



June 5, 2023

Nicholas Winfield  
Director General  
Canadian Wildlife Services  
Environment Canada

Dr. Mary Jane Ireland  
Chief Veterinary Officer  
Canadian Food Inspection Agency

Dr. Theresa Tam  
Chief Public Health Officer  
Public Health Agency of Canada  
Health Canada

Fred Gaspar  
Vice President  
Commercial and Trade Branch  
Canadian Border Services

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Dear Mr. Winfield, Dr. Ireland, Dr. Tam and Mr. Gaspar:

In light of the reported arrival on Saturday June 3, of another shipment of long-tailed macaques from Cambodia, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals—PETA entities have more than 9 million members and supporters globally and more than 467,000 members in Canada—and Action for Primates, urge the Canadian Wildlife Service, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Health Canada and the Canadian Border Services Agency to suspend all importations of long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*) immediately.

Following the [indictment](#) of Cambodian government officials and nationals by the U.S. Department of Justice for the alleged false labeling of wild-caught monkeys as captive-bred, the world continues to learn more about an industry that has [apparently illegally taken monkeys from the forests of Cambodia](#). The situation has become so dire that following the reassessment of [long-tailed macaques](#) as endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, primatologists from around the world petitioned the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) to add long-tailed macaques to the U.S. [endangered species list](#). In an effort to curb the apparent large-scale laundering of wild-caught monkeys as captive-bred, the FWS requested that the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Animal and Plants

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- PETA France
- PETA Australia
- PETA Germany
- PETA Switzerland
- PETA Netherlands
- PETA Foundation (U.K.)

Committee—an international body focused on the protection of endangered animal species—add an additional layer of [review to exports of long-tailed macaques from habitat countries, especially animals exported from Cambodia](#).

Sources in Canada reported to us that on June 3, a large shipment of long-tailed macaques landed at the Montreal-Mirabel International Airport after nearly 30 hours in transit from Cambodia. This shipment comes less than a month after 900 long-tailed macaques reportedly landed at the Montréal–Mirabel International Airport on May 5. These monkeys were reportedly imported from Cambodia by Charles River Laboratories. Sources say they were exported by KF Farm Cambodia Co., Charles River’s main supplier in Cambodia. We initially alerted you of our concerns following the May 5 shipment. This farm, unlike other monkey farms in Cambodia, is [not accredited by the Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International](#).

Earlier this year, Charles River became the subject of [federal investigations](#) for possible violations of the law involving the importation of long-tailed macaques from Cambodia. The company imported 1,000 monkeys into the U.S. from Cambodia, and as these monkeys may have been imported illegally, they are in limbo after the FWS stopped their sale to laboratories.

Furthermore, according to [international trade data](#), Canada imported monkeys worth \$1.23 million from Cambodia **after** Cambodian government officials were [indicted by the U.S. Department of Justice](#) for smuggling in November 2022. In February 2023, major importer Charles River Laboratories announced it was suspending imports from Cambodia into the U.S. until it could ensure monkeys were not illegally captured.

Canada is a signatory to CITES, and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency has [rigorous primate importation requirements](#) designed to reduce the risk of zoonotic disease transmission. We note that your requirements state that imported primates “must have microbiological faecal culture with negative results for Salmonella, Shigella and Yersinia.” Recent [scientific publications](#) and documents received by PETA from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through a Freedom of Information Act request, confirm that primates imported into the U.S. are arriving ill with clinical signs consistent with hemorrhagic gastroenteritis, malaria, and infection with filovirus, *Salmonella*, *Shigella*, *Yersinia*, *Campylobacter*, and more. Charles River even acknowledged the following in its declaration to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission [2022 annual report](#):

In some cases, we may produce or import animals carrying infectious agents capable of causing disease in humans; and in the case of such a contamination or undiagnosed infection, there could be a possible risk of human exposure and infection and liability for damages to infected persons. We are also subject to similar contamination risks with respect to our large research models. While some of these models are owned by us and maintained at our facilities, others are reserved for us and maintained at sites operated by the original provider. Accordingly, risk of contamination may be outside of our control, and we depend on the practices and protocols of third parties to ensure a contamination-free environment.

A [case report published](#) less than six months ago by individuals working at the CDC revealed that multiple long-tailed macaques imported from Cambodia into the U.S. in 2020 and 2021, arrived infected with *Burkholderia pseudomallei*, a bacterium classified as a [Risk Group 3 pathogen](#) in Canada and a [Tier 1 Select Agent](#) in the U.S. and the causative agent of the often fatal disease melioidosis. CDC authorities alerted primate importers and other stakeholders to the possibility of melioidosis in monkeys imported from endemic regions (e.g., Cambodia, China, and Vietnam) and cautioned that misidentification of the bacterium was common and could contaminate the environment through shedding via urine, feces, blood, saliva, and pus. Did you get the [memo](#)? Canadian [live nonhuman primate trade data](#) reveal that within the past 24 months, a steady flow of monkeys has crossed your borders.

Charles River's importation of long-tailed macaques into Canada places your country as part of the global wildlife trade in endangered species and involves Canadians in a primate trade characterized by the [highest risk of zoonotic disease transmission](#).

### **Conclusion**

The commercial importation of primates is a secretive, dangerous, unethical, and financially lucrative enterprise for several major companies, and Canadian residents may ultimately pay the price for this industry's hazardous practices. The scientific community has known for decades that the primate "model" fails to provide meaningful treatments and vaccines for humans. This, the devastation wreaked on wild macaque populations, and the zoonotic disease threat that imported primates pose to humans, make it clear that the time has come to end this threat to human and monkey welfare. We ask that you, as the Canadian agencies mandated to protect public health and empowered as the management authority for CITES, immediately end all primate importations. May we please hear from you as soon as possible? Thank you for your immediate attention to this important matter.

Respectfully,



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