

Achieving a Modern Regulatory Environment

B.C.’s Regulatory Reform Initiative

6th Annual Report 2016/17

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FOREWORD

Regulatory reform, also called red tape reduction, is an important part of ensuring government works for the citizens of British Columbia. Having a government that designs services and policies with British Columbians in mind creates:

- an environment with regulations and policies that are easy to understand;
- programs that are simple to access and straightforward to use; and
- a low regulatory burden, which makes finding and following laws more manageable for small businesses—helping B.C.’s economy prosper.

The regulatory reform branch provides expertise to all of government on best practices for regulation and has created a regulatory reform policy and guide that helps public servants amend or create laws, regulations, policies and forms to ensure that all requirements serve a purpose. The policy and a team dedicated to helping ministries reduce red tape helps keep regulations streamlined across government to build on its red tape reduction momentum, the Province moved LeanBC into the Ministry of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction in Spring 2016. LeanBC was created six years ago as a way to support – government- wide – the development of streamlined processes. Now, LeanBC is taking its successful internally-focused formula and applying it to citizen-facing projects. The Province is continuing to focus on streamlining its services for citizens and small businesses and has begun or completed nearly 250 red

tape reduction projects to date; many of the ideas were submitted through the Help Cut Red Tape website. Additionally, almost 3,300 unnecessary or obsolete regulatory requirements were eliminated this past year. This report provides detail on several projects that were undertaken to streamline the regulatory environment, for example: the new Fish and Seafood Act that has modernized laws for B.C.'s fisheries industry; improved rules for guide dogs use which has made B.C. even more accessible for people with disabilities; and the Ministry of Justice's new Solution Explorer which will free up court time and help settle residential tenancy disputes more effectively and efficiently.

Sincerely, CORALEE OAKES

Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction and Responsible for the Liquor Distribution Branch

OUR GOALS

Reducing Red Tape is about listening to ideas from British Columbians on what government can do to make their lives a little easier. It means fast, easy access to services and simplified processes that save time and money for citizens and businesses.

British Columbia's long-standing commitment to reduce red tape is supported by three primary goals.

The first goal is to Modernize British Columbia's Regulatory Regime. This goal is underpinned by a belief that an efficient regulatory regime which avoids placing an undue burden on citizens and businesses is in the best interest of British Columbians, and a key pillar for economic growth. An efficient regulatory environment is especially important for small businesses, which can be challenged to keep track and comply with provincial requirements due to limited staff and financial resources. In fact, the overwhelming majority of businesses in B.C. are small and medium. In B.C. a small business is defined as having 50 or less employees but most of the businesses in B.C. –79% – employ less than five staff.

The second goal is to Streamline Processes and Enhance Access to Services. This goal is supported by a combination of process change and technology improvements to streamline access to government services across the province.

The third goal is to Strengthen Public Accountability for Red Tape Reduction.

This involves maintaining an accurate picture of regulatory requirements and reporting on progress the B.C. government is making to reduce unnecessary red tape.

Central to delivering on this goal is frequent, meaningful engagement with British Columbians to identify irritants and solutions to improve interactions between citizens and their government.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Province is strongly committed to cutting red tape and improving how British Columbians interact with their government. Internationally-recognized for its regulatory reform leadership, B.C. is seeing other jurisdictions from around the globe emulate the Province's approach. Some of the key

accomplishments over the past year include:

SECOND ANNUAL RED TAPE REDUCTION DAY

- Over 50 outdated or unnecessary regulatory requirements were repealed.
- The Homeowners Grant was updated to be more inclusive for people with disabilities by simplifying the rules and updating the language to reflect modern values and perspectives.
- Amendments to regulations under the Safety Standards Act now enable a process for recognizing international qualifications for power engineers.

RED TAPE AWARENESS WEEK

- B.C. again partnered with the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) to raise public awareness about the negative impacts of excessive regulations on small businesses.
- B.C. was awarded the Golden Scissors, a national award in recognition of the significant actions to reduce red tape for small businesses, including the creation of a dedicated Red Tape Reduction Day.
- In recognition of government efforts to reduce red tape, B.C. received its sixth 'A' grade and is the only province to have this consistent record of high results.

