
From: Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=90FE9CAE30C64CFBB67ABD568E882796-LAUERM]
Sent: 6/2/2021 10:56:07 AM
To: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=02e22836b5ff4e9988e3770cfc7ee770-tabak]
CC: Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=90fe9cae30c64cfbb67abd568e882796-lauer]
Subject: Agenda for 1:1 with Larry Tabak on Wednesday, June 2, 2021
Attachments: Agenda 1 on 1 with Larry Tabak 6 2 21.docx; Tabak 5 30 21.zip

Hi Larry – here's what I have so far.

Many thanks, Mike

Agenda 1 on 1 with Larry Tabak on 6/2/21

Hi Larry – look forward to seeing you at later today (Wednesday). Here's what I have so far.

- COVID-19
 - WIV/EcoHealth: referral to OIG for audit

(b) (5)



Many thanks!

Best, Mike

From: Bulls, MichelleG. (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6)
Sent: 5/27/2021 1:50:05 PM
To: Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6)
CC: Bulls, MichelleG. (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6)
Subject: Mike 1:1

Attachments: [REDACTED] (b) (5)

[REDACTED] Non Responsive ; FY21_ALL_STAFF-#611820-v7-104613__NIH_DATA_INFORMATION_REQUEST_#2_(MAY_14__2021)_DGCO_DRAFT.docx; [REDACTED] Non Responsive

1:1 w/ Mike Lauer

5/27/21

Reminder: Upcoming leave 5/28, 6/3-6/4, 6/7

Mike's Topics

[REDACTED] (b) (5)

IC Requests

- FYI: Ecohealth
 - o NIAID reached out seeking guidance on how to address the RPPR for the suspended award
 - o They proposed [REDACTED] (b) (5)
 - o I agree with this approach

GAO Data Request for the National Institutes of Health (NIH)
Scientific Integrity Engagement 104613

GAO ENGAGEMENT: 104613—Scientific Integrity

REQUEST #: 2

DATE REQUESTED: May 14, 2021

DUE DATE: June 4, 2021

(b) (5)

GAO Data Request for the National Institutes of Health (NIH)
Scientific Integrity Engagement 104613

(b) (5)



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From: Brown, Tiffany (NIH/OD/OMA) [E] [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=14DEF436A4F74669A6C9FDC45F3B0F0F-BROWNTY1]
Sent: 6/21/2021 7:27:41 PM
To: Bundesen, Liza (NIH/OD) [E] [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=3cded900576a49aea461d26e93bddac3-lbundesel]; Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=90fe9cae30c64cfbb67abd568e882796-lauerml]
Subject: RE: Provide Availability for OIG Entrance Conference: "National Institutes of Health and Grantee Compliance With Federal Requirements To Ensure Proper Monitoring and Use of Grant Funds by Selected Grantees and Subgrantees" (A-05-21-00025), Due: 3pm, 6/17
Attachments: NIH Overssight of Grantee-Subgrantee Entrance Conference Agenda...6.21.21.docx

Good afternoon,

There was a slight edit to the 5th bullet under "Questions & Discussion Topics" (see highlighted areas).

Thanks!

Tiffany Brown

NIH/OD/OMA/RMAL

(b) (6) (Direct)
(301) 402-0169 (Fax)

From: Bundesen, Liza (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, June 21, 2021 1:37 PM
To: Brown, Tiffany (NIH/OD/OMA) [E] (b) (6); Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: FW: Provide Availability for OIG Entrance Conference: "National Institutes of Health and Grantee Compliance With Federal Requirements To Ensure Proper Monitoring and Use of Grant Funds by Selected Grantees and Subgrantees" (A-05-21-00025), Due: 3pm, 6/17

Hi Tiffany,

Per our conversation just now, Mike would like to have a pre-meeting with OIG, where he will represent NIH. Then we'll go from there.

Thanks so much,
Liza

From: Brown, Tiffany (NIH/OD/OMA) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, June 21, 2021 9:21 AM
To: Bundesen, Liza (NIH/OD) [E] <(b) (6)>
Subject: RE: Provide Availability for OIG Entrance Conference: "National Institutes of Health and Grantee Compliance With Federal Requirements To Ensure Proper Monitoring and Use of Grant Funds by Selected Grantees and Subgrantees" (A-05-21-00025), Due: 3pm, 6/17

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Sent: Thursday, June 17, 2021 3:33 PM

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Should NIAID participate also or does Dr. Lauer want to participate alone on this?

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Showe, Melanie (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6)

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Best,
Melanie

Melanie Showe

Executive Asst to the Deputy Director for Extramural Research
Office of Extramural Research
One Center Drive
Bldg. 1, Room 144
Bethesda, MD 20892
Phone: (b) (6)

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Flash-Zapata, Ki-Cha (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Smith, Philip (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6);
Valentine, Megan (OS/ASFR) (b) (6); 'ASFR GAO & OIG Liaison' <ASFRGAO&OIGLiaison@hhs.gov>

Cc: Simanich, Sasha (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)

Subject: Provide Availability for OIG Entrance Conference: "National Institutes of Health and Grantee Compliance With Federal Requirements To Ensure Proper Monitoring and Use of Grant Funds by Selected Grantees and Subgrantees" (A-05-21-00025), Due: 3pm, 6/17

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From – OMA

To – OER, ASFR

Action – Please provide your availability to meet with the OIG (this will be a 1-hr meeting):

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Requestor – OIG

Scope – The OIG will review NIH’s monitoring of EcoHealth Alliance grants, and the grantee’s use of management of NIH grant funds, in accordance with Federal requirements.

POCs and Due Date – Please send availability to Tiffany Brown (b) (6) by 3pm on June 17, 2021.

We will receive the agenda, questions, and document request soon.

I will use the availability received to schedule a pre-brief meeting.

Thank you,
Tiffany

Tiffany Brown

NIH/OD/OMA/RMAL
[REDACTED] (b) (6) (Direct)
(301) 402-0169 (Fax)

**Audit of National Institutes of Health and Grantee Compliance With Federal Requirements To Ensure
Proper Monitoring and Use of Grant Funds by Selected Grantees and Subgrantees
CIN: A-05-21-00025**

(b) (5)









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Entrance conference questions attached.

From: Bundesen, Liza (NIH/OD) [E]
Sent: Monday, June 21, 2021 9:36 AM
To: Lauer, Michael (NIH/NHLBI) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: FW: Provide Availability for OIG Entrance Conference: "National Institutes of Health and Grantee Compliance With Federal Requirements To Ensure Proper Monitoring and Use of Grant Funds by Selected Grantees and Subgrantees" (A-05-21-00025), Due: 3pm, 6/17

Hi Mike--Forour one on one later.

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NIH/OD/OMA/RMAL

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*Executive Asst to the Deputy Director for Extramural Research
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Cc: Simanich, Sasha (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
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June 30: 9am – 2pm

Requestor – OIG

Scope – The OIG will review NIH's monitoring of EcoHealth Alliance grants, and the grantee's use of management of NIH grant funds, in accordance with Federal requirements.

POCs and Due Date – Please send availability to Tiffany Brown [REDACTED] (b) (6) by 3pm on June 17, 2021.

We will receive the agenda, questions, and document request soon.

I will use the availability received to schedule a pre-brief meeting.

Thank you,
Tiffany

Tiffany Brown

NIH/OD/OMA/RMAL
[REDACTED] (b) (6) (Direct)
(301) 402-0169 (Fax)

**Audit of National Institutes of Health and Grantee Compliance With Federal Requirements To Ensure
Proper Monitoring and Use of Grant Funds by Selected Grantees and Subgrantees
CIN: A-05-21-00025**

(b) (5)







FCI

Next Steps

(b) (5)



FOR OFFICIAL USE

From: Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=90FE9CAE30C64CFBB67ABD568E882796-LAUERM]
Sent: 6/24/2021 11:42:45 AM
To: Simanich, Sasha (NIH/OD) [E] [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=62114870dc66475a8c0ce0047413ed92-simanichs2]
CC: Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=90fe9cae30c64cfbb67abd568e882796-lauer]
Subject: For 8 AM
Attachments: Lauer NIH Oversight of Grantee-Subgrantee Entrance Conference Agenda...6.21.21.docx

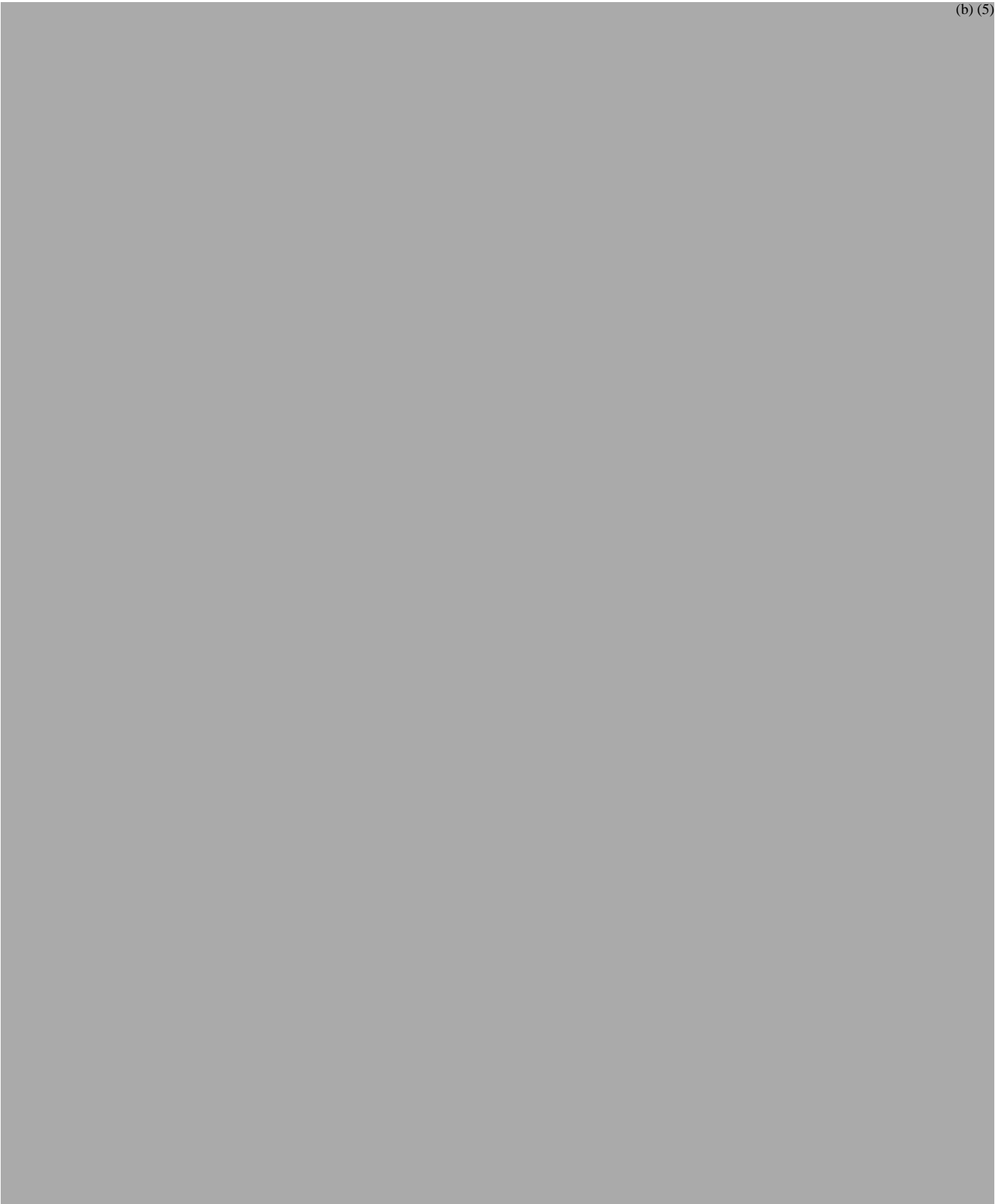
Hi Sasha – here's a draft of answers.

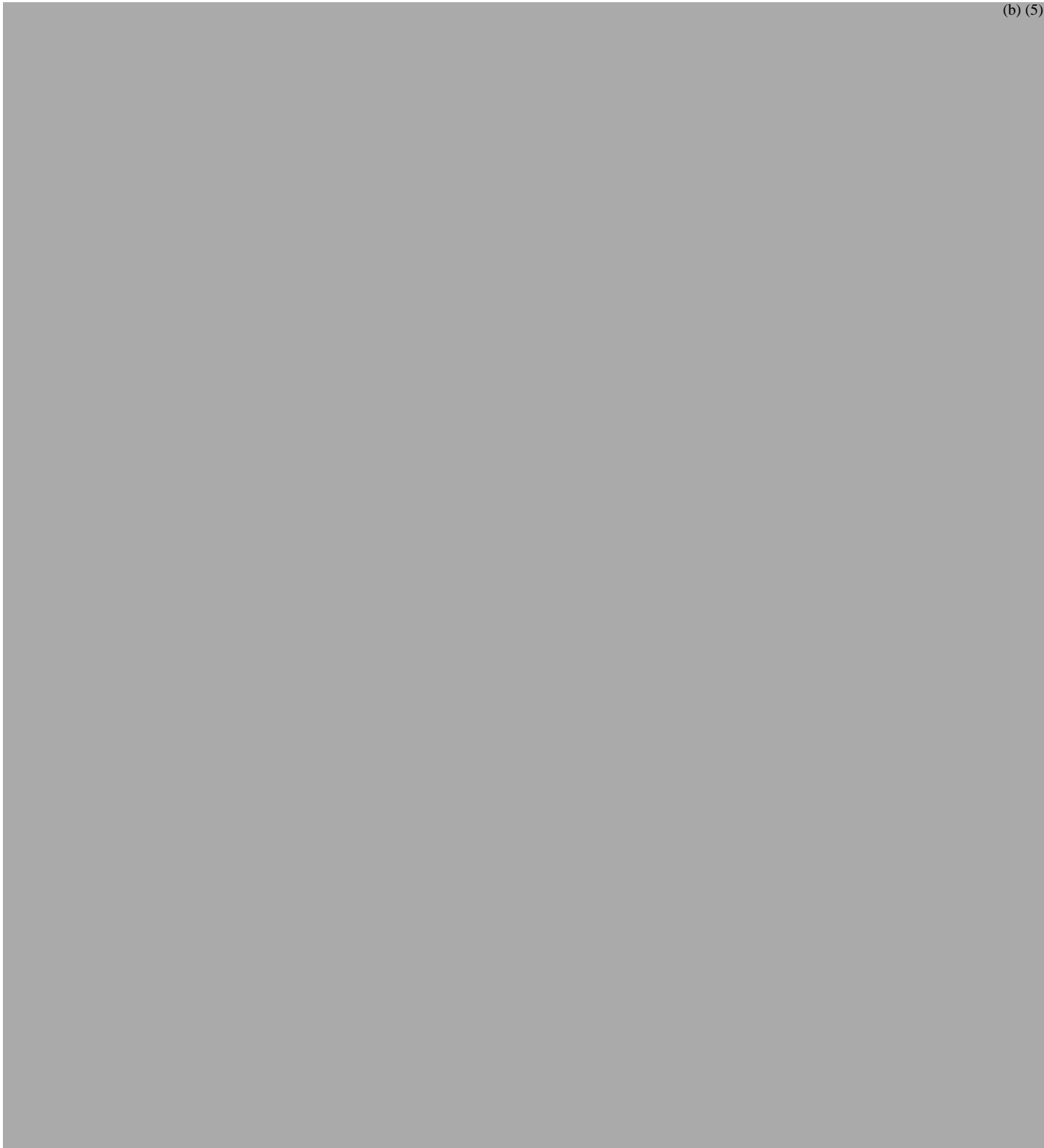
Thanks, Mike

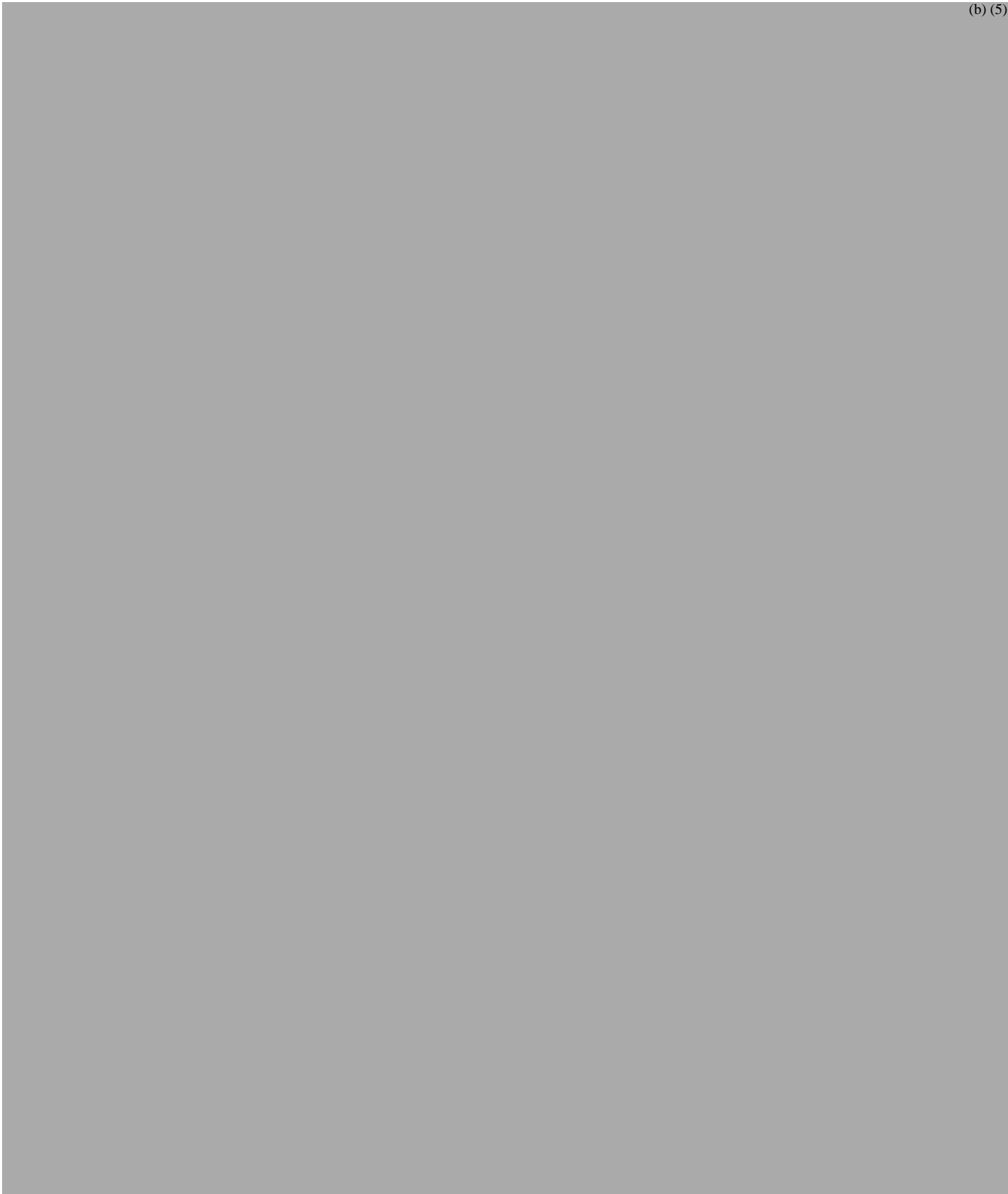
**Audit of National Institutes of Health and Grantee Compliance With Federal Requirements To Ensure
Proper Monitoring and Use of Grant Funds by Selected Grantees and Subgrantees
CIN: A-05-21-00025**

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From: Jacobs, Anna (NIH/OD) [E] [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=E76EEB11DF9A4024B53864FFAC4C4C56-JACOBSAL]
Sent: 6/23/2021 1:12:11 PM
To: Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=90fe9cae30c64cfbb67abd568e882796-lauer]; Stein, Meredith (NIH/OD) [E] [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e3324d143a8c4975b4f1d405d1a54d14-steinme]
CC: Lankford, David (NIH/OD) [E] [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=4f29a9bef672409d967e3aa5fb36e96a-lankford]; Clark, Tamara (OS/OGC) [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e1c5382ce18b420780cf8be39025b0d9-Tamara.Clar]
Subject: GAO questions
Attachments: FY21_ALL_STAFF-#611820-v7-104613__NIH_DATA_INFORMATION_REQUEST_#2_(MAY_14__2021).DOCX

As discussed, this is the version of the GAO questions that I read from on today's call.

Anna L. Jacobs, J.D., M.S.
Senior Attorney
HHS Office of the General Counsel
Public Health Division, NIH Branch
31 Center Drive, Bldg. 31, Rm. 2B-50
Bethesda, MD 20892
[REDACTED] (b) (6) (phone)
301-402-1034 (fax)
[REDACTED] (b) (6)

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GAO ENGAGEMENT: 104613—Scientific Integrity

REQUEST #: 2

DATE REQUESTED: May 14, 2021

DUE DATE: June 4, 2021

Description of Request(s):

1. Please describe and provide any documentation that exists illustrating NIH's processes for suspending and terminating a grant and reinstating grant funds. In your descriptions, please include information about:
 - a. The chain of command or clearance process for these decisions;
 - b. How, if at all, the peer review process is involved;
 - c. How, if at all, the process changes based on where a grant is in its award period (e.g., converting from Type 1 to Type 2 or 5 or in the middle of its current award period); and
 - d. Any pre-determined timeframes (e.g., the amount of time a grantee is given to take corrective action following suspension).
2. Please provide a copy of the grant file for the 2019 grant titled "Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence," (project number 2R01AI110964-06). Please also provide the following information, if the grant file does not contain it:
 - a. A description of the research and how it fit into NIH/NIAID's goals, priorities, and objectives at the time of approval.
 - b. The name(s) of the NIH program manager(s) or officer(s) responsible for overseeing the grants to EcoHealth Alliance and time period(s) of responsibility. (Please include the Grants Management Officer (GMO); Chief Grants Management Officer (CGMO); Scientific Review Officer (SRO); and Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) for the grant in this list.)
 - c. According to the April 2021 *NIH Grants Policy Statement* (p.IIA-12 and IIA-13), there are two types of grants that could possibly contain foreign subcomponents: 1) A domestic grant with a foreign subcomponent; or 2) A consortium/subaward. What type of grant is the grant in question with respect to its inclusion of the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) as a foreign subcomponent?
3. According to the *NIH Grants Policy Statement* (p. I-43), other NIH, HHS, and federal agency staff (e.g., Office of the Inspector General (OIG) and the Office of Research Integrity (ORI)) coordinate with the GMO, when necessary. Which offices and officials were involved in the suspension and cancellation of the 2019 grant titled "Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence" (project number 2R01AI110964-06)? Please describe the date and nature of each office and officials' involvement.

4. According to *SCIENCE*, on April 19, 2020, NIH Deputy Director for Extramural Research Michael Lauer wrote to EcoHealth Alliance and referenced allegations that COVID-19 was released from the WIV, stating: “While we review these allegations during the period of suspension, you are instructed to cease providing any funds to Wuhan Institute of Virology.”¹ Please explain whether NIH conducted an investigation into the allegations involving WIV, and if so, please describe the findings of this investigation and provide any documentation associated with this review.
5. According to the *NIH Grants Policy Statement* (p. IIA-155), a grant recipient may file a grant appeal following an adverse determination. Did EcoHealth Alliance file a grant appeal for the 2019 grant titled “Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence” (project number 2R01AI110964-06)? If so, please provide all documentation related to EcoHealth Alliance’s grant appeal and its outcome.
6. According to *Politico*, on March 18, 2021, the House Committee on Energy and Commerce wrote a letter to NIH Director Collins to “request information, assistance, and needed leadership from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to advance an independent, scientific investigation into the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic.”² GAO is interested in reviewing several of the items that were contained in this request, which are listed below: (*Note: If it is easier for NIH to provide the full document request, as opposed to the individual documents requested here, feel free to do so.*)
 - a. “Please provide all correspondence and communications between NIH and EcoHealth Alliance, since January 1, 2020, related to federal funding involving the WIV. The documentation should include, but not be limited to, correspondence between NIH and EcoHealth Alliance dated sometime in April 2020, on July 8, 2020, and sometime in August 2020.” (Item 11.)
 - b. “In April 2020, NIH suspended a 2019 federal award to EcoHealth Alliance, in part, because NIH did not believe the work aligned with “program goals and agency priorities.” Please specify the work that was done by the EcoHealth Alliance that did not align with the agency’s program goals and priorities, and when that work was conducted.” (Item 12.)
 - i. “Was an evaluation of EcoHealth Alliance’s work and whether it aligned with the agency’s goals and priorities conducted by the NIH before the award was issued? If yes, please provide any related documentation. If not, why not?” (Item 12a.)
 - c. “In April 2020 correspondence with EcoHealth Alliance, NIH wrote that it “received reports that the Wuhan Institute of Virology...has been conducting research at its facilities in China that pose serious bio-safety concerns.” What are the sources for those reports to NIH and what were the specific allegations reported?” (Item 13.)

¹ See <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2020/04/nih-s-axing-bat-coronavirus-grant-horrible-precedent-and-might-break-rules-critics-say>.

² See <https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000178-460d-d27f-ad7e-57cd8e6c0000>.

GAO Data Request for the National Institutes of Health (NIH)
Scientific Integrity Engagement 104613

- d. "After terminating EcoHealth Alliance's 2019 project entitled "Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence," the NIH later offered to reinstate the EcoHealth Alliance funding in July 2020 if EcoHealth Alliance agreed to meet certain conditions." (Item 16.)
 - i. "Please provide all of the information presented to NIH from EcoHealth Alliance in response to NIH's conditions for reinstatement." (Item 16a.)
 - ii. "What actions did NIH take based upon the information received? How has the information been used in NIH's investigation?" (Item 16b.)
- e. "Please provide all correspondence and communications between NIH and Columbia University related to federal funding involving the WIV, including email correspondence in April 2020 between Dr. Michael Lauer, Deputy Director of extramural research, and Naomi Schrag of Columbia University." (Item 17.)
- f. "Please provide ledgers or any accounting for dispersion of all NIH federal funding awards that EcoHealth Alliance has sent to the WIV, including through contracts, grants, donations, cooperative agreements, staffing, or any other support or means. In addition, please provide the results and outcomes from the funding and support." (Item 18.)

From: Jacobs, Anna (NIH/OD) [E] [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=E76EEB11DF9A4024B53864FFAC4C4C56-JACOBSAL]
Sent: 6/24/2021 5:27:02 PM
To: Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=90fe9cae30c64cfbb67abd568e882796-lauer]
Subject: RE: GAO and OIG document productions
Attachments: FOIA Requests Related to EcoHealth and WIV 2020-06-24.xlsx

Got it—that's helpful to know.

Thanks,

Anna L. Jacobs, J.D., M.S.
Senior Attorney
HHS Office of the General Counsel
Public Health Division, NIH Branch
31 Center Drive, Bldg. 31, Rm. 2B-50
Bethesda, MD 20892

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From: Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, June 24, 2021 1:24 PM
To: Jacobs, Anna (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Cc: Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: FW: GAO and OIG document productions

Hi Anna— I'm not completely following this, but my druthers (if possible) is that OIG sees everything.

Many thanks, Mike

From: "Yueh, Lena (CDC/OCOO/OGC)" (b) (6)
Date: Thursday, June 24, 2021 at 11:48 AM
To: "Jacobs, Anna (NIH/OD) [E]" <(b) (6)>, "Clark, Tamara (OS/OGC)" (b) (6), "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Lankford, David (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Stein, Meredith (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Cc: "Bundesen, Liza (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: RE: GAO and OIG document productions

Thank you, Anna.

When we learned that OIG was conducting an audit of the EcoHealth grant, Tamara and I reached out to OIG to make sure that NIH documents that had been requested under FOIA could be released without claiming any (b)(7) exemptions (protecting law enforcement information from disclosure). OIG will not be asserting any (b)(7) exemptions in connection

with its audit. OIG did ask NIH to provide it with any FOIA releases related to the EcoHealth grant, if NIH is amenable. So far, approximately 900 pages of records have been released to FOIA requesters, primarily in connection with ongoing FOIA litigation. Approximately 300 more pages are scheduled to be released next week. A lot of the records are heavily redacted because they contain deliberative information. For those who have not seen it, I'm attaching a chart that lists all of the FOIA requests related to the EcoHealth grant and provides a general description of the documents that have been released. We can also provide a copy of the documents that have been released if anyone wants to see them.

I do not have any concerns about providing the publicly released FOIA documents to OIG, but we wanted to get your thoughts on this and want to follow whatever procedures NIH typically follows with this type of request. We have not reached out to the NIH FOIA Office yet because we wanted to touch base with this group first. Please let us know if it would be easier to discuss over the phone and we can set up a call.

Lena Amanti Yueh
Office of the General Counsel
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Office: (404) 639-7122
Cell: (b) (6)

From: Jacobs, Anna (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, June 24, 2021 11:11 AM
To: Clark, Tamara (OS/OGC) (b) (6); Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Lankford, David (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Stein, Meredith (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Cc: Bundesen, Liza (NIH/OD) [E] <(b) (6)> Yueh, Lena (CDC/OCOO/OGC) (b) (6)
Subject: GAO and OIG document productions

Thanks, Tamara and Mike. Tamara, could you also add Lena to the Box folder?

All, I am looping in my other (wonderful) colleague Lena Yueh, from the OGC NCLID, who has been working on the FOIA productions, and who will be working with me, Tamara, and David on the OIG and GAO audits, and specifically, will be reviewing the documents that will be produced to GAO. That would be great if OGC could also have the opportunity to review the documents to be produced to the OIG. We'd be happy to use Box for that as well. Also, for OMA's communications with OGC about the GAO and OIG engagements, that would be great if you could include all four of us (me, Tamara, Lena, and David).

Lena had a discussion with OIG about the audit, as it relates to the FOIA requests, so I'll let her update the group here.

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From: Clark, Tamara (OS/OGC) (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, June 24, 2021 11:04 AM
To: Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Jacobs, Anna (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Lankford, David (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Stein, Meredith (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Cc: Bundesen, Liza (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: RE: GAO on integrity

Thank you! Invitation sent.

Dr. Bundesen – if you don't receive the invitation to the Box folder, please let me know.

From: Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, June 24, 2021 5:07 AM
To: Jacobs, Anna (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Lankford, David (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Stein, Meredith (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Clark, Tamara (OS/OGC) (b) (6)
Cc: Bundesen, Liza (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
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Good morning – thanks for the meeting yesterday. Here is my draft. I have uploaded documents into the Box folder.

Hi Tamara – could you please add my colleague, Dr. Liza Bundesen, to the Box folder? Her email is

(b) (6)

Many thanks!

Mike

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Sent: 6/24/2021 3:37:23 PM
To: Jacobs, Anna (NIH/OD) [E] [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e76eeb11df9a4024b53864ffc4c4c56-jacobsal]; Clark, Tamara (OS/OGC) [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e1c5382ce18b420780cf8be39025b0d9-Tamara.Clar]; Lankford, David (NIH/OD) [E] [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=4f29a9bef672409d967e3aa5fb36e96a-lankford]; Stein, Meredith (NIH/OD) [E] [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e3324d143a8c4975b4f1d405d1a54d14-steinme]
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Subject: Re: GAO and OIG document productions
Attachments: Lauer GAO FY21_ALL_STAFF-#611820-v7-104613__NIH_DATA_INFORMATION_REQUEST_#2_(MAY_14__2021).DOCX

Thanks Anna – Liza is setting up a Box folder for OIG, and we'll include you, Tamara, David, Meredith, and Lena as well.

Mike

From: "Jacobs, Anna (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: Thursday, June 24, 2021 at 11:10 AM
To: "Clark, Tamara (OS/OGC)" (b) (6), "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Lankford, David (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Stein, Meredith (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Cc: "Bunden, Liza (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Yueh, Lena (CDC/OCOO/OGC)" (b) (6)
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Cc: Bundesen, Liza (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: RE: GAO on integrity

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Hi Tamara – could you please add my colleague, Dr. Liza Bundesen, to the Box folder? Her email is (b) (6).

Many thanks!

Mike

GAO ENGAGEMENT: 104613—Scientific Integrity

REQUEST #: 2

DATE REQUESTED: May 14, 2021

DUE DATE: June 4, 2021

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- a. The chain of command or clearance process for these decisions;



- b. How, if at all, the peer review process is involved;



- c. How, if at all, the process changes based on where a grant is in its award period (e.g., converting from Type 1 to Type 2 or 5 or in the middle of its current award period); and



- d. Any pre-determined timeframes (e.g., the amount of time a grantee is given to take corrective action following suspension).

GAO Data Request for the National Institutes of Health (NIH)
Scientific Integrity Engagement 104613

(b) (5)

2. Please provide a copy of the grant file for the 2019 grant titled "Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence," (project number 2R01AI110964-06). Please also provide the following information, if the grant file does not contain it:

- a. A description of the research and how it fit into NIH/NIAID's goals, priorities, and objectives at the time of approval.

(b) (5)

- b. The name(s) of the NIH program manager(s) or officer(s) responsible for overseeing the grants to EcoHealth Alliance and time period(s) of responsibility. (Please include the Grants Management Officer (GMO); Chief Grants Management Officer (CGMO); Scientific Review Officer (SRO); and Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) for the grant in this list.)

(b) (5)

- c. According to the April 2021 *NIH Grants Policy Statement* (p.IIA-12 and IIA-13), there are two types of grants that could possibly contain foreign subcomponents: 1) A domestic grant with a foreign subcomponent; or 2) A consortium/subaward. What type of grant is the grant in question with respect to its inclusion of the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) as a foreign subcomponent?

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(b) (5)

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of suspension, you are instructed to cease providing any funds to Wuhan Institute of Virology.”¹ Please explain whether NIH conducted an investigation into the allegations involving WIV, and if so, please describe the findings of this investigation and provide any documentation associated with this review.

(b) (5)

5. According to the *NIH Grants Policy Statement* (p. IIA-155), a grant recipient may file a grant appeal following an adverse determination. Did EcoHealth Alliance file a grant appeal for the 2019 grant titled "Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence" (project number 2R01AI110964-06)? If so, please provide all documentation related to EcoHealth Alliance's grant appeal and its outcome.

(b) (5)

6. According to *Politico*, on March 18, 2021, the House Committee on Energy and Commerce wrote a letter to NIH Director Collins to “request information, assistance, and needed leadership from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to advance an independent, scientific investigation into the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic.”² GAO is interested in reviewing several of the items that were contained in this request, which are listed below: (*Note: If it is easier for NIH to provide the full document request, as opposed to the individual documents requested here, feel free to do so.*)

- a. “Please provide all correspondence and communications between NIH and EcoHealth Alliance, since January 1, 2020, related to federal funding involving the WIV. The documentation should include, but not be limited to, correspondence between NIH and EcoHealth Alliance dated sometime in April 2020, on July 8, 2020, and sometime in August 2020.” (Item 11.)

(b) (5)

- b. “In April 2020, NIH suspended a 2019 federal award to EcoHealth Alliance, in part, because NIH did not believe the work aligned with “program goals and agency priorities.” Please specify the work that was done by the EcoHealth Alliance that did not align with the agency’s program goals and priorities, and when that work was conducted.” (Item 12.)

¹ See <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2020/04/nih-s-axing-bat-coronavirus-grant-horrible-precedent-and-might-break-rules-critics-say>.

² See <https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000178-460d-d27f-ad7e-57cd8e6c0000>.

GAO Data Request for the National Institutes of Health (NIH)
Scientific Integrity Engagement 104613

(b) (5)

- ii. "Was an evaluation of EcoHealth Alliance's work and whether it aligned with the agency's goals and priorities conducted by the NIH before the award was issued? If yes, please provide any related documentation. If not, why not?" (Item 12a.)

(b) (5)

- c. "In April 2020 correspondence with EcoHealth Alliance, NIH wrote that it "received reports that the Wuhan Institute of Virology...has been conducting research at its facilities in China that pose serious bio-safety concerns." What are the sources for those reports to NIH and what were the specific allegations reported?" (Item 13.)

(b) (5)

- d. "After terminating EcoHealth Alliance's 2019 project entitled "Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence," the NIH later offered to reinstate the EcoHealth Alliance funding in July 2020 if EcoHealth Alliance agreed to meet certain conditions." (Item 16.)
 - i. "Please provide all of the information presented to NIH from EcoHealth Alliance in response to NIH's conditions for reinstatement." (Item 16a.)

(b) (5)

- ii. "What actions did NIH take based upon the information received? How has the information been used in NIH's investigation?" (Item 16b.)

(b) (5)

- e. "Please provide all correspondence and communications between NIH and Columbia University related to federal funding involving the WIV, including email correspondence in April 2020 between Dr. Michael Lauer, Deputy Director of extramural research, and Naomi Schrag of Columbia University." (Item 17.)

(b) (5)

- f. "Please provide ledgers or any accounting for dispersion of all NIH federal funding awards that EcoHealth Alliance has sent to the WIV, including through

GAO Data Request for the National Institutes of Health (NIH)
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contracts, grants, donations, cooperative agreements, staffing, or any other support or means. In addition, please provide the results and outcomes from the funding and support.” (Item 18.)

(b) (5)

From: Jacobs, Anna (NIH/OD) [E] [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=E76EEB11DF9A4024B53864FFAC4C4C56-JACOBSAL]
Sent: 6/24/2021 5:14:21 PM
To: Stein, Meredith (NIH/OD) [E] [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e3324d143a8c4975b4f1d405d1a54d14-steinme]; Clark, Tamara (OS/OGC) [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e1c5382ce18b420780cf8be39025b0d9-Tamara.Clar]; Lankford, David (NIH/OD) [E] [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=4f29a9bef672409d967e3aa5fb36e96a-lankford]; Yueh, Lena (CDC/OCOO/OGC) [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=c81aa35314954970a6a6ba68404cb49f-osh6.CDC]
CC: Bundesen, Liza (NIH/OD) [E] [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=3cded900576a49aea461d26e93bddac3-lbundesen]; Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=90fe9cae30c64cfbb67abd568e882796-la uerm]
Subject: RE: GAO and OIG document productions
Attachments: Lauer GAO FY21_ALL_STAFF-#611820-v7-104613_NIH_DATA_INFORMATION_REQUEST_#2_(MAY_14__2021).DOCX; FOIA Requests Related to EcoHealth and WIV 2020-06-24.xlsx; RE: GAO and OIG document productions

Thanks, Meredith. I agree that separate Box folders for the OIG and GAO engagements is a good idea.

On your question about whether we can leverage the already collected information, are you asking whether we could internally look through the documents that were collected for the FOIA requests to identify and use the documents that speak to GAO's question 6a (pasted below), or are you asking whether we could give GAO all of the FOIA documents and tell them that the documents requested for 6a are in the FOIA productions? I presume the former, but let me know if you have something else in mind. I ask this given OIG's request for the FOIA productions.

Either way, I am not as familiar with the FOIA documents as Lena is, so I wonder if Lena could let us know whether the documents requested in 6a (pasted below) are in the documents that have been collected and/or produced for the FOIA requests and litigation? If you do not know, would the NIH FOIA office be in a better position to answer that question?

Question 6a asks: ""Please provide all correspondence and communications between NIH and EcoHealth Alliance, since January 1, 2020, related to federal funding involving the WIV. The documentation should include, but not be limited to, correspondence between NIH and EcoHealth Alliance dated sometime in April 2020, on July 8, 2020, and sometime in August 2020."

*Anna L. Jacobs, J.D., M.S.
Senior Attorney
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Public Health Division, NIH Branch
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Bethesda, MD 20892*

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(b) (6)

NOTICE: The contents of this message and any attachments may be privileged and confidential. Please do not disseminate without the approval of the Office of the General Counsel. If you are not an intended recipient, or have received this message in error, please delete it without reading it and please do not print, copy, forward, disseminate, or

otherwise use this information. Also, please notify the sender that you have received this communication in error. Your receipt of this message is not intended to waive any applicable privilege.

From: Stein, Meredith (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, June 24, 2021 12:48 PM
To: Jacobs, Anna (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Clark, Tamara (OS/OGC) (b) (6); Lankford, David (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Cc: Bundesen, Liza (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Yueh, Lena (CDC/OCOO/OGC) (b) (6); Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: RE: GAO and OIG document productions

Hi Anna, I let Sasha Simanich and Tiffany Brown know to include you, David, Tamara, and Lena on meetings and communications for the OIG audit about EHA. Yes, of course, we will allocate time to have OGC review the consolidated draft response prior to submitting to the OIG.

I think a separate BOX site would be a good solution to share the files prior to submitting documents to the OIG. We used BOX for a NHBLI audit that worked well for the volumes of documentation.

Anna, I am thinking (b) (5). I reviewed Lena's spreadsheet of the FOIA items and think we can leverage the already collected information. What do you think?

Thank you,
Meredith

From: Jacobs, Anna (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, June 24, 2021 11:11 AM
To: Clark, Tamara (OS/OGC) (b) (6); Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Lankford, David (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Stein, Meredith (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Cc: Bundesen, Liza (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Yueh, Lena (CDC/OCOO/OGC) (b) (6)
Subject: GAO and OIG document productions

Thanks, Tamara and Mike. Tamara, could you also add Lena to the Box folder?

All, I am looping in my other (wonderful) colleague Lena Yueh, from the OGC NCLID, who has been working on the FOIA productions, and who will be working with me, Tamara, and David on the OIG and GAO audits, and specifically, will be reviewing the documents that will be produced to GAO. That would be great if OGC could also have the opportunity to review the documents to be produced to the OIG. We'd be happy to use Box for that as well. Also, for OMA's communications with OGC about the GAO and OIG engagements, that would be great if you could include all four of us (me, Tamara, Lena, and David).

Lena had a discussion with OIG about the audit, as it relates to the FOIA requests, so I'll let her update the group here.

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From: Clark, Tamara (OS/OGC) (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, June 24, 2021 11:04 AM
To: Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Jacobs, Anna (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Lankford, David (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Stein, Meredith (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Cc: Bundesen, Liza (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: RE: GAO on integrity

Thank you! Invitation sent.

Dr. Bundesen – if you don't receive the invitation to the Box folder, please let me know.

From: Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, June 24, 2021 5:07 AM
To: Jacobs, Anna (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Lankford, David (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6);
Stein, Meredith (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Clark, Tamara (OS/OGC) (b) (6)
Cc: Bundesen, Liza (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: GAO on integrity

Good morning – thanks for the meeting yesterday. Here is my draft. I have uploaded documents into the Box folder.

Hi Tamara – could you please add my colleague, Dr. Liza Bundesen, to the Box folder? Her email is

(b) (6)

Many thanks!

Mike

GAO ENGAGEMENT: 104613—Scientific Integrity

REQUEST #: 2

DATE REQUESTED: May 14, 2021

DUE DATE: June 4, 2021

Description of Request(s):

1. Please describe and provide any documentation that exists illustrating NIH's processes for suspending and terminating a grant and reinstating grant funds. In your descriptions, please include information about:

- a. The chain of command or clearance process for these decisions;

(b) (5)



- b. How, if at all, the peer review process is involved;

(b) (5)



- c. How, if at all, the process changes based on where a grant is in its award period (e.g., converting from Type 1 to Type 2 or 5 or in the middle of its current award period); and

(b) (5)



- d. Any pre-determined timeframes (e.g., the amount of time a grantee is given to take corrective action following suspension).

GAO Data Request for the National Institutes of Health (NIH)
Scientific Integrity Engagement 104613

(b) (5)

2. Please provide a copy of the grant file for the 2019 grant titled "Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence," (project number 2R01AI110964-06). Please also provide the following information, if the grant file does not contain it:

- a. A description of the research and how it fit into NIH/NIAID's goals, priorities, and objectives at the time of approval.

(b) (5)

- b. The name(s) of the NIH program manager(s) or officer(s) responsible for overseeing the grants to EcoHealth Alliance and time period(s) of responsibility. (Please include the Grants Management Officer (GMO); Chief Grants Management Officer (CGMO); Scientific Review Officer (SRO); and Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) for the grant in this list.)

(b) (5)

- c. According to the April 2021 *NIH Grants Policy Statement* (p.IIA-12 and IIA-13), there are two types of grants that could possibly contain foreign subcomponents: 1) A domestic grant with a foreign subcomponent; or 2) A consortium/subaward. What type of grant is the grant in question with respect to its inclusion of the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) as a foreign subcomponent?

(b) (5)

3. According to the *NIH Grants Policy Statement* (p. I-43), other NIH, HHS, and federal agency staff (e.g., Office of the Inspector General (OIG) and the Office of Research Integrity (ORI)) coordinate with the GMO, when necessary. Which offices and officials were involved in the suspension and cancellation of the 2019 grant titled "Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence" (project number 2R01AI110964-06)? Please describe the date and nature of each office and officials' involvement.

(b) (5)

4. According to *SCIENCE*, on April 19, 2020, NIH Deputy Director for Extramural Research Michael Lauer wrote to EcoHealth Alliance and referenced allegations that COVID-19 was released from the WIV, stating: "While we review these allegations during the period

of suspension, you are instructed to cease providing any funds to Wuhan Institute of Virology.”¹ Please explain whether NIH conducted an investigation into the allegations involving WIV, and if so, please describe the findings of this investigation and provide any documentation associated with this review.

(b) (5)

5. According to the *NIH Grants Policy Statement* (p. IIA-155), a grant recipient may file a grant appeal following an adverse determination. Did EcoHealth Alliance file a grant appeal for the 2019 grant titled "Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence" (project number 2R01AI110964-06)? If so, please provide all documentation related to EcoHealth Alliance's grant appeal and its outcome.

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6. According to *Politico*, on March 18, 2021, the House Committee on Energy and Commerce wrote a letter to NIH Director Collins to “request information, assistance, and needed leadership from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to advance an independent, scientific investigation into the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic.”² GAO is interested in reviewing several of the items that were contained in this request, which are listed below: (*Note: If it is easier for NIH to provide the full document request, as opposed to the individual documents requested here, feel free to do so.*)

- a. “Please provide all correspondence and communications between NIH and EcoHealth Alliance, since January 1, 2020, related to federal funding involving the WIV. The documentation should include, but not be limited to, correspondence between NIH and EcoHealth Alliance dated sometime in April 2020, on July 8, 2020, and sometime in August 2020.” (Item 11.)

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- b. “In April 2020, NIH suspended a 2019 federal award to EcoHealth Alliance, in part, because NIH did not believe the work aligned with “program goals and agency priorities.” Please specify the work that was done by the EcoHealth Alliance that did not align with the agency’s program goals and priorities, and when that work was conducted.” (Item 12.)

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² See <https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000178-460d-d27f-ad7e-57cd8e6c0000>.

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- ii. "Was an evaluation of EcoHealth Alliance's work and whether it aligned with the agency's goals and priorities conducted by the NIH before the award was issued? If yes, please provide any related documentation. If not, why not?" (Item 12a.)

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 - i. "Please provide all of the information presented to NIH from EcoHealth Alliance in response to NIH's conditions for reinstatement." (Item 16a.)

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- e. "Please provide all correspondence and communications between NIH and Columbia University related to federal funding involving the WIV, including email correspondence in April 2020 between Dr. Michael Lauer, Deputy Director of extramural research, and Naomi Schrag of Columbia University." (Item 17.)

