



Annual Report

Office of the Ethics
Commissioner of Alberta

April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017





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COMMISSIONER'S MESSAGE



I am pleased to submit the annual report for the Office of the Ethics Commissioner for 2016-2017. This report is my fourth since I became Ethics Commissioner.

During the reporting period the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship was mandated to carry out the review required by statute of the *Lobbyists Act*. Our office made a presentation to the Committee suggesting 26 changes to the legislation.

During the past fiscal year we implemented and completed the replacement of the lobbyists' registry. The project was on time and on budget with no major issues. The new system is much easier to use and seems to have been widely accepted within the lobbyists' industry.

We are looking forward to the upcoming review of the *Conflicts of Interest Act* which must be commenced before the end of December 2017.

There are now over 235 MLAs, designated office holders and political staff providing financial disclosure and meeting with us annually. This past year 8 MLAs and 15 political staff failed to comply with the deadline for filing their financial disclosure. Each was sent a letter imposing an administrative penalty if disclosure was not filed within a fixed period of time. Three MLAs, Prab Gill, Shannon Phillips and Karen McPherson were assessed penalties. One political staff member was assessed a penalty.

Three MLAs accepted gifts in the form of tickets that exceeded the amount allowed in section 7 of the *Conflicts of Interest Act* and did not receive approval to do so. As a result, pursuant to section 7(3)(d), I requested that they each make a donation to charity equivalent to the value of one of the tickets. There is an increasing problem with MLAs accepting invitations to events and conferences that exceed the limits set out on section 7 without prior approval.

Requests for advice decreased from 540 queries the previous year to 429 last year. We try to give advice within 24 hours unless the matter is complex and requires considerable research. Requests for information increased to 60 from 30.

Requests for an investigation increased to 114 from 80. Most requests were for matters outside the jurisdiction given to me in the *Conflicts of Interest Act*. However, three investigations were carried out. One investigation involved former Cabinet Minister Robin Campbell for an alleged breach of the post-employment sections of the *Conflicts of Interest Act*. The second was into allegations that MLA Ric McIver breached section 3 of the *Conflicts of Interest Act*. The final one was a reinvestigation into conduct by former Premier Alison Redford into the awarding of a contract for tobacco litigation when she was Minister of Justice. That reinvestigation was conducted, at my request, by the Ethics Commissioner of British Columbia, Paul Fraser, Q.C., pursuant to section 25 (8) of the *Conflicts of Interest Act* as I had a personal friendship with two members of the legal profession who were involved in the matter.

The Office is looking forward to the upcoming review of the *Conflicts of Interest Act*.



Hon. Marguerite Trussler, Q.C.
Ethics Commissioner of Alberta

LOBBYIST REGISTRAR'S MESSAGE



Year ending March 31, 2017

During the past year our registry and website have undergone significant changes as we completed our replacement of the old lobbyist registry and website. The new system went live on October 31, 2016, and I am pleased to report that the transition process went smoothly. I wish to thank all of the lobbyists for their patience and professionalism during the period of transition to the new website and registry.

The overall response to the new registry has been very positive. While we continue to receive some inquiries on filing requirements and processes, and interpretation of the *Lobbyists Act*, the volume of inquiries in comparison to past years has reduced significantly since the transition to the new website and registry. We attribute this largely to the improvements in using the new registry and the increase in resource materials available on our website, such as a new interactive test on our website to assist a person in determining if he or she is a lobbyist.

Since August of 2016, our office has also participated in the legislative review process to review the *Lobbyists Act*, a process which is legislated to occur every 5 years. Information and materials relating to this review are available under the *Recent News and Events* section on our homepage.

Looking forward, our office will be going through another transition in the year ahead as, effective September 1, 2017, I will be moving on to new challenges. Kent Ziegler, Chief Administrative Officer for the Office of the Ethics Commissioner, will be Acting Registrar until a new Registrar is appointed. I've enjoyed my time as Lobbyist Registrar and General Counsel, and it's been a pleasure getting to know and interacting with the lobbyist community daily over the past 2 ½ years.

I also wish to pay tribute to the dedicated team at the Office of the Ethics Commissioner, and thank them for their support and assistance throughout my time as Lobbyist Registrar and General Counsel.

Lana S. Robins

MANDATE

The *Conflicts of Interest Act* was passed in 1991, Chapter C.22.1 (now Revised Statutes of Alberta, Chapter C-23), and created the Office of the Ethics Commissioner of Alberta. The Office is also responsible for the administration of the *Lobbyists Act*, Statutes of Alberta 2007, Chapter L-20.5 ("*Lobbyists Act*"). The Ethics Commissioner is an Officer of the Legislature and is appointed by an Order in Council following a motion in the Legislative Assembly approving the appointment.

