

Ministry of the Attorney General Ministère du Procureur général

Office of the Deputy Attorney
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Cabinet du Sous-procureur
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June 15, 2020

Christopher Tyrell
Committee Clerk
Legislative Assembly Branch
1405-99 Wellesley Street West
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A2

Dear Mr. Tyrell,

Thank you for your letter dated April 28, 2020. I appreciate that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts is interested in obtaining an update on our Ministry's action plans in response to the Auditor General's 2019 reports on Criminal Courts, Family Courts and Court Operations.

As you are aware, we are currently in unprecedented times with the COVID-19 pandemic and this has had a significant impact on our Ministry and its operations, specifically, courts. The Ministry has activated its Continuity of Operations Plan and is currently in emergency operations mode. Our ministry is currently focused on delivering essential and critical services and preparing for recovery for when the emergency is lifted.

While initial project management and research has commenced on a number of the recommendations, the Ministry has been focused for several months on emergency response and priority operations related to the COVID-19 virus. Therefore, the Ministry has not been able to prioritize responding to the report's recommendations such that a meaningful report back to the Committee could be submitted.

Additionally, in the past few months, the Ministry has implemented new interim processes and technologies as the immediate response to the COVID-19 emergency. As part of the recovery efforts, the Ministry is also exploring various new business processes and new electronic platforms to ensure that courts can run virtually to support safety of staff, justice sector stakeholders and court users. The successful implementation of these new processes and technologies could impact and change the Ministry's responses to the Auditor's recommendations.

We are committed to improving operations at Ontario's courts, which includes addressing the audit recommendations. Given the unique and challenging circumstances, I am requesting that the Committee allow the Ministry to fully recover its operations before requesting a progress update on the audit recommendations. We estimate being able to provide a report back in Q3 2020-21.

Please confirm with Pratima Gounden, Executive Advisor to the CAO/ADAG, CSMD, whether this is acceptable to the Committee. You may contact Pratima at Pratima.Gounden@ontario.ca.

Sincerely,



Irwin Glasberg
Deputy Attorney General

CC: Catherine Fife, MPP, Chair of the Committee
Bonnie Lysyk, Auditor GeCriminal Law Division