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- f. "Please provide ledgers or any accounting for dispersion of all NIH federal funding awards that EcoHealth Alliance has sent to the WIV, including through

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

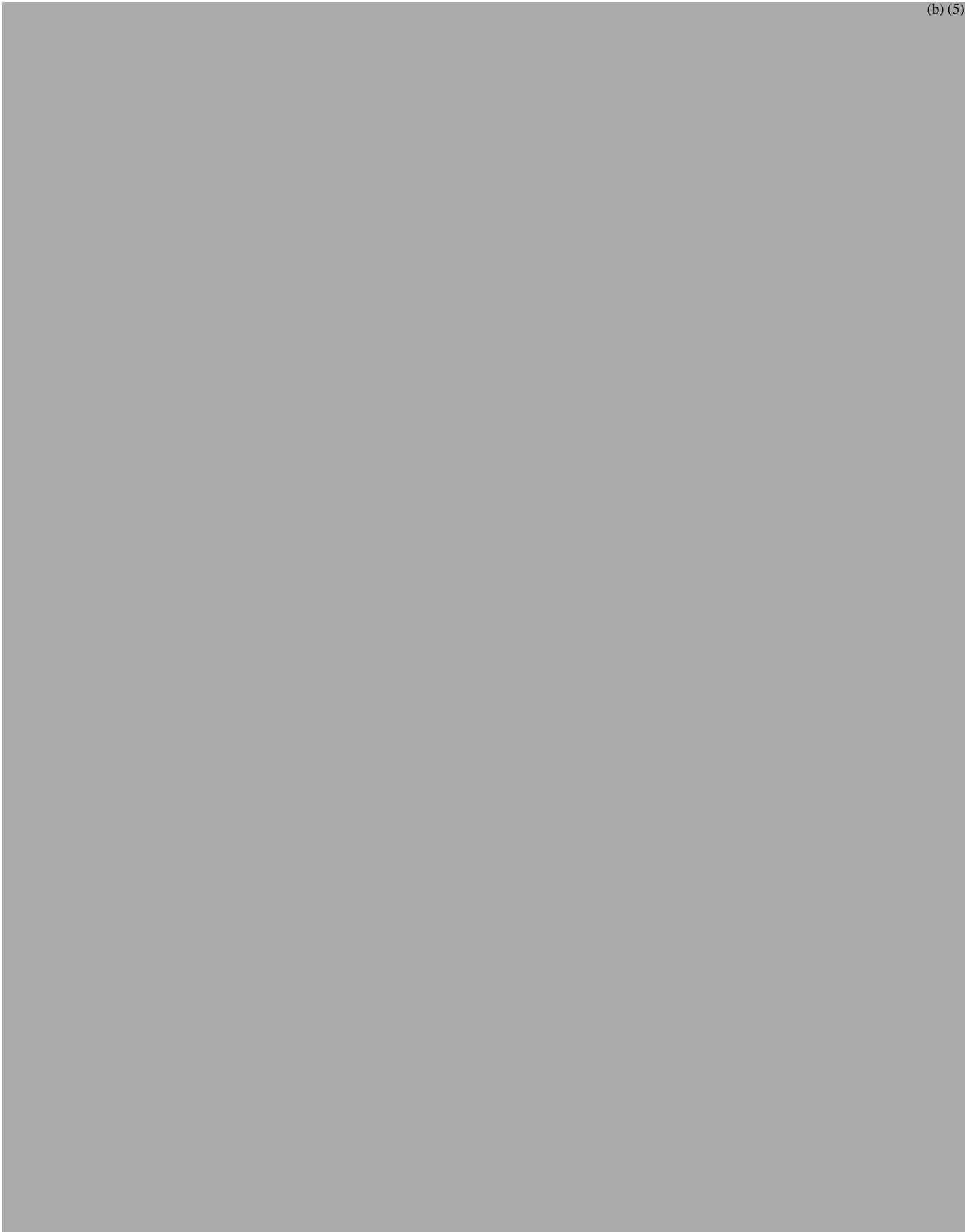
Public Health Service

National Institutes of Health
National Institute of Allergy
and Infectious Diseases
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

(b) (5)



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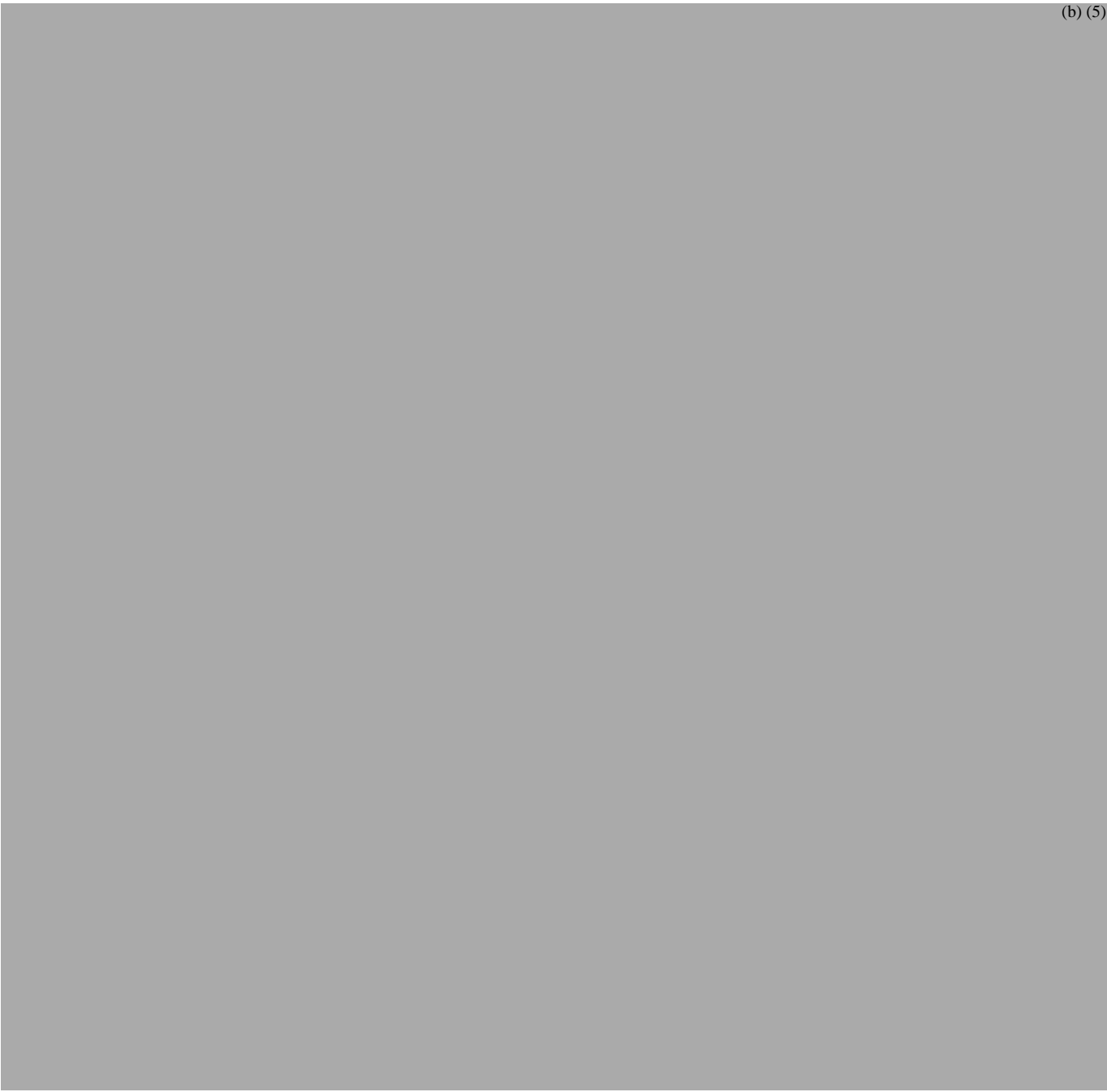


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National Institutes of Health
National Institute of Allergy
and Infectious Diseases
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

XX October 2020

Drs. Aleksei Chmura and Peter Daszak
EcoHealth Alliance, Inc.
460 W 34th St
Suite 1701
New York, NY 10001

Re: NIH Grant R01AI110964

Dear Drs. Chmura and Daszak:

I am following up on Mr. Krinsky's August 13, 2020 letter on behalf of EcoHealth Alliance, Inc. ("EcoHealth") responding to NIH's suspension of grant R01AI110964, which funds the project *Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence* (the "Project"). Per my letter of July 8, 2020, NIH suspended the grant because we have concerns that WIV, who previously served as a subrecipient of the Project, had not satisfied safety requirements that applied to its subawards with EcoHealth, and that EcoHealth had not satisfied its obligations to monitor the activities of its subrecipient to ensure compliance. EcoHealth objected to the suspension on the grounds that WIV has no *current* connection to the Project or EcoHealth's research, and EcoHealth had not issued any subawards in connection with the Grant *at the time of the suspension*.

The fact that EcoHealth does not currently have a subrecipient relationship with WIV and had not issued subawards to WIV at the time of suspension does not absolve EcoHealth of any past non-compliance with the terms and conditions of award for grant R01AI110964. While EcoHealth did not issue a subaward to WIV for year 6 of the grant, WIV served as a subrecipient for years 1 through 5. NIH awarded EcoHealth grant R01AI110964 in 2014, with a project period of June 1, 2014 through June 30, 2024, as renewed. In EcoHealth's grant application, EcoHealth listed Drs. Zheng Li Shi and Xing Yi Ge of WIV as co-investigators and senior/key personnel. It stated that "Drs. Shi, Zhang, and Daszak have collaborated together since 2002 and have been involved in running joint conferences, and shipping samples into and out of China." EcoHealth listed WIV as a Project/Performance Site Location. In describing WIV's facilities, EcoHealth described WIV as China's premier institute for virological research" and touted WIV's "fully equipped biosafety level 3 laboratory" and "a newly opened BLS-4 laboratory." In support of the application, Dr. Zheng Li Shi's personal statement indicated that "My lab will be responsible for diagnosis, genomics and isolation of coronavirus from wild and domestic animals in Southern China and for analyzing their receptor binding domains." The application stated that "Wuhan Institute of Virology and the Wuhan University Center for Animal Experiment BSL-3 lab have an Internal Biosafety Committee and are accredited BSL-2 and BSL 3 laboratories. All

experimental work using infectious material will be conducted under appropriate biosafety standards. Disposal of hazardous materials will be conducted according to the institutional biosafety regulations.”

EcoHealth requested funding specifically for activities to be carried out by WIV. NIH awarded EcoHealth a total of \$749,976 for WIV’s work in the following annual amounts for years 1 through 5:

	-Yr 1	-Yr 2	-Yr 3	-Yr 4	-Yr 5
Total Direct Costs	\$123,699	\$128,718	\$147,335	\$147,335	\$147,335
F&A Costs @ 8%	\$9,896	\$10,297	\$11,787	\$11,787	\$11,787
TOTAL COSTS	\$133,595	\$139,015	\$159,122	\$159,122	\$159,122

As stated in the Notices of Award for each budget period of the grant, the awards were subject to terms and conditions, which include the NIH Grants Policy Statement (GPS) and applicable HHS grant regulations. As I indicated in my letter of July 8, 2020, as a term and condition of award, EcoHealth was required to “monitor the activities of the subrecipient as necessary to ensure that the subaward is used for authorized purposes, in compliance with Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the subaward . . .” 45 C.F.R. § 75.352(d). See also, 45 C.F.R. § 75.342(a) (“The non-Federal entity is responsible for oversight of the operations of the Federal award supported activities.”). Moreover, EcoHealth was required to “Establish and maintain effective internal control over the Federal award that provides reasonable assurance that the non-Federal entity is managing the Federal award in compliance with Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the Federal award[.]” 45 C.F.R. § 75.303(a). The Notice of Award stated that as a term and condition of award, “Research funded under this grant must adhere to the [CDC/NIH Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories (BMBL)].” Moreover, the NIH GPS provides that NIH grant recipients are expected to provide safe working conditions for their employees and foster work environments conducive to high-quality research. NIH GPS, Section 4. The terms and conditions of the grant award flow down to subawards to subrecipients, so these terms applied to WIV. 45 C.F.R. § 75.101.

As I stated, NIH has concerns of non-compliance with terms and conditions of award—namely, that WIV had not satisfied safety requirements under the award, and that EcoHealth Alliance had not satisfied its obligations to monitor the activities of its subrecipient to ensure compliance. Accordingly, NIH suspended all activities related to R01AI110964, pursuant to 45 C.F.R. § 75.371, Remedies for Noncompliance, which permits suspension of award activities in cases of non-compliance, and the NIH GPS, Section 8.5.2, which permits NIH to take immediate action to suspend a grant when necessary to protect the public health and welfare.

In my letter of July 8, 2020, I provided EcoHealth with the opportunity to object and to provide information and documentation challenging the suspension. Specifically, I sought information and materials that speak to WIV’s lab safety and EcoHealth’s oversight of its subrecipient, and an inspection of WIV’s laboratory records and facilities. I indicated that as a specific condition of award, during the period of suspension, EcoHealth Alliance may not allow research under this project to be conducted and that no funds from grant R01AI110964 may be provided to or expended by EcoHealth Alliance or any subrecipients.

EcoHealth objected to the requests on the grounds that “NIAID is not authorized under 45 CFR §§ 75.371, 75.205, and 75.207, entitled *Specific Award Conditions*, to impose, *inter alia*, conditions that consist of demands for information regarding entities that are neither subrecipients of grant funds nor project affiliates.”

As a granting agency, NIH is required to “manage and administer the Federal award in a manner so as to ensure that Federal funding is expended and associated programs are implemented in full accordance with U.S. statutory and public policy requirements: Including, but not limited to, those protecting public welfare [and] the environment[.]” 45 C.F.R. § 75.300(a). In addition to seeking information that speaks to compliance with terms and conditions of award, NIH is entitled to “make site visits as warranted by program needs” (45 C.F.R. § 75.342). As a term and condition of award, NIH “must have the right of access to any documents, papers, or other records of the non-Federal entity which are pertinent to the Federal award, in order to make audits, examinations, excerpts, and transcripts” (45 C.F.R. § 75.364); and must have “timely and reasonable access to the non-Federal entity’s personnel for the purpose of interview and discussion related to such documents” (*id.*). These requirements flow down to subawards to subrecipients. 45 C.F.R. § 75.101. “Non-Federal entities must comply with requirements in [45 C.F.R. Part 75] regardless of whether the non-Federal entity is a recipient or subrecipient of a Federal award.” 45 C.F.R. 75.101. Furthermore, as the grantee, EcoHealth was required to have in place, “A requirement that the subrecipient permit the pass-through entity and auditors to have access to the subrecipient’s records and financial statements as necessary for the pass-through entity to meet the requirements of this part.” 45 C.F.R. § 75.352(a)(5). Moreover, NIH is required to permit the opportunity for recipients to object and provide information and documentation challenging a suspension. 45 C.F.R. § 75.374. Accordingly, NIH is justified in seeking the materials, information, and a site visit specified in my letter of July 8, 2020.

In addition to objecting to NIH’s authority to seek the materials, information, and a site visit, EcoHealth has responded that it lacks knowledge or information regarding the requests; that it is not in possession, custody, or control of the specified items; and that it has no authority to grant NIAID and the U.S. National Academy of Sciences access to WIV’s facility to conduct an inspection. EcoHealth’s responses have not satisfied NIH’s concerns that EcoHealth had failed to adequately monitor the compliance of its subrecipient, and that the subrecipient, WIV, had failed to comply with safety requirements.

Notwithstanding this, NIH is providing an additional opportunity for EcoHealth to provide information and documentation challenging these concerns of non-compliance. Accordingly, NIH requests the following information and materials, which must be complete and accurate:

1. Provide copies of all EcoHealth Alliance – WIV subrecipient agreements as well as any other documents and information describing how EcoHealth Alliance monitored WIV’s compliance with the terms and conditions of award, including with respect to biosafety.
2. Describe EcoHealth’s efforts to evaluate WIV’s risk of noncompliance with Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the subaward.
3. Provide copies of all WIV biosafety reports from June 1, 2014 through May 31, 2019.

During the ongoing period of suspension, NIH will continue to review the activities under this award, taking into consideration information provided by EcoHealth Alliance, to further assess whether EcoHealth Alliance and WIV complied with the terms and conditions of award, including compliance with other terms and conditions of award that may be implicated. We remind you that during the period of suspension, EcoHealth Alliance may not allow research under this project to be conducted. Further, no funds from grant R01AI110964 may be provided to or expended by EcoHealth Alliance or any subrecipients; all such charges are unallowable. It is EcoHealth Alliance's responsibility as the recipient of this grant award to ensure that the terms of this suspension are communicated to and understood by all subrecipients. EcoHealth Alliance must provide adequate oversight to ensure compliance with the terms of the suspension. Any noncompliance of the terms of this suspension must be immediately reported to NIH. EcoHealth Alliance will receive a revised Notice of Award from NIAID indicating the continued suspension of these research activities and funding restrictions as a specific condition of award.

Please note that this action does not preclude NIH from taking additional corrective or enforcement actions pursuant to 45 C.F.R. Part 75, including, but not limited to, terminating the grant award or disallowing costs. NIH may also take other remedies that may be legally available if NIH discovers other violations of terms and conditions of award on the part of EcoHealth Alliance or WIV.

Sincerely,

Michael S Lauer, MD
NIH Deputy Director for Extramural Research
Email: Michael.Lauer@nih.gov

cc: Dr. Erik Stemmy (NIAID)
Ms. Emily Linde (NIAID)

From: Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=90FE9CAE30C64CFBB67ABD568E882796-LAUERM]
Sent: 10/23/2020 11:32:05 AM
To: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=02e22836b5ff4e9988e3770cfc7ee770-tabak]
CC: Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=90fe9cae30c64cfbb67abd568e882796-lauer]
Subject: Agenda for our 1:1 later today
Attachments: Agenda 1 on 1 with Larry Tabak 10 21 20.docx; Tabak 10 19 20.zip

Hi Larry – here’s what I have so far. Since our time is limited, I’ve highlighted the items that are most time sensitive.

Many thanks!

Mike

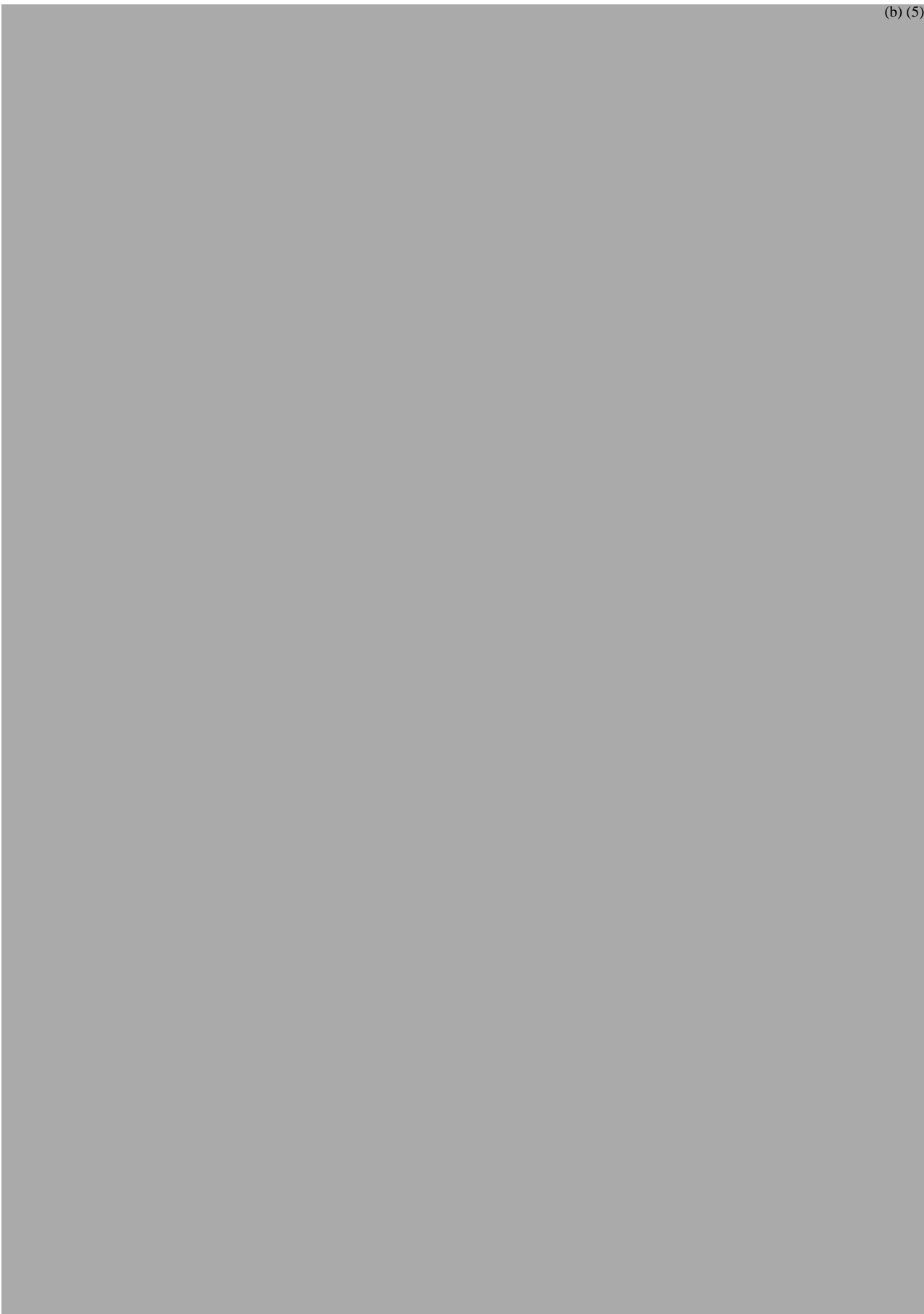
Agenda 1 on 1 with Larry Tabak on 10 23 20

Hi Larry – look forward to seeing you at later today (Friday). Here's what I have so far:

- COVID-19
 - WIV – updated draft letter – OPERA, OGC, cleared by Bob Charrow, ready to send

(b) (5)







Many thanks!
Best, Mike

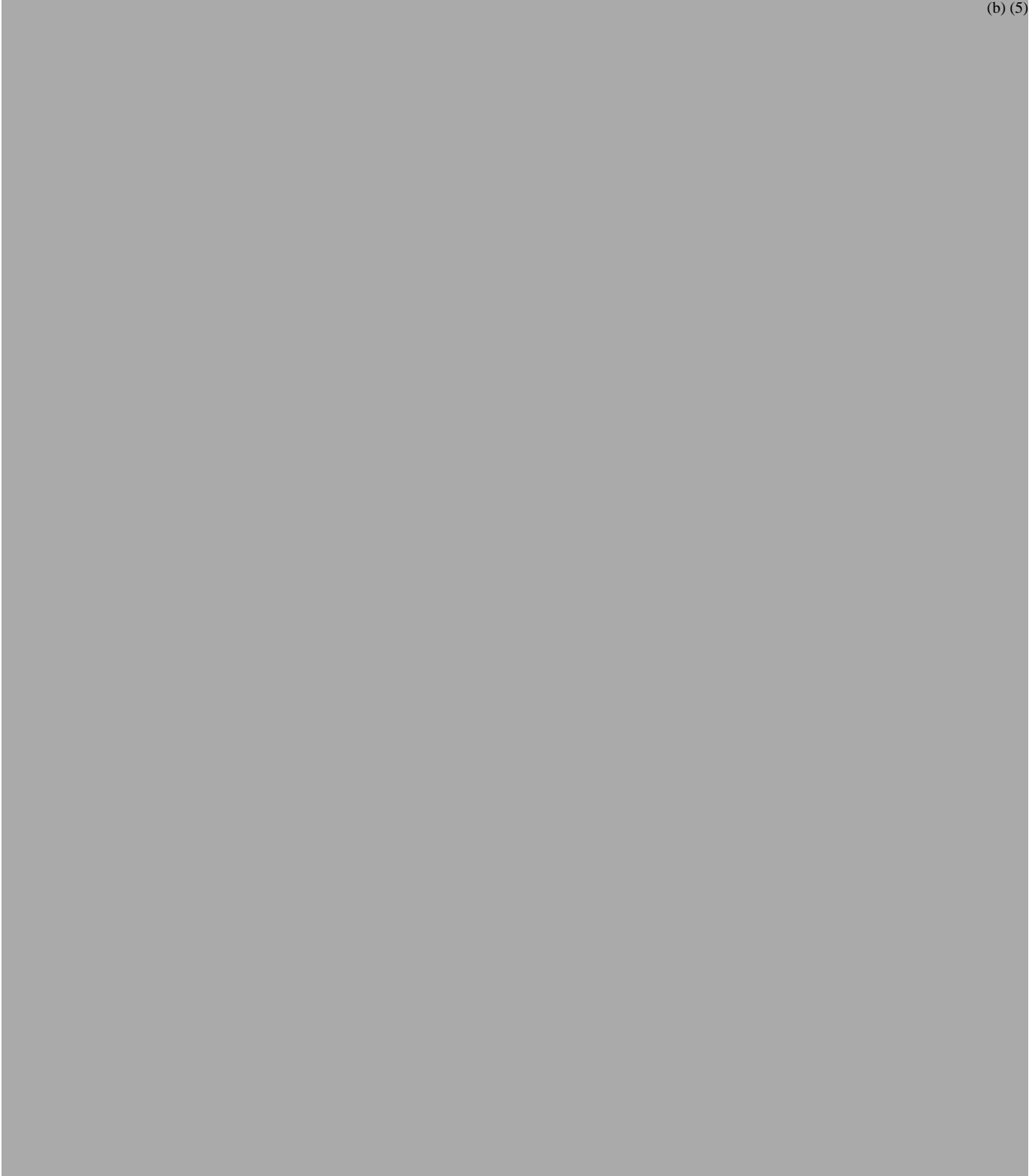


DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

National Institutes of Health
National Institute of Allergy
and Infectious Diseases
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

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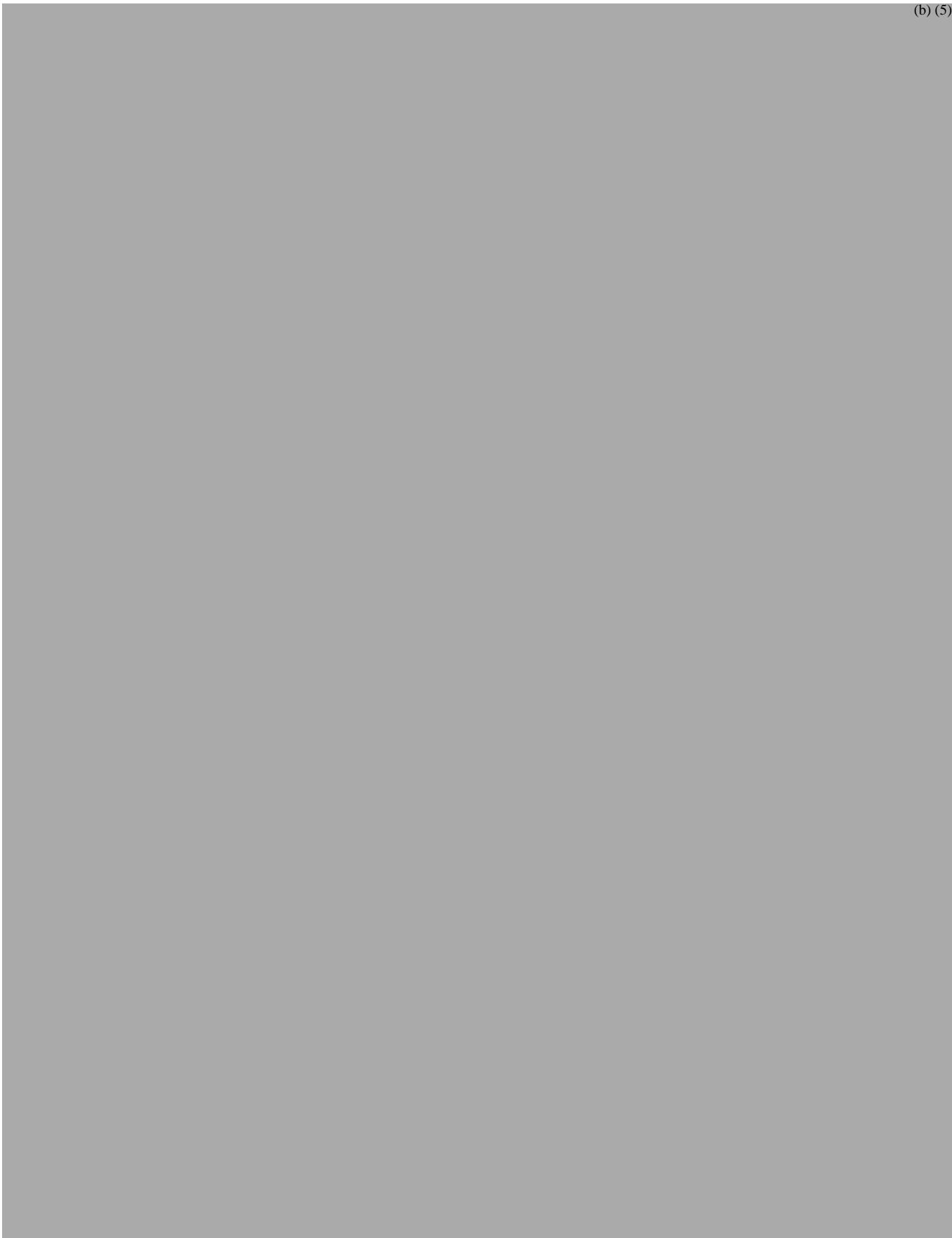
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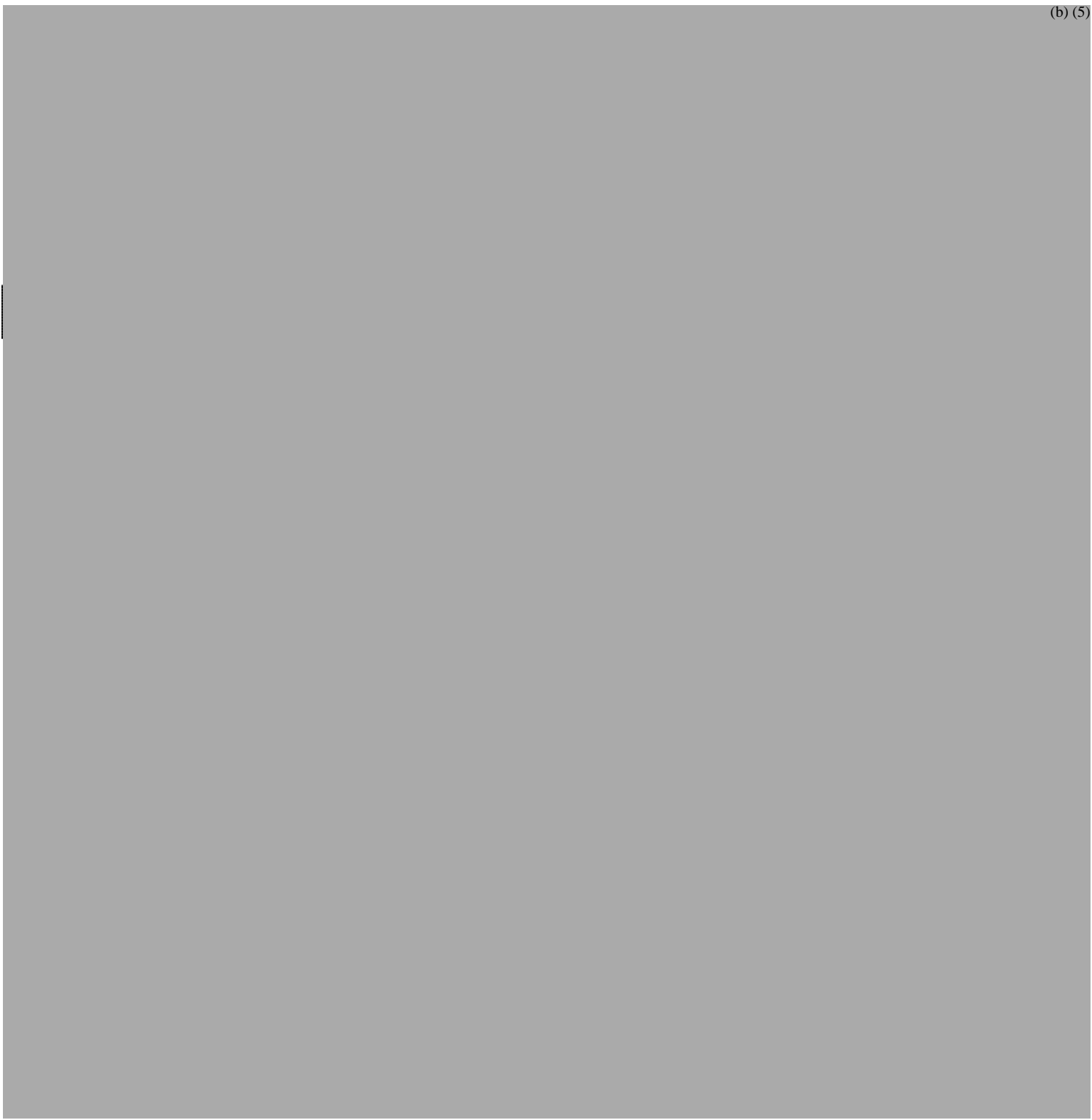


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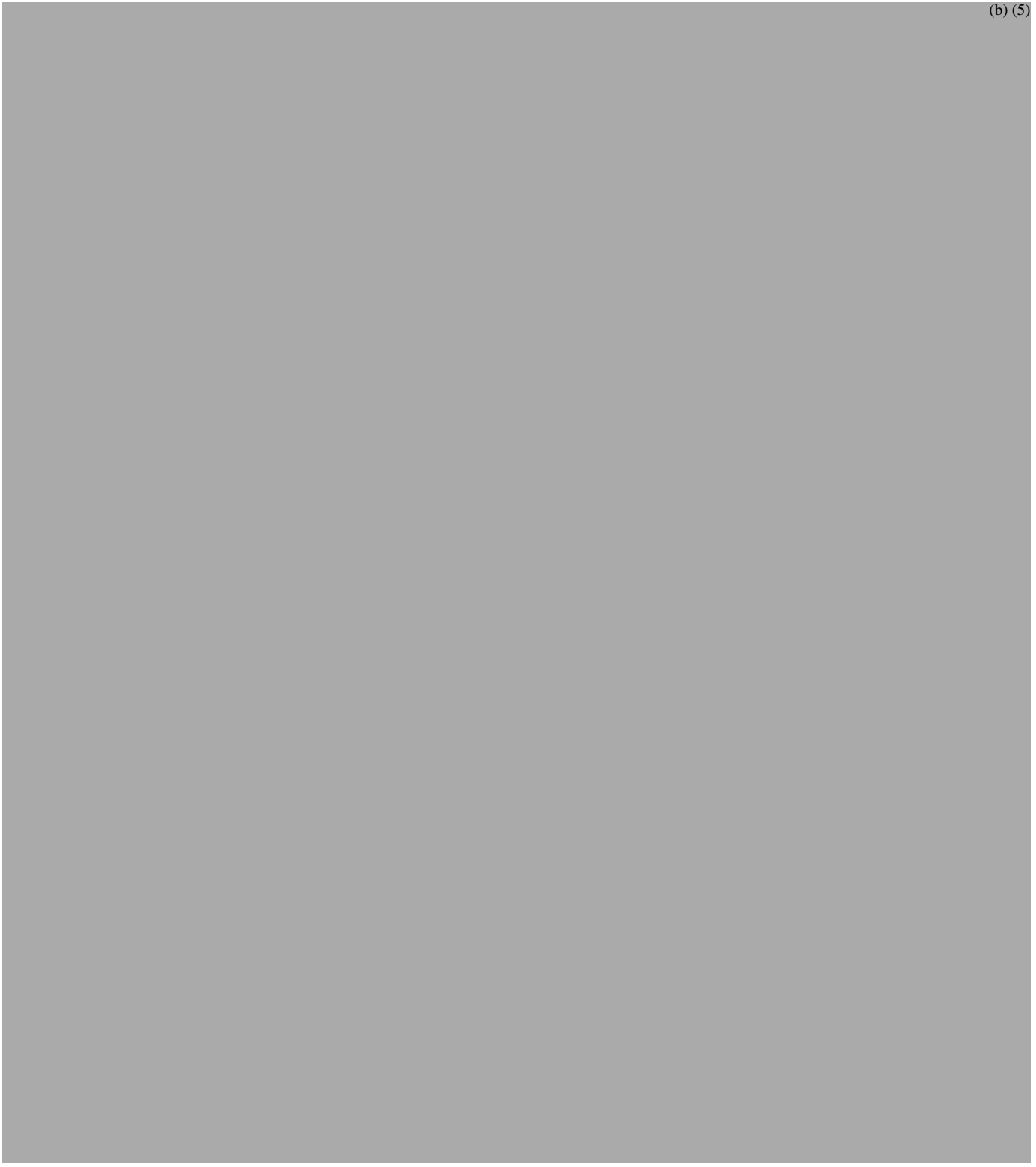


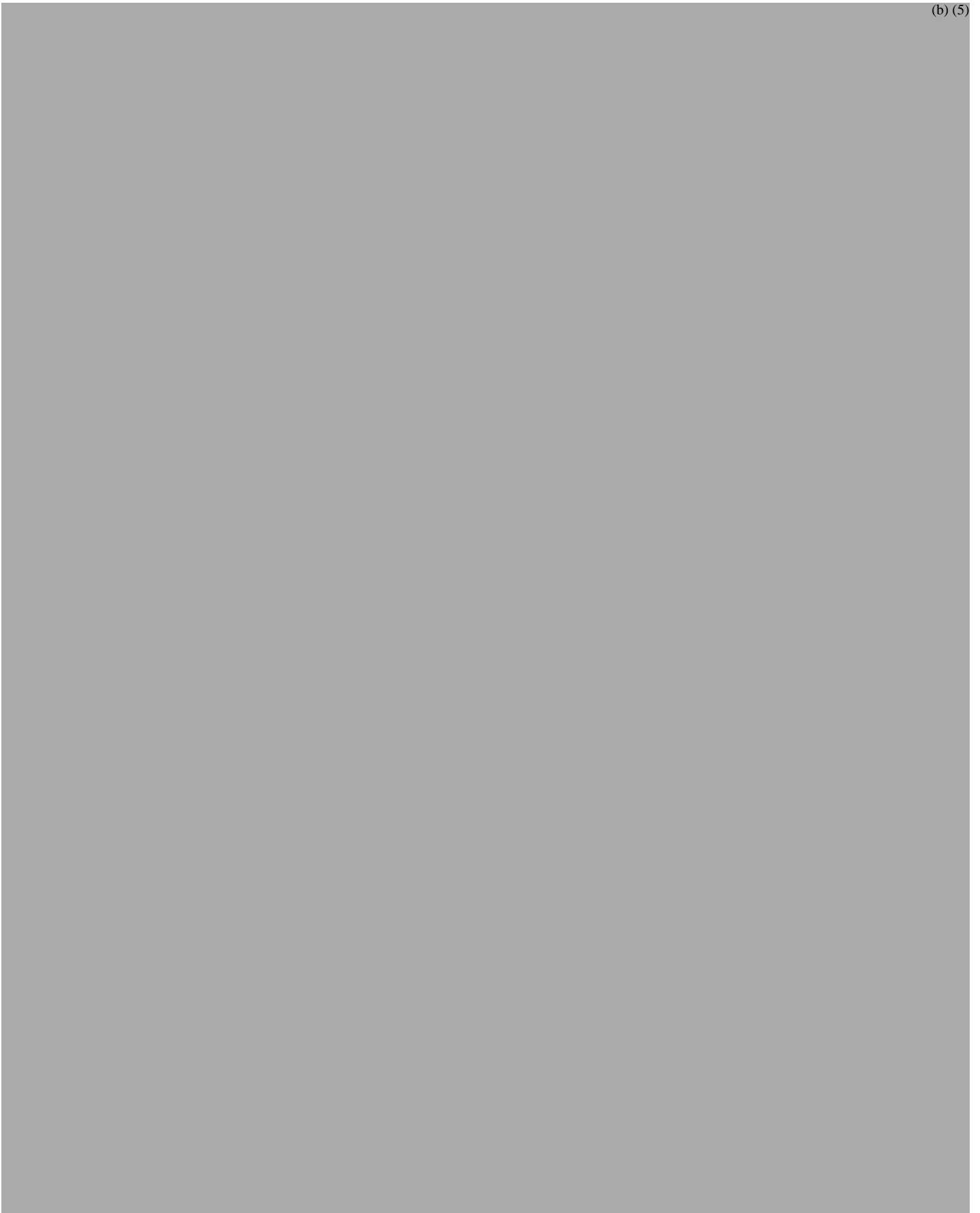
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

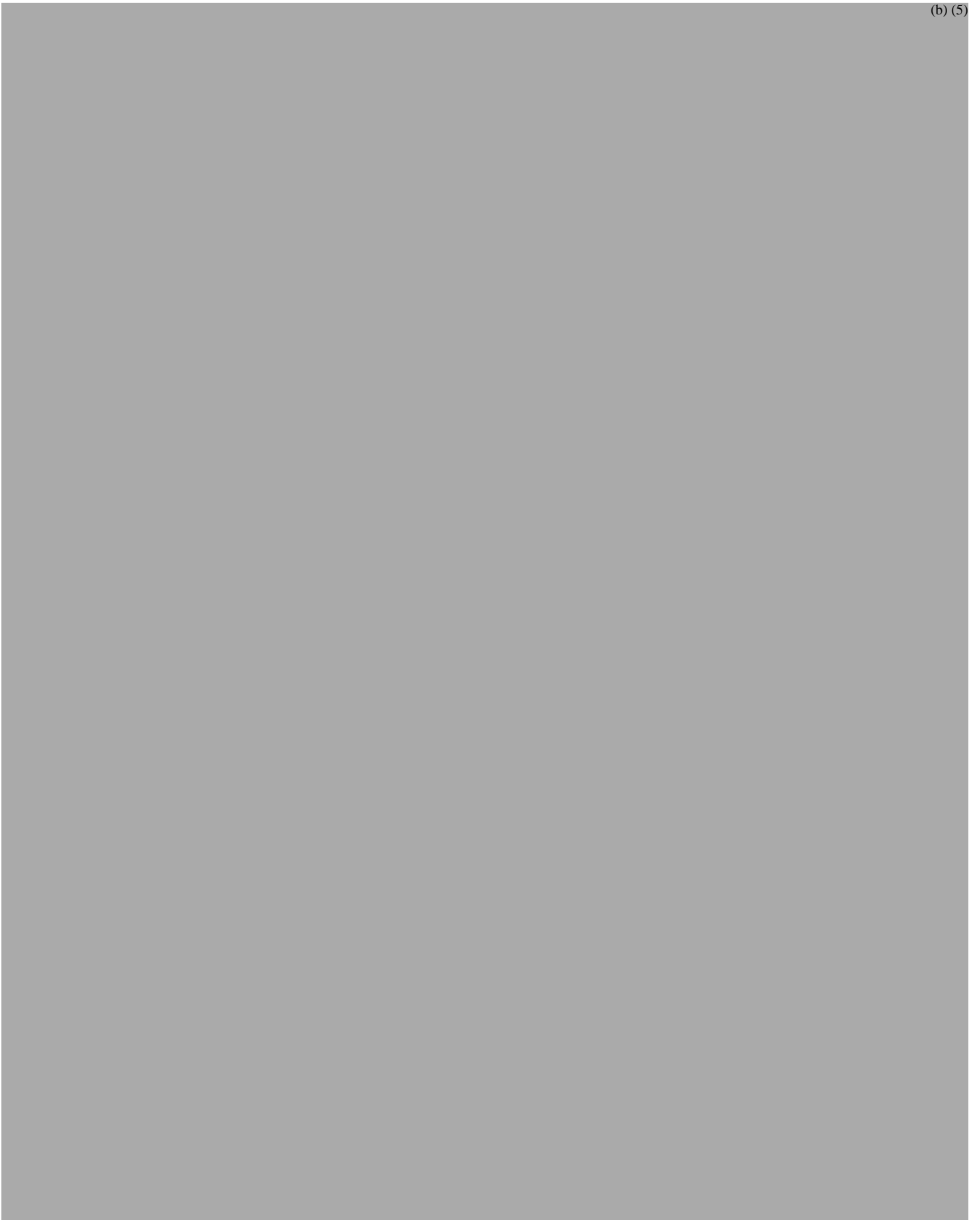
Public Health Service

National Institutes of Health
National Institute of Allergy
and Infectious Diseases
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

(b) (5)









From: [Holden Thorp](#)
To: [Collins, Francis \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
Subject: Editorial posting later today
Date: Friday, May 8, 2020 9:25:04 AM
Attachments: [0515Editorial Holden D.pdf](#)

Francis,

Wanted to give you a heads up that I will be posting at 2 pm today an editorial (attached) about the controversy surrounding the origins of the coronavirus and the actions of the Chinese and US governments. It does question the withdrawal of the grant to the EcoHealth Alliance but also expresses my support for you and your colleagues and the difficult situation you are in.

Thank you for all you are doing for us all. We are excited to publish your vaccine paper on Monday!

Holden

Holden Thorp
Editor-in-Chief
Science Family of Journals
American Association for the Advancement of Science
1200 New York Ave NW
Washington, DC. 20005
Landline: 202-326-6505
Cell: (b) (6)
hthorp@aaas.org

Both/and problem in an either/or world

Before the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, nuance and candor from governments were in short supply. Now they are almost nonexistent. Protecting the world from severe acute respiratory syndrome–coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) can't happen without international scientific collaboration. Progress on vaccines in China and the United States should make us optimistic that science will solve this problem, but the actions of the governments involved are not equally inspiring.

The saber rattling by China and the United States is unnecessary, as the broad impacts of the pandemic in both countries are shared. Isn't that worth curbing nationalistic tendencies? Apparently not to China, which has rebuffed efforts to understand the origin of SARS-CoV-2. And not to the Trump administration either, which can't grasp that it's possible to question the actions of the Chinese government about the early days of the pandemic while embracing collaboration with Chinese science. In a worldwide pandemic, isn't it best for everyone to cooperate and try to save all of humanity together?

We need a both/and approach, but we are living in an either/or world.

The latest setback is the decision by the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) to terminate the grant "Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence" to Peter Daszak of the nonprofit EcoHealth Alliance, who, with NIH approval, shared one in five grant dollars with Shi Zhengli, a top coronavirologist at China's Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV). We are asked to believe that the highly ranked project was killed because even though it sought to prevent the next bat-originating human pandemic, it did not "align" with the NIH's goals and priorities. This comes while the administration is propping up and circulating the unproven theory that the virus escaped from the Shi lab at the WIV, when the science is clearly in favor of zoonotic transfer in nature.

The genetic sequence of SARS-CoV-2 rules out a lab-engineered virus. And although escape from a lab of a naturally occurring virus that was isolated from bat specimens collected by scientists cannot be completely eliminated as the origin, the closest laboratory version of the virus (published by Shi and collaborators) is separated from SARS-CoV-2 by at least 20 years of evolutionary time. SARS-CoV-2 would have had to have

escaped from the lab decades ago—or, another virus that was brought into the lab and not documented somehow escaped. Either way, only a chain of unlikely events could explain laboratory involvement.

The U.S. administration instructed its intelligence community to investigate this matter. Last week, these intelligence agencies ruled out that the virus was lab-engineered. They have not reached any conclusions about whether a virus might have escaped from the lab. But in the absence of evidence, the administration will likely turn uncertainty into "truth"—a lab escape—that serves its narrative.

Even in the face of the intelligence report to the contrary, U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo initially said that "the best experts so far seem to think it was man-made." Apparently, the best experts are neither scientists nor intelligence experts. Pompeo claims to have additional evidence that we are unlikely to see, if it even exists.

What would we have learned from the research that got squashed? Daszak and his colleagues were working to pinpoint hotspots in southern China with a high risk of bat-to-human transfer (most likely with an intermediary species involved) of coronaviruses. It might

be good to find those hotspots if we don't want to go through all of this again. And as important, the bat coronavirus sequences identified at the WIV were used in lab tests of the drug remdesivir, currently the only scientifically supported treatment for COVID-19. Vanderbilt University's Mark Denison, who helped advance the drug, said of the Alliance's research, "Our work on remdesivir absolutely would not have moved forward" without it.

I feel for, and admire, our scientific colleagues in the U.S. federal government. They are giving all they've got to protect the American public and others under impossible circumstances. Before the pandemic, the NIH went overboard to deal with foreign influence in U.S. research because of the nationalistic pressure it was under. Now, the agency is trying to dodge political lunges from an administration that puts political success above human life.

The tyranny of either/or is that we only survive on our own. The promise of both/and is that the world is imperfect but we're all in this together.

—H. Holden Thorp



H. Holden Thorp
Editor-in-Chief,
Science journals.
hthorp@aaas.org; @
hhholdenthorp

"The saber rattling by China and the United States is unnecessary..."

From: [Tabak, Lawrence \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
To: [Collins, Francis \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#); [Fauci, Anthony \(NIH/NIAID\) \[E\]](#)
Cc: [Erbelding, Emily \(NIH/NIAID\) \[E\]](#); [Fenton, Matthew \(NIH/NIAID\) \[E\]](#); [Marston, Hilary \(NIH/NIAID\) \[E\]](#); [Lauer, Michael \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#); [Schwetz, Tara \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#); [Wolinetz, Carrie \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
Subject: HEADS UP: Wuhan lab research
Date: Wednesday, April 15, 2020 10:58:58 AM
Importance: High

Francis, Tony -

The **WH has strongly embraced concerns** raised by Congressman Gaetz who is publicly [criticizing](#) HHS/NIH for funding the Wuhan laboratory's bat research. Here's this quote from another article: "I'm disgusted to learn that for years the US government has been funding dangerous and cruel animal experiments at the Wuhan Institute, which may have contributed to the global spread of coronavirus, and research at other labs in China that have virtually no oversight from US authorities." This is a large multi- country study **with Wuhan being one site**. The principal investigator, Peter Daszak, is based in NY at Ecohealth Alliance, Inc

Project Number: 2R01AI110964-06	Contact PI / Project Leader: DASZAK, PETER
Title: UNDERSTANDING THE RISK OF BAT CORONAVIRUS EMERGENCE	Awardee Organization: ECOHEALTH ALLIANCE, INC.

https://projectreporter.nih.gov/project_info_description.cfm?aid=9819304&icde=49588715&ddparam=&ddvalue=&ddsub=&cr=1&csb=default&cs=ASC&pball=
The 3.7M dollar figure is the total over 6 years to all sites which include (several in) China, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Myanmar. (b) (5)

[REDACTED]. It is in year 6 of a total of 10 year.

More by phone.

