



CCIL Defends Private-Sector Laboratories Against Unfair Competition from Publicly-Funded Institutions

Fanshawe College's Product Validation Centre No Longer a Partner in OCE Program

For Immediate Release

Feb. 26, 2020 – The Canadian Council of Independent Laboratories (CCIL) is pleased that the Canadian Centre for Product Validation (CCPV) is no longer a participating technology development site supported by the Ontario Centres of Excellence (OCE) under its Autonomous Vehicle Innovation Network (AVIN).

The CCPV is a 25,000-square-foot centre in London, Ontario, established by Fanshawe College with funding from the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario). It offers product testing and validation services in direct competition with private-sector commercial laboratories, and because CCPV is subsidized by taxpayers, it has an unfair market advantage.

Advocating on behalf of its members, CCIL brought this issue to the attention of the Ontario Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, who is responsible for OCE. Subsequently, the participation of CCPV as a Regional Technology Development Site under the AVIN program was ended.

“We applaud this development,” says Tony Araujo, CCIL President. “OCE listened to our concerns, and was ready to address the inherent unfairness of a public institution using tax dollars to compete with the private sector. This action ensures that scarce public research and commercialization dollars are used appropriately.”

As recently as January 2020, the London Economic Development Corporation (LEDC) website was still promoting CCPV on the LEDC website autonomousslondon.ca. A further CCIL intervention with OCE has since resulted in this website being taken down as well.

There are other programs both at the provincial and federal levels that are having the unintended consequence of pitting publicly-funded facilities against commercial laboratories for a share of the routine testing market. CCIL is working on a number of

fronts to protect the business interests of its members, and will be announcing details in the months ahead.

“Competition from publicly-funded institutions is a huge concern for our sector,” says Araujo. A recent member survey found that 95% are “very concerned” about this issue, 87% said this competition would result in a loss of business, and 64% said it would result in layoffs and job cuts.

CCIL’s members have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in state-of-the-art facilities and equipment, and employ thousands of engineers, scientists, and technicians in well-paying jobs.

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