



Intergovernmental Affairs

ANNUAL REPORT
2024-2025

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Province of New Brunswick
PO 6000, Fredericton NB E3B 5H1 CANADA

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TRANSMITTAL LETTERS

From the Minister to the Lieutenant-Governor

Her Honour The Honourable Louise Imbeault

Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick

May it please your Honour:

It is my privilege to submit the annual report of Intergovernmental Affairs, Province of New Brunswick, for the fiscal year April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,



Honourable Jean-Claude D'Amours
Minister

From the Minister Responsible to the Lieutenant-Governor

Her Honour The Honourable Louise Imbeault

Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick

May it please your Honour:

It is my privilege to submit the annual report of La Francophonie, Province of New Brunswick, for the fiscal year April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,



Honourable Robert Gauvin
Minister Responsible

From the Acting Deputy Minister to the Minister

Honourable Jean-Claude D'Amours
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Sir:

I am pleased to be able to present the annual report describing operations of Intergovernmental Affairs for the fiscal year April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charles Ayles". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Charles Ayles
Acting Deputy Minister

From the Acting Deputy Minister to the Minister Responsible

Honourable Robert Gauvin
Minister Responsible for La Francophonie

Sir:

I am pleased to be able to present the annual report describing operations of La Francophonie for the fiscal year April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charles Ayles". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Charles Ayles
Acting Deputy Minister

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MINISTER OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS'S MESSAGE

The 2024-25 fiscal year was a challenging but rewarding year for our team at Intergovernmental Affairs. The year saw a significant shift in Canada's relationship with the United States, as President Donald Trump and his administration moved to impose tariffs on international trade, including goods from Canada. These actions dominated the work of our team during this year, as we strived to strengthen existing relationships with our American friends and neighbours, while building a more united and resilient economy within Canada. New Brunswick took a leading role in reducing barriers to trade within Canada, to strengthen our national economy and open new markets for New Brunswick-made goods and services.

We are also working to expand our partnerships with our nearest neighbours through the Council of Atlantic Premiers and the Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers. As chair of the Atlantic Premiers table for 2025, Premier Holt is bringing leadership and new ideas to our regional partnerships.

Intergovernmental Affairs continues to play a key role in supporting our unique heritage as Canada's only officially bilingual province by strengthening our economic and cultural links with the International Francophonie and addressing New Brunswick's interests in Canadian and international trade policy issues.

The Office of Protocol played a key role in welcoming diplomats and foreign dignitaries to the province, managing the Order of New Brunswick and honouring His Majesty King Charles III, and Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, through the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal and the King's Coronation Medal programs.

Upon my appointment to cabinet, I was given additional duties as New Brunswick's minister responsible for Military Affairs. Our team is working to strengthen our province's relationship with Canada's Armed Forces stationed at CFB Gagetown and support our veterans as they transition to civilian life.

I wish to offer my thanks to the staff of Intergovernmental Affairs for their work and dedication to the Province of New Brunswick during the past year.



Honourable Jean-Claude D'Amours
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs
Minister responsible for Military Affairs
Minister of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour
Minister responsible for Immigration
Minister responsible for the Research and Productivity Council

MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR LA FRANCOPHONIE'S MESSAGE

At both the national and international levels, La Francophonie is flourishing, and the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs is proud to be involved in every aspect.

Through the Secretariat of Official Languages and the International Francophonie division, the Department has been able to make significant strides in the area of La Francophonie, greatly benefitting both the province and the people of New Brunswick.

Renewed federal-provincial agreements for French-language services, Francophone community development, Francophone economic development and education enabled the Government of New Brunswick to make substantial investments in its priorities in 2024–2025.

International Francophone recruitment, the development of new markets and New Brunswick's seat at the table of the world's major Francophone leaders have had a direct and tangible impact on all communities in the province via economic spin-offs for the province's entrepreneurs, the arrival of new skilled workers in key sectors such as health and education, and the renewal of cooperation agreements beneficial to the cultural and educational sectors.

