

FAIR Canada Applauds Simplified Complaints Process for Banking Consumers

TORONTO, ON, November 1, 2024 – Effective today, the Ombudsman for Banking Services and Investments (OBSI) becomes the sole external complaints body (ECB) for all banking complaints.

“Having OBSI as the single ECB will be better for everyone—especially for consumers who don’t have the capacity, time, or money to navigate the complex complaint-handling landscape,” said Jean-Paul Bureaud, Executive Director, FAIR Canada. “Banking clients will benefit from OBSI’s expertise in providing fair, efficient dispute resolution services to Canadian financial consumers for more than 25 years.”

The designation of OBSI as the sole ECB for banking is a change from the previous system with two ECBs: OBSI and ADR Chambers Banking Ombuds Office. A system that allows two banks to choose their ECB falls short of international standards and is cumbersome and unfair to consumers.

While this is a great step towards helping bank customers, there’s still more to be done to improve the complaints system for Canadian investors. FAIR Canada calls on governments and regulators to move forward with the Canadian Securities Administrators’ proposal to grant [OBSI binding authority](#).

Binding authority means investment firms must comply with OBSI’s decisions. Currently, they can simply ignore OBSI’s recommendations for resolving investor complaints fairly and impartially. Some investment firms even pressure customers into accepting lower compensation than what OBSI suggests. From 2015 to 2020, investment firms paid consumers nearly \$3 million less than OBSI had recommended.

“For more than a decade, FAIR Canada and fellow consumer groups have advocated for binding authority, as it will level the playing field between consumers and investment firms,” said Bureaud. “It will also align Canada with international standards for dispute resolution and boost confidence in its financial markets. Binding authority would mark a major milestone in ensuring fairer outcomes for consumers in their investment disputes.”

Updated Consumer Complaint Guide Available

FAIR Canada has updated its online guide: “[Getting Your Money Back: An Investor’s Guide to Navigating Canada’s Complaint System](#).” to reflect the latest changes in Canada’s complaint-handling process. The Guide is an easy-to-follow, comprehensive overview designed to help Canadians resolve complaints with their bank or investment firm.

About FAIR Canada

FAIR Canada champions the rights of individual investors in Canada through advocacy, education, and regulatory advancements. We are the trusted, independent voice on significant issues that affect individual investors. As Canada’s only non-profit, investor-focused organization, we provide informed, objective comments on regulatory matters that have an impact on investor fairness and protection. Learn more about investor rights at [FAIRCanada.ca](https://faircanada.ca) and connect with us on [X](#) (formerly Twitter) and [LinkedIn](#).

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