

	<p>Candidate Name: Shelby</p> <p>Bertrand_____</p> <p>Party: Green Party of</p> <p>Ontario_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Riding Ottawa Centre_____</p>
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April 29, 2022

Subject: Promoting your candidacy in the 2022 provincial election

Dear Candidate:

Congratulations on your candidacy as a Member of Provincial Parliament in the upcoming election. We, the Ottawa Food Policy Council (OFPC), would like to take this opportunity to introduce ourselves as a resource and to ask you to consider how you can demonstrate your commitment to Good Food in your campaign and in your future work as a Member of Provincial Parliament.

OFPC is working towards a food system in the Ottawa region that emphasizes social and economic justice and environmental sustainability throughout the entire food cycle, from farm to fork, and back again. OFPC facilitates local discussions on the elaboration of policies related to food and is uniquely positioned to provide cross-sectoral input that reflects citizen voices.

Our work is guided by the definition of Good Food developed by community stakeholders in Ottawa. **Good Food** is fresh, accessible, affordable, culturally relevant, minimally processed, as local as possible, ecologically grown and produced/processed/distributed in such a way as to support just and sustainable livelihoods.

Ontarians need provincial MPs who will champion Good Food in their communities and in Parliament. We encourage you to incorporate a Good Food lens into your platform and to

champion policy- and decision-making that prioritizes Good Food.

We would like to help promote what you stand for!

1 of 6

The Ottawa Food Policy Council (OFPC) is asking you to **complete the attached survey** (below), and **provide your responses by Friday, May 13th**, to demonstrate how you will champion Good Food in Ontario. OFPC is a member of [Sustain Ontario](#), and is using this opportunity to promote their Vote ON Food initiative, which has been worked on by food networks across Ontario. Background information can be found [here](#).

Candidates vying in Ottawa will be provided the opportunity to respond and all responses will be posted the following week on the OFPC website. **Broad networks will be sharing your responses, (newsletters, blogs, and social media), in an effort to promote what you stand for on this important election topic.**

Sincerely,

Chris Evans
Chair
Ottawa Food Policy Council

About the Ottawa Food Policy Council

OFPC is an independent body that seeks to facilitate discussions on, and elaboration of, local policies impacting food systems. Comprised of individuals representing all aspects of the food system, OFPC is uniquely positioned to provide cross-sectoral input that reflects the citizen voice.

Our mission is to have a food system that emphasizes social, economic, and environmental sustainability through the entire food cycle (i.e., from seed to waste) and in which food is celebrated and enjoyed.

Our work is guided by the definition of Good Food developed by community stakeholders in Ottawa's [Food for All](#) project. Good Food, which we use interchangeably with "high quality food", is fresh, accessible, affordable, culturally relevant, minimally processed, as local as possible, and ecologically grown.

Please respond to each question and return this form to us by Friday, May 13th.

To help inform voters in choosing a candidate that champions Good Food, we will be posting your responses on our [ofpc-cpao.ca](#) website on May 13th.

You are also invited to submit comments in each section - by filling in this form (up to a maximum of 500 characters per question).

If elected, what will you do to:

1. Preserve Ontario farmland and protect it from sprawl, speculation and commodification?

In Ontario, we are losing farmland at an alarming rate of 175 acres a day, largely to urban

sprawl and aggregate mining. The GPO states that we need to provide permanent protections for prime agricultural land to keep it from being destroyed by urban sprawl, highways, and gravel mining that threatens our groundwater supply. The GPO will:

- Protect farmland
- Freeze urban boundaries now.
- Permanently protect prime farmland from being lost to non-agricultural use, such as urban sprawl, highways, and gravel mining.
- Move class 1 and 2 soils from the Whitebelt to the Greenbelt.

See the GPO platform, page 67: <https://files.ontariogreens.ca/platform/gpo-platform-2022-en-web.pdf>

The GPO leader, Mike Schreiner says: “Ontario needs real change at Queen’s Park. The empty rhetoric of the other parties has only led to fewer local farmers and the closure of local food processors”. “Only a Green MPP will raise this important issue to ensure all Ontarians have access to healthy local food. We will push for accountability and demand action.”

The GPO is committed to making a healthy food and farming system a provincial priority. The Green Party’s Ontario Food and Farming Strategy supports Ontario farmers, while providing all citizens access to healthy local food within a framework of sustainable, local agriculture.

“Ontario has only 7,000 farmers under the age of 35,” added Schreiner. “Without action on this issue today, Ontario’s food system will crumble.” It’s time to strengthen our food system so that Ontario can feed itself and others.

See: <https://gpo.ca/2011/09/20/green-party-food-and-farming-strategy-better-food-better-jobs-better-ontario/>

2. Support training and long-term access to farmland for Ontario’s new farmers?

See also the response to question#1 above.

The GPO will Invest in the next generation of farmers:

- Create policies that support the retention of family-owned farms, farming by experienced farmers among new Canadians, and the succession of farms to a younger generation of farmers.
- Provide education and grant opportunities to encourage students to enter into the agri-food business.
- Promote training in specialty programs that focus on sustainable practices and soil-health within agricultural schools.
- Continue to enhance the supply management system to include more farm products and ensure offsets or grants for those looking to enter the system or with a lower ability to produce.