The Ethics Commissioner reports to the Legislative Assembly through the Speaker and files annual reports, and investigation reports with the Speaker of the House for tabling in the Legislature. The Ethics Commissioner presents budgetary estimates through the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices. The Legislative Assembly approves the budget for the Office of the Ethics Commissioner.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ACT

The preamble of the *Conflicts of Interest Act* sets out some of the basic ethical requirements:

- Ethical conduct of elected officials is expected in democracies;
- Members of the Legislative Assembly serve Albertans most effectively if they come from a broad spectrum of occupations and continue to participate actively in the community;
- Members of the Legislative Assembly ("MLAs") are expected to perform their duties of office and arrange their private affairs in a manner which promotes public confidence and trust in the integrity of each Member, maintains the Assembly's dignity and justifies the respect in which society holds the Assembly and its Members;
- Members of the Legislative Assembly, in reconciling their duties of office and their private interests, are expected to act with integrity and impartiality; and
- Ministers and their staff must avoid conduct that violates public trust or creates an appearance of impropriety.

Through the *Conflicts of Interest Act*, the Office of the Ethics Commissioner:

- Promotes an understanding of Member, designated office holder and political staff obligations under the *Act*;
- Receives financial disclosure statements from all 87 MLAs, all designated office holders as defined in the *Public Service Act*, and senior political staff in the Premier's and Ministers' offices;
- Provides advice to MLAs and former Members under the *Act*, either on an individual basis or generally to all or groups of MLAs (including former Members) and to current or former political staff and designated office holders;
- Provides advice to individuals governed by post-employment restrictions; and
- Investigates alleged breaches of the *Conflicts of Interest Act* by Members and political staff and breaches of the conflicts of interest and post-employment provisions of the *Public Service Act* by designated office holders.

Upon receiving an investigation report of conduct of a Member from the Office of the Ethics Commissioner, the Speaker is required to release the report publicly. If the Legislature is in session, the report is tabled in the Legislature. If the Legislature is not in session, the report is filed as an intersessional tabling. If the Ethics Commissioner recommends a sanction in an investigation report, the Legislative Assembly debates and votes on the investigation report within 15 days after the report is tabled, or at such other time determined by a resolution of the Legislative Assembly.

Under section 29 of the *Conflicts of Interest Act*, the Legislative Assembly may accept or reject the findings of the Office of the Ethics Commissioner or substitute its own findings. If the Legislative Assembly determines there is a breach, it may impose the sanction recommended by the Ethics Commissioner, any other sanction referred to in section 27(2) which it considers appropriate, or the Legislative Assembly may refrain from imposing a sanction. The Legislative Assembly has final authority about disciplinary matters relating to its Members.

Under the *Conflicts of Interest Act* reports pertaining to an investigation involving a political staff member may only be disclosed by the Commissioner to:

- (a) to the individual against whom the allegation was made,
- (b) in the case of a report respecting a member or former member of the Premier's and Ministers' staff who holds or held a position in the Premier's Office, to the Premier,
- (c) in the case of a report respecting a member or former member of the Premier's and Ministers' staff who holds or held a position in a Minister's office, to that Minister, and
- (d) where the Ethics Commissioner believes on reasonable grounds that the disclosure is necessary for the purpose of advising the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General or a law enforcement agency of an alleged offence under the Act or any other enactment of Alberta or an Act of the Parliament of Canada, to the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General or a law enforcement agency.

Under the *Public Service Act*, reports pertaining to an investigation involving a designated office holder may only be disclosed by the Commissioner to:

- (a) to the individual against whom an allegation was made,
- (b) to the Deputy Minister of Executive Council,
- (c) in the case of a report relating to a deputy minister, to the Minister to whom the deputy minister reports,
- (d) in the case of a report relating to the Deputy Minister of Executive Council, to the Premier,
- (e) in the case of a report relating to a member or person referred to in section 25.2(b), to the deputy minister to whom the member or person reports,

LOBBYISTS ACT

The *Lobbyists Act* is intended to enhance the integrity and accountability of government by fostering openness and transparency about who is influencing decisions made by public office holders. The *Lobbyists Act* establishes two categories of lobbyists: consultant lobbyists and organization lobbyists. The *Lobbyists Act* prohibits a person from lobbying a government department and providing paid advice to another government department on the same subject matter at the same

time, unless an exemption is granted.

The *Lobbyists Act* preamble describes its basic principles:

- Free and open access to government is an important matter of public interest;
- Lobbying public office holders is a legitimate activity;
- The public and public office holders should know who is engaged in lobbying activities;
- A registration system of paid lobbyists should not impede free and open access to government; and
- The public and public office holders should know who is contracting with the Government of Alberta and provincial entities.

The requirement to register as an organizational lobbyist only comes into effect once a lobbyist performs, or is required to perform, over 100 hours of lobbying annually, either individually or with others in their organization. However, some lobbyists, as a matter of practice, register before they reach the threshold. Consultant lobbyists are required to register within ten days of commencing an undertaking to lobby. The Office of the Ethics Commissioner maintains a web-based Lobbyist registry system and database. It is searchable by the general public. The registry provides openness and transparency by:

- Recording the identities and activities of people paid to influence decisions made by public office holders;
- Recording the identities of organizations and clients who pay lobbyists to influence the activities of public office holders on their behalf;
- Allowing lobbyists to register, update, renew and terminate registrations by submitting returns and notices for acceptance into the system; and
- Allowing public scrutiny.

The registry allows access 24 hours per day, seven days per week, for both the public and lobbyists.

The Ethics Commissioner may authorize any individual in the Office of the Ethics Commissioner to act as Registrar and to perform any of the powers, duties or functions of the Registrar under the *Lobbyists Act*. The Ethics Commissioner delegates the administrative and enforcement responsibilities of the Registrar to the Lobbyists Registrar who is also the General Counsel to the Ethics Commissioner.