REGULATORY REFORM POLICY

- B.C.'s Regulatory Reform Policy has been updated to be more robust and now includes a small business lens. It is accompanied by a companion guide containing tools and examples to assist in applying the policy to any changes to provincial legislation, regulations, policies and forms.
- Training on the new Regulatory Reform Policy was provided to over 160 public servants who are responsible for developing new regulations.

LEAN BC

- The LeanBC team has been integrated into the Ministry of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction to strengthen the ministry's capacity to achieve the objectives of regulatory reform.
- Lean is a continuous improvement discipline that improves citizens' experiences of government by modernizing service delivery and streamlining government operations.
- This alignment provides ministries with the support of Lean experts on service improvements which directly address red tape irritants for citizens and businesses.

REDUCING RED TAPE FOR BRITISH COLUMBIANS

Between Fall 2015 and April 2017, over 500 ideas were submitted via the Reducing Red Tape for British Columbians (RRT4BC) engagement and Help Cut Red Tape button. So far approximately 250 of these ideas for improvement are underway or have been completed. Implemented ideas can be found on the Help Cut Red Tape website.

Examples of ways the Province has taken action to cut red tape and improve the everyday lives of British Columbians include:

- Simplifying the application for hunting and fishing licences by moving the processes online;
- Allowing more types of businesses to apply for a liquor licence, opening up the possibility for new revenue streams and diversified services;
- Improving food labelling and removing 194 regulations to make those regulations easier to understand; and
- Improving the way people can find information about land usage and moorages in B.C. by bringing the information on to a simple, user-friendly website— Natural Resources Sector Online Services.

MAINTAINING NET ZERO INCREASE

MONITORING THE NUMBER OF REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS is a key performance measure of the regulatory reform program in British Columbia. The methodology requires that ministries count each instance where a business, citizen or the provincial government must take an action or step to access services, carry out business or meet legal responsibilities. The number of requirements in all B.C. statutes, regulations, associated policies and forms is recorded and tracked in a database.

A regulatory cap, known as the Net Zero Increase commitment was established in 2004 to ensure the regulatory burden does not increase. This commitment means that when a new regulatory requirement is introduced, an existing requirement must be eliminated. The Net Zero Commitment has been extended three times: in June 2008 until 2012;

in June 2011 until 2015; and most recently, in January 2015 until 2019. At the end of 2016/17 fiscal year, the regulatory requirements count was 170,140 – a decrease of 3,299 requirements compared with the previous year, or 48% below the 2001 baseline and 13.7% below the 2004 baseline.

MODERNIZING REGULATION

WHILE REGULATION IS AN ESSENTIAL FUNCTION OF GOVERNMENT, the body of requirements must be monitored to ensure continued effectiveness and relevance. Unless there is regular maintenance, the result can be an unnecessarily complex regulatory environment with an undue burden of overlapping, confusing, and outdated requirements. Highlights from this years' legislation include:

NEW FISH AND SEAFOOD ACT

B.C.'s new Fish and Seafood Act and associated regulations are more responsive to the current realities of the B.C. seafood sector. The new regulatory model is outcomes based, giving businesses the flexibility to develop processes appropriate to their type and size of business. The act and the new Fish and Seafood Licensing Regulation, repeal the Aquaculture regulation, the Fisheries Act Regulation and the Fish Inspection Regulation, eliminating 491 regulatory requirements. The Ministry of Agriculture worked with First Nations and key seafood sector stakeholders to develop the regulation. There will be no increase to licence fees and some have been repealed in an effort to streamline the process.

INCREASED FLEXIBILITY FOR SOCIETIES

The new Societies Act reflects the diverse nature of non-profit organizations and provides the over 27,000 of them operating in British Columbia with additional flexibility and online self-service

capabilities. Societies can now create, through their bylaws, governance rules that reflect the unique characteristics of their organization and the needs of the communities they serve. Societies Online, a new web-based filing system, offers all societies an easier way to complete their paperwork and access their records. Societies Online has eliminated wait times for the majority of non-profits filing or seeking copies of their filings. Societies without a computer or internet access can visit a Service BC location or a local public library to complete their filings online. Already, 14,640 societies have logged onto the new system and 3,208 have successfully transitioned to the new system.

