



The Honourable Sean Fraser
Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

February 15, 2024

Dear Minister Fraser,

We write to you seeking support of federal funding for a food security project important to multiple ridings across Vancouver Island, BC. Extensive research into potential federal funding streams have yielded no available opportunities to support this project.

The Loaves and Fishes Community Food Bank Society operates 11 low-barrier, free food markets in the central island region, feeding 10% of the population. An average of 15,000 people per month rely on Loaves and Fishes for regular, reliable, free food that reaches 30 communities, including 15 First Nations. This need is ever increasing; in the first six months of 2023, Loaves and Fishes saw a 37% increase in individuals requiring free food service, and visits to free food markets increased by 44%.

To facilitate these vital services across Vancouver Island, Loaves and Fishes is building a 25,000 square foot centralized food recovery and distribution facility. The society has already secured \$7 million in funding from the Province of BC, \$1.4 million from the City of Nanaimo, and \$300,000 from the Regional District of Nanaimo to support this project. They are seeking an additional \$5 million in capital funding from the federal government. This project is nearly ready to begin, but they need federal funds to see it through.

This project aligns with multiple priorities outlined in the Government of Canada's *Food Policy for Canada*. From addressing food system issues and supporting food security in Indigenous communities, to reducing food waste and greenhouse gas emissions, the Loaves and Fishes Community Food Bank addresses serious, ongoing issues faced by Canadians. Please see the attached written submission for funding provided by Loaves and Fishes for further evidence of this.

Loaves and Fishes are an essential service vital to the health and well-being of our communities, and their infrastructure must be expanded to keep up with the growing demand. They need federal partnership to make this project a reality.

Minister, can you please provide us with a path forward to ensure Loaves and Fishes Community Food Bank Society receives the federal support required to meet the dire need of Vancouver Islanders?

We look forward to your response.



MP Lisa Marie Barron,
Nanaimo-Ladysmith



MP Alistair MacGregor,
Cowichan-Malahat-Langford



MP Gord Johns,
Courtenay-Alberni



MP Rachel Blaney,
North Island-Powell River