Under the *Lobbyists Act*, certain powers and responsibilities are reserved for the Ethics Commissioner and cannot be delegated, including:

- Exemptions from the contracting prohibitions in s. 6 of the *Lobbyists Act* (i.e. allowing a person to provide paid advice to government while at the same time lobbying the government), with or without conditions;
- Issuing advisory opinions and interpretation bulletins; and
- Banning serious offenders from lobbying.

The Ethics Commissioner reports to the Legislative Assembly through the Speaker on investigations under the *Lobbyists Act*. If the House is sitting, the report is tabled. If the House is not sitting, the report is distributed to Members after which the Ethics Commissioner may make the report public. A report provided when the House is not sitting is tabled when the House next sits.

DISCLOSURE PROCESS

This year, all MLAs, designated office holders and political staff complied with their obligation to file disclosure statements. However, several were late in filing and had to be reminded they were late and would be subject to an administrative penalty if the disclosure was not filed within a set period of time.

Disclosure statements include information about the Member, designated office holder, or political staff, their spouse or adult interdependent partner and minor children.

It requires disclosing:

- All assets, ownership of publicly traded securities, liabilities and financial interests of any private corporation in their control;
- Any legal proceedings brought against them; and
- Taxes owing.

The Office of the Ethics Commissioner received private disclosures from 87 Members and met with each Member personally to discuss their disclosure. Previously, MLA public disclosure statements were released through the Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. However, as a result of the changes to the *Conflicts of Interest Act* in December 2014, public disclosure statements are now posted on the Office of the Ethics Commissioner website sometime after the Member's meeting with the Ethics Commissioner.

Designated office holders are required to submit disclosure statements under the *Public Service Act*. Disclosure meetings were conducted with all designated office holders. When reviewing disclosures by designated office holders of agencies, boards and commissions, compliance with their internal conflict of interest policies, where applicable or appropriate, is considered. There are no public disclosure statements for designated office holders.

Certain senior political staff, Chiefs of Staff, Press Secretaries and Ministerial Assistants are also required to provide financial disclosure to the Office of the Ethics Commissioner as a result of the changes to the scope of the *Act* in December 2014. There are no public disclosure statements for political staff.

Percentage of individuals who submitted all required disclosure information by the deadline

Category of Filer:	Compliance
Members of the Legislative Assembly (87 MLAs)	85% (up from 82% last year)
Designated office holders (fluctuated – 40 to 44)	100% (up from 96% last year)
Political staff (fluctuated – 104 to 110)	86% (down from 87% last year)

REQUESTS FOR ADVICE

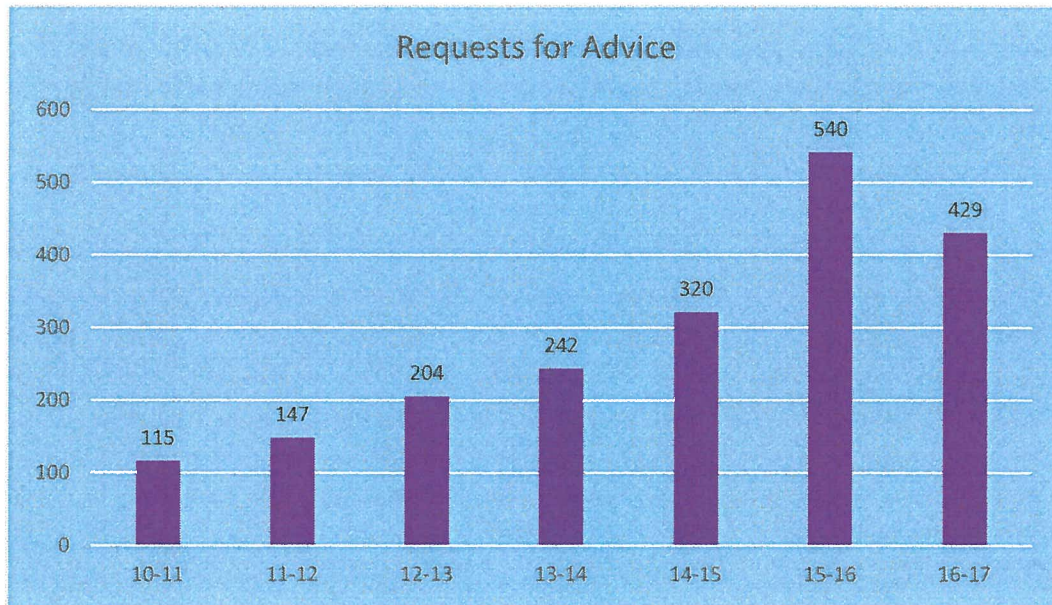
If Members, designated office holders or political staff seek and follow advice from the Ethics Commissioner, they are protected from investigations under the *Conflicts of Interest Act*, or a prosecution for a breach of the *Conflicts of Interest Act*. Advice is typically given in writing.

A confidential and searchable database of all requests and both verbal and written advice is maintained by the Office of the Ethics Commissioner for future reference to ensure consistent responses under similar circumstances to similar requests for advice. This database is only accessible by staff working in the Office of the Ethics Commissioner.

