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Ontario

Our Reference #: M08-06819

OCT 15 2008

Mr. Julian N. Falconer
Falconer Charney LLP
8 Prince Arthur Avenue
Toronto, ON
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Dear Mr. Falconer:

Thank you for your letter of September 10, 2008, about the inclusion of First Nations persons in the jury selection system in Ontario. I appreciate the time you have taken to outline your concerns and I take the issues you have raised very seriously. I wish to advise you that I am also in receipt of a letter from Deputy Grand Chief Fiddler of Nishnawbe Aski Nation, dated September 21, 2008, indicating that Grand Council Treaty #3 and the Chiefs of Ontario have now joined the Coalition. The letter further asks that I make arrangements to contact the Coalition only through your office.

We are committed to working with our Aboriginal partners to ensure a fair and accessible justice system that meets the diverse needs of all participants. The Ministry has taken a number of steps to obtain up-to-date information from First Nations communities to ensure the jury rolls are as complete as possible. I agree that our ongoing efforts would benefit immensely from the support and assistance of First Nations communities, and I look forward to working with you and the Coalition on this important matter.

I would like to meet with you and the Coalition. Please note that, prior to the receipt of Deputy Grand Chief Fiddler's letter, the Ministry had already been in contact with Chief Toulouse to set up a meeting in response to his September 17th letter to me. We had also invited Deputy Grand Chief Fiddler to that meeting prior to the receipt of his letter. I understand that Deputy Chief Fiddler has expressed an interest in meeting to raise his concerns. Please feel free to contact Maria Hart, my scheduler, at 416-326-4443, to discuss an appropriate time for a meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Bentley".

Hon. Chris Bentley
Attorney General