



PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

February 6, 2026

Lex Corteguera
Senior Investigator
Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission
Southern Region A, Collier County

Via e-mail: lex.corteguera@myfwc.com

Dear Officer Corteguera:

I hope this correspondence finds you well. I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals—PETA entities have more than 10.4 million members and supporters worldwide, including more than 400,000 in Florida—to respectfully request that your office investigate how a live long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*) imported from Mauritius on January 28, 2026, by Bioculture US, LLC (BC US) in Immokalee, Florida, was apparently missed upon arrival, discarded in its shipping crate into a biomedical waste dumpster, transported as “waste,” to another county and subsequently escaped.

This incident, if accurate, raises grave concerns about compliance with Florida wildlife law, adherence to permit conditions, lawful transport and containment of regulated wildlife, waste disposal practices involving live animals, public safety, and basic standards of animal care and control. A long-tailed macaque arriving from international transport should have been transferred directly into Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)—mandated quarantine and handled under strict, documented containment protocols (see 42 CFR § 71.53). Instead, this live, confined primate was allegedly discarded into a biomedical waste dumpster and transported through a commercial waste stream — conduct that, on its face, reflects a profound failure of basic care, control, and accountability by BC US and its contractors. Such treatment of a protected, permitted animal is incompatible with the conditions under which these permits are granted and appears to constitute unsafe and unlawful handling under Florida law.

Separately, the fact that this macaque was immediately post-import heightens the seriousness of this incident from a public-health and regulatory perspective. Federal quarantine requirements exist precisely because long-tailed macaques can carry zoonotic pathogens that pose a risk to workers and the public. Routing an animal directly from international transport into a biomedical waste system — rather than into required quarantine — and apparently losing track of a live macaque for days suggests systemic breakdowns in inventory control, training, oversight, and decision-making at BC US and potentially at its contracted transport and disposal partners. For these reasons, we believe this matter warrants prompt and thorough investigation by your office.

Factual Allegations

The relevant facts, as reported to PETA by a source with direct knowledge, are as follows:

Washington

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Washington, DC 20036
202-483-PETA

Los Angeles

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Los Angeles, CA 90026
323-644-PETA

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

PETA received a report from a source at BC US alleging the disposal of a live long-tailed macaque, still confined to the wooden transport crate they had traveled in from Mauritius, into a large, red, outdoor biomedical waste container at the BC US facility on January 28th, 2026. The live macaque was part of a shipment of hundreds of long-tailed macaques exported from Bioculture, LTD in Mauritius to BC US in Immokalee, Florida. The shipment was trucked from the point of entry at Miami International Airport to BC US, arriving at the facility around 9 p.m. on the same date. Upon arrival at BC US, employees began transferring the imported macaques from their wooden shipping crates to holding cages at the facility. The local weather was unseasonably cold, and the source stated that several employees did not show up for work, resulting in a staffing shortage. It was during the unloading process that employees failed to unpack one live long-tailed macaque from its shipping crate and instead threw the crate containing the live macaque into the biomedical waste container/dumpster on the BC US property.

According to the source, no one at BC US recognized that a live, newly imported macaque was missing or unaccounted for before Stericycle collected a red biomedical waste dumpster on Friday, January 30th, 2026, at approximately 1 p.m. The animal's existence only became apparent on Monday, February 2nd, 2026, when the dumpster lid was opened at Stericycle's Miami disposal facility and a live macaque emerged and became loose inside the facility. Based on the reported timeline, the monkey would have been confined without food and water for approximately five days and exposed to extremely cold temperatures as low as 32°F on January 28th, 2026.

The source understands that the monkey was eventually captured and brought back to the BC US facility on February 3rd, 2026. It is unknown whether BC US and/or Stericycle properly reported this escape to authorities.