Some facts pertaining to requests for advice are:

- The number of requests from 2015-16 to 2016-17 decreased approximately 20%.
- Requests are usually handled expeditiously.
- 71% of advice requests pertain to either gifts or post-employment restrictions.

Total Requests for Advice under the Conflicts of Interest Act



Breakdown of Requests for Advice

Types of Advice	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Gifts	25	58	80	110	267	280
Post-Employment	38	37	36	95	105	26
Outside Activities	23	27	26	19	17	12
Investments	19	17	22	13	24	19
Family	5	15	10	18	12	10
Constituency Issues	5	12	20	8	13	10
Codes of Conduct	14	12	3	5	26	2
Contracts with the Crown	4	9	10	9	10	7
Taking Part in Decisions	1	9	4	6	6	7
Conflicts of Interest/Other	n/a	n/a	9	27	57	41
Reviewing SO Appointments	n/a	n/a	14	10	3	15
Total	147	204	242	320	540	429

Gifts

Questions are raised about accepting tickets to sporting events, invitations to fundraisers, invitations to conferences and non-commercial flights. Members are required to track all gifts over \$100, including event tickets, to ensure they have accurate records for yearly disclosure and are mindful of both the value of cumulative gifts they receive from one source in a reporting year and any connection between a source and the Member's public responsibilities.

Post-Employment

Post-employment questions arise from departing Ministers, designated office holders and political staff.

Outside Activities

Questions regarding outside activities almost exclusively deal with volunteer board activities in community organizations and clarification on external business activities.

Investments

Investment requests relate to blind trusts and personal investments of the individual or their family. Where potential conflicts existed, appropriate steps were taken by the parties to remove themselves from the situation prior to a conflict arising.

Family

Questions involving family members involve either the employment or activities of a spouse or child.

Constituency Issues

Questions relate to assisting constituents, using the constituency allowance for social obligations within the constituency. Where questions about the Member's constituency allowance fall within the mandate of the Office of the Speaker, the Member is referred to Legislative Assembly Office.

Codes of Conduct

Several agencies, boards and commissions, seek informal confidential advice on conflict of interest matters relating to their agency's code of conduct.

Contracts

Contract questions are often raised by new individuals about their dealings with Alberta Treasury Branch, and by others regarding other business, financial, or Crown contracts.

Taking Part in Decisions

Generally, individuals consider their personal holdings and those of close family members and ask whether it is appropriate to participate in a decision before the Legislative Assembly or one of its committees, or before Executive Council or one of its committees. The Office of the Ethics Commissioner advises whether a private interest is involved or whether the matter is a general application which affects the Member only as a broad class of the public, thereby allowing the Member to participate and vote.

Conflicts of Interest/Other

This is a new general category where requests for advice do not fall within the other categories but do fall within the general scope of the *Conflicts of Interest Act*.

Reviewing Senior Official Appointments and Vetting of Potential Board Member Appointments

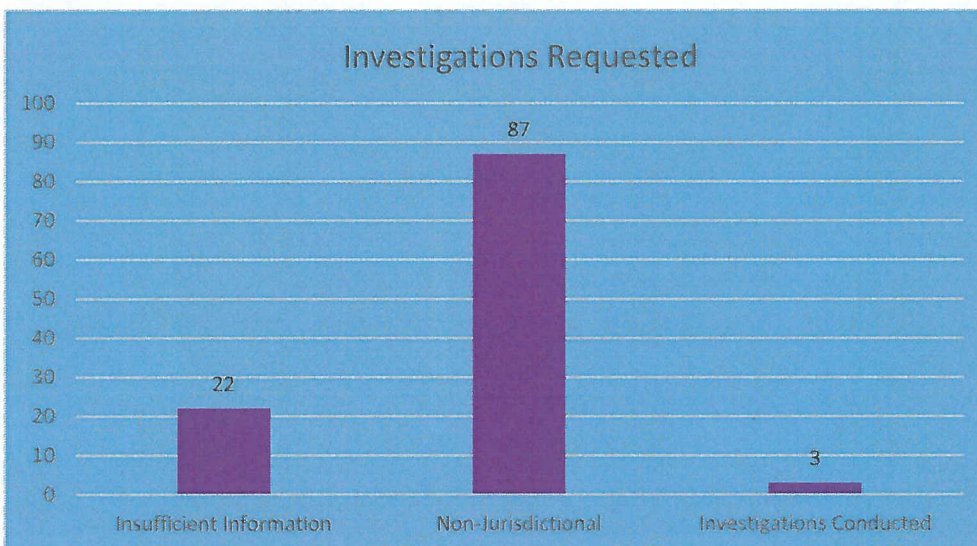
Sometimes, as part of the screening and hiring process, potential conflicts of interest issues arise with certain candidates for certain senior government or board positions. In these cases, or in cases where it is prudent to ensure there are no underlying conflict of interest issues, the Office of the Ethics Commissioner may review selected candidate's backgrounds and investment holdings to ensure there are no issues and provide related advice.

