



**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

**SPEECH TO  
THE HOUSE OF COMMONS' STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS  
APRIL 16, 2026**

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Lobbyists for British Columbia**

Good afternoon, Chair and members of the Committee. Thank you for inviting me here today. I am pleased to assist the committee in its study by providing you with some key aspects of British Columbia's *Lobbyists Transparency Act* – which I'll refer to as the LTA – and my office's role in administering it.

As the Information and Privacy Commissioner, I am designated the Registrar of Lobbyists for British Columbia. Importantly, my role as an officer of the Legislative Assembly is non-partisan and independent.

The overarching purpose of the *Lobbyists Transparency Act* is in the name itself: transparency. The LTA sets out to ensure there is transparency in who is paid to communicate with and attempt to influence the decisions of BC public office holders.

One of the strengths of BC's LTA is that it is a relatively simple Act. As a Regulator, I can attest there is a beauty in simplicity: simplicity leads to understanding, which leads to compliance, which ultimately leads to transparency. In a recent appearance before our own statutory review committee, I reinforced this concept: keep it simple, keep it simple, keep it simple.

I will focus my remarks this afternoon on three important sections of the statute that support transparency:

- The principle underlying what has been referred to at this committee as “registration by default,”
- The requirement to file monthly lobbying activity reports for any lobbying communication with senior public office holders, and
- My office's authority to support compliance through education and, in significant cases, via administrative penalties.

I'll start with the Registration threshold that has been in place since major amendments to the Act came into force in 2020. The amendments harmonized the registration requirements for both consultant lobbyists and organizations and removed a collective 100-hour threshold for in-house lobbyists over a 12-month period.

Prior to the 2020 amendments, this 100-hour threshold did not apply to consultant lobbyists. This created a two-tiered system, whereby consultant lobbyists were subject to more stringent regulatory requirements than organizations, and obscured transparency by allowing for considerable amounts of lobbying by organizations to go unreported.

Now, under the LTA, all lobbyists are treated the same, providing the public with better transparency of the lobbying being conducted in this province.

The ORL saw an over 100% increase in the number of registered organizations in the year following the removal of the 100-hour threshold.

It is evident that significant lobbying efforts were previously unreported and inaccessible to public scrutiny. With that said, the LTA does recognize public-exempt organizations that have fewer than six employees and lobby less than 50 hours over a 12-month period from the requirement to register, unless the primary purpose of the organization is to represent the interests of its members or promote or oppose issues. Some have characterized this as a small business exemption, but it also applies to small service-oriented non-profits.

The next aspect of BC's legislation that I would like to highlight for you today is the Monthly Return. Lobbyists are required to submit details about any lobbying communications with "senior public office holders" that occurred in the month prior via the "monthly return." Senior public office holders are a subset of the most high-ranking public office holders.

Monthly returns must include any communication directed at a senior public office holder, including meetings, correspondence, phone calls, or social media posts directed at a senior public office holder. If it meets the definition of "lobby," it must be reported in a Monthly Return.

The return includes details such as the date of the activity, the names of the lobbyists, the subject matter and intended outcome, and the name and titles of the senior public office holders. This requirement provides the public with timely, detailed information of lobbying activities directed at government and government-controlled entities.

Finally, I would like to conclude with the ability to levy administrative penalties. My office leads with education – we reserve investigations into matters of non-compliance for cases where contraventions are significant or repetitive. In these cases, I have the authority under the LTA to issue administrative penalties on lobbyists found to have contravened the Act.

As a Regulator, I am most effective when I have a range of tools in my toolbox to choose from. Penalties function as one of those tools, as a necessary incentive for lobbyists to meet their transparency obligations under the LTA. Penalties can be either monetary – up to \$25,000 – or a prohibition on lobbying for a period of up to two years. I note that since the amendments came into force in six years ago, the ORL has conducted over 7,000 compliance reviews and has published only 17 decisions regarding non-compliance and associated penalties.

Monetary penalties administered in those decisions range from \$650 to \$8,000. To date, my office has not issued a penalty prohibiting lobbying.

With that Chair, I am happy to answer questions from you and members of the committee.