

LAW COMMISSION OF ONTARIO RELEASES FINAL REPORT ON MODERNIZING THE *PROVINCIAL OFFENCES ACT*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TORONTO — November 10, 2011 - The Law Commission of Ontario (LCO) today released its Final Report on Modernizing the *Provincial Offences Act*. It includes major reforms to significantly change the way in which millions of provincial offences, including parking offences, are dealt with in Ontario each year.

Over two million provincial charges are brought annually under statutes governing public welfare matters such as traffic, liquor, occupational health and safety and environmental protection, among others. Yet the Act is unduly complex for the large majority of minor offences and it makes little distinction among the vastly different types of charges before the court. The LCO's key recommendations include:

- Replacing Part II of the POA which deals with parking offences with monetary penalties that could be disputed before a municipal hearings officer. Court resources would be reserved for more serious and complex matters.
- Replacing a single trial process with two processes, depending on the seriousness of the offence.
- Providing clear sentencing principles to help the court render appropriate and consistent sentences that will promote compliance with regulatory standards.
- Increasing the range of penalties available to be fairer to defendants and more appropriate to the objective to be achieved in the sentence.
- Making simple, plain language information guides available to defendants.
- Identifying future initiatives relating to Aboriginal communities and youth.

"The recommendations are designed to realize the principles of fairness, accessibility, efficiency and proportionality," says Dr. Patricia Hughes, Executive Director of the LCO.

Launched in September of 2007, the LCO operates independently of government to make recommendations that enhance access to justice and make laws more relevant and more efficient.

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