

For Immediate Release  
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### **CBA-NB opposes elimination of Small Claims Court**

**Saint John** – The New Brunswick Branch of the Canadian Bar Association (CBA-NB) strongly opposes the announcement that the Province of New Brunswick has decided to eliminate the Small Claims Court and transfer small claims cases to the New Brunswick Court of Queen’s Bench.

Edward Keyes, President of CBA-NB said “This is a step backwards, one which we believe will have serious ramifications on access to justice in this province”.

Small claims adjudicators were put in place in January of 1999 in order to reduce the backlog in the Court of Queen’s Bench. “Prior to the appointment of adjudicators there were 1,600 small claims waiting to be heard by a Judge. It took months for a small claims matter to be heard” said Keyes.

Transferring approximately 2,000 cases to the Court of Queen’s Bench will quickly create backlogs and will significantly impair the efficiencies that are now present in the Court of Queen’s Bench. “Litigants want their cases dealt with as quickly as possible. We fully expect that adding small claims to the already busy case load in the Court of Queen’s Bench will cause serious delays in having all cases heard by the Court” said Keyes.

CBA-NB disagrees with the argument that the elimination of the adjudicators will save money. “Any financial savings will be more than offset by the significant delays that will arise not only in small claims matters, but in all civil cases before the Court of Queen’s Bench,” counters Keyes. CBA-NB urges the Province of New Brunswick to reconsider this decision.

CBA-NB is a Branch of the Canadian Bar Association with 1,600 members in the province. The CBA is dedicated to improvement in the law, the administration of justice, and support for the rule of law. Some 38,000 lawyers, law teachers, and law students from across Canada are members.

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