

Subject: Richardson Pleads To Halt Chimp Move - Albuquerque Journal
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Richardson Pleads To Halt Chimp Move

WASHINGTON — Gov. Bill Richardson formally petitioned the U.S. Department of Agriculture on Thursday to stop the planned transfer of 186 chimpanzees from an Alamogordo facility to a Texas biomedical research lab.

Richardson, speaking at a packed press conference in Washington, said he hopes U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack will order an investigation into the proposed transfer and issue a decree to halt it under the federal Animal Welfare Act.

The chimps have lived free from testing at the Alamogordo Primate Facility on Holloman Air Force Base since 2001. With the federal management contract scheduled to expire next year, the National Institutes of Health wants to move the chimps to the Southwest National Primate Research Center in San Antonio, Texas, where the apes would be used in hepatitis C research. Fourteen chimps have already been moved to the Texas lab, and most of the rest are to be moved next year.