Transcript of the Proceedings of a Public Meeting of Full Caucus of the Legislative Assembly Iqaluit, Nunavut October 25, 2011

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Members Present:

Eva Aariak James Arreak

Moses Aupaluktuq

Tagak Curley, C.M.

Monica Ell

Ron Elliott, Co-Chair

Joe Enook

Lorne Kusugak

Johnny Ningeongan

Hezakiah Oshutapik

Keith Peterson

Allan Rumbolt

Fred Schell

Daniel Shewchuk

Louis Tapardjuk

Peter Taptuna

Hunter Tootoo

Jeannie Ugyuk

Staff Members:

Nancy Tupik

Stephen Innuksuk

Guests:

Stephen van Dine, Director General of

Devolution and Territorial Relations, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern

Development Canada

Wilf Wilcox, Nutrition North Canada

Advisory Board Member

Interpreters:

Gwen Angulalik

Luci Evaloardjuk

Attima Hadlari

Naimee Kilabuk-Bourassa

Mikle Langenhan

Mary Nashook

James Panioyak

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>>Meeting commenced at 9:59

Chairman (Mr. Elliott): Thank you. Good morning, members. This meeting of the Full Caucus will come to order. I will begin by asking Mr. Curley to say the opening prayer. Mr. Curley.

>>Prayer

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Curley. Before I deliver my opening comments, I would ask if members agree to adopt the agenda for today's meeting.

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. As Co-Chairperson of the Legislative Assembly's Full Caucus, I am pleased to formally welcome our guests to this special meeting on the Nutrition North Canada Program.

For the benefit of our constituents across Nunavut who are following today's proceedings on television and radio, I would like to take a few moments to provide an overview of today's deliberations.

At the request of the Full Caucus, an official from the federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development as well as a member of the Nutrition North Canada Advisory Board have agreed to meet with us today.

As our guests are very much aware, the issue of accessibility to affordable and nutritious food for Nunavummiut is a major priority for all Members of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut.

As many of my colleagues have noted, the Government of Canada has formerly stated

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that it is, and I quote, "committed to providing Northerners with healthy food choices at affordable prices." I am confident that this is a goal we all share. However, as our guests are also aware, many significant concerns and questions have been raised across the north over the past year concerning the extent to which federal government's Nutrition North Canada Program is actually achieving this important goal.

Earlier this year, Members of the Legislative Assembly took the initiative to invite representatives from major retailers to make presentations and respond to questions from members during a formal sitting of the House. This experience provided us with an important perspective on the Nutrition North Canada Program and identified a number of areas for specific improvement.

It is our expectation that our guests today have come prepared to provide us with a comprehensive and detailed update on the specific actions that have been taken over the past several months to improve the Nutrition North Canada Program. For example, it is our understanding that the advisory board has been reviewing such issues as the subsidy rates for communities. We hope that our guests today will provide a comprehensive and detailed update on the status of this work.

Another issue that is of concern to
Nunavummiut is accessibility to country
food. In March of this year, the report of the
House of Commons Standing Committee on
Aboriginal Affairs and Northern
Development on the Nutrition North Canada
Program recommended that the federal
Department of Aboriginal and Northern
Affairs, "in conjunction with the Nutrition
North Canada External Advisory Board,
review the country food component of the

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program to consider options to expand and support the sharing networks and harvesters making up traditional, non-commercial Aboriginal food systems."

Information on the website of the federal Department of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs has indicated that the department is "working with stakeholders and the Nutrition North Canada External Advisory Board to further develop options to support access to country food for northerners." Again, we hope to see concrete progress on this issue and expect that our guests today will be prepared to provide a comprehensive and detailed update on what has been done to implement this recommendation.

I am confident that today's meeting will provide an opportunity for a productive dialogue to take place between Members of the Legislative Assembly and our guests.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank those residents of Nunavut who have taken the time over the last several months to share their concerns about this program with their elected Members of the Legislative Assembly.

With that, I would now ask our guests to formally introduce themselves.

Mr. Wilcox: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Wilf Wilcox, Cambridge Bay, Nutrition North Canada Advisory Board.

Mr. Van Dine: Good morning. My name is Stephen van Dine. I'm the Director General for Devolution and Territorial Relations with Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada.

Chairman: Welcome, Mr. Wilcox and Mr. Van Dine. I will now invite Mr. Wilf Wilcox to make his opening statements on behalf of

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Mr. Wilcox: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I welcome the opportunity to present to the Members of the Nunavut Legislative Assembly today.

My name is Wilf Wilcox. I'm from Cambridge Bay, Nunavut, where I have lived for many years and spent over three decades in service to my community. I have served three terms as mayor and now I sit on the local council as deputy mayor. I have also owned and operated a family business in Cambridge Bay for 20 years. I am deeply committed to ensuring that northern communities like mine realize their true potential in terms of health and prosperity.

As a member of the Nutrition North Canada Advisory Board, I would like to extend the regrets of our Chair, Elizabeth Copland, who was scheduled to be here. She had some unexpected scheduling conflicts preventing her from being here today.

Almost a year ago, in November 2010, I was appointed by the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development to sit on the advisory board for the new Northern Healthy Food Subsidy program, Nutrition North Canada. Together, the board members represent a wide range of perspectives, backgrounds, and interests of northern residents and communities. It has been said that the advisory board gives northerners a voice in the program, and we certainly do try to capture the many and varied voices of the north.

I believe that the creation of the Nutrition North Canada Advisory Board provides a vital link between the government program and the community it is intended to serve. The Nutrition North Canada Program is accountable before Parliament through the ρ የነገር ነው። የነገር ነው። የነገር ነው። የነገር ነው።

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Today's meeting is a good opportunity for me and Stephen to inform you of the program's progress and to hear your views first hand. This morning, I'll give you an update on the advisory board's activities over the past few months. Stephen will then provide a detailed presentation about the origins of the new program and its progress to date.

I would like to emphasize the team factor on the board. There's such a strong spectrum of talent on the board, along with the Nutrition North Canada team, that can cover a lot of ground on very important issues. In fact, it's a very easy and satisfying board to sit on for the very same reason.

My fellow members of the board are Elizabeth Copland from Arviat, she is our Chair, Nellie Cournoyea from Inuvik in the Northwest Territories, Katherine Nukon from Old Crow in the Yukon territory, Steve McDougall from Garden Hill, Manitoba, Marie-Josée Gauthier from Kuujjuaq in the Northern Quebec region, and Michele Wood from Goose Bay, Labrador.

You may recall that the board met here in Iqaluit last May and held its first public meeting in the cafeteria of the Inuksuk High School. Two months after the launch of the Nutrition North program, we asked the public to tell us what they thought of the new program. Following the meeting, we conveyed what we heard to Minister Duncan, and then structured our future work plan to focus on the issues that were, in our view, important to northerners.

For example, based on what we heard, we determined that more work is required to explain to northern consumers how the list of

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Overall, the members of the board believe that for consumers and retailers to shift to Nutrition North Canada will require increased communications and, as with any change, adequate time to adjust. The board believes that the decision to extend the transition period to October 2012 provides the opportunity to fine-tune the program and, as I said back in March, we basically have this time to get things right.

In my own region, the Kitikmeot, the rollout of the new program has brought improvements. I see more variety and fresher products in the local stores, but the change has not been easy. I do hear about the challenges with the program from my neighbours. As a board member, I share what I hear with the board members and Minister Duncan. I believe this ability to give direct input and advice is working. The program is in its early stages and showing signs of responding to northerners' demands for better information. I believe that the advisory board feature of the program is a good model and can be considered for other programs.

In a few weeks, on November 8, the board will meet in Kuujjuaq and hold its second public meeting in the north. While there, we will take advantage of the opportunity to learn about how the program works itself in Nunavik. The board is interested in learning more about food subsidies provided by other levels of government. We will be briefed on

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regional measures that are in place to lower the cost of food and to support access to country food in Nunavik. We're also looking to engage with local retailers and make onsite visits to their stores and warehouses so that we can more fully understand their experiences with Nutrition North Canada. Most of all, of course, we look forward to hearing from the public.

Along those lines, today is an opportunity for me to hear from more northern voices, from you, the Members of the Full Caucus of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, what you see as issues for the program going forward and what your views are on the priorities for supporting access to healthy food in northern communities.

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Finally, to sum up, I think that the advisory board is an important oversight feature of the new program. Our role ensures that the program is truly responsive and accountable to the needs of those it is designed to serve. I am pleased to have been asked to participate in this board and I look forward to continuing the important work we have begun.

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On behalf of the Nutrition North Canada Advisory Board, I thank you for this opportunity to be here today, and now you will hear from Mr. Stephen van Dine from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. He is here to tell you more about Nutrition North Canada. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Wilcox. I will now invite Mr. Stephen van Dine to make his opening statement on behalf of the federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development. Mr. Van Dine, you may proceed.

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Mr. Van Dine: Good morning again and thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to

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start with a small personal note to say that it is with great humility and respect that I find myself here today having the opportunity to present to the members and to you.

In 1984, I found myself as a Sir John Franklin student being invited to be a page in the Legislative Assembly at that time and at that time, members will recall that it was in the basement of the Yellowknife Inn. I found myself behind that glass over there or a glass a lot like it, in the safety and security of having to watch the tapes and make sure that they didn't expire before the next tape went over to record all the interesting things that were going on in the Assembly. I believe it was then that, I think, my first interest in public service became fixed in my desire to make a contribution and again I find myself very pleased to be here today to make a presentation to the members.

I would like to say and reiterate a point that Mr. Wilcox had mentioned earlier and that is to say that the program is accountable to the Parliament of Canada through our minister, the Hon. John Duncan.

These opportunities, such as this one today, do provide us with an excellent opportunity to have the program be transparent and responsive to the needs and the issues of the communities it serves. Our presentation today will provide you with an overview of its origins, its main delivery features, as well as a current update on activities since the launch of the program. Your comments and questions are definitely welcomed and will assist our desire to ensure the delivery of this program that is responsive to the needs of northerners.

I believe our presentation has been circulated to members and I'll be referring to that. It's a presentation entitled, "Improving access to nutritious choices in isolated northern ºFor Pibribrlibrt idaded Cloruls,

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communities, Nutrition North Canada, for the Nunavut Legislative Assembly," dated October 25, 2011.

Slide 2 describes the purpose of the presentation. In essence, it's to provide information and answer questions on the implementation of a new federal program which began on April 1, 2011, and it was aimed at improving access to nutritious foods for northerners in isolated communities.

The Nutrition North Canada Program replaces the previous program, the Food Mail Program, and we believe it offers significant improvement, albeit over time. Nutrition North Canada represents a shift for many and the change has been challenging. New processes and information and new systems to manage performance are in place, as well as claim processing pieces, and we have been building our human resources capacity. We have extended the transition period to October 2012 to allow us to make progress in those areas.

It's important to step back a little bit and remind ourselves how we got here today. The Government of Canada has long recognized that the access of northern communities to nutritious food is important. The previous program has its linkages back to the 1960s and was designed as a transportation subsidy to help offset the costs related to accessing foods and other goods in Canada's North. The Food Mail Program was always a targeted measure, taking the form of a transportation payment to cover portions of the expenses incurred to ship food and other items to isolated northern communities without year-round surface transportation. This payment program was one of the many instruments adopted to respond to the cost of living pressures in the north.

Other direct measures many of you are

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familiar with include other means that are managed by other players, including our colleagues at Canada Revenue, but also the responsibilities of private employers, including the federal government, to provide isolated post allowances to its employees.

So why did we need to change? The original Food Mail Program operated in six provinces and three territories, as it still does today: 134 communities; 77 were extensive users; 80 percent of the volume or 90 percent of our funding resources went to Nunavut (59 percent). Concerns related to escalating program costs were abundantly clear to the department as we are accountable before Parliament on an annual basis for the resources we receive, and that triggered a number of reviews that resulted in a number of findings. The important findings that I'm about to list are all the areas in which we hope to address by the creation of the new program.

To begin, we found that under the previous program, there was limited accountability. Essentially, our department wrote the cheques and Canada Post delivered the program. It was not much visibility and it was not much awareness of how the Food Mail Program actually worked. For those who understood the program and used the program, it worked well. For those who didn't know about the program, they didn't know how to access it. We also found that the regular users, such as vendors and retailers, were very aware of the rhythms and the moves and used it quite effortlessly. However, the fact that the program existed wasn't very visible to consumers who shopped in the stores.

We also found that significant local market distortion occurred, and that's probably a very sophisticated way of saying that money was leaking out of the community and into P/doc /*L* d/*>~\dibc>%<? />
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other vendors south of 60 in order to provide goods to consumers in the north. We also found that over time, we had difficulty with responding to sharp rises in transportation costs related to fuel escalations and other increases. As a result, we found ourselves in a situation where we were paying, but we didn't have much way of responding to predicting how those things occurred or where we made those payments.

We found that there was a lack of incentives for people to make good choices on how they're moving goods and services to the north. We had a series of entry points, which compelled retailers and others to force the purchase of their goods through certain points across the country and, as a result of that, we lost all kinds of efficiencies. We didn't have the tools in place for people to make good choices on how to get things to the shelves, such as through sealift or winter roads.

We also had questions about our product eligibility list. There were concerns raised as to why we would be subsidizing airfreight for such things as machine parts. We also found that the communication and message around the Food Mail Program had a minimal focus on nutrition.

Of course, the last two items we found are that, as mentioned earlier, we were unable to predict and understand the performance of the program in light of the way that we were delivering it through another third party.

Finally, because of all those elements, we had limited consumer and stakeholder redress mechanisms or ways to respond to the needs of the consumers and the people participating in the program. Canada Post does what they do well, but in terms of having the community's interests in terms of responding to the needs that they have, it was difficult

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for that message to get through.

In 2010, the government announced a new and focused program to enhance accountability, transparency, and fiscal financial responsibility. So we have our new program entitled Nutrition North Canada and it provides financial assistance that flows to the public through registered food suppliers and retailers, who arrange their own transportation for eligible foods.

In responding to some of the criticisms that I have mentioned, we have tried to focus this program on improved community access to nutritious foods, which is expensive to transport, to find overall transportation efficiencies by encouraging private market choice for better modes of transportation to ship certain goods.

We have stabilized the funding with an additional \$32 million annually to place the program on a stable financial footing and we have strengthened the program management through transparency and accountability through the establishment of performance measures. Of course, partnering with our colleagues at Health Canada, we're trying to bring a significant health focus on the nutritious aspects of healthy eating, and finally, strengthening the voice of northerners in directing the program through the creation of an advisory board.

On slide 6, it gives you a very general breakdown on what was happening prior to and where we are today. You will note to the left side of the page that we had annual appropriations and, if you have it in colour, on the yellow box, the annual appropriations were approximately \$27.6 million annually. However, we find ourselves spending more than that and requesting an additional \$30.7 million through reallocation. We tried to learn from those two realities and regularize

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the funding to the levels going forward at approximately \$60 million.

Slide 7 describes essentially how the program works. To begin, we have registered suppliers, orders are placed with them, they calculate and provide an invoice, they ship it to retailers in the most efficient means, we hope, possible, it arrives on the shelves in retailers, and that proof of purchase and arrival is then returned back to the program and we make payment.

For small northern retailers and personal orders or direct orders, the process is quite similar. We have registered wholesalers. Those wholesalers are available for people to call. Those wholesalers then work with shippers to make sure that the product arrives on the doorsteps of consumers. Those retailers and personal order users then.... The supplier then provides the information back to our department as to who they have shipped to and for what products, to which we then make a reimbursement.

Slide 8 gives you a bit of a picture as to how wide and varied the reach of Nutrition North Canada goes. It is similar to what we had under the Food Mail Program. From the communities as far east as Labrador to as far west as Old Crow and to as far north as Grise Fiord includes the coverage area of Nutrition North Canada. The catchment area dips into northern Ontario and northern Manitoba, as well as Nunavik, Ouebec.

Slide 9 tells us how we're structured from a governance point of view. We have added two new governance bodies to assist Nutrition North Canada in delivering its mandate and in guiding its evolution. The first was the creation of the advisory board, as Wilf had described the roles and responsibilities moments ago. The second is an interdepartmental committee within

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government that is comprised of Health Canada, Transport Canada, and other departments, including Finance, to provide the program some oversight.

The main message that I would like to convey here on this slide is that unlike what I would call a bit of a blackbox of the Food Mail Program, we have two entry points into the program to provide advice and oversight, the advisory board, of course, and to make sure that we're delivering on our mandate and our responsibilities, we have the benefit of accessing an interdepartmental committee. And that's an important change from the previous approach to which we hopefully see some benefits as we go.

Slide 10. We have mentioned the role of the advisory board and in the interest of time, perhaps what I'll do is go to the third bullet on slide 10. We work with the board to collect and analyze information and to consider policy and management changes to improve delivery. We're drawing from the experience and the expertise of a number of individuals and organizations to do that, including the departments that I referred to moments ago, but also the experience of our advisory board members to review program performance.

We believe that the advisory board will not only to enhance the operation of Nutrition North Canada from the Food Mail Program; it will help the program be more transparent and visible to northerners.

Slide 11. As Wilf has indicated, in November 2010, in following consultation with the Minister of Health, Minister Duncan announced the appointment of the board members comprising Ms. Copland, Mr. Wilcox, Ms. Cournoyea, Ms. Nukon, Mr. McDougall, Ms. Gauthier, and Ms. Wood. The board members were chosen on their

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overall experience and their ability to expand public awareness, and these are three-year terms, renewable on a yearly basis after the initial three years.

So what are the implementation issues that we have encountered? The shift from Canada Post Corporation to Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada as the main delivery partner in partnership with retailers was, no question, a major change.

Previously Canada Post handled the program operations under an agreement with our department. Canada Post was able to arrange flying goods to isolated communities using their delivery system and invoice our department for whatever eligible goods costs it incurred. The program became embedded in the shipping and shopping patterns of the consumers, vendors, and shippers.

The new program, Nutrition North Canada, is a significant shift for both users and administrators. We have created new business processes. We've had to ensure better information and performance management systems, including claims processing and developing our core human capacity. Public education and managing the expectations around the new program remains a key priority for the program. We have tried to manage this change through a staged implementation.

Staged Implementation – On April 1, 2011, we launched the program. That was announced almost a year previously on May 21 that we had the intent to announce a new program. The implementation of the revised eligibility list was announced on October 3, 2010, and following reactions from northerners hearing first hand from concerns about the implementation of that list, the decision was taken to create an additional transition period to October 20, 2012. All

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food mail products were reinstated, with the exception of mechanical parts and bottled water.

The Nutrition North Implementation Action Plan today centres on three pillars. The first is a focus on making sure that our operational policy framework is started to address such questions as the issue of country food and how we set our subsidy rates. It's also focused on a second pillar, which is making sure that our delivery platform is in place. Primarily that means making sure that we are able to collect the information and pay our bills on time. And finally, the third pillar is public outreach and communications.

Slide 14. Our Nutrition North Canada Implementation Action Plan status is as follows:

- we continue to ramp up;
- we have approximately 30 recipient agreements in place and 4 more in waiting;
- we have our claims processor contracted and it's operational;
- the advisory board is up and running and active; and
- the program office continues to complete some staffing actions.

We're continuing with public outreach and communications, and you may have received our recent card in your mailboxes earlier this fall, where 22,000 households received an update on the program by way of general information. More will be following. We're attempting to use the Internet better in making information available. Of course, as mentioned earlier, we're continuing to build our operational policy framework to support

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the transition, as well as making sure that we're responsive to changes to things like subsidy rates and the issue of country food.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, in terms of the formal part of my presentation, we believe that Nutrition North Canada is an important new program that aims to improve access to nutritious foods in isolated northern communities. We're working to strengthen public understanding of the program's objective and it remains a key problem area for us to manage but it's an area of priority.

Nutrition North Canada is influencing a number of things in its new delivery mechanisms by providing people the tools to make good choices. We're influencing multiple platforms, including the food supply chain, the transportation industry, retail practices, and of course, consumer tastes.

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada is committed to delivering the best possible results during and beyond the transition period while managing and actively responding to feedback.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I invite you to pose any questions to either myself or Mr. Wilcox.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Before I open the floor to comments and questions from members, I wish to state that although this is not a formal sitting of the House, I will be following our general guidelines with respect to time. I will allow each member up to 10 minutes for comments and questions before I proceed to the next name on my list. After all members who wish to speak have spoken, I will return to the beginning of my list. I now recognize the Member for Tununiq, Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr.

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Chairman. I would like to welcome Mr. Wilcox and Mr. Van Dine to the committee meeting.

Before I raise a question, I want to get some clarification, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps I did not grasp the message, but those of us from Pond Inlet use a different program, I believe. The presentation, as I heard it, when you talk about the benefits, I doubt if I have even heard anyone in Pond Inlet say that this program is great. "It's providing benefits." I've never heard any citizen of Pond Inlet make that statement to me.

Therefore, I do not understand, even though a presentation was just made, and I was really trying to listen to the presentation, but I did not understand how a citizen of Pond Inlet, Mr. Joe Inuk walking on the street, how much benefit has been divested into that person.

I do understand that the big retail stores have reaped most of these benefits. I think I got that message. However, for the average person on the street I do not understand what benefit has accrued to the people. I have received letters from people in Pond Inlet and out of all the correspondence, not one person has commented that this program has made such a big difference.

I received a lot of letters, but most of them complain that it's now more difficult to place a food order, because now they do not have their freedom to order the food item that they want to buy. Their only option is to buy the food stocks from the Northern or the Co-op. Those are the two avenues that we have, and that places a barrier on ordering food mail, because of the high transportation costs. It's one of the most difficult issues for an average citizen to make an agreement with the air carrier, whereas the retail stores have a lot of clout.

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Can someone please clarify, prior to my raising a question, even if it's a short message, how the average person in Pond Inlet has benefited from this program? What benefits have been given to the people of Pond Inlet? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Enook. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess, to begin, there are probably a couple of things to say right off the bat. The first is that we all recognize that the cost of living in the north is extremely high. Utility costs, power, heat, and housing: all of those things are extremely high and all of those costs are factored in to getting goods to market, as we know.

I don't have examples of costs of foods for Pond Inlet with me today. I can tell you that I do have some examples of the differences between what food would cost without the Nutrition North Canada subsidy and what they cost with the Nutrition North subsidy for a few select items. For example, in Igaluit, we will start there. For a dozen eggs, retailers have provided us that without the subsidy of Nutrition North Canada, the market price to customers would likely be almost \$7 and with the subsidy, we're told that they are able to provide that same dozen eggs for about \$4. In the case of milk, the actual cost of getting two litres of milk on the shelf at market price for consumers would be almost \$13 here in Iqaluit and they're able to offer that same two-litre jug of milk for just over \$6.

I have a couple of other examples, and that is a major centre and I recognize Iqaluit's a major centre. Let's turn to a different community, for example. For the community of Arctic Bay, we're told that the same dozen eggs that would sell in Iqaluit without **Δ•/<>ν(** Ͻ^ίλληυς): የσγο τ΄, Γίο Δως, Γίο « ΟΔ.

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I appreciate that it is early days in the program and the full benefits of that program are still not to be seen, but there's another dimension to this program which you will be seeing some visibility in the next little while and that is the nutrition health aspects of the program and community wellness components. We have \$2.9 million that we have contributed to Health Canada to increase public education and awareness about healthy living and healthy practices. We hope that that particular aspect of the program will create more visibility for the program and the benefits that it can provide. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps you did not understand my statement because my question was not even answered. What I had tried to raise was how an average person benefits from this program. I thought my question was quite understandable because I know that the retail stores and the larger retail bodies are getting a lot of benefits, and I do know that we are getting some assistance based on the particular foodstuff you mentioned, but they are only available in the stores.

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What I was trying to ask is: how does the average person benefit from this program? They can no longer order food mail. We know it's not stopping the food mail, but it places a lot of barriers and obstacles for a person to use the food mail. If you cannot provide a response, I don't know what else to say.

Mr. Chairman, I think a lot of us want to find out, perhaps all of us do. How will we know or how do we know that these retail outlets are not abusing these benefits? How can we find that out? Hopefully that's understandable with my question there. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Enook. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you. Certainly I'll attempt to be more direct in my responses.

We believe the individual benefits or the benefits to people occur at the local level and in the local store. Increasing access to healthy and perishable foods for the most people in the coverage area, we recognize that one of the limitations of the previous program was those with specific means, such as credit cards and others, had an ability to bring in direct orders at much more variety of a rate. That feature still remains with this program. However, what we're attempting to do with the shift in this program is to ensure that local stores are able to put on the shelves healthier and more perishable goods for more people to buy at better prices. That's the aim of the program.

In terms of ensuring that the subsidies that I have described are passed on to people, we have a number of ways to do that. The first is we have a legal agreement with the retailers that are participating in the program. That legal agreement is also followed up with an

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audit component. We're six months into the program and we haven't seen any indication right now or any visible evidence to suggest that our partners are not passing on the benefits. However, we still do not have a full year of operation under our belt to analyze the data to know for sure. The audit feature is an important component of the program to make sure that benefits are being passed on to people. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What I'm trying to raise in my questions is what kind of benefits the average person on the street received. To date, it's almost impossible to order food for the average person on the street. What can we do to ensure that the person on the street, who wants to be able to order food, is allowed to do so? What can they do?

