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Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) Summary

Public Body: The Office of the Ethics Commissioner

Project Title: Lobbyists Registration System

Date Submitted: May 30, 2008

Date Accepted: June 6, 2008

OIPC TRAX File: F4512

Project Summary:

The lobbyists registration system is being designed and built in order to support the impending legislative requirement in Alberta that lobbyists must register so that the public is able to know who is involved in paid lobbying activities, pursuant to *Bill 1: Lobbyists Act*, S.A. 2007, c. L-20.5 (*Lobbyists Act*). The lobbyists registration system will enable a public registry with on-line registration for lobbyists and free on-line searches through the Internet for the public.

The Office of the Ethics Commissioner (OEC) is responsible for administration of the *Lobbyists Act*. The Ethics Commissioner has delegated the authority to the Registrar, *Lobbyists Act* to implement the creation of a lobbyists registry and the development of a lobbyists registration system. The personal information that will be collected, used and disclosed for purposes of administering the lobbyists registration system is prescribed in the *Lobbyists Act*. The lobbyists registration system entails a minimal amount of personal information, consisting of an individual lobbyist's name, business address and business telephone number.

The general purpose of the lobbyists registration system is to enhance the transparency, openness, integrity and accountability of government by providing public access to information about who is attempting to influence the decisions of public office holders. The principles behind the *Lobbyists Act* are described in its preamble, as follows:

- Free and open access to government is an important matter of public interest;

- Lobbying public office holders is a legitimate activity;
- It is desirable that the public and public office holders be able to know who is engaged in lobbying activities;
- A system for the registration of paid lobbyists should not impede free and open access to government; and
- It is desirable that the public and public office holders be able to know who is contracting with the Government of Alberta and Provincial entities.

Background:

Premier Ed Stelmach introduced the *Lobbyists Act* on March 7, 2007 at which time it received First Reading. On March 22, 2007, the *Lobbyists Act* passed Second Reading. On May 29, 2007, following the adoption of Motion 21, the *Lobbyists Act* was referred to the Standing Committee on Government Services. The *Lobbyists Act* was the first bill to be referred to one of Alberta's new all-party policy field committees. Public hearings were held on September 27 and 28, 2007. On November 6, 2007, the Standing Committee on Government Services tabled its report with the Legislative Assembly. On December 7, 2007, the *Lobbyists Act* received Royal Assent. The Registrar, *Lobbyists Act*, was in place at OEC as of February 1, 2008. The *Lobbyists Act* will come into force upon proclamation, which is expected to occur in early 2009, once the lobbyists registry is operational and the lobbyists regulations are finalized.

For further information please contact:

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