



GREEN MOUNTAIN ANIMAL DEFENDERS

Requesting SUPPORT for S. 161

February 20, 2018

Sharon MacNair

Dear Senator Sirokin and Members of the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs,

As president of the statewide animal-protection organization, Green Mountain Animal Defenders, I am asking for your support of S. 161, an Act Relating to Alternatives to Animal Testing.

Since S. 161 specifically exempts medical testing, its scope is limited to toxicity testing for products formulated or finished and manufactured in Vermont. Testing on animals will only be prohibited if there is an alternative test method that provides equal or better scientific information. This act does not include any restrictions on medical testing and drug development.

Many of the currently used toxicity tests were developed three and four decades ago. One example is the Draize test, which measures the eye irritancy of chemicals and other products when concentrated amounts of a test substance are dropped into animals' eyes and then the reactions are assessed using a subjective numeral score to indicate the level of eye damage and injury. In most instances, the conscious animals are immobilized in full-body restraints to prevent them from using their paws to rub the harsh irritant out of their eyes. The duration of this unnecessary test may last up to 14 horrific days.

Scientific advancements and achievements of the last forty years have been, as we all know, truly amazing. Today, technology and new testing methods that do not involve animals exist. Today a number of *in vitro* replacement tests are available to replace the Draize test.

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In addition, these alternatives to animal testing have been proven to be scientifically superior and more predictive of human health. The modalities include cell culture, molecular and computation methods, and methods using human cells and tissues.

Many major manufacturers of cosmetic and personal-care products have already recognized this and have completely eliminated testing on animals. Since opening in 1988, the highly successful Vermont-based company, Seventh Generation, has never conducted or commissioned any animal testing of its products or ingredients.

It is important to note that in March 2013, the European Union (EU) implemented a complete ban on the sale of all animal-tested cosmetics.

These are clear signs that both scientifically and ethically, the public has become increasingly opposed to the needless pain and suffering inflicted on animals, particularly given the wide range of humane alternatives. However, cruel and inhumane animal testing for items such as cosmetics and cleaning products still exists today. This is why S.161 is so critically important.

Please support this humane consumer-safety bill and help S. 161 become signed into law.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon MacNair

Sharon MacNair, president

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