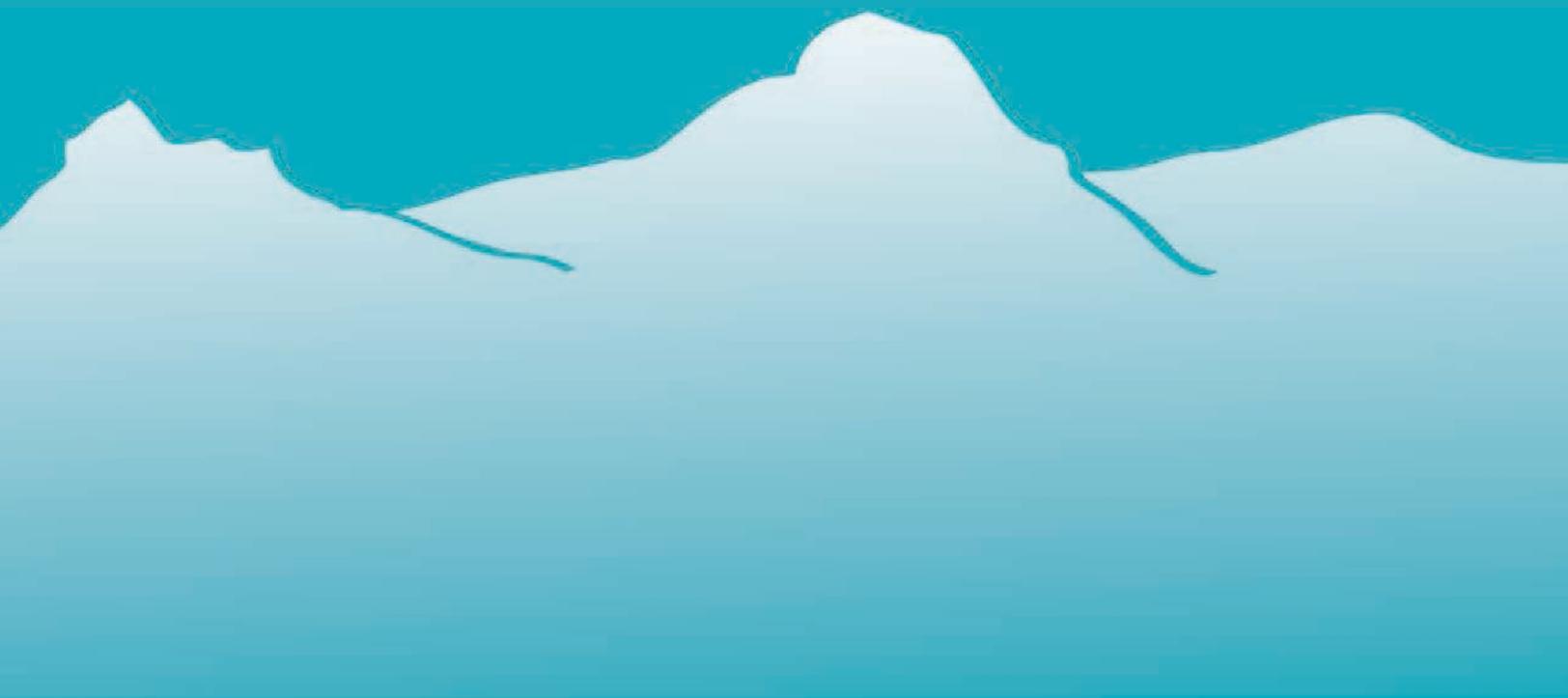




Regulatory
ReformBC

ACHIEVING A MODERN REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT
2014/15



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Forward

British Columbia is recognized across Canada for leading the way in reducing unnecessary regulatory requirements and streamlining government processes. Our government's Annual Regulatory Reform Report outlines the progress we've made over the past year, including eliminating more than 1,700 requirements and completing over 80 red tape reduction projects.

The overarching goal of the Province's regulatory reform strategy is to make British Columbians' lives easier by cutting red tape and ensuring that every regulatory requirement in B.C. is necessary, meaningful and serves a purpose. The report shows where we have cut burdensome forms, simplified complex processes, and provided clear information. By eliminating unnecessary red tape, the Province is minimizing the time and costs for citizens and businesses accessing government services.

In this report, you will see our success in cutting red tape and making it easier for real people and business owners to navigate government regulations. Some highlights include; changes to B.C. liquor policies to allow increased convenience for customers such as liquor sales in some grocery stores and a new online application for special occasion licences, a dramatic reduction in wait times for families applying for mental health services, and a fast and easy way for British Columbians to register to be organ donors.

A streamlined regulatory environment attracts new investment, encourages economic growth and innovation and creates new jobs, while also ensuring the safety of our citizens. That's why we're extending our commitment to a net zero increase in regulatory requirements to 2019. A net zero increase means eliminating one existing requirement when a new requirement is needed.

Over the next year we will continue to help businesses grow and succeed by continuing our fight against red tape.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Naomi Yamamoto".