Maybe to cite this example, we can only buy food that is brought in by the major stores. I can only buy food that the Co-op orders. Even if I don't like that particular food, I have absolutely no choice but to buy that because there is no other food. In the past, we used to be able to order the food that we chose to order. As long as they were listed within the foodstuff list, whether it is frozen, fresh produce, or something else, we were able to order this food mail because they were able to get the transportation costs paid for. Now that has stopped. My fellow citizens in Pond Inlet are no longer able to order the food mail because the air carriers will not agree to provide a subsidy or to lower the cost to a single person. At least I think so.

How can we provide more benefits to the average person on the street so that they can order food? Yes, we all know that they can

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order, but the exorbitant cost of transportation is a barrier. So how can they get a benefit if they want to order food outside of these major retail stores? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Enook. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those are some excellent points. What we have in this program is a market-based program. It does encourage competition among airline providers to give and compete for business and shipping. Certainly, individuals are disadvantaged in terms of the kinds of things that are available to larger purchasers, such as stores and retailers. That is a matter for the airline industry to focus on, for sure.

I can tell you that there are a couple of things that are continuing, and I want to make sure that the record is clear. First and foremost, individuals are still able to order from southern providers. As was mentioned, Mr. Chairman, the subsidized rate would then come up against the shipping of that good. That has been pointed out. There are other iurisdictions in which Nutrition North Canada operates and where provincial governments are offering a transportation subsidy which compliments our initiative. We have had some early discussions and reactions from those provincial governments with respect to how well Nutrition North has been complementing their efforts, and those early days and early expressions seemed promising. That is but one option that I would invite others to consider.

Certainly here today, Mr. Wilcox, as a member of the advisory board, is listening as closely as I am, if not more, about the views about the transportation impact for individuals. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That, I believe, is a problem for the average citizen because we can't negotiate with the air carriers on a common price. That's a barrier. That's an obstacle for the average citizen because we don't have any clout with the air carriers; they will not listen to us. It's only the larger clients who are able to negotiate a better subsidy, whether that is the Northern Store or the Coop. If you're the average citizen trying to get something from the air carriers, it's almost impossible to get any kind of subsidy or a break. I want you to carefully review and consider that.

I do understand that after the process has been running for a period of years, there will be slight changes to fix it and I like that, but I also have big concerns. How many years will we have to wait before the program is corrected? For example, as the Nunavut government, we make a statement that we have just begun as a government, so we're making corrections. When will this government be able to stand to benefit the average person? I am looking forward to that day.

Mr. Chairman, I don't know how to pass along this message, although I understand completely that we're trying to be provided benefits by this program and I like that. However, more time should have been taken into the way the program is set up to benefit the average Joe Inuk who is not a businessperson, who is not an employee. Yes, we, the Members of this House, have the income necessary to be able to order and yes, we can order food because we're making enough revenue and income to be able to order. How can the average citizen on the street who does not have the resources or

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who may not have the financial resources like I do place their orders?

Again, I understand from your comments that the program will be massaged and I like that. I want to leave some time for my colleagues to comment. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Enook. It looks like Mr. Wilcox has an answer to that.

Mr. Wilcox: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Enook. I think, from the advisory board perspective, we have looked at the issue of personal orders. From what we gather over here, there's still a good availability to be able to make personal orders, but we have also.... Speaking in reference to the average Joe Inuk, who is my good friend, the people need access to good nutritious food, you know, at the stores, who can't order. On the advisory board, we have really concentrated on having the most impact to the most people, and that's through the stores, and trying to reduce things and understand what the issues are and how many issues there really is, which is quite an onerous thing.

I think Mr. Van Dine points out that we're six months into the game. We have identified a lot of them and are working through them, and certainly your comments will resonate through our deliberations over the next year because we will be and I'm sure Mr. Van Dine will be speaking to the fact that we're going to be meeting with the retail aspect of things in a meeting later on this winter and we will certainly be doing the same with the transportation representatives. So this meeting here is timely in that we get to catch our breath, but there's still a lot of work to do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Wilcox. I now recognize the Member for Iqaluit West, Ms.

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Ms. Ell (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the presenters who are in front of us and who are able to provide responses to our questions. This is an important program in the north because the price of food is quite expensive, especially with the transportation costs.

The question that I want to ask first is part of the mandate of the Nutrition North Canada Program that was just presented. The second presenter's comments spoke to the use of the program and how they are audited to ensure compliance. (interpretation ends) One of the things that you mentioned in your PowerPoint presentation is that there will be public education and managing expectations around this whole issue of nutritious food. My question is you're spending over \$2 million in the coming year to educate people on what is good food. Maybe, first of all, elaborate a little bit more on those expectations around this area before I ask my next question. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Ell. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to elaborate on that particular program. We refer to it as nutrition education initiatives. We're providing to our colleague department, Health Canada, \$2.9 million annually. So for the life of this program right now, that's from year to year current spending that adds up over time. For retail and community-based nutrition education initiatives in First Nations and Inuit communities that are eligible for the full retail subsidy under Nutrition North Canada, these activities aim to increase knowledge of healthy eating and develop skills related to selecting and preparing healthy store-bought and country or

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traditional foods, strengthen the focus on retail settings and retail community partnerships, and build on existing efforts at the community level.

This funding flows through five Health Canada regions where there are eligible communities, such as the northern region of Health Canada, Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, and Manitoba. For Nunavut, the funding flows from the northern region of Health Canada to the Government of Nunavut, who in turn works with communities.

Examples of nutrition education initiatives include:

- Information and taste tests featuring healthy foods in local stores;
- Grocery store tours for selecting healthy foods:
- Elders teaching youth how to prepare country foods;
- Cooking classes using healthy foods in schools and community settings;
- Training for community workers;
- Retail and community partnerships to promote information and skills around healthy choices.

In 2010 and 2011, Health Canada distributed approximately \$2.8 million to support nutrition education activities as part of planning and transition to the new Nutrition North Canada Program. Some of the successes from this funding over the last little while were:

- Links with local stores were established and expanded;
- Nutrition and healthy education was strengthened and broadened;
- Healthy foods were introduced and promoted through cooking classes;
- Healthy eating knowledge was shared with youth in schools through on-the-

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land camps and home economic classes;

- Equipment and supplies to support cooking skills were purchased; and
- Initiated coordination between Nutrition North Canada and nutrition education in other community programs, drawing linkages to things like healthy living related to diabetes management and other issues.

Health Canada is working closely with regions, territories, and other key partners on implementing the education initiatives. In Nunavut, in particular, the following activities have been identified for 2011 and 2012:

- There will be a training event for community workers that is scheduled for this coming December;
- Community program planning workshops to integrate and benefit all available nutrition related fields will occur;
- Funds for community equipment and supplies will again be purchased; and finally
- Our colleagues are looking at developing more resource material and having it distributed.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Ms. Ell.

Ms. Ell (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Nutritious food is lacking in our communities and the money seems to be huge, but I know that it's not going to be able to cover everything. We need to educate the public on nutritional food in Nunavut and anywhere in the community because we now see people with diabetes. I am very pleased that we're now able to pass on the benefit through the stores. We need to increase

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education in the north about Nutrition North.

As you stated earlier on, they're now working on country food. Could you elaborate further on country food? We can only purchase them from certain retail outlets. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Ell. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you very much. I'll begin by responding to the first comments, which there is a bit of a theme developing today.

Nutrition North Canada, being a significant departure from the previous program, in essence, provides a different set of tools for people to use to make good choices. We're hopeful, over time, that if everyone is making good choices, the benefits of the program will be felt. What I mean by that is when it comes to diabetes programming and other sorts of community wellness activities, Nutrition North is there to be drawn upon to help compliment those programs and to make them work to better aims.

On the issue of country food, we're working closely with our colleagues at Health Canada. They have been consistent over the years in terms of promoting the health benefits of using and cooking with country foods and traditional foods. That will continue. As was remarked, right now, there are just a limited number of suppliers that are providing country foods. Those suppliers are the ones that are now federally inspected by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to provide them the ability to sell goods across the coverage area of Nutrition North Canada.

The information we have on those current programs is very accurate with the comments made, Mr. Chairman. What we find in the

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When supplies are available, sometimes those providers are able to provide more country foods to other retail or commercial enterprises, such as restaurants, but that's when supplies exist. Those things include goods such as muskox, caribou, and other country foods. However, there is more work to be done on country food. The advisory board has been very clear in directing departmental officials to see what we can do to expand the focus on country food as part a new and improved program under Nutrition North Canada, so we're looking at that actively right now.

As has been referenced in some of the comments earlier, there are a number of players involved in the country food chain, from hunters and trappers to airlines themselves to certainly Health Canada and others, to make sure that country foods are accessible. I can say today with some confidence that over the next short while, we're looking to make progress on expanding the ability of country food being more accessible under the program. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Ms. Ell.

Ms. Ell (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It would be very beneficial for country food trading between the communities. In Iqaluit, we have been lacking caribou for a long time. We order from our relatives from Rankin Inlet or trade caribou meat with seal meat. Those are some of the things we do.

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We hear that eating country food or traditional food, such as caribou, fish, muskox, is better for your heart, especially when you have diabetes. You are asked to eat country foods rather than eating foods from the retail outlets because country foods, I hear, are very healthy. I am very pleased that you will be working on this aspect. I urge you to start working on it as soon as possible to make sure.... If you can elaborate further.... Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Ell. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can say that we're definitely.... Based on the advice and the focus of the advisory board, program officials are inspired to make progress on the country food question.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. I guess I'm going with the assumption that everybody is just an average Joe Inuk. Ms. Ell.

Ms. Ell (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With the situation the way it is, we cannot trade our country foods and we can only buy foodstuffs from the retail outlets and that's what we're stuck with.

Now, with respect to nutritious foods and trying to choose the proper nutritious foods, it is starting to crop up in the retail outlets. Sometimes you can actually see the cost of the subsidy that is listed on the food. When we're talking about the price subsidies, I believe you referred to that during your presentation about subsidies. However, when we buy the foodstuffs, the subsidies don't show up on the receipts and we have to believe the retail outlet based on the actual price. So I'm wondering whether it's possible to highlight that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Ell. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. The visibility of the subsidy is an important feature of the program. It's important for people to understand what federal monies are going to reducing the cost and what that is on any given item. Our tools that we have today, albeit, are still relatively new and they do have their limitations.

Our retailers, for example, are obligated to post in their stores the subsidy rate levels that are currently available for items in the store. Unfortunately we haven't overcome the technological barrier of being able to clearly and easily see that incorporated in the receipt of the goods at the till. So there is a bit of work that has to be done, unfortunately, by the part of the consumer and a little bit by the retailer to explain, with the posters that we have provided, how those subsidy rates are translating into lower prices.

Some retailers are using this as an opportunity to promote certain goods and they're undertaking them under their own volition, advertising in their stores to note the differences between prices as a result of Nutrition North Canada. But again, I say that's voluntary. There's certainly more work to be done. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Ms. Ell.

Ms. Ell (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With that situation the way it is, what are your plans for the future if we had a watchman to look over the subsidy costs? The food costs vary and a lot of people do not trust these big retail outlets, although they state that they're there for the benefits. Some people do not believe that these retail outlets are actually subsidizing particular

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healthy foods. It's quite obvious that the transportation costs are continuing to climb and the price of everything seems to be rising. We keep seeing price increases in food. I would like to know whether or not we have some kind of oversight on the rising cost of food. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Ell. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the inspector concept or the price policeman idea is a very interesting one. It's certainly one that, for now, we have been relying on other means to get there and that is the audit function, but I do hear the interest in making sure that consumers can count on benefits getting to them and that everyone is doing their part. I will certainly take that idea back with me and I'll certainly be discussing it with Mr. Wilcox and other members of the advisory board. Perhaps, if I'm invited back, I can provide an update on where that idea has gone.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. I'm sure we will accommodate inviting you back. Ms. Ell.

Ms. Ell (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the communities where there's a retail store, it's sometimes very tempting to buy food from another retail store, but you will also want to try and save money wherever you can. When we were able to order food mail under the old program, if you look at the Inuksuk cafeteria, I believe there was a meeting up in the school that there was a common need that there will be more options available to the people here from the south. In the last six months of this program, has the number of retail outlets where they could order produce increased? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Ell. Mr. Van

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Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you very much. Under the Food Mail Program, there were approximately 35 agreement holders. Some of them, though, included service providers that specialized in heavy equipment. So when we moved to the Nutrition North Canada Program, those suppliers certainly fell off the list, so to speak. I am able to report that we do now have 30 agreements in place and we have four pending. So we have four new ones looking to come on board and we're certainly interested and open to new agreement holders as interest is expressed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Ms. Ell.

Ms. Ell (interpretation): Where the stores can make their agreements, do the stores go to them to make the agreement or do you look for stores to have an agreement with? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Ell. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: There are two main ways that it works right now. There are certainly the larger establishments. We have one central agreement with those larger establishments that have stores across multiple places. It helps with centralized processing and bill payment. It's very easy and efficient. For those stores that are not affiliated with a large chain or distribution, we do have individual agreement holders with some of those. I don't have those numbers with me today.

We also have a list of wholesalers and there are wholesalers in different parts of the country, Winnipeg and parts of Quebec, that are providing supply to independent retailers

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across the north. We hold the agreements with the wholesalers and it saves somewhat on the administrative burden for the smaller retailers that are served by the larger wholesalers.

I hope I was clear, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Ms. Ell.

Ms. Ell (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Some retail outlets have stated that they receive a subsidy, perhaps \$340 per month, which is towards the operation of this program. Is this true? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Ell. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. With our agreement holders, we do recognize that there is an administrative burden to process the monthly reports. It's a bit of a percentage. I believe it's supposed to be about 1 percent of what they ship and, in some cases, that does translate into the amount that was referenced, approximately \$340, but it does vary. It is recognized as an amount to help offset costs to do the monthly reporting. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Ms. Ell.

Ms. Ell (interpretation): Thank you. I have tried to order food by this new program ever since it was introduced, but to date, I still am unsure. In the past, the administrative fee, box fee, or whatever other kinds of fees were added onto the costs of our orders and these outlets would add the cost to the order. If they were getting a subsidy, were they getting additional funding on top of that? Thank you.

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Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Ell. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe I understand the question to be for direct orders or personal orders and what can the individual expect to pay for using the personal order or direct purchase feature of the program. Certainly, when the personal order is made with a registered wholesaler or supplier, the registered wholesaler and supplier applies the preferential subsidy to the goods being purchased. So the individual customer gets the benefit immediately from the wholesaler at the time of purchase.

The next step about getting the package from the wholesaler to the individual, as was mentioned earlier, does involve a transportation step and it is between the personal order maker and the wholesaler on how that part is conducted and what charges apply. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. I now recognize the Member for Rankin Inlet South and Whale Cove, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) It's nice to be able to ask a question. Hopefully I'll get an answer.

Welcome, Mr. Wilcox. I agree when you said you have a strong spectrum of members on your board. I was glad to see the people on your board when they were appointed. Mr. Van Dine, you and I have a lot more in common than I thought. I attended Sir John also while you were in elementary school, mind you, and I sat behind the glass at the Legislative Assembly in Yellowknife when you were there, but I was with the media then. Welcome, nonetheless.

Just to follow along the lines of the

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Has there been any attempt by the board or the department to see what it would take to get these very valuable people back onto the program? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Kusugak. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you very much for that question. Mr. Chairman, I will say that it was certainly brought to our attention very early that some service providers decided not to continue with Nutrition North Canada. We do realize that that provides a service gap in the Kitikmeot in particular, as well as parts of the Northwest Territories. We have drawn attention to that. We have undertaken conversations with each of the organizations or businesses that chose not to continue with us to find out exactly why they didn't and what we could do to encourage them to reconsider. We did do that informal survey. We found that we were a bit surprised with the results we were getting.

I do acknowledge that there was quite a bit of media attention to the paper burden of getting started over to Nutrition North Canada. When I explored that question with some of the ones who chose not to continue directly, what they expanded on, they said that it was,

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The costs associated with packing, delivering, and focusing on the individual versus serving a larger urban market in places such as Yellowknife, for example, wasn't consistent with their business model. I thanked them for their being candid, but it did actually result in me taking a trip to Yellowknife directly and having a candid conversation with a number of different players to find out if other remedies could be found. People were very respectful and they were very clear that their business models didn't align conveniently with the personal order business of what we were trying to achieve.

That being said, we haven't given up. We do realize that a service gap does continue to exist in terms of personal orders for the Kitikmeot and the Northwest Territories, and we're working diligently to try and find a solution. It's a bit premature today for me to tell you the exact progress there on that front, but I can tell you that we haven't given up and we're spending a fair amount of energy to make sure that a solution is found.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Maybe you should communicate with... . I'm not talking about Yellowknife and the Kitikmeot; I'm talking about the Kivalliq and Manitoba. I know the ones who backed out from our region in Manitoba, I would be very surprised if they said they were going to back out anyway because we were getting daily and weekly

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flyers from these suppliers constantly telling us that they had weekly food baskets and things like that all the time. Now they decided they're not going to do it. I assure you those are not the people who decided that this was too costly for them. It was a waste of time where it wasn't their store model.

In talking to two of the retailers which I may be able to tell you afterwards, they actually had people specializing in this field because they were shipping orders. There were hundreds of boxes every week at the cargo offices in Rankin Inlet. That was food going to people's stomachs and when this happened, in all their wisdom, someone decided to change the program, the orders stopped and people would go hungry for nutritious or non-nutritious food just to fill their stomach. So I think you really need to take a look at where you went and where you're going with this.

Mr. Chairman, the other aspect of this that I think needs to be dealt with is that there needs to be some adjustment into your nutritious food, what qualifies as nutritious and not. We have families out there that rely a lot on tea, bannock, macaroni, and Cheese Whiz for three meals a day. To them, that's nutritious. It's not your tossed salad, t-bone steak dinner, mind you, but to them, that's nutrition. They know how to cook it, they know how to make it, and that's all they could afford because they can't afford all the other niceties that are put on the Food Mail Program.

Is there any possibility of including some of these very important diets for Nunavummiut in the program? Even though they're not nutritious, white flour and things like that, is there a possibility that those things could be included in there? I know they could be shipped on the ship and stuff, but even then ΔΡϽϽϤʹσʹϧՐϘϝ· · · ·

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they're still very expensive in the communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Kusugak. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do want to thank the information provided to me about the situation and supply in Manitoba, and I look forward to following up to find out more about that so that we can respond.

With regard to the eligibility list or the food for subsidy list, the list is certainly a dynamic list. We envision that that list will change in part over time as new products come on market that need to be considered but also as we get more experience under our belts with respect to the new program and nutrition value.

We have heard in no uncertain terms from the members of our advisory board and through other conversations that a northern lens needs to be brought to the eligibility list and that eligibility list needs to reflect the realities of northerners. We're working hard to make sure that we have that artful balance between what we understand to be the best that the Canada Food Guide can offer as well as what are the realities for community living.

So, Mr. Chairman, I would just like to acknowledge that those considerations are being taken into account as we consider changes to the food eligibility list. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Not to go much longer, and I appreciate the patience of my colleagues, just

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a couple more things on that.

Excuse my ignorance, but if there isn't, is there a way that it could be looked at to put at least a minimum freight rate for the suppliers to the people who order food, not the retailer, not the Northern stores, Co-ops, and things like that, but for the average Joe Inuk who orders from Joe retailer's shop in Winnipeg, I'll use that for an example, that when they ship us food, they pay a minimum freight rate instead of having to negotiate their own so that we could absorb some of that cost? They can't compete with the Northern stores and anybody else, but is there that and, if not, could that be negotiated? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Kusugak. Mr. Wilcox had an addition to Mr. Kusugak's last answer and then I'll give Mr. Van Dine a chance. Mr. Wilcox.

Mr. Wilcox: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Lorne. You made a pretty good point there on the cost of things that are getting dropped off of the list and I think I'm going to recommend that we monitor some of those items that have been taken off of the list. Of course, the whole notion with Nutrition North is that heavy freight things coming on the ship makes sense and it makes room for the subsidy to go in other areas where perishables are involved.

But I think that we should, as part of the whole effort, try to capture information on things like is flour going up, is macaroni going up, or are things working the way they had been predicted to work, and I think that's a perfectly good thing for us to do to ensure that all of the marks are being checked off. I'll certainly recommend that and it was a good point. Thanks.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Wilcox. Mr. Van

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Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The question pertained to whether or not we could explore the possibility of a transportation subsidy to help personal order users as part of the program. At this stage, that feature is not a component of the program. I know that a lot of deep thinking went into the differences and the benefits between providing a retail subsidy versus a transportation subsidy to try and get the same outcomes. I know that the ultimate decision was taken to go the retail subsidy route in terms of where we put the resources behind this program.

That being said, I have heard the comment about the transportation burden on the individual and the costs of transportation for the individual. As Mr. Wilcox has alluded, we are looking to focus one of the advisory board meetings in February to have a component to engage with businesses, including airlines, to talk about how the program is operating. That certainly will be an area of discussion in terms of the impact on individuals as the result of the changes we have made. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you for the responses, Wilf and Mr. Van Dine. Just a couple more issues.

You must be aware that not everybody wants to shop Northern in Nunavut and what's happening here is we have a lot of small retailers out there. We have Quick Stops and convenience stores. Some of them have one aisle, some of them have a few more, but regardless, none of these stores have the buying power and freight power as Northern stores do. Therefore, Northern stores will get

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the biggest reduction in rate and, if they do like they're supposed to, that should equal to being the cheapest place to shop.

Now, for the small outlets in all our communities, and we all have them, they're being put under tremendous strain to provide the same nutritious foods at equal to or better than the Northern Store. The Northern Store becomes the one-stop shop, so everybody tends to go there, but if the small stores can compete and not necessarily be cheaper, then they could attract customers. This program is making it very hard for the one- and two-aisle shops in our communities to compete with the Northern Store.

Are there any plans to try to equal the playing field so that small businesses do not close their stores because of this program? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Kusugak. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It certainly is recognized that we have taken a market focused [approach] to this program. With that, the market does react with economies or efficiencies that, as have been referred to, go into those that are in a position to purchase more, to negotiate better, and to have different supply chains to make sure that their prices are as competitive as possible.

It is our hope that the ultimate outcome is that the benefits flow to individuals in communities. In the early days of this program, the smaller retailers do have, admittedly, relationships with wholesalers in other places that are providing them with their goods. Those wholesalers are the ones that we are working with to transfer the subsidy and the benefits and prices get transferred onto the small retailer.

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We're finding that a number of small business questions are coming up. There are a number of other players involved that are in the field of small business support. That's certainly not the main focus of our program and our particular mandate. That being said, small stores and retailers are certainly an important partner in the delivery of the program. We're aware that there are other players in terms of the airline industry and others that have an important role to play in making sure that efficiencies are made and benefits arrive.

I will be taking the information I hear today back and I'll be working with Mr. Wilcox and the other members of the advisory board on the question about the nature of the impact on small retailers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Wilcox.

Mr. Wilcox: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was reading a bit vesterday and today with interest to the Hansard for the May factfinding mission. There were some comments made at that meeting that the playing field was much more equal during food mail. I think that that's something that we have all assumed is accurate, but I think that there has always been this ability for the big guys to negotiate and that always existed, so there wasn't really that level playing field before. If you consider that the smaller businesses tend to cater to convenience and people are willing to pay for convenience, I think that the distance between prices probably isn't that high.

On the advisory board, one of the things that we have tried to concentrate our efforts on is where the most impact is and I think, over time, we will be allowed to shift from that when there's a comfort factor around getting

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the biggest bang for the buck. I was happy to hear Mr. Van Dine say that he is willing to look at it. There are so many complexities and we have tried to push away some of them to maximize the bigger impact to our good friends. It doesn't need to be said, but it's good that there's some commitment to work on further reaching. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Wilcox. Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: I just have one more question. Thank you for the response, but I could assure you that when I did the food mail a couple years ago, my food basket, if I ordered the same thing today, is a lot more expensive than it was a couple years ago through this program. So there is a cost factor. It is real. It is more expensive and at the end of the day, you have to decide what you are going to do. You're going to buy a bag of apples and eat healthy for a minute or you're going to buy a bag of flour and eat healthy for a week, not so healthy but at least not be hungry.

Mr. Chairman, the whole idea behind this, and you keep bringing it up and it keeps being brought up all the time, is nutritious foods and the whole idea behind this is that us Nunavummiut could eat nutritiously, not just eat, which so many people out there watching can't even afford to do half the time, never mind eat nutritiously. Half the groceries that go to the stores sometimes don't last very long on the shelves before they become non-nutritious.

Is there a point during this whole exercise...? Remember that we went from a program that just needed to be tweaked, I think, to something that needs to be fixed, the whole idea being that we're going to go towards affordable nutritious food. Is there a point

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Is there going to be a point where we go there and are we anywhere near there? Right now, when I talk to the people out there and in this room, it sounds a lot like we need to do a lot more work to fix this thing. So I reask that question: is there a point on this highway that we're going to re-tool and start over again, knowing what we know now from this program and the one we abandoned? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Kusugak. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are no plans to revamp this six-monthold program. We are in the early days and we continue to make progress in some important areas.

I will absolutely and fully acknowledge that one of things that have occurred as a result of the change of this program has brought light to a number of important issues and questions facing things like food security across the north. Those issues are certainly very significant and are certainly well understood by many. Nutrition North Canada has a role to play, but certainly I wouldn't say it's the definitive answer to some of the food security questions that are facing many communities across the north.

