March 27, 2020

Notice re: Coronavirus (COVID-19)

This notice pertains to functions of the Environmental Appeal Board and the following of its related appeal bodies: the Forest Appeals Commission and the Oil and Gas Commission (collectively, the “Tribunals”).

The Tribunals have implemented business continuity and exposure control plans to ensure that we continue to deliver core services to the public, while protecting our staff and members from the risks associated with COVID-19. The situation continues to change and how we deliver services to the public may continue to change as well. Given in particular the risk of disruption of services relied upon by the Tribunals, including mail, there may be a need for the Tribunals to focus on critical matters.

All those who wish to file an appeal with one or more of the Tribunals, or who have an existing appeal, are encouraged to contact the Board via email. It is possible that there will be delays in receiving physical deliveries and mail. Members of the public may no longer access the Tribunals’ office space. Email is the most reliable method of contact. The applicable email addresses are:

- eabinfo@gov.bc.ca for the Environmental Appeal Board,
- facinfo@gov.bc.ca for the Forest Appeals Commission, and
- ogatinfo@gov.bc.ca for the Oil and Gas Appeal Tribunal.

The Minister of Public Safety has suspended all mandatory timeframes for the filing of appeals and granted appeal bodies the ability to waive, suspend, or extend timeframes until such time as the current state of emergency related to COVID-19 passes. Recognizing the difficulties faced by the public in the current situation, mandatory timeframes for the filing of appeals which would have been due on March 18, 2020 or later are hereby suspended. This applies to all Tribunals, without any need to extend any statutory timeframes. The suspensions will be effective until further notice, at which point the relevant timeframes will continue to take effect, resulting in an extension (not a re-setting) of the applicable timeframe until the end of the COVID-19 public health crisis. For clarity, if an appeal would have been due on March 25, 2020, it will now be due 7 days after the suspension is lifted, at the end of the state of emergency related to the COVID-19 crisis.

All parties, participants, interveners, and representatives are encouraged to identify any issues of a pressing, time-sensitive nature so that work can be prioritized during this time of diminished service. Staff will review any matters so raised and will determine whether the issue needs to be addressed on a priority basis.
If you have an active appeal before the Tribunals, please continue to monitor this website. In the event of service disruptions, an updated notice will be provided to advise of such. We will do our best to communicate the impacts of the spread of COVID-19 and our plans to address those challenges, to interested members of the public.

In advance, I wish to thank the public and our staff for their patience and flexibility as we deal with the risks associated with COVID-19. The Tribunals remain committed to providing our public service to the best of our ability in these difficult circumstances.

Sincerely,

Darrell LeHoullier
Chair