

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release
March 17, 2011



FIPA welcomes new Minister for Open Government, asks her to post long-awaited IBM contract online

Releasing the full \$300 million IBM contract would end a seven-year legal battle and be a real demonstration of openness, says FIPA

Vancouver – BC’s new Minister for Open Government can take a big step toward real openness by routinely posting its multi-million dollar outsourcing contracts online, says the BC Freedom of Information and Privacy Association (FIPA).

“And the first contract to be posted should be the full IBM Workplace Services contract we have been trying to obtain since December 2004,” said Vincent Gogolek, FIPA’s executive director.

In a letter of welcome, FIPA asked Stephanie Cadieux, BC’s new Minister of Labour, Citizens Services and Open Government, to post the contract, which has been the subject of a seven-year legal battle, to the government’s website.

Since 2004, FIPA has been before the Commissioner twice and the courts once fighting for the IBM contract and won every time. Now the provincial government has brought yet another appeal to the courts in an effort to block release of the complete contract.

Gogolek noted that Information and Privacy Commissioner Elizabeth Denham has also recommended the routine release of outsourcing contracts. He quoted a statement from the Commissioner’s order concerning the IBM contract:

“These decisions demonstrate that public agencies should consider the routine release of these types of outsourcing contracts. Proactively releasing these contracts would save everyone considerable time, money and paperwork.” <http://www.oipc.bc.ca/news/2010Releases/NR-CompassFIPAorders.pdf>

“We have a new Minister in a ministry with a new and promising name, and we hope she actually will be willing to give open government a real try,” said Gogolek.

“The new Premier has certainly indicated open government is one of her priorities. As the Information Commissioner said, posting these contracts rather than making people suffer endless delays and litigation would save everyone time, money and paperwork.”