
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2019FIN0038-000573
April 4, 2019

Ministry of Finance

New Crown agency will better protect people's financial interests

VICTORIA – New legislation establishing the B.C. financial services authority will more effectively protect people when they use financial services and boost oversight of the sector to support a strong, sustainable economy and make life better for people.

The financial services authority act establishes a new, independent Crown agency to regulate credit unions, insurance and trust companies, pensions and mortgage brokers.

“People in B.C. work hard to make a living and it’s our responsibility to make sure their financial interests are protected, whether that’s applying for a mortgage, using a credit union, getting insured or contributing to their pension,” said Carole James, Minister of Finance. “The financial services sector is rapidly evolving. This legislation will make sure B.C.’s financial services regulator is modern, effective and efficient for decades to come.”

The act is designed to improve accountability and oversight, and align with international best practices and be consistent with other regulators.

“British Columbians expect a financial regulator to protect their interests,” said Stanley Hamilton, chair, Financial Institutions Commission. “This is a significant achievement that demonstrates government’s commitment to making the changes needed to ensure we can successfully deliver on our mandate.”

The legislation requires the authority to be managed by a board of directors that will appoint a CEO. The authority will be accountable to the minister of finance. As a Crown agency, the B.C. financial services authority will receive a mandate letter from the B.C. government and must maintain a service plan and other transparent reporting requirements.

Modernizing this key provincial regulator will protect people using financial services into the future. The Province has worked with stakeholders over the past year, including as part of a larger legislative consultation and through direct meetings, to ensure a smooth transition for the sector. The new B.C. financial services authority is expected to launch later this year.

Quick Facts:

- In British Columbia, there are:
 - 42 credit unions with more than \$72 billion in assets;
 - 4,000 mortgage brokers;
 - 677 pension plans with approximately \$158 billion in assets; and
 - over 200 insurance and trust companies.
- The authority will be a self-funded Crown agency focused on sector regulation. It will not raise provincial revenue.

- The B.C. financial services authority replaces the Financial Institutions Commission (FICOM). FICOM will continue as the regulator until the authority is fully operational.
- FICOM was created in 1989 with a mandate letter from the minister of finance.
- Establishing FICOM as a Crown agency was a recommendation from a 2017 independent review of FICOM, as well as previously supported by B.C.'s auditor general.

Learn More:

Financial Institutions Commission: <https://www.fic.gov.bc.ca/>

Contacts:

Finance Communications
Ministry of Finance
250 356-0543

Greg Dickson
Communications Manager
Financial Institutions Commission
604 417-9190

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: news.gov.bc.ca/connect