



October 16, 2025

Bernadette Juarez
Deputy Administrator, Animal Care
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Via e-mail: bernadette.r.juarez@usda.gov; ac.complaints@usda.gov

Dear Ms. Juarez:

I am writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals—PETA entities have more than 10 million members and supporters globally—to request that the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) investigate the mistreatment of primates during transport by SmartLynx Airlines Malta Ltd. (USDA Certificate No. 10-T-0028).

PETA received information from anonymous whistleblowers alleging that monkeys on a nearly 45-hour journey from Mauritius to Miami may not have been provided with potable water every 12 hours, as legally required. If accurate, these actions would constitute a violation of the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA) and its implementing Animal Welfare Regulations (AWR).

On October 7, SmartLynx flight 9H-CGN departed from Mauritius, transporting hundreds of long-tailed macaques reportedly destined for LC Preclinical Research, Inc. and BC US. The ordeal lasted more than 44 hours, not including the initial and final loading and unloading times, and involved multiple layovers across Africa, Europe, and North America. Some of the monkeys were reportedly offloaded at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York and transferred to LC Preclinical, while the remaining animals continued to Miami. Upon arrival, the monkeys waited several hours before being transported to their final destination, BC US, resulting in a total confinement period exceeding 50 hours.

While the monkeys may have been offloaded and given water during the 10-hour layover in Brussels, subsequent stopovers were brief, making it unlikely that they could have been removed from the aircraft, attended to, and reloaded safely within those short time frames. The flight from Brussels to John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York alone lasted approximately 13 hours and 45 minutes—including layovers in Keflavik and Boston—already exceeding the 12-hour requirement for access to potable water. Following this, the remaining monkeys continued from New York to Miami, for a total of 18.5 hours of travel time since the longer layover in Brussels. It is therefore probable that the animals were not offered sufficient water, in violation of **9 CFR § 3.89** and federal transport standards.

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.)

Under **9 CFR § 3.89** of the Animal Welfare Regulations (AWR), “*Each nonhuman primate must be offered potable water at least once every 12 hours. ... These time periods apply to carriers and intermediate handlers starting from the date and time stated on the certification provided under § 3.86(c).*”

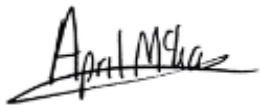
Additionally, when monkeys are stressed—and air transport is inherently stressful for monkeys, especially on flights that ascend and descend multiple times on flight routes that include excessive stops—their metabolic rate and need for water increase. Restricting or not providing them with water seriously compromises their welfare.

These allegations are consistent with previous reports of welfare failures during SmartLynx-operated shipments. Most recently, on July 6, SmartLynx operated a flight from Mauritius to Miami carrying approximately 500 long-tailed macaques. The shipment’s broker, ACA International, was cited for a critical violation for failing to provide water to the monkeys at least every 12 hours during the 40-hour and 56-minute journey. SmartLynx was cited for the same shipment for improper stacking of crates containing monkeys, a serious handling and transport deficiency that increases the risk of injury and distress.

We ask that you immediately investigate the allegations against SmartLynx summarized in this letter and, if substantiated, take swift, decisive enforcement action, including citing the airline and the associated broker for violations of the Animal Welfare Act and Animal Welfare Regulations.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'April McKay', with a stylized flourish underneath.

April McKay, M.S.
Primate Research Coordinator
Laboratory Investigations Department
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals
amckay@peta.org