



NEWS RELEASE

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Nova Scotia's Information and Privacy Commissioner releases 2023-2024 Annual Report

HALIFAX – Today, Tricia Ralph, Nova Scotia's Information and Privacy Commissioner, released her annual report for 2023-2024.

The Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner's (OIPC) work is to review access to information decisions made by public bodies, municipalities and health custodians as well as privacy complaints about public bodies and health custodians. Once again, Commissioner Ralph is pleading with the Nova Scotia Government to adequately resource the OIPC so that it can conduct these reviews in a timely manner.

The workload of the OIPC increases year after year. For example, last year the OIPC received 148 requests for reviews of decisions made by public bodies, municipalities and health custodians in response to access to information requests. This year, the OIPC received 247 – a 67% increase. Last year, the OIPC received 18 privacy complaints. This year, the OIPC received 139 – a 172% increase.

Despite the OIPC making repeated requests for additional resources, this year the Nova Scotia Government once again refused to provide them. Due to insufficient resources, the OIPC's approximate four-year backlog persists. Any gains made to reduce the backlog are offset by significant increases in the OIPC's workload. "It is disappointing that I am making the same plea for more resources during the fourth year of my term," says Commissioner Ralph. "This year, I am calling on the Nova Scotia Government to work with my office and come up with creative ways to reduce our backlog in light of its decision to deny our resourcing requests."

On a more positive note, the Commissioner commends the Nova Scotia Government for initiating its review of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and associated legislation. "Modern and robust access and privacy laws are foundational to a well-functioning democratic society. As the digital landscape continues to rapidly evolve, Nova Scotians need assurance that their access and privacy rights will be protected," says Commissioner Ralph. The Commissioner encourages the Nova Scotia Government to prioritize its review of the legislation and introduce amendments that ensure consistent privacy protections and strong access to information rights.

Another positive outcome this year was the significant increase in the acceptance rate of the recommendations the Commissioner makes after reviewing access to information decisions by public bodies, municipalities and health custodians. The acceptance rate rose from 48% in 2022-



2023 to 77% in 2023-2024. This demonstrates that public bodies, municipalities and health custodians have an increased understanding of the importance of Nova Scotians' access rights.

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