

**House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies
Testimony by Project R&R on the FY 2008 Budget
March 30, 2007**

Project R&R: Release and Restitution for Chimpanzees in U.S. Laboratories, whose advisory board of chimpanzee experts includes twelve organizations with a combined membership of 500,000, respectfully submits testimony on our funding priority.

We request that federal funding for breeding chimpanzees for research, or for projects that require breeding, be terminated. We do so for the following reasons:

- A “surplus” of chimpanzees has resulted from over-breeding in the 1980s for HIV/AIDS research and later findings that they are a poor HIV/AIDS model.¹
- There are enough chimpanzees to address existing federally funded research.²
- As a result of the “surplus,” the government funds a national sanctuary system.³
- The current population costs in excess of about 11 million federal dollars per year.
- Breeding more chimpanzees increases taxpayers’ financial burden.
- Expansion of the population compounds existing concerns about their quality of care.
- While there is a breeding moratorium, NIH still funds research projects requiring breeding.⁴
- The public is concerned about the use of chimpanzees in research.

Background: Of an estimated 1,300 chimpanzees in laboratories in the United States today, approximately 850 are federally owned or supported. In the mid-1990s, the National Research Council (NRC) made recommendations to address the “surplus” that included a moratorium on breeding federally-owned or supported chimpanzees for at least five years⁵ (implemented in 1995). The National Advisory Research Resources Council, which advises NCRP on funding activities, policies, and program, met on 09/15/05 and recommended that NCRP extend the moratorium to 12/07. The recommendation was accepted⁶ – reasons included the high costs associated with care and the fact that chimpanzees are a poor model for human HIV research.^{7, 8}

Circumventing the moratorium: Despite the moratorium, NIH funds research projects requiring breeding. For example, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) maintains a contract with the New Iberia Research Center (NIRC) to provide 10 to 12 infants annually for research. The ten year contract entitled “Leasing of chimpanzees for the conduct of research” was allotted over \$22 million (some \$3.9 million plus has been spent since 2002).⁹

NIRC has also received \$5.47 million from 09/00 to 08/05 for a grant from NCRP to maintain 138 chimpanzees for breeding. NIH/NCRP spends more than \$1 million annually to maintain the NIRC breeding colony.¹⁰ These grants result in \$9 million going to breeding-related activities at NIRC alone since 2000.

Such expenditures circumvent the intent of the breeding moratorium, compelling the need to prevent the growing financial burden of increasing numbers of chimpanzees, particularly since, by the government’s own admission, a “surplus” already exists.

Costs for chimpanzee maintenance: The cost of care for chimpanzees is a major concern, particularly with NIH’s tightening budget. In 1995, the Institute for Laboratory Animal Research (ILAR) published a study that projected the future costs of maintaining chimpanzees in U.S. research.¹¹ ILAR, a division of the National Academies of Science, functions as “an advisor to the federal government, the biomedical research community, and the public.”¹²

The ILAR study examined the per diem costs of the existing population of chimpanzees at six facilities. Taking into account a variety of factors such as longevity, distribution of sex, and complexity of care, it projected costs of maintaining the present colony over the next 60 years. To account for inflation, an annual 4% increase was incorporated, corresponding approximately to the Biomedical Research and Development Price Index.

The results of the study indicated that the lifetime cost of maintaining chimpanzees over the next 60 years – the approximate lifespan of chimpanzees in captivity – will exceed \$3.14 billion. The 1995 projection, however, was based on a population of 1,447 chimpanzees. The present population of federally owned or supported chimpanzees in 2007, due to factors such as the implementation of the partial breeding moratorium in 1995, the end of the Air Force's use of chimpanzees and the close of the Coulston Foundation in 2002 (to which the majority of Air Force chimpanzees were sent), stands closer to 850. This represents approximately 59% of the 1,447 number used in ILAR's projection. Thus we can estimate the federal cost of the existing colony to be \$1.85 billion. The remainder of the original estimated \$3.14 billion figure will now be carried by the U.S. public which contributes to the private sanctuaries caring for formerly federally owned or supported chimpanzees (minus a slight decrease in this estimate due to mortality). Thus, the caring American public has been burdened with the ethical obligation of some estimated \$1.29 billion dollars to care for chimpanzees from laboratories, without any further obligation for this care placed on the laboratories themselves and with none of these privately funded sanctuaries having, at this time, access to federal dollars for their chimpanzee care. Given the American public's deep and growing concern over the use of chimpanzees in research, the NIH's history of breeding has created a hidden, even if self-assumed, "tax" for that faction of the public concerned about the humane and ethical treatment of chimpanzees from research for which NIH no longer assumes any financial responsibility.

The ILAR projection also concluded that the 2006 annual costs would be approximately \$18.8 million. Adjusting this number by 59% results in \$11 million spent in 2006 alone to maintain chimpanzees for research.

