

November 14, 2007

The Honorable Michael Chertoff
Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Via mail and facsimile to 202-282-8401

Dear Secretary Chertoff,

At a time when Americans fear for their safety, when they turn trusting eyes to you in the sincere belief that you will do all that is in your power to serve and protect our country and its people, why has Homeland Security chosen to betray that trust? Are you aware that the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) is using chimpanzees—our closest animal relatives—to develop antibodies to anthrax and other dangerous pathogens even though non-animal antibodies have already been approved by the Food and Drug Administration or are in late-stage clinical trials? This appears to be a stunning case of the left hand of government not knowing what the right hand is doing. And it means that tax dollars that should be used to provide real protection for Americans are being squandered.

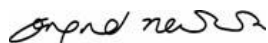
PETA and its more than 1.8 million members and supporters certainly back efforts to develop treatments for the 15 pathogens targeted by NIAID, a number of which have been identified as potential bioterrorism threats under Project Bioshield. But torturing chimpanzees to accomplish this, when antibody treatments for most of the pathogens have already been developed, is wasteful, cruel, and astonishingly foolish. So far, antibody treatments for anthrax, smallpox, hepatitis A and B, rabies, botulism, West Nile, and lupus have already been developed without the use of chimpanzees. Two companies have been contracted to provide their anthrax and smallpox drugs to the Strategic National Stockpile, and at least three other companies have antibody-based anthrax drugs undergoing clinical trials.

Although PETA doesn't receive a dime from the government to protect our country from misuse of tax dollars and stupidity, we uncovered these redundant experiments through public records. I must assume that you didn't know, or you would have acted to stop it; now that you do know, I urge you to put an immediate end to this completely unnecessary abuse of chimpanzees.

If you won't act to protect chimpanzees, who may be caged for decades and endure repeated and excruciating bone marrow extractions, then please act to protect our precious resources from the vile greediness of experimenters who apparently have no idea or do not care that they're doing yesterday's science.

I look forward to hearing from you without delay.

Very truly yours,



Ingrid E. Newkirk
President and Founder



PETA

PEOPLE FOR THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT OF ANIMALS

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