Honourable Naomi Yamamoto
Minister of State for Tourism
and Small Business



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shirley Bond".

Honourable Shirley Bond
Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training
and Minister Responsible for Labour

Our Goals

We need regulation to ensure the safety of our citizens, a rich and lively business environment, and an effective interface between individuals and government. But too much regulation, unwieldy regulation, or outdated regulation can be expensive, frustrating, and time consuming.

Our government is committed to modernizing the existing regulatory environment and ensuring regulation enhances the lives and business endeavours of everyone in British Columbia. This requires assessing the current regulatory system while seeking innovative and transformative ideas for the ultimate benefit of this province.

For the fourth consecutive year, British Columbia has received an 'A' grade from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business for reducing red tape, streamlining regulatory requirements, and renewing our commitment to monitor and report our progress. B.C. is the only province in Canada to have received this grade.

We must strive for a careful balance between regulatory reduction and due diligence. Every regulatory requirement must be necessary, meaningful, and serve a purpose. This will enhance the lives of citizens, workers, and businesses, while protecting us and preserving our economic future.

“B.C. is the only province in Canada to get an ‘A’ grade for regulatory reform from CFIB. The commitment to getting on the regulatory scale and weighing in deserves praise and is something a lot of other governments still don’t want to do. This annual report provides important accountability.”

Laura Jones,
Executive Vice-President
Canadian Federation of Independent Business

A SAFE AND SECURE POPULATION

Without appropriate regulatory requirements, the health and safety of all British Columbians would be compromised. At the same time, modernization of the regulatory system must keep pace with changes in industry and society.

We have recently introduced amendments to the *Workers Compensation Act* to strengthen WorkSafeBC's ability to promote and enforce occupational health and safety compliance in the workplace. These new amendments encourage compliance with regulations, expedite the investigation of workplace incidents, and provide for stop work orders where unsafe conditions present a risk to workers. Careful regulation protects a safe and healthy working environment and results in fewer accidents.

“In the wake of the tragedies at Babine and Lakeland, government has moved decisively to learn from what happened and take the steps necessary to ensure they don't happen again.”

Shirley Bond,
Minister, Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training
and Minister Responsible for Labour

We've also made amendments to the *Mines Act* to ensure there is more time available to conduct investigations into offences under the Act. The amendments align the time limit for pursuing charges under the *Mines Act* with other natural resource legislation, such as the *Forest and Range Practices Act* and the *Environmental Management Act*. Streamlined and mirrored processes reduce costs and lead to more efficient administration.

“These amendments will ensure there is more time available, if required, for a thorough investigation and for a decision on whether to pursue charges for offences under the *Mines Act*.”

Bill Bennett,
Minister, Energy and Mines
and Minister Responsible for Core Review

A VIBRANT ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE

In today's globalized world, capital and businesses are more mobile than ever, flowing across borders to where opportunities for growth are the greatest. To successfully compete in this environment, B.C. must become globally recognized as a preferred place to invest and do business. This means supporting potential investors and removing red tape that hinders economic growth. Through the *BC Jobs Plan*, government has committed to streamline business processes and foster a supportive business climate to keep B.C.'s economy diverse, strong, and growing.

For small business, this means cutting red tape and streamlining requirements to allow entrepreneurs to redirect valuable resources to where they are most needed – the development and expansion of their businesses. The [Small Business Accord](#) and *Small Business Awareness Strategy* will enhance the opportunity for economic prosperity in our communities. The suite of programs we've initiated work towards making B.C. the most small business-friendly jurisdiction in Canada.

REDUCING RED TAPE

In the absence of a process of renewal and scrutiny, the volume of red tape tends to increase over time. Red tape complicates our daily lives, impedes the efficient functioning of business, and strains government resources. Red tape can be particularly burdensome on small and medium-sized enterprises where the proportion of resources diverted to administrative functions is greater than for large firms.

Red tape can also be burdensome for the government and can lessen the efficiency of service delivery to citizens. Reducing the administrative burden of regulations on citizens, businesses, and government is part of government's strategy to keep B.C.'s economy diverse, strong, and growing.

MAKING IT EASIER TO INTERACT WITH GOVERNMENT

The best relationship with your government is an interactive one. We all want information to flow freely, be clear and understandable, and all requirements to be transparent and practical across all levels of government. We welcome members of the public and stakeholders groups to provide [feedback](#) on B.C.'s regulatory reform initiatives to help us improve the delivery of government services.

An effective and modern regulatory system streamlines interaction with government. Continuous and ambitious reform:

- Improves the quality of regulatory requirements;
- Improves and modernizes government processes;
- Aligns services and processes into fewer more accessible points of contact for citizens;
- Provides citizen engagement opportunities and easy access to government information; and,
- Aligns regulation to reduce duplications across levels of government (federal, provincial, municipal).

“Small business owners are very clear that they want the B.C. government to stay focused on keeping red tape in check. The B.C. government has done more over the past decade than any other in this country and we want them to keep up the good work. Freeing entrepreneurs from red tape benefits their employees, customers, and families.”

