



THE CANADIAN
BAR ASSOCIATION
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Office of the President
Cabinet du président

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Via email: julie.lemay-lafleur@scc-csc.ca

The Right Honourable Richard Wagner, P.C.
Chief Justice of Canada
Supreme Court of Canada
301 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0J1

Dear Chief Justice Wagner:

The Canadian Bar Association has long been a proponent of innovation that enhances access to justice. I was recently reminded of the first occasion in which counsel presented applications for leave to appeal via satellite from a Vancouver courtroom to the Supreme Court of Canada in Ottawa. That was a 1983 joint experiment of the CBA and SCC, with the hope that it would lead the way to expanded use of audio-video technology for leave applications from other locations across Canada.

Technology has brought us long past what we imagined in the 1980s. However, not all improvements in access to justice are technologically driven. That is why I read with interest your comments about the SCC considering hearings outside Ottawa. With the Court's investment in webcasting and availability for broadcasting, viewing a SCC hearing is within reach of many Canadians who have the financial and technological resources to access television or the internet. However, additional dimensions of understanding and appreciation of the SCC's work are available for those able to attend in person.

The CBA supports a principled approach to occasional SCC sittings outside Ottawa, taking several factors into consideration: the relationship to the region where the hearing would be held; the cost to the parties; opportunities for public engagement and education; and public perception of the stressors in the justice system generally.

The Canadian Bar Association appreciates the Supreme Court of Canada's commitment to enhancing public appreciation of Canada's law and democratic institutions.

Sincerely,

(original letter signed by Raymond G. Adlington)

Raymond G. Adlington