

Media Release: BCLI Releases Study Paper on Public Hearings

Vancouver, BC – April 6, 2022 – The British Columbia Law Institute (BCLI) has released its *Study Paper on Public Hearings: An Examination of Public Participation in the Adoption of Local Bylaws on Land Use and Planning*. This study paper provides a comprehensive overview of British Columbia's public hearings law and lays the necessary groundwork to initiate law-reform projects to determine how public hearings could be transformed to better serve communities in BC.

Public hearings were first established in British Columbia almost a hundred years ago to provide an opportunity for the public to be heard in land use decision-making processes. These hearings are an integral part of local government land use planning and management. And yet, there have been numerous calls to review the purpose and process of public hearings in relation to its effectiveness on issues such as housing affordability and siting concerns regarding new development proposals. While the legislative assembly has passed modest amendments to local government laws on public hearings over the past year, a full-scale review and re-evaluation may be merited.

With this backdrop in mind, the BCLI has undertaken comprehensive legal research on the legislative requirements for public hearings in land-use bylaws. The resulting study paper provides readers with a detailed picture of past and present developments of the law on public hearings. This study paper is available on our website at bcli.org.

“The BCLI is committed to having modern and responsive legal frameworks in British Columbia,” BCLI Chair Emily Clough said. “This study paper is an opportunity to review a century old legal framework in a modern context. We hope that this paper can help lay the foundation for reforms to local government processes.”

BCLI released this study paper in support of the Renovate the Public Hearings Project carried out by the Simon Fraser University Morris J Wosk Centre for Dialogue Strengthening Canadian Democracy Initiative.

“Our current framework on public hearings is long past due for review,” Ed Wilson, BCLI board member shared. “We were pleased to be able to work with SFU’s Strengthening Canadian Democracy initiative to ensure that this good work is broadly available and can be seen through the lens of this project.”



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The BCLI offices are located at the Peter A. Allard School of Law on the unceded territories of the Musqueam (xʷməθkʷəy̓əm), Squamish (Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw), and Tsleil-Wauthuth (Səlilwi ətaʔ/Selilwitulh) peoples.



ABOUT THE BCLI:

The British Columbia Law Institute is a non-profit society that undertakes independent legal reform research and projects. Its approach brings collaborators together to improve the law, increase access to justice, and develop just and innovative solutions.

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