

July 21, 2009

The Honourable Luis G. Fortuño
Governor of Puerto Rico



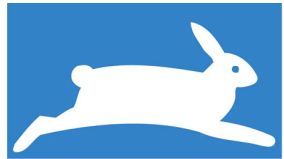
Dear Governor Fortuño,

I am writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), the largest animal rights organization in the world with more than 2 million members and supporters. We are deeply concerned that Puerto Rico may allow Bioculture Mauritius Ltd. to build a massive facility that will breed and ship thousands of monkeys to laboratories for painful and deadly experiments. **We respectfully urge you to prohibit the building of the Bioculture facility—a move that would spare up to 17,000 of these intelligent animals from traumatic tests.**

An international coalition has formed to oppose the construction of the Bioculture facility, including PETA, the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM), the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection (BUAV), and the International Primate Protection League (IPPL). Puerto Rico Bar Association president Arturo Hernández is strongly opposing Bioculture's plans, stating that if this monkey factory is allowed to be built, then Puerto Rico would be an accomplice to "the atrocities being committed against these primates when they are captured until they reach the laboratory. ... Bioculture will be the home of thousands of animals [who] leave from the island Mauritius for use in experiments, and whose final destination is death."

As you know, Bioculture hopes to build the 13,000 square-foot primate breeding facility in Guayama, Puerto Rico. The facility will reportedly lock monkeys in metal cages for many months, which has been shown to induce psychological trauma due to a lack of proper enrichment, socialization, and ability of the animals to exhibit any of their natural behaviors. Bioculture will then sell the animals to drug companies and other contract research organizations, where they will be force-fed harmful chemicals and pharmaceuticals and suffer months of torture, eventually dying slow and painful deaths. Please view footage from our investigation of Covance—the world's largest contract testing company—to see how monkeys suffer in laboratories:

<http://www.petatv.com/tvpopup/video.asp?video=covance30&Player=wm>. In the 1970s, similar evidence of animal abuse in U.S. laboratories spurred India to prohibit the export of rhesus monkeys—a law that remains today. Other countries are now considering laws to ban primate experiments.



PETA

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AN INTERNATIONAL
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TO PROTECTING
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Dr. Nedim Buyukmihci, professor emeritus of veterinary medicine at the University of California, has stated that the conditions in which the monkeys are captured, caged, retained and transported do not meet the standards of the International Primatological Society. According to Dr. Buyukmihci, “They are packed in small wooden boxes and travel as cargo, usually in commercial airlines. Transportation to the final destination may take days. They must also resist inadequate ventilation and extreme fluctuations in temperature.”

Further, the Puerto Rico Senate is investigating the permits given to Bioculture and has uncovered serious malfeasance, including failure to hold a public hearing and failure of Bioculture to submit an environmental impact statement. The Senate also found possible fraud in Bioculture’s payments for permits since the company only paid for a permit with estimated project costs of \$2 million even though government reports show that the project is actually worth \$12 million.

The Mayor of Guayama, the Honorable Glorymari Jaime, has expressed her concern: “If my people do civil disobedience against this [Bioculture] project, I will be there to support them. I want you to know that I have never given a sign to endorse this project. Everything was done by the previous administration.”

There are scientific reasons for opposing the facility as well. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recently stated that 92 percent of drugs that test successfully in animals fail during human trials. This alarming failure rate is due largely to the immense biochemical and physiological differences between species. To address this problem, the U.S. National Research Council (NRC)—the government’s leading scientific advisor—developed a plan to shift toxicology testing away from animals and toward non-animal test methods. The NRC wrote: “Current [animal toxicity] tests also provide little information on modes and mechanisms of action ... and little or no information for assessing variability in human susceptibility. [A] transformative paradigm shift [towards non-animal test methods] is needed to achieve the design criteria set out in the committee’s interim report: ... (2) to reduce the cost and time of testing, (3) to use fewer animals and cause minimal suffering in the animals used, and (4) to develop a more robust scientific basis for assessing health effects ...”

Allowing the construction of the Bioculture facility is a major step in the *wrong* direction, both ethically and scientifically, for Puerto Rico, the animals, and medical research around the world. We urge you to reconsider your position on this critical issue and oppose the construction of the Bioculture facility. You may contact me directly at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,



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