MODERN INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

The Information Management Act replaces the Document Disposal Act of 1936. This new legislation lays the foundation to bring government records management practices into the digital age. The act provides a legislative framework for digital information practices, which, over time, will increase worker productivity, reduce costs for taxpayers, enable timelier services to citizens and improve access to information.

NEW LIQUOR CONTROL AND LICENSING ACT

An updated Liquor Control and Licensing Act and Regulation came into effect in January 2017 creating new opportunities for businesses, increasing convenience for consumers and enhancing the Province's commitment to social responsibility. The Liquor Policy Review made 73 recommendations on updating antiquated laws for British Columbians and reducing red tape. Several of the recommendations required new laws or regulations to be implemented. With the new legislation and regulations in effect, 90% of the Liquor Policy Review recommendations have now been implemented.

ACCESS RIGHTS CLARIFIED

Last year, a new Guide Dog and Service Dog Act came into force, supporting better access for people with certified guide and service dogs. Guide and service dogs provide critical support for people with disabilities by helping individuals with visual impairment and providing assistance to individuals with conditions such as severe hearing loss, epilepsy or diabetes. Certification increases public safety, raises training standards, and improves public access for dog and handler teams. In March 2017, the Guide Dog and Service Dog Regulation was amended to simplify the certification process for guide dog and service dog teams from other provincial and U.S. jurisdictions. The changes enable qualified medical professionals from other jurisdictions to provide the required verification as part of the certification process for guide and service dogs and their handlers. The changes streamline the certification process and increases access for people visiting or moving to British Columbia.

REDUCED PAPERWORK

As of September 2016, people applying to the provincial Persons with Disabilities (PWD) program who are already eligible for a comparable federal or provincial government program only need to complete a brief application form. They no longer have to provide additional assessments by medical practitioners to obtain the PWD designation. About 1,000 people each year will benefit from the change, most of whom will be youth transitioning into Community Living B.C. services. The changes reduce red tape for people with disabilities and their families, and also cut paperwork for doctors and other health-care professionals. The change is part of government's commitment to reduce red tape, and also reflects

feedback received from people with disabilities and disability organizations during the consultations on Accessibility 2024, a 10-year action plan to reduce barriers and create more accessible, inclusive communities.

SMALL BUSINESS FOCUS

B.C. HAS A WIDE VARIETY OF SMALL BUSINESSES spanning many sectors and ranks first in Canada for the number of small businesses per capita. In 2016, there were approximately 388,500 small businesses operating in B.C., making up 98% of all businesses in British Columbia. Inefficient regulations significantly impact small businesses as they do not have the same resources as large companies to navigate complex legal regimes and respond to numerous changes in requirements. Small businesses want requirements to be understandable and predictable, and services that are accessible. Red tape reduction strengthens the competitiveness of B.C. as a preferred place to do business

HARMONIZED FRANCHISE LEGISLATION

Developed with input from key stakeholders throughout the province, the Government of British Columbia introduced franchise legislation that is consistent with legal requirements in five other provinces (Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island). The Franchises Act, which came into force on February 1, 2017, aims to level the playing field for small business owners and provide certainty for investors. The regulation sets out information that is required in a disclosure document and methods of delivery. Franchise legislation supports the expansion of franchises by standardizing regulatory requirements, while at the same time encouraging investment in B.C.

ABORIGINAL SMALL BUSINESS RESOURCES

The Aboriginal Small Business Resources is a guide intended to improve access to important programs and services. This one-stop reference is tailored specifically to Aboriginal entrepreneurs, and includes information on how to access the range of services and supports available to Aboriginal small business owners. The resource was developed after B.C. Small Business Roundtable consultations with First Nations identified that Aboriginal entrepreneurs and small business owners in B.C. could benefit from having further information about existing support services.

MOBILE BUSINESS LICENCE UPDATE

Small businesses in 83 communities throughout B.C. are benefitting from the Mobile Business License program—collaboration between the provincial government and municipalities that allows businesses to operate in multiple municipalities with a single business license. This program saves business owners from having to apply for and purchase separate licences for each community, making it simpler and cheaper to do business in British Columbia. Plumbing services, construction-related businesses and catering companies are among the many types of businesses taking advantage of the program throughout British Columbia. In 2016, three new agreements involving eight local governments in the Kootenays were concluded.

