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August 17, 2026
VIA EMAIL

The Honorable Debra R. McCaslin
205 East Main Street
dmccaslinsc@sccourts.org

In re: *State v. Richard Alexander Murdaugh*,
Indictments No. 2022-GS-15-00592, -593, -594, and 0595

Dear Judge McCaslin,

Given the Court's concern about costs imposed on Colleton County, the defense would first recommend Richland County as a venue. The size of the potential jury venire is on a scale comparable to Charleston, thus giving a much greater opportunity to find an impartial jury. Further, although not an absolute requirement, the racial demographics are similar to Colleton. Neither the defense nor the State would need to book hotel rooms for its attorneys, staff, or SLED witnesses. The State objected that the Masters golf tournament during the first trial week might make Richland County accommodations unavailable, but it is unlikely witnesses will need hotel rooms during the first trial week because that week will be mostly or entirely consumed by jury selection.

Finally, Defendant respectfully requests that when attempting to minimize costs created by the venue transfer, the Court give at least equal consideration to costs imposed upon the defense, which lacks the State's nearly limitless resources. It was Defendant's constitutional rights, not the State's, which were violated by the intentional conduct of Becky Hill, an elected state official. One reason Defendant suggested Charleston is that the defense has access to offices near the courthouse. The State of course has offices at every courthouse in South Carolina. It is appropriate that the Court act to protect the people of Colleton County from costs created by their own elected official's unexpected criminal conduct, but it would be inappropriate to do so by imposing excessive and avoidable costs on the victim of her conduct.

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As an aside, we discussed with Mr. Waters an attempt to resolve this issue when court adjourned last Friday, but did not receive a response.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



Richard A. Harpootlian

RAH: hm

cc: Creighton Waters, Chief Attorney, State Grand Jury Section
Gary Hale, Colleton County Clerk of Court

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