

KATIVIK REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

Resolution No. 2010-88

Concerning the replacement of the Food Mail Program by a new program called Nutrition North Canada.

- Whereas** the Food Mail Program is a combined effort of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), Canada Post and Health Canada to provide nutritious perishable food and other essential items to isolated Northern communities, including the fourteen (14) Northern villages of Nunavik, at reduced postal rates;
- Whereas** on May 21, 2010, Chuck Strahl, then Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, and Minister for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, and Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of Health and Minister responsible for the North, announced that, as of April 1, 2011, the Food Mail Program would be replaced by a new program called Nutrition North Canada;
- Whereas** as announced, Nutrition North Canada will:
- include a revised list of eligible food items for Nunavik;
 - provide for a higher rate of subsidy for eligible perishable food items, such as fruits, vegetables, bread, fresh meats, milk and eggs, and a lower rate of subsidy for several other food items;
 - provide for a direct subsidy to retailers and wholesalers that ship large volumes of food and goods to the North;
 - propose to improve access to commercially-produced traditional Northern foods;
- Whereas** the Food Mail Program is an important element for reducing the high cost of living in Nunavik and Nutrition North Canada has the same potential;
- Whereas** the transition to Nutrition North Canada began on October 3, 2010, with the implementation of a revised list of eligible items under the Food Mail Program that eliminated non-food items, most non-perishable food items and some perishable food items of little nutritional value;
- Whereas** through the Katimajit Technical Committee (the Canada–Québec–Nunavik committee responsible for following up on the commitments undertaken during the Katimajit Conference), a representative of the federal government assured the Kativik Regional Government (KRG) in 2008 that it would be consulted by INAC concerning the future of the Food Mail Program, scheduled to expire in March 2009;
- Whereas** for previous reviews of the Food Mail Program, INAC representatives travelled to Nunavik to discuss the scope of the review and relevant issues, giving all regional and local stakeholders an opportunity to provide feedback;
- Whereas** in December 2008, the KRG sent a letter to INAC expressing the importance of the Food Mail Program for Nunavimmiut and asking to be informed of the dates of the next consultation;
- Whereas** the KRG requested that the consultations include all regional and local stakeholders with the objective of improving the Food Mail Program;

- Whereas** the KRG also recommended that:
- the list of eligible items be maintained until a thorough assessment of the impacts of any changes on consumers could be conducted;
 - the consultations take into account the availability of country food, the shipping system and the warehousing constraints of each region;
 - the consultations take into account the economic development of each region and find a way to generate benefits for suppliers with infrastructure in the North;
- Whereas** on June 16, 2009, the KRG was finally formally consulted by INAC in Kuujuaq and had the opportunity to provide detailed and in-depth comments on the Food Mail Program;
- Whereas** the above-mentioned comments are contained in a written brief that states, among other points, that:
- 20 to 30% of households in Nunavik live in poverty and half of these households are made up of single parents (*Poverty in Nunavik: Status Report*, May 2009);
 - the prices for all categories of consumer goods and services are roughly 60% higher in Nunavik than elsewhere in Québec (*Nunavik Socio-economic Profile 2008*);
 - changes in the Food Mail Program will impact most on Inuit since, in most cases, non-Inuit residents receive employment benefits such as cost of living and cargo allowances that compensate for the region's high cost of living;
 - changes in the Food Mail Program should not lead to a more critical financial situation for elders, low-wage earners, income security recipients and employment insurance recipients;
 - changes in the Food Mail Program should not neutralize all the efforts of the Canadian and Québec governments to improve health, early education and childcare services, economic development and transportation infrastructure;
- Whereas** the proportion of expenditures connected with food purchases represents more than 40% of household budgets in Nunavik compared with 13% in the Quebec City area (*Nunavik Comparative Price Index 2006*);
- Whereas** on July 9, 2009, the KRG transmitted a follow-up letter and the above-mentioned brief to Minister Chuck Strahl, reiterating that the Food Mail Program is vital for Nunavimmiut;
- Whereas** by announcing in May 2010 the replacement of the Food Mail Program by Nutrition North Canada along with changes to the list of eligible items as of October 2010, INAC did not provide Nunavik retailers with enough time to plan, order and finance increased warehousing and inventory before the end of the 2010 sealift season, with the result that the cost of non-food and most non-perishable food items have increased substantially, reducing the purchasing power of Nunavimmiut.

It is therefore resolved that:

1. the preamble be an integral part of this resolution;
2. the changes to the list of eligible items under the Food Mail Program and Nutrition North Canada be postponed:
 - until a thorough assessment of the overall impacts on the socio-economic situation of Nunavimmiut can be completed;
 - to allow Nunavik retailers enough time to plan, order and finance increased warehousing and inventory;
3. transparent monitoring mechanisms of transporters and retailers be developed and implemented to ensure that the benefits of the Food Mail Program and Nutrition North Canada truly reach consumers;

4. a certified copy of this resolution be sent to Minister John Duncan, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development;
5. the Secretary and the Chairperson be authorized to sign any and all documents required to implement this resolution;
6. this resolution come into effect on the day of its adoption.

MOVED BY:	Aisara Kenuajuak
SECONDED BY:	Michael Cameron
IN FAVOUR:	16
OPPOSED:	0
ABSTENTIONS:	0
ABSENTEES:	1
DATE OF ADOPTION:	December 2, 2010
SPEAKER'S SIGNATURE:	(S) Mary A. Pilurtuut
SECRETARY'S SIGNATURE:	(S) Ina Gordon