**Laura Jones,
Executive Vice-President,
Canadian Federation of Independent Business**

Our Commitments

MAINTAINING NET ZERO INCREASE

A regulatory requirement is any action citizens or businesses must take in order to access government services, conduct business, or meet their legal responsibilities. Reducing unnecessary steps is good for everyone. In 2001, we pledged to reduce these steps to the minimum required to ensure easy access to services, and to provide maximum benefit to our citizens. Good government, transparency, and accountability require that we monitor and report on our progress.

In 2001, we committed to reduce the number of regulatory requirements by one third in three years. We exceeded our goal by a considerable margin, reducing the number by over 36% by 2004. Over the past 10 years we've continued to chip away at the body of regulations and have achieved an additional 10.5% reduction, bringing our total reduction to more than 43%.

In our continued efforts to maximize transparency and accountability, in January 2015 the B.C. government extended the Net Zero Increase Commitment to 2019, which is a cap on the overall number of regulatory requirements from the 2004 baseline count, which means that for every requirement added, one needs to be removed.



MAKING THINGS EASIER

Generally speaking, one of the most common complaints raised by businesses and citizens is the amount and complexity of government formalities and paperwork they are expected to complete. Citizens and businesses spend much time and devote significant resources to filling out forms, applying for permits and licences, and reporting business information. In some cases, practices have become complex or irrelevant.

In response to these challenges, we have focused on simplifying processes. We continue to improve interactions with government by removing obsolete or contradictory requirements, and producing helpful websites and tools to navigate administrative rules and requirements. Increasingly innovative thinking and skillful use of information technology are leading to new and more effective approaches to reducing administrative burden.

Modernizing Regulation

The time and cost spent complying with regulatory requirements must be appropriate to the benefit to be gained. Access to services should be fast and easy. For businesses, compliance with government regulation should be at an acceptable cost. Our regulatory reform policy ensures all requirements are necessary for the protection of public health, safety, and the preservation of the environment for future generations.

Each year, specific projects are identified for renewal and modernization to guarantee good governance and more efficient regulation. The following pages provide some examples from this year where we've modernized outdated rules and requirements.



“Our wine-on-shelves model is unique to B.C., and strikes a balance between the enhanced convenience and choice for consumers and the promise we made to protect health and public safety.”

Suzanne Anton,
Attorney General and
Minister of Justice

Modernized Liquor Policy

During the last year we took up the challenge to update old and cumbersome regulations relating to the sale and consumption of beer, wine and spirits. Our laws were realigned with how people actually live, while protecting and enhancing health and safety. The new rules create convenience for one-stop shopping at the grocery store, allow parents to dine with their children in a neighbourhood pub, and allow sales of local wines, beers, and spirits at farmers’ markets. Golf courses and ski hills can apply for a licence that covers up to 26 events in a calendar year without additional applications or fees, decreasing the time and cost for hosting special events at these venues and allowing for more events throughout the year.

B.C.’s new wholesale liquor pricing model places public and private retailers on an equal footing when buying the products they sell, encourages a more competitive marketplace that can be more responsive to consumers and better supports the growth of small and medium-sized B.C. breweries by removing barriers that discourage growth.

Government is taking further steps to safeguard the health and safety of British Columbians, reinforcing the importance of social responsibility in tandem with the updates to our liquor laws. The changes will protect health and public safety by expanding and enhancing *Serving it Right* requirements and implementing mandatory social responsibility signage in licensed establishments. This demonstrates how government has listened and taken action to meet the evolving needs of our citizens.

“Not only is fishing an ideal way to connect with family and nature, but it is important to introduce youth to fishing for they are the future stewards of the resource.”

Don Peterson,
Past President, Freshwater
Fisheries Society of B.C.

New Family-Friendly Fishing Regulations

Changes to the *Wildlife Act* will encourage family fishing and allow access to waters that were previously age-restricted. This provides access to anglers of all ages, provided they accompany a youth under the age of 16 or a disabled angler who is actively angling. Waters stocked with catchable rainbow trout are available to youths aged 16 or less, those 65 and older, and disabled anglers, as well as adult anglers who accompany those fishers. These changes ensure that fishing can be enjoyed by people of all ages, and expert anglers may become teaching resources for those just becoming interested in the sport. Passing on angling knowledge is important to maintain the social, economic, and environmental benefits associated with the recreational fishing culture in B.C.



Common Standards for Home Inspectors

A new common professional standard for home inspectors will help consumers and streamline the process for governing home inspectors who are currently regulated by four different associations, each with its own requirements. A common professional standard will ensure homebuyers benefit from a more standardized approach to accrediting inspectors and conducting home inspections. The Province will enhance [Consumer Protection BC](#)'s role in licensing inspectors by setting new education and training requirements, establishing standard testing and evaluation, and taking on an expanded compliance and enforcement role.



New Strata Rules

Amendments to the *Strata Property Act* removed barriers to good strata governance by reducing voting thresholds to spend contingency reserve funds to a simple majority, making it easier for strata corporations to carry out their responsibilities to maintain and repair strata property.



