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Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

April 29, 2021

PRESIDING JUDGE ERIC C. TAYLOR ANNOUNCES NEW VOLUNTARY FAST TRACK PERSONAL INJURY BENCH TRIAL PILOT PROGRAM

Pilot Aims to Reduce Need for Personal Injury Jury Trials

Balancing safety and timely access to justice, the Superior Court of Los Angeles County is launching a new voluntary pilot program for litigants to obtain a prompt bench trial in cases assigned to the Personal Injury Hub courtrooms upon receipt of a stipulation by all parties to participate, Presiding Judge Eric C. Taylor announced today.

The Court offers this alternative in view of the current logistical concerns related to scheduling jury trials, resulting from the pandemic, as well as the high volume of cases in need of disposition. The 6-month pilot will take effect May 3, 2021 and end on November 1, 2021.

"Thanks to this pilot concept designed by Supervising Judge of Civil David J. Cowan and our Special Committee on Civil Jury Trials, our Civil bench hopes to provide this option to parties seeking swifter access to justice following pandemic-related delays," Presiding Judge Taylor said. "I am grateful for the support of our local bar groups, including CAALA, ASCDC, the LA Chapter of ABOTA, and LACBA, for reaching out to their members to publicize this pilot program as an option to resolve their cases. I understand how difficult these pandemic-related delays have been for attorneys and litigants. We

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PI PILOT
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will continue to explore and implement efficiencies and programs to expedite access to justice in Los Angeles County.”

Parties to a case who are willing to waive their right to a jury may sign up for this program electronically by submitting the attached form to Dept. 1 in the Stanley Mosk Courthouse via SMCDept1@lacourt.org. Once filed, their matter will be assigned to a Civil trial department for a bench trial within 60 days.

If requested, these bench trials also may be held remotely, potentially saving additional expense. Parties also may elect to enter into an agreement to a high-low valuation for purposes of trial. As a result, a defendant’s liability cannot exceed an agreed-upon amount and a plaintiff’s recovery could not be less than an agreed-upon amount. This agreement may be kept confidential until after trial.

To qualify for the program, counsel are required to represent they will be ready for trial within 60 days and will file all pre-trial documents at a final status conference that Dept. 1 will schedule with the assigned trial judge. The parties retain all rights afforded them under Code of Civil Procedure Section 170.6.

“The Court appreciates the thoughtful assistance and cooperation of all attorneys and parties as we work to resolve pandemic-related delays,” Presiding Judge Taylor said. “By reducing the number of cases awaiting jury trial, the Court can make more efficient use of juror assets for criminal and other cases.”

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SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES	
Plaintiff:	
Defendant:	
EXPEDITED PI COURT TRIAL REQUEST FORM	CASE NUMBER:

This new pilot program is designed to address the current waiting time for the hearing of jury trials of personal injury cases by offering an earlier case resolution alternative – a Voluntary Fast Track Personal Injury Bench Trial Program, which will result in a bench trial no later than 60 days from submission of this form.

By submitting this application, you agree to waive your right to a jury trial - a condition precedent to participating in the program.

Counsel for the parties (and or persons representing themselves) further represent they will be prepared to proceed to a COURT trial in no later than 60 days, including by having previously consulted with all anticipated witnesses, including any experts. All trial documents are required to be filed within five days after notification of FSC Date. The parties maintain all rights afforded by Code of Civil Procedure Section 170.6.

Number of Parties _____

Age of the Case/ 5-Year Date _____

Length of Court Trial _____

Any Case Specific Issues _____

Department Where Case is Currently Assigned _____

Special Considerations for FSC / Trial Setting:

<Please Complete Page 2 of this Form>

EXPEDITED PI COURT TRIAL REQUEST FORM

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please provide your name, your email address, and who you represent:

<i>NAME</i>	<i>E-MAIL ADDRESS</i>	<i>WHO YOU REPRESENT</i>
		<input type="checkbox"/> Plaintiff _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Defendant _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
		<input type="checkbox"/> Plaintiff _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Defendant _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
		<input type="checkbox"/> Plaintiff _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Defendant _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

Please complete this form, sign/date & return to Dept. 1 at SMCDept1@lacourt.org

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

-FOR COURT USE ONLY-

Case Assigned to: Courthouse _____

Judge _____

Dept. _____

Telephone Number _____

FSC Date: _____ Time: _____

Trial Date: _____ Time: _____