

June 18, 2018

VIA E-MAIL

Mr. Pat Finnigan, M.P.
Chair, Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food
Sixth Floor, 131 Queen Street
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

**Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on
Agriculture and Agri-Food re: Bill C-281**

Dear Mr. Finnigan:

As the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food considers Bill C-281, *An Act to establish National Local Food Day*, Restaurants Canada is pleased to provide comment on behalf of its members. As an \$84 billion industry that employs 1.2 million people directly, we appreciate the opportunity to share our support for ensuring that Canadians have access to healthy, affordable meals and a sustainable food system.

Canadian restaurants are the boardrooms for small business, and the gathering place for community; for family. We are proud to be the number one first time job creator in the country – we open the door to opportunity for young Canadians, new Canadians, and those facing barriers to employment. More than two-thirds of Canada's restaurants are locally owned and operated by independent entrepreneurs with a strong farm-to-table commitment to their communities.

It is for this reason that strengthening the connection between producers, restaurateurs and consumers is so important to the foodservice industry. Food both nourishes and connects us across communities. A national local food day to celebrate the hard work, passion, and dedication that recognizes the connection between farmers, restaurateurs, and Canadians will help create a sustainable food system and reinforce the government's mandate to invest in culinary tourism.

Canada has a rich variety of culinary offerings, and there is tremendous potential to grow this niche tourism market. Establishing a National Local Food Day would be a significant step in the right direction, helping to set Canada up for success as a destination of choice for foodies around the world.

Restaurants Canada has long-been an industry leader when it comes to highlighting our country's rich culinary bounty. And we believe that our future depends on celebrating our magnificent differences. It depends on creating the best that we can from our local ingredients, so we can give our restauranteurs an unmistakable edge that no other nation can emulate.

In contributing over \$28 billion a year in food and beverage purchases, the foodservice industry and Restaurants Canada members work closely with Canadian farmers to bring great food to the table. Our industry prides itself in serving 18 million Canadians every day, and being the gathering place for special moments. We want to continue to help strengthen the ties between and across local communities. We want to celebrate the nation's social, environmental and economic well-being by strengthening the connection between producers, restauranteurs and consumers.

With our diverse range of food specialties and wide-ranging culinary expertise, Canada has so much to offer. Restaurants Canada is proud to support the establishment of a National Local Food Day to help raise our voice and reputation as a nation of tremendous culinary experiences, expertise, and passion.

Together, we can work toward growing our economy, our food system, and creating culinary opportunities for the benefit of all Canadians across the country.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lauren van den Berg". The signature is written in a cursive style and includes a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Lauren van den Berg
National Vice President, Government Affairs