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2009 SEP -1 PM 4: 31



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September 1, 2009

The Honorable Emily Cain, House Chair  
The Honorable Bill Diamond, Senate Chair  
Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs  
State House, Room 228  
Augusta, ME 04330

Re: The Initiative to Streamline State Government

Dear Representative Cain, Senator Diamond and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs:

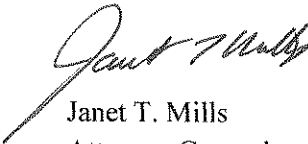
In fiscal years 2010 and 2011, reductions in the state budget required the Office of the Attorney General to achieve savings of nearly \$730,000, or approximately 10 % of the Attorney General's General Fund budget (not including the District Attorneys). In the past few months, three attorneys have been laid off, five other attorneys have had their duties reassigned, and two other attorneys have left our employ; neither these nor any other vacant General Fund positions have been filled, and there have been no new hires.

The formal General Fund "programs" within the Office as identified in the budget document are: Administration; Chief Medical Examiner's Office; District Attorneys; Civil Rights Team Project. The importance of these "programs" to the core mission of our office of investigating serious crimes, enforcing the laws and protecting victims is self-evident.

As a practical matter, the only small "programs" funded by the General Fund are the Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner (SAFE) program and the Civil Rights program. A third program, the Victims' Compensation program, has no General Fund dollars. We will be proposing to the legislature that Victims' Compensation funds be used to support part of the salary of the one employee who staffs the SAFE program. I have restructured the Civil Rights program to focus that program's attorney on consumer litigation as well as civil rights enforcement, while the core educational functions of the program will be supported instead by the curriculum coordinator currently on staff.

While streamlining the office and working to reduce even further the dependency of our small programs on the General Fund, I am also conducting an accounting of legal services performed for state agencies by lawyers outside the Office of the Attorney General. Under Title 5 M.R.S.A. Sections 191 and 192, the Attorney General's Office provides all legal services for the State of Maine, and outside legal services are permitted only with the approval of the Attorney General. Responses to this inquiry may provide a basis for achieving cost savings by having fewer legal services outsourced to private firms.

Yours very truly,



Janet T. Mills  
Attorney General

JTM:ms

Cc: Comm'r. Low