

MEDIA RELEASE

BRITISH COLUMBIA LAW INSTITUTE

VANCOUVER, 2 August 2006—The British Columbia Law Institute has commenced a major project to examine reform of British Columbia’s not-for-profit incorporation statute, the *Society Act*. The project is funded by the Law Foundation of British Columbia.

Commenting on the importance of this project, Committee Chair Margaret Mason said: “Reform of the *Society Act* is long overdue. The legislation has not kept abreast of changes in the volunteer sector and in corporate law generally.”

The last major review of the *Society Act* took place in the 1970s, culminating in the enactment of the current statute in 1977. Since then, there has only been some tinkering with its procedural and reporting requirements. The world in which the not-for-profit sector operates has changed dramatically since 1977, however. New and complex issues have arisen to confront not-for-profit organizations. The legal landscape has also changed. Significantly, British Columbia has recently enacted a new for-profit corporate statute, the *Business Corporations Act*. The *Society Act* lags behind the more streamlined *Business Corporations Act* in many ways. Proposed reforms to the not-for-profit corporation law at the federal level and in other provinces could also affect the volunteer sector in British Columbia.

Is the *Society Act* serving the needs of British Columbians in the twenty-first century? Does it provide the best legal framework for the province’s not-for-profit sector? Are there changes to other statutes that require a response from the *Society Act*? These questions are central to the Law Institute’s project.

The Law Institute has formed a volunteer project committee to study these questions and make recommendations for reform of the *Society Act*. The members of the committee are:

Margaret Mason—chair
(partner, Bull, Housser & Tupper LLP)

Ken Burnett
(partner, Miller Thomson LLP)

Colleen Kelly
(executive director, Volunteer Vancouver)

Murray Landa
(associate director, gift & estate planning, UBC Development Office)

Mike Mangan
(barrister & solicitor)

Kim Thorau
(principal, Perrin, Thorau & Associates)

Kevin Zakreski—reporter
(staff lawyer, British Columbia Law Institute)

The British Columbia Law Institute is a nonprofit society dedicated to law reform. It is the successor to the Law Reform Commission of British Columbia and has been in operation since 1997.

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