



**Office of the Ombudsman  
British Columbia**

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**BUDGET SUBMISSION  
Fiscal 2008 – 2010**

**Presented  
to  
The Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services  
Legislative Assembly of British Columbia**

**December 11, 2006**



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## SUMMARY

“As our communities become more pluralistic...as society becomes more interdependent and...economic competition becomes more intense, it is clear that...polarization...litigation and...confrontation are not the answers...The consensual resolution of small and large-scale public disputes requires maturity and clear thinking, but it has the potential to promote...harmony...stability and...growth in an otherwise complex and threatening environment...An ombudsman office can play a constructive role in this new approach.”<sup>1</sup>

### **Background**

This budget proposal by the Office of the Ombudsman to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services of the Legislative Assembly is for the fiscal years 2008 through 2010.

The Office of the Ombudsman, British Columbia’s Independent Voice for Fairness, assists more than 6,000 people and 400 public authorities each year. It enhances the effectiveness and accountability of public authorities and raises public confidence in those authorities.

In April 2006 the Legislative Assembly adopted the Report of the Special Committee to Appoint an Ombudsman which confirmed that, “The Ombudsman’s two primary roles are to investigate complaints and to generally oversee the administrative actions of government authorities with a view to upholding the democratic principles of openness, transparency and accountability.”<sup>2</sup>

This proposal asks the Committee to fund both parts of that mandate.

### **Request**

The priorities of the office in the next year are to increase understanding of the role of the office as well as accessibility to its services so we help more complainants; to develop partnerships with stakeholders to more effectively deliver services; to improve dispute resolution processes so we deal with the most serious and difficult complaints; and to conduct systemic investigations and produce reports to provide useful resolutions and guidance to a broad range of authorities.

My goals for 2007-2008 are to increase outreach and communication; to make our services more accessible; to work with stakeholders to improve administrative fairness; and to produce useful public reports. Specific initiatives include developing a formal communications program; establishing an Early Response Team; maintaining our service delivery standards; completing three Provincial outreach tours; increasing the positive impact of our mobile clinic program; and publishing four systemic reports.

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<sup>1</sup> Owen, Stephen “The Ombudsman – Essential Elements and Common Challenges” in Reif, Linda; Marshall, Mary and Farris, Charles eds. *The Ombudsman: Diversity and Development* (Edmonton: 1992, The International Ombudsman Institute) at 8

<sup>2</sup> 2006 Legislative Session, Second Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament, *Hansard*, Wednesday April 26, 2006, Volume 9, Number 10, at 4032.

To achieve these results I am requesting a budget of \$4,445,000 for 2007-2008. \$148,000, 21% of the increase, results from salary increases outside the control of the office. \$561,000, the remaining 79% of the increase, is to achieve the goals set out below. The total proposed 2007-2008 budget is, in today's dollars, \$305,000 (7.5%) more than the budget 15 years ago in 1991-1992 and \$374,000 (8%) less than the budget 10 years ago in 1997-1998.

### **Rationale**

The budget requested will maintain our ability to deal in a timely fashion with individual complaints in all mandated areas of jurisdiction; increase communication and outreach; improve access to the services of the office; and produce useful, timely systemic reports. Initiatives in these areas require confirmation of permanent funding for the two positions provided for one fiscal year (2006-2007) to deal with complaints about self-regulated professions and local governments; funding of one position for a communications officer to develop contacts and materials and produce reports; funding of three positions to conduct systemic investigations and produce timely reports; funding of 3 part time (1 FTE) student positions; funding of .8 of a position to develop a first response capacity and increase mobile intake clinics; and funding of .2 of a position to meet increased IT demands.

### **Results**

The proposed budget will allow the Office of the Ombudsman to continue to assist individuals in obtaining fair treatment from public agencies; to work with those agencies to improve the fairness of their policies and procedures; to conduct systemic investigations; and to report publicly on important issues of fairness in public administration. This will enhance effectiveness and accountability in the delivery of public services in British Columbia.

### **Consequences of Under-funding**

The Office of the Ombudsman is at a critical juncture and needs to fulfill both aspects of its mandate to continue to make an important contribution to civil society in British Columbia. While the office has maintained its ability to provide administrative justice and timely, no-cost resolutions for complainants and agencies, it has been less successful in reaching out to those who do not know about its services or experience barriers to accessing them. Nor has it been able to act more pro-actively and investigate and report in a timely fashion on systemic issues that can resolve problems affecting hundreds of people at one time, as well as providing useful guidance for other agencies dealing with similar issues. If the Office of the Ombudsman is under-funded this situation will worsen and the opportunity to re-energize the Office and reaffirm the importance of fairness in public administration to British Columbia will be missed.

### **Conclusion**

British Columbia has an enviable national and international reputation for efficiency, fairness and accountability in public administration. The Ombudsman's Office plays a key role in maintaining the reality underlying that reputation. This proposed budget provides the foundation to maintain that achievement.

# OMBUDSMAN'S STATEMENT

“The Ombudsman idea was thus taken up in the liberal democracies of the West largely because...it seemed the ideal device for promoting accountable administration.”<sup>3</sup>

## **Introduction**

In 1979 the Legislature of British Columbia passed the *Ombudsman Act* and established the Ombudsman's office. Over the past 27 years hundreds of thousands of British Columbian's have used its services. Nine provinces and three territories have also established similar offices to secure fair treatment in the delivery of public services to their residents and to promote accountable public administration. While Canada does not have a Federal Ombudsman, over 100 countries have national level Ombudsman organizations and many have similar offices at the regional level. The European Union also has an Ombudsman's office.

The generally recognized hallmarks of an effective Ombudsman office are independence, impartiality, confidentiality and thorough, professional, investigations and reports. While independence, in both approach and action, depends on legislation, leadership, and a professional culture, it also requires sufficient financial resources to support the organization's mandate.

## **Mandate**

“The Ombudsman's two primary roles are to investigate complaints and to generally oversee the administrative actions of government authorities with a view to upholding the democratic principles of openness, transparency and accountability.”<sup>4</sup>

The Office of the Ombudsman in British Columbia upholds those democratic principles of openness, transparency and accountability by promoting fairness in public administration in the province and working to ensure every person in British Columbia is treated fairly in the provision of public services.

