

NEWS RELEASE

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Gregor Robertson in a bind over tomorrow's Vancouver Police Board vote on openness Will the Mayor change his vote on 'simultaneous disclosure'?

Vancouver – The Vancouver Police Department wants to continue releasing records obtained through FOI simultaneously to the requester and the general public, even though Vancouver City Council (including Mayor Robertson) voted in June to end the controversial practice.

A [report](#) from the Police Board's Freedom of Information Committee recommends that the VPD continue posting responses to FOI requests on the VPD website simultaneously (and sometimes even before) the person requesting the records gets to see them. The full Police Board (chaired by Mayor Robertson) will vote on the report at its December 14 meeting.

"This is an act of defiance by the VPD, and they have put the Mayor (who is also the chair of the Police Board) in a tough spot," said FIPA Executive Director Vincent Gogolek. "He voted to end the City of Vancouver's simultaneous posting of FOI requests and comply with the Commissioner's recommendations. I don't see how he can change his vote here."

[For Vancouver City Council motion, June 14 2011 Click [Here](#)]

FIPA has denounced the practice as a cynical way of discouraging FOI requests and punishing requesters, and B.C. Information and Privacy Commissioner Elizabeth Denham has denounced the practice as well, saying the online posting of FOI'd records simultaneously with release to the requester "frustrates the purposes of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*".

Commissioner Denham's guidelines for posting records on the Internet either proactively or in response to a FOI request include a recommendation of a 24-hour delay before they are posted, but she says requesters can ask for a longer period which a public body "should consider".

"It's unacceptable that the VPD insists on continuing a practice both the Information Commissioner and City Council have denounced," said Gogolek. "It's even less acceptable that the oversight body for the Vancouver Police has apparently done no independent thinking about this and has merely acted as a mouthpiece for the VPD.

"The Board must vote to reject this wrongheaded report or risk losing all credibility on transparency."

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