Larry

From: [Wojtowicz, Emma \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
To: [Collins, Francis \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#); [Tabak, Lawrence \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#); [Wolinetz, Carrie \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#); [Hallett, Adrienne \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#); [Shapiro, Neil \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
Cc: [Wood, Gretchen \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#); [McManus, Ayanna \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#); [Schwetz, Tara \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#); [Higgins, Lauren \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#); [Berkson, Laura \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#); [Myles, Renate \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#); [Fine, Amanda \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
Subject: RE: News clips, releases, QA for Senate HELP Committee hearing
Date: Wednesday, May 6, 2020 3:05:53 PM
Attachments: [Media tough QA 5.6.20.docx](#)

+QA

From: Wojtowicz, Emma (NIH/OD) [E]
Sent: Wednesday, May 6, 2020 3:02 PM
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Shapiro, Neil (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Cc: Wood, Gretchen (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); McManus, Ayanna (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Schwetz, Tara (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Higgins, Lauren (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Berkson, Laura (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: News clips, releases, QA for Senate HELP Committee hearing

Hi Dr. Collins-

In preparation for tomorrow's Senate HELP Committee hearing, please see attached for the following documents:

- News clips on topics of particular interest. Please see the Bulletin Intelligence daily news clips for the most recent coverage of COVID-19: <https://nih.bulletinintelligence.com//>
- Recent relevant news releases and media availabilities
- QA on the EcoHealth Alliance/Wuhan Institute of Virology grant based on the media questions that we've received to date and our statement on NHPs used in research

Thank you-
Emma

Emma Wojtowicz
Public Affairs Specialist
National Institutes of Health
Tel: (b) (6)
Email: emma.wojtowicz@nih.gov
Web: <http://www.nih.gov>

NIH . . . Turning Discovery Into Health

Tough Media QAs on WIV and NHPs As of May 6, 2020

Topic: Wuhan Institute of Virology Grant

Funding

Did the NIH fund or indirectly fund the Wuhan lab and, if so, how much money went to the Wuhan lab and what was the rationale for the program?

EcoHealth Alliance Inc. is the grantee organization, which made sub-awards to Wuhan Institute of Virology (Wuhan), East China Normal University (Shanghai), the Institute of Pathogen Biology (Beijing), and Duke-NUS Medical School (Singapore). The grant funding totaled \$3.4 million over 6 years and was distributed across all sites. The grant was terminated on April 24, 2020. Publicly available information about the grant to EcoHealth Alliance Inc. is available on NIH RePORTER at this [link](#). Information about the distribution to sub-awardees is not publicly available. We recommend you contact EcoHealth Alliance Inc. to get this information.

How much money from the \$3.7 million awarded to EcoHealth Alliance went to the infectious disease lab in Wuhan?

Publicly available information about the grant to EcoHealth Alliance Inc. is available on NIH RePORTER at this [link](#). Information about the distribution to sub-awardees is not publicly available. We recommend you contact EcoHealth Alliance Inc. to get this information since they made the subawards.

Would it be accurate to say that the initial grant was appropriated under the Obama administration and a renewal application was approved in 2019 by the NIH under the Trump administration?

The grant budget began in 2014 and ended in 2019. More information about the grant can be found on NIH [RePORTER link](#). In the "History" tab, funding for each year of the grant is provided. In the "Details" tab in the "Other Information" section, start dates and end dates for the grant are provided. For your background, generally, grants are made for a period of time, for example 5 years, and funding is allocated every year based on a variety of performance reports the grantee is required to submit to NIH, which are due at specific times during the life cycle of a grant award.

Has NIH been directed to cut all funding to this lab?

NIH can confirm that the grant to EcoHealth Alliance, Inc. has been terminated. NIH does not discuss internal deliberations on grant terminations.

Is the project done, and has any money due to Wuhan been withdrawn/put on hold, etc?

NIH can confirm that the grant to EcoHealth Alliance, Inc. has been terminated. Upon termination the funds were restricted in the HHS Payment Management System, and the funds are no longer available to EcoHealth Alliance. The remaining balance of \$369,819.56 will be returned to NIH.

Grant overview

What was the motivation and purpose of the grant?

Most emerging human viruses come from wildlife, and these represent a significant threat to public health and biosecurity in the United States and globally, as demonstrated by the SARS epidemic of 2002-03, and the current COVID-19 pandemic. The grant you are referencing is a multi-site, multi-country project supporting research that aims to understand what factors allow coronaviruses, including close relatives to SARS, to evolve and jump into the human population and cause disease (called a spillover event). Specifically, the project includes studying viral diversity in animal (bats) reservoirs, surveying people that live in high-risk communities for evidence of bat-coronavirus infection, and conducting laboratory experiments to analyze and predict which newly discovered viruses pose the greatest threat to human health.

Details on the grant are available on this NIH RePORTER [link](#).

Was this grant unique? What other countries or labs received funding?

More information about the grant can be found at the NIH RePORTER [link](#). If you select the “Similar Projects” tab, you will see other projects funded by NIH that may be similar.

Subawards

How do you define a “sub-awardee” and who chooses/approves them?

This NIH webpage has information on subawards: <https://www.niaid.nih.gov/grants-contracts/refreshersubawar>

What role did the NIH play in deciding how the money is allocated?

This NIH webpage has information on subawards: <https://www.niaid.nih.gov/grants-contracts/refreshersubawar>

In general, NIH recipients are allowed a certain degree of latitude to rebudget within and between budget categories to meet unanticipated needs and to make other types of post-award changes. Some changes may be made at the recipient's discretion as long as they are within the limits established by NIH. In other cases, NIH prior written approval may be required before a recipient makes certain budget modifications or undertakes particular activities.

Did the WIV subaward have to be cleared by the State Department to be included in the grant to EcoHealth?

NIH policy requires U.S. Department of State (DOS) approval for all grants, cooperative agreements, and contracts that are issued to foreign institutions, subawards, as well as all foreign components. For this grant, State Department clearance for all sites in China (including WIV) was submitted to and approved by DOS in May 2019.

I also understand that EcoHealth submitted annual reports on the status of their research that were reviewed by a panel of experts. Can NIH share those reports?

NIH requires grantees to submit a variety of reports which are due at specific times during the life cycle of a grant award. All reports must be accurate, complete, and submitted on time. More

information about post-award monitoring and reporting is available on this page: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/post-award-monitoring-and-reporting.htm> Such reports are not publicly available. You would need to submit a FOIA request for the reports.

EcoHealth Alliance said the Wuhan Institute of Virology was included as a collaborator on the grant - and NIH and State Dept have a process to approve such collaborators, so does that mean the NIH signed off?

This NIH webpage has information on subawards: <https://www.niaid.nih.gov/grants-contracts/refresher-subawar>

In general, NIH recipients are allowed a certain degree of latitude to rebudget within and between budget categories to meet unanticipated needs and to make other types of post-award changes. Some changes may be made at the recipient's discretion as long as they are within the limits established by NIH. In other cases, NIH prior written approval may be required before a recipient makes certain budget modifications or undertakes particular activities.

Do you happen to know whether any of the sites are continuing work on the project despite the termination of the grant?

You would need to ask EcoHealth Alliance directly about their research.

Would there be any way to tell from the NIH RePorter site whether EcoHealth Alliance or any of the sites have requested funding for a new grant related to this project or would that be something I would have to ask them specifically?

Information on grant applications is not publicly available as they contain proprietary information. NIH makes information available on grants it awards on [NIH Report](#) and [NIH Reporter](#).

Decision to Terminate

What was the reason the grant was terminated?

NIH does not discuss internal deliberations on grant terminations.

Was this done at the direction of officials within the White House, or any other branches of the Administration (ie. outside of NIH)? If so, which?

Did the White House communicate with NIH/NIAID about cutting funding? Who made the decision to do so?

Critics list a number of reasons they say the decision was unwarranted -- what is NIH's response to each of these:

- very little of the grant was being directed to the Wuhan Institute of Virology
- many researchers say the preponderance of evidence suggests the Wuhan Institute of Virology was not responsible for unleashing the coronavirus causing the current pandemic accidentally or otherwise.
- the research project is fundamental to scientific efforts to address the current pandemic as well to foresee and prepare for future ones -- and EcoHealth was the

only U.S. research group working in China. So termination of the project will cause the U.S. to lose crucial access to data and significantly set back research and future preparedness.

NIH does not discuss internal deliberations on grant terminations.

The Office of the Director of National Intelligence issued a [statement](#) on their investigation into the origins of the outbreak. Any questions related to the origins of the outbreak should be directed to ODNI.

Was the NIH decision politically motivated because of allegations that EcoHealth had subcontracted to the Wuhan Institute of Virology?

NIH does not discuss internal deliberations on grant terminations.

The Office of the Director of National Intelligence issued a [statement](#) on their investigation into the origins of the outbreak. Any questions related to the origins of the outbreak should be directed to ODNI.

If the concern was that the PI was working with the Wuhan Institute of Virology, and NIH was informed that in fact no 2019 or 2020 grant money had flowed to WIV, nor would it, why did the entire grant need to be cancelled?

NIH does not discuss internal deliberations on grant terminations.

The New York Post has reported that funding was cut because NIH is investigating the Wuhan lab where the pandemic may have begun, and Eco Health Alliance was using taxpayer dollars to support that lab. Is that accurate?

NIH does not discuss internal deliberations on grant terminations.

The Office of the Director of National Intelligence issued a [statement](#) on their investigation into the origins of the outbreak. Any questions related to the origins of the outbreak should be directed to ODNI.

EcoHealth Alliance says the experiments under that grant and the previous grant couldn't have violated the NIH moratorium on gain of function studies because NIH approved them. Is that accurate? Did they violate the moratorium?

The study we funded is described in the RePORTER entry shared with you: https://projectreporter.nih.gov/project_info_description.cfm?aid=9819304&icde=49588715&ddparam=&ddvalue=&ddsub=&cr=1&csb=default&cs=ASC&pball=. The research supported under grant characterized the function of newly discovered bat spike proteins and naturally occurring pathogens and did not involve the enhancement of the pathogenicity or transmissibility of the viruses studied. Therefore, after review NIAID determined the awards were not subject to either the Gain-of-Function Research Funding Pause or its successor, the [DHHS Framework for Guiding Funding Decisions about Proposed Research Involving Enhanced Potential Pandemic Pathogens](#).

Reinstatement/what comes next

Are there plans to reinstate the funding in some fashion?

No, the grant was terminated.

Letters to EcoHealth Alliance

Why did Mike Lauer write that the grant was being terminated “for convenience” if in fact it was being terminated “for cause” as you indicate below?

NIH does not discuss internal deliberations on grant terminations. Under no circumstance did Mike Lauer or NIH indicate the grant was being terminated “for convenience”.

Could he also state how the grant which last year was deemed of high priority for public health (it scored in the 3rd percentile) had become instead a danger to public health such that its cancellation was necessary “to protect the public health and welfare from the effects of a serious deficiency”? How exactly was the grant’s execution threatening the US public health and welfare?

NIH does not discuss internal deliberations on grant terminations.

Why did you [Mike Lauer] ask for a list of all Chinese participants in the project days before the decision to cut funding?

NIH does not discuss internal deliberations on grant terminations.

I have seen communications suggesting that the decision was rooted in concerns that EcoHealth funding was going to the Wuhan Institute of Virology. Is this true? Also, is it common to revoke funding effective immediately and demand funds be remitted? How often has that happened and what scenarios has it happened in during the past?

NIH does not discuss internal deliberations on grant terminations.

Topic: Non-Human Primates in Research

Response from NIH, COVID language highlighted:

Non-human primates (NHPs) continue to be of immense value in research to understand and improve human health, including the development of treatments and interventions. NHPs have similar developmental paths in neuroanatomy, physiology, genetics, and neural functions, as well as cognition, emotion and social behavior as humans. Thus, research with NHPs has been critical for advancing our ability to treat stroke, post-traumatic stress disorder, Parkinson’s disease, OCD, a vaccine for Ebola, and much more. **Currently NHP research is helping investigators more clearly understand COVID-19 pathogenesis, which is informing the development of vaccines and antiviral drugs for the disease. NHP research is also guiding a more focused search for effective COVID-19 treatments in people.** NIH supports studies involving monkeys to supplement the studies of human beings and, in some cases, stand in when human studies aren’t possible.

Importantly, scientists can study animals in ways they cannot study people. Rigorous experiment studies must be conducted in controlled environments to yield meaningful results. Such studies cannot be carried out in humans. Animal studies conducted in the laboratory allow scientists to control factors such as temperature, humidity, light, diet, or medications that might affect the outcome of the experiments. These rigorous controls enable a more precise understanding of the

biological factors contributing to disease and provide greater certainty about experimental outcomes when developing treatments and preventions.

All animals used in federally funded research, whether non-human primates or not, are protected by laws, regulations, and policies to ensure the smallest possible number of subjects and the greatest commitment to their comfort. Fulfilling these protections is a collaborative effort between NIH, federally supported scientific investigators, and research institutions. NIH-funded investigators must also submit a scientific justification for the use of animals in research to a local Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). The IACUC has policies and procedures in place to evaluate the appropriateness of the species, the number of animals requested and consideration of alternatives to the use of animals, appropriateness of care, and plans for minimizing pain or distress. OLAW also investigates all allegations concerning animal welfare and appropriate animal care in NIH-funded studies.

NIH will continue to carry out and support animal research conducted in accordance with the highest scientific and ethical principles.

To learn more about NIH's policies on animals in research please visit:

<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/air/index.htm>

From: [Donlon, John](#)
To: [Collins, Francis \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
Subject: Flabbergasted
Date: Friday, May 1, 2020 2:55:58 PM

Dear Francis,

You do not know me, but I did work at NIH (10/1974 - 6/1978) and also in 1986. And, in 1977 got to meet and be good chums with the late George Summer.

Ordinarily, I would have not be contacting you, but I am shocked by the decision of NIH to axe grant with China on research relating to bats and viral transmission.

With good wishes and regards.

John Donlon

From: [zh zh](#)
To: [Collins, Francis \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
Subject: SARS-2 Origin and NIH Funding.
Date: Monday, May 11, 2020 3:29:30 AM

Re: SARS-2 Origin and NIH Funding.

From: Zhiyan-Le.

To: Dr. Collins.

Date: 2020-05-09.

I have learned that NIH stopped funding for EcoHealth Alliance and its bat-coronavirus projects with PRC Wuhan Institute of Virology.

That is a right decision. As an American citizen, I want my tax money to benefit American people first. However, the president of EcoHealth Alliance, Dr. Daszak (and his Chinese partners), has done the opposite, since this SARS-2 outbreak.

For example, Dr. Daszak has repeatedly said to the public that there is no such thing as manmade corona-virus. PRC state-run media have been heavily quoting his message and labeling different views as conspiracy theory. As you may already know, the PRC government has censured SARS-2 origin academic research, i.e., not open to the public.

Fact is, manmade corona-virus is a popular business in China and around the world. One example:

Patent ID: CN102690336A.

Patent Title: Bat SARS-like coronavirus spike protein immunity determining area and preparation method and application thereof.

Inventor: Shi Zhengli, etc. Filed at 2012-06-11, by Wuhan Institute of Virology, PRC.

URL:

<https://patentimages.storage.googleapis.com/6d/52/89/cdfed23ddb51c/CN102690336A.pdf>

The patent claim content: by applying genetic engineering tools, to make a sort of bat-SARS-like S-Gene and its proteins that can be engineered and reproduced for corona-virus usages at any time.

Following the SARS-2 outbreak, the PRC Patent Office confirmed that the patent exists and is available. Please see: <http://www.cnipa.gov.cn/docs/2020-02/20200214204433302086.pdf> (Note: Most of websites in PRC contain cloud-computing mul/spy-ware.).

As we know, patent/genetic engineering and its products are manmade. Natural things cannot be patented by law.

More over, taking the patent S-Gene (4126 bp) as the root/query, compare it with SARS-2 and SARS-like corona-virus, the result is as the following:



Regarding the corona-virus S-Gene, its protein stays much more stable than that in RNA format. Thus, it would be absolutely normal that the HuB(2006) has a high identity percent and, along with time goes by, the others have lower identities with the patent genome.

The question is: going to details, it clearly appears that the other identical gaps are at the same location with the same ratio, as well as have the same saw-toothed curves. That is, a uniformed mutation among human, bats and lab corona-virus has happened just in a few years.

A natural process re mutation is random. In a short period of few years, a uniformed genetic mutation among different hosts or holders can happen only by artificial, or manmade, work. As mentioned before, the corona-virus made by Wuhan Institute of Virology can directly jump to humans, but that of natural animals such as of bat cannot.

It is worth of noting that WIV1-CoV can directly jump to humans. Also, the Patent S-Gene and WIV1 S-Gene have higher identity than that of Patent x RaTG13. That is, WIV1 is much more significant in terns of the virus transmission and spreading.

Figure 1: Uniformed Mutation and Gap between WIV1 and WIV02.



That is why I have mentioned that, if someday someone found RaTG13 were genetically modified, I would not be surprised.

As a long term co-author with Dr. Shi Zhengli of Wuhan Institute of Virology, Dr. Daszak of course knows, not speaking of that his co-writing papers have cited, the said info/data..

Therefore, re the SARS-2 is artificial or manmade, what Dr. Daszak has said is seriously misleading, or, knowingly misleading.

I have also learned that, in an interview program, Dr. Fauci responded that there is no scientific evidence to tell the SARS-2 was made in a Chinese lab. The PRC state-run media has taken his words as a strong proof to tell the world that PRC government has nothing to be accountable re the global SARS-2 pandemic.

I think it is better for him to keep silent. Reason: Dr. Fauci is a US government employee and, at the same time, he is a senior member of the Vaccine Board of the Bill Gates Foundation (a serious conflict of interest problem). Just like that in software business, i.e., computer virus and anti-virus go together, vaccine business can survive because there are virus-caused diseases, whether the virus comes from nature or lab. Such business or personal relationship has already been under doubts, not to mention that, without authorization, no NIH employee may speak under hi/her job title. Otherwise, I wish to know if NIH authorized Dr. Fauci to say so.

Thank you for your attention.

Attachment:

1]: The PRC Patent Office Confirmed that CN102690336A Exists and is Available.

抗击新型冠状病毒肺炎专利信息研报

国家知识产权局抗击新型冠状病毒肺炎专利信息分析课题组

2020年2月14日

<http://www.cnipa.gov.cn/docs/2020-02/20200214204433302086.pdf>

(一) 涉及的冠状病毒种类、疫苗技术分类及免疫表位

1. 涉及的冠状病毒种类: SARS 疫苗 87 项, MERS 疫苗 10 项、HCoV-HKU1/NL63/ 蝙蝠冠状病毒疫苗 5 项, 冠状病毒减毒疫苗设计 1 项。结果显示: **有多项专利公开了源自人群和野生动物的新型冠状病毒或新型毒株**, CN102690336 中提及的蝙蝠冠状病毒与此次新型冠状病毒同源性最高, 研究了其可以作为抗原的 S 蛋白/基因片段。如果能对发现的新种类冠状病毒及时分析和研究, 对于疫情出现后的疫苗研发应有相当的帮助。

2. 抗体的筛选制备方法的改进

(1) 抗体表位的选择上以 S、NP 蛋白为主

CN102690336A 将蝙蝠 SARS 样冠状病毒的刺突蛋白 (S 蛋白) **切割成多段**, 免疫动物后, 利用完整 S 蛋白的单克隆抗体鉴定小鼠抗 S 单克隆抗体表位, 并制备相应的检测用抗体。CN100504391C 中**利用基因工程重组抗原**, 获得了 SARS 冠状病毒 S、N、M、E 蛋白, 并制

备了偶联上述蛋白的抗体的免疫微球。JP2017145246A 以 MERS 冠状病毒最为保守且明显区别于其他冠状病毒的 NP 蛋白肽作为免疫原制备检测抗体。WO2019066389A1 将 MERS 冠状病毒的 NP 蛋白的 N 端和 C端构建融合蛋白，免疫小鼠并筛选单克隆抗体，用于 MERS病毒感染的检测。上述对血清抗原的检测相对于血清抗体的检测，能够在检测对象病毒感染初期即作出诊断，在病毒暴发高峰阶段半定量地区分阳性或阴性样本。#

2]: The Patent CN102690336A.

蝙蝠sars样冠状病毒刺突蛋白免疫决定区及制备方法和用途

CN102690336A

Inventor周鹏韩正刚石正丽

2012-06-11 Application filed by 中国科学院武汉病毒研究所

<https://patentimages.storage.googleapis.com/6d/52/89/cdfed23ddb51c/CN102690336A.pdf>

Abstract: :

本发明公开了蝙蝠SARS样冠状病毒刺突蛋白免疫决定区及制备方法和用途，其步骤是：A、以蝙蝠SARS样冠状病毒S基因为模板设计引物，扩增；B、通过上述扩增后得到的片段用BamHI和XhoI酶切后连接于表达载体pET32a上，并测序确定无误；C、将重组质粒纯化后，转化BL21感受态细胞，挑取单克隆进行培养，在终浓度为0.3mMIPTG的培养基中30度诱导；收集菌体超声波破碎后进行纯化，用HisTag纯化试剂盒进行纯化，纯化后在SDS-PAGE中检测蛋白的纯度，得到目的蛋白。该方法简单易行，操作方便，易于生产；该肽段具有最好的免疫原性，在鉴定小鼠抗S单克隆抗体表位中的应用方法特异性好，操作简单，易于重复。

Description

蝙蝠SARS样冠状病毒刺突蛋白免疫决定区及制备方法和用途

技术领域

[0001] 本发明属于生物技术领域，更具体涉及一种蝙蝠SARS样冠状病毒刺突蛋白(Rp3-S)免疫决定区，同时还涉及一种蝙蝠SARS样冠状病毒刺突蛋白(Rp3-S)免疫决定区的制备方法，还涉及一种蝙蝠SARS样冠状病毒刺突蛋白(Rp3-S)免疫决定区的用途。

发明内容

[0005] 本发明的目的是在于提供了一种蝙蝠SARS样冠状病毒(Rp3)刺突蛋白(Rp3_S)免疫决定区蛋白，其氨基酸序列为SEQ ID NO. 1所示。该决定区信息为首次鉴定，可用于蝙蝠SARS样冠状病毒的特异性的诊断。

[0006] 本发明的另一个目的是在于提供了一种蝙蝠SARS样冠状病毒刺突蛋白(Rp3_S)免疫决定区蛋白的制备方法。该方法简单易行，操作方便，易于生产。

[0007] 本发明的再一个目的是在于提供了一种蝙蝠SARS样冠状病毒刺突蛋白(Rp3_S)中

的S280-455多肽片段在鉴定小鼠抗S单克隆抗体表位中的应用。该方法特异性好，操作简单，实验易于重复。

SEQUENCE LISTING

<110> 中国科学院武汉病毒研究所

<120> 蝙蝠SARS样冠状病毒刺突蛋白免疫决定区及制备方法和用途

<170> PatentIn version 3.1

<213> 蝙蝠SARS样冠状病毒

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==--====

From: zh zh

Sent: Monday, May 4, 2020 3:45 PM

To: Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)

Subject: your blog on origin of covid-19.

Dear Dr. Collins,

Re: Genomic Study Points to Natural Origin of COVID-19.

By Dr. Francis Collins, March 26th, 2020.

<https://directorsblog.nih.gov/2020/03/26/genomic-research-points-to-natural-origin-of-covid-19/>

More than one month has passed since the blog-essay published, readers are still coming and commenting. That tells that the American people love to read your work and that the SARS-2 origin is an extremely serious concern and people around the world need a clear and truthful answer.

How many people supporting a conclusion is a sort of politics, not a science. A sound scientific answer to the said concern should come from fact, no matter how many people have seen it or agreed with it. In other words, majority and minority views should have an equal opportunity regarding government publications and recommendations.

Specifically, the searches and discussions of the SARS-2 origin should and must follow this fact: most of the first group patients did not have contact with bats or any animals which are said being the carrier of the new corona virus (nCoV). Besides, there were no bats in the relevant market and, more over, the Chinese have co-lived with those animals for thousands of years without health problems.

By carefully studying info/data provided by NIH GenBank and other departments, I have found that the key role regarding this global pandemic is WIV1 ([KF367457.1](#)), a nCoV that can directly transmit to human and NAS paper had warned that it may someday cause a big public health and economic disaster.

In short, the SARS-2 origin is a nCoV based on WIV1 and involves manmade factors. For details, please see:

Again, SARS-2 Is Manmade. 2020-04-25.

<https://sites.google.com/site/zhiyanpage2/2020/z20200427-manmade> .

Based on my findings, I would, if I may, suggest that:

1] The virus genome submitted to NIH must tell whether it is biologically engineered and, if so, how it is done. Dishonest submission/upload shall be punished.

(Note: I would not be surprised if someone finds out that RaTG13, a bat said being the carrier of SARS-2 virus, is genetically engineered. ---- Gene-edited babies were already born there in China, then, anything may happen there. Besides, bio-engineered animals for various purposes have been a very popular business within the Chinese scientists community and relevant management is badly out of control in PRC for years.).

2] NIH may need to grant research projects that may soon deliver rapid/safe/low-cost testing device re [RNA + Protein (such as CAS)] in human body. It concerns not only about the virus but also ACE2 which can be easily modified by CAS (or other proteins used by gene-editing).

Thank you for your time to read my email.

Best Regards,

Zhiyan-Le.

#=#

From: [Tabak, Lawrence \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
To: [Burklow, John \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
Cc: [Myles, Renate \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
Subject: Re: Interview request: Grant to lab in Wuhan China
Date: Tuesday, May 26, 2020 4:05:05 PM

Thanks for letting me know.

From: "Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: Tuesday, May 26, 2020 at 4:03 PM
To: "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Cc: "Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: FW: Interview request: Grant to lab in Wuhan China

Hi, Larry—

When we discussed the grant issue this morning, I reported that we had not received any further media requests after the NYT story last week. Just so you know, we received this question from 60 Minutes this afternoon.

From: Robinson, Michael J (HHS/ASPA) (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, May 26, 2020 3:26 PM
To: Wojtowicz, Emma (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Lemar, Naweed (OS/ASPA) (b) (6); Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Cc: Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Hall, Bill (HHS/ASPA) (b) (6); Oakley, Caitlin B. (OS/ASPA) (b) (6); HHS/OS Interviews <interviews@hhs.gov>; OER Press Group <OERPressGroup@mail.nih.gov>; NIAID OCGR NSWB <NIAIDOCGRNSWB@mail.nih.gov>; Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Prince, Scott (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); OCPLPressTeam <OCPLPressTeam@od.nih.gov>; ODOCP Interviews (NIH/OD OCPL) <ODOCPInterviews@mail.nih.gov>; Caputo, Michael (HHS/ASPA) (b) (6)

Subject: RE: Interview request: Grant to lab in Wuhan China
ok

From: Wojtowicz, Emma (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, May 26, 2020 3:12 PM
To: Lemar, Naweed (OS/ASPA) (b) (6); Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Cc: Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Hall, Bill (HHS/ASPA) (b) (6); Oakley, Caitlin B. (OS/ASPA) (b) (6); OS - Interviews <interviews@hhs.gov>; OER Press Group <OERPressGroup@mail.nih.gov>; NIAID OCGR NSWB <NIAIDOCGRNSWB@mail.nih.gov>; Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Prince, Scott (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); OCPLPressTeam <OCPLPressTeam@od.nih.gov>; ODOCP Interviews (NIH/OD OCPL) <ODOCPInterviews@mail.nih.gov>; Caputo, Michael (HHS/ASPA) (b) (6)

Subject: RE: Interview request: Grant to lab in Wuhan China

ADD

Ashley Velie

Producer, 60 Minutes

ALV@cbsnews.com

Question:

Has this letter prompted a reconsideration of re-instating the EcoHealth Alliance grant or whether there is any action being taken within the NIH to review the decision to terminate the grant?

Response attributable to NIH generally:

NIH does not discuss internal deliberations on grant terminations.

Additional information:

A producer with 60 Minutes asked about a letter sent by 77 Nobel scientists to the Trump administration regarding the termination of the EcoHealth Alliance grant.

From: [Shirley Wilkinson](#)
To: [Collins, Francis \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
Subject: Fwd: COVID-19
Date: Tuesday, June 2, 2020 12:35:27 AM

Dr. Collins,
Thought a new article published in *Science* would be of interest to you...

NIH-halted study unveils its massive analysis of bat coronaviruses

As a taxpayer, I would definitely prefer spending our tax dollars for these types of studies with the potential to save lives rather than spending money on photo opps for POTUS and deploying the military against Americans.

I think you would have to agree that potentially lifesaving research definitely trumps the political games.

Kindest regards,
Shirley Wilkinson

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: Shirley Wilkinson (b) (6)
Date: May 11, 2020 at 9:45:41 AM PDT
To: (b) (6)
Subject: COVID-19

Dr. Collins,
It is urgent that we move forward in an intelligent manner with coronavirus research on many fronts, including the EcoHealth grant for Dr. Peter Daszak and his team to continue research relating to COVID-19 and other coronaviruses that could potentially lead to future pandemics. Please act NOW to get this grant reinstated.

I realize that you alone cannot make this decision, but my hope is that if enough Americans speak up, the grant will be reinstated. Please feel free to quote me, pass my email along, etc., if that is helpful to get this research grant reinstated.

Kindest regards,
Shirley Wilkinson

Sent from my iPad

From: (b) (6)
To: [Collins, Francis \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
Subject: Restore funding to Eco Health Alliance viral research
Date: Monday, May 11, 2020 3:54:25 PM

Dr Collins,

I was shocked to see that the NIH has cut off funding to the Eco Health Alliance research in China. I can think of very few research projects that are more crucial to the health of the world right now than their work on viruses in China. Frankly, I am outraged that the incompetent Trump administration has the ability to pressure the NIH into cutting funding for a purely political and self serving reason while sacrificing world health. I would like an explanation from you as head of the NIH as to why funding for this crucial research has been cut off. It is clear that this country has arrived at a time when it is not acceptable for good people to stay silent in the face of the corrupt and craven behavior of this administration which has demonstrated that they care only about retaining power. This is not only a travesty against science and logic, it is a chilling indication that there is a more dangerous crisis in our county than the current pandemic.

If you have any power as director of the NIH you must restore this grant and not permit wanton political pressure to subvert scientific progress.

Thank you for your attention,

George Lamson

From: [Joseph Osmundson](#)
To: [Collins, Francis \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
Subject: 29 Organizations and over 300 scientists sign a letter demanding NIH re-fund EcoHealth Alliance
Date: Monday, May 11, 2020 4:13:44 PM
Attachments: [Coronavirus Grant Cancellation Protest SIGN ON LETTER.pdf](#)

Dr. Collins,

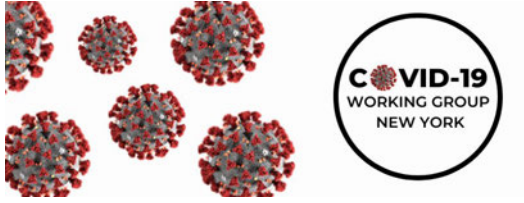
Today, the COVID-19 Working Group–NY (CWG-NY) is sending a letter, signed by 29 organizations, more than 300 scientists, physicians, and community health advocates, to Dr. Francis Collins, Director of the US National Institutes of Health (NIH), Dr. Anthony Fauci, Director of the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), and Alex Azar, Secretary of Health and Human Services, along with officials on the House Oversight Committee and the Senate Health Committee.

The letter expresses outrage at the canceling of a major R01 grant to the EcoHealth Alliance, an international collaboration that studies coronaviruses in bats to determine how they may evolve to transmit in human populations. **We demand immediate reinstatement of the R01 to EcoHealth Alliance.**

Signatories of the letter – which include scientists from many top research institutions across the US including Harvard, Yale, Stanford, University of Michigan, University of Pennsylvania, University of Wisconsin, University of Florida, University of California San Francisco, University of Washington, AstraZeneca, and Columbia University – called for immediate release of the NIH R01 funds to EcoHealth and for an investigation into the decision-making process that canceled the grant funding in the first place.

Best,

Joseph Osmundson
COVID-19 Working Group NY



**COVID-19 Working Group
New York City**
www.covid-19workinggroupnyc.org

The NIH must not cancel awarded grants for purely political reasons

On May 1, 2020, *Science Magazine* [reported](#) the cancelation of a major grant to the EcoHealth Alliance, an international collaboration studying how coronaviruses transmitting in bats can evolve to spread in human populations. Based on emails [reviewed by Science](#), this decision appears to be directly related to the Trump administration's [belief in the conspiracy theory](#) that the SARS-CoV-2 virus, the cause of COVID-19, was purposefully or accidentally released from the Wuhan Institute of Virology. The Wuhan Institute of Virology was a participant in the EcoHealth Alliance grant that was canceled.

We ask for the immediate reinstatement of the grant to EcoHealth Alliance and for a congressional investigation into the decision making process at the NIH that canceled the funding in the first place. A vibrant community of independent scientists is crucial to a functioning democracy and will be the first line of defense against another crisis that costs as many lives as the COVID-19 pandemic.

To be clear, there is [no evidence of human engineering](#) of the SARS-CoV-2 virus nor of accidental release of a laboratory viral strain. [Phylogenetic analyses](#) clearly support the evolution of the SARS-CoV-2 virus from bats in the wild.

We write in strong condemnation of political interference in scientific grantmaking. The NIH has a long and well-established protocol for scoring and funding grants, including decisions on scientific merit, productivity, and the import of research by large panels of expert scientists. During the course of an NIH grant, alterations in funding are incredibly disruptive to ongoing research projects, many of which span years if not decades.

Cancelation of a grant mid-term will disrupt the progress of research in how coronaviruses can evolve to infect humans, the exact process that birthed SARS-CoV-2, leading to hundreds of thousands of deaths worldwide. This research was always critical given the possibility of a coronavirus pandemic; it is now absolutely essential to understand how this crisis originated and to avoid another pandemic in the

future. Bowing to conspiracy theories in this time of crisis to prevent necessary research may, therefore, be sowing the seeds of another crisis in the future.

In fact, the grant to EcoHealth Alliance [provided critical data](#) – [including the sequences of closely related bat coronaviruses to SARS-CoV-2](#) – that both helped [identify the origin](#) of COVID-19 and identified remdesivir as a potential drug for the disease, allowing it to be rapidly moved into clinical trials. It is absurd and horrifying that the Trump administration would shut down a research program that led to the first promising treatment for COVID-19.

Beyond the critical importance of the research the NIH defunded, political interference in grantmaking is a disturbing trend that would allow politicians to effectively squash research that does not align with their political desires. Industry influence in research, the silencing of climate science, and long term harm of American science in the global climate become increasingly likely if politicians can easily meddle in grantmaking. We must stand united as a community of clinicians, scientists, activists, and citizens to demand the best – most transparent – scientific decision making process in this moment of crisis, and always.

Signed:

Organizations Signed On:

COVID-19 Working Group, New York City
The PrEP4All Collaboration
AVAC – AIDS Vaccine Advocacy Coalition
ICAP at Columbia University
ACT-UP
AIDS Foundation Chicago
Universities Allied for Essential Medicines (UAEM)
Center for Science in the Public Interest
Equity Forward
National Black Leadership Commission on Health
Association of Nurses in AIDS Care
Progressive Doctors
Black AIDS Institute
Latino Commission on AIDS
Treatment Action Group
AIDS Action Baltimore

TPAN – Test Positive Aware Network
HIV + Aging Research Project – Palm Springs
HealthxDesign
Georgia AIDS Coalition
Climate Health Now
National Working Positive Coalition
Prevention Access Campaign
The Well Project
Map Data Science
American Academy of HIV Medicine
GCCDC – Gowanus Canal Community Development Corporation
Bannon Consulting Services

Individuals Signed On:

David Ho, Director, Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center of Columbia University
Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons
Gregg Gonsalves, Yale School of Public Health
Sten H. Vermund, Yale School of Public Health
Martin S. Hirsch, Harvard University
Seth Darst, The Rockefeller University
Anthony Eller, Yale AIDS Program
A. David Paltiel, Yale School of Public Health
Ted Cohen, Yale School of Public Health
Nathan Grubaugh, Yale School of Public Health
Robert Heimer, Yale School of Public Health
Taiga Christie, Yale School of Public Health
Eli Fenichel, Yale University
Samy Galvez, Yale University
David Vlahov, Yale University
Nathan Price, Yale University
Walther Mothes, Yale University
Nancy Stanwood, Yale University
Frederick L. Altice, Yale University School of Medicine
Akiko Iwasaki, Yale University School of Medicine
Angela L. Rasmussen, Columbia Mailman School of Public Health
Mady Hornig, Columbia University
Jacqueline Klopp, Columbia University
Sarah Lima, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health
Maimuna S. Majumder, Boston Children's Hospital & Harvard Medical School
Donald Thea, Boston University School of Public Health

Jerry Avorn, Harvard Medical School
Julia Marcus, Harvard Medical School
Aaron Kesselheim, Harvard Medical School/Brigham and Women's Hospital
Ameet Sarpatwari, Brigham & Women's Hospital/Harvard Medical School
Robyn Lee, Harvard School of Public Health
Keletso Makofane, Harvard University
Bryan Terrazas, Harvard University
Grace Mosley, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
Alice O Kamphorst, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
AMIR HOROWITZ, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
Miriam Merad , Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
Thomas Marron, Tisch Cancer Institute - Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
Duncan Maru, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
Konstantina Alexandropoulos , Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
Stephen A Lauer, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
David D Celentano , Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
Nicole Carter, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine
Sarah Horst, Johns Hopkins University
Edward Banigan, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Mila González , Columbia University/ NewYork Presbyterian Hospital
Meredith Whittaker, Co-director, AI Now Institute at NYU
Joseph Osmundson, New York University
ENRIQUE R ROJAS, New York University
Brendan Parent, New York University
Michael Purugganan, New York University
Hayley Belli, New York University
ESTEBAN ORLANDO MAZZONI, New York University
Carol Shoshkes Reiss, New York University
Arthur L Caplan, NYU Grossman School of Medicine
Alison Bateman-House, NYU Grossman School of Medicine
Kelly Folkers, NYU Grossman School of Medicine
Aisha Langford, NYU Grossman School of Medicine
Jamie Webb, NYU Grossman School of Medicine Division of Medical Ethics
Tarlise Townsend, NYU Grossman School of Medicine, Department of Population Health
Christopher J. Morten, NYU School of Law
Bernardo S Reis, The Rockefeller University
Lisa Pomeranz, The Rockefeller University
Simin Liu, The Rockefeller University
Daniel Mucida, The Rockefeller University
Stefan Oliver, Stanford University
Kelsey Logas, Stanford University
Hannah Frank, Stanford University
Veronica Rogers Everett, UMass-Amherst

Diana Taft, UC Davis
Kishana Taylor, UC Davis
Steffanie Strathdee, UC San Diego
Carol L. Brosgart, MD, UCSF
Jennifer Thomas , UCSF
Cesar Augusto Lopez, UNC Chapel Hill
Catherine Eliza Kehl, UNC Chapel Hill
Joseph M McCune, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Christopher Robertson, University of Arizona
Nina A Sokolov, University of California, Berkeley
BethAnn McLaughlin, Academic Decency League
Sarah Tuttle, University of Washington
Kathleen J Millen, University of Washington
Lauren Dunnington, University of Washington
Colm Atkins, Rutgers University
DANA WOELL, Rutgers University
Catherine M Herzog, Penn State University
Jayme Morris, Cooper University Hospital
Lukasz Kowalik, Cornell University
Matthew Herder, Dalhousie University, Health Law Institute
Jennifer Lai, Dartmouth College
Lisa Kearns, Division of Medical Ethics NYU Grossman School of Medicine
Heidi Sinclair, Doctors for America; American College of Physicians; American Geriatric Society
Kendra Phelps, EcoHealth Alliance
Kathrine Meyers, Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center of Columbia University Vagelos
College of Physicians and Surgeons
Dave Gold, Global Health Strategies
Peter Barfuss, École des Ponts ParisTech
Elisa Mandell Keller, EMK Strategic Consulting
Olivier Pernet, EnViro International Laboratories
Susan Tsang, American Museum of Natural History
Jonathan Silver, AstraZeneca
Alexi Grousis-Henderson, Audubon
Dr Alison Cameron, Bangor University
Paul Henry Tremblay, Best Buy Technology
Kimberly Piper, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center
Donald Thea, Boston University School of Public Health
Ameet Sarpatwari, Brigham & Women's Hospital/Harvard Medical School
Marcello Graziano, Central Michigan University
M. Drew LaMar, College of William and Mary
Graham J McDougall Jr, Florida State University College of Nursing
Jeffrey Levi, George Washington University
Adam R. Ward, George Washington University, Milken Institute School of Public Health

Kristin Harper , Harper Health & Science Communications LLC
Simon Collins, HIV i-Base
Isaiah Sumner, James Madison University
Bruce Jennison , JENNISONFYI
Emmy Killelt, Jet Propulsion Lab
Jennifer Chang, Kaiser Permanente at Los Angeles Medical Center
Tara C Smith, Kent State University
Kimberly Stone, Kimberly C Stone PA
Lorna B. Hall, La Cheim Behavioral Health
Stephan R. Glicken, Lehigh Valley Physician Group
Jeremy P. Kamil, LSU Health Sciences Center
Meredith Clement, LSU Health Sciences Center
Lydia Wills, Lydia Wills LLC
Amy H Fitzpatrick, Marine Institute
Tony Mistretta, Medical Management
Wendell Bell, Minnesota State Bar Assn.
Ellyse A. Vitiello, Morningside Monthly Meeting (Quakers)
Greta J. Quintin, Morristown Emergency Services
Navin Pokala, New York Institute of Technology (NYIT)
Mark Cutis, Nihon Phoenix Advisors
Leo Beletsky, Northeastern University
Katrina Kuh, Pace Law School
Aaron Steiner, Pace University
Michelle Fearon, University of Michigan
John Dennehy, Queens College CUNY
Jennifer C Fish, MD, Santa Rosa Community Health
Michael W. Busch, SETI Institute
Sofia P Singer, Seven Directions
Princess McLawrence-Manning, SMART, NYCWC
Sanjeev K Sriram, Social Security Works
Danielle N. Lee, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
Llliana M Davalos, Stony Brook University
Stephen B Baines, Stony Brook University
Frances Ryan, Commission for Persons with disAbilities
Matt Sharp, The Reunion Project
Thomas St. Julien Lankiewicz, The University of California, Santa Barbara
Arthur R. James, Three Peas in a Pod
Amelia Gifford, Toxics Use Reduction Institute
Perry Mitchell, Truckee Meadows Community College
Lawrence Hunter, University of Colorado School of Medicine
Blair T. Johnson, University of Connecticut
Jennifer L. Hoffman, University of Denver

Patrick Kearns, University of Edinburgh Wellcome Lecturer & Harvard University Frank Knox Fellow

Michael Riley II, University of Florida

Adria LeBoeuf, University of Fribourg

Jason Kindrachuk, University of Manitoba

Michael C. Bazaco, University of Maryland

Kristina Elizabeth Atanasoff, University of Maryland, Baltimore County

Monique, University of Michigan

Chanda Prescod-Weinstein, University of New Hampshire

Matthew Martinez, University of Pennsylvania

Robert E. Marc, University of Utah School of Medicine

Emily Bruce, University of Vermont

Autumn Kent, University of Wisconsin

Kathryn Anderson, UW School of Medicine

Face Pickens, Virginia Commonwealth University

Stephanie Hart, Virginia Commonwealth University

Mary Loos, Virginia Commonwealth University

Zachary Pincus, Washington University in St. Louis

John Moore, Weill Cornell School of Medicine

Judith Feinberg, West Virginia University

Linda Grabill, Western Washington University

C. Virginia Fields

Holly H Balogh

Jean Webner

Charles Franchino

Saskia Popescu

Jennifer Taylor

Jere J Lepley

Lydia McKay

Brian Nord

Kim Wallace

Zoe Schroeder

Mingjane Wu

Sureka Gattu

Arthur Smith

Sara Bazaco

Tatiana Rodriguez

Susan Miller

Maureen E Hoatlin

Victor Janusz

Alexei L. Krasnoselsky

Peter Simonetti

Laura Diamondstone

Leslie Carroll
Dorothy Gordon
Leroy Nunez
Malaya Fletcher
Edwin Chen
Linda van der Wal
Angela Wagner
Joan Holup
Ben Spiker
Kelly Roth
Denise Mclsaac
Alexandra Sundell
Minda Sarna
Suzanne Vogel
Tracy Wells
Amy Reese
Bella Berly
Mike Berly
Robert Goodwin
Michael Sheehy
Brienne Barker
Angela Diuble
Barbara Kolber
Nathan Myers
Eric Shattuck
Amy Gregg
Douglas Buchanan
Barbara J Casey
Mary Beth Bowerman
Nicolle Bruett Shanman
Iris Nathan
Jake Scott
Clifford Johnson
Dyan Traynor
Wendy Wifler
Peggy Hamilton
Tim Mackey
Joanne Baio
Leslie Sude
Nicola Chamberlain
Arthur Rourke
Tara Martinez
Ken Kidd

Carly Harrison
K Barrett
Val Barton
Elizabeth Eisen
Catherine Koebel
Victoria Sharp
Diane Tabellija
Kristen Boyle-Heimann
M. Maggie O'Meara
Laura Hanson
Lina Correa Cerro
Jennifer Thompson
Katie Love
Karen Smith-McCune
Tiffany Doherty
Robin Schwartz
Gabrielle Lopez
Danelle Forseth
Tina
Jess Seline
Nina Lee
Callie Preheim
Ysabel Beatrice Floresca
LIPI ROY
Elizabeth Spradley
Gregory G. Sarno
Eric Neumann
Anna Costello
Liz Kroboth
Carol Kessler
Karyn Pomerantz
Keshet Ronen
Danielle Francois
Jeff Sheehy
Rachel Barr
Ann Hartzler
Arturo Garcia Jr
Natan Vega Potler
Ben Stoner-Duncan
Daniel Lugassy
Kate Mastroianni
Pam Kolber zicca
John True

Murray Penner
John Howard
Hannah Forsberg
Zach Watson
Stephen Waldmann
Frances Cross
Alison Fitzgerald
Kurt Fleagle
Mariya Masyukov
Grant Leavins
Lark Jarvis
Joseph Gaschen
Krishna Stone
Robert Haas
PATRICK OLEARY
Racquel Kim Sherwood
Gláucia Furtado
Michael O'Quinn
Siobhan Cooke
Jaclyn Novatt
Jhilya Mayas
Caitlyn Passaretti
W. David Hardy
Amanda Ramsdell
Laura Raffield
Kimberleigh Smith
Barbara McCormack
Toph Allen (Christopher Allen)

From: (b) (6)
To: [Collins, Francis \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
Date: Monday, May 11, 2020 4:59:55 PM

Sir:

EcoHealth Alliance's has proclaimed for the past 15 years that coronaviruses present a clear and immediate threat to our safety. That seems clearer now than ever before with the COVID-19 Pandemic ravaging the world. U.S. National Institutes of Health recently terminated funding of EcoHealth Alliance as directed by the Trump administration. The termination by NIH was a result of misinformation/conspiracy proclaimed by Congressman Matt Gaetz (R-Fl.) on Fox News stated "The NIH gives this \$3.7 million grant to the Wuhan Institute of Virology in China" and later a reporter during a White House press briefing stated to President Trump that there was a report that the NIH during Obama administration had given the Chinese Lab \$3.7 million grant and asked, "Why would the U.S. give a grant like that to China?" President Trump responded, "We will end that grant very quickly." However, in fact, there never was a \$3.7 million U.S. grant to the Chinese Wuhan lab in China but was granted to EcoHealth Alliance for scientific research. EcoHealth Alliance's mission includes international collaboration with countries where viruses emerge which in this instance involved the Wuhan Institute of Virology in China to seek scientific information regarding COVID-19. EcoHealth Alliance has attempted to analyze the risk of coronavirus emergence and help in designing vaccines and drugs for protection from COVID-19 and other coronavirus threats. EcoHealth Alliance genetic sequences of two bat coronaviruses that were discovered with the previous NIH funding grant have been used to test the breakthrough antiviral drug Remdesivir. EcoHealth Alliance research is vital for protecting the lives of people around the world who are battling COVID-19.

President Trump's decision in the termination of the NIH grant to EcoHealth Alliance was a consequence of the misinformation/conspiracy.

The NIH grant to EcoHealth Alliance should be reinstated in the fight against COVID-19 virus Pandemic.

P.S. Dr. Francis Collins

Since I was an Assistant Professor at Mary Baldwin College, Staunton, VA (1988-96) and where you and your family are well remembered, thought I would try to contact you.

Thank you, Ken McBride

(b) (6)

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

From: [Weddle, Andrea](#)
To: [Collins, Francis \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#); [Fauci, Anthony \(NIH/NIAID\) \[E\]](#)
Cc: [Dieffenbach, Carl \(NIH/NIAID\) \[E\]](#); [Jezek, Amanda](#); [Phillips, Terri Christene](#); kgoraleski@astmh.org
Subject: Termination of EcoHealth Alliance Grant
Date: Monday, May 11, 2020 5:00:38 PM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)
[IDSA-HIVMA-ASTMH-PIDS EcoHealth Alliance grant_Final.pdf](#)

Dear Drs. Collins and Fauci –

I'm writing to share the attached letter that is being sent to President Trump on behalf of the leaders of the Infectious Diseases Society of America, the HIV Medicine Association, the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene and the Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society regarding their concerns with the abrupt termination of the EcoHealth Alliance NIH grant supporting important coronavirus research.

Please feel free to contact us with questions.

Sincerely,

Andrea Weddle
Executive Director
HIV Medicine Association
ph 703.299.0915
c [REDACTED] (b) (6)
aweddle@hivma.org
www.hivma.org





May 11, 2020

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

We write on behalf of the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA), the HIV Medicine Association (HIVMA), American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (ASTMH), and the Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society of America (PIDS) to raise serious concerns regarding what appears to have been political interference in the scientific process with the termination of an EcoHealth Alliance grant that included a partnership with the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV).

