



Mr. E. David Crossin, Q.C.
Chair, Board of Directors
Legal Services Society
400 – 510 Burrard Street
Vancouver BC V6C 3A8

Dear Mr. Crossin:

David:

I want to thank you and the other members of the Legal Services Society (LSS) board and executive for meeting with me to discuss justice system reform on January 10. Your vision for a more effective and efficient justice system is one that I am confident is shared by all British Columbians and certainly by this government. I also share your opinion that innovative reforms are needed to reduce the cost and complexity of our justice system.

On February 8, 2012, the premier and I made a significant announcement with respect to justice reform. We have appointed Mr. Geoff Cowper, Q.C. to chair our justice reform initiative. This initiative takes the perspective that our justice system is in need of change, and this government is prepared to lead this change and demand better accountability and outcomes in our justice system.

As set out in the *Legal Services Society Act*, one of the roles of LSS is "... to provide advice to the Attorney General respecting legal aid and access to justice for individuals in British Columbia." In this capacity I am seeking your advice on a number of issues:

- new legal aid service delivery models;
- changes to the LSS tariffs to provide incentives for justice system efficiencies;
- the use of tele-communications and the Justice Centre; and
- how LSS might diversify its revenue stream to expand non-governmental revenue in a manner which will permit funding stability.

In considering these matters I ask that you consider, but not be bound by, prior work undertaken in these areas and the experiences of other jurisdictions and that you consult with stakeholders as necessary. Please also consider the current concerns raised by the Bar as manifested in the duty counsel withdrawal. One of the goals of this advice should be to reduce the costs of delivering current services so that savings can be reallocated to enhance legal aid.

.../2

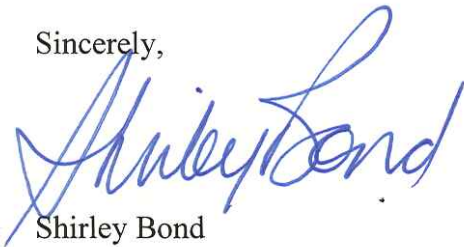
Mr. E. David Crossin, Q.C.
Page 2

As you conduct this work, I encourage you to engage with Mr. Cowper as part of the justice reform initiative. I believe that the advice you will provide with respect to legal aid is very much a part of our broader look at how we administer justice services in British Columbia.

The government recently announced an increase to annual legal aid funding of \$2.1 million to maintain current family law and child protection legal aid services. While the government will continue its efforts to find additional resources for legal aid, given the current economic climate you should assume in preparing your advice that the annual revenue from government will remain at \$68.6 million.

I would be grateful if you could provide your advice not later than July, 2012. Please accept my thanks in advance for your considered advice. I look forward to further discussions about how reforms and efficiencies in legal aid and access to justice may be realized.

Sincerely,



Shirley Bond
Minister of Justice
and Attorney General



**Legal
Services
Society**

Providing legal aid
in British Columbia
since 1979

Suite 400
510 Burrard Street
Vancouver, BC V6C 3A8

Tel: (604) 601-6000
Fax: (604) 682-0914
www.lss.bc.ca

Office of the Executive Director

February 10, 2012

The Honourable Shirley Bond
Attorney General and Minister of Justice
PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
PO Box 9044 St. Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Madam Attorney-General,


Thank you for your recent correspondence seeking our advice regarding legal aid services and funding. We are heartened by your commitment to improving BC's justice system and I look forward to presenting our report later this year.

The Legal Services Society ("LSS") is committed to working with you to improve the efficiency of our justice system, to reduce the cost and to improve the system's effectiveness in helping people resolve their legal problems and get on with their lives. We know that each year it is costing us more to provide the same services because of justice system inefficiencies. As a result of delays in the justice system people are not able to resolve their problems quickly, which results in further problems in our social services and health sectors. So we are seeing the impact of justice system inefficiencies on three fronts.

LSS is involved in more aspects of the justice system than any other single institution; we are involved with criminal defendants, family litigants, as a public legal education provider, a fee payer, a trial manager, a justice policy developer and advisor, and we are obliged to work in the public's interest. We see the need for change on a daily basis and recognize that it is the whole system that requires review.

I look forward to updating you on our progress on this work as our schedules permit and hope that you will be able to join me and the rest of the board for a discussion in March.

Yours truly,



E. David Crossin, QC,
Chair - LSS Board of Directors

Cc: Jay Chalke, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of AG
M. Benton, QC, Executive Director