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Our Reference #: M-2020-9230

Dear Stakeholder,

I am writing to you again regarding reforms to the *Notaries Act* and the *Commissioners for Taking Affidavits Act, Bill 190*. The *COVID-19 Response and Reforms to Modernize Ontario Act* introduced a suite of amendments to both of these acts, and those changes were proclaimed into force on August 1st, 2020. Among other things, these changes permit paralegals to now apply for a lifetime appointment as a notary public in the same way as lawyers.

Bill 190 also paved the way for the development of regulations that set out the parameters for remotely commissioning a document. On August 1st, 2020, a new regulation was made under the *Commissioners for Taking Affidavits Act* to set out the framework for commissioners who wish to exercise their powers without being in the physical presence of the deponent or declarant. That regulation is available here: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/200431>.

Allowing for remote commissioning provides an alternative to in-person services, that will allow vulnerable Ontarians to obtain commissioner services more conveniently. Additionally, the framework will also support underserved communities, including Ontarians with mobility issues, Ontarians who do not live in urban areas, or Ontarians who need to obtain French-language commissioner services.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank everyone who participated in my ministry's stakeholder consultation sessions on remote commissioning in June and submitted written feedback through the Regulatory Registry. These forums for feedback have provided valuable insight regarding the wide range of sectors, stakeholders, and recipient organizations that could be impacted by a regulation that enables remote commissioning.

In response to stakeholder feedback and understanding that notarization is a more complicated process than commissioning, we are continuing to consult and work on a framework for establishing remote notarization in Ontario.

I see this as a positive step towards a more modern justice system in Ontario and providing Ontarians with increased access to, and choice in, commissioner and notary services and look forward to continuing this work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doug Downey".

Doug Downey
Attorney General