BIZPAL UPDATE

The District of Houston is the newest community to sign on to BizPal, bringing the number of communities benefitting from the service in B.C. to 130. BizPal is the result of a unique partnership

among federal, First Nations, provincial, territorial and municipal governments that cuts through the paperwork burden and red tape that small business owners encounter by allowing them to find permits and licences

BIZPAL UPDATE

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ENHANCED FLEXIBILITY FOR BUSINESS

Food services, drinking establishments and tourism are among the fastest growing small business sectors in B.C. The hospitality industry showed the highest growth in jobs in small business with 11,360 people hired between 2010 to 2015. With many of the recommendations from the Liquor Policy Review now implemented, restaurants, bars, pubs, liquor retailers, manufacturers and special event organizers are among the wide range of businesses benefitting from the reduction in red tape and streamlined processes.

STREAMLINING PROCESSES

Beyond increasing the efficiency of B.C.'s regulatory environment, improving access to services through streamlining is also an important part of red tape reduction. Successful streamlining projects completed over the past year include:

COURT ADMINISTRATION TRANSFORMATION SUITE

The Court Administration Transformation Suite is a series of initiatives using innovative business processes and technology to improve access to justice. The Provincial Court Scheduling System, a part of the Court Administration Transformation, is designed to schedule trials more efficiently, and assist in the allocation of court services staff in courtrooms and use of judicial resources. The Court Clerk Desktop is intended to improve efficiency, increase data quality, and address workload issues for court administration staff. Services provided electronically are enhanced through Court Services Online.

EQUIVALENT TRAINING RECOGNIZED

Until recently, individuals with international qualifications as power engineers could not be certified in British Columbia without completing duplicate training and experience. Amendments to regulations under the Safety Standards Act now enable a process for recognizing international qualifications, and introduce certificate renewal and plant operating permits for industries using boilers and pressure vessels. These changes modernize and streamline processes and provide important tools for more effective safety oversight.

APPLICATION IMPROVEMENTS

The Property Taxation Branch within Ministry of Finance, Revenue Division, is responsible for administering the Property Tax Deferral Program. The volume of applications received by the branch, historically between 5,000 and 6,000 annually, increased to 13,000 in 2016. A Lean project completed in

2016 will streamline the process from application submission through to the decision to accept or deny the request. The project will reduce the time between receipt of an application to sending the decision letter.

SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS

Community gaming grants are intended to provide fair and equitable access to funding for eligible not-for-profit organizations. Government has taken a number of steps to improve public access and information for the grant process including consolidation of the program in the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development. Program guidelines have been updated for clarity, usability and consistency with the online application process. A policy and procedures manual and training plan supports consistent and high quality review of grant applications. To help people understand the changes, a series of regional workshops on the new application process were held and over 600 people attended throughout the province. The website has been updated to include pertinent information and a copy of the outreach presentation. Program improvements are in response to client feedback during the 2015/16 fiscal year grant cycle

BIKEBC

BikeBC is a cost sharing program to assist local governments in accelerating the construction of cycling infrastructure. The application process has been streamlined and simplified using the Lean continuous improvement methodology. Now there is consistent timing and intake for the program, allowing local governments to better plan and align municipal project priorities. Through this initiative, transparency and engagement with stakeholders and municipal partners has been enhanced and communication improved. Applying technology and creating new tools has reduced applicant inquiries by over 25% and reduced application review time by 11 days to an average time of 21.5 days.

EDUCATION AND REGULATORY REFORM

THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 553,000 PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS, 81,000 independent school students, and over 2,200 home-schooled children enrolled each year in B.C. Public post-secondary institutions in British Columbia provide high quality education to almost 430,000 learners. Regulatory reform projects in the field of education include:

PLANNING FOR POST- SECONDARY EDUCATION

EducationPlannerBC is making it easier for prospective students, parents and school counsellors to plan, search and apply for post-secondary education in B.C. With access to information on 2,100 post-secondary programs at 25 public post-secondary institutions, EducationPlannerBC enables students to search for programs, compare admission and tuition requirements and apply directly to the public post-secondary institutions of their choice through a common online application platform. The searchable database includes planning tools such as career profiles and labour market information. This free, online resource has been developed collaboratively across the B.C. public post-secondary sector and will continue to be improved through 2017. The tool is part of a shared commitment to ensure British Columbians can access education and training, and be ready for job opportunities.

