



March 26, 2026

The Honorable Brooke Rollins  
Secretary of Agriculture  
c/o Tate Bennett, Chief of Staff to the Secretary of Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Via e-mail: [Brooke.Rollins@usda.gov](mailto:Brooke.Rollins@usda.gov); [agsec@usda.gov](mailto:agsec@usda.gov);  
[Tate.Bennett@usda.gov](mailto:Tate.Bennett@usda.gov)

Dear Secretary Rollins:

I am writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals—PETA entities have more than 10.4 million members and supporters worldwide. As you may know, eight healthy horses were reportedly in the process of being transferred from a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) experimentation program to Washington State University (WSU) as part of that school's College of Veterinary Medicine Junior Surgery laboratory, in which the horses were slated to be used by veterinary students to practice complicated abdominal surgeries before killing them. However, following massive public backlash, which included pleas from students, alumni, veterinarian group Our Honor,<sup>1</sup> and more than 36,000 calls and e-mails from PETA supporters,<sup>2</sup> WSU canceled this planned terminal equine laboratory.<sup>3</sup>

**Based on the information presented below, we appeal to you to send these eight healthy horses—who are in the USDA's custody and were recently spared from deadly veterinary student surgical training at WSU—to a reputable sanctuary:**

- **The horses are highly adoptable:** These horses are healthy and were never destined for slaughter prior to their planned transfer to WSU.<sup>4</sup>
- **Sanctuary placement is secured:** Triple J Horse Haven in Apple Valley, California, has offered to take in the horses and provide them with a peaceful retirement at no cost to the government or WSU.<sup>5</sup>
- **The public is watching:** The public's outrage to this case has been overwhelmingly clear.<sup>6</sup> Sparring these horses from the terminal WSU

<sup>1</sup> Our Honor. March 6, 2026. *Veterinarians, Alumni and Students Call on WSU College of Veterinary Medicine to Spare the Lives of 8 Horses and 60 Goats.*

<https://www.ourhonor.org/blognew/wsui>

<sup>2</sup> PETA. March 17, 2026. *VICTORY! Horses saved from death at Washington State University.* <https://www.peta.org/action/action-alerts/save-8-horses-and-60-goats-wsu/>.

<sup>3</sup> KXLY. 2026. *WSU vet school cancels equine surgery course amid public pressure, threats.* [https://www.kxly.com/news/wsui-vet-school-cancels-equine-surgery-course-amid-public-pressure-threats/article\\_76ecbf14-a54d-405b-b4d7-dfad7c21eb57.html](https://www.kxly.com/news/wsui-vet-school-cancels-equine-surgery-course-amid-public-pressure-threats/article_76ecbf14-a54d-405b-b4d7-dfad7c21eb57.html)

<sup>4</sup> Our Honor. 2026.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Moscow-Pullman Daily News. March 17, 2026. *WSU cancels horse surgery course after public backlash.* <https://www.dnews.com/local-news/wsui-cancels-horse-surgery-course-after-public-backlash-b4faca9a>

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.)

lab, only to then have the USDA send them to be experimented on and killed elsewhere, would be a betrayal of the public's trust.

- **Government agency precedents have been set:** Under President Trump's administration, several U.S. agencies—including the Food and Drug Administration,<sup>7</sup> National Institutes of Health,<sup>8,9</sup> Environmental Protection Agency,<sup>10</sup> Centers for Disease Control,<sup>11</sup> U.S. Navy,<sup>12</sup> and others—have announced historic plans to phase out animal testing,<sup>13,14</sup> in alignment with PETA's Research Modernization NOW strategic framework for modernizing research toward human-relevant methods.<sup>15</sup> The USDA has an opportunity to emulate this progress—retiring these horses to a sanctuary would be a great step in the right direction, and PETA would be glad to collaborate with you.

There is no ethical or scientific justification for sending these horses to slaughter or transferring them to another laboratory. You can contact me at [MaggieW@peta.org](mailto:MaggieW@peta.org). Thank you for your consideration of this important and urgent issue, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Maggie Wiśniewska, Ph.D.  
Science Policy Advisor - International Laboratory Methods  
Laboratory Investigations Department

cc: Chungwon Joseph Chung, PhD  
Research Leader and Unit Head  
Animal Disease Research Unit, Agricultural Research Service, USDA  
([chungwon.chung@usda.gov](mailto:chungwon.chung@usda.gov))

---

<sup>7</sup> US FDA. *FDA Announces Plan to Phase Out Animal Testing Requirement for Monoclonal Antibodies and Other Drugs*. April 10, 2025. <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-announces-plan-phase-out-animal-testing-requirement-monoclonal-antibodies-and-other-drugs>

<sup>8</sup> NIH. *NIH to prioritize human-based research technologies*. April 29, 2025. <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/nih-prioritize-human-based-research-technologies>

<sup>9</sup> NIH. March 18, 2026. *NIH invests \$150 million in human-based research to reduce use of animal models*. <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/nih-invests-150-million-human-based-research-reduce-use-animal-models>

<sup>10</sup> U.S. EPA January 26, 2026. *ICYMI: Administrator Zeldin gets EPA back on track to eliminate animal testing after Biden admin halted phase out*. <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/icymi-administrator-zeldin-gets-epa-back-track-eliminate-animal-testing-after-biden>

<sup>11</sup> Grimm D. November 21, 2025. Exclusive: CDC to end all monkey research. *Science*. <https://www.science.org/content/article/exclusive-cdc-end-all-monkey-research>

<sup>12</sup> Fox News. *Navy halts dog and cat experiments; PETA writes Hegseth about US taxpayer-funded animal tests abroad*. (2025, May 31). *Fox News*. <https://www.foxnews.com/us/navy-halts-dog-cat-experiments-peta-writes-hegseth-about-us-taxpayer-funded-animal-tests-abroad>

<sup>13</sup> PETA. *The Trump administration's achievements for science and animals*. Accessed July 14, 2025. <https://www.peta.org/misc/the-trump-administrations-achievements-for-science-and-animals/>

<sup>14</sup> Bedard P. May 28, 2025. Trump cheered as 'best friend of animals' after research grants nixed. *Washington Examiner*. Accessed May 29, 2025. <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/washington-secrets/3423973/trump-cheered-best-friend-of-animals-after-research-grants-nixed/>

<sup>15</sup> PETA. *Research Modernization NOW*. November 2024. <https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Research-Modernization-NOW-Biomedical.pdf>