



January 15, 2015

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DELIVERED BY EMAIL

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Gary Rolston
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Alf Krause
Chair
BC Vegetable Marketing Commission
207 – 15252 32nd Av
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Dear Chairs:

ACCOUNTABILITY AND EXPECTATIONS OF CHAIRS

Since 2004, the Lieutenant Governor in Council has appointed persons to serve as an independent member and chair of each of the eight commodity boards. This initiative flows from the original Core Review conducted by Government in the early 2000's.

As first instance regulators, the chair and board members are required to protect the public interest and be guided by their governing regulations and sound marketing policy. Good governance practices and procedures are critical in ensuring that these responsibilities are met.

**British Columbia
Farm Industry Review Board**

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As some of you will recall, in 2010 the then Minister of Agriculture issued 'Letters of Expectation' to the chairs of the BC Farm Industry Review Board (BCFIRB) and the commodity boards concerning his expectations of the chairs in respect of: governance standards; codes of conduct; chair and member development and standards; decision-making; strategic planning; communications and consultations; conflict management and alternative dispute resolution; and, reporting.

Subsequently, as the supervisory board and in consultation with the boards, BCFIRB incorporated these expectations into its ongoing strategic and service planning in developing the 'Accountability Framework' and SAFETI¹ principles. These are now used by BCFIRB and the boards to demonstrate accountability in their operations and in their reporting.

More recently, and as can be expected in the complex environments in which our boards operate, specific governance issues have arisen. These include questions about financial accountability, conflicts of interest/apprehension of bias/codes of conduct, transparency and disclosure in terms of freedom of information and protection of privacy, delegation and reporting. Such issues, as well as leading your boards in meeting the larger policy objectives of government, relate directly to your role and responsibilities as an LGIC-appointed member and chair of your board.

In the past, representatives of our board have met with the chairs as a group to review these expectations, develop some common understandings and discuss the role of chairs in ensuring the effective regulatory operation and reporting of their boards. BCFIRB is of the view that it is probably a good time to meet again and review all that has been accomplished in the past few years and assess opportunities and challenges going forward.

BCFIRB staff will be contacting you to arrange a date and location that works for everyone. If possible, and again as per past practice, we will look to see if the Minister and Deputy Minister are available to join the meeting (or attend lunch or a dinner). BCFIRB will also provide some background material in advance of the meeting in support of the discussions. If you have any suggestions for the agenda, please do not hesitate to put them forward.

Thank you and I look forward to meeting with you in the near future.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Les". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

John Les
Chair

¹ Strategic, accountable, fair, effective, transparent, inclusive.