

Minister Kang,

I hope you are doing well – I know work during the pandemic is straining all of us!

I write to add my voice to those asking you to take another look at renewing the lease of the Law Courts Inn. As a lawyer, it has been an invaluable resource for me as a developing lawyer and would really hate to see its doors close.

I had the opportunity to participate in the Inns of Court program at the Inn back in 2014, and as a recently-called lawyer, it was an incredible experience to have face-to-face time with judges and senior lawyers, especially in a less formal setting where I got to speak to them on a personal level. It was a one-of-a-kind opportunity that meant a lot to me as a new lawyer.

I have also enjoyed many social events at the Inn, organized through the VBA and the Law Courts Inn Society – it has been without fail a great place to network with the legal community. It is a beautiful and unique setting not offered by other venues nearby.

Finally – eating lunch at the Inn while in the middle of a trial is a tradition I would hate to lose. It is important to have a space for lawyers within the courthouse, especially when we need to talk with our fellow counsel about time-sensitive trial issues over the lunch break. It is a place that promotes collegiality among bench and bar; that collegiality is an absolute necessity to a smoothly-functioning justice system.

I know that the courthouse is strapped for space due to the surge in trials and growing demands on the courthouse. I would urge you to find other alternatives. There is available office space nearby that could be taken on for administrative purposes or office space. You could work with the Attorney-General to find real solutions to knock down the trial backlog, especially in regards to the volume of trials that have been bumped/forced to proceed due to problematic changes in ICBC's settlement negotiation policies. Doing so would ease the demands on the courts.

Thank you for listening – the Law Courts Inn is a valuable institution to the legal world and to force it to close would damage the overall functioning of the court. It is not something to be dismissed as an afterthought, but a real, living part of keeping the system running well.

Sincerely,

Rory Johnston

Lawyer

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