Behind all this work is a team, and as Minister responsible for La Francophonie, I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all our employees. I would be remiss if I did not recognize their professionalism and their commitment and dedication to ensuring that New Brunswick plays its role as a leader in La Francophonie and in official languages every day, both in Canada and around the world.



Honourable Robert Gauvin
Minister responsible for La Francophonie
Minister of Public Safety

ACTING DEPUTY MINISTER'S MESSAGE

I wish to thank our team at Intergovernmental Affairs for their hard work and dedication during the 2024-25 fiscal year. Our team has managed a series of challenging issues for our province in the areas of federal-provincial relations, trade policy, protocol, relations with the international Francophonie and promotion of official languages.

Through all these challenges, our team has demonstrated professionalism, skill, knowledge, and good judgement in the advice offered to our ministers and premier. They have gone above and beyond the call of duty in their management of our relationships within our province, our country and across the world.

Our department is primarily focused on building and strengthening relations, which will only become more important in the current global climate of economic and political uncertainty.

It is my honour to thank our team for all their hard work over the past year.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charles Ayles". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Charles Ayles
Acting Deputy Minister

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Delivering for New Brunswickers

The priorities the Government of New Brunswick (GNB) has focused on represent the stories and solutions we hear from residents across the province. Our goal is to make a difference and enhance the quality of life for everyone in the province we proudly call home. Together, we are learning, growing, adapting, and discovering new and transformative ways of doing business. GNB is focused on taking the necessary steps to move our priorities forward, and work is being done more efficiently and effectively every day. New Brunswickers are resilient, creative and compassionate people, and by working collaboratively, we can create the brighter future we all deserve. GNB is prioritizing partnerships, and trusting and empowering the people and organizations on the ground working most closely with New Brunswickers to achieve results.

Priorities

GNB is focused on creating a brighter future for all New Brunswickers. To make progress towards this vision, several priorities have been identified within the following areas:

- Health care
- Affordability and housing
- Education
- The economy
- Environment
- Trusted leadership

We invite you to explore the commitments we have made within each priority area, as well as updates on our achievements and the metrics we use to measure success. For more information, visit: gnb.ca/accountability.

