

# Press release



## SPA Canada demands public apology from the Mayor of Epiphanie

For immediate release

Montreal, January 13, 2012

### **SPA Canada welcomes the decision of the Mayor not to renew its contract with the Berger Blanc, but seriously questions the motives behind his decision.**

SPA is appalled about Mayor Benoît Verstraete's insensitive and disrespectful statements that were published on January 12<sup>th</sup> by "L'Hebdo Rive-Nord". He justified his decision to terminate the city's contract with the Berger Blanc because it was 'too expensive'. In fact, he creates a false dilemma: "I have children here who do not have winter gloves and elderly in difficulty. It is against my principles to spend that much money on cats and dogs". "This excuse is outrageous", says Gabriel Villeneuve, campaigns director of the SPA Canada, adding that "it is because of uncaring politicians such as Verstraete that gassing pounds still exist. They are the cheapest method of destroying large amounts of unwanted pets. It is unacceptable to use underprivileged groups as a pretext to fail to care for animals. Poor children and elderly in municipalities that do not invest money in the humane care of animals do not fare any better than elsewhere".

At this time, there is no institution in place in Epiphanie that takes charge of animal control. The mayor suggests, citizens should take matters in their own hand and "write their phone numbers on a dog tag" in case their pet gets lost. With regard to overpopulation control, the Mayor proposes to pass a law prohibiting the feeding of stray animals. "This is certainly the cheapest way", sighs Villeneuve, "starving animals will save money on euthanasia". The SPA is disappointed that most politicians neglect to tackle the root cause of the great number of animals requiring care: the unregulated mass production of dogs in puppy mills and the fact that they can be bought for cheap in pet stores. The SPA observes that Verstraete's dismissal of animals has insulted pet owners and that many citizens want to see a more compassionate society for everyone, including animals. "It is usually caring citizens that spend their own resources to rescue animals and volunteer in ethical animal shelters that carry the real financial cost", explains Villeneuve. "They do not receive any government support. The times are over that a mayor can claim that animals are politically irrelevant."

SPA Canada will be happy to grant media interviews.

For further information, please contact:

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