

BCLTA Library Act Review Potential Issues to be Addressed

Areas of Concern

- **Section 6(4), 18 and 36, Term of office** – Eliminate the eight year limitation on library board member terms.
- **Section 16(3), How the library board is appointed** – Review the issue of alternates for regional district representatives. (In some cases, a regional district has only one participating electoral area, which means if an alternate must be an elected official, then this would have to be someone from outside the library service area.)
- **Section 17, When members are appointed** – Review the issue of regional library board governing authority in an election year. (Develop a clause which will ensure that a regional library district has a governing body in an election year when the Chair, Vice-Chair and other Executive Committee members may not be re-elected.)
- **Section 26(2), Expenditures and financial statements** – Permit annual financial reviews as opposed to requiring audited financial statements. (Audits are a costly undertaking for many libraries.)
- **Section 39(I), The library board** – Remove the requirement for an annual report, or at the very least clarify “the form approved by the minister.”
- **Section 41, Powers and duties of chief librarian** – Change “Chief Librarian” to “Library Director”.
- **Section 48, Agreements** – Clarify and expand this section to include guidelines and expectations for board membership in library service partnership/agreement situations. (Currently much time and energy is invested in negotiating representation for various types of agreements with other bodies.)
- **Section 49, Library federations** – Expand this section to provide Library Federations with guidance for governance, elections, etc.

Must Remain

- **Section 2, Purposes of this Act** – All purposes must remain intact.
- **Section 5(2)(b), How the library board is appointed** – Maintain citizen governance of municipal libraries.
- **Section 46, Free basic public library service** – Protect core principles of free access to public library service.

Should be Added

- **Section 46, Free basic public library service** – Include free resident access to the Internet as a mandated core library service.
- **Section 54, Protection against lawsuits** – Clarify wording of this section and add library boards to those specifically protected. (This would save boards considerable insurance costs.)
- Include principles to identify and entrench the values that libraries generally abide by (e.g., freedom of expression, promotion of literacy, equity of access, etc.).
- Exempt all facilities used as public libraries from property taxes, regardless of who owns them. (Currently library facilities that are owned by a local government or by a public library are exempt from property taxes. Library facilities that are leased are taxed.)

- Enable Development Cost Charges to fund public library facilities. (This would be an optional tool that local governments could choose to adopt; or, in the case of regional libraries, something the board could approve, perhaps by a 2/3 majority.)
- Provide full borrowing authority and powers for regional library systems.
- Enable regional library systems to issue a per diem payment to elected board members attending library board meetings. (Currently member municipalities pay varying per diems to their representatives – or no per diem in some cases. The idea is to enable regional boards to provide a standard per diem to all board members.)
- Enable First Nations to form public libraries. (As First Nations achieve self-government and become local governments it is appropriate that they have comparable options to establish public library service.)