



February 20, 2018

Senator Michael Sirtokin
Chair, Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs
Vermont State House
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301
Sent via email: msirotkin@leg.state.vt.us

RE: Support for S. 161 [Ashe] – An act relating to alternatives to animal testing

Dear Senator Sirtokin

On behalf of Cruelty Free International, a leading organization working to promote the use of modern non-animal testing methods around the world, I write in support of S. 161 which will be heard in committee on Thursday, February 22. This bill will prohibit the use of animals in nonmedical testing when modern non-animal methods are available and accepted by regulatory authorities.

Historically, animals have been used in painful tests to assess the safety of certain chemicals used in products such as cosmetics and household cleaners. Ingredients maybe force-fed to animals, dripped in their eyes or rubbed onto their bare skin for extended periods of time. However, in the past 35 years, due to innovations in science, animal tests are increasingly being replaced with non-animal approaches that use engineered three-dimensional human skin tissues or other types of cells and sophisticated computer models. Approaches like these that are cheaper, faster, and can better predict human reactions are widely available.

Unfortunately, there is no US law that requires that available non-animal tests be used in favor animal tests. In contrast, European Union has required that available scientifically satisfactory non-animal tests be used ahead of animal tests since 1986. Inaction at the federal level compels states like Vermont to lead the way in ensuring that animals are not needlessly harmed in outdated tests. Three other states, CA, NY and NJ, enacted similar legislation over ten years ago, and have demonstrated that giving priority to non-animal tests does not negatively impact scientific advancement or business.

Public concern about the use of animals in product testing has been a driving factor in the development of modern non-animal testing approaches and history has shown that Vermont residents strongly support animal protection. S. 161 reflects public expectation for the humane treatment of animals and would be consistent with existing laws concerning animals. Under existing law, a person who intentionally causes undue pain or suffering to an animal is guilty of a felony or a misdemeanor. There is no doubt that animals subjected chemical tests experience extreme pain and suffering prior to death. Avoiding animal pain and suffering in such tests should be a legal requirement, not merely an option.

With passage of S.161 Vermont would prevent animal suffering and ensure that the best available scientific tests are utilized now and in the future. Again, I urge your support.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely



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Cruelty Free International

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CC: Committee members: Sen. Alison Clarkson, Vice Chair, Sen. Philip Baruth, Sen. Becca Balint,
Sen. David Soucy.

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