

Wharf, Sandy PREM:EX

From: Deputy Minister, PREM:EX
Sent: Tuesday, July 19, 2011 8:13 AM
Subject: Open Government: An Important Step for the Public Service



Where ideas work

Good morning.

Today on the [@Work intranet](#) there is a special video message from Premier Christy Clark regarding some important actions that are relevant to all of us in the BC Public Service. Specifically, these involve how we are delivering on her commitment to open government as a way to improve engagement between government and the citizens we serve.

I encourage you to watch the video and read the related material so you can understand these changes and have an informed discussion within your ministry about what this means for your work. The growing move toward more open government will increasingly change how we all work. These steps will provide new opportunities to share information with the public that will enable greater citizen participation in the programs and services we deliver.

My thanks to the Citizens' Services and Open Government teams who have worked tirelessly in recent months to make today's actions possible and to all those across government who have contributed to that effort. This is an exciting and progressive development that highlights yet again why today's BC Public Service is recognized as a leader in serving citizens at the highest possible level. Thank you.

John Dyble
Deputy Minister to the Premier and
Head of the BC Public Service

Ref: 94045

Sent Via Email

Date: July 19, 2011

To: Deputy Ministers' Council

Re: Open Government Initiatives: Open Information and Open Data

Colleagues:

A hallmark of open government is sharing data and information with citizens in a way that is easy to find and use and consistent with statutory and policy requirements. Jurisdictions with open government initiatives are employing new forms of technology to inform their citizens about their government and its activities and using information and data to engage citizens.

The Premier's Open Government Direction (appended) builds on our corporate transformation strategy, *Citizens@ the Centre*, to share more information and data with citizens using online tools. This memo summarizes the four key elements that government is implementing to achieve open government.

1. The Premier's Direction

Ministries are expected to demonstrate their progress toward improving the quantity and usability of open data available through DataBC. Ministries are also expected to show that they are disseminating more information in a routine manner, rather than waiting for FOI requests. Performance in meeting the Direction will be measured through quarterly reports to Cabinet. The content and format of those reports will be determined by Cabinet.

2. Open Information and Open Data Policy

To assist ministries in supporting the routine release of information and making data holdings open, new tools and resources are available. The Open Information and Open Data Policy http://www.cio.gov.bc.ca/local/cio/kis/pdfs/open_data.pdf authored by the Office of the Chief Information Officer is the policy framework for ministries and sectors to use in devising their approaches around privacy, security, intellectual property and existing policy or contracts and with respect to routine release of information. The policy describes key terms, requirements, and roles and responsibilities. In particular, the open data checklist contained in the appendix of that policy will be a critical tool for your staff in readying data for public use.

We look forward to working in partnership with you and your staff as we implement this initiative. If you have any questions regarding these roles or responsibilities, please contact Kevin Jardine, Assistant Deputy Minister, Business and Workforce Transformation, Citizens' Services and Open Government at 953-3470.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kim Henderson', followed by a period.

Kim Henderson
Deputy Minister

Appended: The Premier's Open Government Direction



July 19, 2011

DIRECTION TO GOVERNMENT FROM THE PREMIER AND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL:

Our government is changing the style and approach of governing to provide citizens with opportunities to influence and improve policies that impact them and their quality of life. Opening up government data and information are key foundations to enabling engagement with citizens by using new technologies to connect the public to government and to one another. Making government data and information available online invites individuals and organizations to transform data and information into tools and applications that help individuals, institutions and communities; and to promote partnerships with government to create innovative solutions to the opportunities and challenges faced by British Columbians.

The following specific actions will ensure our government continues to build on the open data and open information tools launched today.

Open Data

1. Ministries must take steps to expand public access to government data by making it available online unless restricted by law, contract or policy;
2. Ministries must re-prioritize and expand data collection efforts towards those that enable citizens and sectors to create value from government data;
3. Ministries must adopt B.C.'s open license for data and ensure data accessibility through DataBC in accordance with B.C.'s Open Data Policy, which includes the requirement that data be published in an open machine-readable format;
4. DataBC must ensure that citizens can give feedback on and assessment of the quality of published information and provide input to which data should be prioritized for publication.

Open Information

1. To the extent practicable and subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and other valid restrictions, ministries should use modern technology to disseminate useful information in a routine way rather than waiting for specific requests under the FOIPP Act.

Ministers will be expected to provide quarterly reports to Cabinet on their progress in meeting these open government objectives.

[PREM SIGNATURE]