I will say that the program and what I alluded to in my more formal remarks at the beginning, what food mail did, in many cases, was a little bit hidden in terms of the benefits that went to retailers and others. What we have now, and today is a good

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example, is that we have a much more open and transparent approach to how these questions and issues are discussed. And I certainly welcome the opportunity to work through these issues with members of the advisory board and hearing first hand on how things can be addressed. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. I now recognize the Member for Rankin Inlet North, Mr. Curley.

Hon. Tagak Curley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the time from Mr. Wilcox and Mr. Van Dine to appear here informally, if I may say.

My first question is to the deputy chair. Exactly what is the work of the advisory committee and how are the recommendations processed and presented to whom? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Curley. Mr. Wilcox.

Mr. Wilcox: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So far, since we've got the advisory board going, we've had numerous conference calls and several face-to-face meetings. At the end of each meeting, there's a briefing done to Minister Duncan which will outline the actions or issues that we would like to see dealt with at his level. Also, there's quite a bit of activity that happens between the board and the managers for Nutrition North. It's quite a simple model.

We have developed a tempo of how we deal with various issues and they are common to all northerners, from the Yukon right across to Labrador. We rely a lot on the input of people such as you to direct issues that need immediate action. I think we have been able to cover some pretty good ground in the last

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number of months to bring things to this point. There's still a lot of work to do, but really, it has been six or seven months, so we have made good ground in that time, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Wilcox. Mr. Curley.

Hon. Tagak Curley (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) That's a good reply and that's good to know. I have a question for Mr. Van Dine. We invited you to appear before the Assembly and that request was denied. Could you explain to the caucus here exactly why you refused to appear as a witness to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, and were you prevented from appearing before the Legislative Assembly as a witness to explain to Nunavutmiut about the whole nature of this program? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Curley. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm certainly not equipped today to give you the technical legal reasoning behind it, but I'll give you my answer to that question today. It comes to a matter of principle. We're accountable to the Parliament of Canada for the delivery of this program just as your programs are accountable to this Legislative Assembly. We're very interested in making a presentation to this body and that's why we're here today.

We have made presentations to the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories as well and those have been to standing committees, for example, where we have presented information to members in the Northwest Territories on this very program. We're committed to continuing to provide good information to the members

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here through means such as this or other means we are open to in terms of making sure good information about the program is available and to hear first hand from members through the respective chairs, to hear the questions from the chairs on issues that are affecting members in the communities.

In terms of what happened in May, which I believe the question was referring to, there was some correspondence. The minister did receive an invitation asking for members to appear and the response, I believe, that we gave back at that time was that we would be unavailable for that particular configuration of the Legislative Assembly, but we would be more than happy to come and present to another configuration of the Legislative Assembly and that's what we are doing here today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Curley.

Hon. Tagak Curley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We could debate all that. I think sooner or later, Ottawa is certainly going to have to recognize the fact that this Legislative Assembly is a legitimate institution, that it should be respected, and that informal discussions only should not be the forum to present the views of Nunavutmiut. That message must get through to Ottawa.

With respect to what qualifies for subsidies, have the officials done any work with respect to what percentage of the total food market qualifies for a subsidy under the Nutrition North program? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Curley. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I

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believe the question is, if I understand it well and perhaps I'll confirm, of the food products that are available to people, what percentage of those products are covered by the Nutrition North program. Is that? Okay.

I don't have a clear answer to that question because there is a large number of food products out on the marketplace. The eligibility list and the food for subsidy list is literally a snapshot, if you will, of products that are out there that are available for consumers that align with Canada's Food Guide. So regretfully, Mr. Chairman, I don't have a specific percentage answer for that question. What I can say is that the list itself is a list that's a dynamic list and, over time, has to take into account new products that come on the market that try to achieve and are consistent with the goals of the program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Curley.

Hon. Tagak Curley: Thank you. I assume it's probably quite complex, but I think it's important eventually. I used the word whether or not there have been any studies or whatnot. Maybe if I rephrase some of my questions.

You indicated that there were about six provinces that took part in supplying and wholesalers or retailers from these provinces. Do you have a range of figures of exactly how much each province is benefiting from those programs? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Curley. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll take this opportunity to say that under the previous program, we had very limited capability of determining utilization. We

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I have some general information, but I don't have the specifics that you're looking for by province or by region that this serves today. I certainly can make sure that that information is available when it is available. It's certainly going to be public information. Nunavut remains certainly the highest participant in Nutrition North Canada and I suspect we will see that in the numbers as we continue reviewing them as they come in. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Curley.

Hon. Tagak Curley: Thank you. Yes, that confirms my view as well. Having said that, the list appears to be ongoing, a rolling one, and not complete. Is that list of what qualifies for subsidies available on the website or how can we get a hold of one? I'm sure it's available somewhere. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Curley. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The food for subsidy list is available on our website. It does go into a fair amount of detail as to what's available right now and what retailers are using right now in order to invoice us for subsidies.

As was mentioned back in March, earlier in 2010, the Government of Canada did make the decision to extend the transition period of

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a new list that was more restricted, more streamlined, and more focused on nutritious goods until October 2012. It's still our intention to introduce a new list in time for October 2012.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Curley.

Hon. Tagak Curley: Thank you. That's important for me to understand. Secondly, my question has to do with the percentage or the margin of the subsidy. I'm not going to ask you to explain it, but I assume that the first line of benefactor in this case is the retail supplier or wholesale supplier. Am I correct in saying that they also have to be an approved retail supplier and wholesaler? Would I be correct in saying that?

Having said that, they qualify for subsidies, they do their homework, and you guys give them a cheque. They then transfer that over to the airline. The carrier actually doesn't fill out any paperwork on this; they just bill the retailer or wholesaler. Am I correct in that it's the same percentage plus administration fees from both ends? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Curley. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The new program breaks it down into steps. The comment about the subsidy going to agreement holders is correct and those will be either wholesalers or retailers who will have an agreement with the department. They will send us initially what would be forecasts of how much they expect to ship, and then we validate those forecasts against the actuals at the end of the month on a quarterly basis to see whether or not their forecasts are accurate. Sometimes they're up and sometimes they're down.

The relationship between the wholesaler and

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the retailer on how those goods get shipped is a private relationship between the retailer and the airline company or the sealift operator or other transportation provider. The terms and conditions of that relationship are private between the two. They determine themselves a competitive rate that works and that agreement is a private one between them and the shipper. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Curley.

Hon. Tagak Curley: Thank you. That sounds like a free trade, but it's not all that in my view. I believe the carriers have to be qualified under your department. Am I correct? Do they have to be either one or the other? Could it also be a cargo shipping company of any kind? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Curley. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There's certainly a wide open scope on how goods get from point A to point B and how that's done and negotiated. Our department has no role in determining the transportation of the goods. Our role with the department is between us and the wholesaler and the retailer ensuring that the goods that are purchased and sold are eligible under the program. That's where our program parameters rest. We're hopeful that that decision will allow for some creative and efficient means to get goods from point A to point B, but government was stepping out of the transportation aspect of this when we made the change to this program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. It's now twelve o'clock and I recognize the clock. We will reconvene at 1:30, at which time the Member for Rankin Inlet North, Mr.

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Curley, will have the floor. Have a very healthy, nutritious, and affordable lunch. Thank you.

>>Laughter

>>Meeting recessed at 11:59 and resumed at 13:28

Chairman: Welcome back, everybody. I hope everyone had a good lunch. We will continue with our proceedings this afternoon. The Member for Rankin Inlet North, Mr. Curley, you have the floor. Mr. Curley.

Hon. Tagak Curley: Thank you, *Iksivautaaq*. I have a further question with respect to the process that is used by the federal agencies. I wasn't all that clear when the retailers appeared before us exactly how they are accorded the credentials to be the suppliers and to have the benefit of that arrangement to be able to bill you directly for the subsidy. Could you explain to us once again what the criteria are for designating such suppliers for nutritious stuff? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Curley. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm likely going to have to get back to the Chairman with specific criteria. I can give a general response now and I would be pleased to do so, but I will get back with specific criteria to the Chairman to the question.

It's a fairly open process by which suppliers can come to the department and ask to be considered a registered member for Nutrition North Canada. We have to make sure that if a retail supplier is willing to comply with the program requirements, it does require them to ensure that, for instance, they are prepared to account for the goods that they ship and

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It does mean that they have to meet the reporting requirements in terms of the monthly reporting and it does mean that they need to post Nutrition North eligibility rates where it's practical. If it's a wholesaler that doesn't have a lot of street traffic, if you will, then that posting is not necessarily a strong requirement, but we do ask that the subsidy rates be visible to the people who are using that outlet.

Other than that, that is more or less the extent of the criteria, but for specific criteria, I will get back to the Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Curley.

Hon. Tagak Curley: Thank you. I think it's of interest to my colleague who alluded to the small suppliers and the small retailers that are also very much part of the retail suppliers throughout Nunavut. Could you maybe explain a bit more about what you mean by program requirements? I assume the program requirements are a continual list of criteria required for the supplier because obviously it is those that are designated. Once they are designated, is there a contractual arrangement? How does that work? Is there a term for it, I mean the term of supply, or is it on a month-by-month basis only? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Curley. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am searching my memory for the specifics. I believe the agreements with the suppliers and retail participants are on annual bases that need to be renewed, but I'll have to confirm

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The program requirements are the ones that I have described or attempted to describe already. Essentially, they need to be able to get food from the eligibility list into the communities that are covered by Nutrition North Canada. Those communities that are in Nutrition North Canada are also on a list. We have approximately 134 communities now on that list and we are working with a variety of suppliers and retailers to meet the demands of those communities.

I would like to add that, hypothetically, if there was a small independent retailer in an NNC community, that retailer.... I appreciate it may require some effort, but what I would like to underscore is the flexibility. If that retailer was to come across a supplier willing to give them better service and that supplier is not now registered with Nutrition North Canada, we would certainly be open to getting information to that potential supplier to meet the need of that local operator. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Curley.

Hon. Tagak Curley: Thank you. What I'm alluding to is that it was alluded to in the spring session, I believe, by one of the major retailers and correct me if I'm wrong on this. I know that one of the major suppliers indicated that this revamping of the whole program was a result of the bleeding, for instance, that had been occurring for years, meaning that they were losing out with the competitive competitors that were available to Nunavutmiut.

For instance, when the Food Mail Program was in place, they would order from specific suppliers and the only thing that the supplier

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Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Curley. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe that Nutrition North Canada has made a very specific effort to eliminate the delivery point restrictions that were part of the previous program. The flexibility of having entry points into the north was inefficient. It did cause some inefficiency in a variety of places. It was found to be problematic for transportation providers as well.

By eliminating the points of entry, I believe we have addressed at least, I think, a fair point of your comment of that. We have created a new level of openness and flexibility to allow new suppliers to emerge, wherever they may be across the country, to meet the needs of the communities under this program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Curley.

Hon. Tagak Curley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The fact is that there are only two main benefactors in this case, that being the Northwest Company and Arctic Co-op suppliers. Are there other major suppliers that are eligible to benefit, providing they meet your requirements? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Curley. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The short answer is yes, absolutely. We have a market-based program and it's designed to

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allow those that see the north as a growing area of business opportunity to contact the department and express an interest in becoming a registered supplier. They need not necessarily have physical stores in the north presently. It would operate similar to some of the wholesalers that are providing to some of the other companies that you referred to. That opportunity is wide open, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Curley.

Hon. Tagak Curley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to get back to some of the questions that were raised with respect to country food. Could you explain to the committee why the country food program is not covered primarily within the communities of Nunavut? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Curley. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to refer back to some remarks that I made earlier this morning. Country foods are eligible under Nutrition North Canada. I think that the issue that is of concern is whether it's sufficiently covered in the program now. We are working with the advisory board to see how we can amplify the promotion of country food as a feature of the Nutrition North Canada Program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Curley.

Hon. Tagak Curley: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, the reason I phrased my question was what you see in these approved facilities is not country food as far as most Nunavutmiut are concerned. What we mean by country food is like what Joe Enook was

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What you mean by country food is certified by CFIA, whatever that is, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. Am I correct in that version? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Curley. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you for the opportunity to clarify the country food and traditional food question. Country food and the supply chain that supports country food either between families or between communities have a number of elements that I don't have a clear picture on. And when I say I, it's as the program administrator.

What we have done under the direction of our advisory board is we have undertaken some time and effort to do a bit of research to try and understand all the different players that are involved in the traditional food and country food pursuit. I think, Mr. Chairman, you can understand that when we're talking about commercial establishments providing foods, those foods need to be inspected and determined to be able to be sold in a safe manner. So that is one dimension, but there are other dimensions that are being alluded to.

We're in the process of understanding all the different players that are involved in the country food question and one of which you may be aware of, Mr. Chairman, is the individual actions of certain private enterprises, including airlines that have offered to provide services to facilitate country food movement around the north.

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Those are important initiatives and we certainly want to get a better understanding of how that is operating.

To the extent to which Nutrition North Canada can wrap its arms around the entire question of country food and how it gets from the source to the dinner table, I'm not in a position today to tell you how much of that we're able to accommodate at this time, but we are looking into understanding it better. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Curley.

Hon. Tagak Curley: Thank you. I hope you will do that. It's important because it's about time you understand what's happening. We have been around for a long time, a lot more than 300 years, and the diet has remained with Inuit for thousands of years as far as I'm concerned.

For instance, under the land claims agreement which you are a signatory to, Joe Inuk is eligible to sell any country food to another Inuk outside of his own community. It's very clear, as long as my colleague here, the minister of renewable resources, has allocated and qualified for allowable harvest within that program.

And Inuit do ship. For instance, in one community, caribou is bought for \$300 and the shipping costs \$300, and the shipping company approves the shipping containers. Now, why don't they qualify for a subsidy from your program? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Curley. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The short answer to that question is simply that we're working with registered food

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suppliers. For every application that is received, we would need to determine the attributes of that application to determine whether or not that supplier is eligible to receive the subsidy.

What we do know and I believe, Mr. Chairman, it's known that there are a number of larger scale, larger than the individual, processing facilities located across the north that are currently not registered with Nutrition North Canada. I'm advised that earlier last year, as the program was undergoing some levels of rounds of discussions and consultations, those facilities were approached and asked if they would consider applying. They have not applied to date, but that opportunity still exists today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Curley.

Hon. Tagak Curley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In order to establish the requirements for registered food suppliers, what you're talking about would be in the millions and millions of dollars. That is not at all in my view and most of the Inuit who are out there are not interested in the qualified establishments like you see in Rankin Inlet and fisheries products. In Rankin Inlet, when they talk about country food, these are not designated country food suppliers for Nunavutmiut. These are just selling out of the Nunavut territory. We're not asking you to enhance those types of stuff.

What we're talking about is that you need to support the traditional economy, the traditional diet, and if you don't know anything about the traditional diet, you're going to have to go somewhere to train for a while on what we mean by a special diet that is important to the elders and Nunavut

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Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Curley. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With the greatest respect, what we understand is the country food issue has a number of elements to it. It involves hunters and trappers. It involves land claim based obligations to ensure that certain rights and obligations are fulfilled. It involves, in some cases, commercial shippers. In some cases, it involves commercial establishments that provide food. In some cases, it provides the resource management and the proper resource management function to be taken into account.

I would be very willing to take any kind of training with respect to traditional pursuits and harvesting, but I can respectfully let the members know that in terms of the extent to which this program has been designed to embrace and support country food, it does and continues to do so. I think there is an area of expression that has been provided by the advisory board for us to invest more energy and perhaps my esteemed colleague, Mr. Wilcox, would like to comment further on the views of the advisory board on this matter. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Wilcox.

Mr. Wilcox: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The whole issue of country food as it works with Nutrition North Canada is one that the board has been approaching kind of softly because there's a bit of education and stuff that has to occur to grasp the whole issue.

The things that you heard today are 100 percent on the table, but we have also pointed

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out that there are things like a good cooking show here, where you see an Inuk preparing country food and using nutritious products, that can be used as a great example of the types of things that are happening in Nunavut. We should be working to enhance that.

The organizations like that are owned by the Nunavut Development Corporation. They supply products and yes, mostly those products are exported, at least in my community, but they're there and they make a huge contribution to our communities. So I don't underscore anything that the Nunavut Development Corporation does because in our community, they do a lot of good with muskox harvest and arctic char fishing and a lot of it gets exported.

The board is working to pursue it, but we have the same difficulties of getting around the CFIA requirements. We recognize that both of the major airline carriers in Nunavut have special rates for transporting country food and we felt that if that's a part of the dimension, then we should allow it to happen. In fact, we need to encourage more of that to maximize what's happening with Nutrition North.

It's something that's being worked on, but I'm not sure what the answers are and I don't know how it would work. If we wanted to take a packaged piece of meat to the airport here to send to Rankin Inlet or to Cambridge Bay, then who receives it? It's a step away from where we are now. There's a lot of work that has to be put together around it and I think that we will keep pursuing it for sure. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Wilcox. Mr. Curley, your time has expired, so I will now recognize the Member for Amittuq, Mr. Tapardjuk.

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First of all, due to the lack of knowledge of the Food Mail Program, after it was done away with, we realized and noticed that it was very beneficial to the people and brought the cost of food down. We were quite scared when they were going to do away with the Food Mail Program. We were wondering how we can afford nutritious food on the shelves of the stores since Nutrition North replaced the Food Mail Program.

We appreciate that the Government of Nunavut works very hard for anti-poverty. That's one of Government of Nunavut's priorities. How can we deal with that so that there's food security on the plates of the public out there? I know that this is very beneficial for those income support recipients and for elders who are on pension. This is very beneficial. It's evident that with the support of Nutrition North Canada, it brings the food prices down, even though when Nutrition North started, the people who are poorer, who cannot afford to order personal grocery orders, benefited from the Food Mail Program and we know that. I appreciate that.

I know that the Nutrition North Canada Program needs to be improved. We feel compassion for individuals who can't do their personal orders. Let's not forget that the majority of the population cannot afford to order groceries personally. Those people who are on inocme support and elders who are on pension have no choice but to purchase their nutritional food from the stores.

Mr. Chairman, I'll ask a supplementary question to my colleague's question in regard

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to traditional country food. In Mr. Wilcox's opening comments on page 6, second paragraph, he said that in a few weeks, on November 8, the board will meet in Kuujjuaq and hold its second public meeting in the north. It states here that the board would take the opportunity to learn more about how the program works in Nunavik and they're interested in food subsidies provided by other levels of government. We will be briefed on regional measures that are in place to lower the cost of food and to support access to country food in Nunavik. I would like to ask Mr. Wilcox why we are missing out in Nunavut when there is one for Nunavik. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Tapardjuk. Mr. Wilcox.

Mr. Wilcox: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What we're doing is going around. We started off with a meeting here in Iqaluit in May and had a public meeting here that we gathered a lot of information from. There have been smaller satellite-type meetings in Cambridge Bay and in Rankin Inlet, and that was a little bit earlier in the year. Now we're going to be meeting in Kuujjuaq, and then eventually, I'm sure we will probably meet in Labrador at some point and maybe in the west as well, in the Northwest Territories or the Yukon. The two biggest users of the Food Mail Program are Nunavut and Nunavik, so those are the areas and regions that we have been covering first.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Wilcox. Mr. Tapardjuk.

Mr. Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me speak in English.

(interpretation ends) Basically, I'm more interested in your statement that is clearly identified by this paragraph, "...that are in

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I just need some clarification. Why is it only applicable to Nunavik when, in fact, it should also be applicable to Nunavut when you have some discussions around the area of trying to find solutions to the demands of the Inuit of Nunavut as well as Nunavik? I simply want some clarification on that, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Tapardjuk. I think Mr. Van Dine had a response to Mr. Tapardjuk's previous question, so I'll start with him. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just building on Mr. Wilcox's answer, I would like to add that one of the reasons why we're going to Kuujjuaq is to actually learn as to what is being offered by the province of Quebec, in partnership with the Nunavik government, in terms of a transportation subsidy that they already have in place. It's a program that that government is supporting. It's a program that compliments what we're trying to do with Nutrition North Canada. The board, as well as the officials who will be supporting the board in Kuujjuaq on November 8 and 9, will learn more about that program and understand how the province is implementing it to see if we can find better ways to promote greater cooperation between the two programs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Wilcox.

Mr. Wilcox: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regard to country food, as Mr. Van Dine said,

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we need to learn what's going on in other areas. We understand that in Northern Quebec, they have quite a bit of intercommunity trade in country food. We're hoping to learn about that and see if we can learn lessons that can come to other areas. In each area, something new may come out and I'm certain that in saying that, we should be open minded to issues here as well.

I think that we have to take a page from what Mr. Curley was saying about country food and its importance. We have been underlining it in the meetings, but I think we will increase that for sure. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Wilcox. Mr. Tapardjuk.

Mr. Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Very quickly, I would like to give my colleagues some time to ask a question, but I just need one more clarification from Mr. Van Dine. When you differentiate the two regions, are you talking jurisdictional matters as to the Quebec province as opposed to the territories? Are there any connotations involved in these kinds of discussions? Are we on jurisdictional boundaries between provinces and territories or are we being left out because we're a territory? I just wanted to get his remarks on that, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Tapardjuk. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you for the opportunity to respond to that, Mr. Chairman. What I would like to clearly say is that there is no jurisdictional differentiation. Nutrition North Canada is being applied across the six provinces and three territories in the same manner with the same subsidy basis. There are some adjustments on a community basis which you may be familiar

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with in terms of level of subsidy to take into account certain factors.

What I was referring to squarely is that the province of Quebec and Nunavik have their own program. They have undertaken that program on their own volition. I understand that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has another program a little bit similar. Those programs are under the volition of those governments to offer and I understand them to be transportation-oriented subsidy programs that we believe can compliment what we're doing in Nutrition North quite well. They currently operate now. They also operated, I understand, when the Food Mail Program was offered as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. I now recognize the Member for Pangnirtung, Mr. Oshutapik.

Mr. Oshutapik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to welcome Mr. Wilcox and Mr. Van Dine. Here in our community or in Nunavut, we seem to be eating nutritional food, but some doctors consider them non-healthy. When they are required to go on medical travel, the doctor will advise the patient to eat healthy nutritious food, but the stores only offer certain foodstuffs.

For example, bad fat that is unhealthy apparently is only available for subsidy. That seems to be the way that the program is set up. Again, Inuit have not had this modern diet for very long and because this food contains a lot of bad fat, it causes health issues. I'm exactly in that place. I believe many people are starting to fall into that. There are some foods that are very healthy and they are available to be shipped up to our communities.

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What I'm trying to say here is once the program was introduced, I thought, along with many people, that this program would benefit a lot of people. I thought that the food costs would be driven down. Unfortunately, it seems to have gone the other way. Now the only benefits are going straight to the stores and we, the clients, are not finding any benefits.

As you stated, this program is being massaged to fix it. I would have imagined that it would have been set for Inuit so that Inuit would have an option to buy the food from whichever retailer they want to. I think that would have been a lot easier.

I would like to use this example that I want you to listen to. If you look at the units in the communities, because the communities are lot of smaller, if you look at the household income, we all buy food from one store or the other. Perhaps if we were to use a plastic card that would be given a discount, I think that would be a tangible benefit that could be used for purchasing nutritious and healthy food.

I believe that if this part of the program had been applied immediately, based on my opinion, it would have provided a lot more tangible benefits to our people. The way this current program is set up, the only benefits are going directly to the retail outlets. It's not going directly to the consumer. We're not involved in the process. Now you have already expended a lot of funds to initiate this program, and that's what we see from the outside. I believe you tried to do that in the beginning to try to listen to what Inuit wanted.

If it had been geared towards a personal food ordering aspect of the program and if you had segregated the program into two sections, one for retailers and one for

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For those of us who were supposed to benefit from this program, my perceived goal is, and if I was to be believed by my fellow
Nunavummiut, the goal should have been to make the discounts available directly to the people and not to the retail outlets. I believe if that had been approached, then this program would have provided a lot more tangible benefits to our people. I know we're already supporting these stores, but it seems like we're giving more support.

I will have more comments, but I'll stop there for now, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Oshutapik. Mr. Wilcox.

Mr. Wilcox: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think I can only answer part of the comment and question, and I'll have to defer.

Some of the suppliers in Yellowknife, actually on the cash register receipt, demonstrate how much you save because of the Nutrition North program. An X percent equals so many dollars because it's subsidized freight going north. We're told that there is a hard time to get that going for the Northern and Co-op but that they're working towards it. That's for them to comment about in the future. If you have that cash register receipt that shows that you have actually saved money, that's almost as good as a coupon because it will state there.

Earlier, Mr. Van Dine was talking about the price of eggs in one community over another.

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So there is clearly a benefit to all of the people who are purchasing from both of those stores. That's something that the Nutrition North Advisory Board really and strongly supports because it's the best way to help the most people. There are only a few people who can do the personal orders. Maybe there are lots, but not as many. It's just the regular shoppers at the stores.

So I think I'll leave my comment there and see if you can maybe add a bit there, Mr. Van Dine. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Wilcox. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It has been one of the reoccurring themes today in terms of the messages that we have been hearing from the questions about guaranteeing or ensuring that the benefit of the subsidy flows directly to individuals and consumers.

