AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF ALL ANIMALS

PETA

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.)

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Sylvia Washington, Mayor
Glennie Bench, Council Member
Kregg Close. Council Member
Roslyn Palmer, Council Member
Marquita Harris, Council Member
Don Whaley. Council Member
Keenan Adams, Council Member

Via e-mail: sylviaw@bainbridgecity.com; glennieb@bainbridgecity.com; kreggc@bainbridgecity.com; roslynp@bainbridgecity.com; marquita.harris@bainbridgecity.com; donw@bainbridgecity.com; keenan.adams@bainbridgecity.com

Dear Bainbridge Councilmembers and Mayor Washington:

Bainbridge officials know considerably more today about Safer Human Medicine, the monkey trade, and the people and money behind this project than they did when the city first backed it. PETA has repeatedly uncovered and brought to Bainbridge information that should have been part of its scrutiny of this project from the outset. The picture continues to change, and the developments we bring to you today raise new questions about both the viability of this business and the people financing it. Consider first what has happened to one of the few established companies in this industry: a monkey importer and supplier that survived nearly 65 years in business has closed.

Barton's West End Farms had what Safer Human Medicine does not: decades of operating experience, an established facility, and longstanding industry relationships. Its federal registration and license required for holding monkeys have now been canceled, and its New Jersey property is on the market. It was one of only 13 institutions permitted to import monkeys destined for laboratories as of 2024.

Barton's closure should give Bainbridge pause. Safer Human Medicine has no comparable operating history, yet its proposal would create a facility 17 times larger than Barton's in an industry facing growing legal, scientific, and political uncertainty. The larger the project, the greater the consequences for Bainbridge if the business diminishes, fails, or walks away.

The business itself is only part of what Bainbridge should now consider. New information has also brought into much clearer view who is financing Safer Human Medicine and how heavily the project depends on that backing. A recent Forbes article revealed that billionaire Joe Lonsdale, co-founder of Palantir and

founder of the venture-capital firm 8VC, is a major financial backer of Safer Human Medicine. According to Forbes, 8VC supplied $20 million of the $28 million SHM had raised, and Lonsdale has personally defended the investment.

That financial relationship matters to Bainbridge for reasons beyond the size of the investment. Lonsdale has been the subject of significant public controversy, adding another potential source of reputational risk to a project that has already generated considerable opposition and attention. He has repeatedly used his public platform to advance highly provocative positions, including calling for the return of public executions and arguing that society needs a return to "masculine leadership." Through the Cicero Institute, which he founded, Lonsdale has also supported policies criminalizing sleeping outdoors, and the Institute filed a Supreme Court brief supporting governments' authority to arrest or ticket people for sleeping outside. A June 2026 research report by the National Homelessness Law Center documented overlapping relationships among Cicero, organizations involved in corrections, and Lonsdale-associated investments in surveillance, security, and defense companies.

Lonsdale has also faced widespread criticism for racially offensive remarks. In 2021, he attributed disparities in venture-capital funding to what he called "average black culture," stating that it needed to "step it up" and criticizing births outside marriage and attitudes toward education. He has similarly attracted criticism for describing men in important positions who take parental leave as "losers" and asserting that working harder instead was the "correct masculine response." His influence has also contributed to reported turmoil at the University of Austin, which he helped establish and finance. POLITICO reported extensive staff and supporter departures amid an ideological shift at the institution. Lonsdale reportedly held a meeting and stated that all staff and faculty must "subscribe to the four principles of anti-communism, anti-socialism, identity politics, and anti-Islamism." Anyone who was uncomfortable with his political vision was told to leave.

Beyond the questions raised by SHM's financing and its principal backer, there is an even more fundamental issue for Bainbridge: where will the monkeys come from? SHM is proposing a facility for as many as 30,000 monkeys at the same time that Congress is considering legislation aimed directly at the imported-monkey supply on which facilities like this have historically depended. In April 2026, bipartisan members of Congress introduced the Preventing Risky Importation of Monkeys to Avoid Toxic Exposures Act, or PRIMATE Act. For a company proposing the largest monkey facility in the country, that is not a peripheral policy development, it goes directly to the availability and cost of the primates needed to fill it.

And Congress is considering these restrictions because imported monkeys carry risks that extend well beyond the companies that buy and sell them. Safer Human Medicine's existing operation in LaBelle, Florida, also deserves Bainbridge's attention. That Hendry County facility is intended to handle imported monkeys and quarantine operations supporting the proposed Bainbridge facility. Questions are now being raised in Florida about the disease and environmental risks associated with housing thousands of imported monkeys, including pathogens that may escape detection during quarantine and can be shed into waste and wastewater. Florida Congressman Greg Steube cited the risk of imported monkeys introducing tuberculosis, herpes B, Salmonella, and other pathogens when he introduced the bipartisan PRIMATE Act to prohibit their importation for experimentation. Bainbridge should understand those risks before becoming the next large link in SHM's operation.

Barton's closure, SHM's heavy financial reliance on Joe Lonsdale and 8VC, Lonsdale's controversial public record, possible federal restrictions on monkey imports, and the disease and environmental risks give Bainbridge ample reason to reconsider this project. The city should re-examine every commitment it has made to SHM and use all available authority to prevent the facility from moving forward.

Sincerely,



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