

## 2016 – I Creating Jobs and Improving Food Security in Northern & Remote Communities\*

### Mover: Aki Energy

**Whereas:** A combination of factors, including but not limited to poverty, geographic remoteness and a history of colonial policies means northern and remote communities in Manitoba have an acute lack of access to healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate food. In 2011, 24% of Manitoban primary caregivers on First Nations reserves reported not being able to afford enough food for the children in their care.

**Whereas:** Diabetes was rare among the Aboriginal population prior to 1940, but has now reached epidemic levels in some communities across Canada. More than half of all seniors and almost one quarter of adults aged 35 to 54 in Manitoba First Nations report having diabetes. The increasing prevalence of diabetes in Manitoba First Nations is linked to a) the replacement of traditional foods, which provide a protective effect from diabetes, with imported and unhealthy foods that increase the risk of diabetes, and b) high rates of poverty.

**Whereas:** In 2010, the economic burden of diabetes in Manitoba was estimated to be approximately \$86 million in direct costs and an additional \$412 million in indirect costs.

**Whereas:** First Nations people living on reserves have access to few employment opportunities, exemplified by a formal unemployment rate for youth living on reserves of almost 50%. Social enterprises can create training and employment opportunities for people who have limited experience in the workforce.

**Whereas:** Investment and development in northern and remote communities will be most effective if guided by community members, thereby ensuring resources meet community needs and build leadership capacity amongst community members.

**Whereas:** The Province of Manitoba's Northern Healthy Foods Initiative primary focus is to support local food self-sufficiency, and has taken important steps to promote local, healthy food production in many northern and remote communities through increasing opportunities for gardening, poultry raising, and the harvesting of traditional foods such as fish and berries.

**Whereas:** *All Aboard: Manitoba's Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy* identifies food security as a key priority, and an action item for food security commits to responding to challenges in northern communities by building upon local efforts. Furthermore, the All Aboard Action Plan: Food Security commits to strengthening NHFI to better support local food production.

**Whereas:** Manitoba's Budget 2015 committed to further investments in NHFI, and specifically providing support to community-based strategies to expand local food production.

**Be It Resolved That:** CCEDNet – Manitoba urge the Province of Manitoba to support community-led efforts to address local challenges of food insecurity and unemployment in northern and remote communities by:

- a. Increasing investment in the Northern Healthy Foods Initiative to enable expanded support for existing NHFI communities and increase the number of communities able to access support through NHFI partners.
- b. Supporting the scale up of healthy food production and consumption in northern and remote communities through approaches such as social enterprise.

\* Moved to replace policy resolution 2015 – 10 Creating Jobs and Improving Food Security in First Nations through Social Enterprise