Modernized Animal Health Act

With the implementation of a new *Animal Health Act*, we are better equipped to manage and respond to animal diseases, implement disease management practices such as inspections, seizures, quarantine and surveillance orders, and to enact emergency power in the appropriate circumstances. The new Act replaces almost 70-year-old legislation and not only protects our citizens and the livestock, but the businesses in this sector.

Interprovincial Regulatory Alignments in the Energy Sector

An agreement between B.C. and Alberta will make it easier for oil and gas companies to operate in both provinces with aligned regulations to allow oil and gas workers to move easily between provinces. This will give B.C. companies the flexibility to grow their business and create new job opportunities for B.C. residents.

Streamlining Processes

Streamlining government processes is at the core of our regulatory reform initiative. We regularly review what's needed to access government services and the cost and complexity of processes, from a citizen's point of view.

We have completed hundreds of streamlining projects and the results have saved citizens and businesses considerable time and money. Here are some examples of the many successful streamlining initiatives completed in the past year:

Faster Intake Process for Youth Needing Mental Health Services

The intake process for children and youth needing mental health services was redesigned to create a consistent, streamlined, and client-centred process. Families can now access youth mental health intake services through a walk-in clinic model that allows for interaction between the client and the clinician on the first day. Individuals and families benefit from knowing immediately if they qualify for services provided by the ministry. They can also be directly referred to other support systems and services provided in the community. The process that used to take days or even weeks to complete is now being finished in hours. Early results are very encouraging, with high levels of satisfaction reported (94%) from staff and families.

Improved Autism Funding Process

Improvements to processes in the Autism Funding Branch have reduced wait times for funding approval and payment orders by up to 40%. This allows providers to spend less time filling out paperwork and waiting for funding, and more time ensuring their patients have the supports they need.

Organ Donor Registration

A new program available at all Service BC locations will provide British Columbians with information about organ donation and help anyone interested in confirming their intentions with immediately accessible online registration. This builds on the success of last year's pilot project that saw a four-fold increase in donation registrations, and will have an immediate impact on the hundreds of citizens awaiting life changing organ transplants.



Streamlined Process for Hazardous Waste Applications

It is in everyone's best interest to process applications for storage and treatment of hazardous waste on an expedited basis. The Ministry of Environment conducted a considerable volume of public and stakeholder consultations which identified a number of sticking points in the old process. The new streamlined process has resulted in an average reduction of 185 days to process a hazardous waste application. Business is no longer stalled and potential risks due to delays are reduced.

Single Umbrella for Natural Resource Decisions

The Natural Resource Sector represents one of the largest and most complex sectors in government, involving six ministries, multiple pieces of legislation, and many business processes. Transforming the Natural Resource Sector by integrating land and natural resource approvals will result in greater process efficiencies, an enhanced client experience, and contribute to an increase in investment and job creation in the province. By emphasizing common land objectives, integrated and streamlined authorization processes, the consolidation of decision-making responsibilities and changes in legislation and regulation, it is anticipated that regulatory transformation will result in the reduction of the current regulatory burden on businesses.



Simplified Contract Process for BC Parks Capital Facility Improvements

The Ministry of Environment has streamlined the procurement and contract management process for capital facility improvement projects in BC Parks. This is expected to increase the number of competitive bids from contractors while supporting a larger pool of small business contractors across the province.

“We are pleased to see the B.C. government adopt a modern approach to building regulations. This new Act will give builders and developers the certainty they need to move forward with projects.”

Anne McMullin,
President and CEO
Urban Development Institute

Streamlined and Modernized Building Code

Extensive consultation with industry stakeholders revealed B.C.'s building regulatory system was overly complex, time consuming, and costly for both builders and consumers. To address these concerns, the Province introduced a new *Building Act* to streamline and modernize the regulatory system throughout B.C. The Act increases consistency across the province by limiting the authority to set building requirements, making it easier for the construction industry to understand and follow 'the rules' when building in B.C.

New qualification requirements for building officials will also improve consistency in how the Building Code is applied, interpreted, and enforced. Greater consistency across B.C. will reduce delays and costs, improve efficiency, productivity, and innovation for the construction industry.



Improved Security for Financial Information Transfers

This project involved implementing a new File Transfer Protocol (FTP) system that enables financial institutions to submit required reporting files electronically in a secure, efficient, and reliable manner to the Financial Institutions Commission. As a result, banking and financial information is better protected from unauthorized access and flows smoothly through dedicated secure channels. Prior to the new FTP system, required reporting was more time consuming and cumbersome. The new system saves time and money for the institutions that use it.

New System for Employer Advisers Office

Phone advice and assistance to employers about workers' compensation or health and safety matters are now dealt with through a new telephone system and a new team of professionals. This has resulted in "live" telephone transfers in most cases, a drastic reduction in wait times, and speedy and efficient follow-up. In many cases, trained administrative staff members answer employers' WorkSafeBC questions within 90 seconds. This new system significantly improves the advice service of the Employer Advisers Office, an independent employer premium-funded service which helps businesses better understand compensation and health and safety requirements in B.C.

