



Office of the Chief Executive Officer

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**CHIEF CORONER**

October 16, 2018

Lisa Lapointe  
Chief Coroner  
Province of British Columbia  
PO Box 9259  
Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC V8W 9J4

Dear Ms. Lapointe

**Re: Mutch BCCS Case File #2014-0380-0006**

Thank you for your August correspondence in this matter. It was most helpful in allowing us to frame this reply in what we hope will be a productive way.

In very limited circumstances, LSS does provide legal aid services to individuals whose involvement in a Coroner's inquest may result in their rights being at risk. Typically this arises where the inquest may lead to subsequent criminal prosecution of that person. As a result, LSS does have some experience with Coroner's inquests and, based on the details you provided, we have been able to estimate the resources that would be required to provide legal representation to families. Our estimate is that at current legal aid rates the total cost of legal aid services would be about \$325,000 per year.

If that level of funding was made available to LSS, we would be able to provide the service. Alternatively the Coroners Service could provide the fees directly to lawyers. As a result of the Jury's recommendation, LSS will raise this with the Attorney General at our next meeting. If the Coroner's Service shares the jury's view, it would be helpful if your service sought the support of the Solicitor General for funding for this purpose.

Thank you for providing the additional detail.

Yours truly,

Mark Benton, QC,  
Chief Executive Officer

Cc: Donita Kuzma, Presiding Coroner  
Heidi Mason, Acting Chief Executive Officer