

BBOT POLICY BULLETIN:

IMPROVE BC REGISTRIES SERVICES TO SUPPORT NEW BUSINESSES

BC Registries and Online Services administers the registrations of all BC businesses, not-for-profit societies, and cooperatives, but has been experiencing significant delays in processing time, causing delays for entrepreneurs looking to start new businesses. BC Registries and Online Services should be adequately staffed, trained, and resourced to provide timely services to entrepreneurs seeking to start businesses in this province.

Background

All businesses, whether a bakery, a tech start-up, or a trades company, are registered via the BC Registries and Online. However, what should be a simple first step in the journey of an entrepreneur has unfortunately become an obstacle over the past year, causing weeks of delay for new businesses.

A name approval is the first step in registering a business in BC, and is required to be completed before a business owner can register a sole proprietorship/partnership or file their articles of incorporation. Throughout 2018, BC Registries and Online Services has been operating with delays of several weeks for services which used to take just a few business days. Business name approvals, the first step in the process of starting a business, have routinely been taking 3-5 weeks to complete over the past year. This delay stops entrepreneurs from moving forward with their business idea as they cannot secure web domains, open business bank accounts, or seek other permits or licenses without their business name and registration.

And while applicants can opt to pay an increased fee to prioritize their application, a better, permanent solution would be an overall system that is more efficient and timely for all applicants, while keeping administrative costs for entrepreneurs as low as possible. While this may be only an additional \$100, it is part of a suite of registrations, licenses, applications and approvals which are required and which all cost a new business.

Currently, due to an increased volume in Name Approval Requests, processing time may take up to three weeks. If you require a response within 1 business day, please upgrade to a priority service for an additional \$100 fee.

A message explaining delays displayed on the BC Registries and Online Services name approval website

Becoming an entrepreneur and starting a new business can be a challenging and daunting task: bootstrapping the business with your savings, quitting stable jobs to pursue a passion, taking on new and unfamiliar challenges. BC regularly leads the country in entrepreneurship and business creation, and the provincial government should aim to support and encourage this entrepreneurial spirit and not delay and obstruct new businesses.

That staff at the BC Registries and Online Services is professional and provides a valuable and important service but this office must be staffed, trained, and resourced adequately to provide timely services to entrepreneurs seeking to start businesses in this province and eliminate the ongoing backlog and delay.

Therefore, the Burnaby Board of Trade recommends that the provincial government immediately improve the staff resourcing of the BC Registries and Online Services office to eliminate the current backlog of applications and return to the traditional processing time of 1-5 business days.