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Proposed home for 100 chimpanzees has long record of primate fatalities, escapes and federal fines; Watchdog group calls on NIH to use sanctuary

WASHINGTON, DC – Following the recent NIH retirement announcement for 100 chimpanzees, a research watchdog group has discovered that their proposed retirement home has a history of killing primates through negligence as well as primate escapes.

The Texas Biomedical Research Institute (TBRI), the proposed destination for the retirement of 100 chimpanzees from the New Iberia Research Center (NIRC), may have a worse record for primate care than the NIRC, according to research watchdog group, SAEN.

Federal reports reveal that TBRI paid a \$25,714 USDA fine earlier this year for multiple violations of the Animal Welfare Act connected to one primate death and two primate escapes.

According to earlier government reports, other primates at this facility have died of dehydration as a result of malfunctioning watering systems, or simply been found dead.

Lastly, the most shocking incident of negligence at TBRI, also recounted in a federal report, discloses that a post-mortem dissection of a baboon was begun, only to discover that the animal was not yet dead.

“I fear that you may have dumped the chimps out of the frying pan and into the fire by sending them to the Texas facility. The record of care at the Texas Biomedical Research Institute is no better than that at the New Iberia Facility of ULL,” said Michael A. Budkie, A.H.T., Executive Director, SAEN in a letter to NIH Director Francis Collins. “It would be preferable to choose a location, such as a sanctuary, that is at least capable of discerning if the primates in their care are alive or dead.”

All of the federal documents are available upon request from SAEN.