

CEO/REGISTRAR MESSAGE

Hello!

I am honoured to step into the role of CEO and Registrar with the BC Institute of Agrologists (BCIA). It is exciting to join at such a dynamic and pivotal time as BCIA continues its transformative journey as a regulator acting in the public interest.

As you may have read in the announcement, my leadership purpose is to envision new possibilities and empower a team to achieve that vision through values that include adaptability, enthusiasm, integrity, transparency, balance, collaboration, and innovation. I am grateful for the opportunity to apply that purpose with BCIA.

One of my top priorities is to foster connections and build relationships with you—our registrants. I am eager to engage in conversations and learn from your insights and experiences. I look forward to meeting you through both in-person and virtual opportunities. While our commitment to acting in the public interest always needs to remain steadfast, harnessing the invaluable knowledge within our community is essential to the success of our journey.

Other key priorities for me include supporting the BCIA Board to establish a renewed Strategic Plan to guide our work as well as taking stock of our regulatory compliance measures and then building a staff team and operational plan to meet both. With the combining of the CEO and Registrar position, we are creating a new position of Deputy Registrar – Practice in order to ensure the knowledge of a registrant is included on the staff team. Many of you know Laurena Olsen and the amazing service and work she provides to BCIA. She will remain in her role as Deputy Registrar, being able to focus even more deeply on matters related to registration and credentialing.

I would like to take this opportunity to address the BCIA Board decision related to renewal fees for 2025. As I am sure you can imagine, it is not my first choice to be sharing information about a fee increase in my very first message to you! However, I am committed to my core values of transparency, authenticity and integrity no matter the news. The BCIA Board approached this decision thoughtfully, engaging in robust discussions to ensure it was made with careful consideration. The reality is that rising operational costs that everyone is struggling with combined with our obligations under the *Professional Governance Act* (PGA) necessitated this increase. More details can be found below. We are committed to prudent financial stewardship and to that end the BCIA recently established a Financial Working Group. With that working group in place, combined with sound operational leadership, we will work towards creating future-oriented budgets to provide some predictability for fees.

I would also like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank Jane Kerner, PAg for her leadership as the Interim CEO. Navigating the challenges of an interim role is no small feat, and Jane's dedication and passion have been extraordinary. I am truly grateful for her support and guidance during this transition. Also, I want to thank Ryan O'Grady, PAg, PEng as he moves on to new endeavours, for his dedication and work with BCIA and the immense support he provided me in a short period of time.

It is a profound privilege to assume this role, and I look forward to getting to know each of you and immersing myself in our professional environment over the coming months. Together, I am confident that we can build a dynamic, modern, and nimble regulator that keeps the public and its safety at the center of everything we do.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Lawrence, CEO/Registrar

BCIA BOARD APPROVES 2025 REGISTRANT FEE INCREASE

On September 21, 2024, the BCIA Board approved a fee increase for 2025.

The increase will ensure that the BCIA will be able to continue to meet the legal requirements of the *Professional Governance Act* (PGA), *International Credentials Recognition Act* (ICRA) and the requirements from the Superintendent's Office that administers both Acts.

Overall, the BCIA continues to see increasing pressures year-over-year in delivering on its statutory mandate including:

- receiving and processing applications,
- delivering more audits and practice reviews, and
- administering a fair complaints and discipline process.

In addition, the BCIA has not been immune to the overall inflationary pressures that have impacted the global community.

Furthermore, there is still much work to be done as BCIA navigates the transition from membership organization to regulator and there are costs associated with this. Despite the increased costs year over year, there has been no fee increase since 2022.

**The 2025 renewal period will open early November and end January 15, 2025. Watch for further information in the BCIA monthly e-news, BCIA e-notices and the website for further details and to learn when payments can be made.*

Please [click here](#) to see the fees for 2025. Below is an FAQ with further information.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

GENERAL

❖ If there is an increase in registrants is there not an increase in revenue?

Yes, however traditionally the net increase in registrants has been minimal. While new registrants come on board, others end their registration with BC in almost equal numbers. Should there be an influx of new registrants it does come with an increase in workload for the BCIA. This includes increases in:

- application processing
 - the number of annual audits of current registrants
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- the number practice reviews
- investigations and possible disciplinary actions stemming from an increase in complaints
- practice and title infringement enforcement

❖ **Does reserved practice have anything to do with the increase?**

Does reserved practice have anything to do with the increase? Yes, as with the statutory responsibilities mentioned above, reserved practice is a benefit to the public interest as it ensures that qualified professionals are competent and accountable. That responsibility and higher profile of the profession requires greater resources. To ensure that the BCIA is meeting this responsibility and maintaining the public trust in the profession the BCIA will need to continue to build capacity.

❖ **Are the current economic conditions a factor in the decision?**

Current economic conditions are a factor in the decision. The BCIA has not been immune to the overall inflationary pressures that have impacted the global community.

❖ **Can I defer my payment for a few months?**

Registrants are obligated to pay their fees by the renewal deadline in order to avoid being suspended and to avoid risk of having their registration cancelled. The BCIA begins taking fee payment in November with the deadline of January 15, 2025.

❖ **What happens if I do not pay my fees?**

Failure to pay the annual renewal fees (as well as any late applicable fee (s), which will be applied on January 16th) will result in a registrant being considered not in good standing. This means that the registrant is not authorized to practice agrology. Continued non-compliance will result in a registration being cancelled or discontinued. Under reserved practice, having your registration discontinued may compromise your ability to work in compliance with the *Professional Governance Act* and could result in further sanctions. A registrant that is discontinued must apply for reinstatement according to the BCIA bylaw 76. Please reference BCIA bylaws 70-76 for full details relating to payment of fees, resignation and reinstatement.

❖ **How much do other professionals under the PGA pay for fees?**

FPBC	AIBC	CAB	EGBC	ASTTBC
Title: RPF	Title: Architect	Title: RPBio	Title: PEng; PGeo	Title: AScT
Fees:	Fees:	Fees:	Fees:	Fees:
2024 - \$850 [^]	2022 - \$1070	2024 - \$485	2024 - \$520 [^]	2024 - \$484
2025 - \$880 [^]	2025 - \$1136 [^]	2025 - \$572.25 [^]	2025 - \$535 [^]	2025 - \$484

It is important to note that the Institute is required to meet the same regulatory standard as other regulators under the PGA who currently have more capacity. NB: Some regulators' fees compared to other years due to differing fiscal cycles. Fees rounded to the nearest whole dollar.

[^]Inclusive of Goods and Services tax (GST)

❖ **Will the BCIA increase fees again in the near future?**

At this time, work is underway at future budgeting and planning. The intent is to establish a multi-year financial plan to provide transparency and predictability on fees.

BUDGET

❖ **How will the increase in fees be factored into the 2025 budget?**

Delivery demands of increased applications, enforcement of reserved practice, ongoing compliance with government statutes and operational needs require significant resources from both volunteers' and staff's workloads and increased financial pressures.

The BCIA has identified that it will need to increase capacity by at least one full-time equivalent (FTE) position in 2025 as well as an increase in contracted support such as human resources, legal, IT and finance.

These increases in resources will allow the organization to manage workloads at a reasonable level, support existing and future committees, and increase professional supports as mandated by the PGA for registrants such as practice guidance, continuing professional development and policy directives.

The 2025 budget will be finalized and posted in early 2025.

❖ **Why doesn't the BCIA simply reduce costs?**

The BCIA is committed to sound financial stewardship. We will continue to take steps to ensure we are being effective and efficient with BCIA funds. However, to ensure we are properly serving the public interest as a professional regulator we must continue to extend our capacity to delivering on our statutory functions.