

Motion requesting Federal Government Support for Food Banks

Moved by: Councillor Shahid

Seconded by: Councillor Roy

That we recommend to Regional Council:

Whereas financial and affordability pressures related to soaring mortgage and rent costs, inflated grocery costs, stagnating wages, and limited avenues for social assistance have pushed significantly more people toward food insecurity;

Whereas people with fixed incomes, including seniors and social assistance recipients, are at extremely high risk of food insecurity and continue to struggle disproportionately as their dollars are being spread thinner;

Whereas challenges are also continuing to grow for working people, renters, and people living in remote and northern regions of Canada;

Whereas racialized Canadians are disproportionately impacted by each of these factors, as the systemic barriers they face have been further exacerbated by the economic and affordability crisis of the past few years;

Whereas food banks were established as a temporary solution to the increasing cost of food and needs in the community but are now part of a system that government and communities heavily and increasingly rely on;

Whereas it has been more than a full year since Food Banks Canada sounded the alarms in the HungerCount 2022 report, calling for action to be taken immediately to help the millions of struggling Canadians from coast to coast to coast;

Where the Food Banks Canada report from March 2023, indicates that nearly 2 million Canadians accessed food banks across the country, a 32 per cent increase from March 2022 and a 78.5 per cent increase from March 2019, which is the highest year-over-year increase in usage ever reported;

Whereas the “Emergency Food Security Fund” was established by the Federal Government to address urgent needs during the pandemic but food insecurity has only worsened, and the Federal Government no longer has a program to provide ongoing support to Food Banks;

Whereas the majority of support received by food banks is through community fundraising and donations but given financial pressures faced by individuals, these donations are declining;

Whereas in certain communities, people who were donating to food banks are now instead accessing the food bank; and

Whereas the need to address the food insecurity crisis touches on many of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) focus areas, including the Inclusive Communities focus area;

Now therefore be it resolved:

That the Regional Municipality of Durham calls on the Federal Government to help address the food insecurity crisis by providing emergency funding to food banks, food rescue agencies, and farmers markets providing emergency food assistance, and recognize the systemic issues involved in food bank usage, including affordability, inequality, core housing need and insufficient social supports, in order to end food insecurity.