I believe the suggestion that was made was another option or method to do that and that, I believe, if I understood the proposal correctly, would be essentially to give individuals a card which would likely be some amount of credit, if you will, that they can then use to purchase foods directly and they get to choose which store they want to buy from in order to get nutritious foods, if I understand the premise of that. I was just checking some materials that I brought with me for this presentation. I am unable to say whether that particular idea was assessed at the time that the new program was designed, but I will have a look.

Certainly one of the considerations and what we hope to be the advantages of the Nutrition North Canada Program is to equip people with tools, and that means all parts of the system, to make good choices. If you allow **Δ⁶/ «Σ⁶** (Ͻ^ί, Σ⁶): የժ⁶ α Γ⁶, Γ⁶, Γ⁶ ΕΔ⁶ ΕΔ⁶. Γ⁶ ΕΔ⁶.

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me to expand for a moment, what I mean by that is if we give retailers and wholesalers the tools to make good choices on the most efficient way to ship the goods, either through sealift or through winter roads, that will result in lower prices for those goods and translate to benefits to consumers.

If consumers are making what I would call healthy choices in terms of their purchases, then that triggers a response by the retailer to bring in more healthy goods. And if there are more healthy goods coming into local stores, the prices actually come down because they're bringing in more goods for service. It really does depend upon that cycle of purchasing.

If more volume starts accruing, no matter how small the store or how large the store, the prices then will be positively effective in terms of lower costs for the suppliers as well as hopefully the purchase prices. It also means that if healthy choices are made around leveraging other programs, such as Health Canada programming that exists now for diabetes and other healthy living aspects, that too triggers some positive benefits.

All this to say, Mr. Chairman, that Nutrition North Canada right now does have more tools in its toolbox than what the Food Mail Program had previously, but specifically as to whether the concept of a voucher or discount card was considered, I would have to look into and get back to you Mr. Chairman with a more detailed answer at a later date. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Oshutapik.

Mr. Oshutapik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is not a question but a comment and also there is one thing on your comment. In our stores here in our

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community and especially in the north, if we're buying the same foodstuff and they easily run out, the product that is restocked just seems to increase in price, and that's what we're facing here.

Once we complete the healthy food choices, whenever they ship them in, the prices keep increasing, at least in our community. The most popular food choices are used by the stores to drive prices higher. That's why I stated and based on my understanding that when this program was initiated, most people had ideas about benefits and we thought that the price of food would be driven down, but here we're facing the opposite.

We assumed that many of us would see the price of food going down. That is why I mentioned the idea of a plastic card or voucher that could be given to every household separately. This would provide an actual tangible benefit. If there are any other good ideas, that's the only one that I could come up with that would give actual benefits and allow each household to make healthy food choices.

If you're trying to fix the program in that manner, in looking at the entire territory, you should be looking at the food we buy at the stores because they're in the business of making a profit. Every subsidy provided by the government goes towards their bottom line. They just enjoy the subsidy. Even if they abuse it, we, the consumers, cannot speak to the abuse.

The real benefit is driving the price of food down. That's what we should be trying to introduce as Inuit. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Oshutapik. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I

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think those comments are very helpful in terms of allowing us to focus our efforts. I would say by way of a comment that there is clearly a lot of moving parts to making this program successful.

I can assure you, Mr. Chairman, that when supplies run out for the most nutritious and most perishable foods, that's exactly why the subsidies are designed the way they are, to allow them to get in quickly. So for the most nutritious and most perishable food, they still will benefit from a rate which will allow retailers to keep the shelves moving.

Of course, as you know, Mr. Chairman, it does require that the stores are on top of things, that they can anticipate how much is going to move, and it requires more planning on the part of the retailers to make sure that they've got stock to meet demand in their communities. I believe that is obviously one thing that is an unanticipated repercussion of the changes, that retailers are now under more pressure to make sure that they have goods on the shelves.

The ability to move some products that can be shipped by sealift or by winter road, where that is available, really creates more savings than what were available under the previous program. That also helps with adjusting subsidy rates.

There was a question, Mr. Chairman, you posed at the top of the day about subsidy rates and how they're calculated. We have addressed bits and pieces of that throughout the presentation today. I would like to state squarely that subsidy rates are an important instrument on how we deliver benefits to people and it's important for retailers to post what those subsidy rates are so that people know what benefits they're getting on any particular good.

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Subsidy rates are a dynamic instrument, and we set our subsidy rates at the outset of this program based on what we understood on the information that we had at the time around the lowest available shipping rate per community and we then took a volume rate based on volume forecasts that we were able to get from retailers operating in those communities. From that, we were able to calculate a community subsidy rate.

As we get new information and as we see where purchasing patterns are happening, the program does have the ability to adjust the rates either up for more benefits or down depending on what the demand is and depending on our available resources. So it is a dynamic instrument, as is the food eligibility list.

Those are a lot of moving parts, but in the end, we do have a tool that when we have good information, we're in a position to alter those subsidy rates and to have those subsidy rates advertised and made available and known to consumers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Oshutapik.

Mr. Oshutapik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just so we can look at it in a broader manner, you only look at aircraft transportation cost. We don't just order food by aircraft. I would like to open your eyes a bit. I live in Pangnirtung. Our largest store is the Northern Store, but we have more than two stores. If you have ever been to Pangnirtung, there's a store at the bottom and if you go past the airstrip, they have to transport their foodstuffs to the Northern Store from the airport.

Now, this subsidy only applies to the aircraft to the airstrip, but once they arrive in the

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community, the price increases. That's how we see it. When the aircraft drops off the freight, yes, that part is subsidized, and if there is more than one store, then the cost of shipping it from the airport to the store is added.

My colleague from Pond Inlet, like me, is trying to look at actual personal benefits that we can provide to our people Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Oshutapik. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to acknowledge that today's conversations and the ones yet to come have been very informative in terms of how it's operating in reality in each and every community. I believe that there's a lot of rich information that we are taking from today's presentations to us in terms of what communities are saying to their elected members about the limitations of how the program is rolling out so far, at least its impact so far.

I believe the partnership that we have with retailers as a delivery mechanism to delivering the program is one that we're still in our early days. We see some promising signs with those partnerships so far, but as mentioned earlier, we're six months in. I believe Mr. Wilcox and the advisory board have already indicated that they are very interested in understanding better and hearing from retailers and suppliers how they're passing on the benefits to consumers and what other areas we could improve upon.

We look forward to taking the benefits of today's insights and information and working with that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. I now recognize the Member for Arviat, Mr.

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Hon. Daniel Shewchuk: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, Mr. Chairman, I would like to invite the guests here for presenting us with their material and listening to our concerns.

Again, I'm going to start off with this country food issue. I would just like to explain it so you're very clear on what is allowed under the land claims agreement, and that is that any beneficiary in the land claims agreement can sell, trade, barter in country food, in anything, in the internal boundaries of Nunavut without any CFIA inspection and without any inspection at all of anything.

First of all, country food is the safe way of Nunavut. That includes polar bears, caribou, migratory birds, eggs, fish, clams, whales, mussels, and muskox. It's a variety of items. It's very important and very nutritious to all Nunavutmiut. What we're asking is: how can the cost be lessened to allow that to happen at a cheaper and viable rate so it benefits all Nunavutmiut? That's a simple question. How can you help us accomplish that goal? I would just like to hear your thoughts on that. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Shewchuk. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, of which the federal government is a very strong signatory to, has entered into that and we appreciate that those provisions allow some very important country food transactions to occur. So I am very thankful for the opportunity to have a chance to reflect on the proposition that whether Nutrition North Canada can consider a transportation subsidy to offset the cost of the movement of

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shipping those items with those abilities under the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement across Nunavut.

I'm going to reflect on that proposition, but I will say that it was with very clear intent that the Government of Canada decided to place the subsidy dollars away from transportation providers to retailers as a very specific change from the previous program. So our ability to reintroduce a transportation-based subsidy at this stage would require a significant amount of energy to contemplate how that might work since we made a clear decision to move out of transportation-based subsidies.

What we are interested in finding more about, and it was mentioned in terms of the upcoming meeting in Kuujjuaq on November 8 to 9, is to what extent Nutrition North can help compliment other provincial programs and other programs being offered by other governments to ensure that either country foods or nutritious and perishable goods are able to get to the consumer in those areas at a more reasonable price.

So we're certainly looking forward to hearing representation from the Nunavik officials as well as others who may have something to say about what's going on there. After we have heard that, perhaps there could be some insights that we can share more broadly to see how that might benefit across the coverage area of Nutrition North Canada. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Shewchuk.

Hon. Daniel Shewchuk: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks for those comments. However, Nunavut is the greatest stakeholder in this Nutrition North program. We use 59 percent of the available resources. I think that

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you heard us all talk today about country food and how important it is here that we have some kind of mechanism in place to make things happen that are going to benefit all Nunavutmiut.

I know you're listening and I hope the advisory board is listening to this too. You heard us all speak and there's probably more to come yet about how important this is. I don't think it's revamping the whole program. I think programs are made to be amended and developed as you go along. So I hope that you do take this with great interest.

My next question is for Mr. Wilcox. Last year, the Government of Nunavut established an interdepartmental Nutrition North subsidy program monitoring committee. Has your advisory board held any meetings with its officials from its GN committee and, if so, what issues were discussed?

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Shewchuk. Mr. Wilcox

Mr. Wilcox: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our committee has not had any direct meetings with the group. My understanding is that Leo and some of the NNC staff have been in contact, but I don't know how much interaction has occurred. I know that anything that comes into NNC gets shared with us. It doesn't necessarily have a stamp, but we get to see the letters and we get see comments off of the website.

Before I got involved into NNC, I got a lot of information from NTI, who is actually the sponsor of my appointment, and it included documents from the territorial government and also other consulting arrangements, I believe, from Mr. Dargo and there was another document produced by NTI. Those were all taken to NNC for further work on.

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Having said that, I'm sure that we can ensure that we begin working with that group and in fact, I would certainly welcome it and I'm sure that Elizabeth Copland would as well. In fact, I am very sure she would because we're trying to get as much information as we can. Sometimes I get a little worried when the website goes quiet because it means either people are really happy or people just don't feel like commenting anymore, and we will open that channel. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Wilcox. Mr. Van Dine, did you have anything to add? No. Okay. Mr. Shewchuk.

Hon. Daniel Shewchuk: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much. I think it's important that all interest groups are involved in however they can contribute.

Again, with the advisory committee, I'm not exactly sure how it was selected. Obviously you were nominated by somebody to be in that committee and that's a good thing. There must have been a process followed. I was wondering if you could provide us with what that process was and how that happened, and what are your scheduling, your plans, and your timelines for the next year in meeting with various organizations. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Shewchuk. Mr. Wilcox.

Mr. Wilcox: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The process for the NNC advisory committee, to my recollection, was a public process. There were ads in the paper and online, and we were able to submit our names. I was also asked by a member of the NTI board if I was interested in being on the Nutrition North Canada Advisory Committee. I agreed to let my name stand and I ultimately got appointed.

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I have worked hard to get to know about the old program before I went to the first meeting and I think that over the time involved since, we have all developed a pretty good strength around the whole program. It's ending up achieving some good results. I support the program and the direction. I think it has some work to be done and we will do that work. I look around the table and I see some pretty committed people that they're going to make some noise if it doesn't work, so we better make sure we hit the nail on the head.

I hope that answers the question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Wilcox. Mr. Shewchuk.

Hon. Daniel Shewchuk: The second part of my question was: from here on in, what are your short-term plans for meeting, and what entities will you be meeting with? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Shewchuk. Mr. Wilcox.

Mr. Wilcox: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think, speaking from the advisory board, we plan to meet with the stores and the airlines. We need to understand the warehousing issue better because the warehousing issue is integral in making sure this whole different

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initiative works.

What we're doing is taking freight that used to be flown, like all of the cans that used to be flown, as part of food mail and now it's getting diverted to cheaper modes of transportation, which should end up with some kind of savings as long as the fuel prices don't skyrocket and eat it all up. Hopefully some of that can be reinvested back into the Nutrition North program in either increased subsidies or broadened. We have to have those meetings.

At this stage, we haven't got into long-range planning. I'm sure Mr. Van Dine will add to my comments and I'm sure that there is long-range planning on that side. As far as the committee goes, we have been working one or two meetings ahead to keep ourselves on track and to allow us to keep focused on specific aspects of the program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Wilcox. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to add to Mr. Wilcox's remarks by saying we are working closely with the board on managing their agenda. We're starting to get into a rhythm of monthly calls. We have members from across the six provinces and three territories representing and there are great distances to travel.

The time that the board spends in face-toface meetings is a very valuable time, it's very rare time. So we try to organize agendas that are along the following themes: one is an opportunity for board members to check in and have an opportunity to share what it is they're hearing about the program and how it's operating, and what the latest is from their perspective. That's a very important exercise for the board. CL°a bt/ofbMafodPo.

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The second area is, as officials, we try to provide the board with accurate updates or snapshots of activities that are going on in terms of our public engagement and communication efforts, program utilization activities, and program issues that we're grappling with, such as the food eligibility list or things of that nature.

The third component that we have is that we tend to try and focus meetings to drill down a little further on a particular issue. Again, the

time is very limited and very precious.

Over and above what I have just described is basically a day and a half of venture. Given that it can take almost a week for members to travel to and from a meeting, they are, for all intents and purposes, volunteering their time. They do receive a modest amount to offset some of their travel costs and their incidentals, but it is very much a very modest endeavour from their part.

Over and above that day and a half activity, we also, and they have agreed to and they have been very generous with their time, have accepted the overture of having public meetings usually in the first evening that we're there. That's based on a very busy day that we try and organize the agenda. The public meetings are a key feature of the program. It allows the board to hear first hand the concerns of what's going on in terms of the program. It's a feature that I think we will likely continue with as there seems to be quite a bit of interest in it.

Kuujjuaq has a public meeting component to it and Kuujjuaq will have roughly the themes that I have just described. We will go through and give members an update.

We are looking to the next meeting and that's as far as our forecast goes for now. We will talk to the board more in Kuujjuaq in

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November about beyond February. The way the February meeting is shaping up is it seems to be notionally noted as the meeting in which we would provide a component dedicated to understanding the industry perspectives of how it's operating and give the board a chance to find out more. We're very much in the early stages in the planning for that.

When the board next meets face to face will be in February and if we're true to our schedule, the next face-to-face meeting would likely be in May or June, before the summer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Shewchuk.

Hon. Daniel Shewchuk: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I've got one more question and it's very specific to my community of Arviat.

In your eligible communities and subsidy rates for level 1, the subsidy is \$1.10 per kilogram in Arviat. At level 2, it drops down to 5 cents. I don't understand this at all and I think this definitely needs to be looked at. It doesn't make any sense at all to me when you have the same 5 cents in northern Manitoba and then all the surrounding communities in Nunavut are much higher than that. So either that's a mistake or it needs to be looked at. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Shewchuk. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will get an answer to that question, specifically and get back to you, Mr. Chairman, with that after today's meeting. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine.

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ᢤ С∆[®] (ϽʹͱϒႶͿʹ): ʿd⊁°Ⴍ广[®], Δ[®]/᠙ϘĊ[®]. Ċ[©]Ⴍ ϷʹʹϽΓ ϤσͿ[®]/Lϲ[®]ՈʹʹϽͿ ʹϐϘϟՐϤϲϘʹʹϽͿ Ͻ៶[®]ՈσϤ[®]ϐና Ċ[©]Ⴍ LϲႱϲϘ[®]Ո. ʹdϧ[©]Ⴍ፫[®], Δ[®]/᠙ϘĊ[©].

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Thank you, Mr. Shewchuk. I will now recognize the Member for Uqqummiut, Mr. Arreak.

Hon. James Arreak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also would like to thank the guests for appearing before the Full Caucus. I welcome Mr. Wilcox and Mr. Van Dine. Thank you.

Last spring, we held a meeting with the large retailers and they stated that the Food Mail Program was totally broken and that program had to be thrown away, so that's why they came up with the Nutrition North Canada Program. I'm sure that the retail outlets said that because of the interest of selling their goods at the store for those individuals who purchase their groceries.

Also, in my constituency, they used to do personal orders, but that has already stopped. It's probably exactly the same as what is being experienced in Joe Enook's riding. We are experiencing the same situation in my riding.

During that meeting, we also held a meeting with the smaller retail outlet owners. When they appeared before the committee, they stated that the Food Mail Program was not broken and it just needed to be improved, and that the Food Mail Program could have been used by all residents of Nunavut. I believe the statement that was made last spring during our meeting because many people had used the Food Mail Program to order nutritious food. Their freight costs were offset. The entry points needed to be improved because of the perishable foods that could be shipped to the communities at a faster level. They stated that the entry points could have been improved and spread out.

However, at this time, this Nutrition North Canada Program is more in support of the 'dታ°αΓ', Γ'C ረውርጎ'. CΔL የኄ'ር־'', ኦጐďΓνΔ', Γ'C ጳሲላ'.

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retail outlets rather than the consumers. We hear that for the smaller stores or private stores, this program is not even used and perhaps it's subsidizing at least that 1 percent of small private stores. It could probably offset the costs for porting and for administration.

As Mr. Van Dine has stated earlier on, they have provided more support or benefit to the public so that they can purchase more nutritious food with this program that we have now in the north. I want him to understand that the majority of the population in Nunavut, approximately 60 percent, are unemployed and they're looking for ways to get some form of assistance or support.

This program totally supports the commercial industry. For example, if they're an income support recipient, they could be provided with \$14 per day for support and that doesn't even pay for an hour's work. How can we provide more benefit to those people who are unemployed and who are on income support when you're providing more support to the commercial people? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Arreak. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The cost of getting quality goods into communities is high, whether it's food or other items. We're of the view that, as mentioned around the health education programming and the community focus on healthy eating, that one of the attractions of making sure that local community stores have nutritious and perishable foods in them is that we recognize that those stores are focal points for communities. Without a focal point, it's hard to deliver the products but also the message that healthy living and

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healthy cooking starts with getting access to healthy goods.

I think we have heard repeatedly both before the program was launched and after that there are people with different economic means that require benefit to the program and not everyone is in a position to pay or cover the costs personally for the shipping of goods and using the direct order feature. We're hopeful that over time, through the adjustments that have been mentioned about moving things to sealift and to winter road and to adjust our subsidy rates, that stores and communities will be in a better position to offer perishable goods at better prices.

I have given a bit of a snapshot already about what it would cost for individuals commercially if the subsidy didn't exist and then when it does. I believe that that's an accurate snapshot, but I would like to just complete my response to the question, Mr. Chairman, by saying that Nutrition North Canada is designed in a way to actually work with other programs, be it income support or be it other programs offered by other provincial governments for transportation subsidies.

We have good indication so far that while food security remains a very important and very complicated issue in many parts of the north, there is a component part that Nutrition North is playing in reducing the costs of particular perishable goods in communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Arreak.

Hon. James Arreak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. As you had stated earlier in regard to the prices of eggs in Iqaluit and Arctic Bay and if there was no subsidy, it would be \$7 in

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Iqaluit and \$17 in Arctic Bay for a dozen eggs.

As you stated earlier, the price of eggs and milk were lower through the current program. Could you tell us or show us with the use of the previous Food Mail Program how much it would have cost with the same products you showed us? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Arreak. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand the question to be: in comparison to the Food Mail Program, are these better rates or better prices than what was available under food mail? The Food Mail Program offered 80 cents per kilogram flat rate and there was no adjustment for that. We are now offering a subsidy that is adjustable, which was less so the case under the Food Mail Program.

I don't have the specific community subsidy rates for Arctic Bay with me at this moment, but I know it's available currently on the website. I will get back to you, Mr. Chairman, with the comparison between what the average rate was for Arctic Bay for the same product under food mail by the same retail establishment than it is now and I will get that back to you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Arreak

Hon. James Arreak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the Chairman got the wrong Arreak. As Mr. Van Dine stated, they have more tools to subsidize. Can you give us an example of an average Joe Inuk who can use any of the tools that were mentioned? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Arreak. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll give you a few. One tool is the subsidy rate, which is posted. That subsidy rate can be a variable rate. We certainly don't want to be in a position to be adjusting too frequently because it creates uncertainty when you're moving rates around, but it can be adjusted. We have notionally targeted periods to review the rates in conjunction with our discussions with the advisory board up to twice a year.

The second tool that I would draw your attention to is the public education and the health nutrition component part to the program. That refers to the building on healthy eating and healthy living that we're doing with our colleagues at Health Canada who are working in partnership with the Government of Nunavut health and community workers in terms of nutritious and dietary living. That is the second tool that we have there to promote healthy living and healthy cooking techniques.

A third tool that we have is the food eligibility list, which will allow anybody to go on the website to determine the foods that are eligible for subsidy that we're applying public resources towards reducing the cost of, and that is another tool, Mr. Chairman.

And I would say a fourth and final tool is that we have commitments for ongoing communication and public education around the features of the program and how it operates, and we're hoping that over time, the level of awareness of the program will become much more prevalent over the next little while. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Arreak.

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Hon. James Arreak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. With that, I had raised an earlier question about the effective use of this program by individuals. With respect to the variable subsidy rate that he mentioned from the previous program, when it was set at 80 cents per kilogram, our perception was that this was fairer.

Furthermore, with respect to the public education aspect of this Nutrition North program, he only spoke to the pamphlets sent via the post office. Not many people have read these pamphlets. Many people simply throw out the junk mail sent via the post office as you can see lots of pamphlets in the garbage can at the post office. This approach to teaching the general public is not a very effective way of teaching the public here in Nunavut. Additionally, the website you spouted as a good place to gather information on this program will not net many visits as many people do not use computers or the Internet and many residents are not computer literate.

I didn't hear anything that would be of benefit to any individual off the streets in Nunavut, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Arreak. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those are very helpful comments for us to hear in terms of how we attempt to reach people with good information about the program. Those are helpful comments in terms of how we try to work with other mediums to try and get the message out, be it through the use of the web or working with community health workers and the community health stations, about the program and how it can reach people more.

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Those are very helpful comments and I will bring them back and inform our work and our plans going forward on reaching the most people as possible about the features of this program and how it's aimed at reducing the prices of healthy and perishable goods in communities across the north. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Arreak.

Hon. James Arreak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. We have heard on many occasions about the problems with including snowmobile parts under the subsidized transportation costs when people started utilizing the subsidy for snowmobile parts.

Snowmobiles are an essential part of the Inuit way of hunting, when they go hunting for country food for their relatives, for the community feasts, and if an average Joe Inuk harvested an animal, such as a seal, he would go on the local radio stating that he is butchering the seal and for people to come by to grab some fresh meat. All of this is voluntary as they are not paid to do so. Most Inuit are not expecting any payment for that sharing as this is a cultural practice of sharing and he would want others to pick up some fresh meat. Since this is the practice in Nunavut, from my perspective, I think that these parts should qualify for a transportation subsidy.

We hear about the myriad of transportation methods available in Toronto and we hear about the transportation subsidies. In this case, perhaps the train transportation costs, which total about \$3 billion, is provided as a subsidy, even though they have many options to transport their goods, whether that be via road, railroad, airfreight, cars, and other modes of transportation. We, on the other

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hand, have no choice other than air transportation, which we use throughout the year. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Arreak. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those are helpful comments. As I said, the basis of our choices around the eligibility list pertained to Canada's Food Guide. At this point, the link between snowmobile parts and others have not made it to that guide yet. There had to be some choices made in trying to make this program more focused.

The comments with respect to the importance of transportation are very important ones. The remote access to communities and the transportation barriers that exist are an incredible cost inflator for people living in communities for all kinds of things and not just for food. I really welcome the examples that members are providing today to give us a real concrete sense of the challenges and issues facing community members as they're struggling with the high cost of living in northern communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Arreak, did you have another question? Okay. Mr. Arreak.

Hon. James Arreak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The issue that was brought up by some of my colleagues that country food is the primary food of Inuit is another matter I want to touch on.

I believe that this matter was originally tasked to be researched on June 5, 2010, when the representatives of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development met with the chairperson of the standing committee. The members of the standing committee

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asked the representatives to review this matter and to make it a priority. Further, it was requested that it be dealt with within the upcoming fiscal year.

I did not hear any responses to these matters as to whether this is happening. I want to know what happened to the requests submitted on June 15. Are they starting to implement it? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Arreak. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have my materials with me. I will look at the June 15, 2010 standing committee report that has been referred to and will get back to you, Mr. Chairman, with the status of how that issue has been responded to so far. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. I will entertain one more member before we go on break and I will now recognize the Member for Iqaluit East, Madam Aariak.

Hon. Eva Aariak (interpretation): Thank you. I welcome Wilf Wilcox and Mr. Van Dine. I am very pleased to see you here. First of all, this morning, you stated that the eligible retail outlets were seven suppliers. How many were turned down? How many were there? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Aariak. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have any information with me today that suggests anybody had been turned down from re-applying. There were 35 agreement holders under the previous program. We approached all 35 from that and we had 30 respond positively. The information that I have today is that we have four new ones

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Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Ms. Aariak.

Hon. Eva Aariak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The model for Nutrition North Canada was sold on the principle of increased competition. The current application form that NNC supplies refers to prior shipping experience and so on.

Does NNC consider prior experience in determining eligibility for any new entrant? It would be impossible to have either prior shipping experience or know their future shipping volumes. Let's say in our area of the Baffin region, our point of entry was Val-d'Or and I'm sure there are possibly new points of entry.

What actions do you intend to take to increase the number of southern suppliers and fulfill the promise of competition for all northerners? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Aariak. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We eliminated that point of entry feature when we created the new program to allow greater flexibility and more entrants into the program.