REQUESTS FOR INVESTIGATION

Investigation requests, once received, are considered and then acted upon accordingly. If sufficient evidence and grounds are provided, and the issue is within the jurisdiction of the Office of the Ethics Commissioner, an investigation is conducted. If the request is vague or frivolous or contains overly broad allegations, and further relevant information is not provided upon request, the request is categorized as “insufficient information”. If sufficient information is provided, but the request is determined to pertain to someone other than an MLA, designated office holder or political staffer, or is a complaint that does not fall within the scope of the *Conflicts of Interest Act*, it is classified as “non-jurisdictional”.

The majority of requests for investigation involved matters that are outside the jurisdiction of the office.

Request for Investigations by Category *Total: 112 (up from 80 last year)*



Of the 112 requests for investigation, the Office of the Ethics Commissioner found the Office had jurisdiction and merit to conduct three investigations:

1. Investigation into allegations involving former MLA Robin Campbell.
2. Investigation into allegations involving MLA Ric McIver.
3. Re-investigation into allegations involving former Premier Alison Redford.

The full investigation reports that were tabled in the Legislative Assembly on the matters can be found at: <http://www.ethicscommissioner.ab.ca/publications/investigation-reports/commissioner-trussler/>

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

The Office of the Ethics Commissioner received 60 requests for information this year, up from 30 the year prior. The majority of requests were from callers seeking clarification about the Office of the Ethics Commissioner's mandate and the relevant legislation. Information requested concerned employment standards, professional standards and conduct, MLA compensation, post-employment, blind trusts, gift acceptance, public disclosure, conduct in non-profit organizations and legislation surrounding investigations. Callers who could not be assisted were referred, where possible, to the appropriate office that could answer the inquiry.

COMPARATIVE SUMMARY STATISTICS

Total Requests Received for:	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Advice	147	204	242	320	540	429
Investigations	20	11	9	26	79	114
Information	95	208	140	23	30	60
TOTAL	262	423	391	369	649	603

BUDGET AND FISCAL UPDATE

The Office of the Ethics Commissioner continually strives to ensure the best and most prudent expenditure of public funds and prefers to find internal efficiencies and savings wherever possible and reasonable. As a result, the office's expenses last year were less than budgeted.

Full copies of the 2016-17 audited financial statements are located on the Office of the Ethics Commissioner website: <http://www.ethicscommissioner.ab.ca/publications/annual-reports/>.

	2013-14 Budget	2013-14 Actual	2014-15 Budget	2014-15 Actual	2015-16 Budget	2015-16 Actual	2016-17 Budget	2016-17 Actual
Salaries	\$638,000	\$649,124	\$638,000	\$642,539	\$703,000	\$619,149	\$697,000	\$718,673
Supplies and Expenses	\$329,000	\$297,464	\$335,000	\$253,408	\$450,500	\$157,637	\$433,000	\$287,540
Total	\$967,000	\$946,588	\$973,000	\$895,947	\$1,153,500	\$776,786	\$1,130,000	\$1,006,213
Surplus or (Deficit)	n/a	\$20,412	n/a	\$77,053	n/a	\$376,214	n/a	\$123,787

EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

In 2016-17, the Office of the Ethics Commissioner hosted the annual Canadian Conflicts of Interest Network Conference (CCOIN) in Edmonton, and attended the Lobbyist Registrar's Conference. The CCOIN event also commemorated the 25th anniversary of the *Conflicts of Interest Act* and a number of former Ethics Commissioners, dignitaries and Members attended the small celebratory affair.

Participating in annual conferences is very beneficial to further the work of the office. Conferences provide the Office of the Ethics Commissioner the opportunity to exchange information with peers on issues of common interest and review legislative and regulatory differences and trends.

PUBLICATIONS

A routine review of brochures and guides is undertaken each year to ensure they are current. Educational information is reviewed to ensure it is as user-friendly as possible. All brochures and bulletins on the public website were reviewed and updated in 2017.

LOBBYISTS ACT AND REGISTRY UPDATE

Lana Robins resigned her position as Lobbyist Registrar in August of 2017. Lara Draper assumed the role and duties of Lobbyist Registrar and General Counsel on September 25, 2017.

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

The Registrar continues to review registrations submitted by lobbyists for posting to the registry, respond to inquiries and address technical issues in a timely and effective manner. The Lobbyist Registrar continued to receive requests for information and advice from consultant and organization lobbyists and other interested parties about the obligations and requirements under the *Act*. The number of requests is approximately the same from year to year. Communications have concerned:

- New account requests;
- Profile change requests;
- Procedural issues with regard to notices of change;
- Advice with regard to the requirement to register;
- General advice with regard to interpretation of the *Act*;
- Terminating registrations of lobbying activities which were concluded;
- Advice and assistance on completing a new registration;
- Advice and assistance on completing semi-annual renewals;
- Requests from the Lobbyist Registrar for additional information;
- Communication with users regarding account status; and
- Support for technical issues.

Communications about the *Act* and registry were conducted via email and by phone, and were consistently effected in a timely manner.

