



**Nova Scotia Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy  
Review Office**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE MARCH 29, 2007**

**Fees Eliminated for Reviews under the Freedom of Information &  
Protection of Privacy Act**

Dulcie McCallum, the Nova Scotia Freedom of Information & Protection of Privacy Review Officer, applauds the step taken yesterday by the Government of Nova Scotia in tabling a Bill that would totally eliminate the \$25.00 fee for Requests for Review to our Office. *Bill 101* also removes any fee for a citizen applying for information to a public body for the first two hours spent by government in locating and retrieving a record.

*"I am very pleased with the decision today to introduce a Bill to eliminate the fees associated with Reviews at my Office particularly at a time when government is having to increase user fees across the board. Earlier this year, on assuming my new position, I was more than concerned about the fee to file a Request for a Review to the Office," said Ms. McCallum.*

*"Twenty-five dollars is a substantial amount of money for many Nova Scotians. If Government wants to ensure everyone is on an equal footing in pursuing a statutory right of Review, such a hefty fee would impede the participation of poorer Nova Scotians in democratic processes. This result is directly contrary to the purpose of the legislation, which in part is to "permit the airing and reconciliation of divergent views." I brought my concerns to the attention of the Minister of Justice and today he has addressed those concerns with a very positive response."*

The access to information and privacy Review Officer McCallum believes as a result of the fee increases in years past, the number of applications for access to a record and requests for review may have decreased. For example, the number of review requests decreased from a 154 in 2001 to 85 in 2005. With regards to applications in 2003, the first full year with increased fees show that its number went down by 278 or 28% from 2002.

*"In my opinion, I believe the fees imposed for a Review Request were acting as an impediment to access, a result clearly inconsistent with the intention behind the legislation" Ms. McCallum continued. "It is hoped that the Minister of Justice will*

*continue to consider reducing the fees for the initial applications to public bodies to something less than \$25 but of course he will have to do so in consultation with all levels of government under the legislation including municipalities, universities, school boards and hospitals.”*

The fees attached to the *Nova Scotia Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and Part XX of the *Municipal Government Act*, are among the highest in the country. In 2002, the fee for an application for access to a record was increased from \$5.00 to \$25.00.

The Review Office is pleased with the Government’s announcement yesterday and hopes it will enable more Nova Scotia citizens to pursue their right to access personal information and to protect their privacy concerns by seeking a Review of any decision where they are not content with a decision concerning access and privacy issues.

For more information on the *Nova Scotia Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* or Part XX of the *Municipal Government Act* please visit [www.foipop.ns.ca](http://www.foipop.ns.ca). In addition, a factual brochure is freely available and can be requested by phoning 902-424-4684 or 1-866-243-1564 (toll free).

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