

7.21 Role of RECA Spokesperson

Overview

An official spokesperson communicates the messages of the organization to the public. Therefore, the Chair and executive director speak on behalf of RECA.

As an official spokesperson, the Chair and executive director represent RECA to external stakeholders. External stakeholders include: the public, industry members, Government, industry and regulatory associations, regulatory bodies and the media.

The spokesperson messages should be consistent with the legislation that applies to RECA, the policies and procedures of RECA or resolutions of Council.

Shared Responsibility

The Chair and executive director share the role of RECA spokesperson. Therefore, there should be collaboration between the two spokespersons to ensure they convey a consistent message.

The two spokespersons will collaboratively determine what messages to communicate and who will communicate those messages. They should take into account the nature of the message and historical practices. Broadly speaking, the Chair should be responsible for conveying certain messages (e.g. major policy decisions) while the executive director is more appropriate to convey other messages (e.g. regulatory and operational matters).

Examples of Spokesperson Responsibilities

The shared responsibilities of RECA's Chair and executive director include written and verbal communications. This includes:

- Correspondence
- Messages or articles posted by RECA Communications
- Media communications (e.g. news releases, interviews)
- Chairing or attending stakeholder meetings
- Making presentations at public, industry or regulatory events
- Meeting with the Alberta Government including Ministers and senior officials
- Meeting with stakeholders including representatives of industry trade associations
- Attending industry member networking events

Limitations

While the spokesperson speaks on behalf of RECA, they do not make policy decisions in the course of carrying out of spokesperson duties. If RECA does not have a position on an issue, or one cannot be reasonably inferred from other positions RECA has adopted or from RECA's legislation and policies and procedures, the spokesperson should not create an answer on their own.

The Chair and executive director should not communicate personal views. For example, they would not say "We have not considered that issue, but I think RECA should do X". This policy is not intended to muzzle the Chair or executive director in carrying out their responsibilities; they should apply common sense in all circumstances.

There are exceptions to the general rule in limited circumstances. The Chair or executive director may state personal observations or views on public information, trends, regulatory issues, or questions posed to them when making a presentation, attending a meeting or providing remarks as a conference speaker. When doing so, they should clearly preface their remarks as their own views rather than those of Council or RECA. The Chair and executive director need to be mindful that even when prefacing their remarks with such a statement, their audience may not be able to separate their personal vies from their official role as Chair or as executive director, as the case may be.

The Chair and executive director should never express their personal views on a past or current policy or any matter under consideration by RECA to an external party.

The spokesperson should not publicly disparage the organization.

Discretion

In the course of carrying out their duties as a spokesperson, the Chair has the discretion to seek the assistance or advice of Council and/or the executive director before responding to any requests, correspondence, questions or requests to attend an event.

The Chair or executive director may initiate or delegate any of these spokesperson responsibilities on their own accord when they believe it is in the interests of RECA to do so in a given set of circumstances. For example, the Chair may initiate a meeting with the representative(s) of a particular stakeholder. The Chair may delegate the responsibilities assigned to them for a specific matter (e.g. speak at an industry event) to another member of Council, to the executive director, or to a member of the staff (after consultation with the executive director).

The executive director may delegate his or her spokesperson responsibilities on an operational basis through the organizational structure

of RECA or assign specific spokesperson responsibilities to accommodate specific requests.

Assistance for Chair

The executive director or delegate (e.g. Communications Manager) will be available to provide assistance or advice to the Chair to assist them in responding to any correspondence or prepare for a meeting, presentation or media interview (e.g. conducting research, talking points, prepare presentation slides etc.). Media training for the Chair, and other RECA spokespersons will be made available when it is deemed necessary.

Section 7.21

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