



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

MAY 01 2019

Ms. Celeste Haldane, Chair
Board of Directors
Legal Services Society
400 – 510 Burrard Street
Vancouver BC V6C 3B9

Dear Ms. Haldane:

On behalf of the Government of British Columbia, I approve the revised 2019/20 three-year budget management plan for Legal Services Society (LSS) as submitted on April 11, 2019, reflecting the funding increases confirmed on Budget Day, assuming we have a common understanding and agreement on the following points:

1. As you know, budget decisions regarding legal aid were informed by a number of sources, primarily platform commitments, mandate letters and budget proposals. Treasury Board (TB) has advised that funding must be directed towards the purpose for which it was approved. I understand that ministry staff has provided you with the appropriate details of funding for each purpose. As such, please notify ministry staff if new priorities arise that have not been otherwise addressed so they may be discussed at the Ministry/LSS working group as per the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
2. I understand the main priorities of the LSS Board align closely with those of government, especially related to Indigenous justice and family legal aid services. I assume your plans and priorities for allocation of government legal aid funding prioritize tariff services as follows. If not, please advise ministry staff so that we can come to a common understanding of the priorities and next steps:
 - a. Indigenous justice: I appreciate the progress you have made in the expansion of the Parents' Legal Centre to more locations, guided by the Grand Chief Ed John's recommendations and results of current consultations with Indigenous communities. I look forward to information on production of Gladue reports and further enhancement of your Gladue Report Program.
 - b. Family services: The top priority is to reinstate the extended family services that were discontinued in 2016 and advance family case conferences. I appreciate the progress you have made to date in these areas.
 - c. Criminal services: I expect LSS is planning to launch the Expanded Criminal Duty Counsel model to more locations and advance weekend and evening bail and transcripts.

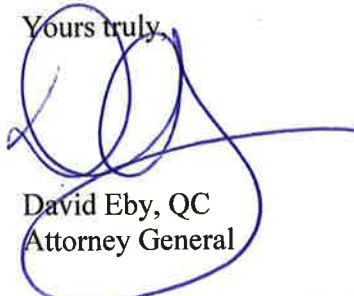
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3. I realize that compensation for legal aid lawyers continues to be of concern. As you are aware, government is engaged in dialogue with representatives for legal aid lawyers on this matter and some progress has been made. In the meantime I ask that you earmark \$1 million of the \$4.7M legal aid expansion envelope for the continuation of the incentive-based compensation plan for fiscal 2019/20. Please work with ministry staff to report and assess outcomes of the first year of implementation of this incentive in 2018/2019.
4. I expect that any mitigation strategies that impact service delivery would only be undertaken after all administrative spending options have been assessed jointly by LSS and ministry staff and approved by the LSS Board. On a related note, I look forward to progress on goals set to reduce administration costs.
5. I have also asked ministry staff to work with you to clarify administration costs related to the delivery of legal aid, specifically separating out direct versus indirect administration costs.
6. Please continue to work with government communications staff on the key messaging and timing of any public communications that have, or may be perceived as having, ministry impacts.
7. Finally, as the ministry charts a path forward for responding to the recommendations of the Maclaren report, I expect you will play a role in the design and implementation of possible solutions for improving access to legal aid services for British Columbians. I appreciate your insightful and valuable contributions to the review process to date.

Please submit LSS's first forecast for fiscal year 2019/20 to ministry staff by Monday, May 6, 2019, for large and major cases (Categories B and C per the MOU) and advise of any notable variances in other budget areas.

I appreciate the considerable time and diligence that you, the LSS board, and staff have dedicated to the budget development process and look forward to ongoing collaboration with LSS.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'David Eby', written over a circular stamp or seal.

David Eby, QC
Attorney General

pc: Mr. Richard J. M. Fyfe, QC
Mr. Kurt J. W. Sandstrom, QC
Mr. Mark Benton, QC