



March 27, 2020

Dear Members of the Legal Community in Ontario,

As communicated in my March 15, 2020 Notices to the Profession, the decision to suspend all but urgent matters in the Ontario Superior Court of Justice (SCJ), effective March 17, 2020 was not made lightly. It was a necessary step to protect all involved in SCJ proceedings during the COVID-19 crisis.

Since the suspension, all members of the SCJ's Council of Regional Senior Judges have been discussing our capacity to expand operations. We know the profession, along with our judges and masters, are eager to do more. The primary impediment has been the ability of the Court to receive filed materials in an electronic format, as well as the provision of other court-related support necessary to run a virtual court. The Court knows, however, that it has a constitutional responsibility to ensure access to justice remains available.

Accordingly, with the support of the Council of Regional Senior Judges, the scope of events that may be heard remotely by the Superior Court of Justice will expand, effective April 6, 2020. I am seeking the advice of each Regional Senior Judge on each region's capacity to expand services in this next phase of virtual court expansion. I accept that not all eight regions of the Court are alike – some may be better equipped to hear more types of events than others.

By Thursday April 2, 2020, I expect to issue further Notices to the Profession which will itemize the Court's plan for expanded virtual courts, effective April 6, 2020.

Thank you for your patience and continued support during this time.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Geoffrey B. Morawetz".

Geoffrey B. Morawetz,  
Chief Justice.

C: The Honourable Doug Downey, Attorney General of Ontario