

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 23, 2021

Ms. Christi Grimm  
Principal Deputy Inspector General  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
330 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Principal Deputy Inspector General Grimm:

We write to request a prompt and thorough investigation into the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) response to biosafety concerns raised about taxpayer-funded coronavirus research at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) in Wuhan, China.

Recently, the *Washington Post*, which had regularly dismissed the theory that the COVID-19 pandemic resulted from a lab leak at WIV, finally published an editorial board column embracing the lab leak hypothesis and calling for investigation into the research lab that was funded in part with U.S. tax dollars from the NIH.<sup>1,2</sup> The *Post's* about-face follows growing belief among experts, including the U.S. State Department, that the pandemic that has killed over 500,000 people in the U.S. and 2 million people worldwide may have been caused by dangerous coronavirus research gone awry at the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)-run bioagent laboratory.<sup>3,4,5,6</sup>

The NIH, unfortunately, has played a major role in supporting WIV and this treacherous research and the promotion of spurious claims dismissing the NIH-funded lab's potential role in the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2017, NIH Director Francis Collins personally supported and celebrated the resumption of dangerous taxpayer-funded "gain-of-function" research designed to make viruses more transmissible and fatal.<sup>7</sup> Subsequently, Dr. Collins' NIH allowed U.S. Taxpayer dollars to be secretly funneled to WIV's reckless coronavirus experiments through grants awarded to the U.S.-based EcoHealth Alliance, Inc.<sup>8,9</sup> The Pentagon also apparently funded WIV via a grant to EcoHealth.<sup>10</sup>

In March 2020, as questions arose about the safety of WIV's NIH-funded coronavirus research, Dr. Collins wrote a blog that is still published, which states, "Some folks are even making outrageous

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/02/05/coronavirus-origins-mystery-china/?arc404=true>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.foxnews.com/media/washington-post-editorial-board-calls-for-answers-from-china-on-pandemic>

<sup>3</sup> <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/article/coronavirus-lab-escape-theory.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://video.foxnews.com/v/6227902415001>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/pompeo-us-wuhan-lab-staff-caught-covid-19-before-pandemic>

<sup>6</sup> <https://2017-2021.state.gov/fact-sheet-activity-at-the-wuhan-institute-of-virology//index.html>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.nih.gov/about-nih/who-we-are/nih-director/statements/nih-lifts-funding-pause-gain-function-research>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.newsweek.com/dr-fauci-backed-controversial-wuhan-lab-millions-us-dollars-risky-coronavirus-research-1500741>

<sup>9</sup> <https://reschenthaler.house.gov/media/press-releases/reschenthaler-introduces-bill-defund-ecohealth-alliance>

<sup>10</sup> <https://americanpriority.com/news/congressman-probes-into-pentagon-wmd-grant-to-firm-that-funded-wuhan-lab/>

claims that the new coronavirus causing the pandemic was engineered in a lab.”<sup>11</sup> He even tweeted a link to his article, writing, “New genomic study debunks claims that the novel #coronavirus causing #COVID-19 was created in a lab.”<sup>12</sup> Yet, experts now claim that WIV’s gain-of-function research could very well have engineered the novel coronavirus that caused the pandemic from a virus collected from bats in caves in China.

EcoHealth’s President has also sided with the CCP and openly criticized the U.S. government for investigating the theory that SARS-CoV-2 originated in the WIV lab to which he directed NIH funds and has closely collaborated with for decades.<sup>13,14</sup>

**In light of all this, we are gravely concerned about the NIH’s relationship with both EcoHealth and WIV, and the Agency’s handling of allegations that the COVID-19 pandemic was potentially caused by an NIH-funded laboratory at WIV. We also are alarmed that WIV is eligible to receive additional funding from the NIH through 2024.**<sup>15</sup>

We request a prompt and thorough investigation into the NIH’s response to biosafety concerns raised about WIV, including, but not limited to:

1. When was the NIH first aware that coronavirus experiments were being conducted at WIV with taxpayer funds (via EcoHealth Alliance or otherwise)?
2. Did NIH officials review WIV’s coronavirus experiments to assess compliance with Potential Pandemic Pathogen Care and Oversight (P3CO) guidelines?
3. When was the NIH first aware of biosafety or other concerns at WIV?
4. Was the NIH briefed on the concerns raised by the State Department in 2018 about the potential pandemic risk of WIV’s research?
5. Did Dr. Collins or other NIH officials communicate with EcoHealth Alliance and/or WIV to coordinate responses to lab leak allegations?
6. When does WIV’s current eligibility to receive NIH funding expire?
7. Is WIV currently receiving any NIH support directly or indirectly?
8. How much NIH funding - directly or indirectly - has WIV received from the NIH including grants, sub-grants, and other funding sources.

Thank you for your cooperation in our effort to protect public health and national security. We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,



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SCOTT PERRY  
Member of Congress



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NANCY MACE  
Member of Congress

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<sup>11</sup> <https://directorsblog.nih.gov/2020/03/26/genomic-research-points-to-natural-origin-of-covid-19/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://twitter.com/nihdirector/status/1243172927933222912?lang=en>

<sup>13</sup> <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/article/coronavirus-lab-escape-theory.html>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.wsj.com/articles/who-are-the-covid-investigators-11613401955>

<sup>15</sup> <https://dailycaller.com/2021/02/16/wuhan-lab-eligible-taxpayer-funding/>



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BILL POSEY  
Member of Congress



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RICK CRAWFORD  
Member of Congress



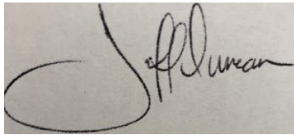
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W. GREGORY STEUBE  
Member of Congress



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JODY HICE  
Member of Congress



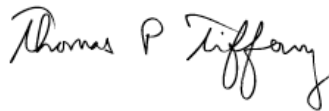
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