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

In 2016 the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship commenced a review of the *Lobbyists Act*. The Office of the Ethics Commissioner was involved in the review process, and in December of 2016 submitted a report to the Committee suggesting 26 changes to the *Act* and regulation, and sent a follow up letter to the committee in February of 2017:

<http://www.assembly.ab.ca/committees/resourcestewardship/LAR/Submissions/2016/RS-LOBBY-070.pdf>

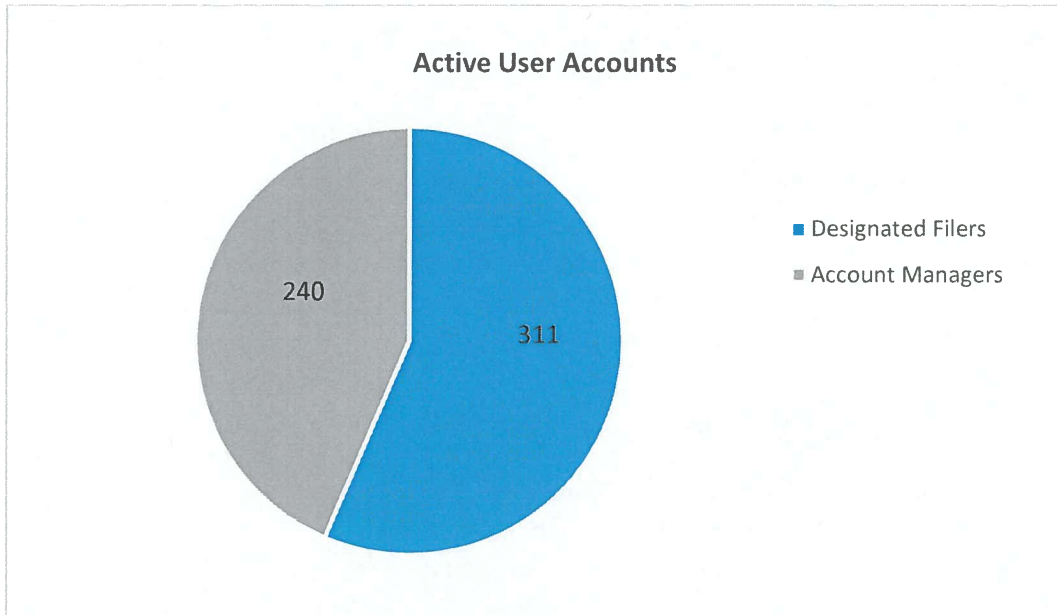
<http://www.assembly.ab.ca/committees/resourcestewardship/LAR/Submissions/2016/RS-LOBBY-100.pdf>

In July of 2017, the Committee submitted its final report to the Legislative Assembly. A number of the suggestions, of varying degrees of importance, made by the Office of the Ethics Commissioner were not addressed in the Committee's final report: A copy can be obtained here:

<http://www.assembly.ab.ca/committees/PastReports/2017/Review%20of%20the%20Lobbyists%20Act.pdf>

