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Canada's access to information and privacy guardians urge governments to modernize legislation to better protect Canadians

VICTORIA –Canada's Information and Privacy Ombudspersons and Commissioners are urging their respective governments to modernize access to information and privacy laws.

In a [joint resolution](#), Canada's access to information and privacy guardians note that along with its many benefits, the rapid advancement of technologies has had an impact on fundamental democratic principles and human rights, including access to information and privacy. They further point out that Canadians have growing concerns about the use and exploitation of their personal information by both government and private businesses.

"Most Canadian access and privacy laws have not been fundamentally changed since their passage, some more than 35 years ago," the resolution says. "They have sadly fallen behind the laws of many other countries in the level of privacy protection provided to citizens.

While there have been legislative advances made in some Canadian jurisdictions, work is still required to ensure modern legislation is in place across the country in order to better protect Canadians.

"The current provincial government pledged to make significant reforms to British Columbia's access to information and privacy laws during its last election campaign," says Michael McEvoy, Information and Privacy Commissioner for BC. "Now is the time to make these necessary changes that will serve the public interest."

The resolution notes that privacy and access to information are fundamental to self-determination, democracy and good government. It calls for:

- a legislative framework to ensure the responsible development and use of artificial intelligence and machine learning technologies
- Enforcement powers, such as legislating order-making powers and the power to impose penalties, fines or sanctions

- the right of access should apply to all information held by public entities, regardless of format

Canada's Information and Privacy Commissioners and Ombudspersons reaffirmed their commitment to collaborate, make recommendations to government, and to continue to study and make public how access and privacy laws impact all Canadians.

The joint resolution, *Effective privacy and access to information legislation in a data driven society*, was agreed upon at the annual meeting of federal, provincial, and territorial Information and Privacy Ombudspersons and Commissioner.

For more information or to request a media interview, contact:

Jane Zatylny
A/Senior Communications Manager
Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner for BC
Cell: 250-415-3283
Email: jzatylny@oipc.bc.ca