Our organizations represent physicians, scientists and other healthcare professionals committed to infectious diseases, pediatric infectious diseases, tropical medicine, and global health. We were dismayed to learn about the termination of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant supporting an important international collaboration with WIV studying the transmission of coronaviruses from bats to humans, microbial genetics, and drug and vaccine development. Such studies are critical to understand the viruses, their transmission, and approaches for prevention and treatment of this dangerous illness. As of May 11, the current SARS-CoV-2 pandemic has resulted in more than 284,628 deaths globally, including more than 80,087 deaths in the U.S.

The grant from the NIH National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases was in its sixth year and was renewed in 2019 for five years through the NIH peer review process, which is the gold standard for identifying and supporting the most promising biomedical research without bias. Basic research completed under the grant has been critical to the evaluation of remdesivir as a treatment for COVID-19, the first drug receiving FDA Emergency Use Authorization to treat hospitalized patients. The ongoing work of the Alliance has become more important than ever to help prevent future coronavirus pandemics. Furthermore, the NIH has not provided a legitimate cause for terminating the EcoHealth Alliance grant, which was given superb ratings in its renewal evaluation. There is no scientific evidence that SARS-CoV-2 originated at WIV or any other laboratory, and the NIH has not responded to inquiries asking for additional clarification and rationale.

An independent and impartial scientific process and robust support for global research collaborations have been indispensable in making the United States the world leader in biomedical research and establishing the NIH as the world's premier medical research enterprise. Continued independent and impartial processes are absolutely essential to the successful development of effective treatments, vaccines, and cures for many infectious diseases and the epidemics and pandemics they can cause. This includes SARS-CoV-2, the cause of severe COVID-19 disease.

We urge immediate reconsideration of the termination of the EcoHealth Alliance grant, with assurances that politics will not influence the scientific process. A failure to set strong boundaries between politics and science will set back future medical discoveries for years to come and leave the U.S. poorly prepared to respond to current and future pandemics. health crisis. If you have questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Amanda Jezek, IDSA Senior Vice President for Public Policy and Government Relations at ajezek@idsociety.org, or Andrea Weddle, HIVMA Executive Director at aweddle@hivma.org.

Sincerely,



Thomas M. File, Jr., MD, MSc
President, IDSA



Judith Feinberg, MD
Chair, HIVMA



Kristina Bryant, MD, FPIDS
President, PIDS



Karen A. Goraleski
CEO, ASTMH

CC: Francis S. Collins, MD, PhD, Director, NIH
Anthony S. Fauci, MD, Director, NIH's NIAID

From: [Calin-Jageman, Robert](#)
To: [Collins, Francis \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
Subject: RE: Question about CBS report of a terminated research grant
Date: Tuesday, May 12, 2020 3:37:46 PM
Attachments: [image003.jpg](#)
[image004.jpg](#)

Director Collins,

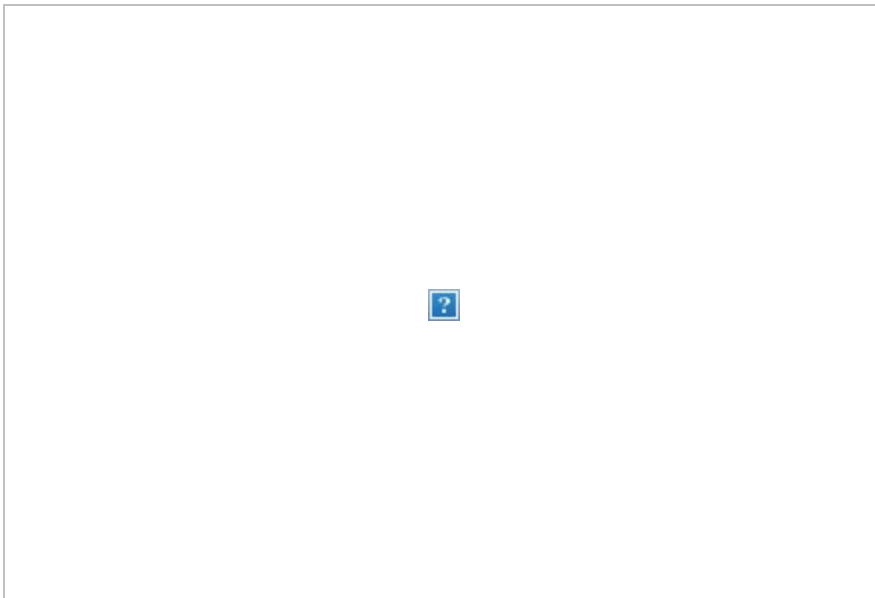
I recently saw a CBS report claiming that an NIH research grant held by Dr. Peter Daszak and the Eco Health Alliance has been unexpectedly terminated (<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-administration-coronavirus-vaccine-researcher-covid-19-cure-60-minutes/>).

I haven't been able to find an official NIH response or explanation related to this report. But did find in the NIH reporter a grant held by Dr. Daszak and the Eco Health Alliance that shows an unusual end date that is less than 1 year from the approval data (see bellw)

Could you direct me to the NIH's response or explanation for the situation? I'd like to know if this grant (or another held by these researchers) was terminated before the date initially specified in the award letter. And if so, I'd like to know more about the process that led to the early termination. If there's a better contact person, I'd be happy to be directed to them.

Thanks,

Bob



=====

Robert Calin-Jageman
Professor, Psychology
Neuroscience Program Director

Dominican University
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708.524.6581
<http://calin-jageman.net>



Shameless Self-Promotion: *Introduction to the New Statistics* is the first statistics textbook to focus on Open Science and the New Statistics. Instructors can obtain a free desk copy here: <https://www.routledge.com/resources/deskcopy>. Or, [order on Amazon](#).

From: [Benjamin Corb](#)
To: [Collins, Francis \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
Cc: [G. Hart](#); [Barbara Gordon](#)
Subject: Community Concerns over EcoHealth Alliance Funding Revocation
Date: Wednesday, May 20, 2020 1:46:36 PM
Attachments: [Support Science Sign on Letter 1.pdf](#)

Dr. Collins,

The biomedical research community, and the National Institutes of Health are stronger institutions thanks to your leadership and your dedication to our community and this important work. The American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology – along with 30 other scientific organizations – however are concerned by a recent NIH decision to revoke a research grant awarded to the EcoHealth Alliance.

The grant in question – awarded to Peter Daszak – was focused on the transfer of coronaviruses from natural hosts to humans – and had been competitively renewed last year. More than a month ago, a narrative was being formed in some news outlets that Chinese scientists, specifically scientists at the Wuhan Institute of Virology, may have been responsible for either the creation of or the release of SARS-COV-2. Those concerns grew, and criticism of the NIH came from the highest levels of our government.

We at the ASBMB were so concerned by these criticisms that we issued a statement supporting the NIH, and NIH-funded investigators (<https://www.asbmb.org/getattachment/a2066d83-77c0-4c65-963a-d4af8aba42df/ASBMB-Trump-NIH.pdf?lang=en-US>), which spurred an op-ed to be published by Michael Hiltzik, a Pulitzer Prize winning writer for the Los Angeles Times (<https://finance.yahoo.com/news/column-attack-nih-trump-steps-192253577.html>).

Criticism continued, and the rhetoric escalated. United States Senators criticized Chinese-born students studying in America, going so far as to suggest that Chinese-born students in the US should not be allowed to study STEM topics. We at the ASBMB rebuffed those comments in a statement (https://www.asbmb.org/getattachment/67895680-216e-40c1-b834-4249b78e4134/FINAL_ASBMB-Statement-on-Sen-Cotton-s-remarks-on-Chinese-students.pdf?lang=en-US).

The rhetoric continued, and on April 24th, the NIH made the decision to repeal the EcoHealth Alliance's grant. At the time, we issued a statement (<https://www.asbmb.org/getattachment/296bfdad-a49c-4757-a000-a4722c1dceb3/ASBMB-Statement-on-EcoHealth.pdf?lang=en-US>) in which I stated "Allowing politics to influence or override their decisions weaponizes research funding and erodes the faith and trust in these long-standing institutions. I followed up that statement with an op-ed on the politicization of science published on CNN (<https://www.cnn.com/2020/04/30/opinions/nih-daszak-coronavirus-funding-cut-opinion-corb/index.html>).

Many in the scientific community are concerned with the decision process that led to the revocation of this grant. Our letter is attached to this email, and we hope it will spur a transparent dialogue with the scientific community, so that we can be assured that NIH-funded and peer-reviewed research remains free of politicization. This is not only important for scientists everywhere, but it's vital to the public health of Americans.

We appreciate your time and consideration of this matter, and look forward to your response.

I hope you remain healthy and safe in these times.

Very Respectfully,

-Ben Corb

Benjamin Corb

Director, Public Affairs

American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

(o) 240.283.6625

(c) (b) (6)

Twitter: @bwcorb

The Honorable Francis S. Collins
Director
National Institutes of Health
9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20892

May 20, 2020

Director Francis Collins:

We, the undersigned scientific organizations representing tens of thousands of members of the American biomedical research enterprise, are alarmed by the National Institutes of Health's revocation of a peer-reviewed research grant for studies of coronaviruses by EcoHealth Alliance. Not only is this decision counterintuitive, given the urgent need to better understand the virus that causes COVID-19 and identify drugs that will save lives, but it politicizes science at a time when, if we are to stamp out this scourge, we need the public to trust experts and to take collective action.

The foundation of the American biomedical research enterprise rests on two principles: international collaboration and a robust peer-review process. Both must be vigilantly upheld. The abrupt revocation of the NIH grant for the EcoHealth Alliance concerns us for two primary reasons:

First, the decision seems to be a reaction to a theory about the origins of the COVID-19 virus that the intelligence community itself has publicly repudiated. EcoHealth Alliance at one point collaborated with a lab in Wuhan, China, which has recently been at the center of rumors about the origin of the pandemic. The overall goal of EcoHealth Alliance's research project is to study coronavirus transmission from species to species. But the purpose of the research project has been conflated with these rumors. This is worrisome. International collaboration has propelled the American research enterprise to achieve vital innovations and discoveries; it is the gold standard for the scientific community. The United States is a beacon for the best and brightest minds, consistently attracting top scientists from around the world. However, with this incident, international collaboration is being portrayed as a threat. The scientific enterprise requires diversity, and American scientists depend on their international colleagues to pool resources, expertise, and ultimately make scientific breakthroughs.

Second, the decision sets a dangerous precedent by revoking a grant that was awarded based upon scientific merit without a justifiable rationale such as issues related to scientific or financial fraud or misconduct. This grant is highly and uniquely relevant to all NIAID priorities to address the current COVID-19 pandemic. Most extramural research funds are awarded through a robust peer-review process. Scientists, not politicians, determine the merit of grant applications, and grant recipients are expected to be careful stewards of taxpayer dollars. Throughout the lifetime of a grant, each recipient communicates regularly with scientific review officers at the funding agency and produces progress reports providing evidence that the work remains valuable and on track. This has been the norm and until April 24, 2020 was applied to the now terminated grant. That has now been breached and this action must not become the norm going forward.

The scientific community urges federal funding agencies and policymakers to ensure the transparency, openness, and collaborative nature of the American biomedical research enterprise. We call on the NIH to be

transparent about their decision-making process on this matter. We urge federal funding agencies to safeguard the American biomedical research enterprise. The action taken by the NIH must be immediately reconsidered.

Respectfully,

The American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
The Academy for Radiology and Biomedical Imaging Research
The American Association for Anatomy
The American Institute of Biological Sciences
The American Physiological Society
The American Psychological Association
The American Society for Investigative Pathology
The American Society for Virology
The American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists
The Association of Anatomy, Cell Biology and Neurobiology Chairs
The Association of Biomolecular Resource Facilities
The Association of Medical and Graduate Departments of Biochemistry
The Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
The Biophysical Society
The Botanical Society of America
The Conference Board of Mathematical Sciences
The Endocrine Society
The Entomological Society of America
The Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology
The Genetics Society of America
The HIV Medicine Association
The Infectious Diseases Society of America
The Natural Science Collections Alliance
The North American Vascular Biology Organization
The Shock Society
The Society for Freshwater Science
The Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles
The Society for the Study of Reproduction
The Society of Toxicology



American Society for
Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
11200 Rockville Pike, Suite 302
Rockville, Maryland
20852-3110

The Helminthological Society of Washington

OSA - The Optical Society

CC: Office of Science and Technology Policy Director Kelvin Droegemeier

From: [Lauren Gross](#)
To: [Collins, Francis \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
Cc: [Boss, Jeremy \(jeremy.boss@emory.edu\)](#); [Ross Kedl](#); [Michele Hogan](#)
Subject: Letter from The American Association of Immunologists (AAI)
Date: Wednesday, May 20, 2020 3:23:16 PM
Attachments: [Letter to Dr. Collins from The American Association of Immunologists.May 20, 2020.pdf](#)

Dear Dr. Collins:

Please find attached a letter from Jeremy M. Boss, Ph.D., President of The American Association of Immunologists (AAI); Ross M. Kedl, Ph.D., Chair of the AAI Committee on Public Affairs; and M. Michele Hogan, Ph.D., AAI Executive Director; regarding the termination of the EcoHealth Alliance research grant.

Kindly let me know if you have any difficulty accessing the attachment or if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Lauren G. Gross, J.D.
Director of Public Policy and Government Affairs
The American Association of Immunologists
1451 Rockville Pike, Suite 650
Rockville, MD 20852
phone: (301) 634-7743
fax: (301) 634-7887
www.aai.org

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The AMERICAN ASSOCIATION of
IMMUNOLOGISTS



President
Jeremy M. Boss, Ph.D.

May 20, 2020

Vice President
Jenny P. Ting, Ph.D.

Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D.

Past President
JoAnne L. Flynn, Ph.D.

Director, National Institutes of Health
1 Center Drive, Building 1, Room 126
Bethesda, MD 20814

Secretary-Treasurer
Edith M. Lord, Ph.D.

Dear Dr. Collins:

Councillors
Gary A. Koretzky, M.D., Ph.D.
Mark M. Davis, Ph.D.
Akiko Iwasaki, Ph.D.
Stephen Jameson, Ph.D.

We are writing on behalf of The American Association of Immunologists (AAI), the nation's largest professional association of research scientists and clinicians who are dedicated to studying the immune system. As you know, many of our members are deeply immersed in research that may lead to needed vaccines and treatments for COVID-19. This research and development, while potentially lifesaving during this pandemic, will no doubt also help prepare our nation and the world for future pandemics.

Executive Director
M. Michele Hogan, Ph.D.

We were concerned, therefore, to learn of a decision by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to revoke grant funding for the EcoHealth Alliance project entitled, "Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence." As scientists who support merit-based peer review, we believe it is important for NIH to explain why this grant – which appears to fund research of great relevance to the COVID-19 pandemic – was abruptly terminated. While we understand there could be legitimate reasons for this action, the NIH response has been unsatisfactory. According to NPR, the email NIH sent to EcoHealth Alliance President Peter Daszak, Ph.D., informed him that, "at this time NIH does not believe the current project outcomes align with the program goals and agency priorities." NIH subsequently refused to answer questions regarding this grant termination or whether NIH had taken similar actions previously. This response is both confusing and troubling. Your explanation could reinforce confidence in the NIH grant review system at a time when many are concerned that world and national events may be politicizing the science we need the most. We support the request made in a community letter organized by our colleagues at the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (ASBMB) for a full explanation of the reasoning for this grant termination.

AAI greatly appreciates your ongoing leadership and support for the nation's medical researchers and remains ready to assist you in these most challenging times.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Jeremy M. Boss.

Jeremy M. Boss, Ph.D.
President

Handwritten signature of Ross M. Kedl.

Ross M. Kedl, Ph.D.
Chair, AAI Committee
on Public Affairs

Handwritten signature of M. Michele Hogan.

M. Michele Hogan, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Paul H. Sayles

(b) (6)

9 May 2020

The Director
The National Institutes of Health
9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda MD 20892

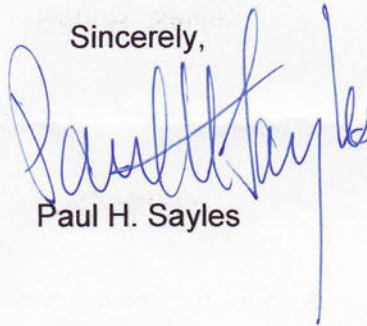
Dear Sir:

In today's news reports I noted a story by Kim Hjelmgaard, USA TODAY, that funding for EcoHealth Alliance has been terminated by your organization. Given that EcoHealth Alliance is studying the Coronavirus in bats in China, I find that this research is both timely and quite necessary. According to the report, EcoHealth Alliance's funding was terminated for "convenience because it didn't "fit" with the agency's goals".

I am aware of some senior administration leadership's "belief" that Corona – 19 has been produced in a lab in Wuhan, China. I can't help feeling that this decision has been pressured as EcoHealth Alliance's research does not add to the evidence to support this "belief". I note that this "belief" has been given little credence by established scientific and intelligence bodies.

I feel that this decision is reconsidered and funding to EcoHealth Alliance is restored in the national interest.

Sincerely,



Paul H. Sayles

May 11, 2020
Hartland, Vermont

TO: VT Senator Leahy, VT Senator Sanders, VT Congressman Welch
CC: US Senate Minority Leader Schumer, US House of Representative Speaker Pelosi,
✓ NIH Director Collins, NIAID Director Fauci

Is it true, as reported on 60 Minutes last night, that NIH withdrew funding in the past two weeks from Peter Daszak, an American scientist working on wildlife viruses that could cause a human pandemic? If true, what is the reason for this? If dishonesty, data fabrication, or other scientific fraud led to the withdrawal, that would be one thing, but if this was at the directive of the Trump administration because Dr. Daszak collaborates with virologists at the Wuhan Institute of Virology, this is **ABSOLUTELY UNACCEPTABLE**.

We are where we are today because the Trump administration – and many others in recent years, have ignored decades-old warnings from biologists, virologists, epidemiologists, and other scientists that humans would experience a pandemic at some point. The question was never ‘if’, it has always been ‘when’, and here we are. The primary problem is a biological one. The secondary economic problem, which is equally horrific and possibly even more damaging to our way of life, will not be solved until we fully address the biological problem. Withholding research support to scientists working on the biology is **UNBELIEVABLY COUNTERPRODUCTIVE**.

Sincerely,



Sarah A. Bruce, Ph.D.
Retired Biology Professor

(b) (6)

From: [Roberts, Rich](#)
To: [Tabak, Lawrence \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#); [Collins, Francis \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
Cc: [J. Michael Bishop](#); [H Robert Horvitz](#); [Randy W SCHEKMAN](#); [Harold E. Varmus](#)
Subject: Letter to Secretary Alex Azar and Director Francis Collins
Date: Thursday, May 21, 2020 1:59:23 PM
Attachments: [NL letter final.docx](#)

Dear Dr. Tabak:

Please find attached a letter from 77 US Nobel Laureates concerning a matter of grave concern in these challenging times.

I hope you are willing to pass this letter on to Director Francis Collins at your earliest convenience.

Thanking you in advance.

Rich Roberts

Sir Richard J. Roberts Ph.D. F.R.S.

1993 Nobel Laureate in Physiology or Medicine

Chief Scientific Officer

New England Biolabs

240 County Road

Ipswich, MA 01938-2723 USA

Tel: (978) 380-7405

Fax: (978) 412 9910

email: roberts@neb.com

Executive Assistant: Karen Otto

Tel: (978) 380-7206

Fax: (978) 412 9910

email: otto@neb.com

77 US Nobel Laureates in Science

May 21, 2020

Dear Secretary Azar and Director Collins:

The 77 signatories of this letter, American Nobel Laureates in Physiology or Medicine, Chemistry, and Physics, are gravely concerned about the recent cancellation of a grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to Dr. Peter Daszak at the EcoHealth Alliance in New York. We believe that this action sets a dangerous precedent by interfering in the conduct of science and jeopardizes public trust in the process of awarding federal funds for research.

For many years, Dr. Daszak and his colleagues have been conducting highly regarded, NIH-supported research on coronaviruses and other infectious agents, focusing on the transmission of these viruses from animal hosts to human beings. Their work depends on productive collaborations with scientists in other countries, including scientists in Wuhan, China, where the current pandemic caused by a novel coronavirus arose. Now is precisely the time when we need to support this kind of research if we aim to control the pandemic and prevent subsequent ones.

As has now been widely reported, the grant to the EcoHealth Alliance was abruptly terminated by NIH on April 24, 2020, just a few days after President Trump responded to a question from a reporter who erroneously claimed that the grant awarded millions of dollars to investigators in Wuhan. Despite the misrepresentation of Dr. Daszak's grant, despite the high relevance of the studies to the current pandemic, and despite the very high priority score that his application for renewal had received during peer review, the NIH informed Dr. Daszak and his colleagues that the grant was being terminated because "NIH does not believe that the current project outcomes align with the program goals and agency priorities." Such explanations are preposterous under the circumstances.

We are scientists who have devoted our careers to research, both in medical and related scientific disciplines that bear on the overall health and well-being of society, as well as fundamental scientific research, much of it supported by NIH and other federal agencies. We take pride in our nation's widely admired system for allocating funds based on expert review and public health needs. The abrupt revoking of the award to Dr. Daszak contravenes these basic tenets and deprives the nation and the world of highly regarded science that could help control one of the greatest health crises in modern history and those that may arise in the future.

We ask that you act urgently to conduct and release a thorough review of the actions that led to the decision to terminate the grant, and that, following this review, you take appropriate steps to rectify the injustices that may have been committed in revoking it.

Peter Agre	Chemistry	2003	James P. Allison	Medicine	2018
Sidney Altman	Chemistry	1989	Frances H. Arnold	Chemistry	2018
David Baltimore	Medicine	1975	Barry Clark Barish	Physics	2017
Paul Berg	Chemistry	1980	J. Michael Bishop	Medicine	1989
Elizabeth H. Blackburn	Medicine	2009	Michael S. Brown	Medicine	1985
William C. Campbell	Medicine	2015	Mario R. Capecchi	Medicine	2007
Thomas R. Cech	Chemistry	1989	Martin Chalfie	Chemistry	2008
Steven Chu	Physics	1997	Elias James Corey	Chemistry	1990
Robert F. Curl Jr.	Chemistry	1996	Johann Deisenhofer	Chemistry	1988
Andrew Z. Fire	Medicine	2006	Edmond H. Fischer	Medicine	1992
Joachim Frank	Chemistry	2017	Jerome I. Friedman	Physics	1990
Walter Gilbert	Chemistry	1980	Sheldon Glashow	Physics	1979
Joseph L. Goldstein	Medicine	1985	Carol W. Greider	Medicine	2009
David J. Gross	Physics	2004	Roger Guillemin	Medicine	1977
Leland H. Hartwell	Medicine	2001	Dudley R. Herschbach	Chemistry	1986
Roald Hoffmann	Chemistry	1981	H. Robert Horvitz	Medicine	2002
Louis J. Ignarro	Medicine	1998	William G. Kaelin Jr.	Medicine	2019
Eric R. Kandel	Medicine	2000	Wolfgang Ketterle	Physics	2001
Brian K. Kobilka	Chemistry	2012	Roger D. Kornberg	Chemistry	2006
Robert J. Lefkowitz	Chemistry	2012	Anthony J. Leggett	Physics	2003
Michael Levitt	Chemistry	2013	Roderick MacKinnon	Chemistry	2003
John C. Mather	Physics	2006	Craig C. Mello	Medicine	2006
William E. Moerner	Chemistry	2014	Mario J. Molina	Chemistry	1995
Ferid Murad	Medicine	1998	Douglas D. Osheroff	Physics	1996

James Peebles	Physics	2019	Saul Perlmutter	Physics	2011
William D. Phillips	Physics	1997	H. David Politzer	Physics	2004
Sir Richard J. Roberts	Medicine	1993	Michael Rosbash	Medicine	2017
James E. Rothman	Medicine	2013	Randy W. Schekman	Medicine	2013
Richard R. Schrock	Chemistry	2005	Gregg L. Semenza	Medicine	2019
Phillip A. Sharp	Medicine	1993	Hamilton O. Smith	Medicine	1978
George P. Smith	Chemistry	2018	Horst L. Stormer	Physics	1998
Thomas C. Sudhof	Medicine	2013	Jack W. Szostak	Medicine	2009
Joseph H. Taylor Jr.	Physics	1993	Kip Stephen Thorne	Physics	2017
Susumu Tonegawa	Medicine	1987	Daniel C. Tsui	Physics	1998
Harold E. Varmus	Medicine	1989	Steve Weinberg	Physics	1979
Rainer Weiss	Physics	2017	Carl E. Wieman	Physics	2001
Eric F. Wieschaus	Medicine	1995	Torsten N. Wiesel	Medicine	1981
Frank Wilczek	Physics	2004	Robert Woodrow Wilson	Physics	1978
Michael W. Young	Medicine	2017			

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 27, 2020

Dr. Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D.
Director
National Institutes of Health
9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20892

Dear Dr. Collins,

While we applaud the tireless work the National Institutes of Health are doing to combat the global COVID-19 pandemic, we are alarmed at action you have taken to halt potentially life-saving research to understand the origin and transmission of coronaviruses.

On April 24, the NIH abruptly cut funding for disease ecology research at EcoHealth Alliance, going so far as to prohibit researchers from accessing the remaining \$369,819 granted for Fiscal Year 2020. Disease ecology allows scientists to research coronaviruses and other diseases in wildlife to identify emerging threats to human life. The necessity for this work is clear, now more than ever.

EcoHealth Alliance has been receiving federal funding since 2014 to study the risk of bat coronavirus emergence—the specific global health emergency we now face. That research is closely aligned with the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases’ own stated priorities for improving our understanding of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19 by tracking natural history and viral transmission of disease.

With the timeliness of the research into coronavirus emergence and ongoing efforts at NIH to gain greater knowledge in our fight against this pandemic, why did the NIH choose to eliminate this funding without warning?

The explanation from your agency, that “at this time, NIH does not believe that the current project outcomes align with the program goals and agency priorities” is simply not sufficient to explain the unprecedented steps of withdrawing a grant repeatedly approved by both the Obama and Trump Administrations without proper investigation or reasonable explanation.

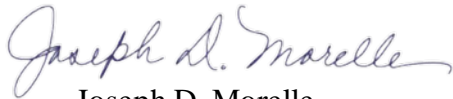
It seems from news reports and statements made by President Trump that this funding has been eliminated based on misunderstanding at best and conspiracy theory at worst. If that is not the case, we would appreciate a full accounting of how this funding came to be cut, why the NIH

believes this research is not worth funding during COVID-19, and what projects will be funded instead to replace the gaps left by its elimination.

This funding was taken away from American research, paid for by American taxpayers, and aimed at saving American lives.

We applaud the work you have been doing on behalf of the American people, but now is not the time to play politics with science. We look forward to your response.

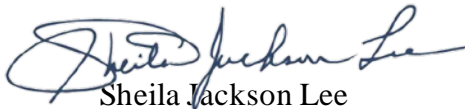
Sincerely,



Joseph D. Morelle
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



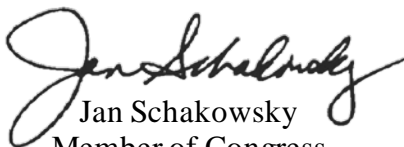
Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

From: [Parker, Ashley \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
To: [Collins, Francis \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#); [Tabak, Lawrence \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
Cc: [Wolinetz, Carrie \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#); [Fleurence, Rachael \(NIH/OD\) \[C\]](#)
Subject: RE: Materials for Meeting with Secretary Azar June 15
Date: Wednesday, June 10, 2020 10:18:37 PM
Attachments: [DRAFT Agenda for Meeting with Secretary Azar June 15 2020.docx](#)

Hi Francis and Larry,

The meeting with the Secretary is rescheduled for Monday, June 15th with revised materials due by COB tomorrow. Would you prefer to include additional items, i.e. WH visit, other items?



Thank you,
Ashley

From: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, June 5, 2020 10:59 AM
To: Parker, Ashley (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Fleurence, Rachael (NIH/OD) [C]
(b) (6)
Cc: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]
(b) (6)
Subject: RE: PLEASE READ THIS ONE: Materials for Meeting with Secretary Azar June 9

Yes ok

From: Parker, Ashley (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, June 5, 2020 7:50 AM
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Fleurence, Rachael (NIH/OD) [C]
(b) (6)
Cc: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]
(b) (6)

Subject: RE: PLEASE READ THIS ONE: Materials for Meeting with Secretary Azar June 9

Please see updated attachment 1 – OK to send?

Thanks,
Ashley

From: Fleurence, Rachael (NIH/OD) [C] (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, June 5, 2020 7:12 AM
To: Parker, Ashley (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Cc: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: Re: PLEASE READ THIS ONE: Materials for Meeting with Secretary Azar June 9

Good morning,

Attached are:

- final meeting agenda and materials for the June 2nd meeting
- list of participants to which I added the 3 late additions from June 2nd that we requested: Robert Kadlec, Carlo de Notaristefani and Tammy Beckham. (Please note the 3 tabs to the Excel spreadsheet for industry, NIH/HHS, BMGF staff).

Rachael

Rachael L. Fleurence, PhD

Special Assistant to the NIH Director for COVID-19 Diagnostics

From: "Parker, Ashley (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: Thursday, June 4, 2020 at 11:43 PM
To: "Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Fleurence, Rachael (NIH/OD) [C]" (b) (6)
Cc: "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: Re: PLEASE READ THIS ONE: Materials for Meeting with Secretary Azar June 9

Happy to include the list of participants but would need the correct slides/agenda shared for the June 2nd meeting, please.

Thanks,
Ashley

On Jun 4, 2020, at 10:38 PM, Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6) wrote:

OK, except Attachment 1 doesn't look quite right – Rick Bright had his own 5 minutes to speak, rather than being combined with me. And please add the roster of attendees to the agenda, that may be even more interesting for Azar to see.

FC

From: Parker, Ashley (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, June 4, 2020 9:27 PM
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6)
Cc: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6); Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6); Fleurence, Rachael (NIH/OD) [C] [REDACTED] (b) (6)
Subject: PLEASE READ THIS ONE: Materials for Meeting with Secretary Azar June 9

With thanks to Rachael, + attachments 1 and 2.

Thanks,
Ashley

From: Parker, Ashley (NIH/OD) [E]
Sent: Thursday, June 4, 2020 5:57 PM
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6)
Cc: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6); Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6); Fleurence, Rachael (NIH/OD) [C] [REDACTED] (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Materials for Meeting with Secretary Azar June 9

Hi Francis,

Please see the attached package – I need the first two attachments, please – cc'ing Rachael. Will likely sub the ACTIV leadership agenda for the meeting summary once ready?

Thanks,
Ashley

From: Parker, Ashley (NIH/OD) [E]
Sent: Thursday, June 4, 2020 6:32 AM
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6)

Cc: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6); Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6)

Subject: Re: Materials for Meeting with Secretary Azar June 9

Got it, thanks!

On Jun 4, 2020, at 6:14 AM, Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6) wrote:

See suggested changes on the attachment. [REDACTED] (b) (5)

[REDACTED]. Another briefing being set up with Ned Sharpless.

FC

From: Parker, Ashley (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6)

Sent: Wednesday, June 3, 2020 10:13 PM

To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6); Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6)

Cc: Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6)

Subject: Materials for Meeting with Secretary Azar June 9

Hi Francis and Larry,

Please see attached draft agenda for the meeting with the Secretary scheduled for June 9th. The draft agenda is due tomorrow with final MATs due on Friday – we standby for edits.

DRAFT AGENDA ITEMS:

[REDACTED] (b) (5)

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment 1 – NIH-BMGF diagnostic leaders roundtable agenda
- Attachment 2 – ACTIV leadership meeting agenda
- Attachment 3 – Draft agenda for mAb Clinical Summit
- Attachment 4 – ACD meeting agendas

Thanks,
Ashley

<Draft Agenda for Meeting with Secretary Azar June 9 2020 fsc.docx>

Dr. Francis Collins, NIH Director
Meeting with HHS Secretary Alex Azar II
Monday, June 15, 2020
1:00 – 1:45 PM

(b) (5)



From: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]
Sent: Thu, 11 Jun 2020 09:54:09 -0500
To: Parker, Ashley (NIH/OD) [E]; Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]
Cc: Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]; Fleurence, Rachael (NIH/OD) [C]
Subject: RE: Materials for Meeting with Secretary Azar June 15

Looks good to me.
FC

From: Parker, Ashley (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, June 11, 2020 10:03 AM
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]
(b) (6)
Cc: Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Fleurence, Rachael (NIH/OD) [C]
(b) (6)
Subject: RE: Materials for Meeting with Secretary Azar June 15

Please see attached updated package for the AMA2 meeting 6/15. We will send to IOS once you've had a chance to approve.

Thank you,
Ashley

From: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, June 11, 2020 5:45 AM
To: Parker, Ashley (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]
(b) (6)
Cc: Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Fleurence, Rachael (NIH/OD) [C]
(b) (6)
Subject: RE: Materials for Meeting with Secretary Azar June 15

There are two other sensitive items (b) (5) but I don't think we'll put them on the agenda.

Please add another attachment – (b) (5)

FC

From: Parker, Ashley (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, June 10, 2020 10:18 PM
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]
(b) (6)
Cc: Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Fleurence, Rachael (NIH/OD) [C]
(b) (6)
Subject: RE: Materials for Meeting with Secretary Azar June 15

Hi Francis and Larry,

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(b) (5)

Thank you,
Ashley

From: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, June 5, 2020 10:59 AM
To: Parker, Ashley (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Fleurence, Rachael (NIH/OD) [C]
(b) (6)
Cc: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]
(b) (6)
Subject: RE: PLEASE READ THIS ONE: Materials for Meeting with Secretary Azar June 9

Yes ok

From: Parker, Ashley (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, June 5, 2020 7:50 AM
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Fleurence, Rachael (NIH/OD) [C]
(b) (6)
Cc: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]
(b) (6)
Subject: RE: PLEASE READ THIS ONE: Materials for Meeting with Secretary Azar June 9

Please see updated attachment 1 – OK to send?

Thanks,
Ashley

From: Fleurence, Rachael (NIH/OD) [C] (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, June 5, 2020 7:12 AM
To: Parker, Ashley (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Cc: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: Re: PLEASE READ THIS ONE: Materials for Meeting with Secretary Azar June 9

Good morning,

Attached are:

- final meeting agenda and materials for the June 2nd meeting
- list of participants to which I added the 3 late additions from June 2nd that we requested: Robert Kadlec, Carlo de Notaristefani and Tammy Beckham. (Please note the 3 tabs to the Excel spreadsheet for industry, NIH/HHS, BMGF staff).

Rachael

Rachael L. Fleurence, PhD
Special Assistant to the NIH Director for COVID-19 Diagnostics

From: "Parker, Ashley (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: Thursday, June 4, 2020 at 11:43 PM
To: "Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Fleurence, Rachael (NIH/OD) [C]" (b) (6)
Cc: "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" <(b) (6)>, "Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: Re: PLEASE READ THIS ONE: Materials for Meeting with Secretary Azar June 9

Happy to include the list of participants but would need the correct slides/agenda shared for the June 2nd meeting, please.

Thanks,
Ashley

On Jun 4, 2020, at 10:38 PM, Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6) wrote:

OK, except Attachment 1 doesn't look quite right – Rick Bright had his own 5 minutes to speak, rather than being combined with me. And please add the roster of attendees to the agenda, that may be even more interesting for Azar to see.

FC

From: Parker, Ashley (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, June 4, 2020 9:27 PM
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] <(b) (6)>
Cc: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Fleurence, Rachael (NIH/OD) [C] (b) (6)
Subject: PLEASE READ THIS ONE: Materials for Meeting with Secretary Azar June 9

With thanks to Rachael, + attachments 1 and 2.

Thanks,
Ashley

From: Parker, Ashley (NIH/OD) [E]
Sent: Thursday, June 4, 2020 5:57 PM
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Cc: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Fleurence, Rachael (NIH/OD) [C] (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Materials for Meeting with Secretary Azar June 9

Hi Francis,

Please see the attached package – I need the first two attachments, please – cc'ing Rachael. Will likely sub the ACTIV leadership agenda for the meeting summary once ready?

Thanks,
Ashley

From: Parker, Ashley (NIH/OD) [E]
Sent: Thursday, June 4, 2020 6:32 AM
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Cc: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Materials for Meeting with Secretary Azar June 9

Got it, thanks!

On Jun 4, 2020, at 6:14 AM, Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6) > wrote:

See suggested changes on the attachment. (b) (5)

(b) (5) Another briefing being set up with Ned Sharpless.

FC

From: Parker, Ashley (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, June 3, 2020 10:13 PM
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6) Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Cc: Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: Materials for Meeting with Secretary Azar June 9

Hi Francis and Larry,

Please see attached draft agenda for the meeting with the Secretary scheduled for June 9th. The draft agenda is due tomorrow with final MATs due on Friday – we standby for edits.

DRAFT AGENDA ITEMS:

(b) (5)



Thanks,
Ashley

<Draft Agenda for Meeting with Secretary Azar June 9 2020 fsc.docx>

From: [JUDITH KIMBLE](#)
To: [Collins, Francis \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#); [Tabak, Lawrence \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
Cc: [Anne Churchland](#); [Berger, Shelley](#); [JUDITH KIMBLE](#); [Lee, Brendan](#); [Barbara Wold, Ph.D.](#); [Dina Katabi, Ph.D.](#); [Francis Cuss](#); [James Hildreth, M.D., Ph.D.](#); [Shendure, Jay](#); [Kristina Johnson, Ph.D.](#); [M. D. Mark Dybul \(mark.dybul@law.georgetown.edu\)](#); [M. Roy Wilson, M.D.](#); [Rebekah Drezek, Ph.D.](#); [Roberta Brinton, Ph.D.](#); [Shelley Berger Ph. D. \(bergers@upenn.edu\)](#); [Spero Martin Manson, Ph.D.](#); [Wendy Chapman, Ph.D.](#)
Subject: Statement of ACD concern and its followup
Date: Friday, June 12, 2020 7:38:36 PM
Attachments: [Statement of concern from the ACD.pdf](#)

Dear Drs Collins and Tabak, Francis and Larry,

I write on behalf of the NIH ACD to thank you for the opportunity to present our statement of concern at the meeting yesterday. This email is a follow up. At the meeting, we reported that it had been endorsed by 15 of 17 members of the ACD with two abstentions; however, it has now been endorsed by 16 of the 17 ACD (one person initially listed as an abstention had not received our communications because of an email glitch). The other abstention has been confirmed. A pdf of the statement is attached.

We understand that this is an extremely thorny issue, though I doubt we fully understand the extent of all its thorns. However, the integrity of the NIH peer review process has been challenged broadly in the biomedical community, and that challenge cannot be ignored. We therefore very much hope you will consider our recommendations. Indeed, we would appreciate your advice and guidance moving forward and would like to work with you if that would be helpful. Towards that end, we wonder if a phone conversation might be possible with one or both of you. Since the statement is already public (e.g. the ACD meeting and now twitter), a call in the next day or two would be great.

With sincere respect and best wishes in this difficult time,

Judith

From: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]
Sent: Sat, 13 Jun 2020 12:33:29 -0500
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]
Subject: FW: Statement of ACD concern and its followup

From: JUDITH KIMBLE <jekimble@wisc.edu>
Date: Saturday, June 13, 2020 at 11:28 AM
To: "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Statement of ACD concern and its followup

Look forward to talking at 4pm EST. An email from Bob Horvitz, pasted in below, just arrived in my inbox, and I wanted you to be aware of it:

Dear All,

Yesterday's CLS meeting (which unfortunately Judith had to miss because of the overlapping ACD meeting) included extensive conversations with three members of Congress: Senators Bill Cassidy (R-LA) and Roy Blunt (R-MO) and Representative Donna Shalala (D-FL). Before the three joined, the CLS voted to endorse the Nobel statement concerning EcoHealth Alliance/Peter Daszak. In each of the three conversations I explicitly raised this issue, and in each case Keith followed with a statement about the broad concern of the biomedical community and the endorsement of the letter by the CLS.

Bill Cassidy: He seemed to possibly have heard about the letter, but not to have really absorbed it or thought about it. At one point he said he had not seen the letter. His statement was "I know what I've been told, but not what I know," by which he seemed to mean he hadn't done his homework. He offered a number of potential issues — safety concerns ("was supposed to be BSL-4 and was only BSL-2") and IP/cyber espionage, China — but stressed that he was "committed to the free exchange of science." In discussing his support of foreign, including Chinese, students, he told us that his son goes to the University of Chicago and has a girl friend from Shanghai who has been afraid to go home for fear she couldn't return; he indicated a personal frustration with the inappropriate challenges of this situation.

This part of the conversation ended with his asking us to send him the letter with an accompanying note addressing his concerns explicitly. He said to send this to his "personal" e-mail at WilliamCassidy@gmail.com (I don't know if there is a space after William). I think we should do this ASAP. With what language might we best address his two concerns? Help, please.

Roy Blunt: He was aware of the letter but said, "I don't know enough about it." He stressed that there is always a balance and that there are some legitimate concerns, by which he seemed to be implying IPI issues. Keith responded strongly by saying "There was no IP issue or security threat involved." Blunt said a number of times "I will look at that," and it seemed at the end that we should send him a copy of the letter with a cover note probably identical to the one we send to Cassidy.

Donna Shalala: I opened the conversation with her very differently from the way I started with Cassidy and Blunt. In the latter cases I began with, "I would like to ask if you are aware of ... ?", whereas with Donna I began with, "I would like your advice and help — we have not had a response from Azar or Collins; what can we do to force them to respond?" Her answer was refreshing and clear — "A member of Congress should ask them to respond at a Congressional hearing they are both at." She added that there

will be such a hearing in 1 1/2 weeks. Donna was very aware of the letter and said that she “was horrified” at what happened. She did not quite say that she would ask the question of Azar/Collins. Harold, do you think you could/should ask Donna to be that member of Congress who does so? If not, how should we proceed?

Keith, please feel free to add/correct to my summaries.

Best,
Bob

From: Larry Tabak [REDACTED] (b) (6)
Date: Saturday, June 13, 2020 at 8:22 AM
To: Judith Kimble <jekimble@wisc.edu>
Subject: Re: Statement of ACD concern and its followup

4 is fine

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 13, 2020, at 8:35 AM, JUDITH KIMBLE <jekimble@wisc.edu> wrote:

Thanks Larry. How about 3pm or 4pm EST? Is 4pm EST too late?
Judith

From: Larry Tabak [REDACTED] (b) (6)
Date: Saturday, June 13, 2020 at 6:14 AM
To: Judith Kimble <jekimble@wisc.edu>
Subject: Re: Statement of ACD concern and its followup

Judith,
Pleased to speak with you either today or tomorrow, anytime in the mid-afternoon on. Let me know what time is convenient for you.
Best wishes,
Larry

From: JUDITH KIMBLE <jekimble@wisc.edu>
Date: Friday, June 12, 2020 at 10:53 PM
To: "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" [REDACTED] (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Statement of ACD concern and its followup

The idea is that you and I talk first, which I assume will not need to be open to the public.

Let me know if there is a good time for you over the week end or Monday, and I'll make it work.

Judith

From: Larry Tabak (b) (6)
Date: Friday, June 12, 2020 at 8:39 PM
To: Judith Kimble <jekimble@wisc.edu>, "Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)

Cc: Anne Churchland <churchland@cshl.edu>, "Berger, Shelley" <bergers@penncmedicine.upenn.edu>, "Lee, Brendan" <blee@bcm.edu>, "Barbara Wold, Ph.D." <woldb@caltech.edu>, "Dina Katabi, Ph.D." <dk@mit.edu>, Francis Cuss <francis.cuss@gmail.com>, "James Hildreth, M.D., Ph.D." <jhildreth@mmc.edu>, "Shendure, Jay" <shendure@uw.edu>, "Kristina Johnson, Ph.D." <kristina.johnson@suny.edu>, "M. D. Mark Dybul (mark.dybul@law.georgetown.edu)" <mark.dybul@law.georgetown.edu>, "M. Roy Wilson, M.D." <president@wayne.edu>, "Rebekah Drezek, Ph.D." <drezek@rice.edu>, "Roberta Brinton, Ph.D." <rbrinton@email.arizona.edu>, "Shelley Berger Ph. D. (bergers@upenn.edu)" <bergers@upenn.edu>, "Spero Martin Manson, Ph.D." <spero.manson@cuanschutz.edu>, "Wendy Chapman, Ph.D." <wendy.chapman@utah.edu>
Subject: Re: Statement of ACD concern and its followup

Judith,

Of course I am willing to speak with any ACD member informally. However, as you know a FACA committee cannot meet without posting a notice in the Federal Register and then the meeting must be held in an open session that is accessible to the public. Please let me know who would like to speak with me and we can arrange a phone call.

Best wishes,
Larry

From: JUDITH KIMBLE <jekimble@wisc.edu>
Date: Friday, June 12, 2020 at 7:38 PM
To: Francis Collins (b) (6), "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Cc: Anne Churchland <churchland@cshl.edu>, "Berger, Shelley" <bergers@penncmedicine.upenn.edu>, JUDITH KIMBLE <jekimble@wisc.edu>, Brendan Lee <blee@bcm.edu>, "Barbara Wold, Ph.D." <woldb@caltech.edu>, "Dina Katabi, Ph.D." <dk@mit.edu>, Francis Cuss <francis.cuss@gmail.com>,"

"James Hildreth, M.D., Ph.D." <jhildreth@mmc.edu>, "Shendure, Jay" <shendure@uw.edu>, "Kristina Johnson, Ph.D." <kristina.johnson@suny.edu>, "M. D. Mark Dybul (mark.dybul@law.georgetown.edu)" <mark.dybul@law.georgetown.edu>, "president@wayne.edu" <president@wayne.edu>, "Rebekah Drezek, Ph.D." <drezek@rice.edu>, "Roberta Brinton, Ph.D." <rbrinton@email.arizona.edu>, "Shelley Berger Ph. D. (bergers@upenn.edu)" <bergers@upenn.edu>, "Spero Martin Manson, Ph.D." <spero.manson@cuanschutz.edu>, "Wendy Chapman, Ph.D." <wendy.chapman@utah.edu>

Subject: Statement of ACD concern and its followup

Dear Drs Collins and Tabak, Francis and Larry,

I write on behalf of the NIH ACD to thank you for the opportunity to present our statement of concern at the meeting yesterday. This email is a follow up. At the meeting, we reported that it had been endorsed by 15 of 17 members of the ACD with two abstentions; however, it has now been endorsed by 16 of the 17 ACD (one person initially listed as an abstention had not received our communications because of an email glitch). The other abstention has been confirmed. A pdf of the statement is attached.

We understand that this is an extremely thorny issue, though I doubt we fully understand the extent of all its thorns. However, the integrity of the NIH peer review process has been challenged broadly in the biomedical community, and that challenge cannot be ignored. We therefore very much hope you will consider our recommendations. Indeed, we would appreciate your advice and guidance moving forward and would like to work with you if that would be helpful. Towards that end, we wonder if a phone conversation might be possible with one or both of you. Since the statement is already public (e.g. the ACD meeting and now twitter), a call in the next day or two would be great.

With sincere respect and best wishes in this difficult time,

Judith

From: [Tabak, Lawrence \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
To: [Collins, Francis \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
Subject: Re:
Date: Sunday, June 14, 2020 11:36:29 AM

Here are additional elements from Mike:

[Redacted content] (b) (5)

On 6/14/20, 10:56 AM, "Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]" [Redacted] (b) (6) wrote:

Hi Larry,

Have you talked with Mike about what would be the perfect set of requirements to lift the suspension on EcoHealth?

[Redacted content] (b) (5)

What else?

FC

-----Original Message-----

From: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] [Redacted] (b) (6)

Sent: Sunday, June 14, 2020 10:43 AM

To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] [Redacted] (b) (6)

Subject: Re:

Yes

Sent from my iPhone

> On Jun 14, 2020, at 10:30 AM, Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] [Redacted] (b) (6) wrote:

>

> See note. You ok with 1 PM?

>

> FC

>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] [Redacted] (b) (6)

> Sent: Sunday, June 14, 2020 9:10 AM

> To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] [Redacted] (b) (6)

> Subject:

>

> I assume Charrow never replied. Robin and I are on our bikes- back on line in about 90 min Larry

>

> Sent from my iPhone

From: [Fauci, Anthony \(NIH/NIAID\) \[E\]](#)
To: [Collins, Francis \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
Cc: [Tabak, Lawrence \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
Subject: RE: EcoHealth grant
Date: Sunday, June 14, 2020 2:55:46 PM

Very reasonable and valid criteria. Although it would be wonderful if they comply, I seriously doubt that they would agree to such criteria. But then, the ball is in their court and not ours.

From: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Sunday, June 14, 2020 2:48 PM
To: Fauci, Anthony (NIH/NIAID) [E] (b) (6) v>
Cc: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: EcoHealth grant

Hi Tony,

Bob Charrow was supportive of the approach that you and I discussed yesterday. See attached for the criteria we would like to see met in order to restart funding of the EcoHealth grant.

