

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**MORE CHANGE TO CANADA'S INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAWS ON THE WAY***by Eric D. Lavers*

On October 23, 2014, as part of the fall budget bill, the federal Government quietly tabled the second in a series of substantial reform packages to Canada's existing intellectual property regime. Following the introduction of new trademark laws earlier this year, a similar update of Canada's industrial design and patent laws will take effect when the bill is passed.

The patent reform appears designed to harmonize Canada's existing framework with that of its key trading partners, while at the same time making the system friendlier and more accessible to applicants. For example, a number of new provisions will simplify the process of filing and maintaining applications in effect. Unintentional abandonments of rights will also now have no impact on the validity of otherwise properly issued patents.

While not as extensive as the patent law reforms, the bill also includes many significant updates to Canada's industrial design laws. Industrial designs offer a relatively simple and inexpensive mechanism for protecting the ornamental appearance (as opposed to function) of a product or article. Most significantly, the new laws will pave the way for Canada's adoption of the *Hague Agreement on Industrial Designs*, which allows for design protection around the world through a single application.

By addressing notable deficiencies in the current system, these legislative reforms are both a welcome development and long overdue.

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