

November 8, 2022

EBC File: 15110-30/2022/137

Janice Williams  
Candidate for Councillor, Victoria  
Via email

## ENFORCEMENT NOTICE

Dear Janice Williams:

This letter addresses a contravention under the *Local Election Campaign Financing Act* (LECFA) and comprises an Enforcement Notice under Part 2 of *Policy 36.3 Administration of Monetary Penalties under the Local Elections Campaign Financing Act*.

Elections BC provided you with a copy of the Investigator's report into this matter, which included his preliminary findings. You have not provided a response to the investigation report.

### **Background:**

You were a candidate for Council in the 2022 Victoria local election. For the 2022 General Local Election, the pre-campaign period started July 18, 2022, and ended September 16, 2022, and the campaign period started September 17, 2022 and ended on general voting day, on October 15, 2022.

On August 27, 2022, Elections BC received a complaint regarding an internet ad that promoted Janice Williams for Victoria City Council, published on the website Island Social Trends ([islandsocialtrends.ca](http://islandsocialtrends.ca)). On August 30, 2022, Elections BC received a separate complaint regarding an ad promoting Janice Williams for Victoria City Council, posted in an Elevator. Both ads lacked full authorization statements.

Elections BC's Compliance team contacted you to remind you to include all information required in an authorization statement going forward, and requested that you take steps to correct the ads by adding a full authorization statement. The file was then forwarded to the Elections BC Investigations team for follow up.

The Elections BC Investigator reached out to you and obtained copies of the invoices for the two advertisements, copies of the original ads and copies of the ads that had been revised and brought into compliance.

The Investigator confirmed that the elevator advertisements were purchased through Hi-Rise elevators, and included 95 elevator advertisements placed at a cost of \$2,826.63. The ad copy that you provided noted that the ad was "Authorized by Janice Williams", but did not provide contact information, such as a BC phone number, a BC mailing address or an email address. The ads were distributed on September 1, 2022.

The Investigator confirmed that the internet ads involved 2 ads on Island Social Trends, and cost a total of \$52. Those ads indicated that they were "approved by Janice Williams", but again, did not include contact information. The invoice for these ads was dated July 27, 2022.

## Legislation:

Section 44 (1) of the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act* requires that a candidate who sponsors election advertising ensure that the advertisement does the following:

- identifies the financial agent,
- indicates that it was authorized by the financial agent,
- gives a BC telephone number, an email address or a BC mailing address at which the financial agent may be contacted regarding the advertising

Section 7(1) of LECFA defines election advertising as:

*7 (1) Subject to subsection (2) and any applicable regulations, election advertising is the transmission to the public by any means,*

*(a) during the campaign period, of any of the following:*

*(i) a communication that promotes or opposes, directly or indirectly, the election of a candidate or an elector organization that is endorsing a candidate, including a communication that takes a position on an issue with which the candidate or elector organization is associated;*

*(ii) assent voting advertising that is election advertising under section 8 (3) [assent voting advertising that is election advertising];*

*(iii) any other communications prescribed by regulation, and*

*(b) during the pre-campaign period for a general local election, of any of the following:*

*(i) a communication that promotes or opposes, directly or indirectly, the election of a candidate or an elector organization that is endorsing a candidate;*

*(ii) assent voting advertising that is election advertising under section 8 (3);*

*(iii) any other communications prescribed by regulation.*

Section 10 of LECFA sets out the pre-campaign and campaign periods for a local election:

*10 (1) The election period in relation to an election is the period that*

*(a) begins, as applicable,*

*(i) in the case of an election that is part of a general local election, at the start of the calendar year in which the election is held,*

*(ii) in the case of a by-election, on the day the local authority office that is to be filled by the by-election becomes vacant, or*

*(iii) in the case of any other election, on the date specified by or determined under the regulations, and*

*(b) ends at the beginning of the campaign period for the election.*

*(1.1) The pre-campaign period in relation to a general local election is the period that*

*(a) begins on the eighty-ninth day before general voting day for the election, and (b) ends on the twenty-ninth day before general voting day for the election.*

*(2) The campaign period in relation to an election is the period that*

*(a) begins on the twenty-eighth day before general voting day for the election, and*

*(b) ends, as applicable,*

*(i) in the case of an election by voting, at the close of general voting for the election, or*

*(ii) in the case of an election by acclamation, at the end of general voting day.*

*(3)The assent voting proceedings period in relation to non-election assent voting is the period that*

- (a)begins on the twenty-eighth day before general voting day for the assent voting, and*
- (b)ends at the close of general voting for the assent voting.*

**Analysis and Determination:**

I have carefully reviewed the investigator’s report, and I concur with her preliminary conclusions. Both sets of advertisements clearly promoted you as a candidate for Victoria City Council. The ads were published both on the internet, and physically, in elevators in Victoria, during the pre-campaign period. While the ads did correctly identify you as the financial agent, neither ad contained contact information for you, as required in section 44(1) of LECFA.

I find that both the Hi-Rise elevator ads and Island Social Trends internet ads that your campaign sponsored during the pre-campaign period contravened section 44(1) of LECFA.

**Monetary Penalty:**

Because of my finding above, s. 68.25(1) of LECFA requires me to issue an administrative monetary penalty against your campaign, of up to \$5,000.

In assessing this penalty, I note the following:

- The nature of this contravention was not egregious. The lack of an authorization statement would not likely have misled a reader to conclude the ads were sponsored by another party besides your campaign; The transparency purpose of the act had been substantially met.
- You indicated that the publication of the advertisements without an authorization statement was inadvertent.
- You indicated that this was your first time as a candidate for public office.
- Once contacted by Elections BC, you quickly and cooperatively amended advertisements where possible. In the case of the Hi-Rise elevator advertisements, the amendments came at a considerable cost of \$1,371.21.
- You have not previously been the subject of a monetary penalty under LECFA.

Based on these considerations, I make the following finding:

- Janice Williams contravened section 44(1) of LECFA, and must pay a penalty of \$100 to the Chief Electoral Officer of BC, under section 68.25(2)(a) of that act.

**Review/Court Relief:**

You may request a review of this determination by an Adjudicator. A request must be made in writing and must be received by the Investigator within 14 days after the date on which the Subject received the Enforcement Notice. The request must state the grounds on which the request for review is made. The Adjudicator is not bound by the Investigator’s determinations or reasons in this Enforcement Notice, and must consider the matter afresh and with an open mind.

You may also seek relief from the BC Supreme Court from the monetary penalties under section 68.26 of LECFA. You may wish to seek legal advice prior to requesting relief.

**Penalty Payment:**

Under *Policy 36.3 Administration of Monetary Penalties under the Local Elections Campaign Financing Act*, you have 40 days from today's date to pay the monetary penalties. Payments can be made by cheque to the Minister of Finance, C/O Elections BC at the address below:

**Mailing Address:**

PO Box 9275 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC  
V8W 9J6

**Physical Location:**

Suite 100 – 1112 Fort Street  
Victoria, BC  
250-387-5305

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adam Barnes", written in a cursive style.

Adam Barnes  
Director of Investigations