Francis

From: [Collins, Francis \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
To: [Charrow, Robert \(HHS/OGC\)](#)
Cc: [Tabak, Lawrence \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
Subject: RE: WIV
Date: Sunday, June 14, 2020 2:47:25 PM
Attachments: [WIV questions that need answers.docx](#)

Hi again,

I realized there was one more situation that WIV should be asked to explain. For simplicity, I slightly rearranged the others. See attachment.

Francis

From: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6)
Sent: Sunday, June 14, 2020 1:16 PM
To: Charrow, Robert (HHS/OGC) [REDACTED] (b) (6)
Cc: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6)
Subject: WIV

Bob,

Here are the specific expectations:

[REDACTED] (b) (5)

Thanks,
Larry

From: [Burklow, John \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
To: [Collins, Francis \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
Subject: Fwd: Wuhan lab grant
Date: Tuesday, June 23, 2020 8:45:15 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[ATT00001.htm](#)
[Termination question E&C 6-23-20.docx](#)
[ATT00002.htm](#)

FYI—Adrienne typed it up!

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: June 23, 2020 at 5:49:46 PM EDT
To: "Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Higgins, Lauren (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Wuhan lab grant

The transcript won't be out for another few hours so I transcribed it myself. It is attached.

From: John Burklow (b) (6)
Date: Tuesday, June 23, 2020 at 4:49 PM
To: Adrienne Hallett (b) (6), Lauren Higgins (b) (6)
Subject: Fwd: Wuhan lab grant

Pls see below—is there a fast way to get the transcript of the hearing?

Thx,

John

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: June 23, 2020 at 4:25:19 PM EDT

To: "Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Cc: "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6),
"Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Wuhan lab grant

Can we get the transcript?

From: Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, June 23, 2020 4:22 PM
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); NIH Director's
Executive Committee (b) (6)
Cc: Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: Fwd: Wuhan lab grant

FYI

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Hall, Bill (HHS/ASPA)" (b) (6)
Date: June 23, 2020 at 4:18:51 PM EDT
To: "Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6),
"Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6),
"Billet, Courtney (NIH/NIAID) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: Wuhan lab grant

Not sure if you've been watching but ASF was just asked why NIH cancelled the EcoHealth Alliance grant (and Wuhan lab). He made quite clear that NIH was simply told to cancel it.

William Hall

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs (Public Health)
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
Washington, DC`

Direct: (b) (6)

Mobile: (b) (6)

Email: (b) (6)

www.hhs.gov

Rep. Marc Veasey (D-TX): Dr Fauci, there was a grant that was, it was a coronavirus related grant that was not renewed and I wanted to talk with you to make sure that we just get the facts straight about this because I was really concerned about this. Do you know why this grant was canceled or if anyone at the White House or HHS pressured your colleagues to do so and, specifically, I wanted to talk with you about the National Institutes of Health. There was a decision made by the Trump Administration to cancel research on a grant that was specifically focused on coronavirus emergence while we are in the midst of this coronavirus pandemic and it just didn't make any sense to me why this grant would be canceled.

Dr. Fauci: The question you're asking is why was it cancelled?

Veasey: Yes, that's right. Why was this grant canceled when we're in the middle of this pandemic. It seems like it would have been very helpful for us to have this research considering that we know very little about COVID-19.

Fauci: Okay. It was cancelled because the NIH was told to cancel it.

Veasey: And why were they told to cancel it?

Fauci: I don't know the reason but we were told to cancel it.

Veasey: Okay, thank you very much.



From: [Fauci, Anthony \(NIH/NIAID\) \[E\]](#)
To: [Collins, Francis \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
Subject: RE: EcoHealth grant
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2020 6:24:51 AM

Thanks, Francis. You are correct. I would not be surprised if this letter ultimately goes public. If so, the press will be all over it, especially the part about the 2012 infections in China. Fasten our seat belts.

Tony

From: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 6:16 AM
To: Fauci, Anthony (NIH/NIAID) [E] (b) (6)
Cc: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]
(b) (6)
Subject: EcoHealth grant

Hi Tony,

I wanted to be sure you were aware that the letter to the EcoHealth PI went out yesterday. This reinstates the grant but immediately suspends it, pending responses to a number of important questions about WIV.

I don't know whether the PI will make this public, but I'd be surprised if the press doesn't get wind of this somehow.

Francis

From: Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 7:37 AM
To: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]
Cc: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]; Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]; Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]; Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]
Subject: Re: EcoHealth

In fact, Amanda and Renate discussed yesterday. Thought it was happening today. Will have a reactive QA.

Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 9, 2020, at 7:29 AM, Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6) wrote:

We are talking with Mike today about a reactive statement, etc..

Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 9, 2020, at 6:50 AM, Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6) wrote:

Again – I am not sure you can or want to make this public and there are too many people on the ICD call to ensure that it will be kept confidential. If the grantee organization chooses to make it public, so be it. And then we can have a reactive statement/discussion with ACD.

Laryr

From: Francis Collins (b) (6)
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2020 at 5:59 AM
To: "Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: FW: EcoHealth

Get ready for the press to find out. Do we need a reactive statement? Are we prepared to hear from the Hill? Should I mention this at ICs today?

FC

P.S. to Mike: Can I have a copy of the final letter?

From: Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 10:40 PM
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Cc: Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: Re: EcoHealth

Hi Francis – yes, it's out!

Many thanks, Mike

From: "Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 at 9:35 PM
To: "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: EcoHealth

Did letter go to PI today?

From: Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]
Sent: Monday, July 20, 2020 9:04 PM
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]
Cc: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]; Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]; Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]; Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]; Wood, Gretchen (NIH/OD) [E]
Subject: Re: EcoHealth Oversight request

I just got it from HHS this evening.

On Jul 20, 2020, at 8:42 PM, Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6) wrote:

Let's discuss at ExComm tomorrow. I note the letter is dated June 26 – is the first time we've seen it?

FC

From: Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, July 20, 2020 7:39 PM
To: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6); Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6); Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6); Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6); Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6)
Subject: EcoHealth Oversight request

[REDACTED] (b) (5). Please see attached Oversight investigation into the issue. Please note the signers:

Frank Pallone, Chair of E&C Cmte
Diana DeGette, Chair of E&C Subcmte on Investigations
Eddie Bernice Johnson, Chair of Science Cmte
Bill Foster, Chair of Science Subcmte on Investigations

<06.26.20 SST EC Letter to HHS.pdf>

From: Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 1:50 PM
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]; Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]; Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]
Cc: Lohmann, Larry (NIH/OD) [E]; LaMontagne, Karen (NIH/OD) [E]
Subject: Re: EcoHealth oversight response

(b) (5)

From: Francis Collins (b) (6)
Date: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 at 1:38 PM
To: Adrienne Hallett (b) (6), "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), Lawrence Tabak (b) (6)
Cc: "Lohmann, Larry (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), Karen LaMontagne (b) (6)
Subject: RE: EcoHealth oversight response

Sounds like a good plan. (b) (5)

FC

From: Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:59 PM
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Cc: Lohmann, Larry (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); LaMontagne, Karen (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: EcoHealth oversight response

Good news! (b) (5) 😊.

We are going to draft a response to the letter (b) (5)

Mike, can you help with the draft?

Thanks!
Adrienne

From: Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]
Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2020 6:29 AM
To: Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]; Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]
Cc: Lohmann, Larry (NIH/OD) [E]; LaMontagne, Karen (NIH/OD) [E]; Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]; Black, Jodi (NIH/OD) [E]
Subject: Re: EcoHealth oversight response
Attachments: EcoHealth Alliance narrative 7 23 20.docx; Daszak 7 8 20.pdf

Hi Adrienne – Taking FC off. Here is a draft narrative along with a copy of the July 8 letter. See what you think.

Thanks again!

Mike

From: "Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 at 1:50 PM
To: "Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Cc: "Lohmann, Larry (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "LaMontagne, Karen (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: Re: EcoHealth oversight response

(b) (5)

From: Francis Collins (b) (6)
Date: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 at 1:38 PM
To: Adrienne Hallett (b) (6), "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), Lawrence Tabak (b) (6)
Cc: "Lohmann, Larry (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), Karen LaMontagne (b) (6)
Subject: RE: EcoHealth oversight response

Sounds like a good plan. (b) (5)

FC

From: Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:59 PM
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Cc: Lohmann, Larry (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); LaMontagne, Karen (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: EcoHealth oversight response

Good news! [REDACTED] (b) (5) 😊.

We are going to draft a response to the letter [REDACTED] (b) (5)

Mike, can you help with the draft?

Thanks!
Adrienne

EcoHealth Alliance narrative
Mike Lauer (OER)
July 23, 2020

(b) (5)





From: Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 3:58 PM
To: Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]; Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]; Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]
Cc: Lohmann, Larry (NIH/OD) [E]; LaMontagne, Karen (NIH/OD) [E]
Subject: Re: EcoHealth oversight response
Attachments: EcoHealth Alliance narrative 7-27-20.docx; 06.26.20 SST EC Letter to HHS.pdf

Attached is the incoming EcoHealth Alliance letter plus Mike's draft of the response, with some edits and additions from me.

A few issues to note:

[Redacted content] (b) (5)

Please let me know how you would like to proceed.
Adrienne

From: "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 at 6:29 AM
To: Adrienne Hallett (b) (6), Francis Collins (b) (6), Lawrence Tabak (b) (6)
Cc: "Lohmann, Larry (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), Karen LaMontagne (b) (6), "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: Re: EcoHealth oversight response

Thanks so much Adrienne! I'll draft something today.

Mike

From: "Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 at 1:50 PM
To: "Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Cc: "Lohmann, Larry (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "LaMontagne, Karen (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: Re: EcoHealth oversight response

[Redacted content] (b) (5)

From: Francis Collins (b) (6)
Date: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 at 1:38 PM
To: Adrienne Hallett (b) (6), "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6),
Lawrence Tabak (b) (6)
Cc: "Lohmann, Larry (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), Karen LaMontagne
(b) (6)
Subject: RE: EcoHealth oversight response

Sounds like a good plan. (b) (5)

FC

From: Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:59 PM
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Tabak,
Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Cc: Lohmann, Larry (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); LaMontagne, Karen (NIH/OD) [E]
(b) (6)
Subject: EcoHealth oversight response

Good news! (b) (5) 😊.

We are going to draft a response to the letter (b) (5)
(b) (5)

Mike, can you help with the draft?

Thanks!
Adrienne

EcoHealth Alliance narrative
Mike Lauer (OER)
July 23, 2020



(b) (5)

(b) (5)

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|
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

June 26, 2020

The Honorable Alex M. Azar II
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Azar,

We write with strong concerns surrounding the Administration's termination of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant to EcoHealth Alliance on April 24, 2020.¹ In the letter communicating the grant's termination, NIH Deputy Director for Extramural Research, Dr. Michael Lauer, wrote that "At this time, NIH does not believe the current project outcomes align with the program goals and agency priorities."² However, press reports indicate that the grant was canceled because a small portion of the funding was to be given to the Wuhan Institute of Virology for on-the-ground sample collection and analysis.³ Given the potential for this study to inform our knowledge of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) transmission, it is deeply concerning that it may have been canceled for political reasons in the midst of the current pandemic.

It is always important that federal research priorities are driven by science-based decisions. This is especially true in a time that requires unparalleled investment in research that may help bring an end to this public health crisis. It is therefore troubling that this abrupt grant cancellation came just a week after President Trump announced that the Administration was looking into "grants going to that area" and continued that "we will end that grant very quickly."⁴ This was in response to a reporter referencing false claims that COVID-19 "likely

¹ Sarah Owerhohle, "Trump cuts U.S. research on bat-human virus transmission over China ties," *Politico*, April 27, 2020, accessed here: <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/04/27/trump-cuts-research-bat-human-virus-china-213076>

² Nurith Aizenman, "Why The U.S. Government Stopped Funding A Research Project On Bats And Coronaviruses," *NPR*, May 1, 2020, accessed here: <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/04/29/847948272/why-the-u-s-government-stopped-funding-a-research-project-on-bats-and-coronavirus>

³ *Id.*

⁴ Clip of President Trump with Coronavirus Task Force Briefing, *CSPAN*, April 17, 2020, accessed here: <https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4869590/user-clip-us-2015-grant-wuhan-lab-question>

came from a Level 4 lab in Wuhan.”⁵ The Administration has been pushing this theory⁶ despite scientific experts saying this path of transmission would be virtually impossible given what is known about the virus and lab safety protocols.⁷ If this theory is the basis for the grant termination, it would be an egregious example of the Administration politicizing scientific decision making in order to further a politically convenient narrative.

EcoHealth Alliance’s grant was renewed in 2019 after an initial five-year grant on the same topic. The grant it received was extremely competitive – only 22 percent of proposals were funded in 2019.⁸ The July 2019 project proposal was titled, “Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence.”⁹ In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic that has taken over 115,000 American lives, it is inconceivable that this project would no longer “align with the program goals and agency priorities” of NIH. Any termination of a grant that has gone through NIH’s rigorous scientific review process must be adequately justified on a scientific basis – particularly a grant which would appear to be so relevant to understanding our current health crisis.

As the Committees of jurisdiction over public health and science, we need to better understand the decision to terminate EcoHealth Alliance’s NIH grant. We are especially concerned given Dr. Anthony Fauci’s, Director of NIH’s National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, assertion at a Committee on Energy and Commerce hearing on June 23 that “the grant was canceled because NIH was told to cancel it.”¹⁰ In order to understand how this decision was reached, we request a briefing to be delivered by July 15, 2020. At this briefing, we ask that you be prepared to address the following questions:

1. When the decision was made to terminate the grant to EcoHealth Alliance;
2. Who at HHS was involved in the decision to terminate the grant;
3. Whether entities outside HHS, including but not limited to the White House, the State Department, the National Security Council, and intelligence agencies, were involved in this decision;

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Mark Mazzetti, Julian E. Barnes, Edward Wong, and Adam Goldman, “Trump Officials Are Said to Press Spies to Link Virus and Wuhan Labs,” *New York Times*, April 30, 2020, accessed here:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/30/us/politics/trump-administration-intelligence-coronavirus-china.html>

⁷ Geoff Brumfel and Emily Kwong, “Virus Researchers Cast Doubt On Theory Of Coronavirus Lab Accident,” *NPR*, April 23, 2020, accessed here: <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/04/23/841729646/virus-researchers-cast-doubt-on-theory-of-coronavirus-lab-accident>

⁸ Research Grants: Competing Applications, Awards, and Success Rates, National Institutes of Health, January 2020, accessed here: <https://report.nih.gov/nihdatabook/category/6>

⁹ “Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence,” National Institutes of Health Research Portfolio Online Reporting Tools, July 2019, accessed here:

https://projectreporter.nih.gov/project_info_description.cfm?aid=9819304&icde=49752569

¹⁰ House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Testimony of Anthony S. Fauci, M.D., Director, National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases, *Oversight of the Trump Administration’s Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic*, 116th Cong. (Jun. 23, 2020).

4. The analysis conducted to determine that the EcoHealth Alliance grant's project outcomes did not align with program goals and NIH priorities;
5. Any analysis conducted to determine EcoHealth Alliance's alleged improper disbursement of NIH funds to the Wuhan Institute of Virology;
6. Any other decision NIH has made to terminate grants since January 1, 2020; and
7. Any further action NIH is considering taking regarding EcoHealth Alliance or any other grant holder regarding alleged relationships with international laboratories.

In addition to the briefing, we request the following materials be provided to the Committees no later than July 10, 2020. Please provide these materials in a searchable electronic format.

1. All documents and communications relating to the cancellation of EcoHealth Alliance's grant, including the notification to and any response from EcoHealth Alliance;
2. All documents and communications regarding any potential direction from outside entities, including the White House or other Agencies or Departments, to terminate grants based on suspicion of collaboration with international laboratories;
3. All documentation of audits or other analyses conducted to determine improper disbursement of federal grant money from grant-holding institutions to other entities; and
4. The criteria that NIH used to assess the EcoHealth Alliance grant and determine that such grant merited cancellation, and documentation thereof.

Any decision to terminate a research grant should be conducted in a deliberative and transparent process that adheres to the highest standards of scientific integrity. Especially in this unprecedented time, it is important that our public health and science agencies remain free from political pressure and be allowed to pursue federally-funded research based on scientific merit.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to speaking with you and reviewing the relevant materials.

Sincerely,



Eddie Bernice Johnson
Chairwoman
Committee on Science, Space,
and Technology



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce

Bill Foster

Bill Foster
Chairman
Subcommittee on Investigations and
Oversight

Diana DeGette

Diana DeGette
Chair
Subcommittee on Oversight and
Investigations

From: Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 4:53 PM
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]
Cc: Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]; Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]; Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]
Subject: FW: EcoHealth oversight response
Attachments: 06.26.20 SST EC Letter to HHS[1].pdf; EcoHealth Alliance narrative 7-27-20 Option 1c msl clean.docx

Hi Francis – we have discussed this [REDACTED] (b) (5)

I'm attaching the incoming letter and proposed our draft response.

Many thanks, Mike

From: "Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]" [REDACTED] (b) (6)
Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 at 3:58 PM
To: "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" [REDACTED] (b) (6), "Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]" [REDACTED] (b) (6), "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" [REDACTED] (b) (6)
Cc: "Lohmann, Larry (NIH/OD) [E]" [REDACTED] (b) (6), "LaMontagne, Karen (NIH/OD) [E]" [REDACTED] (b) (6)
Subject: Re: EcoHealth oversight response

Attached is the incoming EcoHealth Alliance letter plus Mike's draft of the response, with some edits and additions from me.

A few issues to note:

[REDACTED] (b) (5)

Please let me know how you would like to proceed.
Adrienne

From: "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" [REDACTED] (b) (6)
Date: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 at 6:29 AM
To: Adrienne Hallett [REDACTED] (b) (6), Francis Collins [REDACTED] (b) (6), Lawrence Tabak [REDACTED] (b) (6)
Cc: "Lohmann, Larry (NIH/OD) [E]" [REDACTED] (b) (6), Karen LaMontagne

(b) (6), "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)

Subject: Re: EcoHealth oversight response

Thanks so much Adrienne! I'll draft something today.

Mike

From: "Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)

Date: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 at 1:50 PM

To: "Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]"

(b) (6), "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)

Cc: "Lohmann, Larry (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "LaMontagne, Karen (NIH/OD) [E]"

(b) (6)

Subject: Re: EcoHealth oversight response

(b) (5)

From: Francis Collins (b) (6)

Date: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 at 1:38 PM

To: Adrienne Hallett (b) (6), "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]"

(b) (6), Lawrence Tabak (b) (6)

Cc: "Lohmann, Larry (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), Karen LaMontagne

(b) (6)

Subject: RE: EcoHealth oversight response

Sounds like a good plan. (b) (5)

FC

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Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:59 PM

To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6);

Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)

Cc: Lohmann, Larry (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); LaMontagne, Karen (NIH/OD) [E]

(b) (6)

Subject: EcoHealth oversight response

Good news! (b) (5) 😊.

We are going to draft a response to the letter (b) (5)

Mike, can you help with the draft?

Thanks!
Adrienne



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

June 26, 2020

The Honorable Alex M. Azar II
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Azar,

We write with strong concerns surrounding the Administration's termination of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant to EcoHealth Alliance on April 24, 2020.¹ In the letter communicating the grant's termination, NIH Deputy Director for Extramural Research, Dr. Michael Lauer, wrote that "At this time, NIH does not believe the current project outcomes align with the program goals and agency priorities."² However, press reports indicate that the grant was canceled because a small portion of the funding was to be given to the Wuhan Institute of Virology for on-the-ground sample collection and analysis.³ Given the potential for this study to inform our knowledge of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) transmission, it is deeply concerning that it may have been canceled for political reasons in the midst of the current pandemic.

It is always important that federal research priorities are driven by science-based decisions. This is especially true in a time that requires unparalleled investment in research that may help bring an end to this public health crisis. It is therefore troubling that this abrupt grant cancellation came just a week after President Trump announced that the Administration was looking into "grants going to that area" and continued that "we will end that grant very quickly."⁴ This was in response to a reporter referencing false claims that COVID-19 "likely

¹ Sarah Owerhohle, "Trump cuts U.S. research on bat-human virus transmission over China ties," *Politico*, April 27, 2020, accessed here: <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/04/27/trump-cuts-research-bat-human-virus-china-213076>

² Nurith Aizenman, "Why The U.S. Government Stopped Funding A Research Project On Bats And Coronaviruses," *NPR*, May 1, 2020, accessed here: <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/04/29/847948272/why-the-u-s-government-stopped-funding-a-research-project-on-bats-and-coronavirus>

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⁴ Clip of President Trump with Coronavirus Task Force Briefing, *CSPAN*, April 17, 2020, accessed here: <https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4869590/user-clip-us-2015-grant-wuhan-lab-question>

came from a Level 4 lab in Wuhan.”⁵ The Administration has been pushing this theory⁶ despite scientific experts saying this path of transmission would be virtually impossible given what is known about the virus and lab safety protocols.⁷ If this theory is the basis for the grant termination, it would be an egregious example of the Administration politicizing scientific decision making in order to further a politically convenient narrative.

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<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/30/us/politics/trump-administration-intelligence-coronavirus-china.html>

⁷ Geoff Brumfel and Emily Kwong, “Virus Researchers Cast Doubt On Theory Of Coronavirus Lab Accident,” *NPR*, April 23, 2020, accessed here: <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/04/23/841729646/virus-researchers-cast-doubt-on-theory-of-coronavirus-lab-accident>

⁸ Research Grants: Competing Applications, Awards, and Success Rates, National Institutes of Health, January 2020, accessed here: <https://report.nih.gov/nihdatabook/category/6>

⁹ “Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence,” National Institutes of Health Research Portfolio Online Reporting Tools, July 2019, accessed here:

https://projectreporter.nih.gov/project_info_description.cfm?aid=9819304&icde=49752569

¹⁰ House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Testimony of Anthony S. Fauci, M.D., Director, National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases, *Oversight of the Trump Administration’s Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic*, 116th Cong. (Jun. 23, 2020).

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Sincerely,



Eddie Bernice Johnson
Chairwoman
Committee on Science, Space,
and Technology



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce

Bill Foster

Bill Foster
Chairman
Subcommittee on Investigations and
Oversight

Diana DeGette

Diana DeGette
Chair
Subcommittee on Oversight and
Investigations

EcoHealth Alliance narrative
Mike Lauer (OER)
July 27, 2020
"Option 1c"

(b) (5)



From: Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]
Sent: Wednesday, June 24, 2020 11:35 AM
To: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]; Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]; Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]; Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]; Higgins, Lauren (NIH/OD) [E]; Schwetz, Tara (NIH/OD) [E]
Cc: Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]
Subject: Re: Wuhan lab grant

Sounds good. I have a hard stop at 5 PM for a PCORI clinical trial panel that I'm chairing. I'm free between 3 and 4:15 if that works for a more "relaxed" discussion.

Thanks, Mike

From: "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: Wednesday, June 24, 2020 at 11:25 AM
To: "Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Higgins, Lauren (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Schwetz, Tara (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Wuhan lab grant

Correct – just realized need to add Tara as well.
Thanks

From: "Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: Wednesday, June 24, 2020 at 11:24 AM
To: "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Higgins, Lauren (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Wuhan lab grant

One note: There are a lot of people in Labor-HHS prep meeting. I will hold this topic to the end and ask others to drop off.

From: Lawrence Tabak (b) (6)
Date: Wednesday, June 24, 2020 at 11:21 AM
To: Carrie Wolinetz (b) (6), Adrienne Hallett (b) (6), John Burklow (b) (6), Lauren Higgins (b) (6), "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Wuhan lab grant

Schedule seems quite fluid today – lets add to labor hhs prep please.

From: "Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: Wednesday, June 24, 2020 at 11:14 AM
To: "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Higgins, Lauren (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Wuhan lab grant

Practical question – try to schedule discussion today? Add it on to Labor-HHS prep? Wait until microstaff tomorrow?

From: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, June 24, 2020 11:13 AM
To: Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Higgins, Lauren (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Wuhan lab grant

Should discuss. Looping in Mike Lauer.
Thanks

From: "Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: Wednesday, June 24, 2020 at 11:06 AM
To: "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Higgins, Lauren (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Wuhan lab grant

via Politico:

The administration weighs in: A White House official said that the White House encouraged the decision to cut the funding, but that HHS ultimately made the call. A HHS spokesperson said that "the grantee was not in compliance with NIH's grant policy," and declined further comment.

From: Lawrence Tabak (b) (6)
Date: Tuesday, June 23, 2020 at 8:03 PM
To: Adrienne Hallett (b) (6), John Burklow (b) (6), Lauren Higgins (b) (6), Carrie Wolinetz (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Wuhan lab grant

Thanks Adrienne.

From: "Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: Tuesday, June 23, 2020 at 5:49 PM
To: "Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Higgins, Lauren (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Wuhan lab grant

The transcript won't be out for another few hours so I transcribed it myself. It is attached.

From: John Burklow (b) (6)
Date: Tuesday, June 23, 2020 at 4:49 PM
To: Adrienne Hallett (b) (6), Lauren Higgins (b) (6)
Subject: Fwd: Wuhan lab grant

Pls see below—is there a fast way to get the transcript of the hearing?

Thx,

John

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: June 23, 2020 at 4:25:19 PM EDT
To: "Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Cc: "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Wuhan lab grant

Can we get the transcript?

From: Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, June 23, 2020 4:22 PM
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); NIH Director's Executive Committee (b) (6)
Cc: Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: Fwd: Wuhan lab grant

FYI

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Hall, Bill (HHS/ASPA)" (b) (6) >
Date: June 23, 2020 at 4:18:51 PM EDT
To: "Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Billet, Courtney (NIH/NIAID) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: Wuhan lab grant

Not sure if you've been watching but ASF was just asked why NIH cancelled the EcoHealth Alliance grant (and Wuhan lab). He made quite clear that NIH was simply told to cancel it.

William Hall

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs (Public Health)

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

Washington, DC

Direct: (b) (6)

Mobile: (b) (6)

Email: (b) (6)

www.hhs.gov



From: Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]
Sent: Wednesday, June 24, 2020 11:44 AM
To: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]
Cc: Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]; Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]; Higgins, Lauren (NIH/OD) [E]; Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]; Schwetz, Tara (NIH/OD) [E]
Subject: Re: Wuhan lab grant

And Renate, since she and her team are fielding press calls. Thx.

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 24, 2020, at 11:25 AM, Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6) wrote:

Correct – just realized need to add Tara as well.

Thanks

From: "Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: Wednesday, June 24, 2020 at 11:24 AM
To: "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Higgins, Lauren (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Wuhan lab grant

One note: There are a lot of people in Labor-HHS prep meeting. I will hold this topic to the end and ask others to drop off.

From: Lawrence Tabak (b) (6)
Date: Wednesday, June 24, 2020 at 11:21 AM
To: Carrie Wolinetz (b) (6), Adrienne Hallett (b) (6), John Burklow (b) (6), Lauren Higgins (b) (6), "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Wuhan lab grant

Schedule seems quite fluid today – lets add to labor hhs prep please.

From: "Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: Wednesday, June 24, 2020 at 11:14 AM
To: "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Higgins, Lauren (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Wuhan lab grant

Practical question – try to schedule discussion today? Add it on to Labor-HHS prep? Wait until microstaff tomorrow?

From: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, June 24, 2020 11:13 AM
To: Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]

(b) (6); Higgins, Lauren (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)

Subject: Re: Wuhan lab grant
Should discuss. Looping in Mike Lauer.
Thanks

From: "Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: Wednesday, June 24, 2020 at 11:06 AM
To: "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Higgins, Lauren (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Wuhan lab grant

via Politico:

The administration weighs in: A White House official said that the White House encouraged the decision to cut the funding, but that HHS ultimately made the call. A HHS spokesperson said that "the grantee was not in compliance with NIH's grant policy," and declined further comment.

From: Lawrence Tabak (b) (6)
Date: Tuesday, June 23, 2020 at 8:03 PM
To: Adrienne Hallett (b) (6), John Burklow (b) (6), Lauren Higgins (b) (6), Carrie Wolinetz (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Wuhan lab grant
Thanks Adrienne.

From: "Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: Tuesday, June 23, 2020 at 5:49 PM
To: "Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Higgins, Lauren (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Wuhan lab grant
The transcript won't be out for another few hours so I transcribed it myself. It is attached.

From: John Burklow (b) (6)
Date: Tuesday, June 23, 2020 at 4:49 PM
To: Adrienne Hallett (b) (6), Lauren Higgins (b) (6)
Subject: Fwd: Wuhan lab grant
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Thx,
John

Sent from my iPhone

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Date: June 23, 2020 at 4:25:19 PM EDT
To: "Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Cc: "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Wuhan lab grant

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Sent: Tuesday, June 23, 2020 4:22 PM
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); NIH Director's Executive Committee (b) (6)
Cc: Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: Fwd: Wuhan lab grant
FYI

Sent from my iPhone

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From: "Hall, Bill (HHS/ASPA)" (b) (6)
Date: June 23, 2020 at 4:18:51 PM EDT
To: "Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Billet, Courtney (NIH/NIAID) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: Wuhan lab grant

Not sure if you've been watching but ASF was just asked why NIH cancelled the EcoHealth Alliance grant (and Wuhan lab). He made quite clear that NIH was simply told to cancel it.

William Hall

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs (Public Health)
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
Washington, DC

Direct: (b) (6)
Mobile: (b) (6)
Email: (b) (6)

www.hhs.gov

<image001.png>

Project Information ?

2R01AI110964-06





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Project 1 of 2 [NEXT](#)

PI PROFILE LINKS
MORE INFO 

- DESCRIPTION
- DETAILS**
- RESULTS
- HISTORY
- SUBPROJECTS
- SIMILAR PROJECTS
- NEARBY PROJECTS ^{BETA}
- LINKS 
- NEWS AND MORE 

Project Number: 2R01AI110964-06 **Contact PI / Project Leader:** [DASZAK, PETER](#)
Title: UNDERSTANDING THE RISK OF BAT CORONAVIRUS EMERGENCE **Awardee Organization:** ECOHEALTH ALLIANCE, INC.

Contact PI / Project Leader Information:  **Program Official Information:** **Other PI Information:**  Profile Exists  No Profile
Name: [DASZAK, PETER](#)  **Name:** STEMMY, ERIK J **Other PI Information:** Not Applicable
Email: [Click to view Contact PI / Project Leader email address](#) **Email:** [Click to view PO email address](#)
Title: PRESIDENT

Organization: **Department Type/ Organization Type:**  **Congressional District:**
Name: ECOHEALTH ALLIANCE, INC. **State Code:** NY
City: NEW YORK **Country:** UNITED STATES (US) **Other Domestic Non-Profits:** Unavailable **District:** 10

Other Information:
FOA: [PA-18-484](#) **DUNS Number:** 077090066 **CFDA Code:** 855
Study Section: [Clinical Research and Field Studies of Infectious Diseases Study Section \(CRFS\)](#)  **Project Start Date:** 1-JUN-2014 **Project End Date:** 30-JUN-2025
Budget Start Date: 24-JUL-2019 **Budget End Date:** 30-JUN-2021
Fiscal Year: 2019 **Award Notice Date:** 24-JUL-2019

Administering Institutes or Centers:
 NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ALLERGY AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Project Funding Information for 2019:
Total Funding: \$661,980 **Direct Costs:** \$538,926 **Indirect Costs:** \$123,054

Year	Funding IC	FY Total Cost by IC
2019	NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ALLERGY AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES	\$661,980

From: Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]
Sent: Monday, July 20, 2020 7:58 PM
To: Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]; Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]; Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]; Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]
Cc: Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]
Subject: Re: EcoHealth Oversight request
Attachments: Screen Shot 2020-07-20 at 7.56.49 PM.png

Taking FC off. The grant has been officially reinstated; the revised NoA was sent on July 15, 2020. The NoA indicated that the grant was reinstated, but all activities suspended pending satisfactory answers to all of NIH's questions.

The grant is once again identified as active on RePORTER.

Best, Mike

From: "Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: Monday, July 20, 2020 at 7:39 PM
To: "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: EcoHealth Oversight request

(b) (5) Please see attached Oversight investigation into the issue. Please note the signers:

Frank Pallone, Chair of E&C Cmte
Diana DeGette, Chair of E&C Subcmte on Investigations
Eddie Bernice Johnson, Chair of Science Cmte
Bill Foster, Chair of Science Subcmte on Investigations

From: Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]
Sent: Fri, 14 Aug 2020 10:39:12 -0500
To: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]; Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]; Wojtowicz, Emma (NIH/OD) [E]; Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]; Schwetz, Tara (NIH/OD) [E]; Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]
Cc: Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]; Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E]; Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E]; Fritz, Craig (NIH/OD) [E]; NIH News Clearance (NIH/OD); Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]
Subject: Re: FLAGGING: NIAID news release on centers for research in emerging infectious diseases

Hi Larry – we'll check.

Thanks, Mike

From: "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 at 11:29 AM
To: "Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Wojtowicz, Emma (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Schwetz, Tara (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Cc: "Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Fritz, Craig (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "NIH News Clearance (NIH/OD)" (b) (6)
Subject: Re: FLAGGING: NIAID news release on centers for research in emerging infectious diseases

Mike – I know EcoHealth does not; do any of the other components include China?

From: Francis Collins (b) (6)
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 at 11:08 AM
To: "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Wojtowicz, Emma (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Schwetz, Tara (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Cc: "Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Fritz, Craig (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "NIH News Clearance (NIH/OD)" (b) (6)
Subject: RE: FLAGGING: NIAID news release on centers for research in emerging infectious diseases

The news release includes mention of coronavirus research in Asia. Do any of the funds go to Chinese institutions?

FC

From: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, August 14, 2020 10:50 AM
To: Wojtowicz, Emma (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Schwetz, Tara (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] <(b) (6)>
Cc: Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Fritz, Craig (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); NIH News Clearance (NIH/OD) (b) (6)
Subject: Re: FLAGGING: NIAID news release on centers for research in emerging infectious diseases

I heard about this yesterday afternoon. None of the EcoHealth activity is with China.

From: "Wojtowicz, Emma (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 at 10:47 AM
To: Francis Collins (b) (6), "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Schwetz, Tara (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Cc: "Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Fritz, Craig (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "NIH News Clearance (NIH/OD)" (b) (6)
Subject: FLAGGING: NIAID news release on centers for research in emerging infectious diseases

Greetings-

We are flagging for your awareness that NIAID is announcing new centers for research in emerging infectious diseases; one of the 11 grants was awarded to EcoHealth Alliance. The awards were made in June, but NIAID is making the announcement on Tuesday, August 18, please see the release attached. Please let us know if you have any edits or concerns. The release is going through HHS clearance.

Thank you-
Emma

Emma Wojtowicz
Public Affairs Specialist
National Institutes of Health
Tel: (b) (6)
Email: (b) (6)
Web: <http://www.nih.gov>

NIH . . . Turning Discovery Into Health

From: [Lauer, Michael \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
To: [Hallett, Adrienne \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#); [Collins, Francis \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#); [Tabak, Lawrence \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
Cc: [Allen-Gifford, Patrice \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#); [LaMontagne, Karen \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#); [Lauer, Michael \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
Subject: Re: EcoHealth Response Letter
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 1:59:06 PM
Attachments: [06.26.20 SST EC Letter to HHS\[1\]\[1\].pdf](#)
[Eco Health Lab letter July 8.pdf](#)
[SST and EC EcoHealth Alliance response\[1\].docx](#)

Hi Francis, Larry, and Adrienne – late yesterday we received a “response” from EcoHealth Alliance counsel. Briefly, they are refusing to answer the questions. I’ve forwarded the materials to OGC for their review. Since EcoHealth Alliance has not responded to our questions, I think the ASL letter is accurate.

Thanks, Mike

From: "Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 at 12:44 PM
To: "Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Cc: "Allen-Gifford, Patrice (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "LaMontagne, Karen (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: EcoHealth Response Letter

FC,

Well, we finally got a draft back from ASL. It is attached.

Please let me know if you have any concerns.

Adrienne



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

June 26, 2020

The Honorable Alex M. Azar II
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Azar,

We write with strong concerns surrounding the Administration’s termination of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant to EcoHealth Alliance on April 24, 2020.¹ In the letter communicating the grant’s termination, NIH Deputy Director for Extramural Research, Dr. Michael Lauer, wrote that “At this time, NIH does not believe the current project outcomes align with the program goals and agency priorities.”² However, press reports indicate that the grant was canceled because a small portion of the funding was to be given to the Wuhan Institute of Virology for on-the-ground sample collection and analysis.³ Given the potential for this study to inform our knowledge of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) transmission, it is deeply concerning that it may have been canceled for political reasons in the midst of the current pandemic.

It is always important that federal research priorities are driven by science-based decisions. This is especially true in a time that requires unparalleled investment in research that may help bring an end to this public health crisis. It is therefore troubling that this abrupt grant cancellation came just a week after President Trump announced that the Administration was looking into “grants going to that area” and continued that “we will end that grant very quickly.”⁴ This was in response to a reporter referencing false claims that COVID-19 “likely

¹ Sarah Owerhohle, “Trump cuts U.S. research on bat-human virus transmission over China ties,” *Politico*, April 27, 2020, accessed here: <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/04/27/trump-cuts-research-bat-human-virus-china-213076>

² Nurith Aizenman, “Why The U.S. Government Stopped Funding A Research Project On Bats And Coronaviruses,” *NPR*, May 1, 2020, accessed here: <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/04/29/847948272/why-the-u-s-government-stopped-funding-a-research-project-on-bats-and-coronavirus>

³ *Id.*

⁴ Clip of President Trump with Coronavirus Task Force Briefing, *CSPAN*, April 17, 2020, accessed here: <https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4869590/user-clip-us-2015-grant-wuhan-lab-question>

came from a Level 4 lab in Wuhan.”⁵ The Administration has been pushing this theory⁶ despite scientific experts saying this path of transmission would be virtually impossible given what is known about the virus and lab safety protocols.⁷ If this theory is the basis for the grant termination, it would be an egregious example of the Administration politicizing scientific decision making in order to further a politically convenient narrative.

EcoHealth Alliance’s grant was renewed in 2019 after an initial five-year grant on the same topic. The grant it received was extremely competitive – only 22 percent of proposals were funded in 2019.⁸ The July 2019 project proposal was titled, “Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence.”⁹ In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic that has taken over 115,000 American lives, it is inconceivable that this project would no longer “align with the program goals and agency priorities” of NIH. Any termination of a grant that has gone through NIH’s rigorous scientific review process must be adequately justified on a scientific basis – particularly a grant which would appear to be so relevant to understanding our current health crisis.

As the Committees of jurisdiction over public health and science, we need to better understand the decision to terminate EcoHealth Alliance’s NIH grant. We are especially concerned given Dr. Anthony Fauci’s, Director of NIH’s National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, assertion at a Committee on Energy and Commerce hearing on June 23 that “the grant was canceled because NIH was told to cancel it.”¹⁰ In order to understand how this decision was reached, we request a briefing to be delivered by July 15, 2020. At this briefing, we ask that you be prepared to address the following questions:

1. When the decision was made to terminate the grant to EcoHealth Alliance;
2. Who at HHS was involved in the decision to terminate the grant;
3. Whether entities outside HHS, including but not limited to the White House, the State Department, the National Security Council, and intelligence agencies, were involved in this decision;

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Mark Mazzetti, Julian E. Barnes, Edward Wong, and Adam Goldman, “Trump Officials Are Said to Press Spies to Link Virus and Wuhan Labs,” *New York Times*, April 30, 2020, accessed here:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/30/us/politics/trump-administration-intelligence-coronavirus-china.html>

⁷ Geoff Brumfel and Emily Kwong, “Virus Researchers Cast Doubt On Theory Of Coronavirus Lab Accident,” *NPR*, April 23, 2020, accessed here: <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/04/23/841729646/virus-researchers-cast-doubt-on-theory-of-coronavirus-lab-accident>

⁸ Research Grants: Competing Applications, Awards, and Success Rates, National Institutes of Health, January 2020, accessed here: <https://report.nih.gov/nihdatabook/category/6>

⁹ “Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence,” National Institutes of Health Research Portfolio Online Reporting Tools, July 2019, accessed here:

https://projectreporter.nih.gov/project_info_description.cfm?aid=9819304&icde=49752569

¹⁰ House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Testimony of Anthony S. Fauci, M.D., Director, National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases, *Oversight of the Trump Administration’s Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic*, 116th Cong. (Jun. 23, 2020).

4. The analysis conducted to determine that the EcoHealth Alliance grant's project outcomes did not align with program goals and NIH priorities;
5. Any analysis conducted to determine EcoHealth Alliance's alleged improper disbursement of NIH funds to the Wuhan Institute of Virology;
6. Any other decision NIH has made to terminate grants since January 1, 2020; and
7. Any further action NIH is considering taking regarding EcoHealth Alliance or any other grant holder regarding alleged relationships with international laboratories.

In addition to the briefing, we request the following materials be provided to the Committees no later than July 10, 2020. Please provide these materials in a searchable electronic format.

1. All documents and communications relating to the cancellation of EcoHealth Alliance's grant, including the notification to and any response from EcoHealth Alliance;
2. All documents and communications regarding any potential direction from outside entities, including the White House or other Agencies or Departments, to terminate grants based on suspicion of collaboration with international laboratories;
3. All documentation of audits or other analyses conducted to determine improper disbursement of federal grant money from grant-holding institutions to other entities; and
4. The criteria that NIH used to assess the EcoHealth Alliance grant and determine that such grant merited cancellation, and documentation thereof.

Any decision to terminate a research grant should be conducted in a deliberative and transparent process that adheres to the highest standards of scientific integrity. Especially in this unprecedented time, it is important that our public health and science agencies remain free from political pressure and be allowed to pursue federally-funded research based on scientific merit.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to speaking with you and reviewing the relevant materials.

Sincerely,



Eddie Bernice Johnson
Chairwoman
Committee on Science, Space,
and Technology



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce

Bill Foster

Bill Foster
Chairman
Subcommittee on Investigations and
Oversight

Diana DeGette

Diana DeGette
Chair
Subcommittee on Oversight and
Investigations



National Institutes of Health
National Institute of Allergy
and Infectious Diseases
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

8 July 2020

Drs. Aleksei Chmura and Peter Daszak
EcoHealth Alliance, Inc.
460 W 34th St
Suite 1701
New York, NY 10001

Re: NIH Grant R01AI110964

Dear Drs. Chmura and Daszak:

In follow-up to my previous letter of April 24, 2020, I am writing to notify you that the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), an Institute within the National Institutes of Health (NIH), under the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), has withdrawn its termination of grant R01AI110964, which supports the project *Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence*. Accordingly, the grant is reinstated.

However, as you are aware, the NIH has received reports that the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV), a subrecipient of EcoHealth Alliance under R01AI110964, has been conducting research at its facilities in China that pose serious bio-safety concerns and, as a result, create health and welfare threats to the public in China and other countries, including the United States. Grant award R01AI110964 is subject to biosafety requirements set forth in the NIH Grants Policy Statement (e.g., NIH GPS, Section 4.1.24 “Public Health Security”) and the Notice of Award (e.g., requiring that “Research funded under this grant must adhere to the [CDC/NIH Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories (BMBL)].”). Moreover, NIH grant recipients are expected to provide safe working conditions for their employees and foster work environments conducive to high-quality research. NIH GPS, Section 4. The terms and conditions of the grant award flow down to subawards to subrecipients. 45 C.F.R. § 75.101.

As the grantee, EcoHealth Alliance was required to “monitor the activities of the subrecipient as necessary to ensure that the subaward is used for authorized purposes, in compliance with Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the subaward . . .” 45 C.F.R. § 75.352(d). We have concerns that WIV has not satisfied safety requirements under the award, and that EcoHealth Alliance has not satisfied its obligations to monitor the activities of its subrecipient to ensure compliance.

Moreover, as we have informed you through prior Notices of Award, this award is subject to the Transparency Act subaward and executive compensation reporting requirement of 2 C.F.R. Part

170. To date you have not reported any subawards in the [Federal Subaward Reporting System](#).

Therefore, effective the date of this letter, July 8, 2020, NIH is suspending all activities related to R01AI110964, until such time as these concerns have been addressed to NIH's satisfaction. This suspension is taken in accordance with [45 C.F.R. § 75.371](#), Remedies for Noncompliance, which permits suspension of award activities in cases of non-compliance, and the NIH GPS, [Section 8.5.2](#), which permits NIH to take immediate action to suspend a grant when necessary to protect the public health and welfare. This action is not appealable in accordance with 42 C.F.R. § 50.404 and the NIH GPS [Section 8.7](#), Grant Appeals Procedures. However, EcoHealth Alliance has the opportunity to provide information and documentation demonstrating that WIV and EcoHealth Alliance have satisfied the above-mentioned requirements.

Specifically, to address the NIH's concerns, EcoHealth must provide the NIH with the following information and materials, which must be complete and accurate:

1. Provide an aliquot of the actual SARS-CoV-2 virus that WIV used to determine the viral sequence.
2. Explain the apparent disappearance of Huang Yanling, a scientist / technician who worked in the WIV lab but whose lab web presence has been deleted.
3. Provide the NIH with WIV's responses to the 2018 U.S. Department of State cables regarding safety concerns.
4. Disclose and explain out-of-ordinary restrictions on laboratory facilities, as suggested, for example, by diminished cell-phone traffic in October 2019, and the evidence that there may have been roadblocks surrounding the facility from October 14-19, 2019.
5. Explain why WIV failed to note that the RaTG13 virus, the bat-derived coronavirus in its collection with the greatest similarity to SARS-CoV-2, was actually isolated from an abandoned mine where three men died in 2012 with an illness remarkably similar to COVID-19, and explain why this was not followed up.
6. Additionally, EcoHealth Alliance must arrange for WIV to submit to an outside inspection team charged to review the lab facilities and lab records, with specific attention to addressing the question of whether WIV staff had SARS-CoV-2 in their possession prior to December 2019. The inspection team should be granted full access to review the processes and safety of procedures of all of the WIV field work (including but not limited to collection of animals and biospecimens in caves, abandoned man-made underground cavities, or outdoor sites). The inspection team could be organized by NIAID, or, if preferred, by the U.S. National Academy of Sciences.
7. Lastly, EcoHealth Alliance must ensure that all of its subawards are fully reported in the [Federal Subaward Reporting System](#)

During this period of suspension, NIH will continue to review the activities under this award, taking into consideration information provided by EcoHealth Alliance, to further assess compliance by EcoHealth Alliance and WIV, including compliance with other terms and conditions of award that may be implicated. Additionally, during the period of suspension, EcoHealth Alliance may not allow research under this project to be conducted. Further, no funds from grant R01AI110964 may be provided to or expended by EcoHealth Alliance or any subrecipients; all such charges are unallowable. It is EcoHealth Alliance's responsibility as the

recipient of this grant award to ensure that the terms of this suspension are communicated to and understood by all subrecipients. EcoHealth Alliance must provide adequate oversight to ensure compliance with the terms of the suspension. Any noncompliance of the terms of this suspension must be immediately reported to NIH. Once the original award is reinstated, NIH will take additional steps to restrict all funding in the HHS Payment Management System in the amount of \$369,819. EcoHealth Alliance will receive a revised Notice of Award from NIAID indicating the suspension of these research activities and funding restrictions as a specific condition of award.

Please note that this action does not preclude NIH from taking additional corrective or enforcement actions pursuant to 45 CFR Part 75, including, but not limited to, terminating the grant award. NIH may also take other remedies that may be legally available if NIH discovers other violations of terms and conditions of award on the part of EcoHealth Alliance or WIV.

Sincerely,

Michael S Lauer, MD
NIH Deputy Director for Extramural Research
Email: [REDACTED] (b) (6)

cc: Dr. Erik Stemmy
Ms. Emily Linde

Letterhead

The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson
Chairwoman, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510-2102

(b) (5)



From: Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]
Sent: Sat, 15 Aug 2020 07:22:29 -0500
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]
Cc: Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]; Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]; Allen-Gifford, Patrice (NIH/OD) [E]; LaMontagne, Karen (NIH/OD) [E]
Subject: Re: EcoHealth Response Letter

I will suggest that to ASL.

On Aug 15, 2020, at 7:52 AM, Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] wrote:

□

(b) (6) wrote:
(b) (5)
It seems odd not to mention that.
FC

From: Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, August 14, 2020 1:59 PM
To: Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Cc: Allen-Gifford, Patrice (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); LaMontagne, Karen (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: Re: EcoHealth Response Letter

Hi Francis, Larry, and Adrienne – late yesterday we received a “response” from EcoHealth Alliance counsel. Briefly, they are refusing to answer the questions. I’ve forwarded the materials to OGC for their review. Since EcoHealth Alliance has not responded to our questions, I think the ASL letter is accurate.

Thanks, Mike

From: "Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 at 12:44 PM
To: "Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Cc: "Allen-Gifford, Patrice (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "LaMontagne, Karen (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: EcoHealth Response Letter

FC,

Well, we finally got a draft back from ASL. It is attached.

Please let me know if you have any concerns.

Adrienne

From: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]
Sent: Fri, 14 Aug 2020 09:52:47 -0500
To: Wojtowicz, Emma (NIH/OD) [E]; Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]; Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]; Schwetz, Tara (NIH/OD) [E]; Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]; Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]
Cc: Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]; Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E]; Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E]; Fritz, Craig (NIH/OD) [E]; NIH News Clearance (NIH/OD)
Subject: Re: FLAGGING: NIAID news release on centers for research in emerging infectious diseases

I will give Danielle a heads up.