HIGHLIGHTS

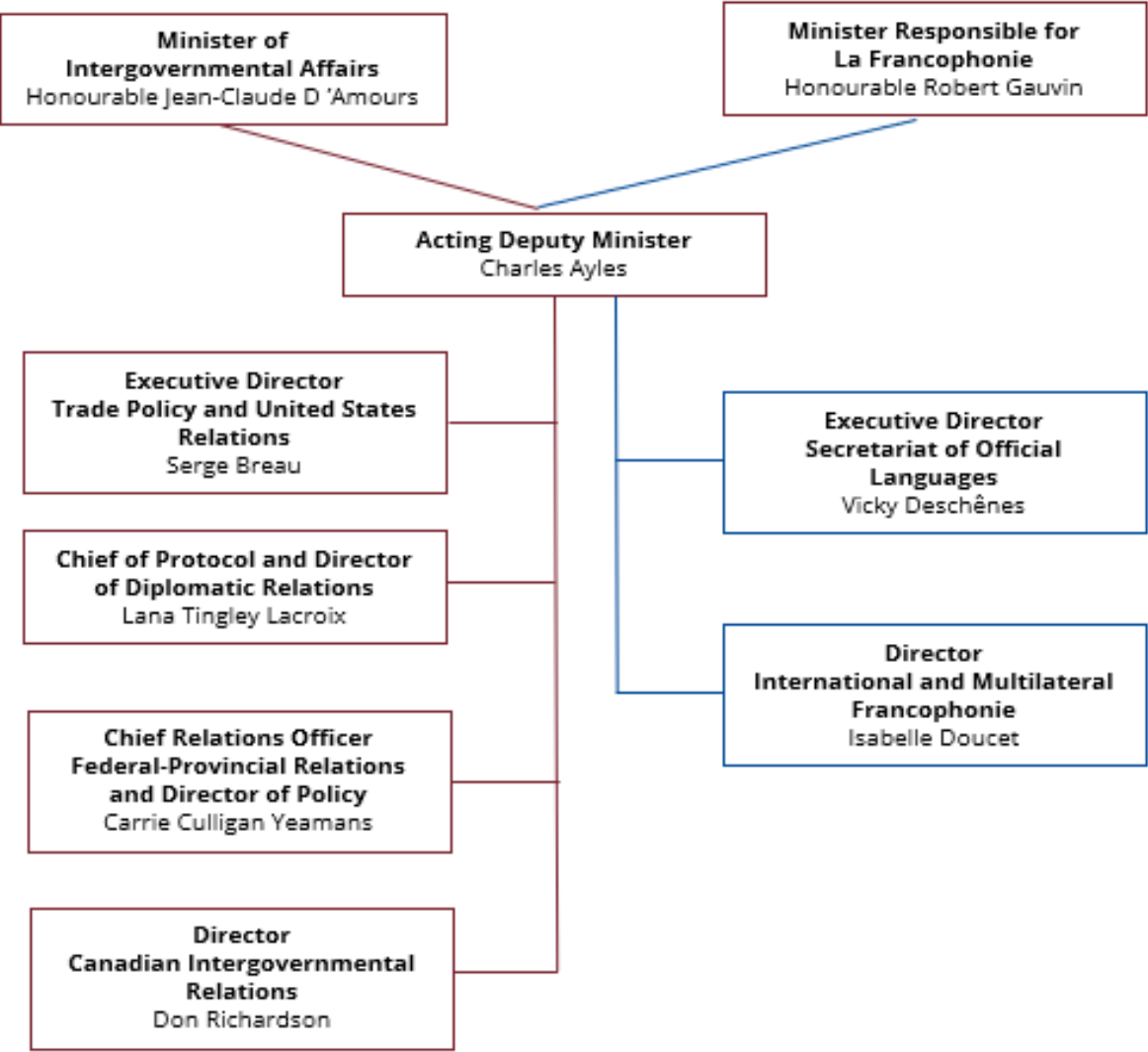
During the 2024-2025 fiscal year, Intergovernmental Affairs accomplished the following government priorities:

- Assisted with the development of the Government of New Brunswick's Tariff Response Plan and promoted and defended the province's interests through Canada's negotiation of free trade agreements.
- Supported the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs at four Canadian Internal Trade (CIT) meetings between January and March 2025 – an unusual frequency compared to the typical single annual meeting – including two held in-person; led New Brunswick's ongoing implementation of the CIT's action plan, which was endorsed by First Ministers with varying timelines extending to December 2025; and coordinated the interdepartmental consultation and review process that led to the removal or amendment of nearly half of the province's party-specific exceptions under the Canadian Free Trade Agreement.
- Supported the Premier's participation at the February 2025 Council of the Federation Mission to Washington, New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers, and led United States (US) advocacy efforts which included meetings with key US interlocutors, government officials and congressional staff.
- Led New Brunswick's litigation efforts in the ongoing US-Canada softwood lumber dispute, including an annual administrative review of US duties on softwood lumber from Canada and challenges of those duties through the Canada-US-Mexico Agreement dispute settlement panel.
- Coordinated the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs' participation as co-chair at the annual Seamless Canada Steering Committee in-person meeting held in Ottawa in May 2024, a virtual meeting in January 2025, and organized the Minister's official visit to 5th Canadian Division Support Base Gagetown in January 2025 which included meetings with the Base Commander and senior leadership.
- Led the 2024-2031 implementation plan for the *Official Languages Act* which received government approval and was published and circulated to government departments and agencies.
- Supported the Minister of La Francophonie at various meetings including: Conseils Permanent de la Francophonie, Conférence des ministres de l'Éducation des États, et Gouvernements de la Francophonie et Conférence des ministres de la Jeunesse et du Sport, as well as signing international, national and intergovernmental agreements with: le Département de la Vienne – France, la Louisiane, le Bénin, la Côte d'Ivoire, le Maroc, the federal government, Quebec, Manitoba, and Ontario.
- Continued to implement the France development strategy and began the development of New Brunswick's strategy for Francophone Africa.
- Implemented the King Charles III Coronation medal program for the Province of New Brunswick, administered the Order of New Brunswick, assisted with the installation of the new government and New Brunswick's 33rd Lieutenant Governor, as well as managing several diplomatic missions.
- Supported the Premier in the role as chair of the Council of Atlantic Premiers for 2025 and prepared for a series of meetings held with First Ministers, the Council of the Federation, Atlantic Premiers, and the Atlantic Growth Strategy.

