



June 29, 2026

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'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment—PETA entities have more than 10.4 million members and supporters worldwide—to respectfully request that the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) promptly investigate a recent incident at Texas Biomedical Research Institute (Texas Biomed; Certificate #74-R-0003 and 74-A-0061) in San Antonio, Texas.

According to [news reports](#), a "small number" of baboons escaped from the Southwest National Primate Research Center (SNPRC) at Texas Biomed on June 24, 2026. While Texas Biomed has publicly stated that it maintains "rigorous protocols and continuous oversight" and that all of the animals were quickly recovered, it has not disclosed how many baboons escaped, how they were able to escape, whether any animals were injured, what failures in containment occurred, or what corrective actions have been implemented to prevent a recurrence.

Based on the publicly available information, the incident appears to raise serious concerns regarding compliance with the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) and its implementing regulations. Sections 3.80(a)(1) and 3.80(a)(2)(iii) of the Animal Welfare Regulations require that housing facilities for nonhuman primates be designed and constructed so that they are structurally sound for the species housed and that enclosures securely contain the animals and prevent accidental opening, including opening by the animals themselves.

Notably, less than 24 hours after the escape, Texas Biomed publicly announced that the SNPRC had received a renewed National Institutes of Health (NIH) P51 base grant to support its research infrastructure, animal care, veterinary services, and research programs. The timing of that announcement underscores the importance of ensuring that the facility meets, at a minimum, the federal standards required for the care and containment of the approximately 900 baboons maintained there.

This incident is particularly concerning in light of Texas Biomed's lengthy history of AWA compliance problems involving nonhuman primate housing, handling, and husbandry. Over the past decade, APHIS has repeatedly cited the facility for

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:

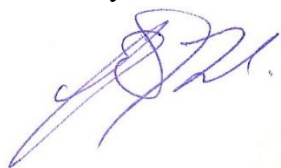
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failures that resulted in preventable injuries and deaths, including monkeys being left without water for days; improperly secured caging that allowed animals to access and injure one another; inadequate enclosure design that resulted in strangulation, fractured limbs, amputations, burns, and fatal attacks; and failures to adhere to approved animal care and use protocols. As recently as June 2025, APHIS cited Texas Biomed after rhesus macaques were deprived of water for eight days. Three months later, they were cited again when monkeys were left for days without water. In 2023 the agency issued an Official Warning after a monkey's fingers required amputation when a guillotine door was dropped on the animal's hand during routine husbandry.

Yet despite this compliance history, APHIS apparently took no enforcement action following two of the facility's most serious publicly reported incidents: the escape of four baboons from the facility in 2018 after they stacked barrels to escape their concrete enclosure and then scaled the perimeter fencing, and the 2021 winter weather event in which approximately 15% of the baboon colony suffered frostbite severe enough to lose fingers, toes, and portions of their tails. The latest escape, therefore, raises significant concerns that longstanding deficiencies in containment, facility management, and oversight have not been adequately addressed by your agency.

PETA respectfully requests that APHIS conduct a comprehensive investigation into the June 24, 2026 escape, determine whether Texas Biomed violated the Animal Welfare Act or its implementing regulations, evaluate whether this incident reflects recurring deficiencies in the facility's containment practices, and take all appropriate enforcement action warranted by its findings.

Sincerely,



Lisa Jones-Engel, PhD
Chief Science Advisor, Primate Experimentation
Laboratory Investigations Department
PETA
LisaJE@peta.org