



October 8, 2003

The Honourable Allan Rock, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Industry
C.D. Howe Building
11th Floor, East Tower
235 Queen Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H5

Dear Minister:

Re: *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*

Thank you very much for your letter of August 23, 2003, congratulating the Canadian Bar Association on the launch of a National Privacy Law Section. Our members across Canada work with many different provincial and federal privacy laws. Their collective experience provides useful insight into the operation of privacy laws and their impact on the activities of citizens and organizations. Your letter was well timed, as the Section identified a number of concerns with the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act* and its expanded scope commencing January 1, 2004.

Such concerns, if unresolved, may impair Canada's Innovation Strategy and the development of Canadian information and communication technologies.

Some of the concerns are:

1. The challenge posed for organizations having to comply and train staff to deal with as many as three different privacy laws;
2. The multiplicity of laws that may apply to personal information exported from one province or territory and imported to another;
3. The difficulties surrounding "legacy information";
4. The wide differences in rules governing the collection, use and disclosure of personal health information across Canada.

Our Section believes there is a compelling need to address and resolve these kinds of concerns and others prior to the end of the year. Failure to do so may well result in much unnecessary difficulty for businesses, non-profit organizations and Canadians.

We request an opportunity to meet with you and your officials to discuss these matters at the earliest possible opportunity.

Yours truly,

Original copy signed by Tamra L. Thomson for Priscilla Platt.

Priscilla Platt
Chair
National Privacy Law Section