CARING FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT – MANITOBA (CEM), INC.

Recipient, Recycle Everywhere Champions 2019 Award

STATEMENT ON THE PROPOSED BUDGET INCREASE FOR THE WINNIPEG FOOD COUNCIL

Caring for Our Environment – Manitoba (CEM) is pleased to provide this written statement in support of the proposed budget increase for the Winnipeg Food Council (WFC) and the broader goals it advances for our city. Founded in 2017, CEM is a registered organization dedicated to empowering individuals through environmental education and advocacy, helping them make informed decisions that drive meaningful change in their communities.

Winnipeg is facing rising food costs, supply chain disruptions, and the growing impacts of climate change. Community organizations and local producers are doing remarkable work, but the need for coordinated, evidence-based municipal leadership has never been greater.

The Urban Agriculture and Community Gardens Small Grants Program shows what is possible when the City invests in community-driven solutions. Initiatives such as Fireweed Co-op's mobile veggie van and the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba's (IRCOM's) balcony gardens demonstrate how small-scale, culturally responsive projects can strengthen food security, support low-income families, and build climate-resilient neighbourhoods—when adequate resources are available.

To sustain and expand these successes, Winnipeg needs stable, predictable funding and a long-term strategy. CEM fully supports the development of a comprehensive urban agriculture and food security strategy that integrates targeted training, technical assistance, value-added processing, and income-generating opportunities. This will help build sustainable, food-secure, climate-resilient communities across the city.

With this context, the proposed increase from $16,800 to $48,000 is an important step. While modest relative to the scale of need, it signals the City's recognition that food security, climate resilience, and local food production matter. It is a foundation upon which stronger capacity can be built.

Investing in the Food Council is not a cost—it is a multiplier. Stronger food systems reduce long-term municipal costs, support local jobs, and unlock external funding. Strengthening the WFC's Terms of Reference to foster external partnerships will further enhance its ability to deliver measurable outcomes for Winnipeg.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to the well-being of all Winnipeggers, particularly the equity-seeking groups.

Sincerely yours,

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