From: "Wojtowicz, Emma (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 at 10:47 AM
To: Francis Collins (b) (6), "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Schwetz, Tara (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Cc: "Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Fritz, Craig (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "NIH News Clearance (NIH/OD)" (b) (6)
Subject: FLAGGING: NIAID news release on centers for research in emerging infectious diseases

Greetings-

We are flagging for your awareness that NIAID is announcing new centers for research in emerging infectious diseases; one of the 11 grants was awarded to EcoHealth Alliance. The awards were made in June, but NIAID is making the announcement on Tuesday, August 18, please see the release attached. Please let us know if you have any edits or concerns. The release is going through HHS clearance.

Thank you-
Emma

Emma Wojtowicz
Public Affairs Specialist
National Institutes of Health
Tel: (b) (6)
Email: (b) (6)
Web: <http://www.nih.gov>

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From: Fritz, Craig (NIH/OD) [E]
Sent: Mon, 17 Aug 2020 11:38:34 -0500
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E];Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E];Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E];Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E];Schwetz, Tara (NIH/OD) [E];Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]
Cc: Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E];Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E];Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E];NIH News Clearance (NIH/OD);Wojtowicz, Emma (NIH/OD) [E]
Subject: RE: FLAGGING: NIAID news release on centers for research in emerging infectious diseases

Hi Dr. Collins,

This is the update from NIAID.

Thanks,
Craig

Further clarification/answers from program:

There are grant funds going to the China CDC in Beijing (estimated \$107,200 for FY20) and The University of Hong Kong (estimated \$294,434 for FY20).

Although neither of these sites are the primary awardees and the grant was made to Washington University, these sites are receiving NIAID grant funds from Washington University.

From: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, August 17, 2020 12:28 PM
To: Fritz, Craig (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Schwetz, Tara (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Cc: Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); NIH News Clearance (NIH/OD) (b) (6); Wojtowicz, Emma (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: RE: FLAGGING: NIAID news release on centers for research in emerging infectious diseases

What Chinese institution(s) are involved?

From: Fritz, Craig (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, August 17, 2020 10:14 AM

To: Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Schwetz, Tara (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Cc: Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); NIH News Clearance (NIH/OD) (b) (6); Wojtowicz, Emma (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: RE: FLAGGING: NIAID news release on centers for research in emerging infectious diseases

Good morning – we asked NIAID the same question and this was their response:

The grant to Washington University with PI Dr. Wang (1U01AI151810-01) is the *only* one in the CREID Network that has foreign involvement in China. The estimated total cost in China during FY20 is \$107,200.

From: Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, August 14, 2020 11:39 AM
To: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Wojtowicz, Emma (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Schwetz, Tara (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Cc: Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Fritz, Craig (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); NIH News Clearance (NIH/OD) (b) (6); Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: Re: FLAGGING: NIAID news release on centers for research in emerging infectious diseases

Hi Larry – we'll check.

Thanks, Mike

From: "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 at 11:29 AM
To: "Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Wojtowicz, Emma (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Schwetz, Tara (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Cc: "Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E]"

(b) (6), "Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Fritz, Craig (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "NIH News Clearance (NIH/OD)" (b) (6)

Subject: Re: FLAGGING: NIAID news release on centers for research in emerging infectious diseases

Mike – I know EcoHealth does not; do any of the other components include China?

From: Francis Collins (b) (6)

Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 at 11:08 AM

To: "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Wojtowicz, Emma (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Schwetz, Tara (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)

Cc: "Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Fritz, Craig (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "NIH News Clearance (NIH/OD)" (b) (6)

Subject: RE: FLAGGING: NIAID news release on centers for research in emerging infectious diseases

The news release includes mention of coronavirus research in Asia. Do any of the funds go to Chinese institutions?

FC

From: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)

Sent: Friday, August 14, 2020 10:50 AM

To: Wojtowicz, Emma (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Schwetz, Tara (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)

Cc: Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Fritz, Craig (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); NIH News Clearance (NIH/OD) (b) (6)

Subject: Re: FLAGGING: NIAID news release on centers for research in emerging infectious diseases

I heard about this yesterday afternoon. None of the EcoHealth activity is with China.

From: "Wojtowicz, Emma (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)

Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 at 10:47 AM

To: Francis Collins (b) (6), "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]"

(b) (6), "Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6),

"Schwetz, Tara (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]"

(b) (6), "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)

Cc: "Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E]"

(b) (6), "Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Fritz, Craig

(NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "NIH News Clearance (NIH/OD)"

(b) (6)

Subject: FLAGGING: NIAID news release on centers for research in emerging infectious diseases

Greetings-

We are flagging for your awareness that NIAID is announcing new centers for research in emerging infectious diseases; one of the 11 grants was awarded to EcoHealth Alliance. The awards were made in June, but NIAID is making the announcement on Tuesday, August 18, please see the release attached. Please let us know if you have any edits or concerns. The release is going through HHS clearance.

Thank you-

Emma

Emma Wojtowicz

Public Affairs Specialist

National Institutes of Health

Tel: (b) (6)

Email: (b) (6)

Web: <http://www.nih.gov>

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From: Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]
Sent: Tue, 18 Aug 2020 08:52:47 -0500
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]; Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]; Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E]
Cc: Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]; Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]; Schwetz, Tara (NIH/OD) [E]; Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]; Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E]; Wojtowicz, Emma (NIH/OD) [E]; Higgins, Lauren (NIH/OD) [E]; Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]
Subject: Re: FOR INPUT/AWARENESS: follow up on NIH grant, EcoHealth Alliance

Hi Francis – the questions are absolutely within scope. We state in the GPS that we expect that all research is conducted in a safe environment. Our expectations of the primary recipient apply fully to sub-recipients.

All of our questions are related to serious safety concerns.

Thanks, Mike

From: "Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 at 8:59 AM
To: "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Cc: "Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Schwetz, Tara (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Wojtowicz, Emma (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Higgins, Lauren (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: RE: FOR INPUT/AWARENESS: follow up on NIH grant, EcoHealth Alliance

Just catching up to this. (b) (5)
But what is our internal response to the reporter's questions about whether six of the seven concerns fall outside the scope of the grant?

FC

From: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, August 17, 2020 8:56 PM
To: Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Cc: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Schwetz, Tara (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Wojtowicz, Emma (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)

(b) (6); Higgins, Lauren (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: Re: FOR INPUT/AWARENESS: follow up on NIH grant, EcoHealth Alliance

thanks

From: "Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: Monday, August 17, 2020 at 8:54 PM
To: "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Cc: Francis Collins <(b) (6)>, "Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6),
"Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Schwetz, Tara (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6),
"Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6),
"Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6),
"Wojtowicz, Emma (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Higgins, Lauren (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: RE: FOR INPUT/AWARENESS: follow up on NIH grant, EcoHealth Alliance

We will clear the standard response attributable to NIH generally, and can let you know if HHS has concerns. Thanks to you and Mike for the quick replies!

Amanda

From: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, August 17, 2020 8:50 PM
To: Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Cc: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6);
Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Schwetz, Tara (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6);
Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6);
Wojtowicz, Emma (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Higgins, Lauren (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: Re: FOR INPUT/AWARENESS: follow up on NIH grant, EcoHealth Alliance

(b) (5) but will run by HHS.

From: "Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: Monday, August 17, 2020 at 8:48 PM
To: "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Cc: Francis Collins <(b) (6)>, "Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6),
"Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Schwetz, Tara (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6),
"Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6),
"Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6),
"Wojtowicz, Emma (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Higgins, Lauren (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)

(NIH/OD) [E]" [REDACTED] (b) (6)

Subject: RE: FOR INPUT/AWARENESS: follow up on NIH grant, EcoHealth Alliance

She said her deadline is tomorrow noon so there is some time if we prefer to check with HHS before responding. Also, she has requested to interview Mike about it.

Thanks,
Amanda

From: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6)

Sent: Monday, August 17, 2020 8:06 PM

To: Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6)

Cc: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6); Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6); Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6); Schwetz, Tara (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6); Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6); Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6); Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6); Wojtowicz, Emma (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6); Higgins, Lauren (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6)

Subject: Re: FOR INPUT/AWARENESS: follow up on NIH grant, EcoHealth Alliance

[REDACTED] (b) (5) - we can check with HHS tomorrow if they prefer a different course in the future.

Sent from my iPhone

On Aug 17, 2020, at 8:00 PM, Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E] [REDACTED] (b) (6) wrote:

Good evening-

Wanted to make you aware that WSJ's Betsy McKay has asked us about the EcoHealth reinstatement/suspension. It appears they have a copy of the most recent letter to EcoHealth. I did share the below with Mike, and discussed it with John. [REDACTED] (b) (5)

[REDACTED] Just checking that is accurate and would appreciate input on the most appropriate response.

Checking with Betsy about deadline.

Thanks in advance for your guidance,
Amanda

From: McKay, Betsy <betsy.mckay@wsj.com>

Sent: Monday, August 17, 2020 4:02 PM

To: Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Routh, Jennifer (NIH/NIAID) [E] (b) (6); Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)

Subject: follow up on NIH grant, EcoHealth Alliance

Hi Amanda et. al,

We were emailing late last week about NIH's reinstatement of a grant to EcoHealth Alliance for bat coronavirus research. The grant had been terminated in April. Looking into that further, I have some follow-up questions. The grant was reinstated, then immediately suspended until EcoHealth Alliance supplies information and material addressing seven areas of concern.

Six of these areas of concern appear to be outside the scope of the grant, such as providing a sample of the SARS-CoV-2 virus used to sequence the virus in January, an explanation of the disappearance of a WIV scientist, and arranging for WIV to submit to an outside inspection to address whether WIV staff had SARS-CoV-2 in their possession before December 2019.

My questions are:

1. Why is EcoHealth Alliance being asked to provide these materials and information?
2. How does the requirement that EcoHealth Alliance provide this information fit into the scope of its grant?
3. Who specifically (which agency or person) has ordered EcoHealth Alliance to supply this information?
4. Any further comment on why these requirements are being placed on this grant recipient at this time?

Thanks very much.

Best,
Betsy

--

Betsy McKay
SENIOR WRITER

[<image002.jpg>](#)

O: +1 212 416 3165
M: +1 404 229 0472
E: betsy.mckay@wsj.com

T: [@betswrites](#)

From: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]
Sent: Tue, 18 Aug 2020 12:38:51 -0500
To: Steele, Danielle (HHS/IOS)
Cc: Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E];Schwetz, Tara (NIH/OD) [E];Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]
Subject: Re: FOR INPUT/AWARENESS: follow up on NIH grant, EcoHealth Alliance

Thanks – all good.
Larry

From: "Steele, Danielle (HHS/IOS)" (b) (6)
Date: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 at 1:38 PM
To: "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Cc: "Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Schwetz, Tara (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: RE: FOR INPUT/AWARENESS: follow up on NIH grant, EcoHealth Alliance

Sorry to miss your deadline! ASPA let me know that the standard response was sent up to them and approved, so sounds like it got taken care of

Danielle Steele

Senior Advisor, Immediate Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
600E | Direct: (b) (6) | Cell: (b) (6)

From: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, August 17, 2020 8:53 PM
To: Steele, Danielle (HHS/IOS) (b) (6)
Cc: Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Schwetz, Tara (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: FW: FOR INPUT/AWARENESS: follow up on NIH grant, EcoHealth Alliance

Danielle,
Sorry to bother you, (b) (5)
(b) (6) thought I would run by you.

Thanks
Larry

From: "Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: Monday, August 17, 2020 at 8:48 PM
To: "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Cc: Francis Collins (b) (6), "Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]"

(b) (6), "Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6),
"Schwetz, Tara (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]"
(b) (6), "Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Myles,
Renate (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Wojtowicz, Emma (NIH/OD) [E]"
(b) (6), "Higgins, Lauren (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)

Subject: RE: FOR INPUT/AWARENESS: follow up on NIH grant, EcoHealth Alliance

She said her deadline is tomorrow noon so there is some time if we prefer to check with HHS before responding. Also, she has requested to interview Mike about it.

Thanks,
Amanda

From: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, August 17, 2020 8:06 PM
To: Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Cc: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]
(b) (6); Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Schwetz, Tara
(NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Burklow,
John (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6);
Wojtowicz, Emma (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Higgins, Lauren (NIH/OD) [E]
(b) (6)

Subject: Re: FOR INPUT/AWARENESS: follow up on NIH grant, EcoHealth Alliance

(b) (5) we can check with HHS tomorrow if they prefer a different course in the future.

Sent from my iPhone

On Aug 17, 2020, at 8:00 PM, Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6) wrote:

Good evening-

Wanted to make you aware that WSJ's Betsy McKay has asked us about the EcoHealth reinstatement/suspension. It appears they have a copy of the most recent letter to EcoHealth. I did share the below with Mike, and discussed it with John. (b) (5)

Just checking that is accurate and would appreciate input on the most appropriate response.

Checking with Betsy about deadline.

Thanks in advance for your guidance,

Amanda

From: McKay, Betsy <betsy.mckay@wsj.com>

Sent: Monday, August 17, 2020 4:02 PM

To: Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Routh, Jennifer (NIH/NIAID) [E] (b) (6); Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)

Subject: follow up on NIH grant, EcoHealth Alliance

Hi Amanda et. al,

We were emailing late last week about NIH's reinstatement of a grant to EcoHealth Alliance for bat coronavirus research. The grant had been terminated in April. Looking into that further, I have some follow-up questions. The grant was reinstated, then immediately suspended until EcoHealth Alliance supplies information and material addressing seven areas of concern.

Six of these areas of concern appear to be outside the scope of the grant, such as providing a sample of the SARS-CoV-2 virus used to sequence the virus in January, an explanation of the disappearance of a WIV scientist, and arranging for WIV to submit to an outside inspection to address whether WIV staff had SARS-CoV-2 in their possession before December 2019.

My questions are:

1. Why is EcoHealth Alliance being asked to provide these materials and information?
2. How does the requirement that EcoHealth Alliance provide this information fit into the scope of its grant?
3. Who specifically (which agency or person) has ordered EcoHealth Alliance to supply this information?
4. Any further comment on why these requirements are being placed on this grant recipient at this time?

Thanks very much.

Best,
Betsy

--

Betsy McKay
SENIOR WRITER

<[image002.jpg](#)>

O: +1 212 416 3165
M: +1 404 229 0472
E: betsy.mckay@wsj.com
T: [@betswrites](#)

From: Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]
Sent: Tue, 18 Aug 2020 14:19:40 -0500
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]; Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]; Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]
Cc: Allen-Gifford, Patrice (NIH/OD) [E]; LaMontagne, Karen (NIH/OD) [E]
Subject: Re: EcoHealth Response Letter

Thank you!

From: Francis Collins (b) (6)
Date: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 at 3:08 PM
To: Lawrence Tabak (b) (6), Adrienne Hallett (b) (6),
"Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Cc: Patrice Allen-Gifford (b) (6), Karen LaMontagne
(b) (6)
Subject: RE: EcoHealth Response Letter

I'm OK too.
FC

From: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 2:31 PM
To: Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]
(b) (6); Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Cc: Allen-Gifford, Patrice (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); LaMontagne, Karen (NIH/OD) [E]
(b) (6)
Subject: Re: EcoHealth Response Letter

I am ok with that.

From: "Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 at 2:30 PM
To: Francis Collins (b) (6), "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]"
(b) (6), "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Cc: "Allen-Gifford, Patrice (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "LaMontagne, Karen
(NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: Re: EcoHealth Response Letter

We drafted an additional sentence for the letter:

(b) (5)

(b) (5)

Any concerns?
Adrienne

From: Francis Collins (b) (6)
Date: Saturday, August 15, 2020 at 7:52 AM
To: "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), Adrienne Hallett (b) (6), Lawrence Tabak (b) (6)
Cc: Patrice Allen-Gifford (b) (6), Karen LaMontagne (b) (6)
Subject: RE: EcoHealth Response Letter

(b) (5)
It seems odd not to mention that.
FC

From: Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, August 14, 2020 1:59 PM
To: Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Cc: Allen-Gifford, Patrice (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); LaMontagne, Karen (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: Re: EcoHealth Response Letter

Hi Francis, Larry, and Adrienne – late yesterday we received a “response” from EcoHealth Alliance counsel. Briefly, they are refusing to answer the questions. I’ve forwarded the materials to OGC for their review. Since EcoHealth Alliance has not responded to our questions, I think the ASL letter is accurate.

Thanks, Mike

From: "Hallett, Adrienne (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 at 12:44 PM
To: "Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Lauer, Michael (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Cc: "Allen-Gifford, Patrice (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "LaMontagne, Karen (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: EcoHealth Response Letter

FC,

Well, we finally got a draft back from ASL. It is attached.

Please let me know if you have any concerns.
Adrienne

From: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]
Sent: Wed, 19 Aug 2020 12:41:51 -0500
To: Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]; Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]; Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]
Subject: Re: NIH Presses U.S. Nonprofit for Information on Wuhan Virology Lab

agree

From: "Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 at 1:41 PM
To: Francis Collins (b) (6), "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: RE: NIH Presses U.S. Nonprofit for Information on Wuhan Virology Lab

(b) (5) I think.

From: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 1:40 PM
To: Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: RE: NIH Presses U.S. Nonprofit for Information on Wuhan Virology Lab

What if Tony and I called him together?

From: Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 1:08 PM
To: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: RE: NIH Presses U.S. Nonprofit for Information on Wuhan Virology Lab

I agree with Larry, Francis. (b) (5)

From: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 12:54 PM
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: Re: NIH Presses U.S. Nonprofit for Information on Wuhan Virology Lab

I don't know that you can – (b) (5)

From: Francis Collins (b) (6)
Date: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 at 12:51 PM
To: "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: RE: NIH Presses U.S. Nonprofit for Information on Wuhan Virology Lab

But the other 76 Nobel Laureates will follow his lead.

(b) (5)

FC

From: Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 12:21 PM
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: Re: NIH Presses U.S. Nonprofit for Information on Wuhan Virology Lab

Please don't waste the ATP; his righteous indignation is so misplaced.

From: Francis Collins (b) (6)
Date: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 at 12:16 PM
To: "Tabak, Lawrence (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6), "Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: FW: WSJ: NIH Presses U.S. Nonprofit for Information on Wuhan Virology Lab

I'm sorry to see such negative comments from Varmus. I wish he had reached out to us before ventilating to the WSJ. (b) (5)

Francis

From: Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 10:03 AM
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); NIH Director's Executive Committee (b) (6)
Cc: Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); OCPLPressTeam (b) (6)
Subject: WSJ: NIH Presses U.S. Nonprofit for Information on Wuhan Virology Lab

NIH Presses U.S. Nonprofit for Information on Wuhan Virology Lab

National Institutes of Health told EcoHealth Alliance it must hand over information and materials from Chinese research facility to resume funding for suspended grant

By

Betsy McKay

Aug. 19, 2020 5:30 am ET

The National Institutes of Health told a small New York-based nonprofit that it must hand over information and materials from a research partner in Wuhan, China, that is under scrutiny by the Trump administration to win back a multimillion-dollar research grant.

Among the items the nonprofit EcoHealth Alliance must provide to resume funding is a sample of the new coronavirus that the Wuhan researchers used to determine its genetic sequence, according to a July 8 letter from the NIH viewed by The Wall Street Journal.

EcoHealth Alliance must also arrange for an inspection of the Wuhan Institute of Virology by an outside team that would examine the facility's lab and records "with specific attention to addressing the question of whether WIV staff had SARS-CoV-2 in their possession prior to December 2019," the U.S. health-research agency's letter said.

"The NIH has received reports that the Wuhan Institute of Virology...has been conducting research at its facilities in China that pose serious bio-safety concerns," read the letter, which was signed by Michael Lauer, the NIH deputy director for extramural research.

“We have concerns that WIV has not satisfied safety requirements under the award, and that EcoHealth Alliance hasn’t satisfied its obligations to monitor” its partner to ensure it has complied with regulations regarding the use of the grant money, the letter added.

EcoHealth Alliance, which searches for warning signs of animal viruses that could cause human outbreaks, confirmed it had received the letter.

The NIH said it doesn’t discuss internal deliberations on specific grants. Dr. Lauer declined a request for an interview, an NIH spokeswoman said.

The Trump administration [has suggested, without providing evidence](#), that the SARS-CoV-2 virus causing the current pandemic originated in a high-security lab at the Wuhan institute.

Recipients of U.S. government research grants are required to routinely monitor subrecipients to ensure that they are using the money as intended, researchers say.

Yet the NIH doesn’t usually set the kinds of conditions it required EcoHealth Alliance to meet, said Heather Pierce, senior director for science policy and regulatory counsel at the Association of American Medical Colleges.

Jimmy Kolker, a former U.S. ambassador and former assistant secretary for global affairs at the Department of Health and Human Services, said the NIH can routinely ask for reports about the progress of research, including updates on the work of a partner and the safety of its lab, but shouldn’t ask about matters outside the scope of the funded research.

“What they’re asking for is intelligence information that will be used for policy-making,” he said in an interview.

The NIH’s list of conditions “is outrageous, especially when a grant has already been carefully evaluated by peer review and addresses one of the most important problems in the world right now—how viruses from animals spill over to human beings,” Harold E. Varmus, a former NIH director, said in an interview. “What could be more important at the moment?”

Dr. Varmus is one of 77 Nobel laureates who asked NIH Director Francis Collins and Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar in May to review the NIH's termination of the grant the month before.

"This whole episode is just a woeful attack on the traditional way NIH has maintained its integrity," he said.

EcoHealth Alliance responded to the NIH last week, calling the U.S. research agency's suspension unjustified, according to a copy of the letter reviewed by the Journal.

EcoHealth Alliance said in its response that it hadn't sent any grant funds to the Wuhan institute before the grant was suspended, though it has provided funding to the institute in previous years.

The conditions are outside the scope of the grant, said Peter Daszak, president of EcoHealth Alliance, adding that his nonprofit doesn't have access to the information the NIH is seeking.

"Our work is part of protecting the U.S. citizen against diseases like Covid-19," Dr. Daszak said. "It's just so shortsighted to drop that research."

Since 2004, the New York City-based nonprofit has collaborated with Wuhan Institute of Virology researchers and others to study coronaviruses in bats in China and how they infect people, according to EcoHealth Alliance and the nonprofit's published research.

EcoHealth Alliance received a \$3.4 million grant from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases in 2014, which the nonprofit used, working with its Wuhan institute collaborators, to study coronaviruses in bats roosting in caves in China and how the viruses infect people.

In [one study resulting from that grant](#), the researchers found evidence that people living near the caves had been infected with viruses resembling the one that caused severe acute respiratory syndrome, the disease that originated in China and caused a deadly epidemic in 2002 and 2003.

The Wuhan institute received \$133,000 each year from EcoHealth Alliance for the first four years of that grant and \$66,000 in the fifth year, according to the nonprofit. The WIV, part of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, is a major research institute focusing on animal and human pathogens. It houses a laboratory that operates at the highest level of biosafety precautions.

The NIAID renewed the EcoHealth Alliance grant last year for another five years, at \$3.7 million.

EcoHealth Alliance planned to use the renewed grant for further study into how often SARS-like viruses in southern China are spilling over to humans and the consequences for public health, Dr. Daszak said.

The Trump administration has expressed concerns about biosafety in China, and U.S. intelligence agencies said in April they were [attempting to determine](#) whether a lab accident in Wuhan might have caused a release of the virus. U.S. diplomats in China sent a cable to the State Department in 2018 warning of insufficient safety training at the Wuhan lab, which was conducting research on bat coronaviruses.

The NIH terminated the grant to EcoHealth Alliance in April, saying it didn't believe the work aligned with "program goals and agency priorities," according to a letter the NIH sent that was viewed by the Journal.

The agency reinstated the grant in July but suspended its activities, saying in its July 8 letter to the nonprofit that it must fulfill seven criteria before funding on the grant can resume.

The Wuhan institute sequenced the genome of the new virus in January after receiving patient samples. In addition to requiring EcoHealth Alliance provide a sample of the sequenced coronavirus, the NIH said in its letter that EcoHealth Alliance must "explain the apparent disappearance" of a scientist who worked in the Wuhan lab.

The scientist was rumored on some social media to be a "patient zero" of the pandemic. The Wuhan institute has [denied that the pandemic began at its facility](#) or among its scientists.

The institute said in a statement earlier this year that the scientist in question was a graduate student who went to work elsewhere after receiving her master's degree.

The NIH also ordered EcoHealth Alliance to explain purported restrictions at the Wuhan institute, including “diminished cell-phone traffic in October 2019, and the evidence that there may have been roadblocks surrounding the facility from October 14-19, 2019.”

The U.S. research agency also asked EcoHealth Alliance to provide it with the Wuhan institute's response to the safety concerns described in the 2018 cable sent to the State Department.

YOU

From: Fauci, Anthony (NIH/NIAID) [E]
Sent: Wed, 19 Aug 2020 20:38:55 -0500
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]
Subject: RE: WSJ: NIH Presses U.S. Nonprofit for Information on Wuhan Virology Lab

No problem. Later in the week is better since the surgeon wants me to save my voice for about a week.

From: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 9:35 PM
To: Fauci, Anthony (NIH/NIAID) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: FW: WSJ: NIH Presses U.S. Nonprofit for Information on Wuhan Virology Lab

Hi again Tony,

When you are able (next week?), (b) (5)
(b) (6) It's a little hard to read the words in his response to the WSJ, and the other 76 Nobelists are likely to follow his lead.

Francis

From: Wojtowicz, Emma (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6) >
Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 7:54 AM
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); NIH Director's Executive Committee (b) (6)
(b) (6)
Cc: Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Subject: WSJ: NIH Presses U.S. Nonprofit for Information on Wuhan Virology Lab

[NIH Presses U.S. Nonprofit for Information on Wuhan Virology Lab](#)

National Institutes of Health told EcoHealth Alliance it must hand over information and materials from Chinese research facility to resume funding for suspended grant



The Trump administration has suggested, without providing evidence, that the coronavirus behind the current pandemic originated in a lab at the Wuhan Institute of Virology in China.

PHOTO: HECTOR RETAMAL/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE/GETTY IMAGES

By

Betsy McKay

Aug. 19, 2020 5:30 am ET

The National Institutes of Health told a small New York-based nonprofit that it must hand over information and materials from a research partner in Wuhan, China, that is under scrutiny by the Trump administration to win back a multimillion-dollar research grant.

Among the items the nonprofit EcoHealth Alliance must provide to resume funding is a sample of the new coronavirus that the Wuhan researchers used to determine its genetic sequence, according to a July 8 letter from the NIH viewed by The Wall Street Journal.

EcoHealth Alliance must also arrange for an inspection of the Wuhan Institute of Virology by an outside team that would examine the facility's lab and records "with specific attention to addressing the question of whether WIV staff had SARS-CoV-2 in their possession prior to December 2019," the U.S. health-research agency's letter said.

"The NIH has received reports that the Wuhan Institute of Virology...has been conducting research at its facilities in China that pose serious bio-safety concerns," read the letter, which was signed by Michael Lauer, the NIH deputy director for extramural research.

MORE ON THE PANDEMIC

- [A Deadly Coronavirus Was Inevitable. Why Was No One Ready?](#)
- [China Bat Expert Says Her Wuhan Lab Wasn't Source of New Coronavirus](#)
- [U.S. Intelligence Sifts Evidence for Origins of Coronavirus](#)

"We have concerns that WIV has not satisfied safety requirements under the award, and that EcoHealth Alliance hasn't satisfied its obligations to monitor" its partner to ensure it has complied with regulations regarding the use of the grant money, the letter added.

EcoHealth Alliance, which searches for warning signs of animal viruses that could cause human outbreaks, confirmed it had received the letter.

The NIH said it doesn't discuss internal deliberations on specific grants. Dr. Lauer declined a request for an interview, an NIH spokeswoman said.

The Trump administration [has suggested, without providing evidence](#), that the SARS-CoV-2 virus causing the current pandemic originated in a high-security lab at the Wuhan institute.

Recipients of U.S. government research grants are required to routinely monitor subrecipients to ensure that they are using the money as intended, researchers say.

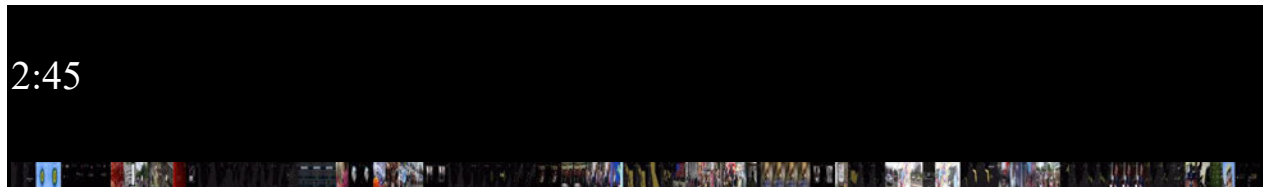
Yet the NIH doesn't usually set the kinds of conditions it required EcoHealth Alliance to meet, said Heather Pierce, senior director for science policy and regulatory counsel at the Association of American Medical Colleges.

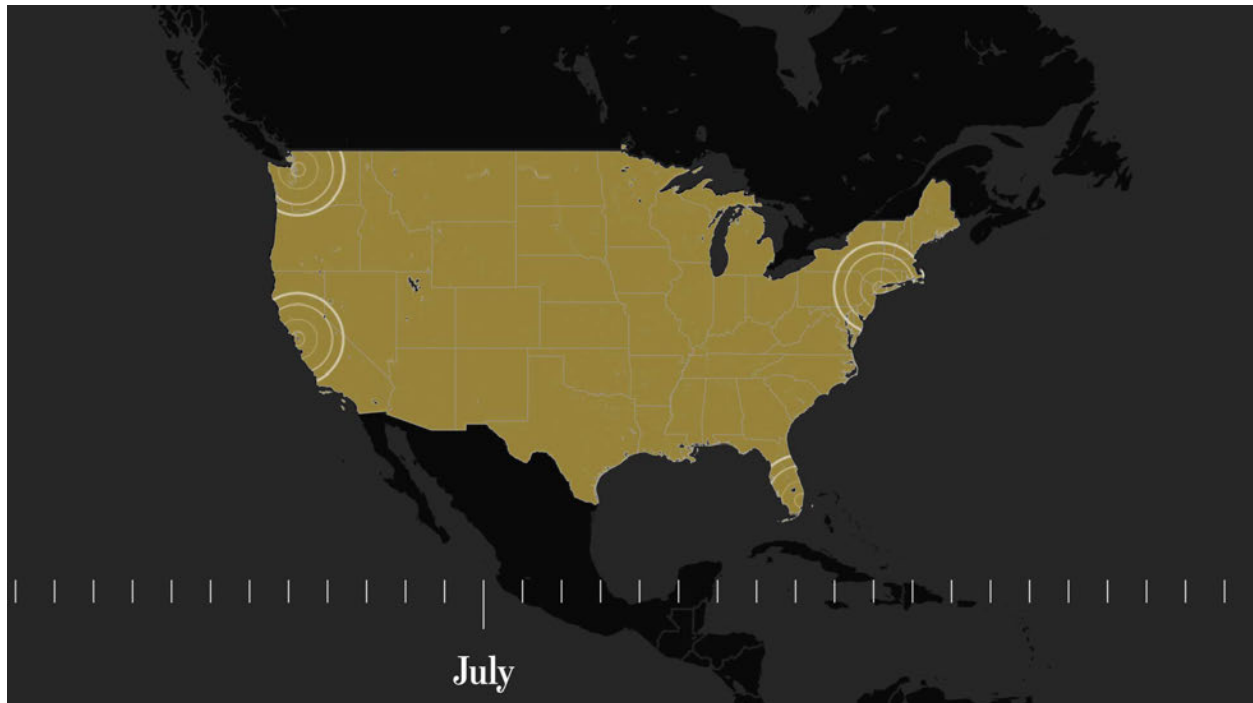
Jimmy Kolker, a former U.S. ambassador and former assistant secretary for global affairs at the Department of Health and Human Services, said the NIH can routinely ask for reports about the progress of research, including updates on the work of a partner and the safety of its lab, but shouldn't ask about matters outside the scope of the funded research.

"What they're asking for is intelligence information that will be used for policy-making," he said in an interview.

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As the coronavirus crisis continues to engulf the U.S., public-health experts have pointed to a series of missteps and miscalculations in the country's response. Here's a look back at how the U.S. became the epicenter of the global pandemic. Photo Drew Angerer/Getty Images

The NIH's list of conditions "is outrageous, especially when a grant has already been carefully evaluated by peer review and addresses one of the most important problems in the world right now—how viruses from animals spill over to human beings," Harold E. Varmus, a former NIH director, said in an interview. "What could be more important at the moment?"

Dr. Varmus is one of 77 Nobel laureates who asked NIH Director Francis Collins and Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar in May to review the NIH's termination of the grant the month before.

"This whole episode is just a woeful attack on the traditional way NIH has maintained its integrity," he said.

EcoHealth Alliance responded to the NIH last week, calling the U.S. research agency's suspension unjustified, according to a copy of the letter reviewed by the Journal.

EcoHealth Alliance said in its response that it hadn't sent any grant funds to the Wuhan institute before the grant was suspended, though it has provided funding to the institute in previous years.

The conditions are outside the scope of the grant, said Peter Daszak, president of EcoHealth Alliance, adding that his nonprofit doesn't have access to the information the NIH is seeking.

"Our work is part of protecting the U.S. citizen against diseases like Covid-19," Dr. Daszak said. "It's just so shortsighted to drop that research."

Since 2004, the New York City-based nonprofit has collaborated with Wuhan Institute of Virology researchers and others to study coronaviruses in bats in China and how they infect people, according to EcoHealth Alliance and the nonprofit's published research.

EcoHealth Alliance received a \$3.4 million grant from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases in 2014, which the nonprofit used, working with its Wuhan institute collaborators, to study coronaviruses in bats roosting in caves in China and how the viruses infect people.

In [one study resulting from that grant](#), the researchers found evidence that people living near the caves had been infected with viruses resembling the one that caused severe acute respiratory syndrome, the disease that originated in China and caused a deadly epidemic in 2002 and 2003.

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EcoHealth Alliance planned to use the renewed grant for further study into how often SARS-like viruses in southern China are spilling over to humans and the consequences for public health, Dr. Daszak said.

The Trump administration has expressed concerns about biosafety in China, and U.S. intelligence agencies said in April they were [attempting to determine](#) whether a lab accident in Wuhan might have caused a release of the virus. U.S. diplomats in China sent a cable to the State Department in 2018 warning of insufficient safety training at the Wuhan lab, which was conducting research on bat coronaviruses.

The NIH terminated the grant to EcoHealth Alliance in April, saying it didn't believe the work aligned with "program goals and agency priorities," according to a letter the NIH sent that was viewed by the Journal.

The agency reinstated the grant in July but suspended its activities, saying in its July 8 letter to the nonprofit that it must fulfill seven criteria before funding on the grant can resume.

The Wuhan institute sequenced the genome of the new virus in January after receiving patient samples. In addition to requiring EcoHealth Alliance provide a sample of the sequenced coronavirus, the NIH said in its letter that EcoHealth Alliance must "explain the apparent disappearance" of a scientist who worked in the Wuhan lab.

The scientist was rumored on some social media to be a "patient zero" of the pandemic. The Wuhan institute has [denied that the pandemic began at its facility](#) or among its scientists. The institute said in a statement earlier this year that the scientist in question was a graduate student who went to work elsewhere after receiving her master's degree.

The NIH also ordered EcoHealth Alliance to explain purported restrictions at the Wuhan institute, including "diminished cell-phone traffic in October 2019, and the evidence that there may have been roadblocks surrounding the facility from October 14-19, 2019."

The U.S. research agency also asked EcoHealth Alliance to provide it with the Wuhan institute's response to the safety concerns described in the 2018 cable sent to the State Department.

From: Harold E. Varmus <varmus@med.cornell.edu>
Sent: Thu, 20 Aug 2020 09:32:53 -0500
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]
Subject: Reaching out for a chance to talk

Yes, of course, we can talk next week. Your schedule will be less flexible than mine, so suggest some times. Early in the week is better than later.

You can call me in Old Chatham at (b) (6).

HV

From: "Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E]" (b) (6)
Date: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 at 9:49 PM
To: "Harold E. Varmus" (b) (6)
Cc: "Fauci, Anthony (NIH/NIAID) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Reaching out for a chance to talk

Harold,

This EcoHealth grant and its connection to Wuhan has presented one of the most difficult and wrenching situations of my 11 years as NIH Director. Most of that is not appropriate for e-mail. Feeling already pretty bruised, it was hard to read your words in the WSJ this morning. I wish you had called me before offering quotes to the reporter. As you might guess based on your time in this town (but in a friendlier era), there's a lot more to this story than we have been able to talk about.

Tony and I would like the chance to speak with you about this – but for various personal reasons we can't do so until next week. How about a call then?

Meanwhile, and not because I completely buy its premises, I wonder if you have seen this article:

<https://www.independentsciencenews.org/commentaries/a-proposed-origin-for-sars-cov-2-and-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

Francis

From: Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 10:03 AM
To: Collins, Francis (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); NIH Director's Executive Committee (b) (6)
Cc: Burklow, John (NIH/OD) [E] (b) (6); OCPLPressTeam (b) (6)
Subject: WSJ: NIH Presses U.S. Nonprofit for Information on Wuhan Virology Lab

NIH Presses U.S. Nonprofit for Information on Wuhan Virology Lab

National Institutes of Health told EcoHealth Alliance it must hand over information and materials from Chinese research facility to resume funding for suspended grant

By

Betsy McKay

Aug. 19, 2020 5:30 am ET

The National Institutes of Health told a small New York-based nonprofit that it must hand over information and materials from a research partner in Wuhan, China, that is under scrutiny by the Trump administration to win back a multimillion-dollar research grant.

Among the items the nonprofit EcoHealth Alliance must provide to resume funding is a sample of the new coronavirus that the Wuhan researchers used to determine its genetic sequence, according to a July 8 letter from the NIH viewed by The Wall Street Journal.

EcoHealth Alliance must also arrange for an inspection of the Wuhan Institute of Virology by an outside team that would examine the facility's lab and records "with specific attention to addressing the question of whether WIV staff had SARS-CoV-2 in their possession prior to December 2019," the U.S. health-research agency's letter said.

"The NIH has received reports that the Wuhan Institute of Virology...has been conducting research at its facilities in China that pose serious bio-safety concerns," read the letter, which was signed by Michael Lauer, the NIH deputy director for extramural research.

“We have concerns that WIV has not satisfied safety requirements under the award, and that EcoHealth Alliance hasn’t satisfied its obligations to monitor” its partner to ensure it has complied with regulations regarding the use of the grant money, the letter added.

EcoHealth Alliance, which searches for warning signs of animal viruses that could cause human outbreaks, confirmed it had received the letter.

The NIH said it doesn’t discuss internal deliberations on specific grants. Dr. Lauer declined a request for an interview, an NIH spokeswoman said.

The Trump administration [has suggested, without providing evidence](#), that the SARS-CoV-2 virus causing the current pandemic originated in a high-security lab at the Wuhan institute.

Recipients of U.S. government research grants are required to routinely monitor subrecipients to ensure that they are using the money as intended, researchers say.

Yet the NIH doesn’t usually set the kinds of conditions it required EcoHealth Alliance to meet, said Heather Pierce, senior director for science policy and regulatory counsel at the Association of American Medical Colleges.

Jimmy Kolker, a former U.S. ambassador and former assistant secretary for global affairs at the Department of Health and Human Services, said the NIH can routinely ask for reports about the progress of research, including updates on the work of a partner and the safety of its lab, but shouldn’t ask about matters outside the scope of the funded research.

“What they’re asking for is intelligence information that will be used for policy-making,” he said in an interview.

The NIH’s list of conditions “is outrageous, especially when a grant has already been carefully evaluated by peer review and addresses one of the most important problems in the world right now—how viruses from animals spill over to human beings,” Harold E. Varmus, a former NIH director, said in an interview. “What could be more important at the moment?”

Dr. Varmus is one of 77 Nobel laureates who asked NIH Director Francis Collins and Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar in May to review the NIH's termination of the grant the month before.

"This whole episode is just a woeful attack on the traditional way NIH has maintained its integrity," he said.

EcoHealth Alliance responded to the NIH last week, calling the U.S. research agency's suspension unjustified, according to a copy of the letter reviewed by the Journal.

EcoHealth Alliance said in its response that it hadn't sent any grant funds to the Wuhan institute before the grant was suspended, though it has provided funding to the institute in previous years.

The conditions are outside the scope of the grant, said Peter Daszak, president of EcoHealth Alliance, adding that his nonprofit doesn't have access to the information the NIH is seeking.

"Our work is part of protecting the U.S. citizen against diseases like Covid-19," Dr. Daszak said. "It's just so shortsighted to drop that research."

Since 2004, the New York City-based nonprofit has collaborated with Wuhan Institute of Virology researchers and others to study coronaviruses in bats in China and how they infect people, according to EcoHealth Alliance and the nonprofit's published research.

EcoHealth Alliance received a \$3.4 million grant from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases in 2014, which the nonprofit used, working with its Wuhan institute collaborators, to study coronaviruses in bats roosting in caves in China and how the viruses infect people.

In [one study resulting from that grant](#), the researchers found evidence that people living near the caves had been infected with viruses resembling the one that caused severe acute respiratory syndrome, the disease that originated in China and caused a deadly epidemic in 2002 and 2003.

The Wuhan institute received \$133,000 each year from EcoHealth Alliance for the first four years of that grant and \$66,000 in the fifth year, according to the nonprofit. The WIV, part of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, is a major research institute focusing on animal and human pathogens. It houses a laboratory that operates at the highest level of biosafety precautions.

The NIAID renewed the EcoHealth Alliance grant last year for another five years, at \$3.7 million.

EcoHealth Alliance planned to use the renewed grant for further study into how often SARS-like viruses in southern China are spilling over to humans and the consequences for public health, Dr. Daszak said.

The Trump administration has expressed concerns about biosafety in China, and U.S. intelligence agencies said in April they were [attempting to determine](#) whether a lab accident in Wuhan might have caused a release of the virus. U.S. diplomats in China sent a cable to the State Department in 2018 warning of insufficient safety training at the Wuhan lab, which was conducting research on bat coronaviruses.

The NIH terminated the grant to EcoHealth Alliance in April, saying it didn't believe the work aligned with "program goals and agency priorities," according to a letter the NIH sent that was viewed by the Journal.

The agency reinstated the grant in July but suspended its activities, saying in its July 8 letter to the nonprofit that it must fulfill seven criteria before funding on the grant can resume.

The Wuhan institute sequenced the genome of the new virus in January after receiving patient samples. In addition to requiring EcoHealth Alliance provide a sample of the sequenced coronavirus, the NIH said in its letter that EcoHealth Alliance must "explain the apparent disappearance" of a scientist who worked in the Wuhan lab.

The scientist was rumored on some social media to be a "patient zero" of the pandemic. The Wuhan institute has [denied that the pandemic began at its facility](#) or among its scientists.

The institute said in a statement earlier this year that the scientist in question was a graduate student who went to work elsewhere after receiving her master's degree.

The NIH also ordered EcoHealth Alliance to explain purported restrictions at the Wuhan institute, including “diminished cell-phone traffic in October 2019, and the evidence that there may have been roadblocks surrounding the facility from October 14-19, 2019.”

The U.S. research agency also asked EcoHealth Alliance to provide it with the Wuhan institute's response to the safety concerns described in the 2018 cable sent to the State Department.

YOU

From: [McManus, Ayanna \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
To: [Collins, Francis \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#); [Tabak, Lawrence \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#); [Wolinetz, Carrie \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#); [Lauer, Michael \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
Subject: ECCO Health Discussion
Attachments: [NIH Response to EcoHealth Response to Suspension_10_23_20.pdf](#)
[Daszak 7 8 20.pdf](#)
[Did the Coronavirus Escape From a Lab.pdf](#)
[The World Needs a Real Investigation Into the Origins of Covid-19 - WSJ.pdf](#)
[29246.full-2.pdf](#)

Francis Collins is inviting you to a scheduled ZoomGov meeting.

Join ZoomGov Meeting
[https://nih.zoomgov.com/j/ \(b\) \(6\)pwd=T2EwSTNpQmxTWENGYIFRVG5YT2o3dz09](https://nih.zoomgov.com/j/>(b) (6)pwd=T2EwSTNpQmxTWENGYIFRVG5YT2o3dz09)

Meeting ID: 160 371 9784
Passcode: 435146
One tap mobile
+16692545252, (b) (6) US (San Jose)
+16468287666, (b) (6) US (New York)

Dial by your location
+1 669 254 5252 US (San Jose)
+1 646 828 7666 US (New York)
+1 551 285 1373 US
+1 669 216 1590 US (San Jose)

Meeting ID: (b) (6)
Passcode: (b) (6)
Find your local number: <https://nih.zoomgov.com/u/adrUtQHjXA>

Join by SIP
[\(b\) \(6\)@sip.zoomgov.com](mailto:(b) (6)@sip.zoomgov.com)

Join by H.323
161.199.138.10 (US West)
161.199.136.10 (US East)
Meeting ID: (b) (6)
Passcode: (b) (6)



National Institutes of Health
National Institute of Allergy
and Infectious Diseases
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

23 October 2020

Drs. Aleksei Chmura and Peter Daszak
EcoHealth Alliance, Inc.
460 W 34th St
Suite 1701
New York, NY 10001

Re: NIH Grant R01AI110964

Dear Drs. Chmura and Daszak:

I am following up on Mr. Krinsky's August 13, 2020, letter on behalf of EcoHealth Alliance, Inc. ("EcoHealth") responding to NIH's suspension of grant R01AI110964, which funds the project *Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence* (the "Project"). Per my letter of July 8, 2020, NIH reinstated the grant but suspended all award activities because we have concerns that the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV), which previously served as a subrecipient of the Project, had not satisfied safety requirements that applied to its subawards with EcoHealth, and that EcoHealth had not satisfied its obligations to monitor the activities of its subrecipient to ensure compliance. EcoHealth objected to the suspension on the grounds that WIV has no *current* connection to the Project or EcoHealth's research, and EcoHealth had not issued any subawards in connection with the Grant *at the time of the suspension*.

The fact that EcoHealth does not currently have a subrecipient relationship with WIV and had not issued subawards to WIV at the time of suspension does not absolve EcoHealth of any past non-compliance with the terms and conditions of award for grant R01AI110964. While EcoHealth did not issue a subaward to WIV for year 6 of the grant, WIV served as a subrecipient for years 1 through 5. NIH awarded EcoHealth grant R01AI110964 in 2014, with a project period of June 1, 2014, through June 30, 2024, as renewed. In EcoHealth's grant application, EcoHealth listed Drs. Zheng Li Shi and Xing Yi Ge of WIV as co-investigators and senior/key personnel. It stated that "Drs. Shi, Zhang, and Daszak have collaborated together since 2002 and have been involved in running joint conferences, and shipping samples into and out of China." EcoHealth listed WIV as a Project/Performance Site Location. In describing WIV's facilities, EcoHealth described WIV as China's premier institute for virological research" and touted WIV's "fully equipped biosafety level 3 laboratory" and "a newly opened BLS-4 laboratory." In support of the application, Dr. Zheng Li Shi's personal statement indicated that "My lab will be responsible for diagnosis, genomics and isolation of coronavirus from wild and domestic animals in Southern China and for analyzing their receptor binding domains." The application stated that "Wuhan Institute of Virology and the Wuhan University Center for Animal Experiment BSL-3

lab have an Internal Biosafety Committee and are accredited BSL-2 and BSL 3 laboratories. All experimental work using infectious material will be conducted under appropriate biosafety standards. Disposal of hazardous materials will be conducted according to the institutional biosafety regulations.”

EcoHealth requested funding specifically for activities to be carried out by WIV. NIH awarded EcoHealth a total of \$749,976 for WIV’s work in the following annual amounts for years 1 through 5:

	-Yr 1	-Yr 2	-Yr 3	-Yr 4	-Yr 5
Total Direct Costs	\$123,699	\$128,718	\$147,335	\$147,335	\$147,335
F&A Costs @ 8%	\$9,896	\$10,297	\$11,787	\$11,787	\$11,787
TOTAL COSTS	\$133,595	\$139,015	\$159,122	\$159,122	\$159,122

As stated in the Notices of Award for each budget period of the grant, the awards were subject to terms and conditions, which include the NIH Grants Policy Statement (GPS) and applicable HHS grant regulations. As I indicated in my letter of July 8, 2020, as a term and condition of award EcoHealth was required to “monitor the activities of the subrecipient as necessary to ensure that the subaward is used for authorized purposes, in compliance with Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the subaward . . .” 45 C.F.R. § 75.352(d). See also, 45 C.F.R. § 75.342(a) (“The non-Federal entity is responsible for oversight of the operations of the Federal award supported activities.”). Moreover, EcoHealth was required to “Establish and maintain effective internal control over the Federal award that provides reasonable assurance that the non-Federal entity is managing the Federal award in compliance with Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the Federal award[.]” 45 C.F.R. § 75.303(a). The Notice of Award stated that as a term and condition of award, “Research funded under this grant must adhere to the [CDC/NIH Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories (BMBL)].” Moreover, the NIH GPS provides that NIH grant recipients are expected to provide safe working conditions for their employees and foster work environments conducive to high-quality research. NIH GPS, Section 4. The terms and conditions of the grant award flow down to subawards to subrecipients, so these terms applied to WIV. 45 C.F.R. § 75.101.

As I stated, NIH has concerns of non-compliance with terms and conditions of award—namely, that WIV had not satisfied safety requirements under the award and that EcoHealth Alliance had not satisfied its obligations to monitor the activities of its subrecipient to ensure compliance. Accordingly, NIH suspended all activities related to R01AI110964, pursuant to 45 C.F.R. § 75.371, Remedies for Noncompliance, which permits suspension of award activities in cases of non-compliance, and the NIH GPS, Section 8.5.2, which permits NIH to take immediate action to suspend a grant when necessary to protect the public health and welfare.