Violations of State Law

As you are aware, the Florida Administrative Code (FAC) 68A-6.018 requires that ESA and ESB permit holders report escapes:

(2) Escapes

Any person in possession of wildlife which requires a license or permit issued under Sections 379.3761, 379.3762, or 379.372, F.S., or those facilities exempt from licensure pursuant to Section 379.3761(4), F.S., shall make reasonable efforts to ensure recapture and return of the escaped wildlife to containment. Such person shall contact the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Division of Law Enforcement as required below:

- a. Any person in possession of Class I wildlife, Class II wildlife, or capuchin, spider, or woolly monkeys, shall report any escapes of such wildlife immediately upon discovery. For the purposes of this paragraph, "escape" shall mean escape from the primary enclosure or escape from transport enclosure, leash, other constraint, or rigid supervision and control while outside of the primary enclosure.

(5) Failure to report any escapes of wildlife as specified in subsection (2) above, shall be considered a violation of this rule.

(7) Any person who maintains captive wildlife in a manner which results in escape of wildlife as specified in subsection (2) above due to such person maintaining captive wildlife

in an unsafe condition or in a manner which results in a threat to public safety commits a violation of paragraph 68A-6.009(1)(f), F.A.C:

No person shall maintain captive wildlife in a manner which results in any of the following:

- (a) An unsanitary condition;
- (b) An unsafe condition;
- (c) A threat to public safety;
- (d) Maltreatment, neglect, or injury of such wildlife;
- (e) An injury to a person as specified in Rule 68A-6.018(6), F.A.C.;
- (f) An escape of wildlife as specified in Rule 68A-6.018(7), F.A.C.

Public Health Risks

What makes this incident especially alarming is that this macaque had just arrived from Mauritius and had not yet begun — let alone completed — the CDC-mandated 31-day quarantine. Primates imported for use in experimentation are known to arrive infected with pathogens of public health concern, including tuberculosis (TB), hepatitis A, malaria, shigella, salmonella campylobacter, measles, malaria, simian hemorrhagic fever virus, *Burkholderia pseudomallei*, simian retroviruses and more. The Mauritius farm that BC US imports monkeys from, Bioculture LTD, has had recent outbreaks of TB. Additionally, stress associated with transport can increase the shedding of pathogens in monkey saliva, feces, urine and blood. Because this animal was not in CDC-approved quarantine, its subsequent escape from a biomedical waste container at a Stericycle facility in Miami potentially exposed Stericycle employees, first responders involved in recapture efforts, and others present at the site to an unscreened, recently imported macaque of unknown health status.

The public expects that licensed captive wildlife facilities comply with state regulations designed to safeguard animal welfare and protect public health. The above outlined incident represents a significant failure by BC US to contain Class II wildlife, constituting a direct violation of Rule 68A-6.009, F.A.C., specifically:

Rule 68A-6.009(1)(c): Maintaining wildlife in a manner that results in a threat to public safety.

Rule 68A-6.009(1)(f): Maintaining wildlife in a manner that results in an escape of wildlife.

Rule 68A-6.009(2): Failure to maintain a secure enclosure or safety entrance sufficient to prevent escape.

Additionally, because this escape involved a species capable of transmitting zoonotic diseases, the failure of BC US to prevent this escape created an unsafe condition as prohibited by Rule 68A-6.009(1)(b), F.A.C.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission open a formal investigation into BC US and Stericycle regarding (1) the improper disposal of a live protected primate; (2) the transport of that animal in a biomedical waste container; (3) the apparent failure to timely report an escape as required under FAC 68A-6.018; and (4) the threat to public health. Under Section 379.4015(8) of the Florida Statutes, the Commission has the authority to suspend or revoke a captive wildlife license via administrative action for such violations. We urge the Commission to investigate these apparent violations and take swift, decisive action. Due

to the threat to public health and the gravity of the containment failure, revocation is the only appropriate remedy to ensure future public safety.

Given the seriousness of these allegations, we request a timely response regarding the status of your investigation.

Sincerely,



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People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals
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gborkowski@aaalac.org; rad@fdacs.gov; ExoticReports@MyFWC.com