



CODY THANE VASUT



TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

District 25

November 28, 2023

James Foster
Chief Executive Officer
Charles River Laboratories

Re: Proposed Facility for Housing Monkeys in Brazoria County.

Dear Mr. Foster,

I am the State Representative for western and southern Brazoria County. It is my understanding that in March 2023, Charles River Laboratories formed Kandurt LLC (collectively, "CRL") to acquire approximately 538 acres of land in Brazoria County located off of County Road 2 (the "Property") near the border with Fort Bend, Matagorda, and Wharton Counties for the purported purpose of housing monkeys for medical research purposes.

I am deeply concerned about the lack of communication and the proposed scope of this project.

While this land acquisition was completed almost eight months ago, I was not notified about this proposed project until recently, I have received no contact from CRL, and it is my understanding that CRL has yet to meet with any local elected official to discuss this proposed project.

Once Brazoria County residents were alerted to this proposed project, my office has received numerous complaints and concerns about the proposal. No one has contacted me in support of this proposal. And I can understand why.



The Property CRL acquired for this proposed project is ill-suited for any significant development, let alone a medical research facility. The Property is located in a low-lying forested area near the San Bernard Wildlife Refuge. I have been informed from adjoining landowners that the Property flooded during Hurricane Harvey in 2017. It is likely the Property will experience a significant flood event in the near future.

As I understand the proposed project, CRL intends to house purpose bred monkeys in one or more buildings to be constructed at the site, which it will transport to the site on Brazoria County roadways. The intended use of this facility to house primates raises a host of concerns about the impact of this site on the quality of life in Brazoria County.

By way of example, it is my understanding that a project of this caliber will generate significant quantities of biological waste from the monkeys housed on site. Regardless of the mitigation mechanism chosen for handling this waste, I am concerned biological waste, including the hormones and potential diseases contained therein, will be exposed to ground at the site and flow into the San Bernard watershed, which is a major recreational area in my district.

I am also concerned about the potential for monkeys at this site to be exposed to open-air and mosquitos, either on site or in transit. Brazoria County is uniquely at risk of mosquito-borne illnesses, including illnesses such as Malaria that may be carried by imported primates.

I am further concerned about the impact on the immediate environment and neighboring communities from any monkeys that escape CRL's custody. I have been provided information that causes me concern about CRL's ability to secure these primates. Even if the primates could be perfectly secured in the ordinary course of operations: the Property is located in a flood plain in a county that frequently experiences tropical storms and Hurricane. It is inevitable that this facility would be struck by a significant storm event.

If a monkey were able to escape the facility, it would have access to a large, forested area in a sensitive ecological area. It would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to locate an escaped primate in the dense woods around the Property. And an escaped primate would pose a direct threat to both our native species, livestock, and residents near the facility.

This morning, I heard from many residents at the Brazoria County Commissioner's Court meeting who raised these concerns and many other concerns about the proposed project. The Brazoria County Commissioner's Court passed a resolution opposing this project. **I am opposed to this project as proposed as well.**

While it is my understanding no construction has taken place, and no permits have been filed for the project, it is unclear to me if and when CRL intends to move forward with the project. I welcome CRL to provide my office, and, more importantly, the people of Brazoria County, with a complete and transparent presentation of CRL's intentions for this project.

I look forward to receiving further information from CRL.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CV' with a superscript '106' and a subscript '6'.

Cody T. Vasut
State Representative

Cc: Congressman Randy Weber
State Senator Joan Huffman
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Brazoria County Commissioner's Court
City of Brazoria
City of Sweeny
City of West Columbia
Sweeny Independent School District
West Brazos County Drainage District #11