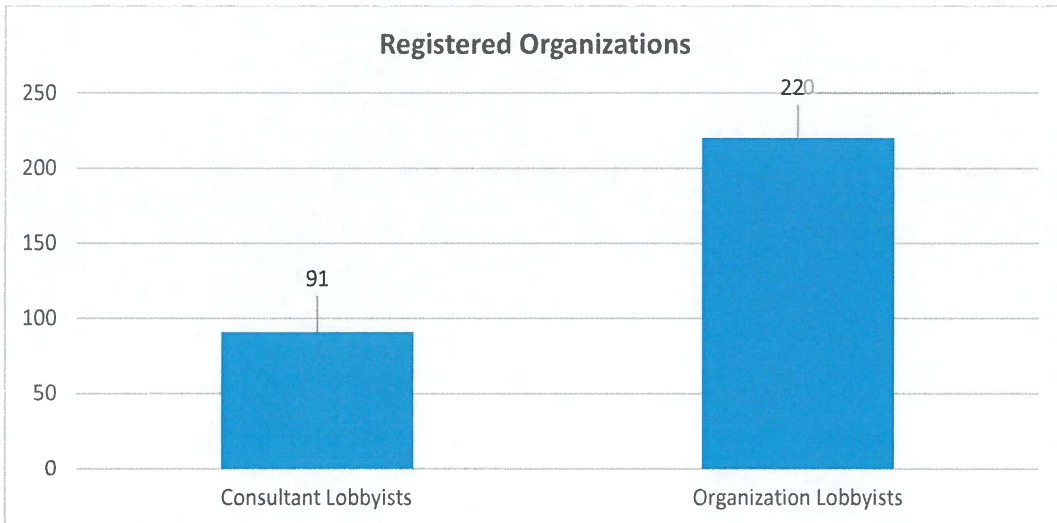
STATISTICAL YEAR IN REVIEW

Active User Accounts from November 1, 2016 - March 31, 2017



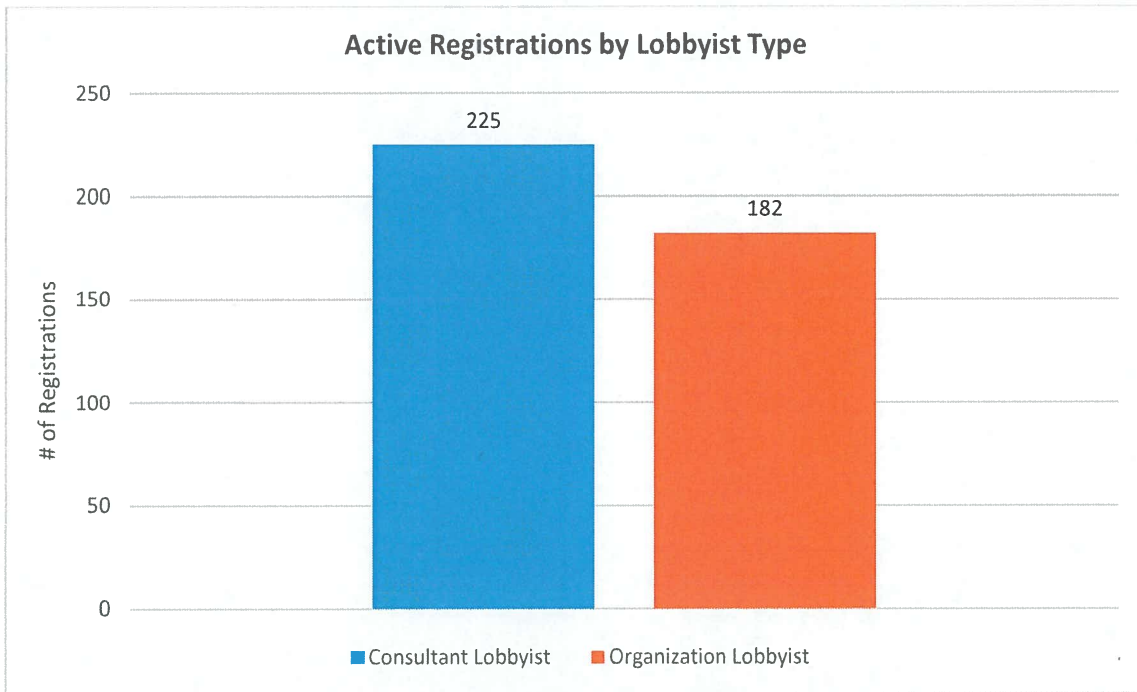
Total: 551

Active Registered Organizations from November 1, 2016 - March 31, 2017



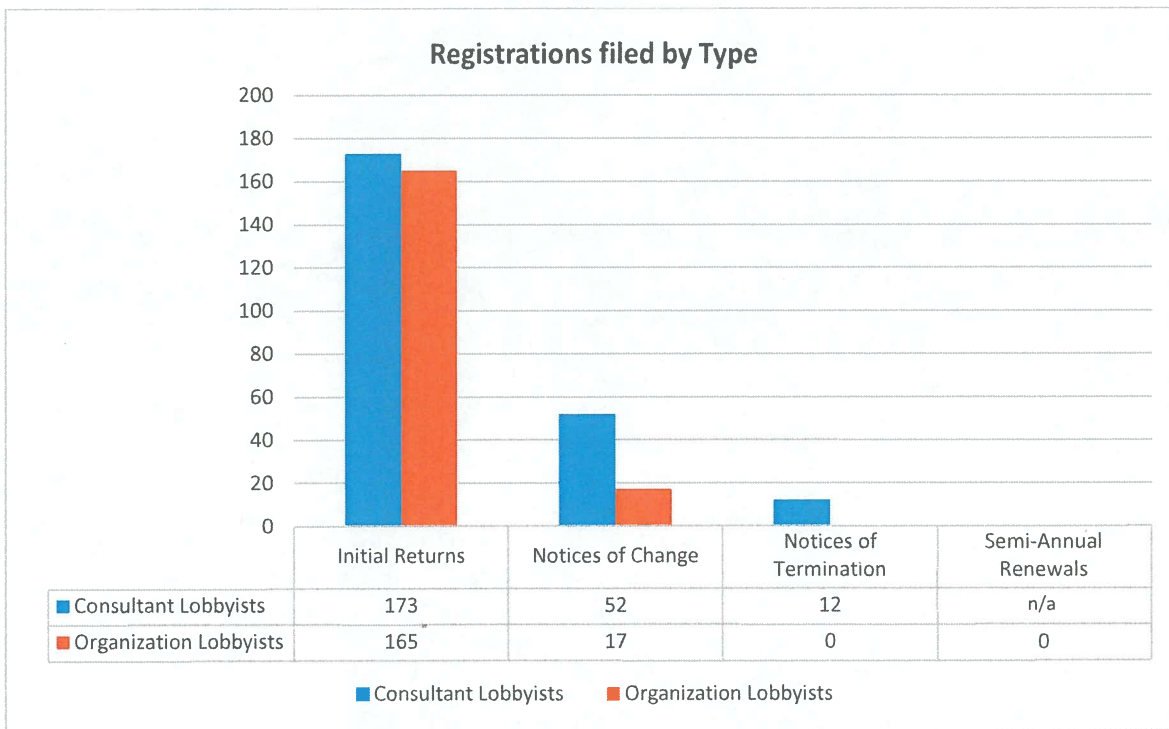
Total: 311

Active Registrations by Lobbyist Type from November 1, 2016 - March 31, 2017



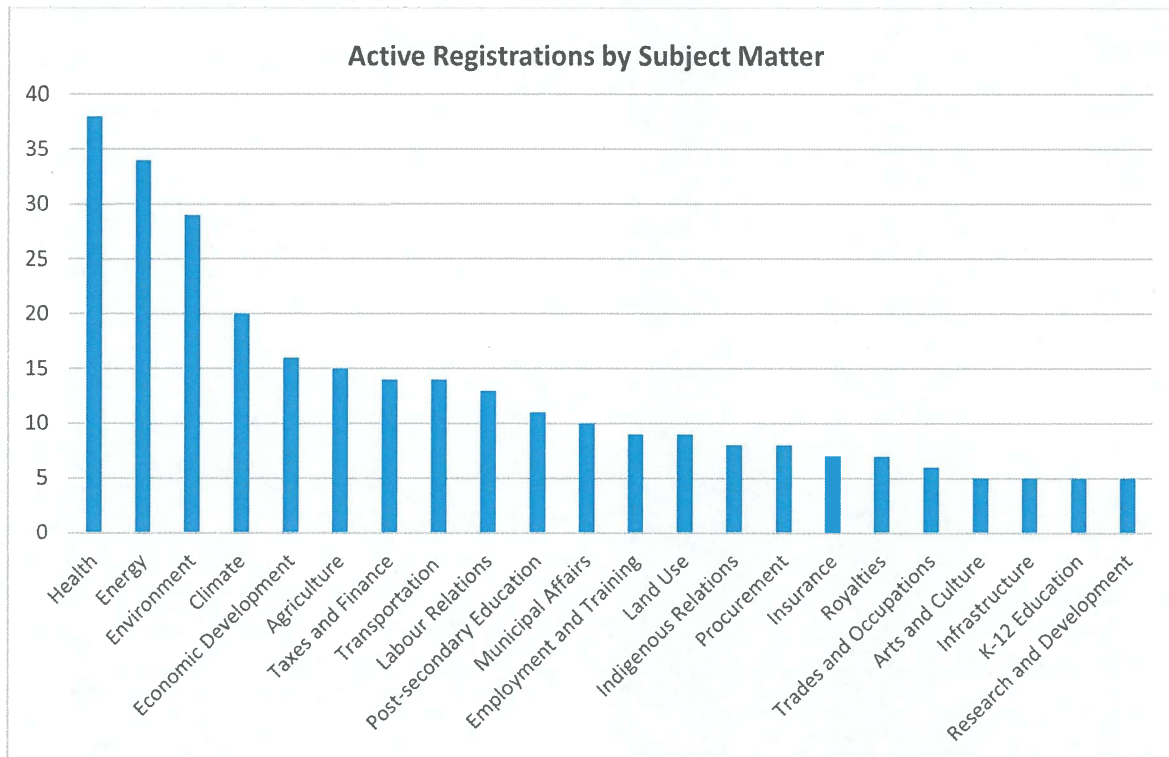
Total: 407

Registrations Filed From November 1, 2016 - March 31, 2017



*The new registry system was launched in November 1, 2016 therefore no semi-annual renewals were filed before March 31, 2017.

Active Registrations by Subject Matter from November 1, 2016 - March 31, 2017



*Subject matters with less than 5 registrations are not shown.

Registry Website Activity from November 1, 2016 – March 31, 2017

Website activity statistics for the new system are only available from the time the system was introduced on November 1, 2017. Full fiscal year statistics will be reported in next year's annual report.

INFORMATION ON FILING REGISTRATIONS

As part of the continuing improvement of the Lobbyist registry, registrations are continually being reviewed to ensure that enough detail has been provided with regard to the particulars of lobbying. In particular, for every subject matter listed, two or three sentences typically are required to clearly describe the particulars of that lobbying activity with respect to that subject matter. One or two words to describe a general area of interest is not considered detailed enough, and does not provide enough particulars about the lobbying activity. If a lobbyist has not provided enough information for their lobbying particulars, the Lobbyist Registrar will contact the lobbyist and require them to correct and re-submit the registration.

INVESTIGATIONS AND ENFORCEMENT

