



## Information Release

### NUTRITION NORTH CANADA PUBLIC CONSULTATION

**Kuujuuaq, Québec, October 24, 2011** – In May 2010, the Government of Canada announced that the Nutrition North Canada program would replace the **Food Mail Program** that had been in effect since the 1960s. For close to 50 years, the Food Mail Program helped Northerners by offsetting the cost of transporting food and goods. The Food Mail Program provided a set per-kilogram subsidy paid to air carriers to cover a part of shipping costs to Northern communities that are not accessible year-round by surface transportation.

**Nutrition North Canada** has been designed to provide financial assistance directly to qualifying food suppliers and local retailers who are now responsible for negotiating their own transportation arrangements with air carriers. As well, nutritious perishable food items (such as fruits, vegetables, bread, milk, eggs and fresh meat) receive the highest rate of financial assistance, while other food items that contain more fat, sugar or sodium, or that have longer shelf-lives, receive a lower rate. Other perishable food, plus non-perishable and non-food items, for their part, will no longer be subsidized. Nutrition North Canada will also generate additional warehouse infrastructure, operating and inventory costs for local retailers that will inevitably be passed on to consumers.

Nutrition North Canada came into effect in April 2011, although public outcry forced the Government of Canada to temporarily revise its list of eligible items to include all food and most non-food items that had been covered under the Food Mail Program. This revised list will be in effect only until October 2012 in order to allow air carriers and retailers time to adjust to the new program.

The **Nutrition North Canada Advisory Board** has been established to give Northerners a direct voice in the program and provide advice related to its management and effectiveness. The Advisory Board members from each northern region are appointed by the Government of Canada. Marie-Josée Gauthier, a nutritionist at the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services is the appointee for Nunavik. The Advisory Board's next meeting will be held on **November 8, 2011**, in **Kuujuuaq**. This meeting will include a **public consultation** that will represent an important opportunity for Nunavimmiut to voice concerns about the recent changes to access to food and goods. While nutritious perishable food items will continue to be subsidized under Nutrition North Canada, the bottom line for Nunavik consumers after October 1, 2012, will be higher prices on store shelves for most perishable food items, as well as essential non-perishable food and non-food items, especially items transported by aircraft.

In March 2011, the Government of Canada directed the Advisory Board to continue discussions with Northerners about the Nutrition North Canada program. The KRG therefore intends to take advantage of the Advisory Board's Kuujuuaq meeting to express its concerns. It is important to make sure that Nutrition North Canada will not neutralize years of efforts to reduce the cost of living and improve health, early education, transportation infrastructure and the economy in the North.

For more information, visit [www.nutritionnorthcanada.ca](http://www.nutritionnorthcanada.ca), or call 1-800-567-9604. Your opinions and concerns may also be shared with your local KRG councillor.