In my letter of July 8, 2020, I provided EcoHealth with the opportunity to object and to provide information and documentation challenging the suspension. Specifically, I sought information and materials that speak to WIV’s lab safety and EcoHealth’s oversight of its subrecipient, and an inspection of WIV’s laboratory records and facilities. I indicated that as a specific condition of award, during the period of suspension, EcoHealth Alliance may not allow research under this

project to be conducted and that no funds from grant R01AI110964 may be provided to or expended by EcoHealth Alliance or any subrecipients.

EcoHealth objected to the requests on the grounds that “NIAID is not authorized under 45 CFR §§ 75.371, 75.205, and 75.207, entitled *Specific Award Conditions*, to impose, *inter alia*, conditions that consist of demands for information regarding entities that are neither subrecipients of grant funds nor project affiliates.”

These provisions are irrelevant to NIH’s requests. NIH is required to permit the opportunity for recipients to object and provide information and documentation challenging a suspension, 45 C.F.R. § 75.374, so we specifically gave EcoHealth the opportunity to provide information that speaks to NIH’s concerns. Moreover, as a granting agency, NIH is required to “manage and administer the Federal award in a manner so as to ensure that Federal funding is expended and associated programs are implemented in full accordance with U.S. statutory and public policy requirements: Including, but not limited to, those protecting public welfare [and] the environment[.]” 45 C.F.R. § 75.300(a). In addition to seeking information that speaks to compliance with terms and conditions of award, NIH is entitled to “make site visits as warranted by program needs.” 45 C.F.R. § 75.342. As a term and condition of award, NIH “must have the right of access to any documents, papers, or other records of the non-Federal entity which are pertinent to the Federal award, in order to make audits, examinations, excerpts, and transcripts” (45 C.F.R. § 75.364); and must have “timely and reasonable access to the non-Federal entity’s personnel for the purpose of interview and discussion related to such documents” (*id.*). These requirements flow down to subawards to subrecipients. 45 C.F.R. § 75.101. “Non-Federal entities must comply with requirements in [45 C.F.R. Part 75] regardless of whether the non-Federal entity is a recipient or subrecipient of a Federal award.” 45 C.F.R. 75.101. As the grantee, EcoHealth was required to have in place, “A requirement that the subrecipient permit the pass-through entity and auditors to have access to the subrecipient’s records and financial statements as necessary for the pass-through entity to meet the requirements of this part.” 45 C.F.R. § 75.352(a)(5). For each of these reasons, NIH is justified in seeking the materials, information, and a site visit specified in my letter of July 8, 2020.

In addition to objecting to NIH’s authority to seek the materials, information, and a site visit, EcoHealth has responded that it lacks knowledge or information regarding the requests; that it is not in possession, custody, or control of the specified items; and that it has no authority to grant NIAID and the U.S. National Academy of Sciences access to WIV’s facility to conduct an inspection. EcoHealth’s responses have not satisfied NIH’s concerns that EcoHealth had failed to adequately monitor the compliance of its subrecipient, and that the subrecipient, WIV, had failed to comply with safety requirements.

Notwithstanding this, NIH is providing an additional opportunity for EcoHealth to provide information and documentation challenging these concerns of non-compliance. Accordingly, in addition to reiterating our prior requests (1) through (6) per our letter of July 8, 2020, NIH requests the following information and materials, which must be complete and accurate:

1. Provide copies of all EcoHealth Alliance – WIV subrecipient agreements as well as any other documents and information describing how EcoHealth Alliance monitored WIV’s compliance with the terms and conditions of award, including with respect to biosafety.
2. Describe EcoHealth’s efforts to evaluate WIV’s risk of noncompliance with Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the subaward.
3. Provide copies of all WIV biosafety reports from June 1, 2014 through May 31, 2019.

During the ongoing period of suspension, NIH will continue to review the activities under this award, taking into consideration information provided by EcoHealth Alliance, to further assess whether EcoHealth Alliance and WIV complied with the terms and conditions of award, including compliance with other terms and conditions of award that may be implicated. We remind you that during the period of suspension, EcoHealth Alliance may not allow research under this project to be conducted. Further, no funds from grant R01AI110964 may be provided to or expended by EcoHealth Alliance or any subrecipients; all such charges are unallowable. It is EcoHealth Alliance’s responsibility as the recipient of this grant award to ensure that the terms of this suspension are communicated to and understood by all subrecipients. EcoHealth Alliance must provide adequate oversight to ensure compliance with the terms of the suspension. Any noncompliance of the terms of this suspension must be immediately reported to NIH. EcoHealth Alliance will receive a revised Notice of Award from NIAID indicating the continued suspension of these research activities and funding restrictions as a specific condition of award.

Please note that this action does not preclude NIH from taking additional corrective or enforcement actions pursuant to 45 C.F.R. Part 75, including, but not limited to, terminating the grant award or disallowing costs. NIH may also take other remedies that may be legally available if NIH discovers other violations of terms and conditions of award on the part of EcoHealth Alliance or WIV.

Sincerely,

Michael S Lauer, MD
NIH Deputy Director for Extramural Research

Email:  (b) (6)

cc: Dr. Erik Stemmy (NIAID)
Ms. Emily Linde (NIAID)



National Institutes of Health
National Institute of Allergy
and Infectious Diseases
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

8 July 2020

Drs. Aleksei Chmura and Peter Daszak
EcoHealth Alliance, Inc.
460 W 34th St
Suite 1701
New York, NY 10001

Re: NIH Grant R01AI110964

Dear Drs. Chmura and Daszak:

In follow-up to my previous letter of April 24, 2020, I am writing to notify you that the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), an Institute within the National Institutes of Health (NIH), under the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), has withdrawn its termination of grant R01AI110964, which supports the project *Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence*. Accordingly, the grant is reinstated.

However, as you are aware, the NIH has received reports that the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV), a subrecipient of EcoHealth Alliance under R01AI110964, has been conducting research at its facilities in China that pose serious bio-safety concerns and, as a result, create health and welfare threats to the public in China and other countries, including the United States. Grant award R01AI110964 is subject to biosafety requirements set forth in the NIH Grants Policy Statement (e.g., NIH GPS, Section 4.1.24 “Public Health Security”) and the Notice of Award (e.g., requiring that “Research funded under this grant must adhere to the [CDC/NIH Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories (BMBL)].”). Moreover, NIH grant recipients are expected to provide safe working conditions for their employees and foster work environments conducive to high-quality research. NIH GPS, Section 4. The terms and conditions of the grant award flow down to subawards to subrecipients. 45 C.F.R. § 75.101.

As the grantee, EcoHealth Alliance was required to “monitor the activities of the subrecipient as necessary to ensure that the subaward is used for authorized purposes, in compliance with Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the subaward . . .” 45 C.F.R. § 75.352(d). We have concerns that WIV has not satisfied safety requirements under the award, and that EcoHealth Alliance has not satisfied its obligations to monitor the activities of its subrecipient to ensure compliance.

Moreover, as we have informed you through prior Notices of Award, this award is subject to the Transparency Act subaward and executive compensation reporting requirement of 2 C.F.R. Part

170. To date you have not reported any subawards in the [Federal Subaward Reporting System](#).

Therefore, effective the date of this letter, July 8, 2020, NIH is suspending all activities related to R01AI110964, until such time as these concerns have been addressed to NIH's satisfaction. This suspension is taken in accordance with [45 C.F.R. § 75.371](#), Remedies for Noncompliance, which permits suspension of award activities in cases of non-compliance, and the NIH GPS, [Section 8.5.2](#), which permits NIH to take immediate action to suspend a grant when necessary to protect the public health and welfare. This action is not appealable in accordance with 42 C.F.R. § 50.404 and the NIH GPS [Section 8.7](#), Grant Appeals Procedures. However, EcoHealth Alliance has the opportunity to provide information and documentation demonstrating that WIV and EcoHealth Alliance have satisfied the above-mentioned requirements.

Specifically, to address the NIH's concerns, EcoHealth must provide the NIH with the following information and materials, which must be complete and accurate:

1. Provide an aliquot of the actual SARS-CoV-2 virus that WIV used to determine the viral sequence.
2. Explain the apparent disappearance of Huang Yanling, a scientist / technician who worked in the WIV lab but whose lab web presence has been deleted.
3. Provide the NIH with WIV's responses to the 2018 U.S. Department of State cables regarding safety concerns.
4. Disclose and explain out-of-ordinary restrictions on laboratory facilities, as suggested, for example, by diminished cell-phone traffic in October 2019, and the evidence that there may have been roadblocks surrounding the facility from October 14-19, 2019.
5. Explain why WIV failed to note that the RaTG13 virus, the bat-derived coronavirus in its collection with the greatest similarity to SARS-CoV-2, was actually isolated from an abandoned mine where three men died in 2012 with an illness remarkably similar to COVID-19, and explain why this was not followed up.
6. Additionally, EcoHealth Alliance must arrange for WIV to submit to an outside inspection team charged to review the lab facilities and lab records, with specific attention to addressing the question of whether WIV staff had SARS-CoV-2 in their possession prior to December 2019. The inspection team should be granted full access to review the processes and safety of procedures of all of the WIV field work (including but not limited to collection of animals and biospecimens in caves, abandoned man-made underground cavities, or outdoor sites). The inspection team could be organized by NIAID, or, if preferred, by the U.S. National Academy of Sciences.
7. Lastly, EcoHealth Alliance must ensure that all of its subawards are fully reported in the [Federal Subaward Reporting System](#)

During this period of suspension, NIH will continue to review the activities under this award, taking into consideration information provided by EcoHealth Alliance, to further assess compliance by EcoHealth Alliance and WIV, including compliance with other terms and conditions of award that may be implicated. Additionally, during the period of suspension, EcoHealth Alliance may not allow research under this project to be conducted. Further, no funds from grant R01AI110964 may be provided to or expended by EcoHealth Alliance or any subrecipients; all such charges are unallowable. It is EcoHealth Alliance's responsibility as the

recipient of this grant award to ensure that the terms of this suspension are communicated to and understood by all subrecipients. EcoHealth Alliance must provide adequate oversight to ensure compliance with the terms of the suspension. Any noncompliance of the terms of this suspension must be immediately reported to NIH. Once the original award is reinstated, NIH will take additional steps to restrict all funding in the HHS Payment Management System in the amount of \$369,819. EcoHealth Alliance will receive a revised Notice of Award from NIAID indicating the suspension of these research activities and funding restrictions as a specific condition of award.

Please note that this action does not preclude NIH from taking additional corrective or enforcement actions pursuant to 45 CFR Part 75, including, but not limited to, terminating the grant award. NIH may also take other remedies that may be legally available if NIH discovers other violations of terms and conditions of award on the part of EcoHealth Alliance or WIV.

Sincerely,

Michael S Lauer, MD
NIH Deputy Director for Extramural Research
Email: [REDACTED] (b) (6)

cc: Dr. Erik Stemmy
Ms. Emily Linde

The Lab-Leak Hypothesis

[Nicholson Baker](#) Jan. 4, 2021

For decades, scientists have been hot-wiring viruses in hopes of preventing a pandemic, not causing one. But what if ...?

By

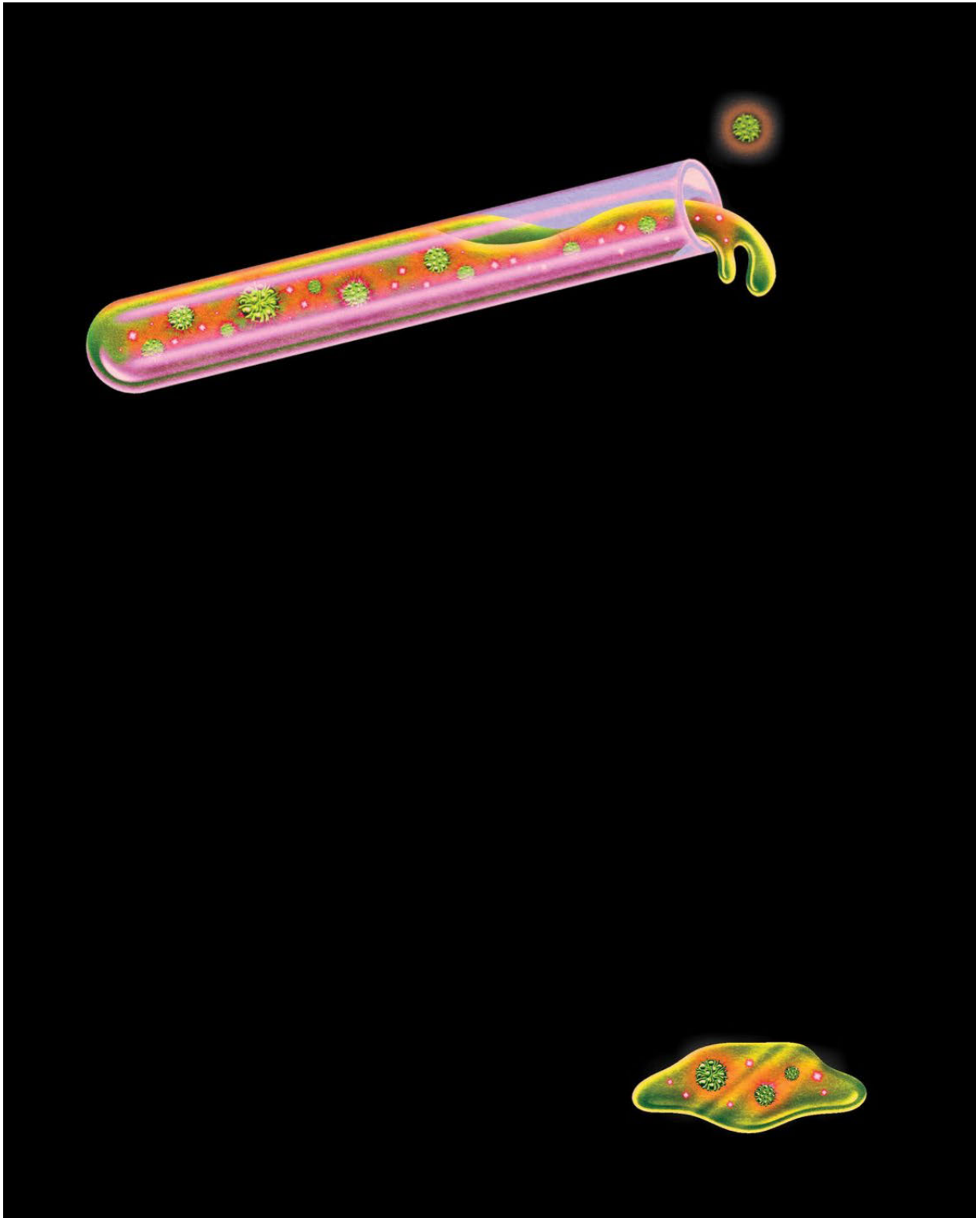


Illustration: Illustration by Robert Beatty for New York Magazine

This article was featured in [One Great Story](#), New York's reading recommendation newsletter. [Sign up here](#) to get it nightly.

I.

Flask Monsters

What happened was fairly simple, I've come to believe. It was an accident. A virus spent some time in a laboratory, and eventually it got out. SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, began its existence inside a bat, then it learned how to infect people in a claustrophobic mine shaft, and then it was made more infectious in one or more laboratories, perhaps as part of a scientist's well-intentioned but risky effort to create a broad-spectrum vaccine. SARS-2 was not designed as a biological weapon. But it was, I think, designed. Many thoughtful people dismiss this notion, and they may be right. They sincerely believe that the coronavirus arose naturally, "zoonotically," from animals, without having been previously studied, or hybridized, or sluiced through cell cultures, or otherwise worked on by trained professionals. They hold that a bat, carrying a coronavirus, infected some other creature, perhaps a pangolin, and that the pangolin may have already been sick with a different coronavirus disease, and out of the conjunction and commingling of those two diseases within the pangolin, a new disease, highly infectious to humans, evolved. Or they hypothesize that two coronaviruses recombined in a bat, and this new virus spread to other bats, and then the bats infected a person directly — in a rural setting, perhaps — and that this person caused a simmering undetected outbreak of respiratory disease, which over a period of months or years evolved to become virulent and highly transmissible but was not noticed until it appeared in Wuhan.

There is no direct evidence for these zoonotic possibilities, just as there is no direct evidence for an experimental mishap — no written confession, no incriminating notebook, no official accident report. Certainty craves detail, and detail requires an investigation. It has been a full year, [80 million people](#)

[have been infected](#), and, surprisingly, no public investigation has taken place. We still know very little about the origins of this disease.

Nevertheless, I think it's worth offering some historical context for our yearlong medical nightmare. We need to hear from the people who for years have contended that certain types of virus experimentation might lead to a disastrous pandemic like this one. And we need to stop hunting for new exotic diseases in the wild, shipping them back to laboratories, and hot-wiring their genomes to prove how dangerous to human life they might become.

Over the past few decades, scientists have developed ingenious methods of evolutionary acceleration and recombination, and they've learned how to trick viruses, coronaviruses in particular, those spiky hairballs of protein we now know so well, into moving quickly from one species of animal to another or from one type of cell culture to another. They've made machines that mix and mingle the viral code for bat diseases with the code for human diseases — diseases like SARS, severe acute respiratory syndrome, for example, which arose in China in 2003, and MERS, Middle East respiratory syndrome, which broke out a decade later and has to do with bats and camels. Some of the experiments — “gain of function” experiments — aimed to create new, more virulent, or more infectious strains of diseases in an effort to predict and therefore defend against threats that might conceivably arise in nature. The term *gain of function* is itself a euphemism; the Obama White House more accurately described this work as “experiments that may be reasonably anticipated to confer attributes to influenza, MERS, or SARS viruses such that the virus would have enhanced pathogenicity and/or transmissibility in mammals via the respiratory route.” The virologists who carried out these experiments have accomplished amazing feats of genetic transmutation, no question, and there have been very few publicized accidents over the years. But there have been some.

And we were warned, repeatedly. The intentional creation of new microbes that combine virulence with heightened transmissibility “poses extraordinary risks to the public,” [wrote](#) infectious-disease experts Marc Lipsitch and Thomas Inglesby in 2014. “A rigorous and transparent risk-assessment process for this work has not yet been established.” That’s still true today. In 2012, in [Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists](#), Lynn Klotz warned that there was an 80 percent chance, given how many laboratories were then handling virulent viro-varietals, that a leak of a potential pandemic pathogen would occur sometime in the next 12 years.

A lab accident — a dropped flask, a needle prick, a mouse bite, an illegibly labeled bottle — is apolitical. Proposing that something unfortunate happened during a scientific experiment in Wuhan — where COVID-19 was first diagnosed and where there are three high-security virology labs, one of which held in its freezers the most comprehensive inventory of sampled bat viruses in the world — isn’t a conspiracy theory. It’s just a theory. It merits attention, I believe, alongside other reasoned attempts to explain the source of our current catastrophe.

II.

“A Reasonable Chance”



Seeking Ebola strains in Sierra Leone's wild-animal population for USAID's Predict project in 2018. Photo: Simon Townsley

From early 2020, the world was brooding over the origins of COVID-19. People were reading research papers, talking about what kinds of live animals were or were not sold at the Wuhan seafood market — wondering where the new virus had come from.

Meanwhile, things got strange all over the world. The Chinese government shut down transportation and built hospitals at high speed. There were video clips of people who'd suddenly dropped unconscious in the street. A doctor on YouTube told us how we were supposed to scrub down our produce when we got back from the supermarket. A scientist named Shi Zhengli of the Wuhan Institute of Virology published [a paper](#) saying that the novel coronavirus was 96 percent identical to a bat virus, RaTG13, found in

Yunnan province in southern China. On March 13, I wrote in my journal that there seemed to be something oddly artificial about the disease: "It's too airborne — too catching — it's something that has been selected for infectivity. That's what I suspect. No way to know so no reason to waste time thinking about it."

This was just a note to self — at the time, I hadn't interviewed scientists about SARS-2 or read their research papers. But I did know something about pathogens and laboratory accidents; I published a book last year, [Baseless](#), that talks about some of them. The book is named after a Pentagon program, Project Baseless, whose goal, as of 1951, was to achieve "an Air Force-wide combat capability in biological and chemical warfare at the earliest possible date."

A vast treasure was spent by the U.S. on the amplification and aerial delivery of diseases — some well known, others obscure and stealthy. America's biological-weapons program in the '50s had A1-priority status, as high as nuclear weapons. In preparation for a total war with a numerically superior communist foe, scientists bred germs to be resistant to antibiotics and other drug therapies, and they infected lab animals with them, using a technique called "serial passaging," in order to make the germs more virulent and more catching.

And along the way, there were laboratory accidents. By 1960, hundreds of American scientists and technicians had been hospitalized, victims of the diseases they were trying to weaponize. Charles Armstrong, of the National Institutes of Health, one of the consulting founders of the American germ-warfare program, investigated Q fever three times, and all three times, scientists and staffers got sick. In the anthrax pilot plant at Camp Detrick, Maryland, in 1951, a microbiologist, attempting to perfect the "foaming process" of high-volume production, developed a fever and died. In 1964,

veterinary worker Albert Nickel fell ill after being bitten by a lab animal. His wife wasn't told that he had Machupo virus, or Bolivian hemorrhagic fever. "I watched him die through a little window to his quarantine room at the Detrick infirmary," she said.

In 1977, a worldwide epidemic of influenza A began in Russia and China; it was eventually traced to a sample of an American strain of flu preserved in a laboratory freezer since 1950. In 1978, a hybrid strain of smallpox killed a medical photographer at a lab in Birmingham, England; in 2007, live foot-and-mouth disease [leaked from a faulty drainpipe](#) at the Institute for Animal Health in Surrey. In the U.S., "more than 1,100 laboratory incidents involving bacteria, viruses and toxins that pose significant or bioterror risks to people and agriculture were reported to federal regulators during 2008 through 2012," reported *USA Today* in [an exposé](#) published in 2014.

In 2015, the Department of Defense discovered that workers at a germ-warfare testing center in Utah had [mistakenly sent close to 200 shipments of live anthrax](#) to laboratories throughout the United States and also to Australia, Germany, Japan, South Korea, and several other countries over the past 12 years. In 2019, laboratories at Fort Detrick — where "defensive" research involves the creation of potential pathogens to defend against — [were shut down](#) for several months by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for "breaches of containment." They reopened in December 2019.

High-containment laboratories have a whispered history of near misses. Scientists are people, and people have clumsy moments and poke themselves and get bitten by the enraged animals they are trying to nasally inoculate. Machines can create invisible aerosols, and cell solutions can become contaminated. Waste systems don't always work properly. Things can go wrong in a hundred different ways.

Hold that human fallibility in your mind. And then consider the cautious words of Alina Chan, a scientist who works at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard. "There is a reasonable chance that what we are dealing with is the result of a lab accident," Chan told me in July of last year. There was also, she added, a reasonable chance that the disease had evolved naturally — both were scientific possibilities. "I don't know if we will ever find a smoking gun, especially if it was a lab accident. The stakes are so high now. It would be terrifying to be blamed for millions of cases of COVID-19 and possibly up to a million deaths by year end, if the pandemic continues to grow out of control. The Chinese government has also restricted their own scholars and scientists from looking into the origins of SARS-CoV-2. At this rate, the origin of SARS-CoV-2 may just be buried by the passage of time."

I asked Jonathan A. King, a molecular biologist and biosafety advocate from MIT, whether he'd thought *lab accident* when he first heard about the epidemic. "Absolutely, absolutely," King answered. Other scientists he knew were concerned as well. But scientists, he said, in general were cautious about speaking out. There were "very intense, very subtle pressures" on them not to push on issues of laboratory biohazards. Collecting lots of bat viruses, and passaging those viruses repeatedly through cell cultures, and making bat-human viral hybrids, King believes, "generates new threats and desperately needs to be reined in."

"All possibilities should be on the table, including a lab leak," a scientist from the NIH, Philip Murphy — chief of the Laboratory of Molecular Immunology — wrote me recently. Nikolai Petrovsky, a professor of endocrinology at Flinders University College of Medicine in Adelaide, Australia, said in an email, "There are indeed many unexplained features of this virus that are hard if not impossible to explain based on a completely natural origin." Richard Ebright, a molecular biologist at Rutgers University, wrote that he'd been concerned for some years about the Wuhan laboratory and about the

work being done there to create “chimeric” (i.e., hybrid) SARS-related bat coronaviruses “with enhanced human infectivity.” Ebright said, “In this context, the news of a novel coronavirus in Wuhan ***screamed*** lab release.”

III.

“No Credible Evidence”

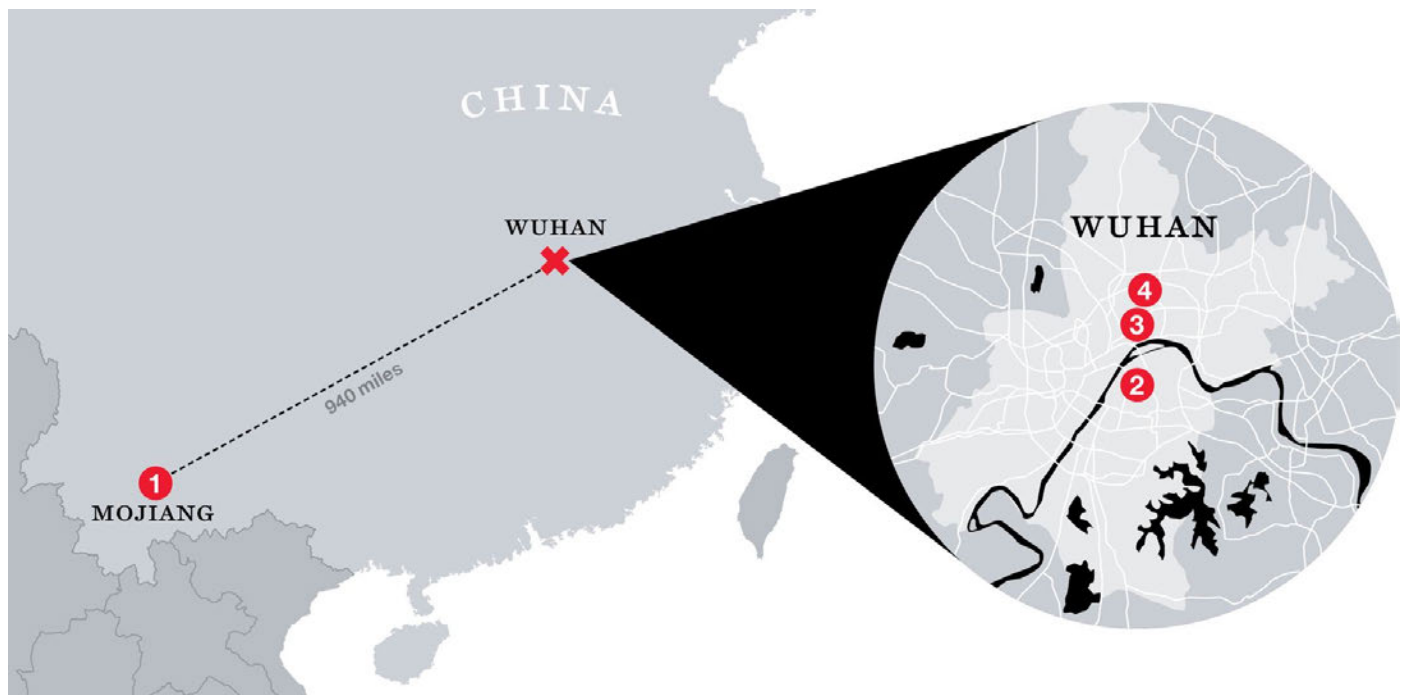
The new disease, as soon as it appeared, was intercepted — stolen and politicized by people with ulterior motives. The basic and extremely interesting scientific question of what happened was sucked up into an ideological sharknado.

Some Americans boycotted Chinese restaurants; others [bullied and harassed Asian Americans](#). Steve Bannon, broadcasting from his living room, in a YouTube series called *War Room*, said that the Chinese Communist Party had made a biological weapon and intentionally released it. He called it the “CCP virus.” And his billionaire friend and backer, Miles Guo, a devoted Trump supporter, told a right-wing website that the communists’ goal was to “use the virus to infect selective people in Hong Kong, so that the Chinese Communist Party could use it as an excuse to impose martial law there and ultimately crush the Hong Kong pro-democracy movement. But it backfired terribly.”

In *The Lancet*, in February, a powerful [counterstatement](#) appeared, signed by 27 scientists. “We stand together to strongly condemn conspiracy theories suggesting that COVID-19 does not have a natural origin,” the statement said. “Scientists from multiple countries have published and analyzed genomes of the causative agent, severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), and they overwhelmingly conclude

that this coronavirus originated in wildlife, as have so many other emerging pathogens."

The behind-the-scenes organizer of this *Lancet* statement, Peter Daszak, is a zoologist and bat-virus sample collector and the head of a New York nonprofit called [EcoHealth Alliance](#) — a group that (as veteran science journalist Fred Guterl explained later in [Newsweek](#)) has channeled money from the National Institutes of Health to Shi Zhengli's laboratory in Wuhan, allowing the lab to carry on recombinant research into diseases of bats and humans. "We have a choice whether to stand up and support colleagues who are being attacked and threatened daily by conspiracy theorists or to just turn a blind eye," Daszak said in February in [Science](#) magazine.



How Did It Get Out? **1. The Tongguan Mine Shaft** in Mojiang, Yunnan, where, in 2013, fragments of RaTG13, the closest known relative of SARSCoV-2, were recovered and transported to the Wuhan Institute of Virology; **2. The Wuhan Institute of Virology**, where Shi Zhengli's team brought the RaTG13 sample, sequenced its genome, then took it out of the freezer several times in recent years; **3. The Wuhan Center for Disease Control and Prevention**, which first reported signs of the novel coronavirus in hospital patients; **4. The Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market**, an early suspected origin of the pandemic, where the first major outbreak occurred. Illustration: Map by Jason Lee

Vincent Racaniello, a professor at Columbia and a co-host of a podcast called [This Week in Virology](#), said on February 9 that the idea of an accident in Wuhan was “complete bunk.” The coronavirus was 96 percent similar to a bat virus found in 2013, Racaniello said. “It’s not a man-made virus. It wasn’t released from a lab.”

Racaniello’s dismissal was seconded by a group of scientists from Ohio State, the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of North Carolina, who put out a paper in *Emerging Microbes and Infections* to quiet the “speculations, rumors, and conspiracy theories that SARS-CoV-2 is of laboratory origin.” There was “currently no credible evidence” that SARS-2 leaked from a lab, these scientists said, using a somewhat different argument from Racaniello’s. “Some people have alleged that the human SARS-CoV-2 was leaked directly from a laboratory in Wuhan where a bat CoV (RaTG13) was recently reported,” they said. But RaTG13 could not be the source because it differed from the human SARS-2 virus by more than a thousand nucleotides. One of the paper’s authors, Susan Weiss, told the Raleigh [News & Observer](#), “The conspiracy theory is ridiculous.”

The [most influential natural-origin paper](#), “The Proximal Origin of SARS-CoV-2,” by a group of biologists that included Kristian Andersen of Scripps Research, appeared online in a preliminary version in mid-February. “We do not believe any type of laboratory-based scenario is plausible,” the scientists said. Why? Because molecular-modeling software predicted that if you wanted to optimize an existing bat virus so that it would replicate well in human cells, you would arrange things a different way than how the SARS-2 virus actually does it — even though the SARS-2 virus does an extraordinarily good job of replicating in human cells. The laboratory-based scenario was implausible, the paper said, because, although it was true that the virus could conceivably have developed its unusual genetic features in a laboratory, a stronger and “more parsimonious” explanation was that the

features came about through some kind of natural mutation or recombination. "What we think," explained one of the authors, Robert F. Garry of Tulane University, [on YouTube](#), "is that this virus is a recombinant. It probably came from a bat virus, plus perhaps one of these viruses from the pangolin." Journalists, for the most part, echoed the authoritative pronouncements of Daszak, Racaniello, Weiss, Andersen, and other prominent natural-originists. "The balance of the scientific evidence strongly supports the conclusion that the new coronavirus emerged from nature — be it the Wuhan market or somewhere else," said the Washington [Post's](#) "Fact Checker" column. "Dr. Fauci Again Dismisses Wuhan Lab As Source of Coronavirus," said [CBS News](#), posting a video interview of Anthony Fauci by *National Geographic*. "If you look at the evolution of the virus in bats, and what's out there now," Fauci said, "it's very, very strongly leaning toward 'This could not have been artificially or deliberately manipulated' — the way the mutations have naturally evolved."

Everyone took sides; everyone thought of the new disease as one more episode in an ongoing partisan struggle. Think of Mike Pompeo, that landmass of Cold War truculence; think of Donald Trump himself. They stood at their microphones saying, in a winking, I-know-something-you-don't-know sort of way, that this disease escaped from a Chinese laboratory. Whatever they were saying must be wrong. It became impermissible, almost taboo, to admit that, of course, SARS-2 could have come from a lab accident. "The administration's claim that the virus spread from a Wuhan lab has made the notion politically toxic, even among scientists who say it could have happened," wrote science journalist Mara Hvistendahl in [the Intercept](#).

IV.

"Is It a Complete Coincidence?"

Even so, in January and February of 2020, there were thoughtful people who were speaking up, formulating their perplexities.

One person was Sam Hussein, an independent journalist. He went to a CDC press conference at the National Press Club on February 11, 2020. By then, 42,000 people had gotten sick in China and more than a thousand had died. But there were only 13 confirmed cases in the U.S. Halfway through the Q&A period, Hussein went to the microphone and asked the CDC's representative, Anne Schuchat, where the virus had come from. His head was spinning, he told me later.

"Obviously the main concern is how to stop the virus," Hussein said; nonetheless, he wanted to know more about its source. "Is it the CDC's contention," he asked, "that there's absolutely no relation to the BSL-4 lab in Wuhan? It's my understanding that this is the only place in China with a BSL-4 lab. We in the United States have, I think, two dozen or so, and there have been problems and incidents." (A BSL-4 laboratory is a maximum-security biosafety-level-four facility, used to house research on the most dangerous known pathogens. *New York* has confirmed there are at least 11 BSL-4 facilities currently operating in the U.S.) Hussein hastened to say that he wasn't implying that what happened in Wuhan was in any way intentional. "I'm just asking, Is it a complete coincidence that this outbreak happened in the one city in China with a BSL-4 lab?"

Schuchat thanked Hussein for his questions and comments. Everything she'd seen was quite consistent with a natural, zoonotic origin for the disease, she said.

That same month, a group of French scientists from Aix-Marseille University posted a paper describing their investigation of a small insertion in the genome of the new SARS-2 virus. The virus's spike protein contained a

sequence of amino acids that formed what Etienne Decroly and colleagues called a “peculiar furin-like cleavage site” — a chemically sensitive region on the lobster claw of the spike protein that would react in the presence of an enzyme called furin, which is a type of protein found everywhere within the human body, but especially in the lungs. When the spike senses human furin, it shudders, chemically speaking, and the enzyme opens the protein, commencing the tiny morbid ballet whereby the virus burns a hole in a host cell’s outer membrane and finds its way inside.

The code for this particular molecular feature — not found in SARS or any SARS-like bat viruses, but present in a slightly different form in the more lethal MERS virus — is easy to remember because it’s a roar: “R-R-A-R.” The letter code stands for amino acids: arginine, arginine, alanine, and arginine. Its presence, so Decroly and his colleagues observed, may heighten the “pathogenicity” — that is, the god-awfulness — of a disease.

Botao Xiao, a professor at the South China University of Technology, posted [a short paper](#) on a preprint server titled “The Possible Origins of 2019-nCoV Coronavirus.” Two laboratories, the Wuhan Center for Disease Control and Prevention (WHCDC) and the Wuhan Institute of Virology, were not far from the seafood market, which was where the disease was said to have originated, Xiao wrote — in fact, the WHCDC was only a few hundred yards away from the market — whereas the horseshoe bats that hosted the disease were hundreds of miles to the south. (No bats were sold in the market, he pointed out.) It was unlikely, he wrote, that a bat would have flown to a densely populated metropolitan area of 15 million people. “The killer coronavirus probably originated from a laboratory in Wuhan,” Xiao believed. He urged the relocation of “biohazardous laboratories” away from densely populated places. His article disappeared from the server.

And late in the month, a professor at National Taiwan University, Fang Chi-

tai, gave a lecture on the coronavirus in which he described the anomalous R-R-A-R furin cleavage site. The virus was “unlikely to have four amino acids added all at once,” Fang said — natural mutations were smaller and more haphazard, he argued. “From an academic point of view, it is indeed possible that the amino acids were added to COVID-19 in the lab by humans.” When the *Taiwan News* published an article about Fang’s talk, Fang disavowed his own comments, and the video copy of the talk disappeared from the website of the Taiwan Public Health Association. “It has been taken down for a certain reason,” the association explained. “Thank you for your understanding.”

V.

“A Serious Shortage of Appropriately Trained Technicians”

In the spring, I did some reading on coronavirus history. Beginning in the 1970s, dogs, cows, and pigs were diagnosed with coronavirus infections; dog shows were canceled in 1978 after 25 collies died in Louisville, Kentucky. New varieties of coronaviruses didn’t start killing humans, though, until 2003 — that’s when restaurant chefs, food handlers, and people who lived near a live-animal market got sick in Guangzhou, in southern China, where the shredded meat of a short-legged raccoonlike creature, the palm civet, was served in a regional dish called “dragon-tiger-phoenix soup.” The new disease, SARS, spread alarmingly in hospitals, and it reached 30 countries and territories. More than 800 people died; the civet-borne virus was eventually [traced to horseshoe bats](#).

Later, smaller outbreaks of SARS in Taiwan, Singapore, and China’s National Institute of Virology in Beijing were all caused by laboratory accidents. Of the Beijing Virology Institute, the World Health Organization’s safety

investigators [wrote](#), in May 2004, that they had “serious concerns about biosafety procedures.” By one account, a SARS storage room in the Beijing lab was so crowded that the refrigerator holding live virus was moved out to the hallway. “Scientists still do not fully understand exactly where or how SARS emerged 18 months ago,” [wrote](#) Washington *Post* reporter David Brown in June 2004. “But it is clear now that the most threatening source of the deadly virus today may be places they know intimately — their own laboratories.”

I’m just asking, Is it a complete coincidence that this outbreak happened in the one city in China with a BSL-4 lab?

to more than 180 infections, many involving hospital workers.

MERS arose in 2012, [possibly spread by camels](#) that had contracted the disease from bats or bat guano, then passed it to human drinkers of raw camel milk and butchers of camel meat. It was an acute sickness, with a high fatality rate, mostly confined to Saudi Arabia. Like SARS, MERS ebbed quickly — it all but disappeared outside the Middle East, except for an outbreak in 2015 at the Samsung Medical Center in South Korea, where a single case of MERS led

In January 2015, the brand-new BSL-4 lab in Wuhan, built by a French contractor, celebrated its opening, but full safety certification came slowly. According to State Department cables from 2018 leaked to the Washington *Post*, the new BSL-4 lab had some start-up problems, including “a serious shortage of appropriately trained technicians and investigators needed to safely operate this high-containment laboratory.” The staff had gotten some training at a BSL-4 lab in Galveston, Texas, but they were doing potentially dangerous work with SARS-like viruses, the memo said, and they needed more help from the U.S.

In November or December of 2019, the novel coronavirus began to spread. Chinese scientists initially named it “Wuhan seafood market pneumonia virus,” but soon that idea went away. The market, closed and decontaminated by Chinese officials on January 1, 2020, was an amplifying hub, not the source of the outbreak, according to several studies by Chinese scientists. Forty-five percent of the earliest SARS-2 patients had no link with the market.

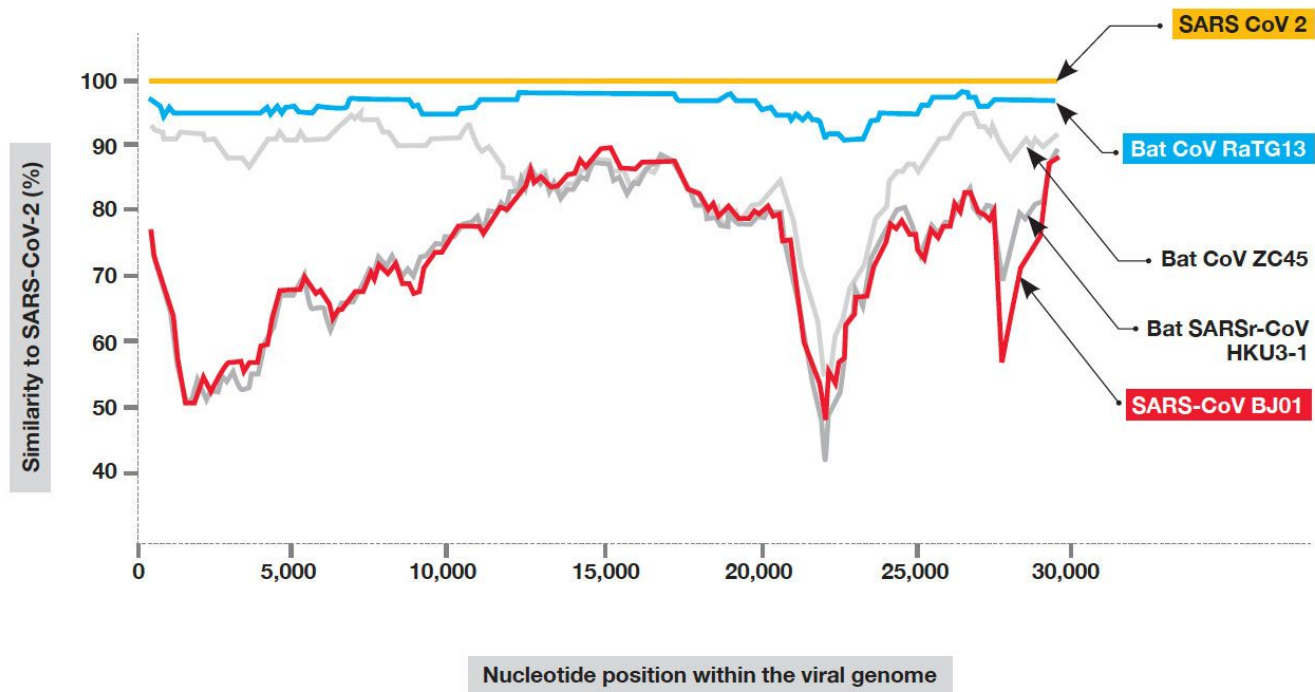
VI.

Emergence

Now let’s take a step back. AIDS, fatal and terrifying and politically charged, brought on a new era in government-guided vaccine research, under the guidance of Anthony Fauci. A virologist at Rockefeller University, Stephen S. Morse, began giving talks on “emerging viruses” — other plagues that might be in the process of coming out of nature’s woodwork. In 1992, Richard Preston wrote [a horrific account](#) of one emergent virus, Ebola, in *The New Yorker*, which became a best-selling book in 1994; Laurie Garrett’s [The Coming Plague: Newly Emerging Diseases in a World Out of Balance](#) appeared that same year and was also a best seller. The idea seemed to be everywhere: We were on the verge of a wave of zoonotic, emergent plagues.

This new, useful term, *emerging*, began to glow in the research papers of some coronavirologists, who were out of the spotlight, working on common colds and livestock diseases. The term was useful because it was fluid. An emerging disease could be real and terrifying, as AIDS was — something that had just arrived on the medical scene and was confounding our efforts to combat it — or it could be a disease that hadn’t arrived, and might never arrive, but could be shown in a laboratory to be waiting in the wings, just a

few mutations away from a human epidemic. It was real and unreal at the same time — a quality that was helpful when applying for research grants.



Where Did It Come From? This chart measures the genetic similarity of known viruses to the novel coronavirus (which appears in yellow). By far the closest is the bat virus RaTG13, which appears in blue, and which was recovered in 2013 and brought to the Wuhan Institute of Virology. The first SARS, marked in red, is a much more distant relative. Graphic: Zhou, P., Yang, XL., Wang, XG. et al. A pneumonia outbreak associated with a new coronavirus of probable bat origin. *Nature* 579, 270–273 (2020)

Take, for instance, [this paper](#) from 1995: “High Recombination and Mutation Rates in Mouse Hepatitis Viruses Suggest That Coronaviruses May Be Potentially Important Emerging Viruses.” It was written by Dr. Ralph Baric and his bench scientist, Boyd Yount, at the University of North Carolina. Baric, a gravelly voiced former swim champion, described in this early paper how his lab was able to train a coronavirus, MHV, which causes hepatitis in mice, to jump species, so that it could reliably infect BHK (baby-hamster kidney) cell cultures. They did it using serial passaging: repeatedly dosing a mixed solution of mouse cells and hamster cells with mouse-hepatitis virus,

while each time decreasing the number of mouse cells and upping the concentration of hamster cells. At first, predictably, the mouse-hepatitis virus couldn't do much with the hamster cells, which were left almost free of infection, floating in their world of fetal-calf serum. But by the end of the experiment, after dozens of passages through cell cultures, the virus had mutated: It had mastered the trick of parasitizing an unfamiliar rodent. A scourge of mice was transformed into a scourge of hamsters. And there was more: "It is clear that MHV can rapidly alter its species specificity and infect rats and primates," Baric said. "The resulting virus variants are associated with demyelinating diseases in these alternative species." (A demyelinating disease is a disease that damages nerve sheaths.) With steady prodding from laboratory science, along with some rhetorical exaggeration, a lowly mouse ailment was morphed into an emergent threat that might potentially cause nerve damage in primates. That is, nerve damage in us.

A few years later, in a further round of "interspecies transfer" experimentation, Baric's scientists introduced their mouse coronavirus into flasks that held a suspension of African-green-monkey cells, human cells, and pig-testicle cells. Then, in 2002, they announced something even more impressive: They'd found a way to create a full-length infectious clone of the entire mouse-hepatitis genome. Their "infectious construct" replicated itself just like the real thing, [they wrote](#).

Not only that, but they'd figured out how to perform their assembly seamlessly, without any signs of human handiwork. Nobody would know if the virus had been fabricated in a laboratory or grown in nature. Baric called this the "no-see'm method," and he asserted that it had "broad and largely unappreciated molecular biology applications." The method was named, he wrote, after a "very small biting insect that is occasionally found on North Carolina beaches."

In 2006, Baric, Yount, and two other scientists were granted a patent for their invisible method of fabricating a full-length infectious clone using the seamless, no-see'm method. But this time, it wasn't a clone of the mouse-hepatitis virus — it was a clone of the entire deadly human SARS virus, the one that had emerged from Chinese bats, via civets, in 2002. The Baric Lab came to be known by some scientists as "the Wild Wild West." In 2007, Baric said that we had entered "the golden age of coronavirus genetics."

"I would be afraid to look in their freezers," one virologist told me.

Baric and Shi Zhengli of the Wuhan Institute of Virology, the two top experts on the genetic interplay between bat and human coronaviruses, began collaborating in 2015.

VII.

"I Had Not Slept a Wink"



Virologist Shi Zhengli at the Wuhan Institute of Virology in 2017. Photo: Feature China / Barcroft Studios / Future Publishing / Getty Images

Early in the pandemic, *Scientific American* [profiled](#) Shi Zhengli, known in China as the “bat woman.” Shi trapped hundreds of bats in nets at the mouths of caves in southern China, sampled their saliva and their blood, swabbed their anuses, and gathered up their fecal pellets. Several times, she visited and sampled bats in a mine in Mojiang, in southern China, where, in 2012, six men set to work shoveling bat guano were sickened by a severe lung disease, three of them fatally. Shi’s team took the samples back to Wuhan and analyzed whatever fragments of bat virus she could find. In some cases, when she found a sequence that seemed particularly significant, she experimented with it in order to understand how it might potentially infect humans. Some of her work was funded by the National Institutes of Health and some of it by the U.S. Defense Threat Reduction

Agency of the Department of Defense via Peter Daszak's EcoHealth Alliance.

As Shi explained to *Scientific American*, late in December 2019, she heard from the director of the Wuhan Institute that there was an outbreak of a new disease in the city. Medical samples taken from hospital patients arrived at her lab for analysis. Shi determined that the new virus was related to SARS but even more closely related to a bat disease that her own team had found on a virus-hunting trip: the now-famous RaTG13. Shi was surprised that the outbreak was local, she said: "I had never expected this kind of thing to happen in Wuhan, in central China." The bat hiding places that she'd been visiting were, after all, as far away as Orlando, Florida, is from New York City. Could this new virus, she wondered, have come from her own laboratory? She checked her records and found no exact matches. "That really took a load off my mind," she said. "I had not slept a wink for days."

If one of the first thoughts that goes through the head of a lab director at the Wuhan Institute of Virology is that the new coronavirus could have come from her lab, then we are obliged to entertain the scientific possibility that it could indeed have come from her lab. Right then, there should have been a comprehensive, pockets-inside-out, fully public investigation of the Virology Institute, along with the other important virus labs in Wuhan, including the one close by the seafood market, headquarters of the Wuhan CDC. There should have been interviews with scientists, interviews with biosafety teams, close parsings of laboratory notebooks, freezer and plumbing and decontamination systems checks — everything. It didn't happen. The Wuhan Institute of Virology closed down its databases of viral genomes, and the Chinese Ministry of Education sent out a directive: "Any paper that traces the origin of the virus must be strictly and tightly managed."