We are adopting an approach and I will have to review the materials that we have available more closely. We certainly don't want to create barriers to new entrants who want to join the program and take advantage of the opportunities that the program can give to allow more suppliers and give communities more choice in terms of where they get their nutritious and perishable foods from.

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In terms of what we're doing actively to increase the number of suppliers, first and foremost, we have an open door policy. So if the word is getting out there, we're hoping that people will reach out to us. If they have any questions or interests in becoming an eligible agreement holder, we would certainly follow that up directly. So we have an open door policy to begin with.

In terms of active recruitment, within the first six months of the program, we have been focusing on the current basic delivery agreement holders that we have in place now. Getting the 30 agreements that we did have at the outset was a significant achievement for us to ensure that as of April 1, the program could operate and get as much coverage across the NNC area as possible.

We will need to be looking at other opportunities and approaching other parties. I don't have a specific strategy to share with you today about how we're about to do that, but we are seized with that as being the next step in our work. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Ms. Aariak.

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Hon. Eva Aariak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This morning in the presentation, it was mentioned that there's an addition of an extra departmental working group to advise NNC in addition to the NNC advisory board, if I understood that correctly. Can you tell me more about that, the composition of it, the purpose, and so on? Thank you.

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Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Aariak. Mr. Van Dine.

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Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When the Nutrition North Canada Program was being designed, there was quite a bit of interest and quite a bit of activity to

determine the nature and the composition of the program.

There were a few things that became pretty clear to program officials. First of all, we needed to have an understanding of the northern transportation. So as a result of that, Transport Canada was a natural department that we would like to have involved in providing advice to us both as we developed the program and as we're now in the implementation of it. So Transport Canada is a member of the interdepartmental working group on this.

We also knew from our experience that putting a nutritious focus on this program and in addition to providing a limited amount of funding through Health Canada, the Health Canada component of this or perspective on this program needed to be at the table. So Health Canada is another member that's sitting at the table.

In addition, there's clearly us as the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, but we also have extended seats to the table to various central agencies in Ottawa as some of the cost drivers that led us to look closely at the previous program were of interest to different central agencies. So they're also members of the internal working group. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Ms. Aariak.

Hon. Eva Aariak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I keep hearing the meeting that's happening in Kuujjuaq and I'm wondering: how can Nunavut be involved in that, or are there similar events happening in Nunavut with your board, and so on? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This would be my characterization. I think we had a very productive meeting with the advisory board and I think Mr. Wilcox has referred to our meeting here in Iqaluit on May 31. It was a good public meeting that evening.

The Legislative Assembly here, at that time, was quite seized with its own processes to hear from retailers. If I may, if I was to speculate, I think the buzz of the Iqaluit meeting is actually what probably inspired Kuujjuaq to be quite interested in us coming there to make a presentation to them and to do something similar to what we did here in Iqaluit.

In terms of coming back to Iqaluit and maintaining an active discussion, I think there is a strong interest certainly in the program and I believe that Mr. Wilcox has indicated a strong sentiment that in order for the program to be successful, we need to be connected. We need to be having conversations such as this today. We need to be hearing from first hand about both some of the benefits and some of the challenges of getting the program underway.

I don't think I would be stepping too outside of my bounds, and I'm looking to Mr. Wilcox to remind me if I am, to say that Nunavut will be one of the future meetings spots again in the not-too-distant future. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Ms. Aariak.

Hon. Eva Aariak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would also like to speak about the people who order via sealift.

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They don't buy any food items from the retail outlets. There are more and more people starting to order food items through sealift. How does that impact the program if you're talking about subsidizing healthy and nutritious food? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Aariak. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The subsidy rates that are available for personal orders users are, how shall I say it, transportation blind, insofar as it doesn't matter how the item gets there. The eligibility list for the items and the agreement holders that we have means that however you decide to order your foods, if you decided to ship it through sealift, you will get the added benefit of a lower shipping cost than had you ordered it through a direct airline approach or airfreight.

For people who are planning ahead, for people who are getting organized around sealift orders, and for people who are actively looking at our website as to what's available in terms of eligible foods and eligible suppliers will have an advantage of lower costs overall if they choose to have their items shipped by sealift during that season. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Ms. Aariak.

Hon. Eva Aariak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will have a short break. Perhaps I'll just comment on these issues. They're not really questions. We continually hear about the website and that this is the address where you can check the program. It's very good to have this kind of information available because some Nunavummiut have access to computers.

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However, in some of the smaller communities, there are a lot of families who do not have computers, who do not use computers, and that's why you have to have a broad medium of information sources. So I wanted to know whether you have different media that you use because not every person, every Nunavummiuq, has as computer nor do they have access to one. So when they want to request more information, they have to know exactly who to approach and where to get that information.

Furthermore, those of us Nunavut residents are blessed with healthy nutritious food. Seal, fish, caribou, and migratory birds are some of the healthiest and most nutritious foods. When we speak about healthy and nutritious food, something we would like to see is country food being subsidized. I would like to encourage that the federal government look at subsidizing our most nutritious and healthy food in Nunavut.

At this current stage, let's cite Baffin Island as an example. The caribou have migrated to a different area and because animals have different migratory cycles, they change over time. Currently caribou are very far from the communities. However, families with either relatives in another community or people they know from another community that has access to caribou ask for caribou, and then they trade that for whatever kind of country food. For example, they trade seal meat for caribou meat.

I would like to urge the government to make careful consideration about this plan. I will have to leave for another meeting, so I will stop at this point. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Aariak. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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Those are helpful comments in terms of how we look forward to try and address the country food question, and very helpful comments as well.

I would like to acknowledge what is an important feature of the program is giving voice to issues that may not have had a voice in the past. Through the conversations we're having today and through the advisory board, we're able to give a voice to a lot of these issues that would not otherwise necessarily get some attention.

We're seized with the various aspects of the country food question that has come up today and we look forward to working with the advisory board members in our deliberations on how best to respond. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. With that, we will have a recess for 20 minutes and come back here at 3:40. I believe I have the member from Nanulik, Mr. Ningeongan, who will be asking questions at that time. So we will have a short recess and get back at 3:40.

>>Meeting recessed at 15:20 and resumed at 15:42

Chairman (Mr. Enook)(interpretation): Welcome back. When we started our meeting this morning, I was just a regular Joe Inuk, but now I'm the Chairman. Pretty impressive, eh? I would like to thank Mr. Elliott for being the Chairman for most of the day.

We will start off with Mr. Ningeongan.

Mr. Ningeongan (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a very short song to wake up everyone. (interpretation ends) Happy birthday, Mr. Rumbolt.

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(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With our change in chairmanship, I would like to return to a previous comment about Nunavut residents. We were led to have high expectation about the cost of food being driven down with respect to nutritious and healthy food. We assumed that we would get a large benefit. If you look at southern Canada, we were expecting to have the cost of food closer to the cost of living down south. That's what we were led to expect, especially when we heard the program was an improvement compared to the previous Food Mail Program.

Due to that reason and furthermore, Mr. Chairman, because of these reasons, the questions I want to raise were spoken to earlier by my colleagues. I pretty much ran out of questions. However, I do want to comment about this particular aspect. For the country food that we consume in the north, I believe we also have to look outside the retail outlets, especially when we're looking at subsidies for country food.

I believe it's already been brought up by my colleagues that inter-settlement trade of country food is something we would like to see move forward. I believe the Government of Nunavut has spoken to that issue. If that is the case, this would be a big benefit if there's a good subsidy for country food. I think we should not be led to expectations, but there should be real tangible benefits.

I just want this noted as well, Mr. Chairman, that in Coral Harbour... I'm just using that as an example. We had commercial caribou harvests during the last few years, especially caribou that have been sold to Baffin Island. However, just recently, the wildlife or regional wildlife organization set a new quota and therefore, we won't be able to

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conduct commercial harvests due to the fact that the population is decreasing. I believe this factor has to be part of the consideration when we're looking at inter-settlement trade of country food.

When we say trade, we're just talking about trading between people and the thing we have to keep in mind is if we are impacting our wildlife populations when we're conducting trades. So we have to be very careful in setting the plan for the future of inter-settlement trade, as well as stated by my previous colleagues, Inuit country food is one of the most important sources of nutrition and we will never stop eating it.

The reason why I'm just commenting now is, with no questions at all, because a lot of the questions I had were already voiced by my colleagues, so I'm just adding that to my colleagues. I will make this my closing comments, Mr. Chairman, and I want to make the comments in English.

(interpretation ends) My simple math tells me that what is an affordable nutritious food item in Winnipeg somehow ends up unaffordable when it reaches Coral Harbour, in my opinion. Mr. Chairman, I wish to make that point. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Ningeongan. (interpretation ends) Comments from our guests? Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It would be irresponsible for us to advertise Nutrition North Canada as a program to match prices in Winnipeg or Edmonton or other major centres in Canada. What we have been trying to do through the program and through our information around Nutrition North Canada is to say that we are providing a significant public subsidy towards reducing the price of perishable goods in communities

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How close we come to parity with Winnipeg and other major centres in the country is dependent upon a lot of factors. We're hopeful that by reducing the point of entry restrictions that we had under the previous program, by encouraging wholesalers and retailers to be working closely with the airlines around competitive shipping rates, and by relocating or moving certain goods to sealift and other more affordable means of transportation, that will reduce the overall cost and make the subsidy dollars go further.

But I would definitely agree that the burden in small communities and the high cost of living are substantial and it is a difficult proposition for people on fixed incomes to make those dollars go as far as they can. We are making an attempt through these changes to make the subsidy dollars go as far as they can in order to reduce those prices of perishable and nutritious goods. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Prior to moving to the comments stage, just before we had a break, Mr. Curley wanted to make a short comment about the Nutrition North program. Mr. Curley.

Hon. Tagak Curley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thought it was important that, rather than relying completely on the federal officials, he mentioned GN and it's really quite important that I speak as the Minister responsible for Health that I comment officially on the Nutrition North contribution. The GN receives about a million dollars a year, to be exact, this year it is \$1.2 million. That is to provide information about the nutritious aspects of what Nunavutmiut should be aware of.

This program is important and as a result of

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that, I will be making an official statement on nutrition or at least the healthy food respect of Nunavut's share, exactly what we do with the funding. Mainly it will be a program to establish the Nunavut Food Guide, which will concentrate mainly on the importance of providing country food to the young Nunavutmiut. I think it's being echoed by many of my colleagues that country food is a healthy food and we're going to be promoting it a lot more in schools that they should, rather than relying on.... For instance, in my interpretation of junk food, country food is healthier.

I wanted to make that point, and the contribution that we get from Health Canada is important to develop the Nunavut Food Guide, which will be issued tomorrow by press release. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Curley. Mr. Taptuna.

(interpretation) I'll leave it at that.

Hon. Peter Taptuna: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I want to thank Mr. Van Dine and Mr. Wilcox for being here. We really appreciate that. I'm from a small community, so I know the challenges, disparity, and also disadvantages of living in a small community. I appreciate you coming here and informing us about this program.

I'm going to get right to the question, Mr. Chairman, seeing that we don't have much time allotted for questioning, but my first question is related to your comments this morning about the cost of eggs here in Iqaluit and in Arctic Bay.

I think there are a lot of misconceptions out there about how the program got initiated. Throughout the transition period, I think something got lost there big time because during the Food Mail Program there, CΔL Ρσιό Ρίτο σίνος σίνος πορίος τος και τος

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everything was quite alright, quite okay, but during the transition period, everything went up, even your category 1 and category 2 items, food items, perishable category, the highest subsidized food rates. They went up drastically during the transition and when the program got put into place, the prices really never came down.

You mentioned the eggs here for Iqaluit was at \$7 actual cost and the subsidy is \$4, which, for the customer, became \$3 for the product. But if you go to these stores, you will see that you don't have the Nutrition North Canada sticker on there and the amount of savings for the customer who is buying this item. Usually you're saving 24 cents or 79 cents. For a carton of dozen eggs, you're saving \$3. There's nothing like that. In Arctic Bay, as far as I know, is... You mentioned that a dozen eggs cost \$17 and with the subsidy, it's \$7.50, so the savings would be \$9.50. There's nothing like that. The stickers don't advertise that. It's usually 29 cents and 79 cents and 49 cents. So some of these customers are quite weary about what happened there.

There are a few things that weren't quite right during the transition period. We know for a fact that down the line here, even though it's only six months into the program, is there any efforts to make sure that it doesn't happen again throughout the process? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Taptuna. One of our guests, Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I think it's fair to say, and we have made a reference to this earlier in our remarks, I don't think we can underestimate the amount of change that happened when we shifted from one program to the next. That amount of change probably commensurate

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with that would have benefited from clearer and better communication. I think there is definitely lots of room for us to improve on that and we will over the coming time.

The sticker price in a store is determined by a whole host of factors. I know that under the former program, it wasn't visible necessarily on the sticker price in the store of what was attributable to the previous program and the sticker price either. Now we're at least making some attempts to bring a little more transparency. We are requiring our agreement holders to post what the subsidy rates are so that they can make their own calculations over and above the sticker price. The sticker price is an important feature, but there should be more displays in stores indicating to customers what they're expecting to get per pound for a given good. So that's something that we're going to continue to do.

In terms of going forward, let me just step back a bit. Different retailers are promoting Nutrition North or using Nutrition North in different ways. I think there is a certain benefit to that. There is some creativity, some flexibility, and there are some innovations that are good. I think that that's healthy for people to find better ways to communicate the benefits.

In terms of determining the overall final sticker cost for a good, that's ultimately up to the retailer after they have factored in all of the things that go into running the business and selling the good. We do have the audit function as part of Nutrition North Canada, which will allow us to know with some certainty that the public money that we are transferring across to reduce the prices are actually going for their intended purpose. That's a feature that certainly didn't exist under the previous program.

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I think I will just stop there, Mr. Chairman. If there are additional questions, I would be more than happy to follow up. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Taptuna.

Hon. Peter Taptuna: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll carry on with my line of questioning here. I am also the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Development Corporation, so I know some of these things that are happening here. The Nunavut Development Corporation holds controlling interest on the three country food suppliers: Kitikmeot Foods, Kivalliq Arctic Foods, and Pangnirtung Fisheries. I don't have any kind of formal submissions from these subsidiaries, but if I do get anything, I'll be sure to let NNC and the House know about it.

The preliminary reports from the subsidiaries are they chose not to participate or register because of the amount of administrative work. There is so much administrative work that they didn't want to do that. The question is: these northern retailers that are registered under the program able to buy products from the subsidiaries that produce country foods, even though these subsidiaries aren't registered? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Taptuna. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am very pleased with that question. That is a question that we're actively pursuing right now because I think that if the answer is positive, then I think that would reduce the barriers for those three subsidiaries from having to register themselves. They would be able to have their goods purchased through someone who is already registered and for sale. So we're actively looking at that question. I don't have a specific answer to

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you today, but I can tell you with some certainty that we are hopeful to have a clear answer to that question soon. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Taptuna.

Hon. Peter Taptuna: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the response from Mr. Van Dine. Going along here, I want to ask some of these questions. According to the standing committee from Ottawa, 80 percent of your budget goes to retailers. Now, from the \$60 million plus, 80 percent of that goes to the retailers. How many employees do you have within Nunavut or the Nutrition North Canada Program? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Taptuna. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have the specific information that supports that 80 percent comment, but I will give you a breakdown on how the program is set up right now.

As mentioned already, of the \$60 million figure that was referenced this morning, \$2.9 million is allotted to our colleagues at Health Canada to help with the nutrition education programming. The most significant portion of the program is \$53.9 million, which is set aside the capped envelope for providing subsidies to our participating communities. The subsidy rates are determined by the community dynamics, not by retailer, although that's where the benefit goes. You're right; they ship the goods, they provide the invoices, and that's where the payment goes.

So that leaves us a balance of.... Rough math, so \$53.9 million plus \$2.9 million to Health Canada leaves us roughly with \$3.2

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million set aside - even the federal government needs some help every once in a while, so that's appreciated - for the operation and administration, which also covers the claims processing contract that we have. That's an operational contract for the claims processor and right now, we have about eight staff in total that are working on Nutrition North Canada. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Taptuna.

Hon. Peter Taptuna: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again I thank Mr. Van Dine for the response. You mentioned a few times today and this morning that the Nutrition North Canada Program is designed around existence of competition. Of course, it encourages competition between retailers and airlines. Of course, the program is intended for that and with competition, that's when it's supposed to work the best. As we know, competition is good for consumers and customers. There's no doubt about that.

But as the months and years roll by, if there is a lack of competition, are there some what you call defectors that are going to kind of derail the program? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Taptuna. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's difficult to predict at this point in time if significant barriers will present themselves to the effectiveness of the program. We're hopeful that as we get the first year behind us, we will be able to draw on some good information to allow us to see where things are working in terms of the demand, where healthy food is being produced, is it going up or is it going down, and where community

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stores are actually passing on benefits or not. We hope to have a clear picture of that in the first year of operation.

The benefit, as mentioned earlier, of having an advisory board working with us is to interpret that information, to be able to bring some real perspectives as to what those numbers actually mean, what we think they mean, or whether it's telling a different story. So it's important that we have the benefit of the advisory board and through some transparency to the program to know whether or not the program is achieving the goals that it's intended. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Taptuna.

Hon. Peter Taptuna: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Van Dine for that response. Today we have heard a lot about country food and of how important it is to our diet and our custom, of course, in Nunavut. Now, under the terms of reference, you've got it listed as category 5, the least subsidized nutritious food. Is the advisory board going to be looking to move that up in the categories so that it will be more affordable to most Nunavummiut?

Again, Mr. Chairman, there was a statement made that there's a lot of unemployment. We do have a high poverty rate and we have to find ways to get to those people who are in need. We have over 60 percent of our population that you could consider on the borderline or below the poverty line, so getting food security which is nutritious, of course, is country food. We've got to find a way to make sure these folks who are less fortunate have access to good, proper, nutritious food.

Are you going to look for ways to make sure that the subsidy for country food goes up?

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Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Taptuna. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the country food question has been one that we have heard a lot about today, about the importance of country food. We are committing some energy, as we speak, to understand and develop a bit of a picture for us as to what are all the elements of the country food question in order for us to make an informed choice on what to do about improving access to country food as part of this program.

Food security is a very complicated subject and we know that Nutrition North Canada has a contribution to make. I'm not entirely sure that Nutrition North Canada would be able to solve all the complexities of food security, but it's an important part of the conversation. I believe Mr. Wilcox has already remarked on it being an area of focus for the advisory board and we are working very closely with the advisory board on how to enhance the country food feature of Nutrition North Canada. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. (interpretation ends) Mr. Wilcox, do you want to make a comment?

Mr. Wilcox: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's actually hearing all of the comments regarding country food and the importance of it will help the Nutrition North Canada Advisory Board to prioritize how we can meet expectations. It may not be easy too, but we will be able to work within our means to try to resolve something. We certainly have support from Leona, who has asked us to work hard on this aspect of Nutrition North Canada. Now listening to all of the

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comments today is going to absolutely reinforce the importance of it. I have made lots of notes and I'll be sharing them with my colleagues.

I can't make any promises, but I can certainly assure you that we're going to do the best we can to at least start coming up with some ideas and it may mean some partnering. It may mean a lot of different things in order to make it work, but we don't want to just say, "Let's do something," and it not be sustainable because we have to live within our means. Maybe by being creative, we can come up with some good answers together. That's my hope. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Wilcox. Mr. Taptuna.

Hon. Peter Taptuna: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Wilcox and Mr. Van Dine for the responses. One of the things that have always become a factor is the cost of doing any kind of activity up north. When the fuel prices go up, everything goes up, and that's one of the key factors in driving up the costs.

If there's anything, let's say some kind of a doable issue, that happens and drives the fuel costs through the roof, are there any plans or emergency things that you have in place there to deal with Nutrition North Canada if it becomes like the situation of prices going way up, especially fuel? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Taptuna. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Nutrition North Canada and the communities across the Arctic are, unfortunately, not insulated from price shocks that happen as a result of global fuel price changes. The ΔLΔĊႪϽჼႱϲͿʹ·αͺʹʹΓιϷͻϤʹͰϽʹ·Ͱ ΡͰϤσ ΛϲʹʹͼϲʹͼϲʹͰʹʹϗϲʹϭϽʹ·ͻͿͺ ΛαϲʹϲʹϚͻϤʹͰ·ϽͿϲ ϥʹͱϧϧ·Ͷϥʹϭϥʹͱϧϲ·ϽͿϲͺϧϽϧʹϧϧͿϲʹϧ ϒͼϧϲͶϥʹϭϥͼϧϲͺϪϳϝͺϒͼϧϲͿϲϲ ϹϧϹͿʹͰͼʹͼʹϹ϶ϭͻ·ͺϹϪϹϲʹϧϽͺͼϧϲͼϳϽ϶ϧͼʹͿϤϨϲϲ ϒͼϧϲʹͼʹ϶ϽͿϲͺʹϥϧͼϲʹϝͺϪϧϒϭϷϹʹͱ

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program was designed with a specific purpose in mind in terms of offsetting the costs of particular foods, not the transportation of those foods. So the answer to the question directly would be no, there isn't anything contained in the program to deal with price shocks associated with escalating fuel prices. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Taptuna.

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Hon. Peter Taptuna: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm trying to ask my question fairly quickly because I know the time is ticking.

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Under the new program, Nutrition North Canada Program, in the past, a customer paid 80 cents per kilogram for freight. There are so many variables now within all our communities that nobody knows exactly what's what. Nobody is really sure of exactly what the subsidy is going to be for freight and whatnot.

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When they do personal orders, especially in Nunavut, is there any kind of consideration being done for certain communities, let's say the High Arctic? They're all different. Would one category be sufficient for a number of communities in Nunavut rather than having 25 different rates? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Taptuna. Mr. Van Dine.

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Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have taken a community-based approach to setting the rates. We sometimes can draw up regional averages on that basis, but the model that we currently have now is a community-based rate setting structure. The notion of coming up with a different structure is an interesting one and I'll take

that back as advice to the department. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Taptuna.

Hon. Peter Taptuna: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the response. This is more or less of a comment. We all know the program is brand new. It went off from the old Food Mail Program, but it's quite different. We all understand that. That's why we're kind of confused, not just the politicians who are sitting here but most residents of Nunavut. We appreciate the fact that you folks have come here to listen to our concerns and questions.

With all due respect, Mr. Chairman, at the end of next month in November, we're having a meeting here strictly to create an action plan for poverty. I would appreciate if you take the time to take a look at what's going to be coming out with the Poverty Reduction Action Plan that we intend to do here in Igaluit at the end of next month.

With all the recommendations and the expertise and knowledge you have on your advisory board and the folks who are working with the program, we expect good things coming out of it. We know it's only six months old, but further down the line here, I'm sure most folks are going to be happy once all the bugs and tweaks are worked out of the program.

I appreciate Mr. Wilcox and Mr. Van Dine for coming here and answering some of these questions we had. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Taptuna. (interpretation ends) On my list is Mr. Tootoo. Go ahead.

Hon. Hunter Tootoo: Thank you, Mr.

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Chairman. Take your time; start the clock if you want.

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First off, I would just to welcome Mr. Wilcox and Mr. Van Dine here.

I have known Wilf for many years and as he said in his statement this morning, he's very deeply committed to the prosperity and the health of people who live in the north. I just wanted to let you know that I am comforted in a way that I'm glad that you're on the advisory board and I know that you will do what you believe in, and to try and help people all over the north. I would strongly urge the officials and the department to listen very carefully to gentlemen like Mr. Wilcox. He will give you good advice.

Having said that, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Van Dine's presentation this morning, I will just say that I assume we got the exact same presentation put in front of us that you read this morning. Just for the record, is that correct? Thanks.

Chairman: Mr. Van Dine, can you confirm?

Mr. Van Dine: Yes, Mr. Chairman, it is the same presentation I did before members. You will have to check my comments against delivery, but I did use the same reference material in my presentation that you have before you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Tootoo.

Hon. Hunter Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think maybe the first part I'm going to ask on is on the bit of the history lesson that you gave us on the old program and the need for change in that. One of the things on there that need to change is the

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rapid decline of financial sustainability. I need you to clarify exactly what you meant by that. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. (interpretation ends) Mr. Van Dine, clarification, please.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. What I'll ask, Mr. Chairman, if you can refer to slide 6, if that presentation is close by.

The history that we had before this new program was started was a history that had some problematic financial features. The department consistently was allocated on average \$27.6 million, give or take, for many years and the department had to reallocate significantly more on an annual basis to cover off the costs associated with that program. I'm not sure if it was 2009, but I believe it was. In 2009, the department had to reallocate an additional \$30.7 million

As you can appreciate, when you have a program where the annual allocation is one number and the reallocation to top it up is actually more than what you have been allotted for, it becomes a burden in terms of explaining why you've got the variation in price. What's the real cost of the program?

One of the features going forward in trying to address all of those elements mentioned on slide 4 as being issues with the previous program, one of the things that we wanted to do was make sure that the program was on a solid financial footing. So the Government of Canada decided to actually appropriate approximately the same amount of money that was being spent historically for the previous program and challenge program officials to actually spend it better and to try and get more efficiency. As a result, we're in the early days of that right now.

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We believe that the removal of the point of entries, encouraging retailers and wholesalers to negotiate competitive rates for shipping, by having a variable subsidy rate, and by having a food for subsidy list that might have more of an emphasis on nutritious and healthy foods, we can actually make those dollars go further.