"The ability for a small business owner to speak to someone immediately about workers' compensation and safety questions will go a long way to helping business owners improve the work environment for employees across the province."

**Cybele Negris,
Vice-Chair, B.C. Small Business Roundtable
and President/Co-Founder, Webnames.ca Inc.**

Modernized Training Platform for Commercial Trucks

The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure implemented an [online training system](#) related to the National Safety Code for all commercial carriers and drivers. This free service has had more than 100,000 online views in its first six months that has resulted in a 26% increase, compared with the previous year, in carriers passing the knowledge test to obtain a NSC safety certificate. Educated carriers are more compliant with the regulations which results in an increase in safety which benefits all British Columbians.



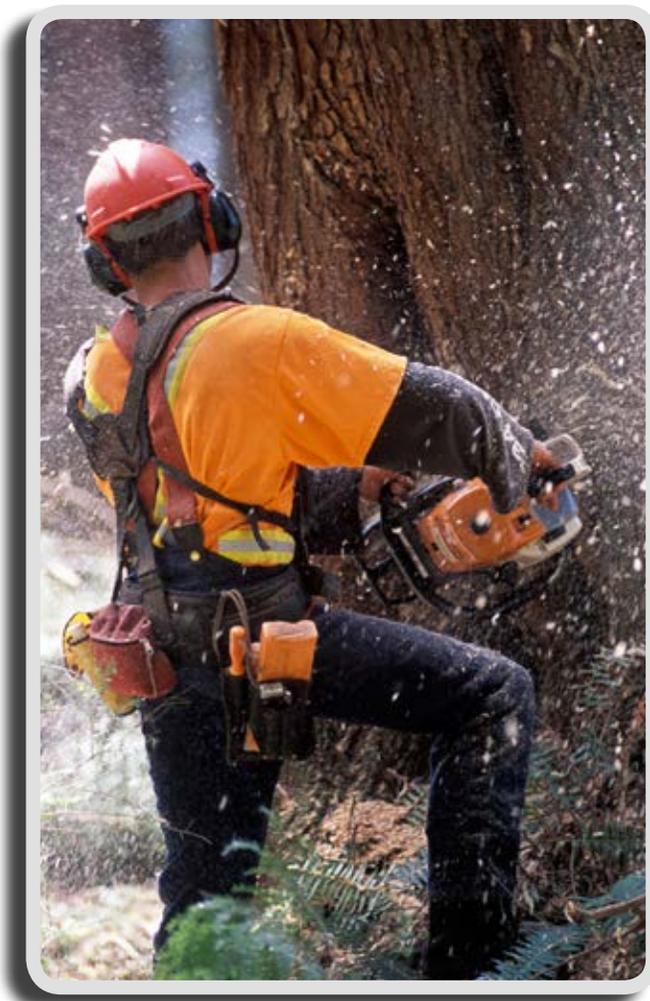
“The new licence gives companies in B.C. a flexible option that allows them to address temporary supply shortages. Greater certainty gives us more confidence as we move forward and promote the role of wood pellets in the Canadian and global markets.”

Gordon Murray,
Executive Director, Wood Pellet
Association of Canada

Flexible Forest Licence

The Province has created a new type of forest licence that allows forestry companies to more effectively respond to fluctuations in the supply of wood fibre. The new supplemental forest licence allows companies to harvest wood when traditional, business-to-business fibre supplies are reduced (for example, when sawmills have less residual fibre for secondary users due to the damage done by pine beetle infestation). This helps ensure that users of residual fibre such as bioenergy companies, pellet producers, and secondary manufacturers, have ongoing access to the fibre supply they need to operate.

The new licence also allows the Province to include licence conditions that encourage the harvesting of less marketable and harder to access wood, which results in better fibre utilization and use of the existing allowable annual cut.



ENHANCING SERVICE AND ACCESS

Regulatory reform in B.C. is about more than just reducing regulations; it is also about improving regulatory quality and reforming government process and services that raise unnecessary obstacles to competition, innovation, and growth. As the provider of many services and resources, the government of B.C. wants you to have easy and direct access to the most up-to-date systems possible. Citizens should be able to get what they need without difficult application processes, time consuming travel, or manual completion and delivery of forms.

In order to enhance citizen engagement and community building we've also designed effective and efficient consultation systems so that individuals, interest groups, and businesses can tell us what they want and what they don't want. We've created an interactive web portal that shows you how to get involved and help shape B.C. government policy, programs, and services. [GovTogetherBC](#) supports transparency and accessibility by listing provincial and regional engagement opportunities. It includes in-person, online, email, and mail opportunities to get involved. GovTogetherBC posts the results of many citizen engagement opportunities so you can see the recommendations or plans you've helped shape.

And so you can know how we're doing, we've implemented an [Open Data](#) program that gives everyone free and unfettered access to online government data on such topics as carbon emissions, the regulatory requirements count, high school graduation rates, or major natural resource sector projects.

