

Submission by Ms. Oryssia Lennie, Chair
Alberta Research and Innovation Advisory Committee (ARIAC)

ARIAC Secretariat
Science and Innovation Division
Economic Development and Trade
4th floor, Phipps McKinnon Building
10020 101 A Avenue
Edmonton, AB, T5J 3G2

February 26, 2018

Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship
3rd Floor
9820 – 107 Street
Edmonton, AB T5K 1E7

Attention: Rod Loyola, Chair

Re: Review of the *Conflicts of Interest Act* – Invitation to make a written submission

Dear Mr. Loyola:

Further to your correspondence of February 2, 2018, please accept this letter on behalf of the Alberta Research and Innovation Advisory Committee (ARIAC) regarding the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship's review of the *Conflicts of Interest Act*.

ARIAC is an advisory body with international membership that advises the Minister of Economic Development and Trade (EDT) on research and innovation matters. ARIAC is established under the *Alberta Research and Innovation Act*, and does not have fiduciary responsibilities or decision making authority, including with respect to funding.

I wish to note that, as the Chair of ARIAC, I am reflecting significant concerns by ARIAC members on the application of the Conflict of Interest Act rather than the principles.


ARIAC recognizes the importance of acknowledging conflicts of interest and adheres to a code of conduct that values respect, integrity and accountability. ARIAC's Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest policy reflect these practices. They include mechanisms to deal with any potential or real conflicts of interest. However, given ARIAC's mandate of providing advice (only) on research and innovation matters to government, to be considered and incorporated into policy development as government sees fit, we do not directly influence government decision making.

While all of the ARIAC members are prepared to adhere to a Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policy that deals with potential or real conflicts of interest, some have expressed very significant concerns over the financial disclosure requirement that may be applicable to designated organizations. When they were appointed, they agreed to provide their best advice to the Minister, utilizing their considerable knowledge and experience and to do so in a way that meets code of conduct requirements, but they are not prepared to make those financial disclosures in their capacity as advisory committee members. This puts ARIAC at high risk of losing valuable members whose expertise, both nationally and internationally, is highly sought after, and that Alberta has the current privilege of accessing.

I also understand that an Order in Council is forthcoming in March 2017 that will establish designated organizations, for which additional disclosure is required. It is yet unclear whether ARIAC would be on this list, and therefore subject to these requirements.

On behalf of ARIAC, I thank you for the opportunity to comment on the *Conflicts of Interest Act*.

Sincerely,



Oryssia Lennie, Chair
ARIAC

Cc:

Honorable Deron Bilous, Minister, Economic Development and Trade (EDT)
Jason Krips, Deputy Minister, EDT
John Brown, Assistant Deputy Minister, Science and Innovation Division, EDT
Jutta Rohrschach, ARIAC Secretariat, Science and Innovation Division, EDT

Dr. Ray Muzyka, Vice-chair ARIAC