

PROCESS CONVENTION

Standing Committee Review of Proposed Policy Initiatives and Implementation Plans

Application

Proposed policy initiatives subject to this Convention are those policies considered for approval by the Commissioner in Executive Council and the signature of the Premier. This would include both the establishment of new policies and substantive amendments to, or rescinding of, existing policies. This Process Convention does not apply to minor administrative amendments, which will not significantly impact established policy commitments.

This Convention also applies to Standing Committee briefings on implementation schedules, communication plans, and implementation tools required to bring a new or substantively amended Commissioner in Executive Council approved policy into force.

Guiding Principles 1, 3, 4, 5 and 7

General Considerations

It is in the interests of consensus government that Standing Committees are provided with an opportunity to review proposed policy initiatives and provide advice to the Government in advance of Cabinet decisions.

These policy initiatives are proposed statements of the government's commitment to the public and must be kept confidential until approved by Cabinet.

One of the guiding principles of consensus government is that Members of the Legislative Assembly should be made aware of and have the opportunity to discuss significant announcements, changes, consultations, or initiatives before they are released to the public.

Authority

This Process Convention is established under the authority of the Executive Council and the undersigned Standing Committees and may be amended at any time by agreement of the Executive Council and Standing Committees.

Process

1. A proposed policy initiative is prepared, signed by the Minister responsible and submitted to Cabinet via the Cabinet Secretariat.
2. Cabinet considers the proposed policy initiative. The only decision made at this time is whether or not the proposed policy initiative should be referred to Standing Committee for review and comment.
3. If approved for referral to Standing Committee, the proposed policy initiative is referred by the Premier to the Chair of the appropriate Standing Committee. The letter of transmission includes an indication of a preferred date for Cabinet consideration of the initiative so that the Standing Committee will have an understanding of the time frame for providing comments. The Minister responsible is copied on this correspondence. The Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning will also be copied on this correspondence if the proposed policy initiative is being referred to a different Standing Committee.
4. The Standing Committee reviews the proposed policy initiative. The Minister and officials may be invited to this meeting to provide additional information. However, it is understood that the proposed policy initiative is a Cabinet document and that any recommendations or advice regarding modifications to the proposed policy initiative, or advice on the proposed policy's implementation, must be provided in the form of a letter from the Standing Committee Chair back to the Premier. The Minister responsible is copied on this correspondence.
5. The Premier, following consultations with the Minister responsible for the original policy initiative, then makes a subsequent submission to Cabinet advising of any concerns raised by Standing Committee and recommending actions for Cabinet's consideration. The proposed policy initiative is received by the Cabinet Secretariat and the Cabinet Secretariat prepares an assessment of the initiative.
6. Cabinet considers the proposed policy initiative, along with Standing Committee comments and Cabinet Secretariat assessment.
7. The Premier advises the Standing Committee Chair of Cabinet's decision with respect to the proposed policy initiative, and any relevant implementation plans.
8. When Cabinet decides to establish a new policy review, the application of an existing policy, or substantively amend an existing policy in accordance with this Convention, the Minister responsible for implementing the Policy will provide both Cabinet and the appropriate Standing Committee with briefings on the relevant implementation and communication plans, as well as any significant implementation tools (e.g., ministerial policies, eligibility criteria, program guidelines), in advance of the Policy's application or implementation and any substantive public communications.