In a modern society everybody is impacted, often on a daily basis, by public administration. Everything from obtaining a license to repaying a student loan; from closing a school to building a hospital; from applying for a benefit to buying property is “a matter of administration.”<sup>5</sup> In 1984 the Supreme Court of Canada stated “... ‘a matter of administration’ encompasses everything done by government authorities in the implementation of government policy. I would exclude only the activities of the legislature and the courts from the Ombudsman's scrutiny.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Gregory, Roy and Philip Giddings, *The Ombudsman, The Citizen and Parliament* (2002: Politico's Publishing, London) at Page 7.

<sup>4</sup> See note 2.

<sup>5</sup> Section 10 of the *Ombudsman Act*, RSBC 1996,c.340

<sup>6</sup> *B.C. Development Corp. v. Friedmann(Ombudsman)* [1984] 2 S.C.R. 447 at 474.

## **Scope**

“An Office headed by an independent, non-partisan...officer of the legislature, provided for by statute...which supervises the administration and deals with complaints from any person or body of persons about alleged administrative injustice and maladministration, or acts on its own motion; has the power to investigate, issue reports, criticise, publicise, conciliate and make recommendations for remedial and corrective action; but is not a court or tribunal and is not authorized to give instructions, make awards or reverse administrative actions.”<sup>7</sup>

The Office of the Ombudsman in British Columbia has one of the broadest mandates in Canada. It can investigate complaints of unfair treatment by more than 2,800 public agencies and service deliverers.

In addition to government ministries ranging from Employment Assistance to Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, the Ombudsman’s office also investigates complaints about provincial commissions and boards such as the Workers’ Compensation Board, the Coroner’s Service, the Financial Services Tribunal, the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission, the Property Assessment Appeal Board and the BC Utilities Commission. It investigates acts, decisions and policies of Crown Corporations such as BC Assessment; the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC), BC Hydro and Power Authority, BC Housing, and BC Transit. Other agencies within our jurisdiction are health authorities; municipalities and other local governments, including boards of variance; schools and school boards; colleges and universities; and a number of professional associations such as the College of Physicians and Surgeons.<sup>8</sup>

The Office of the Ombudsman also deals with complaints about the provision of public services delivered by contracted service providers such as Health Insurance BC, Accenture and Revenue Services BC.

## **Services**

“The Ombudsman’s remit goes wider than dealing in questions of law, and ... [her] intervention may secure remedial action for a complaint which has little or no chance of being upheld in the courts...As far as complainants are concerned, going to the Ombudsman has the invaluable advantages of being not only simple and straightforward but also free. Nor is it only complainants who stand to gain from the work of an Ombudsman. The public interest too may benefit... Ombudsm[a]n, it is said, typically try to achieve outcomes where the governmental body concerned can itself take satisfaction from the remedies and negotiated systemic improvements resulting from their intervention.”<sup>9</sup>

Many of the people who complain to the Office of the Ombudsman have no other place to turn. They have exhausted any internal complaint resolution mechanisms and are simply not in a position to go to court to seek a resolution. This can be as true of a small business person as a property owner, or a person on a pension.

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<sup>7</sup> See note 3 at 13.

<sup>8</sup> The schedule specifying the authorities under the *Act* is included at Appendix C

<sup>9</sup> See note 3 at 8.

The Office of the Ombudsman provides a range of services. It gives information, offers guidance, investigates complaints, resolves problems, provides explanations, initiates investigations, makes recommendations and reports publicly.

The office neither argues on behalf of a complainant, nor defends the actions of an agency. Its commitment is to the principle of administrative fairness which is indispensable to good government. When a person makes a complaint, the Ombudsman's office examines it to ensure that it raises a matter of administrative fairness. If it does not, then we take the time to explain to an individual why we do not see a matter of administrative unfairness in the issue they have raised and we may be able to provide information on another route available to obtain a desirable outcome.

If, after investigation, we conclude that an agency has acted in a fair manner, then we can provide assurance to the complainant that there has been a thorough and impartial investigation into the matter they raised. While they may still be dissatisfied with a particular decision, action, or outcome, they may be satisfied that the process followed was a fair one.

If we conclude the individual has not been treated fairly, then we work in a non-confrontational, consultative manner to resolve the problem and restore fairness. This benefits not only the complainant but also the institution he or she has been dealing with. In many cases the resolution of an individual complaint can lead to an improvement to an entire system. Sometimes it is not possible to come to a satisfactory resolution for an individual, but that person's inquiry or complaint may nevertheless lead to a change which benefits other people. These types of complaints may lead to the publishing of a public report under section 25 or 31 of the *Ombudsman Act*.

Ombudsman staff may and do, on request, provide a service to authorities by working with them to establish effective, fair internal complaints resolution processes.

Finally, the Ombudsman can initiate investigations if she believes a situation of administrative unfairness or "maladministration" of public services exists. This approach can be very useful in identifying and facilitating resolution of systemic problems and will usually lead to the publishing of a public report.

## **2006 Activities**

"An ombudsman office is established as an independent quality control mechanism to balance the market power of the public sector. Individuals and firms can express their concerns to the office regarding the quality and fairness of public sector actions, omissions, decisions and practices. Through this process, the ombudsman office assists public managers to identify and resolve quality concerns...Private contracts negotiated with government should therefore provide explicitly for access to the Ombudsman office by individual users in order to ensure quality control over the public service that is being privately delivered."<sup>10</sup>

2006 was a year of change for the Office of the Ombudsman with a new Ombudsman appointed for a six year term in May and three new Ombudsman Officers (Investigators) joining the investigation teams (18% of Investigators).

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<sup>10</sup> See note 1 at 8

I anticipate more than 6,500 inquiries and complaints will be dealt with in 2006. This number represents a continuation of a recent trend towards a reduction in the number of inquiries and complaints received. I believe there are three factors driving the trend – two positive and one negative. The first positive factor is that the Office of the Ombudsman has over the past five years made a conscious effort to work with authorities to develop more effective internal complaint resolution processes and that initiative has been successful. The second is that our office now utilizes technology to allow individuals calling in by phone or accessing our website to be redirected if there are internal dispute resolution mechanisms available to them that they have not yet accessed.