Shi made some WeChat posts early in 2020. "The novel 2019 coronavirus is nature punishing the human race for keeping uncivilized living habits," she wrote. "I, Shi Zhengli, swear on my life that it has nothing to do with our laboratory." She advised those who believed rumors, and gave credence to unreliable scientific papers, to "shut their stinking mouths."

VIII.

" 'Bug to Drug' in 24 Hours"

It wasn't only AIDS that changed the way the NIH funded research. The War on Terror also influenced which diseases got the most attention. In the late '90s, under Bill Clinton and then George W. Bush, biodefense specialists became interested — again — in anthrax. The Defense Threat Reduction Agency built a small anthrax factory in Nevada, using simulants, to demonstrate how easy it would be for a terrorist to build a small anthrax factory. And in the first year of the Bush presidency, the Defense Intelligence Agency wrote up plans to create a vaccine-resistant form of anthrax using state-of-the-art gene-splicery. A front-page article describing these initiatives, "U.S. Germ Warfare Research Pushes Treaty Limits," appeared in the New York [Times](#) on September 4, 2001, one week before 9/11. "Pentagon Says Projects Are Defense, Is Pressing Ahead," was the subtitle.

After the 9/11 attacks, and the mysterious anthrax mailings that began a week later (which said, "TAKE PENACILIN [sic] NOW / DEATH TO AMERICA / DEATH TO ISRAEL / ALLAH IS GREAT"), the desire for biopreparedness became all consuming. Now there were emerging biothreats from humans as well as from the evolving natural world. Fauci's anti-terror budget went from \$53 million in 2001 to \$1.7 billion in 2003. Setting aside his work toward an AIDS vaccine, which was taking longer than he'd foreseen, Fauci

said he would be going all out to defend against a suite of known Cold War agents, all of which had been bred and perfected in American weapons programs many years before — brucellosis, anthrax, tularemia, and plague, for instance. “We are making this the highest priority,” Fauci said. “We are really marshaling all available resources.”

I would be afraid to look in their freezers.

Vaccine development had to progress much faster, Fauci believed; he wanted to set up “vaccine systems” and “vaccine platforms,” which could be quickly tailored to defend against a particular emergent strain some terrorist with an advanced biochemistry degree might have thrown together in a laboratory. “Our goal within the next 20 years is ‘bug to drug’ in 24 hours,” Fauci said. “This would specifically meet the challenge of genetically engineered bioagents.” The first Project BioShield contract Fauci awarded was to VaxGen, a California pharmaceutical company, for \$878 million worth of shots of anthrax vaccine.

By 2005, so much money was going toward biothreat reduction and preparedness that more than [750 scientists sent a protest letter](#) to the NIH. Their claim was that grants to study canonical biowar diseases — anthrax, plague, brucellosis, and tularemia, all exceptionally rare in the U.S. — had increased by a factor of 15 since 2001, whereas funds for the study of widespread “normal” diseases, of high public-health importance, had decreased.

Fauci was firm in his reply: “The United States through its leaders made the decision that this money was going to be spent on biodefense,” he said. “We disagree with the notion that biodefense concerns are of ‘low public-health significance.’ ”

In 2010, by one count, there were 249 BSL-3 laboratories and seven BSL-4 laboratories in the U.S., and more than 11,000 scientists and staffers were authorized to handle the ultralethal germs on the government's select pathogen list. And yet the sole bioterrorist in living memory who actually killed American citizens, according to the FBI — the man who sent the anthrax letters — turned out to be one of the government's own researchers. [Bruce Ivins](#), an eccentric, suicidal laboratory scientist from Ohio who worked in vaccine development at Fort Detrick, allegedly wanted to boost the fear level so as to persuade the government to buy more of the patented, genetically engineered anthrax VaxGen vaccine, of which he was a co-inventor. (See David Willman's fascinating biography of Ivins, *Mirage Man*.) Fauci's staff at NIH funded Ivins's vaccine laboratory and gave \$100 million to VaxGen to accelerate vaccine production. (The NIH's \$878 million contract with VaxGen, however, was quietly canceled in 2006; Ivins, who was never charged, killed himself in 2008.)

"The whole incident amounted to a snake eating its own tail," wrote Wendy Orent in [an August 2008 piece](#) titled "Our Own Worst Bioenemy" in the *Los Angeles Times*. "No ingenious biowarrior from Al Qaeda sent the lethal envelopes through the U.S. postal system. An American scientist did." What confirmed Ivins's guilt, according to the FBI, was that there was a genetic match between the anthrax used in the killings and the strain held at Fort Detrick.

IX.

"Weapons of Mass Disruption"

After SARS appeared in 2003, Ralph Baric's laboratory moved up the NIH funding ladder. SARS was a "dual use" organism — a security threat and a zoonotic threat at the same time. In 2006, Baric wrote [a long, fairly creepy](#)

[paper](#) on the threat of “weaponizable” viruses. Synthetic biology had made possible new kinds of viral “weapons of mass disruption,” he wrote, involving, for example, “rapid production of numerous candidate bioweapons that can be simultaneously released,” a scattershot terror tactic Baric called the “ ‘survival of the fittest’ approach.”

Baric hoped to find a SARS vaccine, but he couldn't; he kept looking for it, year after year, supported by the NIH, long after the disease itself had been contained. It wasn't really gone, Baric believed. Like other epidemics that pop up and then disappear, as he told a university audience some years later, “they don't go extinct. They are waiting to return.” What do you do if you run a well-funded laboratory, an NIH “center of excellence,” and your emergent virus is no longer actually making people sick? You start squeezing it and twisting it into different shapes. Making it stand on its hind legs and quack like a duck, or a bat. Or breathe like a person.

Baric's safety record is good — although there was a minor mouse-bite incident in 2016, [uncovered by ProPublica](#) — and his motives are beyond reproach: “Safe, universal, vaccine platforms are needed that can be tailored to new pathogens as they emerge, quickly tested for safety, and then strategically used to control new disease outbreaks in human populations,” he wrote in a paper on public health. But the pioneering work he did over the past 15 years — generating tiny eager single-stranded flask monsters and pitting them against human cells, or bat cells, or gene-spliced somewhat-human cells, or monkey cells, or humanized mice — was not without risk, and it may have led others astray.

In 2006, for instance, Baric and his colleagues, hoping to come up with a “vaccine strategy” for SARS, produced noninfectious virus replicon particles (or VRPs) using the Venezuelan-equine-encephalitis virus (another American germ-warfare agent), which they fitted with various SARS spike

proteins. Then, wearing Tyvek suits and two pairs of gloves each, and working in a biological safety cabinet in a BSL-3-certified laboratory, they cloned and grew recombinant versions of the original SARS virus in an incubator in a medium that held African-green-monkey cells. When they had grown enough virus, the scientists swapped out one kind of spike protein for a carefully chosen mutant, and they challenged their prototype vaccine with it in mice.

The scientists also tried their infectious SARS clones in something called an air-liquid interface, using a relatively new type of cell culture developed by Raymond Pickles of the University of North Carolina's Cystic Fibrosis Center. Pickles had perfected a method of emulating the traits of human airway tissue by cultivating cells taken from lung-disease patients — nurturing the culture over four to six weeks in such a way that the cells differentiated and developed a crop of tiny moving hairs, or cilia, on top and goblet cells within that produced real human mucus. In fact, before infecting these HAE (human airway epithelial) cells with a virus, the lab worker must sometimes rinse off some of the accumulated mucus, as if helping the lab-grown tissue to clear its throat. So Baric was exposing and adapting his engineered viruses to an extraordinarily true-to-life environment — the juicy, sticky, hairy inner surface of our breathing apparatus.

SARS-2 seems almost perfectly calibrated to grab and ransack our breathing cells and choke the life out of them. "By the time SARS-CoV-2 was first detected in late 2019, it was already pre-adapted to human transmission," Alina Chan and her co-authors have written, whereas SARS, when it first appeared in 2003, underwent "numerous adaptive mutations" before settling down. Perhaps viral nature hit a bull's-eye of airborne infectivity, with almost no mutational drift, no period of accommodation and adjustment, or perhaps some lab worker somewhere, inspired by Baric's

work with human airway tissue, took a spike protein that was specially groomed to colonize and thrive deep in the ciliated, mucosal tunnels of our inner core and cloned it onto some existing viral bat backbone. It could have happened in Wuhan, but — because anyone can now “print out” a fully infectious clone of any sequenced disease — it could also have happened at Fort Detrick, or in Texas, or in Italy, or in Rotterdam, or in Wisconsin, or in some other citadel of coronaviral inquiry. No conspiracy — just scientific ambition, and the urge to take exciting risks and make new things, and the fear of terrorism, and the fear of getting sick. Plus a whole lot of government money.

X.

“Risky Areas for Spillover”

Project Bioshield began to fade by the end of the Bush administration, although the expensive high-containment laboratories, controversial preservers and incubators of past and future epidemics, remain. By 2010, some BioShield projects had dissolved into Obama’s Predict program, which paid for laboratories and staff in 60 “risky areas for spillover” around the world. Jonna Mazet, a veterinary scientist from the University of California, Davis, was in charge of Predict, which was a component of USAID’s “Emerging Pandemic Threats” program. Her far-flung teams collected samples from 164,000 animals and humans and claimed to have found “almost 1,200 potentially zoonotic viruses, among them 160 novel coronaviruses, including multiple SARS- and MERS-like coronaviruses.” The fruits of Predict’s exotic harvest were studied and circulated in laboratories worldwide, and their genetic sequences became part of [GenBank](#), the NIH’s genome database, where any curious RNA wrangler anywhere could quickly synthesize snippets of code and test out a new disease on human cells.

Baric, Jonna Mazet, and Peter Daszak of EcoHealth worked together for years — and Daszak also routed Predict money to Shi Zhengli's bat-surveillance team in Wuhan through his nonprofit, mingling it with NIH money and money from the U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency. In 2013, Mazet [announced](#) that Shi Zhengli's virus hunters, with Predict's support, had, for the first time, isolated and cultured a live SARS-like virus from bats and demonstrated that this virus could bind to the human ACE2, or "angiotensin-converting enzyme 2," receptor, which Baric's laboratory had determined to be the sine qua non of human infectivity. "This work shows that these viruses can directly infect humans and validates our assumption that we should be searching for viruses of pandemic potential before they spill over to people," Mazet [said](#).

Daszak, for his part, seems to have viewed his bat quests as part of an epic, quasi-religious death match. In a paper from 2008, Daszak and a co-author described Bruegel's painting *The Fall of the Rebel Angels* and compared it to the contemporary human biological condition. The fallen angels could be seen as pathogenic organisms that had descended "through an evolutionary (not spiritual) pathway that takes them to a netherworld where they can feed only on our genes, our cells, our flesh," Daszak [wrote](#). "Will we succumb to the multitudinous horde? Are we to be cast downward into chthonic chaos represented here by the heaped up gibbering phantasmagory against which we rail and struggle?"

XI.

"Lab-Made?"

There are, in fact, some helpful points of agreement between zoonoticists — those who believe in a natural origin of the SARS-2 virus — and those who believe that it probably came from a laboratory. Both sides agree, when

pressed, that a lab origin can't be conclusively ruled out and a natural origin can't be ruled out either — because nature, after all, is capable of improbable, teleological-seeming achievements. Both sides also agree, for the most part, that the spillover event that began the human outbreak probably happened only once, or a few times, quite recently, and not many times over a longer period. They agree that bat virus RaTG13 (named for the *Rinolophus affinus* bat, from Tongguan, in 2013) is the closest match to the human virus that has yet been found, and that although the two viruses are very similar, the spike protein of the bat virus lacks the features the human spike protein possesses that enable it to work efficiently with human tissue.

Zoonoticists hold that SARS-2's crucial features — the furin cleavage site and the ACE2 receptor — are the result of a recombinant event involving a bat coronavirus (perhaps RaTG13 or a virus closely related to it) and another, unknown virus. Early on, researchers proposed that it could be a snake sold at the seafood market — a Chinese cobra or a banded krait — but no: Snakes don't typically carry coronaviruses. Then there was a thought that the disease came from sick smuggled pangolins, because there existed a certain pangolin coronavirus that was, inexplicably, almost identical in its spike protein to the human coronavirus — but then, no: There turned out to be questions about the reliability of the genetic information in that diseased-pangolin data set, on top of which there were no pangolins for sale at the Wuhan market. Then a group from China's government veterinary laboratory at Harbin tried infecting beagles, pigs, chickens, ducks, ferrets, and cats with SARS-2 to see if they could be carriers. (Cats and ferrets got sick; pigs, ducks, and most dogs did not.)

In September, some scientists at the University of Michigan, led by Yang Zhang, [reported](#) that they had created a "computational pipeline" to screen nearly a hundred possible intermediate hosts, including the Sumatran orangutan, the Western gorilla, the Olive baboon, the crab-eating macaque,

and the bonobo. All these primates were “permissive” to the SARS-2 coronavirus and should undergo “further experimental investigation,” the scientists proposed.

Despite this wide-ranging effort, there is at the moment no animal host that zoonoticists can point to as the missing link. There’s also no single, agreed-upon hypothesis to explain how the disease may have traveled from the bat reservoirs of Yunnan all the way to Wuhan, seven hours by train, without leaving any sick people behind and without infecting anyone along the way.

The zoonoticists say that we shouldn’t find it troubling that virologists have been inserting and deleting furin cleavage sites and ACE2-receptor-binding domains in experimental viral spike proteins for years: The fact that virologists have been doing these things in laboratories, in advance of the pandemic, is to be taken as a sign of their prescience, not of their folly. But I keep returning to the basic, puzzling fact: This patchwork pathogen, which allegedly has evolved without human meddling, first came to notice in the only city in the world with a laboratory that was paid for years by the U.S. government to perform experiments on certain obscure and heretofore unpublicized strains of bat viruses — which bat viruses then turned out to be, out of all the organisms on the planet, the ones that are most closely related to the disease. What are the odds?

In July, I discovered a number of volunteer analysts who were doing a new kind of forensic, samizdat science, hunched over the letter code of the SARS-2 genome like scholars deciphering the cuneiform impressions in Linear B tablets. There were the anonymous authors of Project Evidence, on GitHub, who “disavow all racism and violent attacks, including those which are aimed at Asian or Chinese people,” and there was Yuri Deigin, a biotech entrepreneur from Canada, who wrote [a massive, lucid paper](#) on Medium, “Lab-Made?,” which illumined the mysteries of the spike protein. Jonathan

Latham of the Bioscience Resource Project, with his co-author Allison Wilson, wrote two important papers: one a calm, unsparing overview of laboratory accidents and rash research and the other a [close look at the small outbreak](#) of an unexplained viral pneumonia in a bat-infested copper mine in 2012. I corresponded with Alina Chan (now the subject of a nicely turned piece in [Boston](#) magazine by Rowan Jacobsen) and with the pseudonymous Billy Bostickson, a tireless researcher whose Twitter photo is a cartoon of an injured experimental monkey, and Monali Rahalkar, of the Agharkar Research Institute in Pune, India, who wrote a [paper](#) with her husband, Rahul Bahulikar, that also sheds light on the story of the bat-guano-shoveling men whose virus was remarkably like SARS-2, except that it was not nearly as catching. I talked to Rossana Segreto, a molecular biologist at the University of Innsbruck, whose [paper](#), "Is Considering a Genetic-Manipulation Origin for SARS-CoV-2 a Conspiracy Theory That Must Be Censored?" co-authored with Yuri Deigin, was finally published in November under a milder title; it argued that SARS-2's most notable features, the furin site and the human ACE2-binding domain, were unlikely to have arisen simultaneously and "might be the result of lab manipulation techniques such as site directed mutagenesis." Segreto is also the person who first established that a bat-virus fragment named BtCoV/4991, identified in 2013, was 100 percent identical to the closest known cousin to SARS-CoV-2, the bat virus RaTG13, thereby proving that the virus closest to the SARS-2-pandemic virus was linked back not to a bat cave but to a mine shaft, and that this same virus had been stored and worked on in the Wuhan Institute for years. This made possible the first big investigative piece on SARS-2's origins, in the [Times](#) of London, in July: "Nobody can deny the bravery of scientists who risked their lives harvesting the highly infectious virus," the *Times* authors write. "But did their courageous detective work lead inadvertently to a global disaster?"

XII.

"A New, Non-Natural Risk"

In 2011, a tall, confident Dutch scientist, Ron Fouchier, using grant money from Fauci's group at NIH, created a mutant form of highly pathogenic avian influenza, H5N1, and passaged it ten times through ferrets in order to prove that he could "force" (his word) this potentially fatal disease to infect mammals, including humans, "via aerosols or respiratory droplets." Fouchier said his findings indicated that these avian influenza viruses, thus forced, "pose a risk of becoming pandemic in humans."

This experiment was too much for some scientists: Why, out of a desire to prove that something extremely infectious could happen, would you make it happen? And why would the U.S. government feel compelled to pay for it to happen? Late in 2011, Marc Lipsitch of the Harvard School of Public Health got together with several other dismayed onlookers to ring the gong for caution. On January 8, 2012, the *New York Times* published a scorching [an editorial](#), "An Engineered Doomsday." "We cannot say there would be no benefits at all from studying the virus," the *Times* said. "But the consequences, should the virus escape, are too devastating to risk."

These gain-of-function experiments were an important part of the NIH's approach to vaccine development, and Anthony Fauci was reluctant to stop funding them. He and Francis Collins, director of the National Institutes of Health, along with Gary Nabel, NIAID director of vaccine research, published an opinion piece in the *Washington Post* in which they contended that the ferret flu experiments, and others like them, were "a risk worth taking." "Important information and insights can come from generating a potentially dangerous virus in the laboratory," they wrote; the work can "help delineate the principles of virus transmission between species." The

work was safe because the viruses were stored in a high-security lab, they believed, and the work was necessary because nature was always coming up with new threats. "Nature is the worst bioterrorist," Fauci told a reporter. "We know that through history."

Soon afterward, there followed some distressing screwups in secure federal laboratories involving live anthrax, live smallpox, and live avian influenza. These got attention in the science press. Then Lipsitch's activists (calling themselves the Cambridge Working Group) sent around a strong statement on the perils of research with "Potential Pandemic Pathogens," signed by more than a hundred scientists. The work might "trigger outbreaks that would be difficult or impossible to control," the signers said. Fauci reconsidered, and the White House in 2014 announced that there would be a "pause" in the funding of new influenza, SARS, and MERS gain-of-function research.

Baric, in North Carolina, was not happy. He had a number of gain-of-function experiments with pathogenic viruses in progress. "It took me ten seconds to realize that most of them were going to be affected," he told [NPR](#). Baric and a former colleague from Vanderbilt University wrote a [long letter](#) to an NIH review board expressing their "profound concerns." "This decision will significantly inhibit our capacity to respond quickly and effectively to future outbreaks of SARS-like or MERS-like coronaviruses, which continue to circulate in bat populations and camels," they wrote. The funding ban was itself dangerous, they argued. "Emerging coronaviruses in nature do not observe a mandated pause."

Hoping to smooth over controversy by showing due diligence, the National Science Advisory Board for Biosecurity, founded in the BioShield era under President Bush, paid a consulting firm, Gryphon Scientific, to write a report on gain-of-function research, which by now was simply referred to as GoF.

In chapter six of this thousand-page dissertation, published in April 2016, the consultants take up the question of coronaviruses. "Increasing the transmissibility of the coronaviruses could significantly increase the chance of a global pandemic due to a laboratory accident," they wrote.

The Cambridge Working Group continued to write letters of protest and plead for restraint and sanity. Steven Salzberg, a professor of biomedical engineering at Johns Hopkins, said, "We have enough problems simply keeping up with the current flu outbreaks — and now with Ebola — without scientists creating incredibly deadly new viruses that might accidentally escape their labs." David Relman of Stanford Medical School said, "It is unethical to place so many members of the public at risk and then consult only scientists — or, even worse, just a small subset of scientists — and exclude others from the decision-making and oversight process." Richard Ebright wrote that creating and evaluating new threats very seldom increases security: "Doing so in biology — where the number of potential threats is nearly infinite, and where the asymmetry between the ease of creating threats and the difficulty of addressing threats is nearly absolute — is especially counterproductive." Lynn Klotz wrote, "Awful as a pandemic brought on by the escape of a variant H5N1 virus might be, it is SARS that now presents the greatest risk. The worry is less about recurrence of a natural SARS outbreak than of yet another escape from a laboratory researching it to help protect against a natural outbreak." Marc Lipsitch argued that gain-of-function experiments can mislead, "resulting in worse not better decisions," and that the entire gain-of-function debate as overseen by the NIH was heavily weighted in favor of scientific insiders and "distinctly unwelcoming of public participation."

Nariyoshi Shinomiya, a professor of physiology and nano-medicine at the National Defense Medical College in Japan, offered this warning: "Similar to nuclear or chemical weapons there is no going back once we get a thing in

our hands."

But in the end, Baric was allowed to proceed with his experiments, and the research papers that resulted, showered with money, became a sort of *Anarchist's Cookbook* for the rest of the scientific world. In November 2015, Baric and colleagues published [a collaboration paper](#) with Shi Zhengli titled "A SARS-like Cluster of Circulating Bat Coronaviruses Shows Potential for Human Emergence." Into a human SARS virus that they had adapted so that it would work in mice, Baric and Shi et al. inserted the spike protein of a bat virus, SHC014, discovered by Shi in southern China. They dabbed the mice nasally with virus and waited, looking for signs of sickness: "hunching, ruffled fur." They also infected human airway cells with the mouse-adapted bat-spike-in-a-human-virus backbone. In both mice and human airway cells, the chimeric virus caused a "robust infection."

This proved, Baric and Shi believed, that you did not need civets or other intermediate hosts in order for bats to cause an epidemic in humans and that therefore all the SARS-like viruses circulating in bat populations "may pose a future threat." Peter Daszak, who had used Predict funds to pay Shi for her work on the paper, was impressed by this conclusion; the findings, he said, "move this virus from a candidate emerging pathogen to a clear and present danger."

Richard Ebright was trenchantly unenthusiastic. "The only impact of this work," [he said](#), "is the creation, in a lab, of a new, non-natural risk."

Early in 2016, Baric and Shi again collaborated. Shi sent Baric a fresh bat virus spike protein, and Baric inserted it into the backbone of a human SARS virus and then used that infectious clone to attack human airway cells. "The virus readily and efficiently replicated in cultured human airway tissues, suggesting an ability to potentially jump directly to humans,"

[reported](#) the UNC's website. This time, they also used the bat-human hybrid virus to infect transgenic humanized mice that grew human ACE2 protein. The mice, young and old, lost weight and died, proving, again, that this particular bat virus was potentially "poised to emerge in human populations." It was "an ongoing threat," Baric wrote. But was it? Civets and camels that are exposed to a lot of bat-guano dust may be an ongoing threat and a manageable one. But the bats themselves just want to hang in their caves and not be bothered by frowning sightseers in spacesuits who want to poke Q-tips in their bottoms. This 2016 "poised for human emergence" paper was supported by eight different NIH grants. In 2015, Baric's lab received \$8.3 million from the NIH; in 2016, it received \$10.5 million.

Gain-of-function research came roaring back under Trump and Fauci. "The National Institutes of Health will again fund research that makes viruses more dangerous," said an article in *Nature* in December 2017. Carrie Wolinetz of the NIH's office of science policy defended the decision. "These experiments will help us get ahead of viruses that are already out there and pose a real and present danger to human health," she told [The Lancet](#). The NIH, Wolinetz said, was committed to a leadership role with gain-of-function research internationally. "If we are pursuing this research in an active way, we will be much better positioned to develop protection and countermeasures should something bad happen in another country."

A reporter asked Marc Lipsitch what he thought of the resumption of NIH funding. Gain-of-function experiments "have done almost nothing to improve our preparedness for pandemics," he said, "yet they risked creating an accidental pandemic."

XIII.

"Proximity Is a Problem"

In April, four months into the coronavirus emergency, a deputy director at the NIH wrote an email to EcoHealth Alliance. "You are instructed to cease providing any funds to Wuhan Institute of Virology," it said. In response, Daszak and the chief scientific officer of New England Biolabs (a company that sells seamless gene-splicing products to laboratories, among other things) got 77 Nobel Prize winners to sign a statement saying that the cancellation deprived the "nation and the world of highly regarded science that could help control one of the greatest health crises in modern history and those that may arise in the future." Later, as a condition of further funding, the NIH wrote to say it wanted Daszak to arrange an outside inspection of the Wuhan lab and to procure from Wuhan's scientists a sample of whatever they'd used to sequence the SARS-2 virus. Daszak was outraged ("I am not trained as a private detective"), and again he fought back. He was reluctant to give up his own secrets, too. "Conspiracy-theory outlets and politically motivated organizations have made Freedom of Information Act requests on our grants and all of our letters and emails to the NIH," he told [Nature](#). "We don't think it's fair that we should have to reveal everything we do."

But Daszak has survived — even prospered. Recently, *The Lancet* made him the lead investigator in its inquiry into the origins of the pandemic, and the World Health Organization named him to its ten-person origins investigation. ("We're still close enough to the origin to really find out more details about where it has come from," Daszak told [Nature](#).)

The NIH has also set up an ambitious new international program, called CREID, which stands for Centers for Research in Emerging Infectious Diseases, and it has put Daszak's EcoHealth in charge of trapping animals and looking for obscure bat viruses in Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand.

Baric is one of Daszak's partners in CREID. The virus hunting and collecting, which Richard Ebright likens to "looking for a gas leak with a lighted match," will continue and widen with U.S. funding. "We're going to work in remote parts of Malaysia and Thailand to get to the front line of where the next pandemic is going to start," Daszak told NPR.

In May, an interviewer from the People's Pharmacy website asked Baric if he had any thoughts on whether the coronavirus began with a natural bat-to-human transfer. "Or was there something a little bit more, perhaps, insidious involved?"

"Well, of course the answers to those questions are in China," Baric replied. "Exactly how they work in that facility is something that would be very difficult for a Westerner to know," he said. "The main problems that the Institute of Virology has is that the outbreak occurred in close proximity to that Institute. That Institute has in essence the best collection of virologists in the world that have gone out and sought out, and isolated, and sampled bat species throughout Southeast Asia. So they have a very large collection of viruses in their laboratory. And so it's — you know — proximity is a problem. It's a problem."

Over the course of the fall, and especially after the election muffled Donald Trump's influence over the country's public-health apparatus, that proximity problem — and the uncomfortable questions of origins it raised — began to grow somewhat more discussable. The BBC, *Le Monde*, and Italy's RAI have all recently taken seriously the scientific possibility of a lab leak. In late October, the World Health Organization convened the first meeting of its second inquiry into the origins of the disease. The WHO's effort is perhaps the world's best chance to satisfy its curiosity about goings-on at the Wuhan Institute of Virology and at the Wuhan CDC's virus lab near the Wuhan seafood market. But, as the *New York Times* has [reported](#), the

WHO's information gathering has been hindered by Chinese secretiveness since February, when an initial investigative team sent to Beijing was told its members' access to scientists would be restricted and that it couldn't visit the seafood market, then considered a hub of the pandemic.

When a BBC video team tried to inspect the Yunnan mine shaft, they found the road to the mine blocked by a strategically parked truck that had "broken down" shortly before they arrived. Reporter John Sudworth asked Daszak, one of the ten members of the second WHO investigative team, whether he would push for access to the Wuhan Institute of Virology. "That's not my job to do that," Daszak replied.

In November, David Relman, the Stanford microbiologist, one of the most thoughtful of the voices warning against gain-of-function research, published [a paper](#) in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* on the urgent need to unravel the origins of COVID-19. "If SARS-CoV-2 escaped from a lab to cause the pandemic," he wrote, "it will become critical to understand the chain of events and prevent this from happening again." Conflicts of interest by researchers and administrators will need to be addressed, Relman wrote; to reach the truth, the investigation must be transparent, international, and, as much as possible, unpolitical. "A more complete understanding of the origins of COVID-19 clearly serves the interests of every person in every country on this planet."

"The world is sitting on a precedent-setting decision right now," wrote Alina Chan on December 8. "It is unclear if SARS2 is 100 percent natural or emerged due to lab/research activities. If we walk away from this, demonstrating that we cannot effectively investigate its origins, it will pave the way for future COVIDS."

Just before this issue of *New York* went to press, I reached Ralph Baric by

phone and asked him where he now believed SARS-2 came from. (Anthony Fauci, Shi Zhengli, and Peter Daszak didn't respond to emails, and Kristian Andersen said he was busy with other things.) Baric said he still thought the virus came from bats in southern China, perhaps directly, or possibly via an intermediate host, although the smuggled pangolins, in his view, were a red herring. The disease evolved in humans over time without being noticed, he suspected, becoming gradually more infectious, and eventually a person carried it to Wuhan "and the pandemic took off." Then he said, "Can you rule out a laboratory escape? The answer in this case is probably not."

XIV.

Transmission

So how did we actually get this disease?

Here's what I think happened. In April 2012, in a copper mine in Mojiang, China, three men were given an awful job — they were told to shovel bat guano out of a mine shaft. They went to work and shoveled guano for seven hours a day in the confined, insufficiently ventilated space of the mine shaft, and by the end of the week, they were sick with a viral pneumonia of unknown etiology. Three more, younger shovelers were hired to replace the ones who were out sick.

The viral load in their lungs was so huge, because of all the guano dust, that their lungs became a kind of accelerated laboratory passaging experiment, as Jonathan Latham and Allison Wilson have written, forcing the virus to switch its allegiance from bats to humans. SARS experts were consulted, and the disease was judged to be SARS-like but not SARS. It was something new. (Shi Zhengli told *Scientific American* that the guano shovelers had died of a fungal disease, but, as Monali Rahalkar pointed out,

they were treated with antivirals, and their symptoms were consistent with viral pneumonia with attendant secondary fungal infections.)

Although it was a severe disease, and in the end three of the shovelers died, there was no resultant epidemic. It was actually a case of industrial overexposure to an infectious substance — what we might call a massive OSHA violation. The bat disease that the men encountered wasn't necessarily all that dangerous except in an environment of immunosuppressive overload.

Peter Daszak and Shi Zhengli were interested, of course, because this unidentified coronavirus disease involved bats and people. Of the fragmentary bits of virus Shi retrieved from the mine shaft, one was SARS-like, and Shi sequenced it and called it BtCoV/4991 and published a paper about it. Several times — in 2016 and 2018 and 2019 — this most interesting sample, a portion of what we now know as RaTG13, was taken out of the freezers in Shi's lab and worked on in undisclosed ways. (Peter Daszak claims that these samples have disintegrated and can't be validated or studied.) Samples of the nameless human disease also traveled back to the Wuhan Institute of Virology — few specifics about these valuable specimens have been released by Chinese sources, however.

This is the period in the story that demands a very close investigation, when chimeric assemblages may have been created and serially passaged, using BtCoV/4991, a.k.a. RaTG13, and other bat viruses, perhaps along with forms of the human virus. It's when Shi and Baric both published papers that were about what happened when you hot-swapped mutant spike proteins between bat viruses and human viruses.

The link, via the renamed sample BtCoV/4991, to the copper mine is of exceptional importance because of the one huge difference between the

unnamed guano shovelers' virus and the SARS-2 virus that is now ravaging, for example, California: transmissibility. Airborne human-to-human transmissibility — the kind of thing that gain-of-functioneers like Ron Fouchier and Ralph Baric were aiming at, in order to demonstrate what Baric called "lurking threats" — is COVID-19's crucial distinguishing feature. If six men had gotten extremely sick with COVID-19 back in 2012 in southern China, doctors and nurses in the hospital where they lay dying would likely have gotten sick as well. There might have been hundreds or thousands of cases. Instead, only the shovelers themselves, who had breathed a heavy concentration of guano dust for days, got it.

The existence of bat virus RaTG13 is therefore not necessarily evidence of a natural bat origin. In fact, it seems to me to imply the opposite: New functional components may have been overlaid onto or inserted into the RaTG13 genome, new Tinkertoy intermolecular manipulations, especially to its spike protein, which have the effect of making it unprecedentedly infectious in human airways.

This is where the uniquely peculiar furin insert and/or the human-tuned ACE2-receptor-binding domain may come in — although it's also possible that either of these elements could have evolved as part of some multistep zoonotic process. But in the climate of gonzo laboratory experimentation, at a time when all sorts of tweaked variants and amped-up substitutions were being tested on cell cultures and in the lungs of humanized mice and other experimental animals, isn't it possible that somebody in Wuhan took the virus that had been isolated from human samples, or the RaTG13 bat virus sequence, or both (or other viruses from that same mine shaft that Shi Zhengli has recently mentioned in passing), and used them to create a challenge disease for vaccine research — a chopped-and-channeled version of RaTG13 or the miners' virus that included elements that would make it thrive and even rampage in people? And then what if, during an

experiment one afternoon, this new, virulent, human-infecting, furin-ready virus got out?

For more than 15 years, coronavirologists strove to prove that the threat of SARS was ever present and must be defended against, and they proved it by showing how they could doctor the viruses they stored in order to force them to jump species and go directly from bats to humans. More and more bat viruses came in from the field teams, and they were sequenced and synthesized and "rewired," to use a term that Baric likes. In this international potluck supper of genetic cookery, hundreds of new variant diseases were invented and stored. And then one day, perhaps, somebody messed up. It's at least a reasonable, "parsimonious" explanation of what might have happened.

This may be the great scientific meta-experiment of the 21st century. Could a world full of scientists do all kinds of reckless recombinant things with viral diseases for many years and successfully avoid a serious outbreak? The hypothesis was that, yes, it was doable. The risk was worth taking. There would be no pandemic.

I hope the vaccine works.

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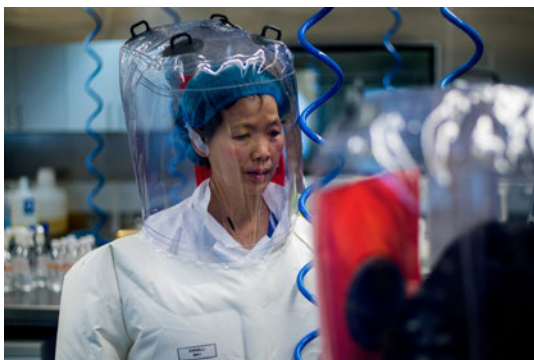
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LIFE & ARTS | IDEAS | ESSAY

The World Needs a Real Investigation Into the Origins of Covid-19

A team of WHO researchers has arrived in China but won't investigate the possibility that the coronavirus originated in a lab.



Dr. Shi Zhenli, whose lab at the Wuhan Institute of Virology has been a suspected source of the coronavirus, in 2017.

PHOTO: JOHANNES EISELE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

By Alina Chan and Matt Ridley

Jan. 15, 2021 11:31 am ET



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In the first week of January, scientists representing the World Health Organization (WHO) were due to arrive in China to trace the origins of Covid-19. The team membership and terms of reference were preapproved by the Chinese government, yet at the last minute Beijing denied entry to the investigators. This prompted WHO to take the rare step of criticizing China, which relented and allowed the group to enter the country this week.

The brief standoff highlights a more serious problem: the inadequacy of WHO's current investigative framework for exploring all plausible origins of Covid-19. The world needs an inquiry that considers not just natural origins but the possibility that SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, escaped from a laboratory. The WHO team, however, plans to build on reports by Chinese scientists rather than mount an independent investigation. Given that Chinese authorities have been slow to release information, penalized scientists and doctors who shared clinical and genomic details of the novel coronavirus, and have since demonstrated a keen interest in controlling the narrative of how the virus emerged, this is not a promising foundation for WHO's investigation.

The WHO team includes experts who traced the origins of Ebola and MERS outbreaks, but critics are concerned that it doesn't have the expertise for an investigation that would examine possible lab origins. Dr. David Relman of Stanford University, who raised the possibility early on that the virus might have leaked from a lab, told us: "Based on the scant information that has been shared publicly about the WHO investigation, it doesn't appear that WHO has adequately represented the range of views and perspectives of key stakeholders or incorporated all needed forms of expertise." Responding to whether the

Critics are concerned that the WHO team doesn't have the expertise for an investigation that would examine possible lab origins of the coronavirus.

WHO team will investigate lab origins, Dr. Peter Ben Embarek, the leader of the team, told us, "If our studies point to a possible lab accident, then other international mechanisms would be involved to document such an event. It would take time and additional types of expertise."



Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director-general of the World Health Organization, at a press conference in March 2020.

PHOTO: SALVATORE DI NOLFI/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Could the virus have escaped from a laboratory? Then-deputy U.S. national security adviser Matthew Pottinger told international leaders late last year that the latest intelligence points to SARS-CoV-2 having originated from the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV). This intelligence has not been made public, and China has denied that the virus came from a lab. Dr. Shi Zhengli, whose lab at WIV has been a suspected source of the virus, [told Scientific American](#) last March that "none of the [early SARS-CoV-2] sequences matched those of the viruses her team had sampled from bat caves."

The hypothesis that SARS-CoV-2 originated in a lab remains controversial. Last March, in the journal *Nature Medicine*, Dr. Kristian Andersen of the Scripps Research Institute and colleagues [asserted that](#) "SARS-CoV-2 is not a laboratory construct or a purposefully manipulated virus." They said there was no evidence to support lab-based origins and that the available data was consistent with natural evolution. Dr. David Robertson of the University of Glasgow told us that "SARS-CoV-2 is just too different to the [viruses] we were aware of prior to its emergence."

The ability to build coronavirus genomes without leaving traces of manipulation has existed for years.

In November, however, in the journal *PNAS*, Dr. Relman [wrote that](#) Dr. Andersen's argument didn't acknowledge that unpublished viruses closely related to SARS-CoV-2 could have been studied in a laboratory. For more than a decade, Dr. Shi has been publishing experiments on "chimera" coronaviruses, built by inserting parts of newly found viruses into better known viruses to understand how novel viruses could

infect human cells. These were used to assess the risk that such viruses could spill over

into humans.

The ability to build coronavirus genomes without leaving traces of manipulation has existed for years. Dr. Ralph Baric of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, a world-leading coronavirus expert and collaborator of Dr. Shi, told an Italian television documentary last June, “In sequence databases there were sequences for a large number of bat coronaviruses that were SARS-like, reported out of China.” He added that “whether the virus existed beforehand, it would only be within the records of the Institute of Virology in Wuhan.”

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For some scientists, the location of the first detected outbreak is enough to raise suspicions. In the words of Dr. Richard Ebright of Rutgers University, “the outbreak occurred on the doorstep of laboratories that conduct the world’s largest research project on horseshoe-bat viruses, that have the world’s largest collection of horseshoe-bat viruses, and that possessed and worked with the world’s closest sequenced relative of the outbreak virus. The laboratories actively searched for new horseshoe-bat viruses in horseshoe-bat colonies

in caves in remote rural areas in Yunnan province, brought those new horseshoe-bat viruses to Wuhan, and then mass-produced and studied those new horseshoe-bat viruses, year-round, inside Wuhan.”

Such concerns have gained prominence over the past year and were recently explored in a [much-discussed article](#) in New York magazine, “The Lab-Leak Hypothesis” by Nicholson Baker.



In January 2020, a police officer stands guard outside the seafood market in Wuhan, China, where the coronavirus was first detected.

PHOTO: HECTOR RETAMAL/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

SARS viruses are known to have escaped previously from laboratories in Singapore, Taiwan and twice in Beijing. Dr. Maciej Boni of Pennsylvania State University told us that if the virus escaped from the Wuhan lab (though he thinks this is unlikely), he would expect that “some of the early December cases should be traceable to WIV employees, family members of WIV employees or frequent social contacts of WIV employees. If this evidence is presented, it will be the first ‘positive evidence’ that SARS-CoV-2 may have a lab origin.”

What would it take to properly investigate possible lab origins? Dr. Relman said that “it will be critical to obtain independently verified, time-stamped records of sample

inventories, data, lab notebooks and records, internal and external communications, personnel health records and serum samples, and access to personnel so that they can be interviewed in private without fear of repercussions.” Yet the path to such a credible investigation seems nearly impossible in the current geopolitical climate.

Several scientists also told us they were troubled by the presence on the WHO team of Dr. Peter Daszak of the New York-based EcoHealth Alliance. Dr. Daszak has been a longtime collaborator of Dr. Shi since they worked together to trace SARS viruses to bats after the 2003 epidemic. His organization has administered more than \$100 million in U.S. federal grants to fund overseas fieldwork and laboratory experiments, including those performed by WIV, to find and characterize new viruses in order to predict the next pandemic, according to the EcoHealth Alliance.

Last February, Dr. Peter Daszak organized a statement in The Lancet, a prominent medical journal, to ‘condemn conspiracy theories suggesting that Covid-19 doesn’t have a natural origin.’

Last February, Dr. Daszak organized [a statement](#) in The Lancet, a prominent medical journal, to “condemn conspiracy theories suggesting that Covid-19 doesn’t have a natural origin.” The statement was drafted when little was yet known about the virus. Dr. Daszak declined to comment for this piece, but a spokesman for Dr. Daszak told us: “The Lancet letter was written during a time in which Chinese scientists were receiving death threats and the letter was intended as a showing of support for them as they were caught between important work trying to stop an outbreak and the crush of online harassment.” Yet, in June, Dr. Daszak

wrote an opinion piece for the Guardian headlined, “Ignore the conspiracy theories: scientists know Covid-19 wasn’t created in a lab.”

The spokesman for Dr. Daszak told us that any questions about his potential conflict of interest should be referred to WHO. Dr. Ben Embarek said that he sees no problem in having Dr. Daszak on his investigative team: “Of course the WHO team will have discussion with the scientists and researchers in Wuhan. And therefore it is good to have on the team someone who knows the area well.”

Miles Pomper, a co-author of [an expert guide](#) to investigating outbreak origins published in October by the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, said that “The independence of the WHO investigation may be seriously compromised by the process used to choose investigators.... In particular, the choice of Dr. Daszak, who has a personal stake in ensuring current Chinese practices continue and who is a longtime collaborator of a scientist at the center of the investigation, is likely to taint its results.”

Another co-author of the guide, Dr. Filippa Lentzos, said, “We also need to take a hard look in the mirror. It is our own virologists, funders and publishers who are driving and endorsing the practice of actively hunting for viruses and the high-risk research of deliberately making viruses more dangerous to humans. We need to be more open about the heavily vested interests of some of the scientists given prominent platforms to make claims about the pandemic’s origins.”

As a scientist and a science writer, we believe that both natural and lab-based scenarios of Covid-19’s origins must be rigorously investigated, not only to avert future pandemics but for the sake of science’s reputation. The formal investigation launched by WHO is only

taking steps to look into natural origins. That needs to change.

—Dr. Chan is a researcher at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard. Mr. Ridley is a member of the House of Lords and the author, most recently, of “How Innovation Works: And Why It Flourishes in Freedom.”

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To stop the next pandemic, we need to unravel the origins of COVID-19

David A. Relman^{a,b,c,d,1} 

We find ourselves ten months into one of the most catastrophic global health events of our lifetime and, disturbingly, we still do not know how it began. What's even more troubling is that despite the critical importance of this question, efforts to investigate the origins of the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) virus and of the associated disease, coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), have become mired in politics, poorly supported assumptions and assertions, and incomplete information.

SARS-CoV-2 is a betacoronavirus whose apparent closest relatives, RaTG13 and RmYN02, are reported

to have been collected from bats in 2013 and 2019, respectively, in Yunnan Province, China (1). COVID-19 was first reported in December 2019 more than 1,000 miles away in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. Beyond these facts, the "origin story" is missing many key details, including a plausible and suitably detailed recent evolutionary history of the virus, the identity and provenance of its most recent ancestors, and surprisingly, the place, time, and mechanism of transmission of the first human infection. Even though a definitive answer may not be forthcoming, and even though an objective analysis requires addressing



To avoid or mitigate the dire consequences of this and future pandemics (here, people in PPE bury a victim in Delhi, India in June), unraveling the origins of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19 will be essential—even though a definitive answer may be elusive, and an objective analysis means broaching some uncomfortable possibilities. Image credit: Shutterstock/PradeepGaur.

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some uncomfortable possibilities, it is crucial that we pursue this question. Preventing the next pandemic depends on understanding the origins of this one.

There are several potential origin scenarios. First, SARS-CoV-2 may have evolved in bats, which are known reservoirs of immense coronavirus diversity (2), and then spread directly, or indirectly via an intermediate host, to humans through natural mechanisms. The degree of anticipated but undiscovered natural diversity clearly lends support to this scenario, as well as support to other scenarios. Second, SARS-CoV-2 or a recent ancestor virus may have been collected by humans from a bat or other animal and then brought to a laboratory where it was stored knowingly or unknowingly, propagated and perhaps manipulated genetically to understand its biological properties, and then released accidentally.

Some have argued that a deliberate engineering scenario is unlikely because one would not have had the insight *a priori* to design the current pandemic virus (3). This argument fails to acknowledge the possibility that two or more as yet undisclosed ancestors (i.e., more proximal ancestors than RaTG13 and RmYN02) had already been discovered and were being studied in a laboratory—for example, one with the SARS-CoV-2 backbone and spike protein receptor-binding domain, and the other with the SARS-CoV-2 polybasic furin cleavage site. It would have been a logical next step to wonder about the properties of a recombinant virus and then create it in the laboratory. Alternatively, the complete SARS-CoV-2 sequence could have been recovered from a bat sample and viable virus resurrected from a synthetic genome to study it, before that virus accidentally escaped from the laboratory. The third scenario, seemingly much less likely, involves laboratory manipulation or release, with the clear intention of causing harm.

Even though strong opinions abound, none of these scenarios can be confidently ruled in or ruled out with currently available facts. Just because there are no public reports of more immediate, proximal ancestors in natural hosts, doesn't mean that these ancestors don't exist in natural hosts or that COVID-19 didn't begin as a spillover event. Nor does it mean that they have not been recovered and studied, or deliberately recombined in a laboratory.

Why do these distinctions matter? If we find more concrete evidence of a "spill-over" event with SARS-CoV-2 passing directly from bat to human, then efforts to understand and manage the bat-human interface need to be significantly strengthened. But if SARS-CoV-2 escaped from a lab to cause the pandemic, it will become critical to understand the chain of events and prevent this from happening again. Rather than resorting to hunches or finger-pointing, each scenario must be systematically and objectively analyzed using the best available science-based approaches. There is a path to greater clarity. It requires scientific rigor, forensic approaches, deliberate methods, transparency, and cooperation.

In an effort to reveal the origins of the pandemic, researchers so far have focused on the SARS-CoV-2

genome sequence. However, the sequence of the pandemic virus tells us only so much. First, the closest known relatives, RaTG13 and RmYN02, are not that close (4). Second, there is probably more than one recent ancestral lineage that contributes to SARS-CoV-2 because its genome shows evidence of recombination between different parental viruses. In nature, recombination is common among coronaviruses. But it's also common in some research laboratories where recombinant engineering is used to study those viruses. The bottom line is simple: We need to identify the immediate parent(s) of SARS-CoV-2, and they're missing.

To find its parents and understand its recent history, we need 1) additional genome sequences of coronaviruses from relevant bats and other suspect

A deliberative process for investigating the origins of this pandemic must be representative of all relevant disciplines, expertise, and stakeholders; must achieve political neutrality, scientific balance, and access to all relevant information and samples; and must operate with transparency and independent oversight. Without these features, it will not be credible, trustworthy, or effective.

hosts—some of these likely exist already in laboratories, given the efforts so far undertaken to survey bats in particular (2, 5); 2) measurements of SARS-CoV-2 evolution under a variety of defined conditions so that differences between viral genomes can be understood better as differences in time on an evolutionary clock; and 3) data from antibody surveys of humans at high risk of coronavirus exposure and from past cases of similar disease, so that previously unrecognized encounters can be revealed. In addition, we need to address whether there is information about host or environmental samples that contain recent ancestors of SARS-CoV-2, data perhaps not yet publicly available. More generally, are there relevant scientific data, including from coronavirus engineering work in laboratories, that have not been shared widely? Who knew what about relevant viruses and cases of disease before December 2019, and when? This information will go a long way toward clarifying the origins of this pandemic, even if certainty continues to elude us.

The means are just as important as the goals. An investigative process should be transparent, collaborative, international, and, to the extent possible, devoid of political interest. Recent, productive scientific collaborations between the United States and China, for example, provide hope that such a process can be achieved. But the kind of effort required will need to expand far beyond what's taken place so far, and nations other than the United States and China will need to be involved. Conflicts of interest by researchers, administrators, and policymakers on all sides must be revealed and addressed, and all relevant global

constituencies must be included. Both the World Health Organization and *The Lancet* COVID-19 Commission (6) have hinted that they have taken some first steps, but their efforts so far have been cloaked in secrecy (7, 8). A deliberative process for investigating the origins of this pandemic must be representative of all relevant disciplines, expertise, and stakeholders; must achieve political neutrality, scientific balance, and access to all relevant information and samples; and must operate with transparency and independent oversight. Without these features, it will not be credible, trustworthy, or effective.

A more complete understanding of the origins of COVID-19 clearly serves the interests of every person in every country on this planet. It will limit further re-criminations and diminish the likelihood of conflict; it will lead to more effective responses to this pandemic, as well as efforts to anticipate and prevent the next one. It will also advance our discussions about risky science. And it will do something else: Delineating COVID-19's origin story will help elucidate the nature of our very precarious coexistence within the biosphere.

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