OVERVIEW OF DEPARTMENTAL OPERATIONS

The mandate of Intergovernmental Affairs is to provide a strategic and corporate approach to the management of relations with other governments, communities, and organizations in support of the government's vision of New Brunswick.

High-Level Organizational Chart



DIVISION OVERVIEW

TRADE POLICY AND US RELATIONS

The Trade Policy Division aims to maximize opportunities and minimize constraints inherent in trade relations for all New Brunswickers, by actively engaging in the advocacy, negotiation, implementation, and dispute settlement aspects of domestic and international trade agreements. The trade-related responsibilities include supporting the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, as Minister responsible for Trade at the Committee on Internal Trade (CIT), a federal-provincial-territorial (FPT) ministerial table which oversees the implementation of the Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA). The division also promotes the Government of New Brunswick's interests in the United States by strengthening partnership with US States, including through the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premier's Conference (NEG-ECP), and the South-East US – Canadian Provinces Alliance (SEUS-CP). The division also provides support to the Minister responsible for Military Affairs.

SECRETARIAT OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

The mandate of the Secretariat of Official Languages is to promote the *Official Languages Act* and to administer its full implementation.

The Secretariat has three main functions:

- **Coordination:** to provide advice and work with government institutions regarding the Act; meet the needs of the two linguistic communities; develop, review and evaluate the implementation plan required by the Act; prepare an annual report on outcomes based on the activities undertaken as part of the Act; evaluate the Act on a continual basis and make recommendations for amendments as required.
- **Support:** to provide the appropriate support to government employees so they can work in an environment conducive to the use and learning of both official languages as stipulated in the Language of Service Policy and Guidelines, and the Language of Work Policy Guidelines.
- **Promotion:** to undertake public outreach campaigns to promote respect, knowledge, and communication between the two linguistic communities and the economic benefits of bilingualism in the province; and to ensure regular consultation with various stakeholders from both linguistic communities.

The Secretariat continues to be responsible for the coordination and promotion of activities of GNB within the provincial and Canadian Francophonie. It also interacts with its counterparts in the other provincial and territorial governments and the Government of Canada in the Francophonie and is involved with the various authorities of the Francophonie in provincial and national associations.

INTERNATIONAL AND MULTILATERAL FRANCOPHONIE

The mandate of the International and Multilateral Francophonie Branch is to coordinate New Brunswick's participation in the work and bodies related to the International Organization of La Francophonie (OIF) and its member states.

The Branch coordinates the implementation of bilateral agreements with OIF member states as well as exploratory missions to countries throughout the Francophonie with the objective of identifying economic, cultural, institutional and other opportunities for the people of New Brunswick.

The Branch is staffed by four persons, including a permanent correspondent to the OIF in Paris. An expert in decentralized cooperation was loaned to the Branch by the Government of France in November 2023 for a two-year term.

OFFICE OF PROTOCOL

Protocol, at the heart of New Brunswick's diplomatic and international engagement, allows the province to build bridges between New Brunswick and foreign governments, promote New Brunswick's economic and cultural agenda to foreign audiences, create a lasting positive image of the province, and nurture ongoing relationships with diplomats and dignitaries both in Canada and abroad.

