

Source: <http://theconcordian.com/2017/03/protestors-stand-up-for-animal-rights-outside-itr-laboratories/>

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Protestors stand up for animal rights outside ITR Laboratories

Posted by: [Rebecca Meloche](#) in [News](#) March 19, 2017 0 Comments

Undercover footage revealed misconduct and animal abuse at toxicology research facility
Protesters gathered in front of ITR Laboratories in Baie-D'Urfé on the West Island on March 17, after a recent undercover operation found that animals were being mistreated at the facility.



Cases of animal abuse at ITR Laboratories were made public on March 11. Photo by Rebecca Meloche

International Toxicology Research (ITR) Laboratories Canada is among the numerous medical animal testing companies in Canada. The animal rights group Last Chance for Animals sent an undercover technician into the facility for four months to videotape how the animals were treated. The footage, which aired on CTV's W5 on March 11, shows dogs being thrown into cages, pigs being restrained as they scream and technicians slamming animals onto operating tables.

The protest was organized by 269Life Canada, a world-renown animal rights activism group. Rob Boisvert, an activist and the protest's main organizer, said he has been

planning this protest ever since he learned about ITR's treatment of animals from an anonymous source, even before CTV's W5 aired the undercover footage.

"We want to let this business know that in this day and age that enough is enough, we don't need animal testing to continue" said Boisvert, adding he plans on putting all his focus into shutting down ITR.

Protesters chanted, "Shut down ITR!" and "Murderers!" whenever movement was seen inside and outside the building. One protester shouted they should be conducting tests on "rapists and murderers" rather than on animals.

The undercover footage was shown to the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC). The CCAC is responsible for ensuring and advancing animal ethics and care in science. Once they have done their own investigation, the CCAC will recommend appropriate action that should be taken. If an institution fails to take action, the CCAC can place it in a status of non-compliance. The process can take months.

Zaphiro Catherine Cody, a protestor, said she believes the CCAC are also at fault—about a dozen other protesters agreed. Cody added the CCAC are responsible for verifying the facilities once a year to ensure that animal testing facilities such as ITR are following regulations. Cody said they should have caught the mistreatment of the animals sooner.

"It's important to come out today because we have to stand up for the animals," Cody said. "We have a voice—they don't. From the minute they are born, they are caged, labeled and tagged, and thrown into pharmaceutical companies or other places that do research, unfortunately."



Photo by Rebecca Meloche

Baie-D'Urfé city councillor Peter Fletcher also attended the protest and denounced the facility's conduct. He said he believes that it is time for Canada to re-invent their animal testing laws and regulations.

Animal rights activists from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and Last Chance for Animals and members from Caring Paws Animal Therapy, among others, were

at the protest. According to their social network biography, Caring Paws offers animal-assisted therapy using dogs and cats to help improve the health and quality of life of individuals of all ages. They have visited Concordia during exam period as well as senior residents and hospitals to offer pet therapy.

“There is no reason whatsoever why we are testing in 2017 on animals, and the only reason that this is happening is for money. Multi-million dollar companies are getting rich by murdering animals,” said Helen Attavaris, a protester who was dressed as a giraffe.

A recent statement released on ITR’s website said: “We take our responsibility to treat the animals in our care with the utmost respect very seriously. Behavior that does not comply with our guidelines is addressed promptly and firmly.”

After the footage was shown, ITR sent a stated to W5 that they are taking the measures necessary to ensure that the animals are treated according to the CCAC. Ginette Bain, senior vice-president of ITR Canada, added she is certain animals have not been mistreated in the laboratories.

Katherine Millington, the vice-president of the Concordia Animal Rights Association (CARA), said she hopes the footage will show those in Montreal and across Canada that animal abuse is happening every day in their cities, and people need to be more aware of it.



Photo by Rebecca Meloche

Millington said, although she does not condone all animal testing, “I think that what this footage shows is that it’s more than just lab mice being tested on. Dogs, pigs and monkeys are being tested on—something that many people are under the impression is a thing of the past,” she said. “[It] is simply not true—The dogs used in ITR Laboratories would have been bred specifically to be used in laboratories and would live incredibly short and painful lives and know nothing of the kind of care and love of a domesticated pet.”

Millington said, since ITR is claiming that their practices are in-line with industry guidelines, “the public needs to think about whether or not they believe animal abuse should be a standard practice,” Millington said.

Police were present throughout the protest to ensure it remained peaceful and that nobody trespassed on the company's property.

To follow the ongoing investigation against ITR, visit 269Life's [Facebook](#) page or [website](#).

With files from Savanna Craig