We've put in place a number of programs over the course of the past year that help enhance services and access to specific government resources. Here is a review of some of them:



New Job Mapping Tool for People with Developmental Disabilities

Research, with the aim of transforming employment practices for individuals with developmental disabilities, led to the development of a new online tool that will help people with developmental disabilities prepare for work and break down barriers to employment. The online mapping tool is expected to be completed by the end of June 2015 and will help job seekers prepare for employment and address barriers they may experience in getting or keeping a job.

Improved Access to Social Assistance Data and Tools

British Columbians now have even easier access to their personal income and disability assistance information with the province-wide launch of My Self Serve. My Self Serve is an online service allowing people who receive income and disability assistance to access their personal information including their monthly cheque amount, status of their monthly report, annual earnings exemption limits, and important reminders and messages. My Self Serve offers people more flexibility as to how, when, and where they access ministry services, which will increase convenience and foster independence for those who need it most.

Enhanced WorkBC Website

[WorkBC](#) is the online access point to the world of work that helps all British Columbians successfully navigate the B.C. labour market. WorkBC now includes career tools such as Blueprint Builder which integrates more than 50 tools to make it easier for workers to find the resources they need. The new Apprentice Job Match tool connects apprentices with employers looking to hire, and Career Compass provides resources for teachers and parents of secondary students. With over 8 million annual visits, and more than 10,000 registered users, the WorkBC website is a primary source for access to information for workers, employers, and communities.



Improved Teacher Certification Process

Improvements to the teacher certification process are underway and time savings for applicants have already been realized with a reduction in processing time which was averaging seven weeks to eight months, down to two weeks on receipt of all application documentation. Moving the process online is also expected to improve the security and tracking of applications. Faster teacher certification allows applicants to take advantage of placement opportunities in B.C. and overseas.

Innovative Trades Seat Finder

Developed in partnership with the B.C. Trades Training Consortium, the new [Trades Seat Finder](#) provides easy access to current information about where and when trades training spaces are available at all 14 public post-secondary institutions offering trades programs. The site is linked so once a trade is selected, students are able to go to the institution's website to register and for more information.



Reduced Barriers for Apprentices

With one million job openings projected by 2022, driven by retirements and economic growth, B.C. will need to tap into the full potential of its workforce. Through [B.C.'s Skills for Jobs Blueprint](#), government is re-engineering education and training to keep up with the growing need for skilled and experienced workers in this province. B.C. continues to play a leadership role in driving national apprenticeship goals, including work to harmonize apprenticeship training in Red Seal trades and employer engagement as a means to improve apprentice completion rates. Work is also underway amongst provinces to make it easier for apprentices to move between provinces and territories while they complete their certification.

“The B.C. Major Planned Events Guidelines are a first step towards safe and successful planned events in all areas of B.C. I see the guidelines as a place to start a conversation about safety and security with all stakeholders involved in major planned events in my jurisdiction.”

Ryan Wainwright,
Emergency Program Manager,
Squamish-Lillooet Regional
District

British Columbia Major Planned Event Guidelines

A diverse group of B.C. partners, co-led by the Government of British Columbia and the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District, has developed a new set of user-friendly guidelines to assist communities with hosting safe and successful major planned events. The [B.C. Major Planned Event Guidelines](#) are the first of their kind. The guidelines assist stakeholders to reduce the potential for public disorder and are designed to proactively assist with the prevention and management of emergencies and disasters resulting from public gatherings. This enhances the effectiveness of special events and limits any negative impacts that those events may have on citizens and local businesses.

Better Traffic Flow

The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure is streamlining the current system for traffic flow authorizations due to special events or film productions on our province’s roads. The improved process provides advice to event organizers, and will better communicate notifications to motorists to ensure disruption of traffic flow is minimized. Implementation of this program will continue reducing the impact of special events for businesses and the travelling public.

Special Occasion Licence Applications Online

Applicants are now able to apply online for Special Occasion Licences, which permit the serving, selling, and consumption of alcohol at special events. The [new online application](#) is designed to increase convenience and decrease approval time for small low-risk events. Accessing the Special Occasion Licence application via computer or mobile device will eliminate multiple visits to BC Liquor Stores, police stations, and municipal halls. With over 25,000 Special Occasion Licences approved each year, it is expected the new system will result in significant time savings for individuals hosting special events.



“British Columbians are fortunate to live in a strong democracy where citizens [are encouraged to] participate in local elections. ...The *Voter’s Guide to Local Elections in British Columbia* provides useful information to help citizens understand and participate in the local electoral process.”

**Linda Reimer,
Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister,
Community, Sport and Cultural Development**

New Online Voter’s Guide

The *Voter’s Guide to Local Elections* in British Columbia is now [available online](#) and in seven languages. The guide answers basic questions eligible voters may have as they prepare to vote in local elections. Voters are encouraged to participate in elections for all local authorities including mayors, councillors, electoral area directors, Islands Trust local trustees, local community and park board commissioners, and school trustees. Spreading this useful information supports participation of all B.C. residents in our political system.

