



Honourable Marjorie Michel
Minister of Health
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

May 16, 2025

Dear Minister Michel,

On behalf of the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA), we extend our heartfelt congratulations on your appointment as Minister of Health.

CPMA is Canada's leading trade association representing companies active in the marketing and sale of fresh fruits and vegetables in Canada—from the farm gate to the dinner plate. Our membership spans the entire produce supply chain and includes major growers, shippers, packers, importers and exporters, transportation and logistics firms, brokers, distributors, wholesalers, retailers, foodservice distributors, and fresh-cut processors. Founded in 1925, CPMA is proud to represent over 930 domestic and international members who are responsible for well over 90% of fresh fruit and vegetable sales in Canada.

The fresh produce industry plays a vital role in Canada's economy, contributing nearly \$15 billion annually to GDP, supporting more than 185,400 jobs in both rural and urban communities across the country¹. Our industry is also a major trade engine for Canada, generating more than \$4.6 billion in exports and more than \$12 billion in imports in 2024 alone². Beyond its economic impact, the fresh fruit and vegetable sector also plays a crucial role in enhancing the health and well-being of Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Despite these successes, growing political uncertainty with our largest trading partner, a series of port disruptions, escalating severe weather events and continuing consumer concerns about the cost of food have all contributed to significant challenges for the Canadian fresh produce sector. More federal support is needed to make food a federal priority and to create the conditions necessary to enable an environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable fresh produce industry in Canada, while ensuring our competitiveness in the global marketplace.

Even prior to recent inflationary pressures on the cost of food, year over year, Canadians are eating fewer vegetables and fruits. Although Canadian adults should be eating 7 or more servings daily, a recent report found that more Canadians are consuming just 1 or 2 servings of fruits and vegetables per day (34.1% in 2021, compared to 24.1% in 2015)³. In fact, the latest Statistics Canada numbers suggest that almost 80% of Canadians over age 12 are eating less than five servings per day⁴. Given the protective effect of fruits

¹ Conference Board of Canada, 2023

² Statistics Canada, 2025

³ The Economic Burden Attributable to Low Fruit and Vegetable Consumption in Canada, H. Krueger & Associates Inc., 2023

⁴ Statistics Canada, 2023

and vegetables on reducing the risk for many chronic diseases, it is clear that supporting access to these nutritious foods in all regions of the country can contribute substantially to the health and well-being of our communities, while also significantly decreasing government health care spending.

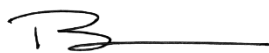
CPMA urges the government to support a strengthened food system and food security for all Canadians by adopting a whole-of-government approach to agriculture and food production, and by prioritizing food production and access to food in legislation, policy and crisis management. CPMA recommends the establishment of an Agri-food Supply Chain Advisory Council to serve as a standing forum to support Cabinet in advancing this cross-departmental effort.

Under this lens, as you begin your role as Minister of Health, CPMA offers the following recommendations for government action to support Canada's fresh fruit and vegetable supply chain, which were also shared in a [letter to Prime Minister Carney](#) following the federal election:

- The government should invest in the health of Canadians using a "Food as Medicine" approach to support economic and other measures to reduce diet-related diseases and mitigate health care costs associated with poor nutrition.
- The government should advance measures promoting the Canada Food Guide recommendation to fill [Half Your Plate](#) with fruits and vegetables, including in public procurement and government programming with the support of the *Half Your Plate* program.
- The government should prioritize the development and implementation of the National School Food Program, ensuring that enhancing nutrition and promoting healthy eating practices, including through the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, are core objectives of the program.
- Finally, the government should create an enabling regulatory environment for new products, technologies and business practices to support and de-risk the adoption of more sustainable solutions. This should include a focus on the harmonization of product registration across North America, and a commitment to ensure that the Pest Management Regulatory Agency is sufficiently resourced to fulfill core functions including pre-market applications, re-evaluations and minor use registrations.

We thank you in advance for your consideration of the recommendations outlined above. CPMA and our members are eager to serve as a resource for you and your team and would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the priorities and needs of the Canadian fresh produce sector.

Sincere regards and congratulations again on your appointment,



Ron Lemaire
President
Canadian Produce Marketing Association