

## Local Grocer First and Only to be Endorsed as “Green” by Greenpeace *Overwaita Food Group tops Greenpeace Sustainable Seafood Rankings*

(June 28, 2012 – Vancouver, BC) The Overwaita Food Group (OFG) was recognized today as Canada’s top grocer for its commitment and efforts in sourcing and selling sustainable seafood. OFG achieved the coveted green ranking in **Greenpeace’s seafood sustainability report** this year, in recognition of its commitment and efforts in sourcing and selling sustainable seafood. The overall rating of 72% - a jump of 13 points from last year - reflects OFG’s progress in expanding their offering of sustainable seafood products, discontinuing red-listed items such as open net-pen farmed salmon and educating its staff, suppliers and customers about sustainable seafood products.

The Greenpeace report, first published in 2009, rates Canada's eight major grocery chains on their efforts to help improve the sustainability of the seafood they buy and sell. The company’s 2012 scores out of 100 in order of rank from first to eighth place are as follows: Overwaita Food Group (72); Loblaw Companies Ltd. (68); Canada Safeway (63); Metro (56); Walmart Canada (55); Sobeys (54); Federated Co-operatives Ltd. (54); and Costco Canada (43). Companies move from a “red” rating to an “orange” rating at a score of 41 percent, are considered to be “passing” at 50 per cent and receive a “green” rating with a score of 71 percent or higher.

“Sustainability has been a journey for us in all areas of our business and when it comes to sustainable sourcing, it’s been a real partnership with suppliers, NGOs and the scientific community to meet consumer demand in more and more earth-friendly ways,” said Carmen Churcott, vice-president, OFG. “At the end of the day, we want people to feel confident that we’re doing everything we can to provide seafood today that also ensures that seafood will be available for future generations.”

In June 2009, OFG introduced its 6 point Sustainable Seafood Plan in conjunction with SeaChoice, a national program that ranks seafood using a science-based assessment system and provides information to consumers. Since then, OFG has delisted a number of threatened species, developed an industry-leading sustainable seafood reference guide for customers and team members, and introduced many new choices for consumers.

“We congratulate the Overwaita Food Group for reaching a new high level of performance in regard to their commitment to sell sustainable seafood products. Our SeaChoice team is very proud to work in partnership with OFG as they take steps to help ensure that our oceans are healthy and that we have an abundant supply of seafood well into the future. The team at OFG walk their talk and they fully deserve this recognition,” said Bill Wareham, SeaChoice Representative from the David Suzuki Foundation.

In 2010, as part of a commitment to give customers more sustainable seafood choices, OFG became the first and only Canadian retailer to sell sustainably-grown Coho Salmon, which is farmed on land in a closed-containment system. This SweetSpring Salmon is rated “Super Green” by the Seafood Watch Program and “Best Choice” by SeaChoice.

“It’s really exciting that two short years after we first introduced SweetSpring Coho we’re now able to replace red-listed open net pen farmed salmon in all our stores with this green alternative along with a number of wild salmon options” added Churcott.

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# Overwaitea Food Group

A division of Overwaitea Food Group LP, a Jim Pattison business

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“Once again OFG has taken strong action to implement its seafood sustainability commitment,” said Sarah King, Greenpeace Oceans Campaign Coordinator. “As the first retailer to remove open net-pen farmed salmon from sale, it has proven that by taking the right steps it is possible to avoid products that are not part of their healthy oceans vision and still provide customers with choice.”

OFG has a long history of commitment to the environment beginning with its first Environmental Stewardship Award nearly 20 years ago. Today, it continues to focus on providing customers with quality eco-friendly products and environmentally sustainable choices, placing an emphasis on local, Western Canadian products. Recycling, sustainable seafood, reusable bags, energy-efficient stores and efforts to be the Number One Supporter of local products and producers are just some of the ways OFG lives its commitment every day. “Caring about sustainability is just the right thing to do – and, of course, we live here too, so it’s been an easy decision to make it a priority for decades,” says Churcott.

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## **about OFG:**

OFG operates a total of 125 stores in Western Canada. The BC-based company has been in operation for more than 95 years, with its first store originally located in New Westminster, BC. With the support of 13,000 team members, OFG serves over 80 communities with six store formats - **Save-On-Foods, Overwaitea Foods, PriceSmart Foods, Cooper’s Foods, Urban Fare and Bulkley Valley Wholesale.**

Since the early 90’s, OFG has been recycling over 90 percent of recyclable materials coming through its stores. OFG won its first environmental achievement award in 1993. As the first Western Canadian grocer to commit to sustainable seafood three years ago, OFG offers more choices today than ever before. OFG has embraced technologies that reduce energy consumption including high-efficiency lighting, energy-reduced refrigeration and heat recovery and reclaim systems and its efforts were recognized for the fifth time by BC Hydro with their highest honour, the 2010 Power Smart Leader Award. Save-On-Foods has been recognized by consumers as being the top environmentally-friendly grocer in BC in a study released in April 2012 by Ipsos Reid.

## **about Seachoice:**

SeaChoice, Canada’s most comprehensive sustainable seafood program, works to shift the Canadian market to sustainable seafood. Working in collaboration with the Monterey Bay Aquarium’s acclaimed Seafood Watch program, SeaChoice undertakes science-based seafood assessments, provides informative resources for consumers, and supports businesses through collaborative partnerships. The SeaChoice program is operated by the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, David Suzuki Foundation, Ecology Action Centre, Living Oceans Society and Sierra Club BC.

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