

August 25, 2026

The Hon. Diana Gibson

Minister for Citizens' Services

The Hon. Brenda Bailey

Minister of Jobs and Economic Growth

The Hon. Rick Glumac

Minister of State for Artificial Intelligence and New Technologies

Sent via email: CITZ.Minister@gov.bc.ca; JEDI.Minister@gov.bc.ca
AI.Tech.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Re: Restore public access to the B.C. Government Directory

Dear Ministers:

On behalf of the undersigned business associations, professional organizations and other organizations across British Columbia, we are writing to express our significant concern regarding the Government of British Columbia's decision to eliminate public access to the B.C. Government Directory and to urge the Province to immediately restore access to this important public resource.

The directory has long served a simple but important purpose of helping British Columbians understand how their government is organized, who is responsible for particular areas of work, and how to contact the appropriate public servants for relevant work. This has been especially true as government's size has grown and various ministry mandates have evolved over time.

While many of our organizations have a long history of working with various ministries, we still rely on this tool on a daily basis to understand the structure of ministries, identify which branches and officials are responsible for particular policy and regulatory files, and ensure that questions, information and stakeholder perspectives are directed to the appropriate people. Removing public access will make those interactions challenging at a time when government needs to increase access and trust, not make it more difficult to engage.

Respectfully, directing the public to a general government services page is not an equivalent substitute for a resource that allows users to understand the organizational structure of government and identify those working on particular files.

We recognize and take seriously the cybersecurity and privacy considerations identified by the Province. It was noted in media reports that the ministry had “received advice from law enforcement to take the lockdown action. The decision was supported by the Canadian Centre for Cyber Security guidances”. There remains much about this decision and any incidences that may have transpired that are unknown. However, we do know that the federal government's Government Electronic Directory Services (GEDS) remains publicly searchable and provides a directory of federal public servants, while noting that individual departments determine the information supplied and that some do not list all employees. All other provinces have some form of directory.

While we do not have all the information, we want to propose some solutions that we believe could restore access to this important directory. In the spirit of good faith, here are some options the Province could consider:

- require users to create a verified account before accessing the directory;
- use CAPTCHA or similar measures to prevent automated scraping and bot activity;
- introduce reasonable rate limits on searches;
- restrict bulk downloads or automated queries;
- remove or limit information for employees in sensitive positions; and
- maintain enhanced public access for senior officials, policy, regulatory, consultation and stakeholder-relations functions.

Consistency with open government

We are also concerned that eliminating the directory appears inconsistent with the Province's broader commitments to open government, accessibility, and transparency.

The Province's Open Information and Open Data Policy explicitly states that its purpose is to increase government transparency and accountability through the public release of information and data. Provincial guidance further states that government is committed to expanding the public availability of information and data. B.C.'s own Digital Code of Practice goes further, observing that working openly can build public trust, improve services and make it easier for people to access government services and information.

Against that backdrop, removing a longstanding tool that allows the public to understand the basic organizational structure of government represents a meaningful step in the opposite direction.

This also creates a difficult contrast for businesses and organizations that are themselves being asked to provide increasing amounts of information and data to government or make information publicly available to comply with regulatory, reporting, transparency and accountability requirements.

A better path forward

There may be much that we do not know about why the decision was made. In the absence of that news, and in recognition of the ideas we include above, we ask the Government of British Columbia to:

1. Restore public access to the B.C. Government Directory while appropriate safeguards are developed;
2. Publicly explain the specific cybersecurity and privacy risks that prompted the decision and disclose the nature of any advice received from the Canadian Centre for Cyber Security; and
3. Develop a modernized access model that protects employees and government systems while maintaining the transparency and accessibility expected of an open government.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Joslyn Young CEO Surrey & White Rock Board of Trade	Bridgitte Anderson President and CEO Greater Vancouver Board of Trade
Trevor Koot CEO BC Real Estate Association	Ian Tostenson President and CEO BC Restaurant and Foodservices Association
Michael Goehring President and CEO Mining Association of British Columbia	John Wilson CEO Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce
Todd Stone President and CEO Association for Mineral Exploration	Ryan Mitton Director, Legislative Affairs, BC Canadian Federation of Independent Business
Mike Drummond CEO Urban Development Institute	George Greenwood CEO Canadian Home Builders' Association of BC

Chris Atchison President British Columbia Construction Association	Chris Gardner CEO and President Independent Contractors and Businesses Association
Greg Wilson Director, Government Relations (B.C.) Retail Council of Canada	Andrew Wynn-Williams Divisional Vice President Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters
Aaron Aerts Vice President of Policy Business Council of BC	Kim Haakstad President and CEO BC Council of Forest Industries (COFI)
Damian Stathonikos President Building Owners and Managers Association of British Columbia (BOMA BC)	Matt MacInnis President Electrical Contractors Association of BC
Shaena Furlong President and CEO Richmond Chamber of Commerce	Alex Mitchell CEO Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce
Dave Earle President and CEO BC Trucking Association	Cory Redekop CEO Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce
Rob Hoffman Director, Government & Stakeholder Relations Canadian Fuels Association	Berit Beattie; Erin Co Co-Presidents Public Affairs Association of Canada (PAAC)
Matt Pitcairn President BC Road Builders & Heavy Construction Association	Katie Kachur Vice President Canadian Propane Association

CC:

Shannon Salter, Deputy Minister to the Premier

Tom McCarthy, Deputy Minister, Policy and Coordination, Office of the Premier

Hayden Lansdell, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Citizens' Services

Fazil Mihlar, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Jobs and Economic Growth