



June 13, 2025

Brent Morse, DVM
Director
Division of Compliance Oversight
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare

Via e-mail: morseb@mail.nih.gov

Dear Dr. Morse:

I am writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and our more than 9 million members and supporters to request that your office investigate possible noncompliance with the Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (PHS Policy) and the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* (the *Guide*) related to the treatment of animals at the Southern Research Institute (SRI; PHS-Approved Animal Welfare Assurance #D16-00025) in Birmingham, Alabama.

According to an [inspection report](#) dated May 14, 2025, and recently posted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), a long-tailed macaque at SRI was strangled to death after their metal collar was entangled inside a gap in their cage. Staff were not in the room at the time, and did not arrive in time to prevent the monkey's terrifying death.

The issues raised in the USDA's report suggest noncompliance with PHS Policy and the *Guide*:

Primary Enclosure Safety and Design (*Guide*, pp. 51–52):

The cage design failed to prevent injury or death. The *Guide* requires that primary enclosures be constructed and maintained to protect animals from injury. The failure to modify the enclosure to account for the metal collar represents a clear deviation from this standard.

Environmental Enrichment and Social Housing (*Guide*, pp. 64–65):

The use of an open vertical divider for social housing created a hazardous gap. The *Guide* emphasizes that social housing must not compromise animal safety. The facility did not adequately assess or mitigate the risks associated with this configuration.

Institutional Oversight and Risk Mitigation (*Guide*, pp. 11–15):

The institution failed to identify and correct a foreseeable hazard associated with the use of collars in this type of housing. This suggests a lapse in the responsibilities of the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and the attending veterinarian.

PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

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.)


Clinical Care and Management (*Guide*, pp. 113–114):

The monitoring protocols in place were insufficient to prevent or promptly detect a life-threatening situation, particularly for an animal with known equipment-related risks.

Given the severity of the incident and the apparent noncompliance with the *Guide*, I respectfully request that OLAW investigate this matter to ensure that appropriate corrective and preventive actions are fully implemented and that similar incidents are prevented in the future. Since SRI has proven itself incapable of meeting even basic animal welfare requirements, it should no longer receive NIH funding, and its Animal Welfare Assurance should be revoked.

Thank you for your attention to this serious matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amy Meyer', written over a light gray rectangular background.

Amy Meyer
Associate Director of Primate Experimentation Campaigns
Laboratory Investigations Department
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals

cc: olawdco@od.nih.gov