The negative factor is that fewer people are aware of the work of the office, some even believe that it had been closed for a time, and that more work needs to be done to ensure that people in British Columbia are aware of the office and its mandate. This is particularly true in the Lower Mainland where, statistically, fewer people than expected use our services.

A strong indication that the positive factors are responsible in part for this decline is that although overall Intakes are down, the number of complaints requiring investigation continues to rise. It is anticipated that 2,200 files will be opened to investigators this year, up approximately 20% since 2005 and 35% since 2004. 67% of those files are expected to be closed within 90 days and 97% within one year.

The distribution of complaints among authorities remains fairly constant. 58% of the files closed related to provincial ministries; 16% to provincial commissions and boards; 9% to Crown Corporations; 5% to Health Authorities; and the remainder related to municipalities, school boards and other authorities.

The increase in staff in April 2006 (two temporary investigator positions and one FTE for systems) to a total of 37 allowed the elimination of the “holding queue” for municipalities and professional associations and the continued operation of the mobile clinic program. At the end of December 2006 there will be no files in a holding queue.

Three public reports were published this year, Special Report No.27: *The Power of an Apology: Removing the Legal Barriers*; Special Report No. 28: *Ombudsman Investigation of the Public Interest Advocacy Centre’s Complaints about the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance*; and Special Report No. 29: *Strategic Plan 2006-2010*.

### **Strategic Direction 2006-2010**

“Introducing a systemic approach requires a threshold maturity for an ombudsman office. It is not an alternative to individual complaint resolution: rather, it is intimately dependent on the technical expertise and casework experience acquired through investigating, analysing and resolving thousands of individual concerns over many years...as skill and experience accumulate within an ombudsman office, there evolve both the capacity and the responsibility to identify and remedy systemic causes of recurring unfairness.”<sup>11</sup>

In Special Report No. 29: *Strategic Plan 2006-2010*, I have outlined the strategic direction for the Office of the Ombudsman over the next four years. That direction is one of outreach and public communication of the results achieved by our investigations and initiatives; continued timely response to and resolution of individual complaints; and the development of a

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<sup>11</sup> See note 1 at 7

systemic approach to remedy issues of recurring unfairness and to produce useful, timely public reports.

There are two trends in government that I will be monitoring and that have potential to impact on our planning. These are the use of guidelines and discretion to replace regulatory requirements and the move to alternate service delivery of public services. In addition I want to look at the *Ombudsman Act* over the next year to see whether, after nearly 30 years, it needs updating in certain areas.

### **2007-2008 Initiatives**

“The *Ombudsman Act* of British Columbia establishes a code of administrative justice for all public authorities.”<sup>12</sup>

My goals for 2007-2008 are to increase outreach and communication; to make our services more accessible; to work with stakeholders to improve administrative fairness; and to produce useful public reports. Specific initiatives include developing a formal communications program; establishing an Early Response Team; maintaining our service delivery standards; completing three Provincial outreach tours; increasing the positive impact of our mobile clinic program; and publishing four systemic reports.

To achieve the goals I have set out I am requesting the following:

1. Confirmed permanent funding of the two temporary Investigator positions provided this year to allow complaints involving all authorities to be investigated, rather than having some declined or placed in a holding queue. It is expected that approximately 450 files relating to municipalities and professional associations will be dealt with by the office in 2006.
2. A communications officer position. In my view this position is critical to ensuring the office continues to be effective, as a better understanding of the role of the office and the services provided is the single greatest challenge faced in the next three years. A communications officer will act as a media point of contact and, on some issues, spokesperson; develop education packages; produce materials; edit reports; find no and low costs mechanisms to communicate the role and services the office provides through the media; and identify how the office can reach out to under serviced communities.
3. Three additional permanent Investigator positions. These positions will provide the human resources necessary to conduct systemic investigations. Systemic investigations are key not only to solving recurring problems effectively, but also important for outreach to under serviced communities, as well as providing examples of how to resolve problems to other agencies.
4. One FTE for student positions. This will provide additional research capacity to the office, as well as aid in the production of materials and allow follow up analysis to be conducted on referrals. It will also give a series of young people in British Columbia exposure to working in the public service. Although this is expressed as 1 FTE I expect that it will mean three or four students part time during the year.

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<sup>12</sup> Parfitt, Brent “Public Education on the Role of the Ombudsman Office: Geographical Concerns, Targeting Vulnerable Groups” see note 1 at 161

5. .8 FTE for a Complaints Analyst position. This will allow for an even more active mobile intake program and the introduction of an Early Response Team initiative to provide quicker resolution of straight forward, easily resolved, complaints. This will improve service to both complainants and authorities.
6. .2 FTE increase for IT support to allow us to maintain our Case Tracker System at its high level of efficiency.
7. An increase in our operating and capital budgets to cover statutory and contractual salary increases; personnel expenses; improved IT capabilities; and increased travel and professional services.

## **A. OVERVIEW OF CORE BUSINESS AREAS**

The Office of the Ombudsman has two core business areas, investigation of individual complaints about administrative unfairness and general oversight of the administrative actions of government authorities.

The *Ombudsman Act* provides jurisdiction over 2,800 public authorities ranging from provincial government ministries to local boards of variance. The Ombudsman can investigate administrative decisions, actions, omissions, and procedures of authorities that may aggrieve a person. Most complaints are resolved through a consultative and collaborative approach. The Ombudsman can make findings that a decision, recommendation, act or omission was contrary to law; unjust, oppressive or improperly discriminatory; the result of the application of an arbitrary, unreasonable and unfair procedure; made for an improper purpose; was negligent; lacked adequate and appropriate reasons or resulted in an unreasonable delay.

The Ombudsman can recommend a matter be referred back to an authority for further consideration; an act be remedied; a decision or recommendation be changed; adequate reasons be given; a practice, procedure or course of action be altered; an enactment or other rule of law be reconsidered; or any other step be taken.

After making findings and recommendations to an authority, the Ombudsman may make a report to the Lieutenant Governor in Council and then the Legislative Assembly, if she concludes adequate and appropriate action has not been taken. The Ombudsman may also provide a special report to the Legislative Assembly or comment publicly about any investigation if she considers it to be in the public interest.

