

First Report

SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO APPOINT STATUTORY OFFICERS: APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

October 2025

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
of BRITISH COLUMBIA

First Session, 43rd Parliament

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
of BRITISH COLUMBIA

October 22, 2025

To the Honourable the
Legislative Assembly of the
Province of British Columbia

Honourable Members:

We have the honour to present herewith the First Report of the Special Committee to Appoint Statutory Officers containing our unanimous recommendation regarding the appointment of a Chief Electoral Officer.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Committee,

Janet Routledge, MLA
Chair

Linda Hepner, MLA
Deputy Chair

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Composition of the Committee

Members

Janet Routledge, MLA, Chair
Burnaby North

Linda Hepner, MLA, Deputy Chair
Surrey-Serpentine River

Tara Armstrong, MLA
Kelowna-Lake Country-Coldstream (from September 12, 2025)

Garry Begg, MLA
Surrey-Guildford (from September 12, 2025)

Harman Bhangu, MLA
Langley-Abbotsford

Stephanie Higginson, MLA
Ladysmith-Oceanside

Qwulti'stunaat / Debra Toporowski, MLA
Cowichan Valley

Committee Staff

Kate Ryan-Lloyd, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Jennifer Arril, Clerk of Committees

Katey Stickle, Senior Research Analyst

Natalie Beaton, Committee Research Analyst

Mary Heeg, Committee Research Analyst

Aza Bryson, Committee Researcher

Jonathon Hamilton, Committee Researcher

Danielle Migeon, Committee Researcher

Alexa Neufeld, Parliamentary Committees Officer

Kayla Wilson, Committees Coordinator

Emily Andrews, Committees Coordinator

Terms of Reference

On February 24, 2025 and May 29, 2025, the Legislative Assembly agreed that a Special Committee to Appoint Statutory Officers be appointed to select and unanimously recommend to the Legislative Assembly the appointment of:

a. an individual to hold office as Auditor General, pursuant to section 2 of the *Auditor General Act* (S.B.C. 2003, c. 2);

b. an individual to hold office as Chief Electoral Officer, pursuant to section 4 of the *Election Act* (R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 106);

c. an individual to hold office as Conflict of Interest Commissioner, pursuant to section 14 of the *Members' Conflict of Interest Act* (R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 287);

d. an individual to hold office as Merit Commissioner, pursuant to section 5.01 of the *Public Service Act* (R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 385); and,

e. an individual to hold office as Ombudsperson, pursuant to section 2 of the *Ombudsperson Act* (R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 340)

That the Special Committee have the powers of a Select Standing Committee and in addition be empowered to:

a. appoint of its number one or more subcommittees and to refer to such subcommittees any of the matters referred to the Special Committee and to delegate to the subcommittees all or any of its powers except the power to report directly to the House;

b. sit during a period in which the House is adjourned, during the recess after prorogation until the next following Session and during any sitting of the House;

c. adjourn from place to place as may be convenient; and,

d. retain personnel as required to assist the Special Committee.

That the Special Committee report to the House on each of its recommendations as soon as possible, and that during a period of adjournment, the Special Committee deposit its reports with the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, and upon resumption of the sittings of the House, or in the next following Session, as the case may be, the Chair present all reports to the House.

Introduction

The Chief Electoral Officer is a non-partisan officer of the Legislature responsible for the fair and impartial administration of electoral events in British Columbia and ensuring compliance with governing legislation. The Chief Electoral Officer carries out the duties and powers set out in the *Election Act*, the *Constitution Act,* the *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act,* the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act,* the *Recall and Initiative Act,* and the *Referendum Act.*

Section 4 of the *Election Act* provides that the Lieutenant Governor must appoint as Chief Electoral Officer an individual who has been unanimously recommended for the appointment by a special committee of the Legislative Assembly. Pursuant to section 6 of the *Election Act,* the Chief Electoral Officer's term ends 12 months after the date set for the return of the last writ for the second general election for which they administer. The Chief Electoral Officer may be reappointed, in the same manner, for an additional term or terms.

The Chief Electoral Officer leads Elections BC which is located in Victoria, British Columbia. Elections BC's core operating budget for the 2025-26 fiscal year is $15.553 million, which includes funding for approximately 82 full-time equivalent positions. Elections BC's event budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year included $69.422 million in funding for the estimated cost of administering the 43rd provincial general election and $5.657 million for conducting the 2024 enumeration. The 2025-26 event budget was $5.099 million, for activities related to closing out the election and a new geographic information system.

