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Rt. Honorable Prime Minister, Respected Ministers and Nepalese Officials:

I kindly ask the government of Nepal to acknowledge global concern about its breeding and export of monkeys for use in biomedical experimentation. Please halt any shipments of rhesus macaques and enact laws to protect your treasured wildlife.

As you know, India outlawed overseas sale of rhesus monkeys in 1977 in response to ghastly radiation experiments on animals considered sacred by many Indians. As a result, Western labs want Nepali monkeys — and have opened the door to let other foreign researchers exploit Nepalese species.

Experimentation upon primates has failed to produce tangible data for AIDS, Alzheimer's, stroke, cancer, and other diseases. Still, electrodes are lodged in the brains and spinal cords of monkeys. Seizures and infections are artificially induced. Toxic substances are injected. Babies are forcibly separated from "breeding" mothers.

It is irresponsible to promote animal research when so many animal-free methods now offer data more relevant to humans. Findings from distressed animals do not result in accurate extrapolation to humans. Though primates possess physiological and psychological instincts as intricate as our own — lab variables such as pain, injury, confinement, loneliness and repeated handling generate misleading data.

In Nepal, Hindus celebrate monkeys as a reincarnation of Lord Hanuman. Buddhists feel the killing or mistreatment of any animal is wrong. Monkeys are an integral thread in Nepal's rich natural and cultural tapestry. They live alongside humans in the temples or roam mountain forests. Inside a lab, a monkey's life is defined by metal bars, cement floors, terror and pain.

I respectfully ask Nepalese authorities to advocate progressive animal-free research. Please eliminate breeding compounds — and stop the removal of rhesus monkeys from their natural environment.

Sincerely,