

NDP Caucus News

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Food Rescue, Income Levels, and Removing Barriers to Production Highlighted in Food Insecurity Panel

“A lot of our donors have now become our clients – I have to tell them to not feel ashamed... this crisis is really impacting everyone.”

Yesterday’s panel on food insecurity, organized by NL NDP Leader Jim Dinn (St. John’s Centre), brought together experts on the subject to discuss the realities of what people are facing in the province when it comes to putting food on the table.

Panelists from Food Producers Forum, Single Parents Association (SPANL), Bridges to Hope, and Food First NL came together to discuss how the rising cost of food and high demand on supply is being felt at the dinner table, especially for children. But there was also a focus on what changes can be made to strengthen our food sovereignty. These solutions include calls for changes in legislation around food rescue, income levels, and giving more support for food producers across the province.

“Food rescue was a big topic of discussion, especially from SPANL and Bridges to Hope. The term refers to saving food that is being taken to Robin Hood Bay – food that could be donated to food banks and organizations that distribute food,” said Dinn. “Right now, it is more incentivising for businesses to dump the food and write it off than it is to donate, and this is something we have to change. If government made changes to encourage businesses to donate leftover or unwanted food that is still good to eat, and integrated food banks and food organizations into our supply chain, while helping build the necessary infrastructure to store the food, we would see much less wastage and more food going to those in need.”

“The Food Producers Forum highlighted many barriers that are in front of food producers. One big aspect is how large grocers are able to produce more food at a faster rate due to their access to infrastructure. If government was able to work with farmers and create a network that would allow producers to avail of the necessary infrastructure, while also connecting local producers to food banks and organizations, it would help get more local produce into our supply,” said Dinn. “When more local options are available, we create competition which can really help reduce the cost of foods. This is what public grocery stores are all about.”

“The main takeaway from this panel is that income levels must change for people to truly be food secure. Income levels, whether it’s income support or wages, are too low for people to access what they need to survive. Food is just one part of the equation – when you add in the cost of housing, home heating, home care, you name it, when it comes down to it, there just isn’t enough income to make it work. That’s why the NL

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NDP continues to push for a basic income program that would help so many people in our province stay fed, while also benefiting their health and overall wellness.”

“As I always say, we do better when those around us do better. When we make it easier for producers to grow and distribute food, when we save good food from being thrown away and give it to those who are hungry, and when we ensure everyone has income to live a sustainable, healthy life, it benefits everyone. The solutions brought forward at this town hall will be beneficial to communities across this province, and that’s what we will be fighting for in the House of Assembly this Fall.”

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