

# How does the College Advocate?

## Can the College engage in advocacy?

**THE SHORT ANSWER** is “yes”. The College, as the regulator of professional biologists and technologists, can and does comment on issues that affect the ability of the College or its members to meet their obligations. To this end the College promotes the view that the public interest is best served when the public has access to unbiased scientific information, advice, and decisions from competent, accountable professionals.

Frequently, the question about whether the College engages in advocacy is focussed on environmental issues. Although the College does not comment on specific management decisions, it does have an interest in ensuring that decisions are informed by the best available scientific advice.

Our primary method of upholding the public interest is to ensure that our members meet their responsibilities to the profession by adhering to our *Code of Ethics* and upholding principles of stewardship. Therefore, if it was brought to the College’s attention that a management decision was based on biased or poor science provided by a member, or if the decision was made by a member without ensuring that all the applicable information was considered within the framework they are working (i.e. the member is held accountable for how they made their decision), then the College would address the situation through the lens of a member failing to meet his/her obligations to the College and by extension, the public.

## The College advocates:

**1. By ensuring as many practicing applied biologists as possible are regulated by the College.** In 2009, the College introduced the Registered Biology Technologist (RBTech) category so that these important applied biologists are regulated by the College; however, there are many other biologists interested in membership who do not currently meet our requirements. To address this we brought in a new self-directed report option, and we are investigating the possibility of creating additional categories of membership.

**2. By collaborating with other professional associations and the provincial government to secure appropriate recognition and roles for applied biology professionals, and by commenting on legislation, regulations, and policies that affect the practice of College members.**

We are developing a guidance paper on the Riparian Areas Regulation, and are engaged with the Qualified Persons Initiative and the Professional Reliance Taskforce; we are developing a white paper on the issue of loss of scientific information; we are developing a response to the recent guidance document on stream crossings published by other regulatory organizations that overlooked important environmental considerations; and we recently became a signatory on the joint statement on Professional Leadership in a Changing Climate <https://www.cab-bc.org/file-download/joint-statement-climate-change>. The College is also participating on a science-integrity-in-decision-making taskforce that is national in scope, with the intent to develop a statement of principles on the use of science in decision-making to be released later in 2015.

## What can you do to assist the College in its advocacy role?

The ability of the College to comment on relevant legislation and respond to pertinent issues is important, and we rely on our members to support and drive these initiatives. If you feel the College should engage in an issue around the practice of applied biology or legislation, please *contact us!* Or if you’re interested in participating on a working group, please let us know.

Finally, and importantly, if you are concerned about the work of a fellow professional, remember the obligation in Principle 9 of the *Code of Ethics*: the duty to address poor conduct and/or practice of another member. Poor practice of one member affects the reputation of all of us. The College relies on its members, who are the ones ‘on the ground’, to identify and address poor practice. This protects the public and ensures that professional biologists and biology technologists maintain the trust of, and credibility with, the public. 

The 2015 College Council



Jillian Stewart, Trainee (RBTech)  
Black-capped Chickadee.