

NEWS RELEASE

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Report Release: Improving Crown Land Decisions

Victoria - B.C.'s Ombudsperson Jay Chalke released today Special Report No. 39, [Stem to Stern: Crown Land Allocation and the Victoria International Marina](#). Stem to Stern is the report of the Ombudsperson's investigation into the decision of the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development to approve a lease of a Crown water lot to be used as part of the Victoria International Marina.

"Stem to Stern highlights how important it is that decisions about Crown land management be made in a transparent, consultative and evidence-based manner," said Chalke. "Much of British Columbia is Crown land and government's decisions about Crown land need to be made in a manner that is, and is seen to be, administratively fair and reasonable."

The investigation was into complaints from the public that the ministry did not adequately consider Crown land allocation principles in their decision making, approved the application when other approvals were still pending, and made the decision without adequate public consultation.

"This report is about how decisions are made about valued public assets," said Chalke. "Transparent and clear processes contribute to public understanding and acceptance of government decisions. The public should be provided with sufficient information to understand a decision and how it was made - even if they disagree with it."

The Ombudsperson's investigation resulted in eight recommendations for the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development relating to matters such as the quality and relevance of information available to the public, the ministry's public consultation process and the transparency of its decision making. All eight recommendations have been accepted by the ministry.

"Because individuals brought their concerns to us, we were able to identify shortcomings with how the ministry handled this matter," said Chalke. "As a result, the ministry has committed to making improvements in future Crown land allocation decision making. The changes government has committed to as a result of this report will benefit the public for years to come."

The B.C. Ombudsperson provides independent and impartial oversight of public authorities to ensure every person is treated fairly in the provision of public services. In addition to being an independent avenue for individuals with complaints with B.C. public services, the Ombudsperson reports to the Legislative Assembly and the people of British Columbia to bring attention to matters of administrative fairness. These reports provide oversight of public bodies and assurance to legislators and the public regarding the fairness of provincial and local public administration.