So to come back to your original question, the financial issues associated with the previous program pertained to a couple of things. One, we consistently spent more than what we were allotted for and, number two, we had almost no ability to control those increases or decreases as a result of the way we were administering the program through, at that time, our contract with Canada Post, I

Under this new program, we have many more performance-based measurement practices in place to have a handle on what the cost pressures are to the program and to manage accordingly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

don't know if black box is quite the word, but we paid what they invoiced us and that

was the extent of our controls.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Tootoo.

Hon. Hunter Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So if I understand correctly, then you could basically say that for many years, this program was deficit funded. You had no idea what it was going to cost. You said, "We will just put this base in the budget and we will top it up at the end." Is that correct? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: I don't know if I would quite characterize it that way, but that is one

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የ የ የ characterization that would describe the dynamic. We would allocate consistently at a number that was proven over and over again as being inadequate to support the full cost of the program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Tootoo.

Hon. Hunter Tootoo: That's just poor budgeting, Mr. Chairman, I think. I guess then with the understanding that you knew it wasn't going to be enough and once you figured out at the end of the year what it was going to be, you would top it up and cover those costs. Is that correct? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Similar to, I'm sure, a number of programs that are administered by other governments, there is an obligation to fund to the terms of the program. When the invoices came in, we were not in a position to say "no" if the obligations and all of the costs met the terms and conditions of the program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Tootoo.

Hon. Hunter Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We all know the costs are going up.

I think, by the sounds of it, you guys say, as one of my colleagues said, "Geez, we've got to stop the bleeding." You guys had no way of determining what those costs would be. So it was one of the instruments behind looking at changing the program, where the department thought, "Okay, we've got to have a number so we know what we're dealing with. We know it's going to go up,

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so we're just going to have one number there and that's it." Was that one of the factors in looking at changing the program? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On slide 4, we do talk about that there are a whole house of factors that went into the need for change. The fourth bullet speaks to.... I think that was the preference of the comments of the first set of questions on this issue. There was an inability to respond to different price comparisons and the rapid decline in financial sustainability meant that without a clear view into what was driving program costs - fuel costs, obviously, were one factor - we weren't in a position to actually determine whether that was the sole factor in driving costs up because we just didn't have the tools.

We had very poor information available to us in terms of the internal mechanics of the program and as a result, one of the features that we're doing with Nutrition North Canada is we have been allotted an annual appropriation and we have been given more tools to manage that appropriation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Tootoo.

Hon. Hunter Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Another question on the presentation on slide 6, it talks about those amounts that you mentioned, but I'm just curious. In the green box, it says "Nutrition North Canada Base Funding \$60M Ongoing," and that's what you had mentioned this morning. Underneath that in brackets, it says "Capped." So maybe I could just ask you why you didn't bother to mention it.

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That's a pretty important word to that when you go from a deficit funded program and yet we have this program, "Whatever it costs, we're going to pay it." Now that's your ceiling. So maybe I could ask you why you failed to mention that word this morning in your presentation. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Well, I'm sure it's become evident that I've probably got many failings already, Mr. Chairman, but my failure to mention the capped portion was perhaps an oversight on my part. The capped feature is to enable us to make sure that we use all the tools that are within our disposal now to make sure we get the most amounts of efficiencies out of the program.

At the end of the day, we want to make sure that how the program breaks down.... We had questions earlier with respect to what that breakdown is of that \$60 million and that was the \$53.9 million. We want to make sure that that \$53.9 million goes to the best rates possible for the best subsidies possible to reduce the overall price and impact in communities, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Tootoo.

Hon. Hunter Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It seems to me and I have heard from a lot of people out there that this just a way for the department to cap their expenditures. I understand that there is a bit of a risk assessment done on the program and one of the things that were mentioned in there is they said, "What happens if the program is over-utilized?" What happens if you get six months into the year and your \$60 million is gone? What happens then?

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Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are six months into the program and we're not in that situation. It's difficult and probably not helpful for me to speculate on the ins and outs of that proposition. I can say that the program management tools will give us good information on a much more regular basis, which will allow us to determine how close we're getting at any given time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Tootoo.

Hon. Hunter Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think he was the one who was even mentioning a hypothetical situation in here earlier today. So, hypothetically, once you hit that \$60 million mark and you still have time left in the year, what happens? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think, similar to any government program, we have a responsibility to manage the program within the dollars allotted to it. There are a number of tools currently at our disposal, including the eligibility list and the subsidy rates are all variable tools.

In terms of making determinations and final decisions on how we approach any given situation, those are program matters that we would be weighing very carefully before we made any change to the delivery of the program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr.

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Van Dine, Mr. Tootoo.

Hon. Hunter Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What happens if you determine that \$60 million isn't enough? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think what I would say, Mr. Chairman, which is a very important feature of this program that we didn't have available before under the previous program, is we didn't have good information to determine what's driving those costs.

We need to know what's driving costs before we are in a position to determine whether it's population growth or whether it's other factors. Having that information available will allow us and the advisory board to determine what's going on and how the dollars are currently being spent in the best way possible.

It's when we have an accurate picture which is when we would be in a better position to make any corrections or advise and hear from the advisory board on any advice that they might have for us with regard to the program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Tootoo.

Hon. Hunter Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Considering how long your base funding of \$27.6 million went on, that scares the "you-know-what" out of me.

It sounds to me like, like I and my colleague said earlier, to stem the bleeding, the department wanted to figure out a way and come up with a program to limit their liability. This is what it is. The response that

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you gave earlier is a pretty snazzy way of basically saying, "Let's cut our losses at this and we will leave it at that." Instead of us paying and being responsible for this program that we've had for many years, that we funded, we're now passing it on to those of us who live in the north, many of whom cannot afford it.

Like I said earlier, Mr. Wilcox and the advisory committee are all from up north. They know what's going on. Listen to them. To me, this is just passing the buck. The department has found a way to pass the buck from their budget into the pockets of everyone who lives in the north who takes advantage of this program. I wish that it had the courage to admit that.

I certainly hope that as this new program moves forward, it becomes evident that some drastic changes need to be made, that they have the courage as well then to say we need to make some changes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. (interpretation ends) Comments from our guest, Mr. Wilcox.

Mr. Wilcox: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Tootoo, for your comment. I think there's a thing that needs to be said here. In the old food mail days, the warehouses were filled with pop and chips because you were able to fly in all of the cans and all of the stuff that are now not on the list. Warehousing is getting done better now and it will increase over time. There are actually some savings there. So I think, to move forward with the program that is designed to ensure success, the cans will keep, they will come on the sealift, and this program concentrates on perishables and other items that don't have that shelf life.

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We can't always approach things with fear; we have to approach things with some confidence that there is a good chance that it can work. I think that in the time that our advisory board worked on this, there is some comfort factor and there has been some very hard questions asked. Together, we have worked through them and hopefully we can continue to do so. There are what ifs that could upset all the apple carts, but I think we have to kind of move ahead with some faith and that's what we're trying to do. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Wilcox. Mr. Tootoo.

Hon. Hunter Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank Wilf for that response. If I understand what's being said coming from the department, they're moving ahead with these changes with the best intentions of moving forward. We have heard from just about everyone here today, we hear it from people on the streets, and you hear people in the grocery store that when they're buying their groceries, they're not any cheaper. Maybe one or two little things are cheaper, but everything else is much more expensive. The cost of living has just gone up as a result.

Sure, I can understand the old program and I think it was really obvious that it was mismanaged, but it was your program. It wasn't us that mismanaged it; it was your department that mismanaged it. How do we know that that's not going to happen? Again, now, everyone who used to benefit from that program that goes into the store is paying for that mismanagement. So how are you going to ensure that this doesn't happen again? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Mr. Van Dine.

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Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I find the comments very instructive and very helpful in giving us a point of focus in terms of the program delivery of Nutrition North Canada. What I can say about the program management features is that we're dealing in an environment where we're dealing with basically one program that was developed in a previous century and another program that was actually developed in today's century. We have program management tools at our disposal that we didn't have as we were administering the other program.

We are, as Mr. Wilcox has correctly pointed out, quite hopeful that the design features of the program will allow us to get more out of the amount of dollars that were spent previously and more in terms of making sure that the dollars go for nutritional and perishable goods to reduce those prices at a more targeted way than what was being done under the previous program. When those efficiencies and those savings materialize, we will be in a position to readjust and make sure that the focus on the nutritious and perishable foods are available at a better price point.

In terms of whether Nutrition North Canada will be administered better overall in comparison to the previous program, I have gone through today in a fair amount of detail on the program features that we have to mitigate against that risk. I am going to be held accountable for making sure that we use those tools, including the oversight of interdepartmental committees as well as the advisory board. There's quite a bit of interest in this program and how it's being managed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Tootoo.

Hon. Hunter Tootoo: Thank you, Mr.

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Chairman. I think they probably had, over the years, the same kind of sales pitches as for the Food Mail Program. You could probably go back and find that.

When I asked you earlier, you said that this is a capped amount. You said that once you get more information, if it's not enough, if I understood what you were saying, you're going to be taking a look at the program and you're going to be looking at how do we find ways to keep it in that targeted amount of \$60 million. The only way you're going to be able to do that, and I think you hinted at it, was, "Okay, we've got to cut this off. We've got to cut this off."

So we have a program that went from having way too much stuff on there under the old Food Mail Program to the one now that's just nutritious and healthy food to potentially, with the ever-increasing and rising costs, not even be able to address that. Is that the correct interpretation? If everything doesn't fit into this amount, this appropriation, then whatever doesn't fit is going to fall off. Is that basically what he's saying? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think his comments are very instructive. We have a market-based program. The market-based program means that we're going to have efficiencies in this program that were not available in the previous program. As Mr. Wilcox has pointed out, there were products that were taking up space and money on airplanes that didn't need to travel that way and they didn't provide any nutritious or healthy benefit. Those dollars are now being targeted for nutritious and healthy purposes. We're hoping that over the next evolution of the program, those savings

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In terms of changing the program, I want it to be abundantly clear that I'm not suggesting any changes to the program other than that the program itself is designed as being a much more dynamic program. We have better information and better tools at our disposal that we didn't have before which allow us to make adjustments and make sure that everyone is making good choices.

If retailers are making good choices about how they're shipping their goods and if retailers are making good choices about the rates that they're able to secure through their private discussions with others, then benefits will accrue. If people are making good choices in terms of the foods that they're choosing to buy through subsidy, more foods of that nature will be brought into the stores that they're shopping at. As a result, you will get a better selection and better choice in those stores.

In many respects, while the premise of the comments and the questions perhaps suggest a hypothetical situation where we're forced to make dramatic changes, I would caution that it's far too early for us to be contemplating any scenarios that have been suggested so far today. This program is six months into its operation.

My commitment and my responsibility to making sure that we're having a transparent program that's giving good information out to the public and the way it is operating is a very clear one. I am hopeful that when more information is available on the activities of the program, Mr. Chairman, that this question can be brought back to me when we give that opportunity to present again. We will be able to give a clear picture of how the program is operating with real facts and real

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figures. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Tootoo.

Hon. Hunter Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The way I see it now on slide 7, I think it is slide 7, it shows where the subsidy is, you get invoiced and you pay the invoice for the subsidy. Like any business, any company, or any government, you say, "I'm going to go back." You've got \$60 million. Once that \$60 million runs out, do the cheques stop going for those invoices? Will people not get paid? Will the prices in the stores go to the amount that it would be without that subsidy because the money has been spent already? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe that I have given some of my perspectives on the nature of that question. I'll elaborate some more.

Annual appropriations are there to ensure that parliamentarians can hold ministers into account for the dollars that are allocated to that. Those reporting mechanisms are important for making sure that value for money for public dollars goes to the intended purpose in which they have been provided. We have a number of instruments at our disposal now that will be tracking and making sure that we are making sure those dollars go to the furthest extent possible.

There is an assumption built in. I think the comments and the questions that have been made this afternoon do represent a requirement for us to be financially responsible. That was a means that was a bit missing in the previous program. We, first and foremost, need to make sure that we are

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being financially responsible for the dollars that have been allocated. We have those means.

In terms of what happens when the clock runs out or the budget runs out, the calendar runs out, we're not into that situation right now. I'm not in a position to speculate on what would happen in that event, but I can assure you that we have active means at our disposal to make sure that we will have significant warning if any of those eventualities would present themselves. We would be in a position to consider what that would be and we would be in a better position to determine what actions and steps we would need to take once that information was available.

That's, I think, as complete as I can go today, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. (interpretation ends)
Unfortunately, Mr. Tootoo, the clock has run out on you. On my list, Mr. Aupaluktuq.

Mr. Aupaluktuq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also welcome the guests, Mr. Wilcox and Mr. Van Dine. It's encouraging that this process is willing to hear and listen to the concerns from Nunavummiut. My colleagues have spoken eloquently and addressed many concerns.

I just want to reiterate as well, as Minister James Arreak noted and said previously, in my community, the smaller stores indicated that they're having trouble competing with larger stores. They state that the former Food Mail Program worked but that it just needed some tweaking and adjustments in order to better enhance the service and delivery, ultimately to benefit the consumers in Nunavut.

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Mr. Chairman, I just want to note it's understandable that shipping by air is a challenge and boxes are labelled as fragile. However, some constituents receive their orders in poor condition. As well, the onus is on the supplier to provide quality products. It's said and it's also known by constituents that all the products are sent with short lifespan of freshness, quality diminished, bruised fruits and vegetables, and broken contents of packaged goods.

It's perceived by some who feel that the supplier or provider is deliberately sending less quality and close expiration or best-before dates to rid of them and hopefully take them out of their stock or supply, knowing that the consumer most likely will receive them as is, considering the difficulty and the process that they have to go through. People of Nunavut want suppliers to know that better quality and service of products is

As well, I think it should also be noted that some major stores are viewed as catering to a select few, most often professionals, who get first choice of fresh products. Constituents have also noted that if we're going to be in this forum, it should also be noted that it should be a fair process for all public to have access to fresh food.

expected and demanded.

These are comments that I would like to share with you in order to take into consideration as well with some of the challenges that are faced with Nunavummiut as consumers. It's just a comment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Aupaluktuq. (interpretation ends) Did you want to make a comment, either of our guests? Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I

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would like to say that those are very instructive comments for me to hear about the quality of goods and it is very helpful to get specifics around those. I would encourage that if there are specific examples that continue to occur, to bring them to our attention.

At no point would we want, certainly, suppliers to be treating their customers as a different class of customer than any other customers. So it's important to hear that information so that we can bring it and correct it as we can. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. (interpretation ends) Mr. Aupaluktuq, you are done. Thank you. Ms. Ugyuk, please.

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Ms. Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wish to welcome you to Iqaluit since you have travelled here.

In looking at the opening comments, in particular page 7 of this morning's presentation that was given by Mr. Van Dine, in looking at the written comments, I take it to mean that the federal government is not a retail outlet. Are you trying to be a retail outlet? That is what I wanted to ask to the presenter since I know the federal government does not have any retail experience.

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You are administering the program by dictating what foodstuffs we can purchase, you set a flat rate for the airfreight costs, as well as the total subsidy. Will this lower the cost? The administrators of this program are dictating to the communities what to purchase, but this does not assist the communities. It has no benefit accruing to the communities.

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I can cite this example. In our community, if I wish to buy ice cream other than the vanilla flavour, it will be more expensive. As mothers and parents, we try our utmost to provide nutritious food for our children. If the ice cream I buy is not vanilla and it's a different flavour, I have to pay additional costs to purchase the ice cream. That is how much power you hold sway over our communities.

In the past, products that were priced the same are no longer the same. Ice cream is just one product. The vanilla flavour is much cheaper than the other flavours as the non-vanilla flavours cost much more. Is that what you are trying to accomplish? Thank you. If he could respond to that, please.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Ms. Ugyuk. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Raising awareness in terms of what level of benefit is going to the communities is an area where we are going to make sure that we get more information out so that we allow people in the communities to understand exactly what level of subsidy is coming into the community and what prices they can expect as a result of that subsidy. I think there's work that we need to do in order to better explain that.

In terms of individual price products, in terms of ice cream, whether one ice cream is more expensive or less expensive, it's an interesting question. I'm going to have to look into it a little more closely, Mr. Chairman, and find out what in our toolkit gives us guidance on why one particular product under the eligibility list might be featured and, in particular, why one flavour would deserve some benefit over another flavour. I'm a bit curious about that myself. I really appreciate the question being posed

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today and I'll look into that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Ms. Ugyuk.

Ms. Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am thankful that Mr. Van Dine will be checking into this matter. When I was in my home community, another resident was trying to buy ice cream for a birthday party for her child, but when she picked a different flavour, it was too expensive and she ended up returning it to the freezer. This was just ice cream for a birthday party, and that is how much you are influencing the purchases of the residents of Nunavut. This is unacceptable and causes resentment. I want that clearly understood.

The second issue is related to transportation. In our community, we generally end up with this practice. When the foodstuffs arrive via airfreighter, some produce only end up fresh for one day and after one day, they are no longer fresh due to the time lag between when the order is placed and when it arrives in the community. Within a day, the stores throw out much of the produce since it is no longer fresh. They end up throwing a lot of products out that were just subsidized for their transportation costs. Is this the goal of the program? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Ms. Ugyuk. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Food quality, ultimately, the retailer has the responsibility to be selling goods on their shelves that are consumable. Wholesalers and retailers who have experience in working in the north, for the most part, understand what it takes to get a good to where it needs to get to in a manner in which it can be purchased in a reasonable

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For spoilage and things of that nature, if it's the transportation company that had shipped the good and it's damaged in some way, then the recourse is back through the company that shipped it. If you're going to the store shelves and you're not getting the quality good, then it's the retailer who has the responsibility for making sure that it's of good quality for purchase.

If there are specific examples in which there are issues, I would be very much willing to hear more about those specific examples. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Ms. Ugyuk.

Ms. Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Using the Co-ops as an example, they have an agreement with Canadian North to transport nutritious food to the community co-operatives. That is how I understand it. Many planes are multi-purpose flights and depending on the number of passengers, the foodstuffs scheduled for transport are bumped off, resulting in delays in their arrival. This is a factor that may not have been taken into consideration and I hope that this will be remedied.

When the plane is full of passengers, the nutritious foodstuffs scheduled for that trip cannot be loaded. With the combination flights of passengers and foodstuffs, if there is any detrimental weather, then the flights can no longer ship the produce to the community. How will you remedy this situation? Will you be requesting freighters to ship only the foodstuffs to the communities?

How will you prioritize these two competing categories? Do you pick the passenger who is

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trying to go home or do you pick the nutritious foods? That seems to be the challenge when airlines are trying to transport nutritious foods and we have no choice as they can only arrive via airfreight, even in the summer. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Ms. Ugyuk. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The quality of the good that's shipped is the conversation between the one making the order and the transportation provider they're working with. If there is a problem over the quality of the good that the retailer is receiving, then they have an obligation to take that up with the transport company that's brining it to them.

I believe, in some comments made by Mr. Wilcox earlier today, he did note and perhaps I may give Mr. Wilcox the opportunity to indicate, that one of the areas that the advisory board is quite interested in is having a conversation with retailers and transportation providers on how well the program is working and what the potential rough spots might be in terms of the way it's working. It's amazing what can happen when you've got a conversation; you can get information on the table and hopefully solutions will present themselves. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Did you want to further that, Mr. Wilcox?

Mr. Wilcox: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think, hopefully in our February meeting, we will be able to have discussions with retail stores and with transportation representatives and talk about the types of things that you're bringing up, but also to see how the program is interacting with their operations.

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I think, in order to succeed, we have to take a little bit of a partnership approach because there are three organizations very firmly involved and if you consider the consumers, there are four, that being Nutrition North, the airlines, the stores, and the consumers. They all have to work together and they all have to come out on top. So that's one of the things that we're striving for, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Wilcox. Ms. Ugyuk.

Ms. Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the responses I'm receiving. I would like to ask Mr. Wilcox since he's a member of the Nutrition North Canada Advisory Board. I don't know how many members there are, but I know he's the member for Nunavut and I know there are two members for Nunavut on the Nutrition North Canada Advisory Board. Nunavut is the largest user of this program. According to being a member, will all the interests and needs of Nunavummiut be a priority on the board? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Ms. Ugyuk. Mr. Wilcox.

Mr. Wilcox: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can assure you that we work together as a team. On our board, we try to share issues. We're all northerners and we feel that we have a common bond that way and that one issue is also their issue. By doing that, we don't really have divisions. We concentrate on the issues and certainly the concerns that come forward. Every meeting, there's a special issue that will come up in the High Arctic or over in our area and to a less extent, in this immediate area, but by working together, we seem to address the issues. Certainly a lot of the members from other areas of Canada look at Nunavut with great

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Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Wilcox. Ms. Ugyuk.

Ms. Ugyuk (interpretation): This will be my last question. The advisory board hears from the public interest. Do they have authority? Does the federal government listen to your recommendations or advise? I would like to get clarification on that. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Ms. Ugyuk. Mr. Wilcox.

Mr. Wilcox: I'm sure that Mr. Van Dine will add to what I say, but so far, we have identified issues and we have been responded to. There haven't been difficult times between what we're doing and the responses that we get. We are working hand in hand. We have to understand what the constraints are, but I have never felt that we're being ignored. In the early days of the whole program when issues were coming fast and furious, we raised our concerns and the government responded. People raised their concerns and the government responded. So I think we have a very well grounded board and it's working well. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Wilcox. Jeannie, are you finished? Thank you, Ms. Ugyuk. (interpretation ends) On my list is Mr. Ron Elliott. You have 10 minutes.

Mr. Elliott: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks for that reminder. I think, since the program was first announced in 2010, it was a real concern for me and that goes back to when I was first elected in 2008, where the High Arctic has a very unique transportation system. As much as people say it's a retail subsidy or a subsidy that goes to the consumer, to me, it's still a transportation

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subsidy because it's actually a per kilogram payment for nutritious food. That's one of the reasons why this has been a real big concern for me and my constituents in the three communities that I represent.

Even with just some of the comments that were made today as I have been sitting and listening, it's nice to hear that it's an issue that's Nunavut-wide. But Mr. Van Dine said himself that it's a market-based program and since it's a market-based program, it will be successful. What do you do when there's no market? And that's the reality of what we face in our communities, so I would start with that question, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Elliott. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The market-based program is intended to be a significant incentive to manage the resources that we have available for the program as efficiently as possible to encourage transportation choices that align with the appropriate modes of transportation for the good that's being shipped. Sealift, as we know, is a much more economic way to move certain goods and for goods that are able to be shipped that way, it will allow the dollars of the program to go much further than to be airlifting items that don't necessarily need to be shipped that way.

In terms of the point that was made specifically, there are obviously small markets and large markets. In small markets, there are different dynamics at play. We're certainly obligated to make sure that the program is delivered in a comparable manner across the coverage area, including six provinces and three territories. To do so, we have a structure that gives us a per community subsidy rate. That is one tool in

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which we hope to deliver on the objectives of the program, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Elliott.

Mr. Elliott: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again thank you for the answer. I know Mr. Van Dine had mentioned earlier about the possibility of coming before the Full Caucus again to discuss this program. I'm glad he offered that because I'm sure my colleagues will be looking forward, as the program continue to roll out, to have your department and the advisory board come and also either explain the accountability that he was talking about or the successes of the program.

You have committed to providing the committee a variety of information as the afternoon has gone on. You used a specific example of Arctic Bay, \$39 for two litres of milk and it is \$14.50 once the subsidy is applied to it. Would it be possible to get a breakdown, not now, in terms of my math in my mind is not that good, in terms of two litres and kilograms, and whatnot?

Would you provide a bit of a pie chart for us at a later date in terms of how that number of...? You said the full cost to get it to our Arctic Bay was \$39 and I am curious to see that breakdown as to how much of it is actually freight and how much of it is whatever cost that the retailer is putting in. Could you provide that to us? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Elliott. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We developed these numbers based on conversations that we had with the retail partners that we have been working with. I'll take this back today to come up with a more

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complete breakdown as to what goes into the full cost of the items and I would be pleased to share that information. I will say, by way of a qualifier, it will be dependent upon the information I'm able to collect. Certainly, in coming up with good information on what the full cost of a particular item is, I will commit to look into that and get that information back. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Elliott.

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Mr. Elliott: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that commitment. No offence to anybody in terms of choice of airline, we only have one airline and that's what I'm talking about: no market being we have First Air that flies to Arctic Bay. If I was to show up in Ottawa and ship food, First Air has a food rate which is not negotiated; it's just a flat rate of about \$9.50. If I showed up with a bag of milk, it sounds like I could ship it to Arctic Bay cheaper than what these retailers are getting it to Arctic Bay, unless that's heavier milk than I could find at some other location, but I'm just curious.

As well, when we talked about the Food Mail Program, it's come up that it is 80 cents per kilogram with a packaging fee of roughly \$1.50. One of the things that we had when one of the retailers came before us in June, we talked about a level playing field for transportation and I think that's the concern that I have. With some of the costs that are coming in and when you do the calculations for... I've had conversations with people from Pond Inlet. They can order personal food mail and get... Well, they have gone from \$1.50 per kilogram shipping to the community to \$5, and in Arctic Bay, it's between \$7 and \$9.

