

# The Liversidge e-Letter

An *Executive Briefing* on Emerging Workplace Safety and Insurance Issues

April 28, 2006

An Electronic Letter for the Clients of L.A. Liversidge, LL.B.

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## Government Proposes New WSIB Chair *Hon. Steven W. Mahoney P.C. Nominated*

### **The Hon. Steven W. Mahoney knows his way around the WSIB file**

Yesterday, the Government of Ontario nominated former MPP and federal Cabinet Minister Steve Mahoney as Chair of the WSIB Board of Directors, subject to review by the Standing Committee on Government Agencies.

If confirmed by the standing committee and appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, Mahoney would take over from current acting Chair Jill Hutccheon, who will remain as President. *"The renewal of the WSIB initiated by the McGuinty government will continue," said Labour Minister Steve Peters. "We believe Steve Mahoney shares our government's commitment to ensuring injured workers are treated with dignity, fairness and respect, and that the WSIB achieves its prevention goals while operating in a fiscally responsible and efficient way."*

Mr. Mahoney has over 26 years of political experience in all three levels of government. He was first elected to public office in 1978 as a City Councillor in Mississauga and the region of Peel. He was elected to the Ontario Legislature in 1987 where he served as the Chief Liberal Whip. His provincial political career included a strong run for the Leadership of the Liberal Party of Ontario. He was elected an MP, and in April, 2003, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien appointed Mr. Mahoney as Secretary of State for selected Crown Corporations including Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Canada Post, The Royal Canadian Mint, Queens Quay and The Old Port of Montréal. As Minister, he was responsible for affordable housing and administered over 2 billion dollars along with the provinces and territories.

### **Employers' Council of Ontario supports the nomination**

The Employers Council of Ontario (ECO) welcomed the nomination of Mr. Steve Mahoney as the new Chair of the WSIB's Board of Directors and signalled its intention to work diligently with Mr. Mahoney to address the pressing issues to restore system confidence.

### **Mr. Mahoney is well known to L.A. Liversidge clients**

While Mr. Mahoney has been removed from the provincial scene for several years (after serving as an MPP he was elected federally as an MP), during the time he was involved in provincial politics, Mr. Mahoney was greatly committed to effective workers' compensation reform. In the early 1990s, as many readers will recall, the Ontario workers' compensation scheme was experiencing one of its most trying times. Far reaching reform was needed. As is his style, Steve Mahoney took the bull by the horns and delved into the controversial arena of workers' compensation reform with an open mind and firm principles.

### **Back to the Future study unveiled at L.A. Liversidge client meeting**

I had the distinct honour of having Mr. Mahoney release the results of his own task force review of the Ontario workers' compensation system, entitled ***Back to the Future***, at an L.A. Liversidge client meeting on April 21, 1994. In the April 22, 1994 issue of ***The Liversidge FaxLine*** (the predecessor publication to ***The Liversidge e-Letter***), I reported Mr. Mahoney's overarching sentiments expressed at that meeting:

*"Justice Merideth was right when he said that the purpose of workers' compensation was so that "injured workers and their dependents could receive the benefits of speedy justice, humanely administered". Justice Merideth's principles were appropriate then and are even more relevant now".*

### **Mr. Mahoney is not shy to confront the tough questions**

On January 18, 1995, Steve very graciously returned to address my client group and answered some tough questions arising from his report. This is what I reported in the January 25, 1995 issue of ***The Liversidge FaxLine***:

*I was extremely impressed by Mr. Mahoney's directness and candour. He didn't hedge or evade the issues. You know where he stands.*

When confirmed, Mr. Mahoney will assume this pivotal position with strong stakeholder support. His personal style, commitment and compassion for injured workers will allow him to carve out solutions with a unique skill and ingenuity.