The Chief Electoral Officer is accountable to and reports to the Legislative Assembly through both the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and through any designated parliamentary committees. Oversight of the Chief Electoral Officer and other statutory officers is currently assigned to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services. The Select Standing Committee is responsible for considering and making recommendations regarding the annual budget of the statutory offices, as well as considering their annual reports, service plans, and any other matters that may arise regarding the administration of their offices.

The current Chief Electoral Officer, Anton Boegman, was appointed for a term of two provincial general elections plus one year starting on June 1, 2018. On behalf of all Members of the Legislative Assembly, the Committee extends its sincere gratitude to Mr. Boegman for his steadfast leadership of provincial electoral events and his dedicated commitment to public service.

This report contains the Committee's unanimous recommendation to the Legislative Assembly regarding the appointment of the province's next Chief Electoral Officer.

Meetings Schedule

The Committee met on the following dates for the purposes described below.

First Session, 43rd Parliament

March 12, 2025	Organizational Meeting
April 2, 2025	Organizational Meeting
April 30, 2025	Organizational Meeting
August 6, 2025	Deliberations
September 8, 2025	Interviews
September 9, 2025	Deliberations
October 1, 2025	Deliberations
October 10, 2025	Deliberations and Adoption of Report

Recruitment Process

The Committee began its work to appoint a Chief Electoral Officer on March 12, 2025, with an organizational meeting. The Committee elected a Chair and Deputy Chair and adopted a motion to hold all meetings and deliberations on a confidential, *in camera* basis, in keeping with the usual practice of appointment committees. Members also reviewed a workplan for the Committee's activities and approved the job description (see Appendix A) for the position of Chief Electoral Officer.

The Committee accepted applications for the position from May 12 to June 20, 2025. Advertisements were placed in select provincial and national media, posted on job boards, distributed to relevant professional associations, and shared on the Legislative Assembly's social media accounts. By the closing date, the Committee received 23 applications.

Members carefully assessed all applicants for their experience leading the administration of electoral events, analyzing and interpreting legal principles and statutory provisions, and conducting sensitive investigations. The Committee also considered applicants' experience in organizational management, ability to work with diverse communities including Indigenous peoples, and personal suitability for appointment as an independent, non-partisan officer of the Legislature.

On September 8, 2025, the Committee interviewed four applicants. Members considered applicants' experience administering electoral events and applying statutory provisions; perspectives on election administration, law, and related processes; and experience creating and maintaining a respectful and inclusive work environment, managing organizational change, and making difficult decisions. The Committee also examined applicants' capacity to communicate effectively with media and the public, promote the accessibility of voting, and ability to ensure public confidence in electoral integrity and the work of Elections BC.

During its deliberations, the Committee expressed strong support for Shipra Verma. Members highlighted her more than two decades of service with Elections Manitoba, including more than ten years as Chief Electoral Officer, administering electoral events with professionalism and integrity. They also acknowledged her strong financial background and her long-standing record of providing non-partisan, independent support within the public service.

The Committee appreciated Ms. Verma's leadership approach, which emphasizes engagement, collaboration, innovation, and staff development. Members acknowledged her success in building relationships with Indigenous communities and diverse groups, and her dedication to promoting electoral participation among underrepresented voters through education and outreach.

In addition, Members emphasized Ms. Verma's deep commitment to democratic values and ethics, and her focus on maintaining electoral integrity. They commended her commitment to modernizing electoral systems to meet current and future challenges. Members agreed that her experience, perspectives, and insights would contribute to the ongoing advancement and effective administration of British Columbia's electoral system and support the delivery of electoral events.

Given these strengths, the Committee unanimously recommended that the Legislative Assembly appoint Ms. Verma as Chief Electoral Officer.

Recommendation

The Committee unanimously recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the Lieutenant Governor appoint Shipra Verma as Chief Electoral Officer, for a term commencing on November 12, 2025, and continuing until 12 months after the date set for the return of the last writ for the second general election for which the Chief Electoral Officer is responsible, pursuant to sections 4 (1) and 6 (1) of the *Election Act* (R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 106).

Biographical Information



Shipra Verma is a Fellow Chartered Professional Accountant with over 25 years of experience spanning election administration, public accounting, and professional services. Throughout her distinguished career, Ms. Verma has consistently demonstrated a deep commitment to integrity, innovation, and public service—leaving a lasting legacy in Manitoba's democratic landscape.

Appointed Chief Electoral Officer of Manitoba in 2013, Ms. Verma led Elections Manitoba through a multi-year transformational modernization of its election administration. Her leadership was instrumental in introducing forward-thinking reforms that enhanced operational efficiency, transparency, and public trust. Under her guidance, Elections Manitoba adopted innovative approaches to election delivery, prioritizing accessibility, service excellence, and democratic engagement. Her efforts have helped shape a more inclusive and responsive electoral system for Manitobans.