STREAMLINED TEACHER CERTIFICATION PROCESS

By applying Lean methodology, the application process to become a teacher in B.C. has been streamlined over the past two years. Applicants now receive a first response within 2 to 4 weeks, instead of 4 to 7 weeks, and the time to provide a final answer to the applicant has been reduced to under a week after receiving the last document from eligible teachers. Expanded to cover all certification types, the online application process improves security and service delivery. Applicants receive updates about the status of their application and can monitor its progress online. Fees can be paid online and information available to applicants on the website has been enhanced. These improvements have simplified and automated the process for applicants, reducing the time to receive certification, and enabling applicants to start teaching faster both here in B.C. and in B.C.'s offshore schools around the world.

OPEN TEXTBOOKS

Post-secondary students in British Columbia can now use more than 180 open textbooks available through the government-funded open textbook project. Open textbooks are available online and use an open licence, making digital versions free to use by students and faculty. Students have the choice of using them online for free, or printing them for a fraction of the cost of traditional textbooks. Almost 300 faculty members at 23 public post-secondary institutions are participating. As a result, it's estimated that more than 35,000 students in B.C. have saved as much as \$4 million with open textbooks since the project was launched in 2012.

APPLY ONLINE

StudentAid BC is now accessible to all potential students online. Previously, even though the vast majority of StudentAid BC applications were submitted online, approximately three per cent of students had no choice but to submit paper applications due to uncommon personal circumstances, such as having a parent who did not have a social insurance number. These students could only apply using a paper application. In 2015/16, StudentAid BC processed almost 2,000 paper applications, while in 2016/17, system enhancements were introduced so all students can apply online. Although students still have the option to submit paper applications, fewer than 30 paper applications were received since the introduction of online applications.

BCFORHIGHSCHOOL

International students have a new one-stop, online shop for all information they need to consider for their high school education and tips on how to make the most of the experience. The BCforHighSchool website communicates to current and potential international students and their families so they can learn about B.C.'s world-class education system, teachers and schools. A wide range of topics are featured on the website including how to enroll in a B.C. school and what to expect during a homestay experience with a British Columbia family.

ENHANCING SERVICE AND ACCESS

Each year, Ministries identify specific business processes for review based on public feedback and internal evaluation. Some of the improvements made over the past year to enhance provincial services and improve access are:

INCOME AND DISABILITY ASSISTANCE ONLINE

Thanks to a new integrated tool, it is easier for British Columbians to apply for income and disability assistance online. The Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation combined its online application tool (the Self Serve Assessment and Application—or SSAA) and its online client services portal (My Self Serve—or MySS) into a single, streamlined online tool for all income and disability assistance applicants and clients. Currently, over 40,000 ministry clients are registered with My Self Serve. In addition to offering one simple point of access, the new My Self Serve tool is more user-friendly and allows applicants to access the benefits of the client portal, such as uploading documents, checking the status of an application and receiving online help from ministry staff. Other changes include a website that is easier to navigate and use, and improved mobile device compatibility. Pre-application tools now available on the website include a My Self Serve introduction video, document checklist and an eligibility estimator to provide a high-level estimate of how much financial assistance an individual may be eligible to receive.

CARROT REWARDS APP

B.C. residents can now measure and reap the rewards of physical activity and loyalty points on a daily basis with the new step tracker feature of the Carrot Rewards app. Launched in 2016, Carrot Rewards is a smartphone app that encourages British Columbians to engage in healthy behaviours by offering them loyalty points from leading rewards providers, such as Aeroplan, PetroPoints, MoreRewards and Scene, for performing healthy activities and learning about healthy lifestyle choices. The step tracker is a welcome addition to an app that has been helping nudge people to make better physical activity choices. The goal of the new feature is to motivate British Columbians to be more physically active by measuring an individual's daily step count.