### **Outreach and Communication**

The mobile intake program is continuing to provide service in the Lower Mainland and southern Vancouver Island with regular intakes being held in Abbotsford, Surrey, Richmond, Coquitlam, Burnaby and North/West Vancouver as well as Duncan, Nanaimo, Sooke, and on Salt Spring Island.

In September 2006 the Ombudsman and two Ombudsman Officers went on a provincial tour from Golden to Merritt, meeting with authorities, MLAs and staff, not-for-profit agencies, and the Upper Nicola Band as well as holding mobile intake clinics. Another provincial tour is being scheduled for January 2007 to the Sunshine Coast and northern Vancouver Island.

Information binders have been sent to all MLA offices as well as many authorities and not-for-profit agencies.

### **Investigation of Individual Complaints**

The Office of the Ombudsman will receive approximately 6,500 inquiries and complaints in 2006. It is anticipated that 2,200 files will be assigned to Investigators this year, up approximately 20% since 2005 and 35% since 2004. 67% of those files are expected to be closed within 90 days and 97% within one year. 58% of the files closed related to provincial ministries; 16% to provincial commissions and boards; 9% to Crown Corporations; 5% to

Health Authorities; and the remainder related to municipalities, school boards and other authorities.

### **General Oversight of Administrative Actions of Government**

Special Report No. 27: *The Power of an Apology: Removing the Legal Barriers* advocated the adoption of legislation to facilitate the use of an apology as a dispute resolution mechanism by separating its use from any issue of liability.

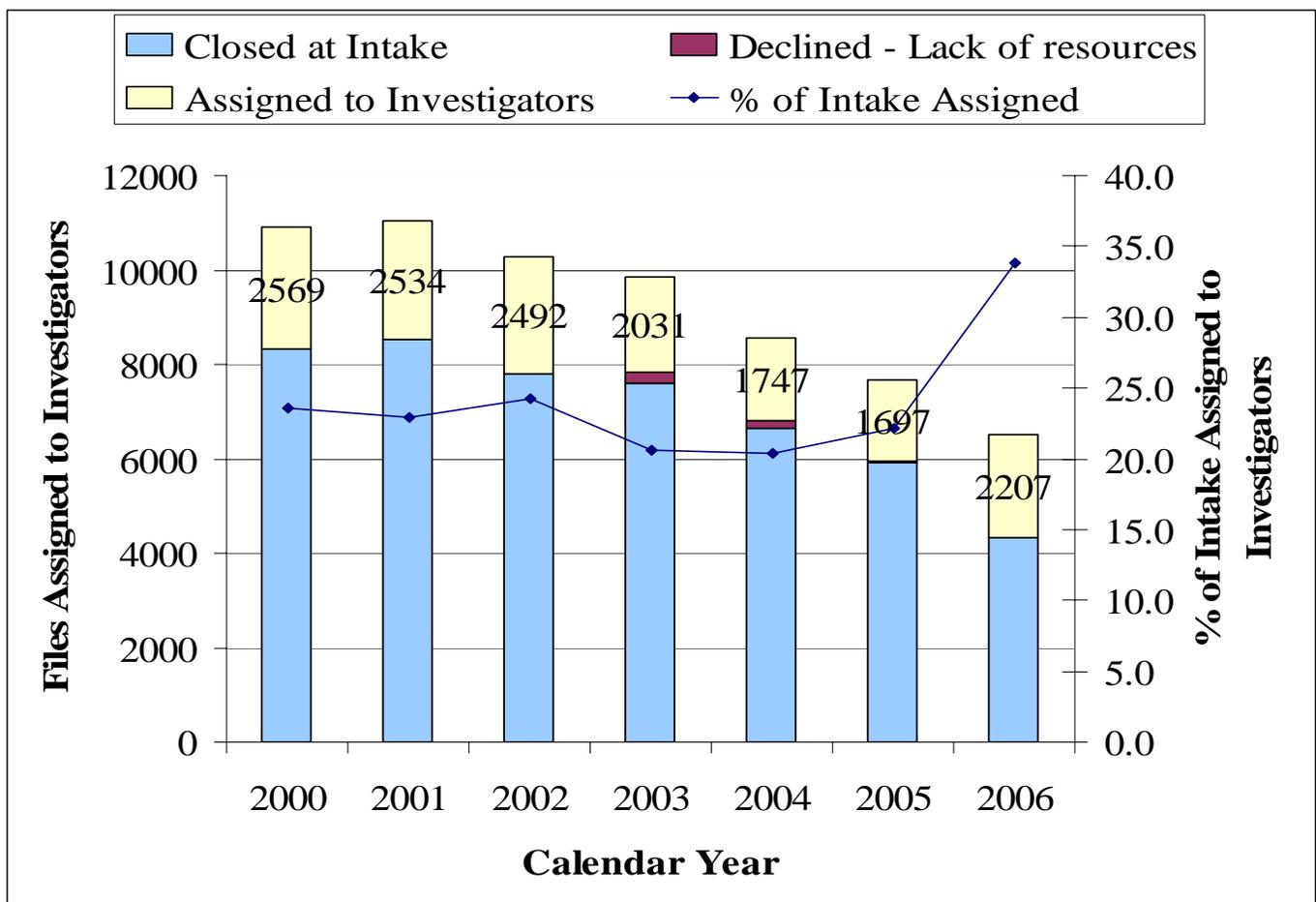
Special Report No. 28: *Ombudsman Investigation of the Public Interest Advocacy Centre's Complaints about the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance*, looked at aspects of the Ministry's requirements for information and its procedure for evaluating people seeking benefits.

