February 25, 2026

Ynon Kreiz
Chief Executive Officer
Mattel, Inc.
Via email

Dear Mr. Kreiz,

We recently learned of a Mattel Keepsake Collection *Stardream Polly Pocket* toy that features a "pet monkey" that appears to be a chimpanzee dressed in an astronaut costume. While we understand that this may seem cute on the surface for a space-themed toy, imagery that depicts primates as companion animals – particularly in the context of space flight – unintentionally echoes a painful history of exploitation and cruelty.

Chimpanzees and other primates were used in early space test flights during the height of the U.S.-Soviet space race. These individuals were not willing participants; they were subjected to invasive training procedures, restraint, isolation, and high-risk launches in order to test the limits of space travel. Many primates used in early space experiments suffered extreme stress, injury, and death. Even those who survived experienced lifelong consequences of confinement and experimentation. These missions, including those involving chimpanzees such as Ham and Enos, are now widely recognized as ethically troubling chapters in scientific history.

Today, we understand far more about the psychological and social needs of chimpanzees and other primates. They form lifelong family bonds, rely on complex social networks, and require expansive and engaging environments to thrive. Portraying a chimpanzee as a "pet" or as a whimsical astronaut companion may seem harmless, but it risks normalizing that primates belong in human homes, and that their historical exploitation is lighthearted or benign.

The North American Primate Sanctuary Alliance (NAPSA) is a coalition of eight leading primate sanctuaries across North America. Collectively, our members provide lifetime care to nearly 800 primates, many of whom were formerly used in laboratory research, entertainment, or kept as private "pets." Some are even survivors and descendants of the Air Force's space program. We regularly see the downstream effects of media and marketing that portray primates as cute accessories or companions. Sanctuaries are inundated with requests to accept monkeys and apes purchased as infants and later relinquished when they become too strong, too unpredictable, or too difficult to manage.

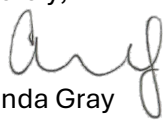
While the Polly Pocket toy does not involve a live animal, its design still contributes to broader cultural messaging about primates. Companies today are increasingly mindful of how product themes intersect with animal welfare and conservation ethics. We encourage Mattel to consider how depictions of primates, particularly chimpanzees in space suits, may inadvertently trivialize both the

suffering endured by animals in early space experimentation and the ongoing crisis of primates exploited in the pet trade.

We respectfully urge Mattel to reconsider the inclusion of primate "pets" in future product lines and to explore alternative creative directions that celebrate space exploration without referencing the historical use of nonhuman primates in test flights. Doing so would align with evolving public values around animal welfare and demonstrate Mattel's continued leadership as a socially responsible company.

We would welcome the opportunity to share additional information about the history of primates in space research and the current realities facing primates in captivity.

Sincerely,



Amanda Gray
Director, North American Primate Sanctuary Alliance