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I just wonder: what do we tell our constituents? It's nice that the federal

government is subsidizing nutritious food, but the idea is we have gone from a program that was allowing a \$1.50 per kilogram to provide nutritious food and a wide range of foods across the territory to an increase of three to five to ten times higher, and I don't know in terms of making programs better. To me and in the eyes of the constituent, that makes the program worse. So I was wondering if Mr. Van Dine could speak to that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Elliott. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As been mentioned earlier, the limitations of the previous program and to allow for subsidized freight, how does limitations in terms of predictability and cost...? I think, from a consumer point of view, which has been pointed out a number of times today, there was a level of fixed predictability in terms of what that shipping rate is and I do appreciate that being adding some comfort to consumers. What we have now is a variable rate with the subsidy rate and that a lot of things go into the calculation of that rate.

In the early days of Nutrition North Canada, I believe it's fair to say that the changeover from the one method of delivery to the new method of delivery has not been communicated as well as, perhaps, it could have. What we are finding and what we will hopefully be able to communicate in the coming months is the trend lines on where consumer purchasing patterns are starting to shift. Are people buying more nutritious and perishable goods than they did previously? What does that look like? Where are they doing that? How are they doing that?

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percent of that activity, 10 percent of that expenditure was related to personal orders or direct food purchases. The other amounts of that money were actually being spent towards our retailers, who were actually bringing in goods using the same previous program. The bulk of the effort was actually in the retailers to begin with, as our reports and evaluations have shown us.

In the Nutrition North program, we still have a personal order feature. I can't tell you today exactly what the percentage of personal order consumption is as a result of this change. I can say with some confidence that the economies that we're hoping to achieve as a result of these shifts, of eliminating entry points, by encouraging better rates between other players in the process, we're hoping that the larger users of the program will be turning those benefits over to consumers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Van Dine, Mr. Elliott.

Mr. Elliott: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In Mr. Van Dine's comments, with the way the program was before, I think it's more than just comfort to the consumers; it was actually putting more food on the table. That's, I think, a lot of times the problem in terms of buying power and the affordability of food in our communities.

My next question is sort of based around the idea of when the retailers came in, in June, they talked about spoilage and possibly, with the new system, materials would be shipped to the communities faster, so there would be less spoilage. I just wonder in terms of some clarification, in terms of the way the program used to work under the food mail.

Through Canada Post, it was a 72-hour movement period that they had to actually

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CΔLC ΔLΔ'b'CC_Þ'°·UC ΠΡ\Δ'b'CΠ'¬)Γ΄ ΠΠ°•bσ</ get products to the communities. Now my understanding is that everything comes as freight, whether it's a skidoo part or a tire or if it is bananas and fresh and perishable food, it all travels as freight. So what mechanism is in place to ensure that there's no spoilage under the new system? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Elliott. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There's a very solid relationship between the purchaser and the transportation provider, so that relationship is key in all of this. If the purchaser is not getting the satisfaction that they want from the transportation provider, then they have to talk to the transportation provider to make sure that they're getting the remedies that they're seeking.

We have identified a program in which we're looking to put food subsidies for specific foods and goods to retailers and wholesalers, and we're providing a lot of flexibility for the retailers and the wholesalers in the way in which they choose to have those items shipped. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Elliott.

Mr. Elliott: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 5 of your presentation, one of the bullets talks about the new program will have overall transportation efficiencies by encouraging market choice for mode of transportation, example, marine, ice roads, and then on page 9, under the strengthening of governance, it talks about your interdepartmental committee. I was just wondering: is the Department of Fisheries and Oceans part of that committee? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Currently Fisheries and Oceans is not a member of the interdepartmental committee. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Elliott.

Mr. Elliott: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a suggestion of possibly including them in that and the reasoning behind that.... If you're relying on individuals in the community, which I think is still wrong for individuals because most of the individuals don't have the luxury of being able to order sealift, you're relying and asking the retailers to be able to purchase more on sealift.

We're in the middle of reviewing capital expenses in Committee of the Whole and in those proceedings, we were having discussions with the minister about the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the cost savings that would be available, let's say, if there was a port here in Iqaluit and the thousands of dollars that are spent on having the ship sit out docked while the tide goes in and out. So I think it would be important to have them on board as well.

My next question is around the partnership with Health Canada and the Minister of Health and Social Services here within the Government of Nunavut mentioned that he would be doing a member's statement, but I was hoping for a commitment from your department if you could provide us with a detailed breakdown since the program started in 2010 where the money went, how much money came to the territory, what the program and projects names and what the outcomes were. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Elliott. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to acknowledge that I have just taken note of his suggestion about the addition to our interdepartmental committee that's advising on Nutrition North Canada to add Fisheries and Oceans, and I'll take that back with me.

With respect to the question on a detailed breakdown on Health Canada's expenditures since 2010 on the health, nutrition, and education initiatives, I will contact our colleagues at Health Canada and I will bring it back through some means, either correspondence or other, to convey how the breakdown of that money has occurred in Nunayut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Elliott.

Mr. Elliott: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 6 of your presentation, you had talked about the funding and Mr. Tootoo had a number of questions based around that. We're seven months into the program. You were talking about accountability and the ability of Nutrition North Canada, through your department, to account for the funding and hopefully cost savings through the implementation of the new program.

Of the \$53.9 million that goes specifically to the subsidy and we're seven months into the program, do you have a dollar figure as to what you're at now? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Elliott. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have a dollar amount that I can share at

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this particular moment in time, but what I can tell you, Mr. Chairman, is at the start of the fiscal year, we put into place a number of assumptions in terms of cost projections as to where we would be. Every indication thus far is that we're within those cost projections to get us to the end of the fiscal year without any surprises. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Elliott.

Mr. Elliott: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 9 of your presentation in terms of the advisory board, initially when all of the correspondence came out about the advisory board, it was considered and spoken of as the external advisory board. I'm just curious. The external part has been dropped from that name. Is that just a changing of the title? One of the things that we're trying to determine as a caucus is just: is this an advisory board that is separate from the department or is it just a part of the department? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Elliott. Mr. Wilcox.

Mr. Wilcox: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just the name of our board is reflective of what it is. We don't run Nutrition North. We're helping to implement it and we're trying to put a northern face on the whole overall change, and the minister is very open-minded in how we do that. Right now, we have a system in place where we send him a briefing note at the end of each meeting with action points. That seems to be working okay, but I think that if we identify the need for a face to face or anything like that, we will be obliged fully on that. We certainly have all had an opportunity to speak personally with the minister.

I think that there is good confidence in what

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we're doing, and because of that confidence, I feel that we are being listened to and that things are working the way that we need them to. Believe me, if they weren't, we would probably be a pretty loud gang. For a short amount of time, it's all working fairly well. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Wilcox. Your allotted time has been used, Mr. Elliott. Next on our list is Mr. Peterson.

Hon. Keith Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know it has been a long day. I welcome Mr. Van Dine and Mr. Wilcox as our guests today.

It has been very informative sitting here today and listening to all the questions and hearing all the answers. I'm sure that this hasn't gotten us any further in our understanding of how the Nutrition North Canada process works. We spent a couple days this past summer talking to the retailers and we have been briefed by our officials. It's a very complex program, very complicated, and I'm certain that the average consumer in Nunavut doesn't understand the program. Unfortunately they have to buy food, so they go into the stores and they have to purchase.

I know that in Cambridge Bay, where I come from, where Mr. Wilcox comes from, we have been friends for many years, so we're quite familiar with the community. I do my own informal food surveys when I go shopping every week. You go up the aisle with your carts and you look at labels on the shelves and talk to other people. Generally being a politician, I ask them, "Have you noticed any improvements in your food bills or can you buy more food?" Almost every one of them will say no, it has made no difference to them and it's costing them more.

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Now, I was quite relieved earlier this month when a 4-litre jug of milk was reduced by \$4 from \$12.94 at one of the stores to \$8.94, and that was quite positive. That brought it almost in line with Yellowknife. I think it's a tad under \$5 in Yellowknife for a similar amount of milk, so that was good.

But more recently, I got some prices for vegetables and fruits. I almost fell off my chair yesterday when I read an email from somebody because I put out a Facebook notice that people like you guys were coming and if they wanted me to ask you some questions here or make some points.

A red pear in the Northern Store in Cambridge Bay was \$9. One red pear. To me, that's almost as bad as a \$200 turkey that one of my colleagues saw up in Arctic Bay a couple years ago. It may be a pricing error, but it raises the question: can retailers lower the price of milk and then increase the other products to cover off the price of milk? Is that allowed or is that permissible? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (Mr. Elliott): Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The short answer is that the subsidy rates are based on the invoices that are submitted to us by particular items that are shipped. There is not an inability to send us those invoices and that's why we have the waybill and the invoices there as a bit of a check and balance to make sure that what we're being invoiced is for the goods that were actually moved.

There isn't any flexibility for, let's say, a subsidy to be moved from one category to another or one item to another, but what I would like to add is that there's a whole number of things that are available to retailers in terms of what price they want to

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set an item at. We have the accountability to make sure that the subsidies that we are paying to the retailer for a particular good aligned.

If there are other considerations that a retailer would like to do - for example, what happens in many other places is to reduce the level of the price in order to attract more people into their store to get more traffic for other kinds of purchases - they're certainly free to do that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Peterson.

Hon. Keith Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Van Dine for the answer. I don't know. It just seems a little outrageous that the prices are still high. Gala apples are \$19.19 a kilogram, green pears are \$5.39 a kilogram, and one pineapple is \$10.96 each. In Yellowknife, I think you can get the pineapples at Extra Foods for \$3.88 each and a case of mandarin oranges, \$16.50. These are supposedly nutritious foods.

Those are the kind of foods we want our folks in Nunavut to be able to purchase with the funds they have. As my colleague spoke today, Mr. Taptuna, we're working on a Nunavut poverty strategy to help people to be able to afford food. I know those are the kind of prices that a lot of people in Nunavut can't afford, even with a subsidy.

When you guys review the bills that you get from the retailers, I'm just wondering if they are charging an appropriate amount or not trying to stick in a little bit extra for profit, freight, and other such things on top of that.

We talk in our House all the time about food security. A lot of our kids need to.... We have our breakfast programs so that they can get a meal before they go to school and eat at

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Even with this program, you guys are saying that it's going to work, but what we're hearing as politicians on the ground at our communities is that it's not helping and it's not really putting nutritious food on the tables of the average person in Nunavut. I know Wilf and the advisory committee probably raise that with your department or minister quite often.

I share my colleagues' concern too that you have to listen to the advisory committee. You can't just have them as a committee that acts as a buffer between yourselves and the communities. When our government puts a committee together, we take their input and their comments or recommendations quite seriously. Otherwise, what would be the point of having a committee unless you listen to them?

I'll end it right there for the moment, Mr. Chairman, and I'll let Mr. Van Dine respond. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to certainly make the point quite clear that the views and the reality that we get from the advisory board is a very important feature of the program and we treat it very seriously, and we will continue to do so.

In terms of the specific price issues that have been listed, I did include at the back end of the presentation my email coordinates and if those particulars could be forwarded to me, Mr. Chairman, I would look into it and try and determine why there are such prices that have been listed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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Hon. Keith Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Van Dine. Perhaps I'll post those on my Facebook page and we will send you the comments of some of the people who email me.

One of my duties as a cabinet minister is as the Minister of Justice. I have a number of correctional facilities in Nunavut that I'm responsible for and as many as 150 prisoners and a lot of staff, and we're opening a facility in Rankin Inlet next year which will increase that number. Now, I'm wondering how the correctional facilities can benefit from this Nutrition North program in terms of lowering our costs because we do have people in our care and custody.

I believe our costs have actually increased since the Nutrition North program has come into being somewhat. A major facility or operation like Nunavut Corrections can benefit from the Nutrition North program and lower the costs to the government so that we can provide more food to our folks and then perhaps leave a little bit of money available to other departments for other programs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Certainly, institutions are able to find registered suppliers that are a part of the Nutrition North program suite right now and enter into arrangements with those suppliers to have their needs met for foods that are eligible under the Nutrition North program. If there are any questions or specific issues in terms of getting the right connection points to those suppliers for those purposes, I would be happy to get back to you, Mr. Chairman,

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with that information. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Peterson.

Hon. Keith Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Van Dine for the answer. I put that out there because as a government, we're facing increasing costs. Like you, there are budget reductions and program cuts. Nunavut is no different and our costs are going up in all of our departments, our hospitals, our correction facilities, and our educational facilities, so we certainly look to any way we can reduce our costs.

Mr. Chairman, earlier I said that we have sat around and talked about this in a number of meetings for a long time. I don't know if there is any benefit in continuing these discussions because we do have a lot of meetings, but we never seem to get any answers. We're talking about future meetings and discussions.

I'm just getting worn out talking about this program. To me, anything that's complex and complicated wears out politicians. Politicians are the ones who make complex and complicated programs. This is one that has me completely stymied. You would think it is going to confer benefits on the people in the north, the six provinces and three territories, but it has become a quite controversial issue. Just about everybody you talk to says it hasn't helped them. Politicians are holding meetings with witnesses and guests, and we still don't know how it's helping us, yet our costs are increasing.

I'm wondering: if we hold future meetings, how are we going to be assured by the people, and it could possibly be yourselves who come again, that we're going to have

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Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am very sensitive to the fact that conversations can be illuminated much more interestingly if you've got good information on the table, real results and real information in terms of where the purchasing patterns are happening or changing. It will be a much more active discussion when you've got good evidence to suggest where prices are changing or not changing.

At the six-month point into the delivery of the program, we are only now getting some good information to us that certainly was not available for us today. I am fairly confident that before the one-year anniversary or not too distant after, we will be in a position to paint a fairly accurate picture of what this program has achieved so far and communicating that information in a very clear and transparent manner. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Peterson.

Hon. Keith Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Van Dine. So Mr. Van Dine, you're saying that after one year, you will get all the detailed information. I'm sure you will more than likely discover that there needs to be some major improvements to the program. Are you committing the Government of Canada to improving their program and adding additional funds to the program to allow the retailers to offer more subsidies and allow the consumers in Nunavut to purchase more affordable foods?

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Government of Canada has already made the commitment to make this program a responsive program to the needs of northerners. It has created an advisory board to provide advice to the administration of the program. That did not exist in the previous program, and this is a very attractive feature of Nutrition North Canada. The Government of Canada has already, through the announcement of this program, indicated that there are a number of features of this program that are dynamic in nature, including the setting of subsidy rates, as well as the eligibility and food for subsidy issue.

We have heard some very encouraging comments today with regard to the importance of country food. With that issue being front and centre in today's conversation, I have a new-found, how shall I say, evidence from the comments made today to bring back and have a frank and candid discussion with members of the advisory board and other program officials about the country food question.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to say with some clarity that the responsiveness and the dynamic nature of the program for improvement exist today, will continue into the future, and will remain a very important part of this program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Peterson, your time has expired. Before I move on to the Member for Rankin Inlet North, we will pause and take a 5-minute break. We will see you in 5 minutes.

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>>Meeting recessed at 17:42 and resumed at 17:53

Chairman: Welcome back, everybody. I will call upon and recognize the member from Rankin Inlet North, Mr. Curley.

Hon. Tagak Curley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Very quickly, I appreciate the response. The Nutrition North, the team and the advisory committee, you indicated that you're responsive. Hopefully that is the case because Nunavutmiut feel that they have been left out, particularly the individuals who used to take advantage of the old Food Mail Program. It was very popular. It was widely used by individuals.

Now the market share has been shrunk to mainly go through the commercial establishments. The individual liberty that once existed and taking advantage of the service is now not allowed under this new regime, but Nunavutmiut throughout have been calling to bring back the Food Mail Program. So it would be important to get a response, whether the advisory committee will respond to that at all or not. I also wanted to note that Nunavik recently rejected the whole Nutrition North initiative and they actually called on the federal government to scrap it. So it will be important to get some indication what your response is, whether you are responsive to that or not.

I want to quote from one of our local businessmen who sat in last June during a formal sitting of the committee when we had some of the members of the retail representatives in town. The president of Arctic Ventures stated that, and I quote, "The best feature of the old program," referring to the Food Mail Program, "was that everyone was treated equally in terms of the cost of air transportation. For category 1 items - and those are the items we are most interested in,

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nutritious perishable foods - the rate was 80 cents per kilogram plus a surcharge of 75 cents per box. So it would probably average out to about 84 to 85 cents per kilogram. It didn't matter whether you were in Iqaluit or Cambridge Bay or Grise Fiord."

I'll cut it short. "The problems," he goes on to indicate, "with the old Food Mail Program could have been corrected by tweaking the program. INAC could have done public education programs. They could have initiated a signing program. They could have changed eligibility lists. They could have allowed more entry points. These are all things that they're doing under Nutrition North Canada. They could have done all of these things within the existing Food Mail Program."

I know by adjusting the old program, you would've had continued support of Nunavik and many Nunavutmiut who are now prevented from taking advantage individually.

What is your response to these statements? Will you respond in a more responsive way to these suggestions? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Curley. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again I find all of the comments and questions, and commentary that we're receiving today is very important for our goforward plan with Nutrition North Canada. I welcome the opportunity to respond.

I begin by saying that I certainly don't have available any information on the references to views from Nunavik as to what's being proposed or intended or the reason for that, so I'm not in a position to respond to those comments today.

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In terms of whether the program will continue to be responsive, it certainly will be responsive and continues to be responsive to input and comments made to its delivery. I did take time to look at quite closely the comments and the representation that was made here in this Legislative Assembly in June; the testimony by the three companies that did take the time to spend with members to talk about how it's operating.

I do always welcome the opportunity to talk to the retailers directly, including Mr. Harper. I would be very pleased to talk to Mr. Harper about whether the program is still viewed in the way that he saw it back in June today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Curley.

Hon. Tagak Curley: One last question that I have is: considering the fact that the Food Mail Program was quite popular in Nunavut, the largest user of the whole system, including Nunavik, will there be consideration for individuals as well to benefit directly through the Nutrition North program by being able to order directly, whether or not you're a commercial retailer? Is that clear? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Curley. Mr. Van

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Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think we will need to make that more clear in our materials. Absolutely, individuals are able to access the program as individuals to purchase goods from registered suppliers wherever they may be, and that continues with this program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. I now recognize the Member for Iqaluit Centre, Mr. Tootoo.

Hon. Hunter Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a few more questions for Mr. Van Dine. If you look at the numbers that you provided in your presentation to us this morning, and I think those are 2009 numbers, you said, the cost of the program, the total cost with the base amount and the top-up, if you want to call it that, was \$58.3 million. I know how departments look at things. Did you run projections and numbers of what you figured your costs might be over the next few years and, if so, what were they? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: We deal with annual appropriations and we budget according to our annual appropriations. This year, when we were given our annual appropriations for the delivery of this program, we did take into account certain forecasts and projections on information we received from our agreement holders, and we included a number of other financial variables in determining our projections for spending this year. We do that on an annual basis, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr.

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Tootoo.

Hon. Hunter Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those projections that you guys looked at, did they exceed the \$60 million mark? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: We based our information on some variables that took us to work within the envelope that we had been given, recognizing that there were some other transition costs associated with moving to the new program this year. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Tootoo.

Hon. Hunter Tootoo: Maybe I could make it really clear. What was the projected number that you guys looked at? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: We've had a number of.... I don't want to sound disrespectful or evasive, but this is a demand-based program with volumes and projections. We are at the mercy of consumers' purchasing patterns to determine what our final costs are. We can build it in with a certain amount of assumptions and projections to determine where we're going to be at the end of the fiscal year, which is what we have done, and we will continue to do so.

The numbers that went in at the start of the fiscal year for this program, as responsible managers, had us calculating that we would be operating the program within the budget envelope that we had been allotted and

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Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Tootoo.

Hon. Hunter Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, I guess those numbers couldn't have been good; otherwise, you would have told us. The only assumption that I can make on that is I realize that it's going to cost you guys more than that to run the program. We better change it and cap it because we know it's going to cost us more than that in the future. So to me, that means that the program is going to suffer as a result in the future because you guys have realized that it's going to cost you more than that.

That's 2009 numbers. It's \$58 million, then a year later, it's \$60 million, and the next year, it's \$62 million. Was any inflation factor or indexing taken into account in what you guys looked at in setting the funding amount for this program? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Mr. Van Dine

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The mechanics of the appropriation that we have right now do not include an index factor.

What I would like to remind and perhaps repeat, Mr. Chairman, is the fact that in the previous program, in terms of the tax payers' dollars that were going into the previous program, there was inability to determine what amounts were going for what purposes at any given time. We now have some tools available to us plus some new delivery mechanisms that remove what we know to be cost inflators to the delivery of those dollars.

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The full accounting of the savings that we expect as a result of this new delivery model is being monitored on an active basis. So that's an important piece as we move forward with this new program is to ensure the spending amounts that have been allocated are going to the purposes that they were intended and that efficiencies that we believe will be resulting from this new delivery platform will result in maximum benefits going to consumers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Tootoo.

Hon. Hunter Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are quite a few things that are coming off the list, a lot of things that you hear from many people that that's their basic needs, things that they need.

I would also assume that if it cost you \$58 million in 2009 with everything on the list, we know that if the list is pretty much cut in half, those costs are going drop considerably. As you have committed to and said that you are responsive, it's going to be a responsive program, if you're finding that we don't need the whole \$60 million on that new list, you would look at expanding that list to cover off some of the basic needs that people up here need to survive and get by.

The people like you who live in the south forget and they could go some place else. They can go down the street and they can get it somewhere else. They don't have the high cost of living that we face up here. When you go to the store, look at some of the prices. Do you know how much are pampers? How much is baby formula? If you want to really help people of the north, I think those are the kind of things that need to be looked at. I would like to get a commitment that that's something that the department would look at.

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those realities are being weighed on a fairly regular basis and the list is a list that's viewed periodically. We're still determining how frequently we're reviewing the list and those sorts of things.

The savings or efficiencies or economies that are as a result of this new delivery platform are a means by which we can actually make the biggest impact on these items that are eligible by making sure that the subsidy rates are applied to the fullest extent that we have available to us.

To put it another way, if the way that we're delivering the program now actually costs less than what it took to deliver the program previously, we're in a good position to reprofile those savings into the program and make sure that the benefits are fully realized. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Tootoo.

Hon. Hunter Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Would that mean like putting some of those other things that are off the list back on? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: The short answer is there is advice that we will be taking in, we will be consulting with the advisory board, and we will be looking at the opportunities to make the list a better list and that would be done on a periodic basis. I'm not in a position today to determine or to indicate one way or the

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Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Tootoo.

Hon. Hunter Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the things that one of my colleagues mentioned, a quote from the last hearings that we had on this, reminded me of another quote that I found rather intriguing during those hearings. Basically the individual was saying that the only reason that changes were being made to the program was to keep one of the two airlines that we have up north from going under.

I found that as an interesting comment, I guess. I wonder why someone would make a comment like that. I would just like to ask you if you know of anything in the department that that actually had anything to do with the changes in the program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: I have no information to suggest that that was the reason that the program had been changed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Tootoo.

Hon. Hunter Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Did the department receive...? Were there groups that lobbied the department for changes in the program and, if there were, who were they? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Mr. Van Dine.

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Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Tootoo.

Hon. Hunter Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question was: you say you talked to people and stuff like that, but are you aware of...? I would hope that you would be aware if the department itself was lobbied by any groups for changes to the program and that specifically lobbied right to the department saying, "We want this program changed," and I'm sure that that probably happened. I'm just wondering who those people were. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to respond to the question. There is a specific definition to lobbying in the federal government. I do not have the information available of who, as a registered lobbyist, has come and made representation to the department on the program. I don't have that with me today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Tootoo.

Hon. Hunter Tootoo: Thank you, Mr.

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Chairman. So then you are aware that the department was lobbied by different groups or some groups for changes in the program. Is that what he's saying? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No. What I'm saying today is that I don't have that information available as to whether or who has the department been lobbied with respect to this program. I don't have that information with me today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Tootoo.

Hon. Hunter Tootoo: Will you commit to providing us with that information? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll add that to my commitment list.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. I will now recognize the Member for Arviat, Mr. Shewchuk.

Hon. Daniel Shewchuk: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I've got two quick points or questions. One is my colleague from Baker Lake brought up an assurance of quality that there are savings that are passed on, best-before dates, and that all retailers are meeting criteria that are set out in this program. I think it's very important that the advisory committee and you take this into heart. I think there is a need for independent monitoring or inspections done of all retailers. I mean that on a random basis, not let the retailer know you're coming in to the

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store but that it happens at any time, at any place. I think that's an important tool to use to monitor this situation. If you have any comments on that. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Shewchuk. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The program does contemplate right now certainly the audit in terms of the performance, but I did hear quite clearly several points today about the importance of making sure that good practices, good business practices, and good, fair selling of quality goods is occurring. As I think I have indicated earlier today, I will bring that perspective back and I'll certainly work with Mr. Wilcox and the rest of the advisory board to make sure that happens.

I will add that the issue of expiry versus bestbefore date has been an issue that has been raised with the program. It is an interesting question and it does require a clear answer to: if there's a product on the shelf where its best-before date might be expired, whether or not it can still be sold and be sold reasonably for safe consumption. Those are important questions that the retailers themselves are bringing to us as an issue for them as they try to take advantage of the different shipping modes of delivering products to different northern locations. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Shewchuk.

Hon. Daniel Shewchuk: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One last comment. In lieu and in hindsight in the fact that you're here today giving us information, in the creation and implementation of this program, why was it not considered or even looked at to do what we're doing today? We have talked to the

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retailers in the summertime; we're talking to you today. Would it not have been much better to have these conversations in developing a program like this instead of implementing it and then having these hearings after the fact?

