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SAEN blows Whistle on Oregon Health Sciences University – USDA allows Lab to 'Get Away with Murder'

PORTLAND, OR – SAEN is criticizing what it calls a "drastically insufficient" USDA fine against an Oregon research laboratory that allowed "murder" of animals to go virtually unpunished.

Documents obtained by SAEN reveal that the USDA has slapped the Oregon Health & Sciences University (OHSU) with a paltry \$11,679 fine for violations of the Animal Welfare Act (AWA).

The USDA fine is relevant to AWA violations for *inadequate enclosures, improper research supervision by OHSU's IACUC* (Institutional Animal Care & Use Committee), *unqualified personnel*, and *failure to provide sufficient access to water*.

The incidents recounted in the settlement documents reveal multiple deaths of primates at OHSU, as well as primate escapes. According to the federal report, two primates died due to dehydration, a third died due to improper sedation, and two others died after the unapproved administration of toxic compounds.



"The fine issued by the USDA for multiple federal violations is drastically insufficient," said Michael A. Budkie, A.H.T., Executive Director, SAEN. "This is just a fraction of the fine that should have been issued."

According to SAEN, the USDA has levied larger fines for incidents at other facilities with fewer animal deaths. For example, Texas Biomedical Research Institute was fined \$25,714 for three violations relevant to only one primate death.

The USDA is literally allowing OHSU to get away with murder. This fine makes a mockery of the law and sends the message that meaningful enforcement does not happen. Actions like this have led to carelessness causing an epidemic of primate lab fatalities across the U.S.