It is important to note that \$11 million represents only a partial estimate of the entire federal expenditure for chimpanzee research. The total population of U.S. chimpanzees available for research is estimated at 1,300. Approximately 500 of these chimpanzees are privately owned. Privately owned chimpanzees are also partially funded by federal research dollars. Therefore, the 2006 estimate of annual expenditure actually exceeds \$11 million by an undetermined amount.

Delivery of care: USDA inspection reports indicate that facilities housing chimpanzees for research are not adequately meeting basic housing needs. Inspection reports for the NIRC 2004 showed some chimpanzees being housed in less than the minimal space requirements. The facility was given one year to correct the non-compliance, which needed to be further extended as construction of new housing facilities was still not completed. NIRC was also cited 7 times during its 12/04 inspection for improperly sanitizing cages and living quarters, as well as for failing to provide adequate environment enhancement.

Inspection reports filed on the Southwest Foundation for Biomedical Research and the Yerkes Primate Facility, both National Primate Research Centers, also demonstrate multiple non-compliant items for failing to keep chimpanzee areas in well-maintained condition, and failing to maintain safe facilities free of dangers due to disrepair.

A poor model: It is widely agreed within the scientific community that chimpanzees are a poor model for HIV. Years of research demonstrated that HIV-infected chimpanzees do not develop AIDS. Similarly, while chimpanzees are used in current hepatitis C research, they do not model the course of the human disease. The decoding of the chimpanzee genome pointed out similarities as well as differences between humans and chimpanzees. Some of those greatest differences relate to the immune system.¹³ Such differences question the validity of using chimpanzees in infectious disease research, further arguing the need to curb populations and costs.

Ethical concerns: The U.S. public is concerned about the use of chimpanzees in research because of their intellectual, emotional and social similarities to humans. A 2005 poll conducted by the Humane Research Council revealed that 4 out of 5 (83%) of the U.S. public recognize chimpanzees as highly intelligent, social individuals who have an extensive capacity to communicate. A full 71% of Americans support the release of chimpanzees if they have been used in research for more than 10 years.¹⁴ A 2001 poll conducted by Zogby International showed that 90% of Americans believe it is unacceptable to confine chimpanzees in government-approved cages.¹⁵

Conclusion: We respectfully request that the following language appear in the House Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee Report for Fiscal Year 2008:

“None of these funds shall be used for the breeding of chimpanzees or research projects that require the breeding of chimpanzees.”

We hope the Committee will accommodate this modest request that will save the government substantial money, benefit chimpanzees, and allay some concerns and financial responsibilities of the public at large. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



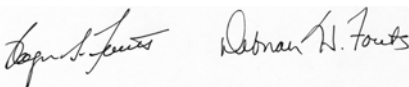
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¹ National Research Council (1997) Chimpanzees in research: strategies for their ethical care, management and use. National Academies Press: Washington, D.C.

² Report of the Chimpanzee Management Plan Working Group to the National Advisory Research Resources Council; May 18, 2005

³ http://www.ncrr.nih.gov/compmed/cm_chimp.asp

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ National Research Council (1997) Chimpanzees in research: strategies for their ethical care, management and use. National Academies Press: Washington, D.C.

⁶ http://www.ncrr.nih.gov/compmed/cm_chimp.asp

⁷ Muchmore, E., (2001) Chimpanzee models for human disease and immunobiology, *Immunological Reviews*, 183, 86-93.

⁸ Reynolds, V., (1995) Moral issues in relation to chimpanzee field studies and experiments, *Alternatives to Laboratory Animals*, 23, 621-625.

⁹ Source: http://dcis.hhs.gov/nih/nih_daily_active_web.html (See contract No. 272022754)

¹⁰ <http://nirc.louisiana.edu/divisions/nihgrants.html>

¹¹ Dyke, B., Williams-Blangero, S. et al, 1995 "Future costs of chimpanzees in U.S. research institutions," *ILAR Journal* V37(4) http://dels.nas.edu/ilar_n/ilarjournal/37_4/37_4Future.shtml

¹² Institute for Laboratory Animal Research, website at http://dels.nas.edu/ilar_n/ilarhome/about.shtml

¹³ The Chimpanzee Sequencing and Analysis Consortium/Mikkelsen, TS, et al., (1 September 2005) Initial sequence of the chimpanzee genome and comparison with the human genome, *Nature* 437, 69-87.

¹⁴ U.S. Public Opinion of Chimpanzee Research, Support for a Ban, and Related Issues, Prepared for the New England Anti-Vivisection Society, by the Humane Research Council, 2005.

¹⁵ Public Opinion Poll, Prepared for the Chimpanzee Collaboratory, by Zogby International, 2001.