O.R.L.
office of the registrar of lobbyists
BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Registrar announces Enforcement through Education, following conclusion of temporary fine freeze

VICTORIA – The Office of the Registrar of Lobbyists (ORL) has launched an additional enforcement approach, through education, to support compliance and enforcement of the *Lobbyists Transparency Act* (LTA). The addition follows the September 30 conclusion of the six-month temporary fine freeze for unregistered lobbyists for certain provisions of the Act. The temporary freeze was designed to help unregistered organizations and consultant lobbyists understand their legal obligations under the LTA and to onboard them with the registration process, without risk of a fine.

The ORL piloted the Enforcement through Education program during the fine freeze, providing education in certain circumstances as an alternative to a compliance investigation that could result in fines. The approach has now been adopted into practice and will require designated filers and other relevant individuals who qualify to, in addition to bringing themselves into compliance, confirm in writing their review of educational materials to assist with understanding of the LTA's requirements. Once confirmed within a set deadline, the ORL may choose to not engage in an investigation related to apparent non-compliance with the Act if it is satisfied that the lobbyist understands and will comply with the requirements for lobbying transparency under the LTA.

Whether a designated filer or other individual qualifies for Enforcement through Education is at the sole discretion of the Registrar, with consideration of factors including the severity of the potential contravention, whether the potential contravention was deliberate, steps taken to come into compliance, and the existence of previous enforcement action against the designated filer or individual.

"The launch of the Enforcement through Education program adds to the spectrum of enforcement actions that my office may take to address compliance and is designed to enhance the transparency of lobbying in BC," said Registrar Michael Harvey. "In most cases, while launching an investigation is an option, we first try to work with lobbyists to come into compliance, to understand how and when to register lobbying activity, and to ensure they adhere to the rules of the legislation."

For additional details on Enforcement through Education and how it applies, see Guide to Investigations: https://www.lobbyistsregistrar.bc.ca/handlers/DocumentHandler.ashx?DocumentID=391

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