CANADIAN INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS AND FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL RELATIONS

Canadian Intergovernmental Relations seeks to promote New Brunswick's interests within the Canadian federation, pursue regional cooperation in achieving New Brunswick's social and economic priorities, and to leverage investments by the federal government in achieving the province's key public policy objectives.

Canadian Intergovernmental Relations coordinates New Brunswick's participation as a member of the Council of the Federation, the Council of Atlantic Premiers, meetings of the Atlantic Growth Strategy Leadership Committee, and with the federal government through meetings of First Ministers, as well as supporting departments in their ministers' participation in federal-provincial-territorial ministerial tables.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

2024-2025 Expenses	Budget	Actuals	Variance
Executive Office	\$920,753	\$379,263	\$541,490
Canadian Francophonie and Official Languages	\$4,793,588	\$6,973,248	(\$2,179,660)
Federal Provincial Relations	\$897,883	\$599,116	\$298,767
International Francophonie	\$1,603,198	\$1,688,734	(\$85,536)
International Relations and Office of Protocol	\$515,723	\$408,931	\$106,792
Trade Policy	\$1,225,539	\$1,310,880	(\$85,341)
Total IGA Expenses	\$9,956,684	\$11,360,172	(\$1,403,488)
2024-2025 Revenues	\$2,210,000	\$4,697,048	(\$2,487,048)

SUMMARY OF STAFFING ACTIVITY

Pursuant to section 4 of the *Civil Service Act*, the Secretary to Treasury Board delegates staffing to each Deputy Head for his or her respective department(s). Please find below a summary of the staffing activity for 2024-2025 for Intergovernmental Affairs.

NUMBER OF PERMANENT AND TEMPORARY EMPLOYEES AS OF DEC. 31 OF EACH YEAR		
EMPLOYEE TYPE	2024	2023
Permanent	23	22
Temporary	1	1
TOTAL	24	23

The department advertised 0 competitions, including 0 open (public) competitions and 0 closed (internal) competitions.

Pursuant to sections 15 and 16 of the *Civil Service Act*, the department made the following appointments using processes to establish merit other than the competitive process:

APPOINTMENT TYPE	APPOINTMENT DESCRIPTION	SECTION OF THE CIVIL SERVICE ACT	NUMBER
Specialized Professional, Scientific or Technical	An appointment may be made without competition when a position requires: - a high degree of expertise and training - a high degree of technical skill - recognized experts in their field	15(1)	0
Equal Employment Opportunity Program	Provides Aboriginals, persons with disabilities and members of a visible minority group with equal access to employment, training and advancement opportunities.	16(1)(a)	0
Department Talent Management Program	Permanent employees identified in corporate and departmental talent pools, who meet the four-point criteria for assessing talent, namely performance, readiness, willingness and criticalness.	16(1)(b)	1
Lateral transfer	The GNB transfer process facilitates the transfer of employees from within	16(1) or 16(1)(c)	1

APPOINTMENT TYPE	APPOINTMENT DESCRIPTION	SECTION OF THE CIVIL SERVICE ACT	NUMBER
	Part 1, 2 (school districts) and 3 (hospital authorities) of the Public Service.		
Regular appointment of casual/temporary	An individual hired on a casual or temporary basis under section 17 may be appointed without competition to a regular properly classified position within the Civil Service.	16(1)(d)(i)	1
Regular appointment of students/apprentices	Summer students, university or community college co-op students or apprentices may be appointed without competition to an entry level position within the Civil Service.	16(1)(d)(ii)	0

Pursuant to section 33 of the *Civil Service Act*, 0 complaints alleging favouritism were made to the Deputy Head of Intergovernmental Affairs and 0 complaints were submitted to the Ombud.

SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION AND LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

Intergovernmental Affairs did not have any legislative nor regulation changes in 2024-2025.

SUMMARY OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACTIVITIES

Introduction

The Department of Intergovernmental Affairs continues to work hard to meet its official languages objectives.

Strategic Objective 1

Ensure high quality, equal bilingual services to all New Brunswickers:

The Department believes in the utmost importance to offering equal, high-quality bilingual services to New Brunswickers. Management ensures that the teams in place meet the language profile requirements for providing services to the public in both official languages at all times.

