



PEOPLE FOR  
THE ETHICAL  
TREATMENT  
OF ANIMALS

February 22, 2024

The Right Honorable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.  
Prime Minister of Canada  
Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister:

I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals—PETA entities have more than 9 million members and supporters globally, including 471,000 in Canada—regarding the disease-ridden, violent, and dangerous monkey-importation industry. We urge you to call for an immediate end to the importation of endangered long-tailed macaque monkeys caught in the international wildlife trade—beginning with those brought to Canada from Cambodia. These are primates who have either been ripped from their forest homes or confined to and bred in squalid facilities in Southeast Asia, subsequently purchased by Charles River Laboratories and shipped to the company's facilities in Canada.

The U.S. has suspended the importation of primates from Cambodia because Charles River and other importers can't prove that the monkeys weren't falsely labeled as captive-born. Charles River is currently under federal criminal and civil investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. So Charles River shifted its North American importation business to your nation. Inexplicably, Canadian officials have continued to allow the company to import monkeys from Cambodia.

### Background

The importation suspension of Cambodian-origin monkeys to the U.S. follows a five-year investigation by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service into the alleged mislabeling of wild-caught Cambodian long-tailed macaques as captive-bred. In 2022, the U.S. Department of Justice indicted multiple Cambodian officials, now awaiting trial, for facilitating the export of falsely labeled long-tailed macaques to the U.S. Subsequently, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service prohibited Charles River from using or selling multiple shipments of long-tailed macaques from Cambodia because the company has no way of proving that the Cambodian-origin monkeys weren't wild-caught.

Charles River found a workaround by bringing the monkeys to Canada. In 2023, the **total value of Cambodian-origin** primates imported into Canada soared. Documents that PETA received via public records request from Canadian

Washington  
1536 16th St. N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036  
202-483-PETA

Los Angeles  
2154 W. Sunset Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90026  
323-644-PETA

Norfolk  
501 Front St.  
Norfolk, VA 23510  
757-622-PETA

Info@peta.org  
PETA.org

### Entities

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

authorities indicate that Charles River continues to import thousands of monkeys from Cambodia. Canada has allowed this monkey trade to boom at a devastating cost. Long-tailed macaques in Cambodia and elsewhere in Asia have been driven to the brink of extinction, in large part due to the insatiable demand of laboratories.

Whether monkeys are bred in captivity or snatched from the wild, the monkey-abduction pipeline causes immense animal suffering. Overseas hunters trap mother monkeys, pry their babies away, stuff them into bags, and cram the mothers into crates, either to be sold directly to laboratories or to be sent to commercial factory farms first. They're forced to live and breed in filthy conditions, and many of them die. Those who survive are crammed into small, wooden crates and loaded into the dark cargo holds of airplanes, where they're forced to make a sometimes days-long journey in their own excrement. Please see the video in the card. And this is all before experiments even begin.

### **Human Health Risk**

Importing monkeys also poses a serious public health risk, particularly as Canada is now allowing thousands more primates into the country than in recent years. The risk of transmission of bacteria and viruses from monkeys to humans is greater than from any other group of animals. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently revealed that from 2021 to 2023, there was a shocking increase in imported shipments of monkeys with tuberculosis, a highly infectious disease that's transmissible to humans.

Transporting monkeys exposes numerous people—including flight crews, cargo handlers, and any other handlers—to monkeys who may be infected with diseases. Laboratory employees are also vulnerable. Staff members at a Michigan lab were referred for treatment for tuberculosis recently following exposure to imported monkeys. Primates are known to carry and transmit a slew of nasty pathogens and diseases, including herpes B virus, tuberculosis, Ebola-like viruses, simian hemorrhagic fever virus, shigellosis, salmonella, Campylobacter, malaria, dengue, and leprosy. The public can also be endangered in the case of escapes, which have occurred in the U.S.

### **Please Take Action**

We respectfully ask that you protect endangered primates and the public by suspending the importation of monkeys, beginning with those from Cambodia. Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Lisa Jones-Engel, Ph.D.  
Senior Science Advisor, Primate Experimentation  
Laboratory Investigations Department  
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals  
LisaJE@peta.org