



April 26, 2006

I am pleased to inform you that amendments to the *Residential Tenancy Act* and the *Manufactured Home Park Tenancy Act* have been introduced in the Legislature. The amendments help protect assisted living and supportive housing tenancies, introduce new administrative penalties, and establish staff arbitrators.

With these changes assisted living and supportive housing rental accommodation tenancies will be required to have tenancy agreements, with terms similar to agreements used in conventional tenancies. In addition, service agreements will set out the terms and conditions of the hospitality and personal care services that are provided along with the accommodation.

Currently, many of these landlords and tenants do not have access to services to help them resolve tenancy disputes. The government will provide a range of dispute resolution services, such as information, referral, mediation and, if necessary, will decide disputes based on the law.

These amendments address the issues and concerns that were raised during province-wide consultations in 2003/04, and fulfill a commitment made in the 2006/07 to 2008/09 Service Plan of the Office of Housing and Construction Standards.

In addition, amendments to both the *Residential Tenancy Act* and the *Manufactured Home Park Act* will establish administrative penalties for serious or repeat violations of the legislation. This gives government a tool for enforcing the legislation outside of the courts.

Another change is a transition from part-time appointed arbitrators to full-time staff to resolve disputes. This change will mean better service to the public. Existing appointed arbitrators will be invited to remain with the government under contract until December 2008.

A summary of the amendments is attached. The *Tenancy Statutes Amendment Act* can be viewed at http://www.legis.gov.bc.ca/38th2nd/1st_read/index.htm

Further information on the amendments will be posted on the Residential Tenancy Branch website in the coming months <http://www.rto.gov.bc.ca/>

Sincerely yours,

Rich Coleman
Minister Responsible for Housing