



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COMMISSIONER ORDERS DISCLOSURE OF OUTSOURCING CONTRACTS

VICTORIA — In two orders issued today, the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner (OIPC) ruled that the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) and the Ministry of Citizens' Services (the ministry) must disclose commercial and financial details of two outsourcing contracts.

"These two orders continue the trend in our decisions requiring the release of contract details between public bodies and service providers," said Information and Privacy Commissioner Elizabeth Denham. "These decisions demonstrate that public agencies should consider the routine release of these types of outsourcing contracts. Proactively releasing these contracts would save everyone considerable time, money and paperwork."

In her recent report, *It's About Time: Report Card on the Timeliness of Government Access to Information Responses*, the commissioner highlighted that a policy of routine release and proactive disclosure of information would also promote trust and confidence in government.

The orders rule on:

1. a request by the Hospital Employees' Union (HEU) to VIHA for contracts for cleaning and patient food services. The contracted service provider, Compass Canada, argued that releasing information about pricing, performance incentives, capital investment and other financial information would harm its competitive position, interfere with contract negotiations or cause undue financial loss—all reasons for withholding information under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA). The OIPC's adjudicator ruled that Compass did not establish that disclosure of its commercial and financial information would cause the company economic harm.
2. a request by the Freedom of Information and Privacy Association to the Ministry for a contract for workplace systems' support services. The ministry argued that releasing information about pricing, service levels, gain-sharing and financial penalties would harm the government's economic or financial interests, and other disclosures would affect the security of its computer systems—two reasons for withholding information under FIPPA. The OIPC's adjudicator agreed with the applicant that withholding the requested information did not compromise the ministry's interests or system security.

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To read the orders and the commissioner's *It's About Time* report, please visit: www.oipc.bc.ca

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