



**REPORT TO CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT BOARD  
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2017**

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**SUBJECT**    **National Food Policy for Canada, Capital Regional District Recommendations**

**ISSUE**

To consider whether to provide recommendations to the Federal Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister regarding a national food policy, a long term policy and program framework for issues related to food production, processing, distribution and consumption.

**BACKGROUND**

On May 29, 2017 Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Lawrence MacAulay, announced that the Government of Canada was launching consultations to support the development of a food policy for Canada. The Minister's mandate is to develop a food policy that promotes healthy living and safe food by putting more healthy, high-quality food, produced by Canadian ranchers and farmers, on the tables of families across the country. The consultation process is expected to conclude at the end of fall 2017. The development of a national food policy creates an opportunity to raise regional food system priorities to the federal and provincial Ministers of Agriculture.

The opportunity to provide input into the national food policy aligns with Capital Regional District (CRD) Board Strategic Priority "Enable others and advocate for supportive agricultural programs and policies by provincial and federal governments", and further supports the Regional Food and Agriculture Strategy (RFAS) desired outcome to achieve stronger partnerships with municipalities, provincial and federal government agencies, First Nations, and community organizations. Other federal policy areas that affect the region's food and agriculture community include: economic viability, wildlife impacts, drainage and run off, meat inspection, and First Nations Treaty negotiations. The Regional Food and Agriculture Task Force (RFATF), appointed by the Board on December 14, 2016, has discussed the opportunity to provide input. Appendix A reflects the input that the RFATF suggests be forwarded to the federal government.

**DISCUSSION**

The national food policy process is the first time the federal government will integrate agriculture with food through a policy document. The cross-cutting and broad nature of food adds to the complexity of developing a national policy. In addition to agriculture, poverty reduction, nutrition, food safety and economic development will also be considered. The federal government is seeking to identify where there may be potential for multi-jurisdictional collaboration. Involvement of provincial and local governments is critical to realizing a holistic approach to the food system. The federal process will also explore how best to align and coordinate current and future federal policies and programs that are linked to agriculture and food.

In developing a national food policy, the federal government is asking for input on priorities and actions related to the following four proposed themes.

**1. Increasing access to affordable food**

- Ensuring all have access to nutritious food no matter where they live
- Support growth of local and regional food production
- Making nutritious food more affordable
- Working to improve access to nutritious food around the world

**2. Improving health and food safety**

- Ensuring food is as safe as possible
- Preventing and reducing obesity and chronic diseases
- Making healthier food more available
- Preventing misleading labels or altered content of food

**3. Conserving our soil, water, and air**

- Reducing GHGs
- Conserving water, air and biodiversity
- Product labelling that makes it easier for consumers to identify with their values
- Reducing food waste

**4. Growing more high-quality food**

- Support for new farmers
- Preserving agricultural land
- Helping the food sector innovate and adapt to changing markets
- Helping business increase exports
- Enhance reputation as a preferred food supplier worldwide

Public engagement has been underway since June 2017, asking for feedback on the above proposed priorities and actions. An online survey was available until August 31, 2017. In addition, the federal government hosted an engagement session in Ottawa on June 22-23, 2017, to receive feedback primarily from not-for-profit groups. BC organizations that attended the Ottawa event included the National Zero Waste Council, Vancouver Food Policy Council, University of BC Centre for Sustainable Food, and BC Food Systems Network. Other engagement sessions were scheduled in six locations across Canada. The chair of the CRD RFATF attended the Vancouver session held on September 5, 2017.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

### *Alternative 1*

That a letter be sent to the federal Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister with a copy to the BC Minister of Agriculture, providing CRD recommendations for a food policy for Canada.

### *Alternative 2*

That recommendations for a national food policy be received for information.

**IMPLICATIONS****Local Government Implications**

In the capital region, the role of local governments (regional districts and municipalities) in the food system is related to their jurisdictional responsibilities for land use and for provision of community services. Local governments also advocate for specific actions when senior government action is deemed essential to resolving issues of community concern. The new national food policy creates an opportunity to identify how the federal government can better support agriculture and food system resilience as well as improve coordination and collaboration amongst government agencies.

**CONCLUSION**

The federal government has launched a consultation process on the development of a food policy for Canada that is expected to conclude in fall 2017. The new national food policy creates an opportunity to identify how the federal government can better support agriculture and food system resilience as well as improve coordination and collaboration among government agencies. Given that participation from all levels of government is critical to realizing a holistic food system approach, staff recommend that the CRD Board support sending input to the federal and provincial Ministers of Agriculture.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That a letter be sent to the federal Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister with a copy to the BC Minister of Agriculture, providing CRD recommendations for a food policy for Canada.

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Attachments: Appendix A - Capital Regional District Recommendations: National Food Policy  
Appendix B – Regional Food and Agriculture Strategy Page 2 & 3 Infographic