



PEOPLE FOR  
THE ETHICAL  
TREATMENT  
OF ANIMALS

December 22, 2021

Denis Wirtz  
Vice Provost for Research  
Johns Hopkins University

Via email: [research.jhu.edu](mailto:research.jhu.edu)

Dear Vice Provost Wirtz:

I am writing to share critical information regarding the health of monkeys housed at Johns Hopkins University (JHU). For the safety of your staff and the community, as well as the integrity of JHU's research, I urge you to act on these concerns immediately.

In October, the [Arizona Republic](#) and [USA Today](#) unveiled an exposé of the University of Washington's National Primate Research Center (WaNPRC) detailing unintended infections and perchlorate and lead exposures of macaques at WaNPRC's breeding facility in Mesa, AZ. By WaNPRC's own admission, the use of these monkeys can and has led to compromised experiments. It was confirmed yesterday that the [NIH is investigating](#) the failure of WaNPRC to maintain biosecurity and adequate standards of animal care.

Documents from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and internal communications from WaNPRC staff indicate that JHU has purchased, and/or received pigtailed macaques from WaNPRC's breeding facility. Additionally, a recent COVID-19 publication, authored by JHU investigator Dr. Joseph Mankowski, indicates that [your faculty continue to use pigtailed macaques from WaNPRC](#).

A [2013 UW case report](#) and a [2017 internal WaNPRC report](#) highlighted the prevalence and potential research-confounding effects of coccidioidomycosis (Valley fever) in WaNPRC colonies, and a recent [WaNPRC peer-reviewed publication](#) stated that monkeys with possible infection with or exposure to coccidioidomycosis should not be used for SIV studies. As you represent an institution that uses pigtailed macaques in SIV and other immunosuppressive studies, this should be of particular concern to you.

It is noteworthy that [your pigtailed macaque colony was founded](#) with pigtailed macaques from not only the WaNPRC colony but from multiple facilities. In addition to the Valley fever infections in the macaques, PETA has documents—including necropsy reports, grant applications, NIH progress reports, publications and internal UW communications—showing that multiple

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infectious agents are known to affect the monkeys housed in the WaNPRC, New Iberia Research Center, Tulane National Primate Research Center and the former Texas-based Shin Nipon Biomedical Laboratory breeding and research colonies. Among these agents are *Trypanosoma cruzi* (Chagas disease), *Campylobacter*, *Shigella*, *Salmonella*, *Cryptosporidium*, *Vibrio cholerae*, West Nile virus, MTBC (tuberculosis), MRSA, and multiple enzootic primate viruses. The presence of these pathogens not only confounds research results, but threatens public health and safety, fails the scientific community that purchases monkeys from WaNPRC and these other facilities, and wastes tens of millions of taxpayer dollars.

WaNPRC also violated state law. In May 2021, the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA), acting on a complaint from PETA, found that WaNPRC committed multiple offenses against society and the public, including:

- Failure to comply with importation and testing requirements for wild and exotic animals (Animal Health Violation – [WAC 16-54-180](#));
- Failure to comply with reporting requirements for diseases on the World Organization for Animal Health's (OIE) notifiable disease list (Animal Health Violation – [WAC 16-70-010](#));
- Failure to report diseases in animals, resulting in unlawful importation (Animal Health Violation – [RCW 16.36.080](#)).

The WSDA investigation focused only on the presence of Valley fever infections in macaques being imported into and maintained in WaNPRC's Seattle facilities. Given that documents show that at least 279 pigtailed macaques have been sold to external investigators in the past five years, PETA is contacting regulatory authorities in the states where these monkeys were shipped.

We urge you to cease immediately importing or transporting any monkeys to your facility. Further, we urge you to investigate whether or not unintended infections have been identified in any monkeys used in previous or current studies, and if so, that any publications resulting from them be retracted.

May I hear from you on this urgent issue? Thank you.

Sincerely,



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