



Association of
Canadian Archivists
Association canadienne
des archivistes



Canadian Council of Archives
Conseil canadien des archives

Honourable Michael de Jong, Q.C.
Minister of Finance and Government House Leader
PO BOX 9048 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria BC V8W 9E2

Cc: Cheryl Wenezenki-Yolland
Associate Deputy Minister and Chief Records Officer
Ministry of Finance
PO BOX 9417 STN PROV GOVT
VICTORIA BC V8W 9V1

6 March 2017

Dear Minister de Jong,

On behalf of the Association of Canadian Archivists and the Canadian Council of Archives executive boards and membership, we write to express our concern regarding the recent call for public comment on the “decision making process” for British Columbia’s records retention and disposition schedules.

As you know, the Province entrusts the development of records schedules to the Chief Information Officer, and the many records managers and archivists who possess the necessary professional and subject matter expertise to ensure the appropriate retention and disposition decisions are made for the public records of British Columbia, in accordance with the Information Management Act. Records managers and archivists have in-depth knowledge and experience required to analyze administrative and operational business records, and the varied legislative requirements for retention and disposition. We are writing today to express our support for the Government Records Service (GRS) / Corporate Information and Records Management Office (CIRMO), and the many hard working professionals charged with the daunting task of managing the depth and breadth of BC provincial government records.

We agree that transparency and accountability are critical to good governance, and engagement between the public and the government is vital in an open, democratic society. Government retention and disposition schedules already contain the legal, administrative and historical rationale for records retention and disposition and are based on extensive analysis and research, and this ensure

transparency and accountability. To ask the general public for feedback in the decision making regarding the retention of "health records, school records, budget documents, advice papers, adoption records, emails or any other information that government creates and maintains" shows an underestimation of the consequences of those decisions by conveying to the public the idea that such a responsibility does not require both profound knowledge and public accountability (a public officer responding for the decision), devalues the work of information professionals and the GRS/CIRMO, whose mandate is to provide records management service for government, and places unrealistic expectations on the citizens of the Province. Furthermore, a public consultation on retention and disposition schedules does not address the numerous recommendations of the Loukidelis' report.

We urge the BC Government not to abdicate its responsibility and accountability for retention and disposition of its records in the name of an ill-conceived idea of what transparency and open government mean. We encourage you to continue your work of addressing the Loukidelis' recommendations and to provide the necessary resources to the GRS/CIRMO to further professional information management on behalf of British Columbians.

Sincerely,



Lara Wilson, Chair
Canadian Council of Archives



Luciana Duranti, President
Association of Canadian Archivists