Ms. Verma has also contributed to global democratic efforts through participation in several international election observer missions. Her dedication to continuous learning and professional development is reflected in her active facilitation of collaboration and exploration of emerging topics in electoral governance. She has played a key role in fostering interjurisdictional learning through organizations such as the Canadian Election Official Training group and the Council on Governmental Ethics Laws, which recognized her with its Outstanding Service Award in 2023.

Parallel to her remarkable career is her service on multiple boards and committees, where her commitment to community involvement extends beyond electoral matters. She is currently serving on the boards of notable organizations such as Children's Hospital Foundation of Manitoba and as a lay councillor for the Council of Engineers Geoscientists Manitoba.

In recognition of her contributions to forging new pathways for women in Manitoba, Ms. Verma was one of 18 women to receive recognition with the Trailblazers of the First 100 Years from the Manitoba Legislative Assembly project.

Appendix A: Job Description

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
of BRITISH COLUMBIA

Chief Electoral Officer
Job Description

Position Overview

The Chief Electoral Officer is an officer of the Legislature appointed as set out in the *Election Act*. As a non-partisan officer of the Legislature, the Chief Electoral Officer is independent from the executive branch of government, and reports and is accountable to the Legislative Assembly.

The Chief Electoral Officer is responsible for the fair and impartial administration of electoral events in British Columbia and ensures compliance with governing legislation. The Chief Electoral Officer carries out the duties and powers set out in the *Election Act,* the *Constitution Act*, the *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act*, the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act,* the *Recall and Initiative Act,* and the *Referendum Act.*

Appointment Term and Process

Section 4 of the *Election Act* provides that the Lieutenant Governor must appoint as Chief Electoral Officer an individual who has been unanimously recommended for the appointment by a special committee of the Legislative Assembly (the "Special Committee"). The Chief Electoral Officer's term ends 12 months after the date set for the return of the last writ for the second general election for which they administer. The Chief Electoral Officer may be reappointed, in the same manner, for an additional term or terms.

Location

The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer (Elections BC) is located in Victoria, British Columbia. The Chief Electoral Officer is expected to reside in the Greater Victoria region.

Compensation and Benefits

Pursuant to section 7 of the *Election Act*, the Chief Electoral Officer is to be paid a salary equal to the salary paid to the chief judge of the Provincial Court of British Columbia. For the 2025-26 fiscal year, the estimated salary is $411,840.

The Chief Electoral Officer is reimbursed for travel and other expenses incurred in performing the duties of the position. The Chief Electoral Officer is also eligible for enrolment in the Public Service Pension Plan, in accordance with the terms and conditions of that plan, with each year of eligible service counted as 1.5 years of pensionable service. The detailed terms and conditions of appointment and the associated benefits are specified in the letter of offer provided to the recommended candidate by the Special Committee.

Accountability to the Legislative Assembly and Statutory Reporting Requirements

As an officer of the Legislature (also referred to as a statutory officer), the Chief Electoral Officer is accountable and reports to the Legislative Assembly through both the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and through any designated parliamentary committees.

The Legislative Assembly has delegated general oversight of statutory officers and their respective offices to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services. The oversight delegated to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services includes considering and making recommendations regarding annual reports, service plans, office budgets, and any other matters that may arise respecting the effective and efficient administration of Elections BC. Such delegated oversight may be adjusted from time to time by resolution of the Legislative Assembly.

Section 13 (1) of the *Election Act* requires that the Chief Electoral Officer report annually to the Legislative Assembly through the Speaker on the work of Elections BC. That section also requires the Chief Electoral Officer to present the following reports to the Speaker: a report on the proceedings, results, and costs of each election or plebiscite; a report on any recommendations made under section 12 (2) (a) of the *Election Act* respecting amendments to the *Election Act* or other enactments affecting election matters; and any reports required regarding a Member of the Legislative Assembly who has failed to comply with Part 10 of the *Election Act*. Section 153 of the *Election Act* requires that, following a decision on an application to the Supreme Court to find an election invalid made under section 150, the Chief Electoral Officer must also report to the Speaker regarding the application and the decision of the Court. The Chief Electoral Officer has further responsibilities to report to the Speaker under the *Recall and Initiative Act*.

