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Hon. Mickey Amery, ECA, KC
Minister of Justice & Deputy House Leader
Legislature Building, 10800-97 Ave.
Edmonton AB T5K 2B6
Via Email: ministryofjustice@gov.ab.ca

March 13, 2025

Dear Minister:

Thank you for your letter dated February 4, 2025, regarding investment in Alberta's legal aid plan.

CBA Alberta appreciates the government is carefully considering all options when it comes to funding legal aid, to ensure it is sustainable and efficient.

At a recent meeting, CBA Alberta's Legal Aid Working Group had the opportunity to review Bill 39: *Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2025*, which includes amendments impacting the Alberta Law Foundation (ALF). Members of the working group, who are senior members of the bar from across Alberta, are concerned about the proposed changes, respectfully.

In particular, the proposed changes introduce uncertainty and delay, as to whether grants approved by ALF, will ultimately be approved by the government. Many established *pro bono* legal services providers already rely on grants greater than \$250 000 from ALF; any delay in their receipt of funds may jeopardize their ability to provide legal services to vulnerable Albertans, or, frankly, worse, jeopardize their ability to exist. It is also noteworthy that organizations have already prepared robust grant applications for approval on March 16th, following a multi-month process of feedback and dialogue with ALF.

Respectfully, instead of requiring Ministerial approval for all grants greater than \$250 000, the government may wish to legislate additional screening, if and when appropriate, for major grantees and major gifts. Those particular recipients are unique and distinct, and the process should be separate and outside the scope of the existing ALF approval process, followed by numerous legal clinics and resource centres.

CBA Alberta encourages you to meet with various *pro bono* legal service providers and notably, members of the Alberta Law Foundation leadership, with the hope of reaching common ground, common goals and a path forward that serves the interests of all.



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CBA Alberta is confident this approach will support access to justice and ensure appropriate oversight, but without introducing unnecessary red tape.

Please advise if CBA Alberta can elaborate on the above.

Yours truly,
Canadian Bar Association – Alberta Branch

Robert D.L. Bassett
President

Cc: President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance