

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 7, 2022

The Honorable Lawrence A. Tabak, D.D.S., Ph.D.
Director
National Institutes of Health
9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20892

Dear Director Tabak:

We write regarding the recent decision by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to resume funding to the EcoHealth Alliance Inc. (EcoHealth) over the next five years to conduct more dangerous experiments on coronaviruses collected from bats, beginning with an initial payment of \$653,392 from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases in 2022.¹ This announcement is deeply concerning given EcoHealth's lengthy history of reporting failures and collaboration with the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV).

As you may know, the WIV is a Chinese Communist Party (CCP) laboratory and the likely origin of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since 2017, the WIV has engaged in classified research with the Chinese military and has a history of safety concerns at their high-containment laboratory.² In August of 2021, the Director of National Intelligence determined in the COVID-19 Origins assessment that "one Intelligence Community element assesses with moderate confidence that the first human infection with SARS-CoV-2 most likely was the result of a laboratory-associated incident, probably involving experimentation, animal handling, or sampling by the Wuhan Institute of Virology."³ It is worth noting that the National Intelligence Council (NIC) and four other intel agencies assessed with low confidence that the pandemic had natural origins, while three other agencies could not reach a conclusion on either theory.⁴ The NIC agreed that a lab leak and natural origins were plausible scenarios for causing the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2021, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) acknowledged that EcoHealth provided \$1.1 million to the WIV from October 2009 to May 2019.⁵ This funding utilized gain-of-function (GOF) research to create a hybrid, man-made virus by inserting a spiked protein from a wild coronavirus into a mouse-adapted SARS-CoV backbone, which could infect human airways

¹ <https://reporter.nih.gov/search/0jAp779zVkaN-DEsKnKa5A/project-details/10522470#description>

² <https://gop-foreignaffairs.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Final-Minority-Report-on-the-Origins-of-the-COVID-19-Global-Pandemic-Including-the-Roles-of-the-CCP-and-WHO-9.20.20-Coverpage.pdf>

³ <https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/Unclassified-Summary-of-Assessment-on-COVID-19-Origins.pdf>

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ <https://rescenthaler.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/rescenthaler.house.gov/files/Rep.%20Rescenthaler%20EcoHealth%20RESPONSE.pdf>

by binding to the ACE2⁶. It is worth noting that in October 2014, the Obama Administration paused GOF research activities and funding.⁷

According to government records, this is not the only time EcoHealth transferred taxpayer dollars to the WIV. Between 2015 and 2019, the WIV received approximately \$598,500 from EcoHealth for a National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases-funded study on the risk of bat coronavirus emergence.⁸

It is troubling that when NIH requested information about the taxpayer-funded coronavirus research being conducted with the WIV, EcoHealth's president called the questioning "inappropriate" and "heinous."⁹ He also orchestrated an effort to taint the investigation into the origins of COVID-19, calling suggestions that there could have been a lab leak from the Wuhan Institute "conspiracy theories."¹⁰ In July 2020, NIH suspended its grant to EcoHealth until the information requested was provided.¹¹ In August 2022, NIH canceled EcoHealth's sub-award to the Wuhan Institute of Virology "for failure to meet award terms and conditions requiring provision of records to NIH upon request."¹² Despite repeated requests from NIH for the laboratory notebooks and original electronic files from the research conducted at WIV, the records were never provided. Given this history of compliance failure and concerning lack of transparency, what made NIH suddenly reverse course to award EcoHealth new funding?

Due to their failings, dishonesty, reckless disregard for federal laws and U.S. taxpayers, and collaboration with the CCP, Congress has taken bipartisan action to investigate and restrict funding to EcoHealth. For example, Congress passed, and President Biden signed into law, language prohibiting the Department of Defense funding from being used to support EcoHealth grants for work performed in China in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022 (P.L. 117-81).

Given the strong bipartisan opposition to EcoHealth's research and the federal government's noted compliance failures by the organization, we request that you end this grant relationship with EcoHealth to protect taxpayer funding and end dangerous experiments that jeopardize public health.

We appreciate your consideration of our request. We look forward to your prompt response.

Very respectfully,

⁶ <https://gop-foreignaffairs.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Final-Minority-Report-on-the-Origins-of-the-COVID-19-Global-Pandemic-Including-the-Roles-of-the-CCP-and-WHO-9.20.20-Coverpage.pdf>

⁷ <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2014/10/17/doing-diligence-assess-risks-and-benefits-life-sciences-gain-function-research>


⁸ https://www.usaspending.gov/award/ASST_NON_R01AI110964_7529

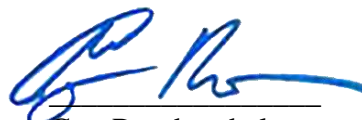
⁹ <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-02473-4>

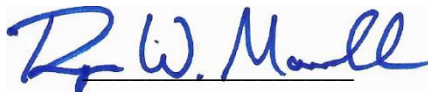
¹⁰ <https://usrtk.org/biohazards-blog/ecohealth-alliance-orchestrated-key-scientists-statement-on-natural-origin-of-sars-cov-2/>


¹¹ http://downloads.vanityfair.com/lab-leak-theory/Daszak_7_8_20_Reactivation_and_Suspension.pdf

¹² https://republicans-oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/NIH-Letter-to-Congress-regarding-EHA_Comer.pdf



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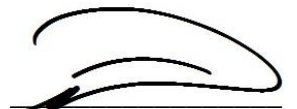

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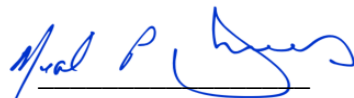

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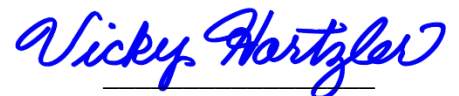

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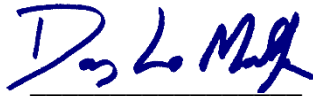

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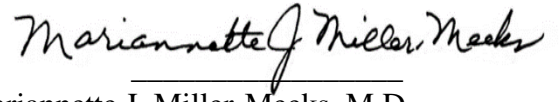
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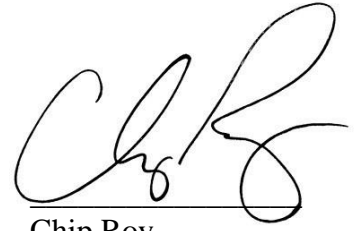
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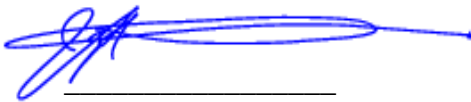
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