

For Immediate Release  
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## **WEBCASTING OF COURT PROCEEDINGS BEGINS TODAY**

*Pilot Project Increases Public Access To The Justice System*

TORONTO — Starting today, some Ontario Court of Appeal proceedings will be webcast, recorded and available to the media as part of a pilot project, announced Attorney General Michael Bryant.

“We are giving the public a front row seat in the Court of Appeal,” said Bryant. “Webcasting court proceedings and providing same-day copies to the news media on DVD will increase the openness and transparency of our justice system, giving everyone a better look at the people, procedures and processes in our courtrooms.”

Certain proceedings in Courtroom #1 at the Court of Appeal will be recorded and streamed live on the Court’s Internet website at [www.ontariocourts.on.ca/appeal.htm](http://www.ontariocourts.on.ca/appeal.htm). DVD copies of recorded proceedings will be distributed to accredited media twice per day on request. They will also be available for use by journalism and law schools and other organizations for educational and training purposes. An audio feed box for reporters is available if audio recordings of proceedings are required. Recorded proceedings will be archived on the Court’s website for 90 days to ensure round-the-clock public access.

While cameras in the courtroom are generally prohibited under Ontario law, they are permitted for educational or instructional purposes, with approval from the presiding judge and consent from the parties and witnesses to the proceeding.

“I would like to commend the Attorney General on his progress implementing the use of cameras in the Court of Appeal,” said Patrick Monahan, Dean of Osgoode Hall Law School. “The government has come a long way in opening up the justice system to media and the public.”

“Staff at the Court of Appeal and the ministry have been working towards this launch for months,” said Bryant. “I would like to thank all parties and counsel who agreed to having their appeals recorded during the testing phase. Their cooperation and patience, along with that of the judges of the Court of Appeal, were essential to the development of this pilot project. Particular credit goes to Chief Justice Winkler for seeing this project through.”

For more information on how to access DVD copies of proceedings, members of the media may contact Lauralee Bielert, Counsel, Court of Appeal for Ontario at [lauralee.bielert@jus.gov.on.ca](mailto:lauralee.bielert@jus.gov.on.ca). Information on the schedule for recording cases will be available weekly on the Court's website at [www.ontariocourts.on.ca/appeal.htm](http://www.ontariocourts.on.ca/appeal.htm).

The pilot project responds to a recommendation made by the Panel on Justice and the Media. In its August 2006 report, the Panel made 17 recommendations on ways to improve mutual understanding between the justice system and the media. The McGuinty government is taking action on all recommendations and has already:

- Significantly cut the fees charged to view and photocopy case files in all provincially-administered courts
- Formed a Justice-Media Liaison Committee to bring together representatives from the judiciary, media, police, the legal community and the ministry to work together on justice-media issues as they arise
- Engaged in the development of learning materials for justice and media professionals and for high school students
- Created a justice-media section on the ministry's website, which includes information on resources and useful links
- Posted an updated staff directive on the ministry's policies and procedures governing access to court files, documents and exhibits on the ministry's website for media and the public
- Provided copies free of charge of informations, indictments and judicial interim release papers requested by accused persons and their counsel.

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