to directly lobby a public office holder, that communication must be reported in the Lobbyists Registry.

*Registration Returns* and *Lobbying Activity Reports* can both be accessed through the Registry.

## Using the Registry – Example #2

**Scenario:** You run a ride-share company and have heard a lot of talk about other ride-share companies aiming to expand services in BC. You want to see which companies are lobbying government on this subject.

- 1) From the [Registry Dashboard](#) you can hover over the “Reporting Tools” tab and click [Listing of Organizations Clients and their Direct Interests](#) to browse different organizations that have lobbied government in the past 12 months.
- 2) Once you have found a ride-share company that interests you, click on their name to see a list of their lobbying activities in the past 12 months.
- 3) Clicking on “View Summary” will give you a detailed breakdown of the subjects and intended outcomes that were lobbied.

## Using the Registry – Example #3

**Scenario:** You are a journalist investigating housing affordability in BC. You want to find out: how frequently housing is a subject matter of lobbying with government, who is doing this lobbying, and how this has changed over the past several years.

- 1) From the [Registry Dashboard](#) go to the “Lobbying Statistics” tab and click on [Subject Matter in Active Registrations](#). This will show the current subjects that are being lobbied with government, and how many active registrations each topic has.
- 2) By clicking on the “Trends” tab, you can set a date range to see how the number of active registrations has changed over time. Once you have set the dates of interest, you can click on the number of active registrations to see exactly which organizations are lobbying on the subject of housing within a specified period.
- 3) Click on the “Historical” tab, to find a count of the subject matter being currently lobbied, along with a comparison of counts from the previous five months.
- 4) You can follow the same process with Lobbying Activity Reports. Hovering over the “Lobbying Statistics” tab and clicking on the [Subject Matter in Lobbying Activity Reports](#) option allows you to explore the “Current”, “Historical”, and “Trends” information for Lobbying Activity Reports.

## QUICK LINKS AND FURTHER ASSISTANCE

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If you have further questions about lobbying or the Lobbyists Registry, please contact the Office of the Registrar of Lobbyists for BC at [info@bcorl.ca](mailto:info@bcorl.ca) or take a look at one of the resources below:

- [Using the Registry](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Guidance Documents](#)
- [Glossary](#)
- [Lobbyists Transparency Act](#)

The user guides, FAQs and guidance documents are continually updated on the website for reference.