



OFFICE OF THE  
INFORMATION &  
PRIVACY COMMISSIONER  
for British Columbia

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**News Release**

**For Immediate Release**

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**Statement from B.C. Privacy Commissioner regarding recommended changes to the *Personal Information Protection Act***

**VICTORIA**—Information and Privacy Commissioner Elizabeth Denham issued the following statement in response to the final report of the Special Committee to Review the *Personal Information Protection Act*, B.C.'s private sector privacy legislation:

“Every British Columbian has a right to privacy that is guaranteed and protected by B.C.'s comprehensive privacy laws. The *Personal Information Protection Act* applies to more than 380,000 private organizations in B.C., including businesses, not-for-profits, charities, associations and trusts.

“For the better part of a year, the Special Committee studied the legislation, received public submissions and feedback, and deliberated on whether our laws can keep up with dramatic technological change in an increasingly digital society.

“The Committee made 15 recommendations for change, which if implemented, would strengthen consumer privacy rights and make our laws more consistent with other jurisdictions. I support all of the Committee's recommendations.

“I am pleased that the Committee is recommending new breach reporting rules for the private sector. By making businesses report privacy breaches to affected individuals and the Commissioner, consumers can take steps to protect themselves and my Office can work with organizations to help prevent those same breaches from happening again.

“Breach reporting has been in place in Alberta since 2010, and Bill S-4 proposes similar breach reporting rules at the federal level. In a world where data knows no borders and businesses expect consistent rules across jurisdictions, it is important that B.C.'s breach reporting regime is in harmony with the rest of Canada.

“The Committee has also made some important recommendations to narrow the circumstances that allow warrantless disclosures to law enforcement, and sharing personal information between organizations. This recommendation is incredibly important to the public for bringing accountability and transparency to how organizations handle personal information, and to ensure that our legislation is in line with the recent Supreme Court of Canada decision in *R v. Spencer*.

“Finally, the Committee’s recommendations for privacy management programs will ensure consumers are made aware of an organization’s privacy practices, and those same organizations better understand how to fulfill their responsibilities under the law. I concur with the Committee that the programs must be scalable and flexible, which is important in a province like B.C. where 98% of businesses are small businesses.

“I would like to commend Committee members and staff for their thorough and thoughtful work, and I look forward to government’s response.”

The Report of the Special Committee to Review the *Personal Information Protection Act* is available at: <http://www.leg.bc.ca/cmt/40thparl/session-3/pipa/index.htm>

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