



Canadian Service
Security canadien du
Intelligence renseignement
Service de sécurité

Paul Champ
Champ & Associates
Counsel, British Columbia Civil Liberties Association
43 Florence Street
Ottawa, ON K2P 0W6

MAR 14 2014

Dear Mr. Champ:

Thank you for your letter dated February 6, 2014, in which you raise concerns, on behalf of your client, the BC Civil Liberties Association, relating to the investigation of groups and individuals associated with environmental activism.

The activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) are governed by the *CSIS Act*. Our mandate includes, under section 12 of the Act, investigating and advising the Government of Canada on activities that may on reasonable grounds be suspected of constituting threats to national security, defined in section 2 of the act, as: a) espionage or sabotage; b) foreign interference; c) terrorism and extremism; and d) subversion. The *CSIS Act* also does not constrain the provision of advice to any particular department, agency, or Minister of the Crown.

As you note, the *CSIS Act* expressly forbids the investigation of lawful advocacy, protest, or dissent. Such activities can only be investigated when they are carried out in conjunction with the threat-related activities cited above, again as stipulated by *the Act*. The Service's adherence to the *Act*, which is of course thoroughly reviewed annually by the Security Intelligence Review Committee (SIRC), is very well-established. In that regard I would encourage you to examine SIRC's most recent annual report and in particular its review of CSIS activities related to domestic investigations and emerging issues. In that review, SIRC found that the Service adhered to the law and internal policy, that the Service did not investigate "activities related only to legitimate protest and dissent," and that the Service was quick to terminate investigations when individuals were no longer involved in threat-related activity. The above referenced report can be found at www.sirc-csars.gc.ca.

In response to your concerns, as articulated in the four bullets outlined on pages 2 to 3 of your letter, it is difficult to respond insofar as credible specifics of any wrongdoing or improper conduct by the Service were not provided. The information and observations are largely speculative and based on third-party information. The Service can, however, assure you that that we conduct ourselves according to the law, policy, and Ministerial Direction.

I understand your concerns that Canadians engaged in peaceful advocacy and protest would be targeted illegitimately by a Government agency. In fact, the employees of CSIS are devoted to protecting Canada's national security and ensuring that the very rights of privacy and free speech which you refer to are indeed protected from individuals and groups who would reject peaceful democratic processes to attain their goals.

I trust that the foregoing has been of some assistance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Venner', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tom Venner
Assistant Director
Policy and Strategic Partnerships