

August 5, 2021

File: 400-01

Chair and Directors
Regional District Board

Dear Chair and Directors:

Re: Universal School Food Program

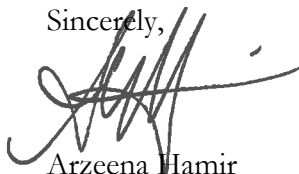
The Comox Valley Regional District Board received correspondence dated July 19, 2021 from Maurita Prato, Executive Director, LUSH Valley Food Action Society and Coordinator, Comox Valley Food Policy Council requesting endorsement of a universal, cost-shared healthy school food program (correspondence attached).

As a member of the Canada-wide Coalition for Healthy School Food, the Food Policy Council is advocating for public investment in and federal standards for a universal cost-shared school food program that would see all children having daily access to healthy food at school. In addition to the health and educational benefits for local children, such a program would directly support and enhance our agricultural sector which is a key policy goal of the Comox Valley Regional Growth Strategy.

I respectfully request the Board’s consideration of the following with regards to a universal school food program:

1. THAT the Comox Valley Regional District Board endorse the Coalition for Healthy School Food proposal for a universal, cost-shared healthy school food program.
2. THAT the Comox Valley Regional District Board write to the Prime Minister of Canada to request the implementation of a universal, cost-shared, healthy school food program for all Kindergarten to Grade 12 students in the country.
3. THAT staff be directed to provide a cursory review of resources that would be required to investigate the connection between income and food insecurity and possible options for action.

Sincerely,



Arzeena Hamir
Director

Enclosure: Comox Food Policy Council Request for support

July 19th, 2021

Comox Valley Regional District Board of Directors
720 Harmston Avenue
Courtenay, BC
V9N 0G8

Re: Comox Valley Food Policy Council Requesting Comox Valley Regional District's endorsement of a Universal School Food Program

Dear CVRD Board of Directors,

We are writing to request that the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) add its voice to the growing number of municipalities across Canada who are in favour of a universal, cost-shared healthy school food program.

A 2021/22 strategic priority of the CV Food Policy Council is to advocate for and develop policy related to healthy school food access and food systems education. The CV Food Policy Council is a member of the [Coalition for Healthy School Food](#), a growing network of over 160 non-profit member organizations from every province and territory. We are advocating for public investment in and federal standards for a universal cost-shared school food program that would see all children having daily access to healthy food at school. Building on existing programs across the country, we hope that all students will eventually eat a healthy meal or snack at school daily in programs that will include food education and that serve culturally appropriate, local, sustainable food to the fullest extent possible.

Healthy school food programs are [known](#) to improve students' diets, school performance, attendance, and social cohesion. Yet, Canada is the only G7 country without a National School Food Program and [UNICEF](#) has ranked Canada 37th of 41 wealthy countries when it comes to children's food security and nutrition. After years of grassroots advocacy, the Federal Budget 2019 committed "to work with provinces and territories towards the creation of a National School Food Program." Covid-19 has demonstrated that school food programs are an essential service.

After decades of no action at the federal level and very little in most provinces, [new developments have occurred in the last year](#). There is a wonderful opportunity for the CVRD to join with other voices in British Columbia and across the country to take a position on the need for a national school food program that meets strong [guiding principles](#) including universality, health promotion, cultural relevance and respect for local conditions.

Goal 6 of the Comox Valley Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) is to, "support and enhance the agricultural and aquaculture sectors and increase local food security." This initiative is aligned with the CVRD's 2019-22 Strategic Plan and key drivers. LUSH Valley Food Action Society, the Comox Valley Food Policy Council are members of the Coalition, and the SD71 board of Trustees have recently endorsed the Coalition for Healthy School Food. In 2020 both the City of Vancouver and the City of Victoria passed endorsements. Existing local school food programs could be made available to all students and economic partnerships with local producers could

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be strengthened if we create a financial cost-sharing model of support with the Federal and Provincial governments.

The momentum towards a universal school food program is building and the Coalition for Healthy School Food is seeking endorsements from supporting organizations, agencies and local governments. To demonstrate the CVRD's support for a universal school food program, we request that you consider passing a motion, with the following recommendations:

1. That the CVRD endorse the efforts of the Coalition for Healthy School Food to advocate for a universal, cost-shared healthy school food program. This support is based on a shared belief that all children and youth in British Columbia should have daily access to healthy food at school. To endorse the BC chapter of the Coalition for Healthy Student Food, sign up [here](#).
2. That the CVRD call on the federal government to begin to implement a universal, cost-shared, healthy school food program for all K-12 students in the country.
3. That the CVRD express willingness to commit resources towards pilot projects in the Comox Valley and call on the provincial government to commit to increase investment in a universal, cost-shared, healthy school food program for all K-12 students in the province.

Please see here for motions passed by [the City of Vancouver](#), [the City of Victoria](#), and [City of Toronto](#). See here for an [example letter](#) sent to the federal government by the City of Vancouver.

In addition to these municipalities, the Union of BC Municipalities ([see here](#)) and Federation for Canadian Municipalities ([see here](#)) have passed motions in the last 5 years to advocate for a universal school food program.

Please reach out if you have any questions or require a delegation to council. Thank you for your leadership and support in building momentum for a national healthy school food program for K-12 students in Canada.

Warmly,

Comox Valley Food Policy Council

Andrea Cupelli, Arzeena Hamir, James McKerricher, Jenn Meilleur, Kimberley Toonders, Lynnette Hornung, Maurita Prato, Marie-Gabrielle Béchar, Mike Obal, Sandra Viney, Sheila McDonnell, Stephanie McGowen, Vickey Brown, Vivianne Lemay, Wendy Morin



Maurita Prato, Executive Director LUSH Valley Food Action Society and Coordinator Comox Valley Food Policy Council

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