New Online Resource to Support First Nations Economic Development

A new user-friendly [web application](#) has been developed to integrate information about First Nations communities, companies, and economic development agreements, as well as their relationship to major projects throughout the province. The database, which integrates information from a number of public sources, helps connect businesses and investors looking to partner with First Nations communities and companies more efficiently and effectively.

Better Information for Landlords and Tenants

A new, updated website will help tenants and landlords access the information they need to maintain successful rental relationships. The new [Residential Tenancy website](#) is simple to navigate, provides plain language information on tenancy laws and regulations, and will make it easier for tenants and landlords to understand their rights and responsibilities.

New Economic Mapping Tool

Investors and businesses now have access to multiple government databases as well as the ability to link with open-source public data through the [BC Economic Atlas](#) mapping tool. Easy access to free integrated online data provides economic and natural resource information aiding entrepreneurs and potential investors in making business investment decision, identifying investment opportunities, and undertaking business case analysis. The BC Economic Atlas fulfils a *BC Jobs Plan* priority of providing information to potential investors and helping strengthen communities’ ability to act on investment opportunities.



“A healthy economy depends on a sustainable water supply. The Northwest Water Tool is another example of government’s commitment to providing the necessary information to support environmentally sustainable decision-making.”

Steve Thomson,
Minister Forests, Lands and
Natural Resource Operations

Innovative Online Tool for Better Water Management

Anyone can now access science-based information on water supply in the northwest region of B.C. With the release of the [Northwest Water Tool](#), a leading edge program that supports decision-making on water use planning and approvals, and water use information is now available online within as little as five minutes. Landholders and affected parties can now easily determine what their

rights are or what steps they can take to protect their rights to rivers and estuaries. This information previously took between a week and ten days to obtain. Water licence applicants can use this information to help them complete water licence applications. Regional water managers can use the information to support water allocation decisions. The new tool summarizes information on all water use approvals and provides decision-makers with guidance on minimum environmental flows and potential water supply in a format that is transparent, readily accessible and easily interpreted. The Northwest Water Tool builds on the award-winning Northeast Water Tool released in 2013.

Collaborative Capital Markets Regulatory System

B.C. is collaborating with other provincial and territorial jurisdictions and the federal government to establish a Cooperative Capital Markets Regulatory Authority. The Authority will foster more efficient globally competitive capital markets in Canada, provide increased protection for investors across Canada through more integrated and coordinated compliance and enforcement activities, and strengthen Canada’s capacity to identify and manage capital markets-related system risks on a national basis.

PROGRESS UPDATE: CUTTING RED TAPE FOR SMALL BUSINESS INITIATIVE

Last year government identified and committed to undertake five projects for continued red tape reduction. We are proud to report that we've successfully completed these projects and considerably more in the ensuing period. Here are updates on the five red tape reduction projects:

Online Guide for Starting a Restaurant in B.C.

Opening a restaurant in British Columbia is now a little easier. In January 2015, the B.C. government launched a [new online guide](#) to help entrepreneurs navigate the myriad of agencies, steps, and requirements involved in opening a restaurant. The online resource helps to clarify the requirements for permits and licenses, decrease the cost of compliance and unintended delays, and increase a new business' chance of a timely opening and successful operation.

Two-Page Request for Proposal Form

A simplified two-page request for proposal form was launched in April 2014, enabling small businesses to acquire government contracts more easily and with less paperwork. Training resources and guides for using this tool are available free of charge at the [Simplified Request for Proposals webpage](#). With this assistance, small businesses and independent contractors are better able to compete for government contract work, spend less time filling out paperwork, and have more time to deliver goods and services to their clients.

“The B.C. Government is highly proactive and innovative when it comes to working with industry on regulatory reform. The British Columbia Restaurant Association worked in partnership with government to release the online guide which has proven to be a wonderful and convenient resource for restaurant owners. It is a detailed yet easy to follow guide that makes it easier to both open and operate a restaurant in B.C.”

**Ian Tostenson,
President and CEO, British Columbia
Restaurant and Foodservices Association**

Citizen Centred Web Services

We continue to consolidate the B.C. government web presence to provide a user-friendly web experience for easy interaction and access to government information and services. This web strategy aims to develop a single point of entry that will:

- Be accessible and available to all;
- Be recognized as a trusted and reliable source of information;
- Provide consistency in use;
- Eliminate redundancies and out of date information; and,
- Increase cost effectiveness.

WorkSafeBC Strategy

WorkSafeBC continues to update and redesign its correspondence and website content to reduce the complexity of information and clarify requirements under the *Workers Compensation Act*. New tools for small business owners make it easier to register for workplace insurance and to set up a safe workplace. Development of these services saves businesses time and money and contributes to an improved working environment for employees.

Regulatory Reform Refresh

Over the past year, the Regulatory Reform Branch has undertaken research and consultations to inform our renewed approach to regulatory reform in B.C. More detail on this initiative is provided on the next page.