Section 15 of the *Lobbyists Act* sets out when the Registrar shall conduct an investigation and when the Registrar can exercise discretion to decline an investigation. There were no requests for an investigation under the *Lobbyists Act* received from April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017.

Working with lobbyists to assist them in understanding their obligations under the *Act* and the functions and processes of the Registry are key elements in a proactive approach to achieving compliance with the *Act* and reducing the amount of enforcement required. However, as the *Lobbyists Act* was enacted in 2009, and is no longer new legislation, lobbyists should now be familiar with the legislation and their obligations under the *Act*. In future, a greater emphasis will be placed on enforcement of the provisions of the *Lobbyists Act*, including the designated time periods to complete required filings and the requirement to register.

LOOKING FORWARD

The replacement Alberta Lobbyist Registry has now been completed and the new registry is fully operational. The project was completed by FCI Accelerated Solutions within the time frames and the budget set out in the contract.

The development of any new registry is challenging as coding, legislative requirements, content and format all need to be aligned and integrated with a view to accessibility for a wide range of individuals and user skill sets. The Office of the Ethics Commissioner is very pleased with the final product, and the lobbyist community has generally been very positive about the new system and its functionality.

The Office of the Ethics Commissioner will await the fall session of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to see if any changes to the *Lobbyists Act* and *Conflicts of Interest Act* will be brought forward and will ensure any new legislation or changes to the current legislation are implemented.