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March 18, 2019

Wisconsin State Supreme Court
c/o Clerk of Supreme Court
Attention: Deputy Clerk-Rules
P.O. Box 1688
Madison, WI 53701-1688

Re: Rule Petition 19-02

**In re Petition for the Creation of a Pilot Project and Interim Court Rule
Governing Electronic Filing in the Court of Appeals and Supreme Court**

To the Honorable Justices of the State Supreme Court:

I write in whole-hearted support of the Petition regarding electronic filing (“e-filing”) in the appellate courts, not just the proposed Pilot Project. This transition has already been accomplished in the circuit courts—and it is highly efficient and is an excellent means by which to continue to improve the prompt distribution of justice in our State. As part of the circuit court e-filing program, the compilation of the record on appeal has already been expedited, but the full expansion to the appellate courts is a necessary next step in bringing the legal system up to current technological speed.

Not only is e-filing a cost-saving mechanism, it assists in making certain that documents are more quickly filed and not lost in the mail. Importantly for both judges and counsel, it now incorporates document and page numbers; for that alone, this system should be expanded. It also frees up (to some extent) the time of clerks. Of course, there will always be some individuals who will file with the traditional method, but this program will greatly streamline the overall process. Moreover, any glitches (however few) have already been addressed in the roll-outs in the circuit courts, thus insuring a smoother path going forward.

Attorneys have been able to maneuver through the e-filing system with a minimal amount of training. And, as noted above, these same attorneys already are familiar with the system and will be able to pivot quickly to the new appellate Pilot Project.

Wisconsin State Supreme Court
March 18, 2019
Page 2

Finally, there is still the availability for judges to print out those documents that they wish—either to high-light or hand-write notes or just read the old-fashioned way. Even so, the amount of paper created in the system will be reduced exponentially. I'd also add that electronic filing at all levels has been the rule in federal courts for years, but I realize that state courts sometimes disdain comparison to the federal system of justice.

Accordingly, I commend the Clerk of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals for pursuing the expansion of e-filing to the appellate courts, and urge the State Supreme Court to adopt this Petition.

Sincerely,

/s/ Maria S. Lazar

Maria S. Lazar
Waukesha County Circuit Court Judge
Branch 7

c: Randy R. Koschnick, Director of State Courts (by email)