Statutory Powers, Duties, and Responsibilities

The Chief Electoral Officer carries out the powers, duties, and responsibilities set out in the *Election Act,* the *Constitution Act,* the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act,* the *Recall and Initiative Act,* and the *Referendum Act*, including but not limited to:

- providing leadership and direction in the administration of electoral processes including provincial general elections, by-elections, plebiscites, recall petitions, initiative petitions, and initiative votes;
- overseeing and ensuring compliance with provincial and local campaign financing and advertising requirements;
- maintaining a register of political parties, elector organizations, and third party and advertising sponsors;
- enforcing electoral law as applicable, including by investigating and adjudicating alleged or possible contraventions;
- maintaining the provincial list of voters and list of future voters and conducting enumerations of all eligible citizens; and
- providing information to the public regarding voter registration procedures and election proceedings.

Financial and Human Resources Management

The Chief Electoral Officer is accountable for the effective and efficient administration of Elections BC. As the head of Elections BC, the Chief Electoral Officer has managerial authority over staff, currently consisting of approximately 80 full-time equivalent positions with Elections BC and up to 18,000 temporary staff hired for provincial electoral events. Elections BC's core operating budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year is $13,948,000. In 2024-25, Elections BC's event budget, which included the cost of

administering the 43rd provincial general election and conducting the 2024 enumeration, was $76,079,000.

In addition to the Chief Electoral Officer's statutory reporting requirements, the Chief Electoral Officer is expected to issue multi-year strategic plans for the Office, that include goals and performance measures for consideration by the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services on an annual basis. The Chief Electoral Officer is also expected to provide accurate and fiscally responsible budget proposals, forecasts, and reporting in alignment with the expectations set by the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services.

The Chief Electoral Officer is expected to ensure that Elections BC has policies and procedures in place to ensure the responsible management of financial and human resources, including standards of conduct and respectful workplace policies applicable to Elections BC staff.

Qualifications

Education and Experience

- A post-secondary qualification in a relevant field of study, such as law or public administration
- Experience providing leadership and direction in the administration of electoral events
- Experience conducting sensitive investigations in a thorough, impartial, and fair manner
- Experience analyzing, interpreting, and applying legal principles and statutory provisions
- Experience in financial, human resources, and organizational management in a senior capacity
- Experience communicating with the public, media, and senior officials
- Experience working with and meeting the needs of diverse communities, including Indigenous Peoples

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

Knowledge

- Knowledge of election administration best practices and emerging issues, election and campaign finance law, the importance of democratic engagement, and practices to improve the accessibility of voting
- Knowledge of the context within which the Chief Electoral Officer operates, including the Legislative Assembly and its parliamentary committees, the Executive Council, government, the public service, and external stakeholders
- Knowledge of the principles of investigative processes and electoral law, including administrative and procedural fairness

Leadership

- Strong leadership skills, including the ability to manage, motivate, and develop strong relationships with staff, based on trust, respect, effective communication, and common goals
- Ability to build and maintain a respectful and inclusive workplace culture
- Ability to demonstrate strategic thinking and long-term vision to set and achieve organizational goals and lead organizational change
- Effective delegation and management skills, including rapidly adjusting organizational size and efforts based on scheduled and unscheduled electoral events

Organizational Management

- Organizational management skills including managing assets effectively and preparing organizational budgets while exercising discretion in spending matters

- Ability to promote public accountability and transparency in the work of Elections BC
- Ability to improve organizational performance by identifying, promoting, or introducing previously unknown or untried procedures

Communication and Relationship-Building

- Demonstrated collaboration and interpersonal skills with the ability to communicate clearly and effectively, both verbally and in writing
- Ability to articulate the importance of effectively administered elections and democratic engagement and to explain the substance of and rationale behind decisions and recommendations made pursuant to applicable legislation
- Ability to build effective relationships with Members, parliamentary committees, government, and external stakeholders
- Ability to interact effectively and respectfully with Indigenous peoples, as well as communities and individuals from diverse backgrounds

Analysis and Judgement

- Strong problem-solving aptitude and ability to conceptualize new strategies and approaches to addressing complex issues and organizational needs
- Ability to make sound and impartial decisions in routine, sensitive, and/or public matters
- Ability to consistently apply legislative and regulatory requirements to specific circumstances

Personal Suitability

- Demonstrated record of non-partisanship
- High degree of integrity and strong personal and professional ethics
- Commitment to the values of impartiality, fairness, transparency, and accountability
- Respected in chosen career and in the community at large

Personal Conduct

The Chief Electoral Officer is expected to uphold their oath of office, abide by all policies of Elections BC, and create, foster, and maintain a safe and positive work environment for all staff. This includes modelling respectful and professional conduct expected of a senior public officeholder.

The Chief Electoral Officer is not entitled to vote in an election and is subject to the impartiality requirements in section 5 (3) of the *Election Act*.

The appointment of the Chief Electoral Officer will be subject to the successful completion of a criminal record check.