



Tony Cárdenas
Congress of the United States
29th District, California

August 23, 2019

Mr. William N. Bryan
Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary for Science and Technology
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Mr. Bryan:

In the interest of good science, animal welfare, and transparency, I am writing to inquire about taxpayer-funded animal research at the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Battelle National Biodefense Institute.

I am encouraged to see that DHS's use of primates in experiments has dropped from 89 animals in FY15¹ (including 80 used in painful testing), to just two primates used in non-painful tests in FY18.² Other agencies whose painful primate use has increased, including the NIH and FDA, should take note of your progress in this area as Congress urges them to reduce primate testing.

However, I am alarmed by *a more than ten-fold increase in DHS's use of rabbits* between FY13³ and FY18 (from 24 animals to 258), including for research that causes animals significant pain and distress that is intentionally unrelieved (USDA Pain Column E). According to the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), "animal models have limited relevance to humans and poorly predict effects in humans."⁴ We all have a vested interest in conducting research using sound science that provides useful, applicable results. I am aware and glad that DHS has expressed interest in effective animal testing alternatives like organs-on-chips,⁵ which the Pentagon has won several awards for developing.

I am interested in learning more about DHS's animal research, but I have been unable to ascertain many details because DHS does not post information in the federal research database. Therefore, I request that you provide my office with the following information:

- A list of all current DHS research projects involving rabbits and primates, including abstracts, their cost, and USDA pain categories
- Copies of all column E explanations for all species from FY13-present
- A description of specific DHS efforts to replace animal testing with alternatives

Thank you for your assistance with this matter.

Sincerely,

Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress

¹ DHS 2015 USDA Animal Research Facility Report: <http://bit.ly/2MHAmpf>

² DHS 2018 USDA Animal Research Facility Report: <http://bit.ly/2XEGltd>

³ DHS 2013 USDA Animal Research Facility Report: <http://bit.ly/2WGqjK>

⁴ <https://www.darpa.mil/program/microphysiologicalsystems> | [YOUTUBE.COM/REPCARDENAS](https://www.youtube.com/repcardenas) | [FACEBOOK.COM/CONGRESSMANCARDENAS](https://www.facebook.com/congressmancardenas)

⁵ <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/biodefense-aims-to-simulate-human-bodies-by-linking-mini-organs-on-chips/>