



## RESPONSE TO PETITION

Prepare in English and French marking 'Original Text' or 'Translation'

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PETITION No.: **421-02264**

BY: **MR. ERSKINE-SMITH (BEACHES-EAST YORK)**

DATE: **APRIL 25, 2018**

PRINT NAME OF SIGNATORY: **MR. BILL BLAIR**

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Response by the Minister of Health

SIGNATURE

Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

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SUBJECT

**Food policy**

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**ORIGINAL TEXT**

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**REPLY**

Health Canada is committed to using the best available evidence in the revision of Canada's Food Guide. We recognize the importance of understanding the totality of the evidence base. We consider relevant evidence such as high-quality, peer-reviewed systematic reviews, and reports from leading scientific organizations and governmental agencies. Our Evidence Review is available online at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/food-nutrition/evidence-review-dietary-guidance-summary-results-implications-canada-food-guide.html>. Building on the recently published Evidence Review, we will continue to monitor the most recent data on healthy eating.

Based on the available evidence, Health Canada is translating the science on food and health into evidence-informed healthy eating guidelines for application in the Canadian context. Health Canada is proposing that the revised Food Guide continue to encourage Canadians to choose nutritious foods and beverages, including protein foods, while emphasizing plant-based sources of protein. Protein foods include legumes, nuts, seeds, tofu, fortified soy beverage, fish, shellfish, eggs, poultry, lean red meat including wild game, lower fat milk, lower fat yogurts, lower fat kefir, and cheeses lower in fat and sodium. Plant-based sources of proteins are emphasized as part of a healthy eating pattern because the regular intake of plant-based foods—vegetables, fruit, whole grains and plant-based sources of protein—can have positive effects on health.

A diet that includes a regular intake of plant-based foods can result in higher intakes of:

- dietary fibre, associated with a lower risk of cardiovascular disease (including well established risk factors such as LDL-cholesterol) and type 2 diabetes;
- vegetables and fruit, associated with a lower risk of cardiovascular disease;
- nuts, associated with decreased LDL-cholesterol; and
- soy protein, associated with decreased LDL-cholesterol.

A diet that includes a regular intake of plant-based foods can also encourage lower intakes of:

- processed meat, which have been linked to increased risk of colorectal cancer; and
- foods that contain mostly saturated fat by replacing these foods with foods that contain mostly unsaturated fat.

While our guidance has not yet been finalized, Health Canada recommends the regular intake of nutritious foods that are consistent with eating patterns that have beneficial effects on health.

Health Canada is committed to ensuring that the Food Guide remains evidence-based, linked to public health priorities and effectively communicates healthy eating guidance to Canadians.

To ensure public trust in the integrity of Canada's Food Guide recommendations, officials from the Office of Nutrition Policy and Promotion responsible for drafting these recommendations are not meeting with food and beverage industry representatives. This decision was deliberate to ensure that Health Canada's dietary guidance is based on health evidence. This is in keeping with guidance from the World Health Organization and academic literature, on conflict of interest in policy-making.

Changing the food environment to make healthier choices easier for Canadians is a shared responsibility and all sectors have an important role to play. While the officials revising the Guide are not meeting with industry, the Department has not closed its doors to industry's views. Health Canada has conducted extensive consultations in the fall of 2016 and summer of 2017, both of which were open to Canadians and all stakeholders, including industry. The results of these consultations have been published in *What We Heard* reports available online here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/food-nutrition/canada-food-guide-phase1-what-we-heard.html> and here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/health/publications/food-nutrition/canada-food-guide-phase2-what-we-heard.html>

As of October 2016, when the Healthy Eating Strategy, which includes the revision of Canada's Food Guide, was launched, all meetings conducted with and correspondence received from stakeholders with the intent to inform development of policies, are published in a table on the Canada.ca website, including the name of the organization as well as the topics and the purpose of the discussion. A list of these meetings and correspondence can be viewed at [http://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/healthy-canada-vision-canada-en-sante/meetings-reunions-eng.php?\\_ga=2.36004448.1108192440.1512770055-2114404495.1456434726](http://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/healthy-canada-vision-canada-en-sante/meetings-reunions-eng.php?_ga=2.36004448.1108192440.1512770055-2114404495.1456434726)