

Budget Cuts Could Decrease Food Safety in Vancouver

VANCOUVER (The Canadian Press) — The union representing federal food inspectors says budget cuts have chopped a team upholding food safety standards and that's left consumers in the Vancouver area vulnerable.

The Public Service Alliance of Canada says Metro Vancouver became the only major metropolitan center in the country without food inspectors dedicated to consumer protection when the team was disbanded in January.

PSAC officials say it means ground meat inspections have been more than halved compared with last year, there will be no cooking oil inspections and far fewer independent food retailers will be checked.

An online report from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency confirms planned spending on the food safety program will drop by \$35 million and the agency will employ 192 fewer inspectors by 2016-17.

However, federal budget documents say there has been an overall increase of 750 inspectors since 2006 and that the government proposes investing an additional \$390 million to Canada's food safety system over the next five years.

The union's Bob Kingston says the money is not actually new spending and that although workers may be classified as inspectors they haven't actually seen increases in staff on the frontlines. Neither the CFIA nor the federal government were available for comment.

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<http://www.foodmanufacturing.com/news/2014/04/budget-cuts-could-decrease-food-safety-vancouver>