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June 19, 2019

Dear Mayor Rochefort and East Ferris Councillors,

The Nipissing and Area Food Roundtable is a collaborative group of community stakeholders and food champions, working to create a healthy and sustainable food system for the Nipissing area. Our group was formed to work toward achieving the vision of a healthy, sustainable food system that is outlined in the [Nipissing and Area Food Charter](#). Protecting the environment is included as a core value in the Charter related to achieving this vision.

We applaud you for passing a motion affirming the commitment of East Ferris to fighting climate change, and that this commitment will form part of the municipality's decision-making framework and upcoming budgets. While we are disappointed that East Ferris voted not to join the movement of hundreds of municipalities across Canada declaring a climate emergency, we commend East Ferris for recognizing its responsibility to do everything in its power to minimize the impacts of climate change on future generations.

Moving forward, the Nipissing and Area Food Roundtable is very interested in supporting East Ferris with this important work. We kindly ask that you keep us in mind when considering climate change initiatives because we cannot talk about climate change without bringing food into the conversation.

The reality is that food contributes to climate change in many ways, from the way it is produced, processed, transported, and wasted. In fact, when all the aspects of the food system are accounted for, it has been cited as one of the top contributors to greenhouse gas emissions<sup>1</sup>. Research suggests that shifting to more environmentally sustainable eating patterns is one of the most effective ways to mitigate climate change<sup>2</sup>.

There are many ways municipalities can take action on mitigating and adapting to climate change from a food systems perspective<sup>3,4</sup>. Some ideas include:

**1. Provide leadership among multi-sectoral stakeholders to identify creative, local solutions**

- Formally [endorse the Nipissing and Area Food Charter](#).
- Create networking opportunities to facilitate discussions about our local food system and reducing its environmental impact.
- Contribute to food-related and environmental committees and coalitions, such as the Nipissing Area Food Roundtable.
- Work with community stakeholders to collect data on food related assets and challenges within the municipality, and then create a plan to make measurable progress.

## 2. Increase support for locally and sustainably produced foods

- Promote the [Nipissing and Area Local Food Map](#) to support local producers.
- Support urban food production, including community garden projects at public institutions and in community spaces, as well as the keeping of backyard hens and bees.
- Prioritize local food procurement practices in municipal institutions such as long term care facilities, municipal office buildings and daycares.
- Increase access to local foods by supporting farmers' markets and other local food retail outlets.

## 3. Reduce waste

- Reduce vending of bottled beverages and replace them with water refill stations.
- Consider solutions to reduce the volume of recyclables and food waste that goes to landfill that could be diverted, such as expanding recycling pickup and support for/promotion of backyard composting.

All of these ideas are examples of initiatives being implemented by municipalities across Canada, and there are many other best practice case studies we can investigate and learn from. The Nipissing and Area Food Roundtable would be pleased to explore these ideas and others with the Municipality of East Ferris, and discuss how we could support and/or co-facilitate their implementation.

We look forward to more dialogue with you on the urgent issue of climate change from a food systems perspective. Thank you for taking the time to review our letter and we look forward to collaborating on finding creative solutions to protect the health of our planet now and for future generations.

Sincerely,

The Nipissing and Area Food Roundtable  
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### Additional resources:

1. [Municipal Food Policy Entrepreneurs](#)
2. [Best Practices in Local Food: A Guide for Municipalities](#)

### References:

1. United States Environmental Protection Agency. Global greenhouse gas emissions data. 2017. Retrieved June 7, 2019 from <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/global-greenhouse-gas-emissions-data>.
2. Toronto Public Health. Diets for a Cool Planet: Healthy, Sustainable Diets for Toronto. Toronto. 2017. Retrieved June 7, 2019 from <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2017/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-109103.pdf>
3. EAT-Lancet Commission. EAT-Lancet commission brief for cities. 2019. Retrieved June 7, 2019 from <https://eatforum.org/lancet-commission/cities/>.
4. Nipissing and Area Food Roundtable. Nipissing and area food charter toolkit: For policy makers – what can we do? Retrieved June 7, 2019 from <https://nipissingareafood.ca/action-toolkit/for-policy-makers-what-can-we-do/>.