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Hon. Daniel Shewchuk: I think that it could have been delivered a lot smoother, with a lot more input, and made a lot more sense to all Nunavutmiut and all the north, actually, if it was maybe looked at differently and structured differently right from the beginning. I'll just hear your comments on that. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Shewchuk. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those are clearly, as they have been today throughout the day, very thoughtful comments about the impact of this program on the people living in the communities across Nunavut. It's with thoughtful comments and constructive advice in which we will be able to make the program a better program to achieve its desired outcomes.

I will say that while we may not have had conversations in a forum such as this, there were a number of conversations, reviews, and discussions held with a variety of stakeholders, including territorial governments and other stakeholders, in the review of the previous program as well as the design of the new program.

I believe, as you pointed out, I am in full agreement that conversations such as this that touches on such an important issue for people in the community, where the cost of food and particularly nutritious and perishable foods that are so important to so

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many people, do deserve a place for an active conversation such as what we're doing here today. I believe that deserves further conversations like this in the future. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. I would like to recognize the member from Tununiq, Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening to Pond Inlet residents and Nunavummiut. We have been dealing with the same issue all day, but it's very beneficial, Mr. Chairman. It seems like we have been discussing the problem areas all day long.

The way this is set up is not good for our communities and it's not beneficial to the communities. The residents of the communities don't just say that things come out of nothing. I believe that we all agree that Nutrition North Canada is good, but the way it operates or the processes are not good for regular individuals.

Thank you for providing all the support and benefits that we receive because all of the cost of groceries for nutritional food would be very expensive. When we had used a program and when that program is changed, we're not used to changes, Mr. Chairman. Once you get used to it, we can get used to the change.

I kept receiving correspondence from Pond Inlet. Yesterday there was a local radio show in Pond Inlet to find out what the concerns are and I thank the people of Pond Inlet for providing their correspondence to me and also to my CA in Pond Inlet. For example, at this time, if you want to purchase milk, the price has gone down by 70 cents. We can be satisfied with 70 cents; at least the price goes down. However, the price of a jar of Nutella

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had gone down by \$3. Is that sensible? So these are the issues that the consumers or individuals in the community cannot understand.

The program is trying to support nutritious food, but I still don't understand personally how this program was broken right away when it was initiated. They started the program right away. We have been sitting here all day and discussing the problematic areas of this program. Why does this program have problems right away? What we're saying is that the previous Food Mail Program just needed tweaking and we didn't ask for a replacement or total overhaul. This program that we're now using is already problematic.

I'll speak briefly in English. (interpretation ends) Why is the program so wrong for Nunavummiut right from the get-go? When you start a new program, of course, you expect little incidents where some things might not work perfect and that's fine, but according to my colleagues in the House today, basically nothing works with this program. Why? Was it because there were no consultations with Nunavummiut or conversations with Nunavummiut? And if there were, obviously they weren't taken into account. Otherwise, I think this system would have worked better right from the get-go.

The first thing I said this morning, if I may, Mr. Chairman, is while we really appreciate, including me, that we are getting subsidized programs overall, there is a large number of people who have been cut out. Most of my colleagues, including Mr. Curley, Mr. Arreak, and a few others, we talk about those individuals who can't place an individual order anymore. We realize they can, but the fact of the matter is, I guess, it doesn't matter to you whether they can or can't because you

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say the system is there.

The problem we have is the airline issue. What airline is going to give me a break on the freight as good as or better than they give to the two big retailers? That's the two that have benefited from this program. At the end of the day, who else? Not very many other people. Certainly not the small retailers. Certainly not the individual people who want to place orders.

Are we saying that individuals are out of luck unless the airlines are willing to come up with a rate? All of us have said it's very doubtful. Where do they go? What happens to them? Yet we say, "The program is there for everybody." Yes, it is, but at the end of the day, these individual orders are cut off. So we don't care because the system says we have the two big retailers.

I'm making a comment, not so much a question, but I hope the comments that we have made today are taken seriously (interpretation) because we are representing all the residents of Nunavut. Our comments are very serious because we see Nunavut residents on a daily basis and they live within our communities.

We work hard to buy nutritious food. We feel for the unemployed who are on fixed incomes and there are not too many subsidies out there. We feel for our fellow human beings at the community level. It seems like we're not being provided any benefits or subsidies as individuals. I keep receiving correspondence that there is no benefit to the individuals.

I hope our comments are going to be considered very seriously, as Mr. Van Dine said that he discussed those matters and consulted with the people prior to this meeting. If you had consulted the people of

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Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Enook. As you had said that those were comments, I'll give the guests an opportunity to reply. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Given the time of day, Mr. Chairman, I thank you and I'll be brief. I believe that the very thoughtful comments that have come forward today have been well considered and are very helpful for us to hear in terms of how the program is operating.

I believe we have made it quite clear in the opening comments that the program does represent a significant change from the previous [program] and what people understood to be offered. I would like to say that we're six months into the endeavour.

There are some keen and very important perspectives that are being shared with us. We're very interested in making sure that we can make some progress on country food. It was certainly an issue that came up as a very clear theme earlier today. I think it is good information for us to consider how that might play a role in the program.

I believe that the information that we will find as we get through the first year of operation will give us better information in terms of what the program is doing and where as we move through the fiscal year.

I thank you Mr. Chairman for the opportunity to comment. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. I'll now recognize the member from Iqaluit Centre, Mr. Tootoo.

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Hon. Hunter Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to advise you, don't worry, this is not a question, it's just comments I want to make now, so you can relax a little bit.

From what I have heard today, one of the great things with this new program is you're going to have data and you're going to have all this good information to make sure that the money is going where it's supposed to be going. From what we hear and what I have heard today, we have a higher cost of living. It's nice that you have your data. We have a higher cost of living. A good trade-off.

I sincerely hope and I know and I trust that individuals like Mr. Wilcox and the other members of the advisory committee are going to hear that as we move forward. As Mr. Van Dine has indicated, it's a responsive program. When they get that message coming through loud and clear, which I anticipate it probably will, that they are responsive to it.

I think my colleague, Mr. Kusugak, was basically saying that at some point, don't just sit there with your head in the sand and pretend that everything is fine when it's not. I think people will respect individuals or governments a lot more if they say, "Yes, we made a mistake and we're going to fix it." If that happens with this, I certainly look forward to being able to offer that respect to the department on this program.

Again, having said that, I know we all have jobs to do. I thank both of you for coming here today. You're doing your job and allowing us to do our jobs as being able to ask questions that we hear from the people that we represent. I thank you for that. I know that over the years, it's not always an easy thing, but that's our jobs. I just want to acknowledge that and respect that, and thank

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you for that opportunity.

The other thing here is this program was developed with the best intentions. I think everyone knows that old saying where the road that's paved with best intentions goes to. There's a pretty well known quote like that. Hopefully, with this responsiveness, we don't head down that road.

So I'll just leave it at that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (Mr. Enook)(interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. (interpretation ends) Did either of our guests want to make a comment on that? Thank you. Mr. Elliott.

Mr. Elliott: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 13 of your presentation where it talks about the Nutrition North Canada implementation, on the second bullet under Staged Implementation, in terms of the timeline that was followed, I just want to go back and sort out the history.

In October of 2010, which was a year ago, I know I had received many concerns from constituents because overnight, prices went through the roof, and that was, I guess, the transition that you had talked about. I know that Mr. Doyle, in conversations that I've had with him, also Minister Duncan, and our MP as well, had talked about maybe the transition could have been smoother.

Again, I don't want to dwell on the past, but I kind of want to look forward to October 2012. I'm wondering: is the same thing going to happen again? We're being told that the transition now has been bumped up another year and we still have another sealift cycle to go through. I'm just wondering: what steps is your department doing to make sure that prices don't skyrocket like they did in October of 2010? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Elliott. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Certainly the experiences and any advice that we received in the early days of the program were very informative experiences for the program, and we hope to make sure that we have learned from that experience. What I can perhaps emphasize is the October 2012 date is one that was front of mind in the views of our members of the advisory board early in our discussions, as early as this past May, when we were here in Iqaluit.

I'll certainly defer to Mr. Wilcox, but the point was impressed upon the program officials to make sure that we were in a position to make adjustments to the eligibility list and make sure that we take advantage of the transition period that we have to make sure that people had good information when they needed it to avoid any unnecessary shocks. So we're working with that premise and we're working very hard. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Elliott.

Mr. Elliott: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Was Mr. Wilcox willing to speak to that as well? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Wilcox.

Mr. Wilcox: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was actually going to make some end-of-the-day comments, but I think that we're going to have to do an awful lot to try and build some confidence around this program.

I want to go back just a little bit to the old program. There's some belief that the old program was good and a little of tweaking would have done the trick, but there was like **Δካ/ዊኦር%**: 'd৮° ሲቮ, Γ'ር Δላር ፈና. Γ'ር ኞ° ርΔ°.

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30 years of abuse, twists, turns, non-decisions, bad decisions, and a lot of malarkey that needed to be dealt with. I don't think that any amount of tweaking would have done that.

Having said that, I think that there was an awful lot of good things said today. I didn't expect, when I came here today, that we would be at this point at the end of the day, and I am very humbled and grateful to have heard that because I think it will refocus what we really have to do.

We will ensure that the advisory board stays engaged and responds to the multitude of notes that I have made here, and I'll tell you that we're going to have to work hard, it's obvious, to build that confidence and that may take more than tweaking too. I don't feel like I have an awful lot of answers right now. I've got to work on it and I think we will work on it as a group.

I don't mean to insult anybody who was standing in favour of the old program because I certainly respect everything that was said. I still think that we can do what we need to do and we will be tasked in a new way after today, I can assure you of that. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Wilcox. Mr. Elliott.

Mr. Elliott: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that response. Again, I think it has been said before that change is sometimes hard and people have a hard time with change, but when it's so drastic and it's almost overnight, and as well, when it's based around something that everybody needs to sustain life....

In terms of the 2012 transition date, I just have some concerns and maybe you can help

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If a retailer doesn't purchase enough of one item.... I'm not talking about, like we had this year, baby formula. We had shelves that were bare. If that happens like it happened this summer and it has happened for the last two summers, part of it has nothing to do with the program. It has to do with situations within the community. It also has to do with our transportation system.

If the saving grace now was that supplies could be ordered and those materials were covered under the Nutrition North Canada Program now, in 2013, when that happens or if it happens, we will be looking at skyrocketing prices until sealift comes in. That's a reality based around consumption and purchasing within the community.

I'm just wondering: what recourse do we have as people in the community for feeding our families? One day, you walk in and a can of tuna could be \$2.59 like it is in Arctic Bay, and then when it's being flown in because the supply is down, you could be paying close to \$24. What do we do?

We can't obviously phone the advisory board and say, "Please change this," or we can't phone INAC. What do we one, tell our people in the communities, and what are the advisory board and the Nutrition North Canada people doing to look at this situation? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr.

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Elliott, Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are looking to take steps to make sure that the October 2012 transition period allows for all the players within the system to provide food from one end of the supply chain to the other to be ready. In order to do that, the question and comments around the question also alluded to the responsibilities of retailers to do proper planning and ordering.

What we're finding certainly in the early days of the program is that we are being introduced or being made aware of the need to ensure that retailers do take advantage of the seasonality that exists with sealifts in a much more active manner. As Mr. Wilcox alluded to earlier in his remarks, the previous program that existed allowed for or at least permitted and possibly even entertained an ability to not have to plan around the sealifts and other modes of transportation.

We have clearly crossed a significant threshold of responsibility to make sure that proper planning around those measures is undertaken, and that represents a significant change. We're hopeful that the transition period will allow all the different actors within the supply chain who are involved to be able to make the right choices in order to make sure that those situations that have been mentioned are avoided. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Wilcox.

Mr. Wilcox: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Part of my early research on the whole history of food mail and where it was going was that the stores or the retailers said, "We can do better than what was there." Clearly they've had some opportunities to deliver better and

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they haven't.

I think that it's incumbent on all of us, including them, and we still have to listen to them the same way as we have come here to listen to your input to see what did and didn't happen and to ensure that things are better. I think that there will probably be surprises there as well.

I think this has been a great day because it forces us to realize that there are a lot of issues out there and we have to dig further and work harder to get through them. I have said a number of times that there is a partnership here, and we have to work together and try to make that work. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Wilcox. Mr. Elliott.

Mr. Elliott: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Wilcox, for that response. Again, I really hope in terms of Any time the guests are before us, I think we ask the hard questions, like what you were saying, Mr. Wilcox, in terms of a partnership of working together to put all of these issues out on the table and talk about them, throw them around, see what's good and what's not, and then come up with a plan and move forward.

In terms of my dealings with Nutrition North Canada and their ability to react with different situations that we've had in the High Arctic, it's commendable in terms of looking at the possibility of increasing subsidy rates, depending on costs and variable costs, and because of the research that was not there from the original Food Mail Program. I hope that when you walk away from this, you take that. At least myself, I'm very thankful that you're here and took the time to come and listen to our

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concerns.

I kind of want to conclude it with, after we concluded our discussions in June, we kind of summed it up with five specific points in terms of where to go and some of the key issues. One of them was the idea of a level playing field for the transportation of goods to the communities, and I think that has been discussed very well by other members and questions have been asked.

The other one was the advisory board getting out there and listening to what people say. That again has been addressed in terms of the questions that have been addressed to Mr. Wilcox and some of the meetings that they're having in the different regions, so I won't dwell on that

The third was the possibility of Nutrition North dealing with best-before dates. This was a concern and an issue brought up by Mr. McMullen from the Northwest Company and Mr. Harper from Arctic Ventures, the idea of a possibility of a letter or addressing what can be on the shelf and what can't be on the shelf in terms of shelf life and expiry dates, one in terms of clear information to consumers what those two issues are so that there is no miscommunication or fear of buying products that are harmful, as well as shelf life in terms of can a product be on a shelf if the best-before date is there. I think that ties into some of the issues around sealift. If we bring up the canned tuna in September, is it still good to be sold in the stores by the next sealift?

The fourth issue was the idea of spot audits. That was brought up by another member as well in terms of whether they're announced or unannounced, again, to keep retailers on their toes and whatnot.

The final issue that was brought up was

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streamlining the list of subsidized products and that has been talked about as well. I think that's an ongoing issue and maybe that's a question I have. Will the list ever be finalized or at what point do you have a...? Is there a cut-off date that, as of this date, this is the list and this is where we're going from there? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Elliott. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do appreciate the comments and the goodwill expressed and the intent behind the comments to us today. I believe there's a very sincere interest in making sure that the people living in the communities across Nunavut are able to gain the full benefits of what we're trying to achieve with Nutrition North Canada. The comments that we received today have been very helpful in that regard.

The five points that have been mentioned, I believe, all but the last have had some response today and I want to clarify with the Chairman whether that's where I should focus my answer. Mr. Chairman, I just want to confirm that I'm focusing my answer on the last point that was made.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. I think you had a question to Mr. Elliott. Mr. Elliott.

Mr. Elliott: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, that was a good summary of where I think I would like to see us go and yes, specifically on that last part, because I know you were taking notes and I saw Mr. Wilcox taking notes as well, of the five key issue areas, but in terms of the list, that was a specific question I was hoping to have addressed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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Chairman: And I presume you were satisfied, happy, content, Mr. Elliott, or are you looking for more? Okay. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to close the loop on that point, the streamlined and the eligibility list - when is it finished and what level of predictability can people have with respect to the list - is an important feature for us.

What we're finding as a result of, and this isn't a policy statement, but probably I'm sharing some information that will inform some kind of operational policy direction that we need to come to at some point, is that we're finding that there's a natural rhythm starting to emerge. Whether that rhythm actually always existed isn't probably another conversation, but the natural rhythm that we find is that October and April are sort of natural periods in which we need to be thoughtful as to what we might want to do in terms of adjustments either to the subsidy list or to the eligibility list.

I can't say with any clarity today other than we're now grappling with making sure that we can provide predictability to people, including the retailers, as to when we're looking to make adjustments. So October 2012 is our next area where we're working to be clear on that eligibility list and we're hoping to make sure that we have learned from our experiences in the past.

Once we have gone through the next steps of preparing and determining that list during the transition period, it's our firm intention to make sure that there are, if there's going to be an adjustment or a subsequent review, windows of opportunity to entertain suggestions on that list and to work with the advisory board with that.

I'm sorry. I apologize, Mr. Chairman. That

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was a bit longer than I expected to give in terms of an answer, but in summary, we are hoping to bring predictability around the changes to the list. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Elliott.

Mr. Elliott: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To me, I think that's one of the things that I would like to see with the list itself. You would think it would constantly be changing because of changing research within the field of nutritious food.

One example I was thinking of was the debate between butter, which is not subsidized at the highest rate now because of the high fat content versus margarine with the polyunsaturated and saturated fats. Our body digests animal fat that is in butter a lot better than with the margarine. So the margarine is actually subsidized, and you wonder, if we're strictly talking about nutritious food, why is that allowed to happen.

My next question actually before Mr. Wilcox was based around the advisory board. As the voice for us, and I think that's another thing the departments have been good about, there are phone numbers if people want to phone and communicate by talking to a person. There's email access if someone is computer literate and wants to deal with an email, and then there's a bulk of information on the website. There is that availability to contact the advisory board and let our views be known.

I know I passed it on many times to my constituents to say... . And that's one of the frustrations I have with the program. We work in the realm of the GN. This is a federal program and we can't affect policy. We can

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try to influence it, but we can't actually change it in terms of the way we do with the Legislative Assembly.

For the advisory board itself, if you are able to.... You said you could contact the minister directly. You have the meetings face to face and you have your group discussions, but is there something within your policies that states if the advisory board feels something needs to change, does the policy say that it will be changed in X number of days to the satisfaction of the advisory board or is it you give the recommendations and if the federal government decides to change it, they will after discussion meetings on their part within their department as well? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Elliott. Mr. Wilcox.

Mr. Wilcox: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know, I could read off the terms of reference, but I have good confidence that we are being listened to. One thing that I want to do is get the contact information for the interdepartmental committee so that we can engage that process. It's a perfect way to get our ears right to the ground and make sure that we're starting to get some check marks. I'm hoping that Mr. Van Dine will agree with that because I'm kind of making a commitment there and I'm not supposed to do that.

We've really got to roll up our sleeves here after today and I think that you will see nothing but seriousness on that point. Thanks.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Wilcox. (interpretation ends) [Mr. Elliott], your allotted time is done. Mr. Curley.

Hon. Tagak Curley: Thank you, Mr.

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Chairman. I just have to respond as the Department of Health and Social Services is the lead agency in responding to the Dargo report, and the Mr... what's your name again? You indicated that the GN was consulted, so I think it's very important that we put this into proper prospective.

Graeme Dargo's report, commissioned by Indian Affairs, I think, in my opinion, if I also may use the adjective, has some of our businessmen comments that were made to be from local, very experienced gentlemen. Kenn Harper, as a businessman, knows the tricks of the trade of the suppliers, the wholesalers, and shipping companies. I think he made a very good submission.

I think Mr. Dargo's report submitted to Indian Affairs was, to me, if I may call it, a bunch of baloney. It was so convoluted and unclear that no one understood it. Even my deputy minister, when I took over in preparing the response, couldn't make sense of it. Nowhere did we find in that report that the Food Mail Program should be changed to provide upfront subsidies to major retailers or airline companies. So I don't know who made that case to the federal government.

Nowhere did our report that we submitted on behalf of the cabinet proposed that the major retail suppliers and airline companies only be given upfront subsidies and nickel and dime to try and fit where that nutritious stuff is and hope that the majority of the people of Nunavut would take advantage of it. That really is very strange stuff for us to try and make sense of.

To try and backtrack to try and correct what Indian Affairs did, at that time that's what it was called, it really is quite complicated for us to make right now. So we're at your mercy, Mr. Chairman, as an advisory representative, Mr. Wilf Wilcox, and I want

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to say to the department that our submission as a government spoke about food security for those who need it the most, those in the marginal scale of income, isolated companies. That was the number one issue that we raised as a government in our submission.

Secondly, the inter-settlement trade country food subsidy was crucial for Nunavutmiut. We made that clear in our formal submission. Indian Affairs totally ignored it. Whereas they come up with the Nutrition North program, upfront subsidies to the airlines, major companies, and certify. DIAND, I think in my view, is intervening in a private market and really, I think, that's completely contrary to the spirit of free trade, as well as the interprovincial and territorial trade, which we have an agreement with to have a free trade arrangement between the two entities. How you justify those provisions is something that we simply don't understand.

I thought it was important that I make a point because the reference to the GN was alluded to. Nowhere near has our recommendation been reflected in the Nutrition North program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's the end of my comments.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Curley. I'll give the guests an opportunity to reply. Mr. Van Dine.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the point I was making earlier today was a general comment about where there were inputs into the review of the previous program and where there were some views taken into account into the design of the new one, and I referenced a whole number of parties that were involved in that process.

I do appreciate the comments that were made to us today in reflecting back the input that **Δ৬/ペレር%** (ጋጎ/እበሆነ): የ<mark></mark>የታ°ዉቮ⁶, Γ¹C dc. Ċ⁶dላ የኦበሆሴናσላ%<66 የዕልና<mark></mark>የታን/L⊀ና. Γ¹C ጵ⁶ CΔ⁶.

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has been received and why the program is configured in the way that it has been. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. Mr. Wilcox.

Mr. Wilcox: No, I don't have... . It's too big for me.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Wilcox. I will now recognize the Member for Pangnirtung, Mr. Oshutapik.

Mr. Oshutapik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since we started, we have been going round and round, and it doesn't seem to be like we're going anywhere. I would like to ask about the toolkit that you have for Nutrition North program. Is there a toolkit for Nunavut that could be applied to Nunavut? Is that why we cannot understand this? Do we need to get a toolkit to be used for Nunavut only?

It seems like the airlines are benefiting from this and it's not going to improve the prices for consumers. That's the only comment I can make at this time. It seems like we're not going anywhere because I don't see anything that's going to benefit us Nunavummiut in our communities. You probably need more tools so that this program can work in Nunavut because our constituents and Nunavut as a whole can benefit from this program. That's my understanding now from having a whole day's discussion on this.

I truly believe that this meeting was going to be beneficial. I thought that this meeting was going to be beneficial, but it seems like we're going round and round. It turns out that your toolkits need to be improved and additions need to be made to them so that we, as Nunavummiut, can at least benefit from it. From the beginning of the meeting today, it

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seems like I'm going out the door with no changes and nothing else. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Oshutapik. Mr. Van Dine, if you would like to comment.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This has been an important day for Nutrition North Canada to hear first hand the thoughtful and considerate concerns from the Members of the Legislative Assembly, who are in touch with their constituents on a very important program that we're hoping to make progress on. We believe we, as Mr. Wilcox has pointed out, have received a fair amount of material for us to work through in terms of how we move forward.

We are six months into the program and we do have information that we are planning to bring out to improve the clarity of the program. I believe that over the next number of months, there will be more to see about the program. I believe you will see more information about the way it's intended to operate and how it operates. I believe that you will see good information in terms of the program and how it's operating as information comes forward.

I do want to say with some emphasis and sincerity that today's conversation and comments have been quite instructive and we look forward to working with the comments that we received. We hope, in some small measure, that perhaps the information that we have provided today has, in some way, clarified the program in some small measure. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. There are no more names on my list. Just double-checking. Thank you. I would now ask Mr. Van Dine if he has any closing comments.

Mr. Van Dine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I

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would like to thank you for providing Nutrition North Canada a very important opportunity to present the program, its origins, its findings, and how it's progressing. I want to thank the very thoughtful and considerate work that has gone into preparing for today by the members, Mr. Chairman.

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Clearly there has been quite a bit of considerate engagement with constituents. There has been quite a bit of deliberation and consideration in preparing for the questions that have been posed today. It has been certainly acknowledged by me and I think by Mr. Wilcox that the energy and time taken to provide us with those perspectives today is a significant testament of the importance of this issue in Nunavut.

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I am very pleased that we were able to take advantage of the opportunity to come here and talk about Nutrition North. I thank you, and through you, the members for the ability to present today. I hope that some time in the not-too-distant future, we will have an opportunity to come back and provide an update on the progress of the program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Van Dine. I would now ask Mr. Wilcox if he has any closing comments.

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Mr. Wilcox: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a few. Like I said earlier, I think we've got quite a bit of a new mission here to take back to our group and we will do that.

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I think one of the things that I would like to see is that we reverse my good friend from Cambridge Bay's comment about being exhausted on this issue because I think we really need it to work. I feel very passionately about that and I think everybody here does.

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I came into the meeting this morning and I felt like I was among a lot of old friends and I hoped that I would make some new ones today. I think that I have.

We've got some good work to do. It's important work and it's got to be done quickly. So I hope that my ending comment here can be meaningful very soon. Thank you for your time today. It has been good.

>>Applause

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Wilcox. I will now conclude today's special meeting of the Full Caucus by thanking our guests for taking the time to appear before us today.

As you have heard today, the Members of the Legislative Assembly are committed to working with you to help ensure that all Nunavummiut have access to nutritious and affordable food. We look forward to seeing further progress in the months ahead to improve this important federal program, and we may wish to meet with you again.

This meeting of the Full Caucus is concluded and we are adjourned.

>>Applause

>>Meeting adjourned at 19:13

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