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Court of Appeal rules on City of Winnipeg Municipal Services in French

WINNIPEG, MB – November 23, 2009 – The Manitoba Court of Appeal has released its decision in the *R. v. Rémillard et al.* matter, confirming the City's obligation to provide bilingual municipal services in the designated district, in particular with respect to the French language obligations of the City of Winnipeg Police Service.

“The court has confirmed that residents of the bilingual district have a right to receive notices in both languages and that a breach of their language rights cannot be tolerated,” says Aimée Craft, lawyer for the respondents, a group of francophone citizens.

The respondents contested photo-radar tickets that were sent to them in a format which was not entirely bilingual, as mandated by *The City of Winnipeg Charter*. Their tickets were quashed by the Provincial Court, after which the Crown appealed the decision to the Manitoba Court of Appeal.

The appeal was heard in May 2009 and was the first entirely French hearing in the history of the court. The respondents made a motion for a panel of judges that would hear and understand the appeal in French, without translation or interpretation services. “The Chief Justice of Manitoba, Richard Scott, responded positively to the motion by granting the bilingual panel, naming on an ad hoc basis two Queen's Bench judges for this purpose. It was a first and certainly an excellent precedent for future cases that will be heard in French at the Court of Appeal and at other levels of courts and tribunals in Manitoba” says Aimée Craft.

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