## B. WORKLOAD TRENDS AND PERFORMANCE DATA

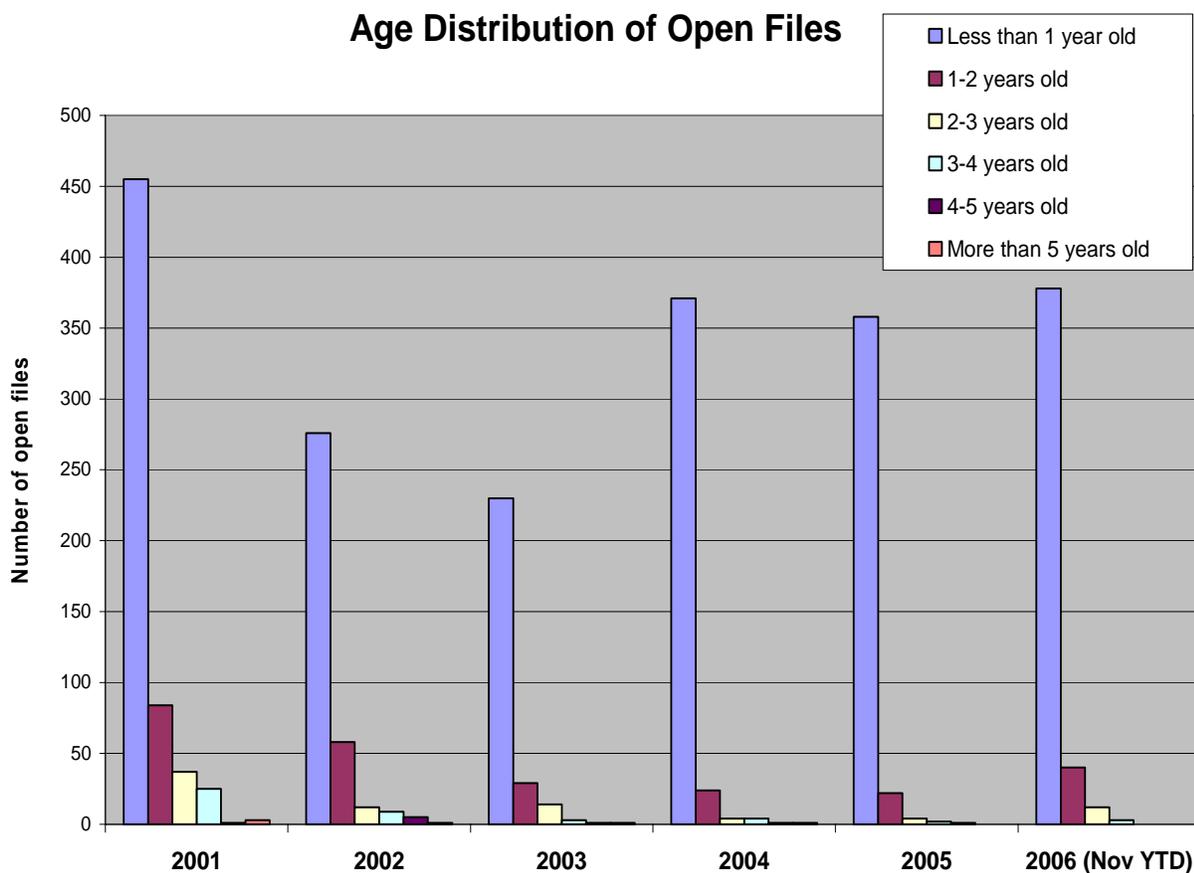
The Office of the Ombudsman is fortunate to have a strong Case Tracker System that not only supports the efficient daily management of the office’s work but also enables the workload trend analysis and performance management. Much of this data is presented in the Annual Report each year, but the following is a subset of that information with particular relevance to budget deliberations and the service consequences that flow from those decisions.

The work of the office is carried out through several approaches, but the main work consists of investigation of thousands of complaints brought forward by individuals each year. If the office is to provide good service to the citizens of British Columbia, it is important to monitor the complaint trends and respond accordingly.

The chart below illustrates a trend that has been developing for several years – that being a declining number of total intakes but an increasing proportion of complaints requiring investigation. This trend reflects the result of a previous strategy of the office to provide better on-line information about alternative available remedies and the encouragement and assistance provided by the office to authorities in the development of their own internal complaint review mechanisms. This has had the effect of reducing the initial screening workload of the Intake function of the office, but the investigative load is increasing as the number of files assigned to Investigators is increasing.

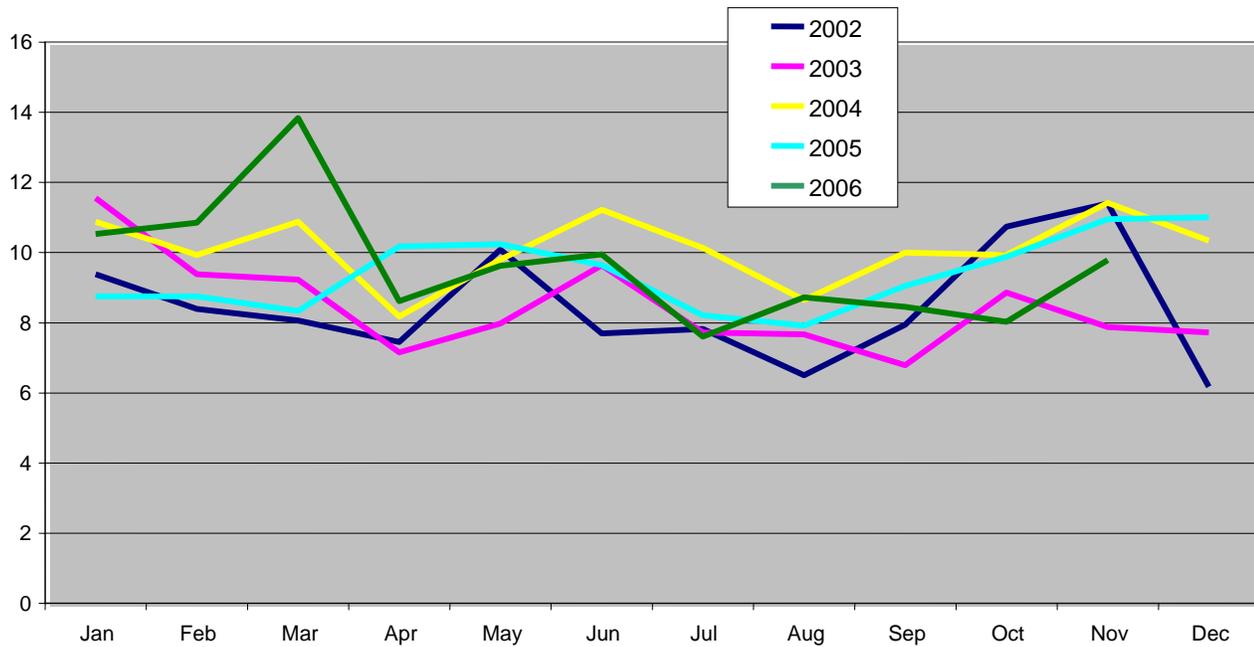


Over the past six years the Office of the Ombudsman has introduced a comprehensive performance measurement system. One of the most important measurements is the time between opening and closing a file. The next chart shows the age distribution of open files. It can be seen that there is a trend starting towards files being open longer. This reflects the increasing percentage of files being assigned for investigation. As of the end of November the percentage of files open was approximately 8% higher than at the end of 2005. This represents the highest open investigative case load since 2001 at which time the office had a staff complement of 50 FTEs. This is a reflection of the overall increase in the number of files. We will be looking closely at ways to ensure that investigations continue to be completed in a timely fashion. This highlights the requirement for additional investigative resources to complete systemic investigations without adversely impacting the handling of individual complaints.

