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Independent Review of IRAC releases Interim Report, invites Island residents to respond

CHARLOTTETOWN, PE, September 18, 2026. The Independent Review of the Island Regulatory and Appeals Commission (IRAC) today released its Interim Report, setting out what it has heard and the directions for change it is considering ahead of its final report, due November 1, 2026.

The Interim Report is the product of sustained research and public engagement. Since May, the Review has received 63 written submissions, heard 20 presentations at public meetings, and held more than 40 meetings with community organizations, municipal leaders, industry associations, government departments, IRAC Commissioners and staff. It has also examined the legislation IRAC operates under and the practices of comparable tribunals across Canada. It is the first independent review of IRAC since the organization was created in 1991.

This Review has identified a substantial agenda for change. Its central conclusion is not that IRAC has failed, but that the institutional model created in 1991 has been overtaken by the breadth, complexity and specialization of the responsibilities now assigned to it.

“The question we were asked is whether IRAC is still fit for purpose,” said Commissioner Rory Francis. “For more than three decades it has served Island residents, and we found capable, hard-working people who care about getting decisions right. The challenge is to build a structure that better equips those people, and their successors, to perform increasingly complex regulatory, appellate and administrative functions.”

Many of the issues identified by the Review cannot be resolved by IRAC acting alone, they arise from legislation, government policy, the allocation of statutory responsibilities, institutional structure, and the actions of other participants in the system.

This is directly reflected in where the Interim Report directs its recommendations. Of 65 recommendations, 35 calls for action by the provincial government, 17 by IRAC or its successor organizations, and 13 by others, including the Residential Tenancy Office.

Among the directions for change, the Interim Report proposes a complete restructuring of IRAC to establish the PEI Energy and Utilities Board, and the PEI Land and Appeals Board, each with dedicated Commissioners selected through an external, transparent, merit-based recruitment process. The Boards would be served by a shared administrative support tribunal holding the subject matter expertise each Board requires.

Other changes in structure and governance are recommended. The Residential Tenancy Office would be fully separated from IRAC, with its own budget, staff and accountability. Published service standards, reported against annually, would let Island residents see what timelines to expect and whether those standards are being met. Significant changes to the Residential Tenancy Act are also proposed.

Land was among the subjects most raised with the Review, and the Interim Report addresses it directly. Island residents expressed strong and consistent support for the *Lands Protection Act*. In the report, the Review reiterates that the *Lands Protection Act* is a control on who owns land and was not designed to preserve agricultural land or to govern how land is used.

The Land Identification Program, introduced in 1995 to restrict development on certain approved purchases, was brought in as a temporary measure until the province adopted a provincial land use plan. However, no such plan was ever developed, and identification currently expires after ten years.

“Island residents care deeply about land, and they are right to,” said Francis. “The Land Identification Program has created a false impression that it provides some extra degree of land use planning or protection in rural areas. It does not and that is why our report reiterates, very strongly, the need for a Provincial Land Use Plan.”

The Review is inviting feedback on the Interim Report until Friday, October 2, 2026 at Commission@IRACReview.ca. The full report is available on the Review website at iracreview.ca. The window reflects the Review’s November 1 reporting deadline and the time required to consider feedback before the report is made final.

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