As part of THE GREEN PLAN, the GREEN PARTY OF ONTARIO will:

- Rebuild agricultural extension programs and hire soil-health focused agronomists.
- Purchase available farmland and place it in protected Land Trusts so it can be made available for dramatically lower costs to new farmers who would otherwise not be able to afford farmland.
- Advocate for the federal government to restrict farming products from future trade deals.
- Make family farming more profitable
- Ensure the Federal-Provincial-Territorial grocery retailer code of conduct is mandatory,

- enforceable, transparent and benefits both customers and farmers.
- Increase investments in the Risk Management Program to meet or exceed the previous 85% coverage to improve financial security for farmers.
- Establish a food processing infrastructure fund to support investments by Ontario-based companies in food processing facilities.
- Eliminate property tax penalties for farmers with small-scale, value-added production facilities on farm.
- Protect farmers against losses for up to ten years as they transition from chemical agriculture to soil-health agriculture.
- Shift program dollars from supporting industrial and intensive animal agriculture to supporting soil health and regenerative agriculture.

3. Incentivise and support sustainable farming practices?

The GPO supports local sustainable farming and will:

- Pass the Organic Products Act to regulate the use of the term “organic” within Ontario
- Invest in research and innovation that improves the sustainability of how we grow, produce, and distribute our food.
- Revise crop insurance programs to support farming practices that improve soil carbon and soil health.
- Incentivise on-farm composting of agricultural waste that results in biogas recovery. • Invest in an Organic Growth Strategy to support transition, small-scale certification, access to organic advisors and capital, expansion of organic research programs, and increased promotion of Ontario’s organic products.
- Ban the routine use of unnecessary antibiotics in healthy animals.
- Pay farmers for programs that produce, enhance and maintain ecosystem services leading to cleaner water and air, habitat, carbon sequestration and climate resiliency on agricultural lands (e.g. ALUS).

4. Extend a healthy school food program to all children and youth in Ontario?

The GPO will increase access and support for local, nutritious food:

- Introduce a nutritious school lunch program for the public school system. •
- Provide start-up funding and land for community-owned healthy food markets, community gardens, and rooftop growing spaces, particularly in urban food deserts.
- Set measurable, made-in-Ontario food purchasing targets for all public institutions.
- Treat surplus food as a valuable resource. First, use it to feed people, then animals, and never send it to landfill.
- Provide tax incentives for local food and beverage manufacturers who purchase inputs grown by local farmers.
- Advance food literacy education for all students in grades K-12.

6. Establish community-led standards for accessibility and soil testing in community gardens?

This is a great idea! While the GPO platform does not address these activities in the platform, it does promote healthy soil and community gardens: Healthy soil is essential for the health of Ontario’s farms and food system. It also impacts yield and quality, water and nutrient retention, resilience, biodiversity, and climate change adaptation and mitigation. So we need to support our family farms while they protect this precious resource.

The GPO will: Provide start-up funding and land for community-owned healthy food markets, community gardens, and rooftop growing spaces, particularly in urban food deserts.

7. Prioritize poverty reduction?

While this important issue is not addressed specifically in the GPO food policy, the GPO

addresses poverty in important ways. The GPO will:

- Implement a Basic Income and end poverty
- Phase in a Basic Income, with the first step being to double ODSP and OW rates and reduce aggressive clawbacks.
 - Eliminate any unnecessary red tape, reporting requirements, and other barriers typically faced by those needing financial support.
 - Maintain all existing supplementary supports that are available with current income assistance programs.
- Include meaningful consultation with people who have lived experience with poverty and existing social assistance programs in the design of all programs and services aimed at client-centred approaches for reducing poverty.
- Annually report disaggregated data on the proportion of the population that experiences chronic homelessness, unmet health needs, food insecurity, lack of literacy, and low-paid work.
- Prohibit “payday” lending that takes advantage of those facing financial hardship as a violation of anti-racketeering laws, and work with credit unions to develop a low-cost, small loan alternative to help people get out of debt.

8. Ensure that social assistance rates include the cost of a nutritious food basket in all regions?

The GPO Ottawa Centre candidate Shelby Bertrand embraces the idea of including the cost of a nutritious food basket in all regions.

9. Use healthy food to serve health needs?

The GPO platform states: Health through a Preventive Lens: When it comes to healthcare, this means helping people to access healthy food and a place to call home.

10. Guarantee public sector purchasing of local food and farm products?

The GPO will: Set measurable, made-in-Ontario food purchasing targets for all public institutions.

11. Strengthen protections for migrant farm and food workers?

GPO Leader Mike Schreiner had this to say: Ontario needs to protect migrant workers, including against covid. We need to treat them as the essential workers they are.

See: <https://gpo.ca/tag/migrant-workers/>

12. Establish a Provincial Food Policy Council?

What a great idea!