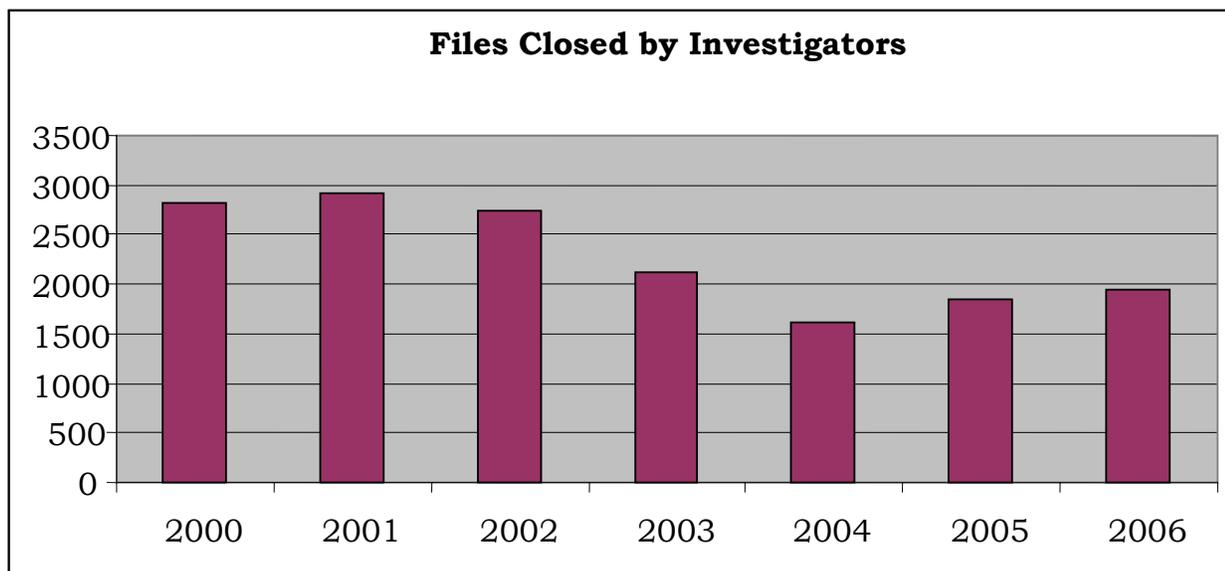


The next two charts show the trends in workload in relation to new files assigned to Investigators and files closed by Investigators. This is an important statistic as it relates to the matter of maintaining a manageable caseload at the individual investigator level, which allows for timely resolution of cases, as opposed to looking at the load from the perspective of the whole office. This data shows a fairly consistent average rate of assignment between 8 – 12 files per month per Investigator and an increasing overall rate of file closure consistent with the higher number of files being assigned for investigation and the increase in the number of Investigators over the last two years.

**Average Files Assigned to Investigators**



**Files Closed by Investigators**



## **C. RELATED INITIATIVES AND PLANNING PROCESSES**

### **Information Resource Management Plan**

The Office of the Ombudsman maintains its own internal Information Systems capability for security and confidentiality reasons as required under the *Ombudsman Act*. The hardware and software utilized is consistent with current government standards and is acquired using government purchasing Master Standing Offers if possible.

Hardware and software is replaced on a routine 3-year cycle with approximately 1/3 of the equipment being replaced each year in order to maintain reliability and performance requirements.

The Office of the Ombudsman Systems staff now provides systems support to the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner and the Office of the Merit Commissioner. This support is being provided under a shared services agreement.

During Fiscal 2008 it is planned to upgrade the Operating System software to Windows 2003, introduce SharePoint collaboration software and upgrade the Backup hardware and software to provide greater disaster recovery capabilities for all of the offices supported under the shared services agreement.

### **Human Resource Management Plan**

The Office of the Ombudsman integrates the objectives, strategies, performance measures and targets related to Human Resource Management with the overall Strategic Plan for the office. This is because Human Resource Management is not a Goal or Core Business Area that stands on its own but it is a crucial component in any strategic plan for an organization.

To assist in addressing the growing potential for shortages of skilled and experienced personnel in the Public Service, the office plans to offer several student positions as a method of introducing new talent to the opportunities of a career in the public service.

### **Case Tracker System**

During the current fiscal year an agreement was entered into with the Saskatchewan Ombudsman and the Saskatchewan Children's Advocate's Offices to provide and support a modified version of the system for their offices. The funds generated in this way are recovered to the office budget to offset any expenses associated with providing the services, to support on-going enhancement of the Case Tracker System and to enhance the Systems Team so that it is not so vulnerable due to its small size.

Further opportunities regarding the sale of the Case Tracker System will be evaluated as they become available. Continued support agreements with the Alberta Ombudsman, Saskatchewan Ombudsman and Saskatchewan Child Advocate are expected in the coming fiscal year. In addition the Merit Commissioner has indicated an interest in acquiring a modified version of the Case Tracker to support the work of her office. These opportunities allow the Ombudsman (and other Legislative Officers) to benefit from economics of scale and maintain an independent, leading edge case management system.

### **Shared Services**

During the current fiscal year, the Ombudsman's Office entered into an agreement to provide administrative, payroll, financial and systems support to the Office of the Merit Commissioner. Continued support services are being provided to the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner and the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner.

