

PETITIONS

Guidelines for Petitioning
the Legislative Assembly
of British Columbia



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
of BRITISH COLUMBIA



GUIDELINES FOR PETITIONING THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

A fundamental concept of parliamentary democracy is the right of the public to have access to parliament by way of petition. A petition can be from an individual or group and can relate to the passage of a bill or the government's consideration of an important public issue. Since the

Legislative Assembly is a representative institution, it considers only those matters submitted to it by its own Members and petitions are no exception.

Only Members of the Legislative Assembly may present a petition in the House; however, residents of the Province of British Columbia have the right to petition their legislators.

A petition is a request that the Legislative Assembly take some specific action (or refrain from taking some action) to redress an alleged public grievance. The action requested must be within the scope of jurisdiction of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, and the request must be clear, concise, accurate and temperate.

General Petition Requirements

- Petitions must be addressed to “The Honourable the Legislative Assembly of the Province of British Columbia, in Legislature Assembled.” Petitions addressed to the Government of British Columbia or to a particular minister cannot be accepted.
- Petitions must not request any expenditure, grant or charge on the public revenue, whether payable out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund or out of moneys to be provided by the Legislative Assembly.
- Petitioners must be residents of the Province of British Columbia and provide their name and address.
- There is no minimum age requirement for anyone signing a petition.
- A petition must contain a minimum of one signature.

Original, Hard-Copy Petitions

Provisions for how and when petitions may be presented are provided for in **Standing Order 73**, and the form of the petition is prescribed in its accompanying **Appendix A**. Petitions presented in original, hard-copy form must comply with the following basic rules:

- All signatures must be original and written directly on the face of the petition, and not pasted or transferred to it. Petitions must be free of erasures or insertions. The petition must be in original form; not a photocopy or printed scan.
- If a petition consists of more than one sheet of signatures, the text of the petition must appear at the top of each sheet.

- Each person petitioning the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia must print their name and address and sign their name under the text of the petition.
- Petitions must be written, typewritten or printed, and it is recommended that the paper be standard letter or legal size.

Electronic Petitions

As approved by the House on October 4, 2021, as a temporary measure in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the collection of signatures by electronic means is permitted on a provisional basis. Electronic petitions must adhere to the General Petition Requirements noted above and must also be substantially in the form of Appendix A-Sample Petition, as shown below.

Additionally, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, or her designate, is authorized to exercise reasonable discretion with the admissibility of electronic petitions and their compliance with Standing Order 73 and Appendix A of the Standing Orders.

An **electronic petition template** containing fillable fields is available for download or print.

Presentation

A petition may only be presented to the House by a Member of the Legislative Assembly, and petitioners may contact any Member of the Legislative Assembly with regard to their proposed petition. Members are not required to present petitions, and it is entirely at a Member's discretion whether or not they choose to do so.

A petition, on being presented and meeting the requirements of the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, is recorded in the Votes and Proceedings, becomes an official record of the Legislative Assembly and made a public document. Petitions that do not comply with the Standing Orders are returned to the Member.



Standing Order 73

How and when presented.

73. (1) A petition substantially in the form prescribed by Appendix A may be presented by a Member for the redress of an alleged public grievance.
- (2) The petition must contain a clear, concise, accurate and temperate statement of the facts for which the intervention of the House is requested and the signature of all the petitioners.
- (3) No petition can be received which requests any expenditure, grant or charge on the public revenue, whether payable out of the consolidated revenue fund or out of moneys to be provided by the House.
- (4) A petition, on being presented and meeting the requirements of this Standing Order, is deemed to have been received, and copies shall be made available to a Member on request. Tabling of the petition shall be recorded in the Votes and Proceedings.
- (5) Members presenting petitions shall be answerable that they do not contain impertinent or improper matter.

Appendix A – Sample Petition

To the Honourable the Legislative Assembly of the Province of British Columbia, in Legislature Assembled:

The petition of the undersigned, _____, of the _____, states that: [*here state the object of the petition, briefly setting forth the reasons therefor*].

Your petitioners respectfully request that the Honourable House [*recommend, urge, or take such action as may be deemed appropriate.*]

Dated _____ day of _____, 20____.

First and Last Name (printed)	Address (printed)	Signature

Office of the Clerk | Room 221, Parliament Buildings | p. 250.387.3785 | e. officeoftheclerk@leg.bc.ca



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