

Friends of FOI

The Campaign for Open Government is soliciting opinion leaders from across the political spectrum to sign on as Friends of FOI. Such widespread support is aimed at motivating the BC Government to strengthen the right of citizens to access government information.

New signatories to the Declaration by the Friends of FOI shall be announced through press releases and via this page. If you are interested in joining the Friends of FOI then please email info@opengovernment.ca.

The current and new signatories to the Declaration by the Friends of FOI are:

- Stewart B. Alsgard – Mayor, Powell River
- Maureen Bader – BC Communications Director, Canadian Taxpayers Federation New Friend!
- David Beers – Editor, The Tyee
- Andrew Britton – City Councillor, View Royal
- Stephen Elliott Buckley - Editor, Vista Political Editorials New Friend!
- Daniel W. Burnett – Barrister & Solicitor, Owen Bird Law Corporation; Adjunct Professor, School of Journalism, University of British Columbia New Friend!
- Jackie Byrn – Freelance Journalist New Friend!
- George Chow – City Councillor, Vancouver
- Randy Christensen – Staff lawyer, Sierra Legal Defence Fund New Friend!
- Duff Conacher – Founder of Democracy Watch New Friend!
- Katrine Conroy – BC MLA for West Kootenay Boundary, Opposition Critic for Citizens' Services (including FOIPPA) New Friend!
- Kathy Corrigan – School Board Trustee, Burnaby
- Libby Davies – Member of Parliament, Vancouver East New Friend!
- David Flaherty – First Information and Privacy Commissioner for British Columbia New Friend!

- Dean Fortin – City Councillor, Victoria
- David Gollob – VP of Public Affairs, Canadian Newspaper Association
- Gordon Gibson – Political commentator; Senior Fellow, Fraser Institute
- Carmen Gustafson – City Councillor, Golden
- Larry Hannant - Professor of History, Camosun College New Friend!
- Sean Holman – Editor, Public Eye Online; Host, Public Eye Radio
- Dr. Kerry Jang – Professor, Faculty of Medicine, University of British Columbia; Community Activist New Friend!
- Am Johal - Co-founder, Civil Society Development Project New Friend!
- Frances M. Kelly – Lawyer, Disability Law Program, Community Legal Assistance Society New Friend!
- Larry Kuehn – Director of Research, BC Teachers’ Federation New Friend!
- Leonard Krog – BC MLA for Nanaimo, Opposition Critic for the Attorney General New Friend!
- Troy Lanigan – National Communications Director, Canadian Taxpayers Federation New Friend!
- Nick
Loenen – Founding Director of Fair Voting BC; Former MLA; Lecturer,
Department of Political Science, University of British Columbia New Friend!
- Raymond Louie – City Councillor, Vancouver
- Sara MacIntyre – BC Director, Canadian Taxpayers Association
- Rafe Mair – Political commentator; Former Social Credit cabinet minister
- Mark Milke – Author and columnist New Friend!
- Dr. Roy Miki – Professor, Department of English, Simon Fraser University; Author & Activist New Friend!
- Kevin Millslip – Activist; Founder of Check Your Head New Friend!
- Jack McLeman – City Councillor, Port Alberni
- Stephen Osborne – Writer; Co-founder and Editor of Geist Magazine New Friend!

- Stephen Owen – Member of Parliament, Vancouver Quadra New Friend!
- Sue Powell – City Councillor, Parksville
- Murray Rankin – QC, Heenan Blaikie
- Ann Rees – Former award-winning investigative journalist, The Province Newspaper; Instructor, Journalism Program, Kwantlen University College New Friend!
- John Richardson – Executive Director, Pivot Legal Society New Friend!
- Thomas Rankin, Save Our Rivers Society New Friend!
- Dr. Alasdair Roberts – Professor of Public Administration, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University New Friend!
- Dr. Richard Rosenberg – Professor Emeritus, Department of Computer Science, University of British Columbia New Friend!
- Mel Rothenburger – Editor, Daily News in Kamloops; Former Mayor, Kamloops
- Calvin Sandborn – Legal Director, University of Victoria Environmental Law Clinic
- Shane Simpson – BC MLA for Vancouver-Hastings, Opposition Critic for Environment New Friend!
- Dr. Kennedy Stewart – Assistant Professor, Graduate Public Policy Program, Simon Fraser University
- Dr. David Suzuki – Founder, David Suzuki Foundation; Host, The Nature of Things
- John Swift – Barrister and Solicitor, John J. Swift Law Corporation New Friend!
- Joey Thompson – Columnist & Legal Editor The Province Newspaper New Friend!
- Dr. Stephen J. A. Ward – Acting Director, Associate Professor of Journalism Ethics, School of Journalism, University of British Columbia
- Dr. Reg Whitaker – Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Victoria New Friend!
- Silvine Zimmerman – Director at Large, BC Green Party New Friend!

The Declaration states as follows:

Declaration by the Friends of FOI

WHEREAS open government is the hallmark of a free and democratic society, and

WHEREAS the government of British Columbia has pledged to support the principle of open, transparent and accountable government, and

WHEREAS government information belongs to the people, not to the government, and

WHEREAS access to information helps to ensure that citizens have the information required to participate meaningfully in the democratic process, and that politicians and bureaucrats remain accountable to the citizenry, and

WHEREAS British Columbia's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act was created to ensure that all citizens have timely, effective and affordable access to the documents which governments make and keep, and

WHEREAS the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act requires that the head of a public body must make every reasonable effort to assist applicants and respond without delay to each applicant openly, accurately and completely

THEREFORE, we the undersigned agree that

- The rights and protections enshrined in BC's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act should be maintained and enhanced. Government should facilitate access to information, not obstruct it.
- Responses to Freedom of Information requests should always be within the timelines of, and follow the guidelines within, BC's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.
- Requesters should not be quoted exorbitant fees, or in any way discouraged from filing Freedom of Information requests by elected officials, political aides or provincial civil servants.

- Sufficient resources should be available so that government bodies are able to meet statutory disclosure timetables, and the Information and Privacy Commissioner's office is able to discharge its mandate in a timely fashion.