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Montreal tenants protest lack of heating

One resident fights for three years to have her apartment heat turned up

CBC News Posted: Oct 25, 2012 4:10 PM ET | Last Updated: Oct 25, 2012 4:18 PM ET



A man dressed in tinfoil demonstrates outside the Quebec rental board office to draw attention to tenant complaints surrounding heating issues. (Morgan Dunlop/CBC)

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CBC News Montreal at 11 - October 13, 2014

30:00

Late Night News from Montreal

Some Montreal tenants who say their landlords have left them in the cold demonstrated today in an attempt to get the attention of Quebec's rental board.

They staged a protest outside the board's offices in downtown Montreal, out of frustration over "excessive" waits for hearings on the issue.

Community organizer Sheetal Pathak said that many landlords try to save money by not turning on the heat until December.

Pathak says she's heard a wide range of excuses from landlords, including "I don't have to put the heat on until there is snow on the ground."

The city and the rental board recommend that landlords keep temperatures at 21C year round. But in cases where apartments temperatures dip below that level, tenants must wait for the rental board to address the situation, said Pathak.

Margaret Prince has been fighting for a warmer apartment for three years. She says her cold apartment has compounded her bladder problems.

"My apartment was so cold, when I'd come in from outside I couldn't get warm," she said.

Once a tenant sends a complaint to the rental board, they could be stuck waiting for months, or even years, said Pathak.

The rental board has no way to deal quickly with cases like Prince's, she said, where the health and security of the resident could be at risk.

She added tenants can sometimes wait up to 20 months for a hearing and even if the case is marked as urgent, it can take up to two months.

"We think it's completely unfair," Pathak said. "Tenants who are stuck in this situation cannot get justice at the rental board."

"People end up waiting many months in the winter in badly-heated

apartment."

Pathak hopes today's demonstration will raise awareness about the living conditions of many Montrealers.

"The point is to show how ridiculous it is that people have to take measures to fend for themselves," she said.

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from David Suzuki.



CBC News: Montreal - October 13, 2014

30:05

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2:08

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