ADOPT BC KIDS

Adopt BC Kids is an online digital portal for prospective adoptive parents to apply, track and manage their adoption application using a personalized and user-friendly web site. Families no longer need to go to a local office or attend a session with a social worker, as they are now able to get the information they need online through the new adoption website. Since going live November 1, 2016, Adopt BC Kids has attracted more than 340 prospective adoptive families. Sixty-three of the families who have registered on the site have applied to adopt, with more applications coming in every week. After obtaining a personal BCeID, users access their customized home page, which allows them to search child and youth profiles, fill out an application, and track their progress throughout the application process. The Lean process improvement methodology was used in the design and delivery of these service enhancements.

SUPPORTING ORGAN DONATION

Fifty percent of British Columbians believe they have registered a decision on organ donation but, in fact, only 21 percent have. With more than 600 people desperately waiting for organ donation in B.C., an easy and clear way to register is essential. Now, every British Columbian visiting an ICBC driver licensing office will be asked to register their decision about organ donation. Last year, at four driver licensing offices, staff provided information about organ donation to customers and encouraged them to register their decision. Since then, over 15,000 customers registered their decision on organ

donation. Based on the success of the pilot program, ICBC and BC Transplant have expanded this partnership to all ICBC driver licensing offices across the province. The Province entered into a partnership with BC Transplant in 2015 enabling people to also sign-up at all 62 Service BC locations throughout B.C. In 2016, a record number of more than 83,000 British Columbians registered to be organ donors, an increase of 85% over the previous year.

EXPORT NAVIGATOR

The Export Navigator pilot program offers small and medium businesses access to community-based export specialists who provide a personalized, step-by-step approach and help connect businesses to the appropriate market information, export programs, financial services, and business development experts. Export Navigator is available to businesses operating within the regional communities of Central Vancouver Island, Cariboo, North Okanagan, Pacific Northwest and Kootenay Boundary regions. Along with advice on how to develop a strong Export Plan, customized workbooks, appropriate tools, resources, and information are provided to participants. Advisors connect businesses to the right service at the right time, saving them time and money. For businesses outside of the pilot communities, the Province's trade professionals and its network of international Trade and Investment Representatives are available to help.

IMPROVED ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The B.C. Economic Development Portal has been updated to strengthen the economic well-being and resiliency of B.C. communities. The portal serves as a one-stop shop to meet the needs of stakeholders and builds the capacity of communities to respond to, and act on, economic development opportunities. Improved services such as a streamlined search function for finding available funding and easier navigation, will allow all B.C. communities, including First Nations, to easily access a range of essential tools and resources to help them realize their economic development potential and build capacity at a local level.

TIME SAVINGS

Produced by the Queen's Printer, the British Columbia Gazette is a two-part publication that provides the latest legal notices and provincial regulations for anyone wishing to know. Three of the most popular forms for the British Columbia Gazette are now available online. Seven more forms will soon be available with the remaining forms along with a payment portal to be rolled out next year. Having the forms online reduces the form submission and processing time and provides instant proof of ad submission.

ONROUTEBC

A new, innovative system for the commercial trucking industry now allows commercial carriers traveling within B.C. to apply and receive a permit online. onRouteBC is the first of its kind in Canada and replaces the Transport Permit System. With the introduction of an automated online permitting system, commercial operators can now obtain permits 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with no wait times. This system helps the commercial vehicle industry bring goods to market faster, by automatically approving permits and showing drivers detailed information on the approved route to follow. With onRouteBC, commercial carriers are able to create a profile with their company and vehicle information,

apply for permits, make payments, produce a map of approved routes and receive their permits online. In many cases, the online system auto-approves and issues a permit to carriers without ministry staff involvement. For those circumstances where a load is out of the ordinary, the Permit Centre staff remain available for assistance.

PROACTIVE DISCLOSURE

In the past year, government has put more resources in place to respond to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and introduced a new proactive disclosure initiative. Proactive disclosure releases information without requiring citizens to make a formal request under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. B.C. now routinely releases Ministers' receipted travel expenses; calendars of Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Associate Deputy Ministers; summaries of directly-awarded contracts, contracts with values or amendments of \$10,000 or more and Alternative Service Delivery contracts administered by the Strategic Partnerships Office; summaries of community gaming grants awarded; and summaries of open and closed FOI requests. The overall timeliness of government's responses to FOI requests has improved by six percentage points compared to the prior fiscal year, with overall on-time performance at 80%.

