

# NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release  
March 8, 2012



## BC government back in court fighting FOI request for \$300 million contract with IBM

### FIPA denounces eight year battle as waste of time and money

Vancouver – The BC government is in BC Supreme Court in Victoria today carrying on its fruitless legal battle to keep the BC Freedom of Information and Privacy Association from getting an uncensored copy of its \$300 million Workplace Services Agreement with IBM.

“This has got to be the longest and most expensive FOI request in BC history,” said FIPA Executive Director Vincent Gogolek. “The IBM contract has a ten year term, so there is a real chance that this battle could still be going after the contract itself has expired.”

The government has tried a number of legal gambits to keep the contract secret, and has lost every one of them. It has also been forced to release other contracts, including several Alternative Service Delivery contracts worth \$1.8 billion of taxpayers' money.

The BC government is arguing that releasing the remaining parts of the contract would result in damage to the security of the government's computer systems, but they failed to convince the Information and Privacy Commissioner, who ordered the contract released. Interestingly, the government didn't appeal a similar Order by the Commissioner which required it to release another multimillion dollar contract on almost identical grounds. (See <http://www.oipc.bc.ca/orders/2011/OrderF11-14.pdf>.)

FIPA and Commissioner Elizabeth Denham have repeatedly called for government contracts to be posted online.

"The government should act immediately to make all government contracts available on government websites," said Gogolek. "The public has a right to know, and the government has run out of excuses for not releasing this information."

-30-

**CONTACT:** Vincent Gogolek, Executive Director, 604-739-9788 cell 604-318-0031