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Premier's instructions to the Minister on priorities for the year 2014



September 25, 2014

The Honourable Madeleine Meilleur
Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs
Ministry of the Attorney General
720 Bay Street
11th Floor, McMurtry-Scott Building
Toronto, Ontario
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Dear Minister Meilleur:

I am honoured to welcome you back to your role as Attorney General. We have a strong Cabinet in place, and I am confident that together we will build Ontario up, create new opportunities and champion a secure future for people across our province. The people of Ontario have entrusted their government to be a force for good, and we will reward that trust by working every day in the best interests of every person in this province.

As we implement a balanced and comprehensive plan for Ontario, we will lead from the activist centre. We will place emphasis on partnerships with businesses, communities and people to help foster continued economic growth and make a positive impact on the lives of every Ontarian. This collaborative approach will shape all the work we do. It will ensure we engage people on the issues that matter the most to them, and that we implement meaningful solutions to our shared challenges.

Our government's most recent Speech from the Throne outlined a number of key priorities that will guide your work as minister. Growing the economy and helping to create good jobs are fundamental to building more opportunity and security, now and in the future. That critical priority is supported by strategic investments in the talent and skills of our people, from childhood to retirement. It is supported through the building of modern infrastructure, transit and a seamless transportation network. It is supported by a dynamic business climate that thrives on innovation, creativity and partnerships to foster greater prosperity. And it is reflected across all of our government, in every area, and will extensively inform our programs and policies.

As we move forward with our plan to grow the economy and create jobs, we will do so through the lens of fiscal prudence. Our 2014 Budget reinforces our commitment to balancing the budget by 2017-18; it is essential that every area adheres to the program-spending objectives established in it. We will choose to invest wisely in initiatives that strengthen Ontario's competitive advantage, create jobs and provide vital public services for our families. The President of the Treasury Board, collaborating with the Minister of Finance, will work closely with you and your fellow Cabinet members to ensure that our government meets its fiscal targets. The President of the Treasury Board will also lead the government's efforts on accountability, openness and modernization as we implement new accountability measures across government.

As the Attorney General, you are responsible for the administration of justice and ensuring a fair and accessible justice system. Equally important is that access to our system of justice must be guaranteed to everyone in our criminal, civil and family courts — and our adjudicative tribunals.

As Chief Law Officer of the Crown, you have a unique role in providing independent legal advice to Cabinet, with a special responsibility as the guardian of the rule of law. You are responsible for ensuring Cabinet is properly advised on the constitutionality and legal risks of all government initiatives. You and your ministry staff will also continue to provide legal advice to all ministries, and to review the conduct of litigation on behalf of the government.

Your ministry's specific priorities include:

Promoting Fairness and Access to Justice

- Continuing to focus on the delivery of legislative and systemic initiatives that promote fairness and access to our justice system for Ontarians.
- Engaging in discussions within the legal profession about improving access to justice. You will develop a strategy to expand Legal Aid support for the most vulnerable within our society by working to raise the income eligibility threshold to qualify for Legal Aid. Your goal is to ensure that more Ontarians in need are represented by a lawyer through Legal Aid — or have access to the legal supports they may need.
- Pursuing the re-introduction of legislation to protect the public from lawsuits intended to discourage public participation.
- Supporting the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in reviewing the scope and effectiveness of the Ontario Municipal Board and in recommending possible reforms to improve its role within the broader land use planning system.
- As the Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs, continuing to work to ensure ongoing improvement in the availability of French-language services within the justice system, including court services.

Building a Stronger Relationship between First Nations and the Justice System

- Continuing efforts to strengthen the relationship between Aboriginal Peoples and the justice system.
- Working with partner ministries and organizations, including the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, and with First Nations to continue to implement the recommendations of the Iacobucci report, First Nations Representation on Ontario Juries.

- Working with the Jury Review Implementation Committee and the Advisory Group to achieve significant progress in capacity-building and education, making the jury system more accessible and improving the prospective pool of jurors.
- Working with other ministries to ensure continued consultation with First Nation representatives about increasing positive participation in, and access to, the court system. You will also continue to support innovative initiatives to address self-represented litigants.

Moving Ahead on Court Reform

- Continuing to modernize and streamline our court services. Your ongoing focus will be on improving access to justice, increasing efficiency and improving services through innovative, low-cost and sustainable changes.
- Developing a comprehensive strategy to address systemic challenges related to bail, sureties, remand and delay. You will work with your partner ministries and consult with stakeholders on this strategy, which will include a co-ordinated approach that incorporates mental health initiatives for the accused.

Reforming the Family Law System

- Continuing to work with other partner ministries on family law reform, with a focus on creating a holistic system that promotes family health and access to justice. Your priority will be identifying ways to triage cases at the initial stages. Your goals are to address families that require additional support due to domestic violence, mental health or other concerns — and to ensure families get the help they need as early as possible.
- Collaborating with the judiciary to develop a more harmonized family court system in Ontario. This will include ensuring that, wherever possible, one judge oversees a case from beginning to end.

Building Safer Communities

- Working with the Minister of Children and Youth Services, and the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services to address challenges with violent crime involving young offenders and victims. You will continue to collaborate on important programs, such as the Youth Action Plan.
- Assisting the police in their pursuit of measures to keep guns out of Ontario and get handguns off our streets. This issue requires engagement at all levels of government.

Cracking Down on Auto Insurance Fraud

- Protecting Ontario consumers by continuing to be tough on auto insurance fraud.
- Working with the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, and stakeholders to explore potential enhancements to serious fraud investigations and prosecutions, with a special focus on auto insurance fraud.

We have an ambitious agenda for the next four years. I know that, by working together in partnership, we can be successful. The above list of priority initiatives is not meant to be exhaustive, as there are many other responsibilities that you and your ministry will need to carry out. To that end, this mandate letter is to be used by your ministry to develop more detailed plans for implementation on the initiatives above, in addition to other initiatives not highlighted in this letter.

I ask that you continue to build on the strong relationships we have with the Ontario Public Service, the Broader Public Sector, other levels of government, and the private, non-profit and voluntary sectors. We want to be the most open and transparent government in the country. We want to be a government that works for the people of

this province — and with them. It is of the utmost importance that we lead responsibly, act with integrity, manage spending wisely and are accountable for every action we take.

I look forward to working together with you in building opportunity today, and securing the future for all Ontarians.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Wynne
Premier

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