



EMBARGOED UNTIL 11 AM - APRIL 18, 2011

## People's Food Policy Challenges Federal Parties

(OTTAWA, ONTARIO)- Canada's first citizen-driven food policy was unveiled today and calls on the next federal government to address crucial gaps in the nation's food system.

The People's Food Policy (PFP) is a comprehensive plan to address some of the most pressing health, hunger, climate and agricultural-related issues facing the country.

"Our food system is failing us", said Amanda Sheedy, PFP coordinator. "Close to two and a half million Canadians regularly don't have enough to eat, thousands of family farms are disappearing, one in four Canadians is considered obese, and the environment is being pushed to the limit. The status quo is no longer an option".

Sheedy called on candidates in all parties to say what they would do to address the problems and put a food policy in place that reflects the realities of the average Canadian.

"The People's Food Policy embodies a wave of concern, interest and action by citizens who are increasingly questioning how our current food system is organized," said Cathleen Kneen, chair of Food Secure Canada, the national voice of the food movement in Canada, who is co-launching the Policy.

While plans to develop national food policies are being advanced by many sectors, the PFP represents the first time that regular Canadians, farmers, fishers and organizations that deal directly with food security have come together to put forward a national food policy proposal.

"The PFP goes beyond the standard 'agri-food' framework", said Anna Paskal, Policy Lead. "It addresses issues such as health, hunger, fisheries, children's nutrition, farming, and Indigenous food systems".

Key recommendations include:

- Localizing the system so that food is eaten as close as possible to where it is produced.
- Supporting food providers in a widespread shift to ecological production, including programs to support new farmers getting on the land.
- Enacting federal poverty elimination and prevention programs to ensure Canadians can better afford healthy food.
- Creating a nationally-funded children and food strategy.
- Ensuring that the public, is actively involved in decisions that affect the food system.

"We've laid the groundwork for a national food policy that serves people and the environment," Sheedy said.

"We are asking citizens to sign our online pledge to call on the next government to take this forward and make it national policy."

-30-

Contact: Amanda Sheedy - Coordinator (514) 654-3529 - [info@peoplesfoodpolicy.com](mailto:info@peoplesfoodpolicy.com)  
or Anna Paskal - Policy Lead (514) 889-2533 - [anna@peoplesfoodpolicy.ca](mailto:anna@peoplesfoodpolicy.ca)

For the full policy: [www.peoplesfoodpolicy.ca](http://www.peoplesfoodpolicy.ca)

**NB: Photo opportunity will immediately follow the news conference, and high resolution photos will be available for press on the PFP website.**

**Press conference:** Charles-Lynch Room Centre Block, Parliament Hill Ottawa, 11am April 18, 2011.