RENEWING OUR APPROACH

Continual changes in technology and social expectations require that government be responsive to the needs of citizens and businesses to stay current and relevant. We are committed to continually reviewing our programs and services in order to maximize the benefit to all British Columbians and support businesses as they seek new opportunities in the year ahead.

The government-wide Core Review initiative highlighted the ongoing importance of streamlining and reducing red tape and provided an opportunity to reassess and renew our approach to regulatory reform in B.C. This renewed approach aims to expand the scope of our reform beyond the regulatory count and place greater emphasis on economic development outcomes and improved service delivery to citizens.

The widely acknowledged success of B.C.'s regulatory reform initiative over the past decade stems in part from the consistent emphasis on significantly reducing administrative burden posed by regulatory requirements and preventing their increase over time. These aims will continue; however, over the past few months, we have been working to identify new ways to refresh and upgrade the way government is tackling regulatory reform.

New approaches will include finding new mechanisms to amend or revise regulatory requirements to demonstrate government's continued commitment to reducing regulatory burdens imposed by unnecessary red tape. In an effort to further strengthen governmental accountability to regulatory reform, we'll be refining government's regulatory reform policy framework to better capture any unintended regulatory impacts before they are passed into law.

We've also taken steps to extend the reach of our red tape and reform considerations to provincial Crown corporations. The introduction of the Taxpayers Accountability Principles in June 2014 provided an opportunity to support greater strategic engagement with Crown corporations and the development of annual evaluation plans will allow Crown corporations to report on performance against the Taxpayer Accountability Principles. Crown corporations in the economy sector are being encouraged to include within their evaluation plans, red tape reduction considerations and new strategies that align their activities with government's regulatory reform priorities. This initiative will help support greater economic development, reduce administrative burden, and ensure our Crown corporations operate in the best interest of taxpayers.

In addition, we'll ensure that future capital investment decisions in information management and information technology infrastructure fully consider the need to cut red tape and improve service delivery and access to government services.

Finally, as noted earlier in the report, to ensure the number of regulatory requirements does not increase over time, our government extended its cap on requirements compared with the 2004 baseline (known as the Net Zero Increase Commitment) to 2019. This means that for every requirement added, one must be eliminated. This decision will ensure that regulatory reform continues to eliminate unnecessary red tape, improve regulatory quality, and support greater economic development and competitiveness in B.C.

Going Forward

Every single regulatory requirement in our province must be necessary, meaningful, and serve a purpose, while protecting public health, safety, and the environment. As we push ahead with regulatory reform we will continue to modernize and streamline the systems in place in order to improve access to government information and services. We will continue to improve regulatory quality by reducing the burden of compliance and any unnecessary obstacles to competition, innovation, and growth.

We will continue to strive for open and accountable government and public engagement. By keeping a keen eye for progress and continued engagement with the public, we will ensure that British Columbia remains a national and global leader in regulatory reform.

These goals will foster new businesses, support economic prosperity and diversity in all regions of the province, and involve more of our citizens in shaping the future of B.C's regulatory environment.

“This coming year, your government will look at how citizens interact with government services...to reduce red tape for real people. Step by step, we will propose changes to ease unnecessary burdens, save time and make things more efficient.”

Throne Speech 2015:
The Honourable Judith Guichon,
OBC Lieutenant-Governor

Our commitments for the fiscal year 2015/16 include:

1. Maintaining our Net Zero Increase Commitment. This requires managing the regulatory count database to ensure no overall increase in regulatory requirements compared with the 2004 baseline, meeting *Regulatory Reporting Act* requirements, and regular cross-government monitoring and liaison.
2. Building on the *BC Jobs Plan* commitment to streamline business processes and foster a supportive business climate to keep B.C.'s economy diverse, strong, and growing.
3. Partnering with the Canadian Federation of Independent Business on the development and implementation of Red Tape Awareness Week.
4. Delivering on the outcomes of the Regulatory Reform Refresh. This includes strengthening governance and accountability to regulatory reform across the public service by:
 - Working towards including red tape reduction in future rounds of the Taxpayer Accountability Principle evaluation plans.
 - Developing enhanced evaluation criteria related to red tape for provincial Crown corporations in the economy sector and capital investments in new information management and information technology infrastructure.
 - Implementing a refined policy framework with supporting training tools and best practices to ensure regulatory burden is identified and managed early on in the regulatory development process.
 - Continuing to work with our ministry partners and our stakeholders to pursue continuous improvement opportunities to “reduce red tape for real people” and to ensure B.C. maintains its reputation as a leader with respect to regulatory reform.

In summary, Regulatory Reform is a priority for the Government of British Columbia as a building block of our diverse, strong, and growing economy.

A stylized graphic of a mountain range in various shades of teal and light blue, with white outlines, set against a white background.

Regulatory Reform Branch
Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills
Training and Responsible for Labour.
Victoria, B.C. V8W 9N3
regulatoryreformbc@gov.bc.ca
www.gov.bc.ca/regulatoryreform