## **D. RESOURCE SUMMARY & BUDGET REQUEST**

### **Current Fiscal Year - 2007**

The Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services (the "Committee"), in its report of December 20, 2005, recommended that the budget be set at \$3,693,000 for Fiscal 2007. This included amounts of \$189,000 to hire two additional Investigators for one year. Treasury Board added \$43,000 to the budget to account for increased benefit chargeback rates and building occupancy charges that were applied across the entire public service. This brought the total 2006/07 budget included in the estimates to \$3,736,000.

At this time, the office anticipates being able to meet its budget target for the current fiscal year.

### **Fiscal 2008 - 2010**

The Committee stated that for planning purposes, the budget for Fiscal 2008 and 2009 should be \$3,504,000. The Committee recommended that the office receive a capital budget of \$65,000 in each of Fiscal Years 2007-2009.

**The Committee is now requested to approve a revised base operating budget of \$4,445,000 and a revised capital budget of \$110,000 in Fiscal 2008.**

This request is based on supporting core services at an increased staffing level that would reflect keeping the additional two Investigators that were funded for one year plus adding three more Investigator positions. It would also allow an increase of 0.8 FTE on the Intake Team to facilitate introduction of an early resolution capacity. Mobile Intake on the Lower Mainland and on lower Vancouver Island will be continued reflecting the usefulness of this as an outreach tool for the office and we will look at expanding access to this program. It will also allow for an increase of one FTE to focus on communications activities for the office. A small increase in Systems support of 0.2 FTE is required due to the additional entities being supported. Finally, in keeping with the need to address the growing prospect of labour shortages in the Public Service, it will provide funding for 1 FTE for several part time student positions.

Based on the current caseload data and rates of new complaint intake, it is anticipated that the staffing level supported by this budget request will allow the office to provide full services without the need to place files in a holding queue.

The funding request is summarized on the next page and the details are in Appendix A.

## **Budget Summary**

<b>Core Business Area</b>	<b>2006/07 Estimates</b>	<b>2007/08 Estimates</b>	<b>2008/09 Plan</b>	<b>2009/10 Plan</b>
<b>Operating Expenses (\$000)</b>				
Core Services *	\$3,736	\$4,395	\$4,395	\$4,395
Public Service Development – Student		50	50	50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,736</b>	<b>\$4,445</b>	<b>\$4,445</b>	<b>\$4,445</b>
<b>Full-time Equivalents (FTE'S)</b>				
Core Services*	37	42	42	42
Public Service Development – Student		1	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)</b>				
Office of the Ombudsman	\$65	\$110	\$65	\$65
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$65</b>	<b>\$110</b>	<b>\$65</b>	<b>\$65</b>

\*Core Services in fiscal 06/07 included one time funding of \$189,000 for additional Investigators (2 FTEs). These amounts are included in the Core Services Estimates for Fiscal 07/08 and the plans for Fiscal 08/09 and 09/10.

## **Key Features and Service Consequences**

- Increased focus on outreach and communication to the public.
- Renewed ability to carry out investigations of complaints about all the Authorities in the *Ombudsman Act* through the permanent addition of two Investigators.
- Increased capacity through the permanent addition of three Investigator positions to conduct systemic investigations.
- Introduction of an early resolution process through the Intake Team.
- Expanded Mobile Intake service in the Lower Mainland.
- Continue timely, high quality investigations of complaints and at the same time maintain an acceptable balance in the workload to staff ratio.
- Support for Public Service workforce development through funding for several student positions.
- Continued economics through the sharing of offices and services between the Office of the Ombudsman, the Office of the Information and Protection of Privacy Commissioner, the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner and the Office of the Merit Commissioner in the areas of Financial, Payroll and Systems support.
- Continued enhancement of the Case Tracker System by recovering funds through the sale and support of the System to Ombudsman Offices in other jurisdictions.
- Upgrade of the computer operating system software to Windows 2003, improved disaster recovery capabilities through new backup hardware and software to support all of the shared services offices and provision of SharePoint collaboration software.
- Potential for hosting, on a cost shared basis, a national collaboration system for Ombudsman offices across Canada using SharePoint.

