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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Ottawa Food Policy Council has challenged local area candidates to put food policy on the agenda in this federal election. A number of candidates from the Liberal, NDP, and Green parties have agreed that Good Food For All is a priority.

Good Food for All is a policy statement (<http://ofpc-cpao.ca/blog/2015/09/23/open-letter-to-federal-election-candidates/>) based in a comprehensive grassroots process of community consultation and kitchen table meetings over a period of more than two years (2010-2012). Good Food for All calls for a national poverty reduction strategy; a universal school food program; a strategy to ensure access to good, culturally appropriate food for First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in the urban centres and in Northern communities; and that food security for Canada as a whole demands an agricultural policy that encourages and supports new farmers and ecological farming practices that protect land, water, and air quality for the future.

Eight candidates from the Ottawa region have responded in writing and their statements are available on the Ottawa Food Policy Council website <http://ofpc-cpao.ca/federal-candidate-responses-to-good-food-for-all-reponses-des-candidats-a-la-lettre-aliments-sains-pour-tous/>.

Further engaging candidates, on September 19th, 2015, the Ottawa Food Policy Council co-sponsored Eat.Think.Vote. (<http://www.usc-canada.org/resources/news/item/329-candidates-gather-to-talk-food-in-ottawa>), along with other Ottawa -based organizations concerned with food and justice. The round-table café-style event saw ten area candidates from all six Ottawa ridings hold in-depth discussions with constituents and pledge to support a National Food Policy. Eat.Think.Vote. is a Food Secure Canada (<http://foodsecurecanada.org/EatThinkVote>) initiative where communities across the country engaged their local candidates to encourage food policy as an election issue. Food Secure Canada is a national non-profit organization representing the food movement across the country.

“Engagement on food policy by the federal candidates is significant,” commented Sarah Rice, Chair of the Ottawa Food Policy Council. “We have seen some movement at the local level in terms of increasing access to nutritious food in and around schools, and the NCC Greenbelt Master Plan to promote sustainable food production for the local market in the Greenbelt. But for core issues like addressing poverty, Aboriginal food access, and sustainable agriculture we need action at the Federal level. We look forward to more engagement from the federal level with the municipal government and the province to create a strong action plan in the near future.”

With the Federal Election just days away, the Ottawa Food Policy Council encourages those candidates who have not had a chance to respond to do so and challenge themselves and others to champion Good Food for All. Responses can be sent to the Ottawa Food Policy Council at [info@ofpc-cpao.ca](mailto:info@ofpc-cpao.ca), and will be posted publicly on [www.ofpc-cpao.ca](http://www.ofpc-cpao.ca).

Ottawa Food Policy Council/Le conseil des politiques alimentaires d'Ottawa  
c/o 2389 Pepin Court Ottawa, ON, K1B 4Z3

[www.OFPC-CPAO.ca](http://www.OFPC-CPAO.ca) [info@OFPC-CPAO.ca](mailto:info@OFPC-CPAO.ca)