



April 2, 2026

CLIFF: 190646

To: All Chief Administrative Officers and Corporate Officers:

Re: Bill 17 Housing and Municipal Affairs Statutes (Codes of Conduct) Amendment Act, 2026, and Bill 18 Housing and Municipal Affairs Statutes (Parental Leave) Amendment Act, 2026

On April 2, Bill 17 and Bill 18 were introduced in the Legislature. These Bills propose to amend various sections in the *Community Charter*, *Local Government Act*, and the *Vancouver Charter*, with consequential amendments to the *Islands Trust Act* and *Cultus Lake Park Board Act*.

The purpose of this circular is to provide an overview of the changes made to legislation regarding codes of conduct and parental leave for local elected officials. Some of the amendments come into effect right away, while others will come into effect after the 2026 general local elections.

We encourage local governments to review the amendments and consider how they may incorporate the changes into training and orientation materials for new councils and boards following the 2026 general local elections. Further guidance to help you prepare for these changes will be made available in summer and early fall of 2026.

Code of Conduct Key Changes:

- Authority for the province to prescribe a code of conduct by regulation that applies to all local governments in B.C.
- Requirement for all local elected officials to comply with a Provincial code of conduct established by regulation.
- Establishes a code complaint, investigation and sanction process in legislation.
- Requirement that code of conduct complaints be referred to an investigator.
- Authorities of investigators on receiving a code complaint is prescribed in legislation.
- Sanctions that may be recommended by an investigator for a code breach.

- If an investigator report recommends sanctions, the report is considered at a closed meeting.
- If a council or board decides to not impose the recommended sanctions, they must provide reasons for its decision that are included in a public summary.
- Public reporting requirements for code complaints to support transparency and accountability.

Parental Leave Key Changes:

- Provides 26 consecutive weeks of parental leave for local elected officials due to the birth or adoption of a council or board member's child or children.
- Allows local elected officials to start their leave as early as 4 weeks ahead of the expected birth or adoption.
- Entitles local elected officials to full remuneration during their parental leave but provides the option to decline remuneration, if they wish to do so.
- Ensures local elected officials are not disqualified for missing council or board meetings during their parental leave.
- Provides that local elected officials on parental leave continue to hold office but cannot exercise any power or duty as an elected official while on leave, meaning they cannot participate in local government decision making while on leave. They will still be able to participate in community events or similar activities allowing them to stay connected within their communities.
- Allows the minister to take certain actions to ensure that quorum can still be met while an elected official is on parental leave.
- Establishes that parental leave ends after 26 consecutive weeks or the end of the term; whichever is earlier.
- Retains local governments' ability to establish their own parental leave policies that go beyond the provincial minimum entitlement.

If you have questions regarding the amendments related to the local government legislation, please contact our Governance and Structure Branch by phone at: 250-387-4020 or by email at LGGovernance@gov.bc.ca.

This circular is provided for information only and should not be considered legal advice or be a substitute for legal advice.

I will provide another update when further guidance and resources for local governments are available on our website beginning in summer 2026.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Tara Faganello". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the text "Yours truly,".

Tara Faganello
Assistant Deputy Minister
Local Government Division
Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs