INDEPENDENT COMMISSION

Review of the Island Regulatory and Appeals Commission

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Independent Review of IRAC releases Final Report

CHARLOTTETOWN, PE, November 1, 2026. The Independent Review of the Island Regulatory and Appeals Commission (IRAC) today released its Final Report, completing the first independent review of IRAC since the organization was created in 1991. The report makes 73 recommendations to modernize how Prince Edward Island regulates utilities, administers land ownership and hears appeals.

The Final Report builds on the Interim Report released September 18. The Review received 29 written feedback submissions responding to the Interim Report and considered each one in preparing its final recommendations. A number of recommendations were refined or added as a result, among them those addressing roles in the electricity system, consumers representation during electricity hearings, and the transparency of decisions under the Lands Protection Act.

“By sharing our preliminary findings and directions before reaching final conclusions, we were able to test and improve our ideas against the knowledge, experience and perspectives of Island residents and stakeholders,” said Commissioner Rory Francis. “I extend my sincere appreciation to everyone who took the time to respond.”

The central recommendation remains unchanged. IRAC should be restructured into two specialized bodies, the PEI Energy and Utilities Board and the PEI Land and Appeals Board, supported by a shared administrative tribunal.

In electricity, the Review found areas where roles and responsibilities lack clarity or duplicate effort. To enhance clarity, the Review recommends that the province’s energy policy objectives be set by the provincial government in legislation and that Maritime Electric coordinate integrated, long-term electricity planning with other system partners. It also recommends that IRAC independently review those plans and hold Maritime Electric accountable for adequate supply, both now and over the longer term

“Our electrical services system is a network of relationships, roles and responsibilities that must work smoothly together,” said Francis. “Our recommendations set out what is needed to achieve a well-functioning, collaborative and trusted electricity system for PEI, with the best interests of Island residents at its centre.”

The Final Report also recommends creating an Office of the Independent Consumer Advocate. Currently there is no explicit mechanism to support the participation of small, vulnerable and underrepresented consumers and small businesses in regulatory proceedings. The Advocate would conduct outreach to consumers, represent their interests as an intervenor at hearings, engage expert advice as needed, and report annually to the Legislative Assembly.

On land, the Review has added a recommendation to address public concern about the lack of transparency of decisions under the *Lands Protection Act*. Currently, IRAC reviews applications to acquire land and makes recommendations to the provincial government, which makes the final

decision. The Review recommends that the Act be amended to require government to publish, with each Order, an explanation of the reasons each land purchase application is approved or denied.

“The evidence is strong that the provincial government follows IRAC’s detailed rationale on land purchase applications to a very high degree,” said Francis. “Given that consistency and the recommendations for a dramatic decrease in applications that should need be considered, it’s time to move to a transparent decision-making process.”

The Review also sets out principles to guide implementation. It recommends that implementation be led by a Transition Implementation Committee drawn from senior levels of the provincial government and IRAC, setting priorities and reporting regularly on progress. Continuity of service is a foundational principle, so that no one is disadvantaged by changes being made . It also recommends that where possible, improvements to IRAC’s operations begin right away, before the new structure is in place.

“A well-functioning, independent regulatory and appeals system is vital to Prince Edward Island,” said Francis. “These changes are about strengthening and modernizing these essential institutions so they build the trust and respect of Island residents and serve the province well into the future.”

The full Final Report is available at iracreview.ca

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