

## NEWS RELEASE

March 8, 2016

*For immediate release*

### **Ombudsperson releases guide for fair bylaw enforcement**

**Victoria** – B.C. Ombudsperson Jay Chalke has released a guide today aimed at improving the fairness of local government bylaw enforcement programs.

*“Bylaw Enforcement: Best Practices Guide for Local Governments* is to help municipal officials review and revise bylaw enforcement programs to support fair treatment, save money and inspire public confidence,” says Ombudsperson Chalke. “Whether it’s animal control, noise complaints, unsightly premises, building permits – or any other area covered under a bylaw – this report provides a path to fairness.”

Bylaw enforcement processes addressed in the new guide include the role of council, complaint handling, investigations, enforcement decisions and appeals. Five best practices checklists are also included for quick reference.

“Too often bylaw enforcement can result in unnecessary conflict, unfairness and frustration,” says Chalke. “Our investigations of local governments have identified root causes to these problems that are recurring, preventable – or both.”

Examples of Ombudsperson bylaw enforcement investigations are found in the guide. Local governments make up about eight per cent of complaints made to the Office of the Ombudsperson, the independent office with oversight over administrative fairness of B.C. public authorities – including each municipality, regional district, improvement district and the Islands Trust.

*“Bylaw Enforcement* is a practical tool each local government in B.C. can use to best apply the principles of administrative fairness,” says Chalke.

Each local government in B.C. will receive a copy of *Bylaw Enforcement: Best Practices Guide for Local Governments*. The guide can be obtained free of charge at [www.bcombudsperson.ca](http://www.bcombudsperson.ca)

*Since 1979, the Office of the Ombudsperson has had a statutory mandate from the provincial legislature to uphold fair and reasonable conduct by provincial public authorities. In addition to investigating individual complaints, the Ombudsperson also publishes systemic investigations and recommendations for changes that address administrative unfairness and improve public administration in B.C.*

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Backgrounder attached.