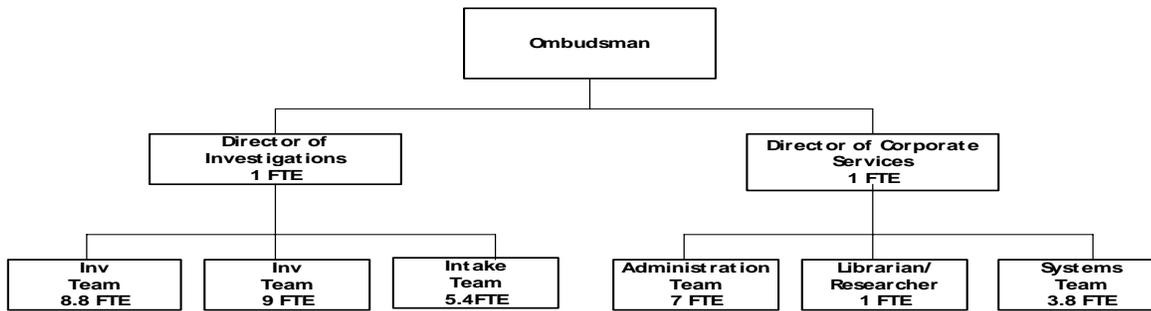
## APPENDICES

### Appendix A – Budget Details

STOB	DESCRIPTION	2006/07 Budget	2007/08 Estimates	Change	2008/09 Plan	2009/10 Plan
50	SALARIES	\$2,309,000	\$2,810,000	\$501,000	\$2,810,000	\$2,810,000
51	SUPPLEMENTARY SALARY	15,000	45,000	30,000	45,000	45,000
52	EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	656,000	755,000	99,000	755,000	755,000
54	OFFICER OF LEG.SALARY	222,000	228,000	6,000	228,000	228,000
57	TRAVEL	54,000	60,000	6,000	60,000	60,000
59	CENTRAL MGM'T SUPPORT SERVICES	90,000	102,000	12,000	102,000	102,000
60	PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	65,000	100,000	35,000	100,000	100,000
63	INFORMATION SYSTEMS - OPERATING	40,000	75,000	35,000	75,000	75,000
65	OFFICE & BUSINESS EXPENSES	95,000	110,000	15,000	110,000	110,000
67	INFO ADVERTISING & PUBLICATIONS	40,000	40,000		40,000	40,000
68	STATUTORY ADVERTISING & PUBLICATIONS	20,000	20,000		20,000	20,000
69	UTILITIES, MATERIALS, SUPPLIES	22,000	25,000	3,000	25,000	25,000
70	OPERATING EQUIPMENT & VEHICLES					
73	AMORTIZATION EXPENSE	65,000	85,000	20,000	85,000	85,000
75	BUILDING OCCUPANCY	228,000	290,000	62,000	290,000	290,000
88	RECOVERIES - INTERNAL	(140,000)	(220,000)	(80,000)	(220,000)	(220,000)
89	RECOVERIES					
90	RECOVERIES - EXTERNAL	(45,000)	(80,000)	(35,000)	(80,000)	(80,000)
<b>TOTAL</b>		\$3,736,000	\$4,445,000	\$709,000	\$4,445,000	\$4,445,000
	<b>CAPITAL BUDGET</b>					
Capital	Information Systems & Furniture & Equipment	\$65,000	\$110,000	\$45,000	\$65,000	\$65,000

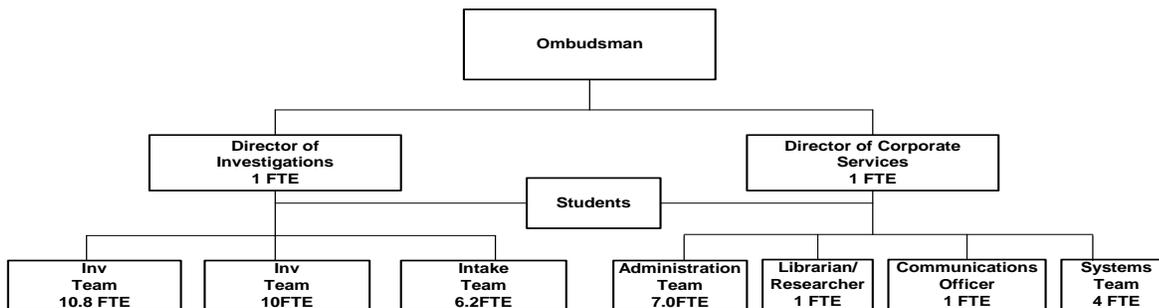
## Appendix B – Organization Chart

FISCAL 07



37 FTEs

PROPOSED FISCAL 08



43 FTEs

The Director of Corporate Services and five of the staff in the Administration Team, the four members of the Systems Team and the Librarian/Researcher (10 positions) also provide support services to the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner, the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, and the Office of the Merit Commissioner pursuant to shared services agreements with those offices. In addition, the Systems Team provides support to the Case Tracker Systems for the Alberta Office of the Ombudsman, the Saskatchewan Ombudsman and the Saskatchewan Children’s Advocate under cost recovery contracts.

## Appendix C – Schedule of Authorities

1. Ministries of the government.
2. A person, corporation, commission, board, bureau or authority who is or the majority of the members of which are, or the majority of the members of the board of management or board of directors of which are,
  - (a) appointed by an Act, minister, the Lieutenant Governor in Council,
  - (b) in the discharge of their duties, public officers or servants of the government, or
  - (c) responsible to the government.
3. A corporation the ownership of which or a majority of the shares of which is vested in the government.
4. Municipalities.
5. Regional districts.
6. The Islands Trust established under the *Islands Trust Act*.
7. Improvement districts as defined in the *Local Government Act*.
8. The Capital Improvement District under the *Capital Commission Act*.
9. Boards, committees, commissions or similar bodies established under the *Community Charter*, the *Local Government Act* or the *Vancouver Charter*.
10. The Resort Municipality of Whistler and the Whistler Resort Association.
11. A local trust committee, the Trust Council, the Trust Fund Board and the executive committee and persons to whom their powers are delegated under the *Islands Trust Act*.
12. Library boards defined in the *Library Act*.
13. The Cultus Lake Park Board.
14. A greater board as defined in the *Community Charter*.
15. Development districts, water users' communities, comptroller and regional water manager under the *Water Act*.
16. The commissioners of a district defined in section 58 of the *Drainage, Ditch and Dike Act* and an engineer, commissioner, inspector of dikes or land settlement board acting under that Act.
17. The British Columbia Diking Authority and a diking authority under the *Dike Maintenance Act*.
18. The Okanagan Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Board.
19. Regional transit commissions established under the *British Columbia Transit Act*.
20. A corporation
  - (a) more than 50% of the issued voting shares of which are owned by one or more of the authorities listed in sections 4 to 19 of this section, or
  - (b) that is controlled by one or more of the authorities listed in sections 4 to 19 and, for the purpose of ascertaining control, a corporation is controlled by one or more of these authorities if a majority of the members of the corporation or of its board of directors or board of management consists of either or both of the following:
    - (i) persons appointed as members by the authorities;
    - (ii) officers or employees of an authority acting as such.

- 21 Schools and boards as defined in the *School Act*.
- 21.1 Francophone education authorities as defined in the *School Act* and francophone schools operated by francophone education authorities.
- 22 Universities as defined in the *University Act*.
- 23 The University of Northern British Columbia.
- 23.1 The Thompson Rivers University.
- 24 Royal Roads University.
- 25 Institutions as defined in the *College and Institute Act*.
- 26 Hospitals and boards of management of hospitals as defined in the *Hospital Act*.
- 27 Governing bodies of professional and occupational associations that are established or continued by an Act.
- 28 Regional Health Boards established under the *Health Authorities Act*.
- 29 Regional Hospital Districts under the *Hospital District Act*.
- 30 [Repealed 2002-35-11]
- 31 The Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority established under the *Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority Act*.
- 32 The Business Practices and Consumer Protection Authority established under the *Business Practices and Consumer Protection Authority Act*.
- Municipal Pension Board of Trustees.
- Teachers' Pension Board of Trustees.
- Public Service Pension Board of Trustees.
- College Pension Board of Trustees.
- The British Columbia Safety Authority established under the *Safety Authority Act*.
- Land Title and Survey Authority of British Columbia.



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