E-SERVICES FOR HUNTING

The Province has launched a new online portal that makes it easy for hunters to access a range of e-services, including hunting licences and applications for limited entry hunting (LEH) draws. The B.C. hunting portal gives hunters immediate access to apply for their resident hunting credentials and the new Fish and Wildlife ID, which replaces the old hunter identification number. The new online LEH system offers interactive maps and a simple interface that instantly gives hunters information on upcoming hunting opportunities across the province. Hunters without internet access can still visit a Service BC, FrontCounter BC or an authorized vendor to apply in person for the Fish and Wildlife ID or an LEH draw.

ENHANCED ACCESS

Significant changes to the Discover Camping Reservation Service enhance fair access for everyone looking to book a campsite in B.C.'s world-renowned provincial parks. These changes include eliminating the mid-March 'opening day' for reservations, and extending the three-month rolling window to four months. New restrictions are in place to prevent the reselling of reservations and the practice of overbooking days around long weekends. A pilot project in select parks limits the length of stay to seven days during the peak camping season in order to provide more camping opportunities in provincial parks. The Discover Camping call centre hours have been expanded to seven days a week.

SOLUTION EXPLORER

The Solution Explorer is an online question- and-answer tool to help tenants and landlords resolve tenancy issues or better prepare for formal dispute resolution. The tool provides plain language tenancy information, template letters and recommended actions tailored to the user's tenancy problem. The Solutions Explorer is mobile-friendly, and offers 24/7 access to information specific to the user's tenancy problem without having to telephone or travel the Residential Tenancy Branch. Information can be printed or emailed and the user can leave their exploration and return to where they left off by entering

a unique access code. The Solution Explorer is not replacing existing Residential Tenancy Branch services and citizens may still connect with an Information Officer by email, telephone or in person.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The BC Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) has released a test version of a new and improved EAO Project Information and Collaboration system (EPIC). This application makes it faster and easier to find important information, access key documents, and send comments in during public comment periods. EPIC exemplifies government's commitment to use modern tools and technology, with a focus on identifying user needs, to provide more convenient, accessible and reliable services to citizens and businesses. Since the launch of the improvements in February 2017, there is information related to 296 projects in EPIC and there have been approximately 20,000 visits to the site.

COURT ACCESS 24/7

The Civil Resolution Tribunal (CRT) is Canada's first online tribunal for resolving strata and small claims disputes. By offering new ways to resolve legal issues in a timely and cost-effective manner, the CRT encourages a collaborative, problem-solving approach to dispute resolution, rather than the traditional courtroom model. The CRT aims to provide timely access to justice, built around citizens' life and needs. It does this by providing legal information, self-help tools, and dispute resolution services to help solve problems, as early as possible. The CRT can be used 24 hours a day, seven days a week, from a computer or mobile device that has an internet connection. Interaction with the tribunal system and the other participants in a dispute can be done when it is convenient to the parties involved, rather than a set date. Tribunal members are expert decision-makers who hear both sides of a dispute in a virtual courtroom. Right now, the CRT is accepting strata property disputes for intake and will soon accept small claims disputes as well.

SUMMARY

Over the past year, B.C. has continued to make regulatory reform a priority, making it easier for citizens and businesses to access quality services in communities throughout the province. At the end of the 2016/17 fiscal year, the regulatory reform count was 170,140 – a decrease of almost 3,300 compared with the previous year and 48% below the 2001 baseline. Input from citizens and businesses has helped guide B.C.'s red tape reduction efforts, Lean experts have supported ministries with service improvements to directly address irritants identified by citizens and businesses and BC's regulatory framework has been kept modern and efficient through measures such as Red Tape Reduction Day and collaboration on Red Tape Awareness Week. As well, meeting the requirements of the Regulatory Reporting Act and monitoring the progress in all Ministries in achieving the Net Zero Increase commitment are essential to ensuring no overall increase in regulatory requirements. Together all of this has resulted in BC's recognition as a world leader in regulatory reform. The many facets of government's regulatory reform program contribute to keeping B.C.'s diverse economy strong and growing.