Through the Secretariat of Official Languages, which is under the Department's responsibility, management participated in the production of mandate letters for ministers of the new government as well as for the heads of agencies to remind them of their duties and responsibilities with respect to official languages.

The Office of Protocol carried out its activities in both official languages with respect to protocol visits, international missions or discussions with other provinces and territories and the federal government.

All news releases issued in relation to meetings of the Council of Atlantic Premiers, the First Ministers Conference, First Ministers Meetings, and the Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers were disseminated in both official languages simultaneously.

The Secretariat of Official Languages has redesigned the training modules for Part I personnel on the Official Languages Act and the Language of Service Policy. These modules are intended to make employees in the public service and various government institutions more aware of their official languages responsibilities and to ensure the provision to the public of equal quality services in both official languages.

Strategic Objective 2

Provincial government employees are able to work and pursue a career in the official language of their choice:

The Department provides all of its employees with support to work in their official language of choice. This is a core value of the Department. Employees are encouraged to speak in the official language of their choice and have access to work tools to perform their tasks successfully. In addition, performance assessments are done in the employees' choice of official language and second language training is always available if necessary. Weekly senior management meetings and team meetings are bilingual.

The Secretariat also redesigned the Language of Service Policy training module intended for Part I employees. This module is intended to inform public service employees of their rights and responsibilities under the Official Languages Act in order to create a positive and inclusive work environment.

Strategic Objective 3

New Brunswickers understand the socio-economic benefits of bilingualism through improved and effective communication and better support.

Speeches and presentations on the economic benefits of bilingualism were given during the Francophone Economy Agora of the Ministers' Council on the Canadian Francophonie, held in Halifax in August 2024, and the annual meeting of the Tourism Industry Association of New Brunswick in November 2024.

To achieve the performance indicators set out in the GNB Implementation Plan for Official Languages for 2024–2031, the Secretariat launched initiatives to conduct a study on the economic spinoffs of bilingualism for the Province's GDP.

Strategic Objective 4

Positive measures are implemented to promote the development of both official linguistic communities:

The Department plays an important role to ensure the development of the two official language communities.

The 2024–2025 fiscal was a busy year with the renewal of two major funding agreements on services in French and minority language education and second language teaching between the federal and New Brunswick governments. These agreements make it possible to invest substantial funding in the development of the two official language communities.

The Department approved various community projects as part of its collaboration agreements with Quebec and Manitoba. The Secretariat of Official Languages also participated in discussions with the Ontario government to draft an agreement on strengthening cooperation on Francophone issues.

Lastly, in order to promote bilingualism in New Brunswick and bring the two official language communities closer together, the Department, through the Secretariat of Official Languages, has provided a number of bilingual organizations with funding to hold community events.

The Secretariat collaborated with the Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture in designating Heritage Week 2025, held from February 10 to 17, by proposing the theme of: Celebrating New Brunswick's Official Languages.

Conclusion

The Department of Intergovernmental Affairs, in its role as a New Brunswick government central agency, takes its official languages responsibilities very seriously and continually provides services for the public and for government agencies and departments in both official languages.

Interdepartmental initiatives, such as the second edition of the Dictée P.G.L. (where the participation rate increased by 25% from the year before), celebrations associated with Official Languages Day in

the provincial capital, distribution in all departments of new posters on the active offer of service in both official languages, and the redesigning of official languages training modules are concrete examples of senior management's and the team's commitment.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

Intergovernmental Affairs did not receive any recommendations from the Office of the Auditor General for the current reporting year and the previous year.

REPORT ON THE PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE ACT

As provided under section 18(1) of the *Public Interest Disclosure Act*, the chief executive shall prepare a report of any disclosures of wrongdoing that have been made to a supervisor or designated officer of the portion of the public service for which the chief executive officer is responsible. Intergovernmental Affairs did not receive any disclosures of wrongdoing in the 2024-2025 fiscal year.