



**WHITE COAT
WASTE
PROJECT**



**Organic
Consumers
Association**

February 22, 2021

The Honorable Joe Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters, we are writing to thank your administration for advocating for open, independent investigations into whether SARS-CoV-2 originated in a Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) animal lab. We also urge you to immediately defund WIV and its US-collaborator EcoHealth Alliance, and reinstate your moratorium on dangerous “gain-of-function” (GoF) research designed to make coronaviruses and other pathogens more dangerous.

In 2014, under your leadership, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy paused funding for new GoF research over concerns about biosafety following several lab accidents at federal facilities, as well as leaks and other lab incidents in China and beyond.¹

Unfortunately, in 2017, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) under the Trump Administration lifted the funding pause and allowed perilous GoF research to resume.² As a result, U.S. taxpayer dollars via the NIH, Department of Defense (DOD), and other federal agencies have continued to fund GoF research, including at WIV.³ This continued despite the State Department warning in 2018 that WIV’s research could cause a pandemic because of inadequate safety measures.⁴

Fast forward to 2020, and a potentially bioengineered virus of WIV origin has devastated global health and the economy. Based on SARS-CoV-2’s close similarity to coronaviruses collected from wild bats by WIV researchers and manipulated in their animal lab—and other suspicious activity at WIV before and after the pandemic took hold—global experts have grown increasingly convinced that the COVID-19 pandemic was caused by a leak or other accident.^{5,6}

¹ The White House, “Doing Diligence to Assess the Risks and Benefits of Life Sciences Gain-of-Function Research,” White House website, October 17, 2014, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2014/10/17/doing-diligence-assess-risks-and-benefits-life-sciences-gain-function-research>

² National Institutes of Health, “Notice Announcing the Removal of the Funding Pause for Gain-of-Function Research Projects,” NIH website, December 19, 2017, <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-17-071.html>

³ Nicholson Baker, “The Lab-Leak Hypothesis,” New York Magazine, January 4, 2021, <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/article/coronavirus-lab-escape-theory.html>

⁴ Arin Greenwood, “YOU PAID FOR IT: U.S. TAX DOLLARS SHIPPED TO DANGEROUS WUHAN ANIMAL TESTING LAB,” White Coat Waste Project website, April 13, 2020, <https://blog.whitecoatwaste.org/2020/04/13/you-paid-for-it-u-s-tax-dollars-shipped-to-wuhan-animal-testing-lab/>

⁵ Nicholson Baker, “The Lab-Leak Hypothesis,” New York Magazine.

⁶ U.S. Department of State, “Fact Sheet: Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology,” State Dept. website, January 15, 2021, <https://2017-2021.state.gov/fact-sheet-activity-at-the-wuhan-institute-of-virology/index.html>

To date, the Chinese Communist Party has destroyed evidence, censored research and restricted lab access to prevent real investigation into the lab leak theory. The World Health Organization has unfortunately accepted China's denials of a lab leak at face value. We share the "deep concerns" raised by your administration about the so-called investigations undertaken to date.⁷

U.S. federal agencies have also refused to release relevant documents and not been transparent about their role in and knowledge of WIV's questionable coronavirus research.⁸ And despite growing concerns about a lab leak, the NIH just confirmed that it has authorized WIV to receive taxpayer funding for GoF experiments and other animal testing until 2024.⁹

Similarly, EcoHealth Alliance—the nonprofit that secretly funneled NIH funding to WIV and has received \$110 million taxpayer dollars for GoF and other dangerous virus research since 2003—is also still eligible for federal funding and received millions in new grants from the DOD and NIH as recently as September 2020.¹⁰ This despite revelations that EcoHealth's president has obstructed investigations into the origins of COVID-19 and obscured his relationship with WIV and the Chinese government.¹¹

There is strong bipartisan support for an investigation of WIV and the lab leak hypothesis, including from the editorial boards of the *Washington Post* and *Wall Street Journal*.^{12,13} A national poll of 1,000 taxpayers conducted in early February also found that 60 percent of voters—including 68 percent of Democrats, 54 percent of Republicans and 59 percent of Independents—want Congress and the White House to block funding for WIV while its role in the COVID-19 pandemic is investigated.¹⁴

To prevent the next pandemic and hold accountable those responsible for the current one, we urge the Administration to:

- 1. Support thorough U.S.-led investigations into the relationship between U.S. federal agencies and the Wuhan Institute of Virology and whether taxpayer-funded gain of function research played a role in the COVID-19 outbreak.**
- 2. Disqualify the Wuhan Institute of Virology and EcoHealth Alliance from receiving taxpayer funding pending the outcome of all relevant investigations.**
- 3. Reinstate your moratorium on gain of function research.**

⁷ Reuters, "White House cites 'deep concerns' about WHO Covid report, demands early data from China," NBC News website, February 13, 2021, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/joe-biden/white-house-cites-deep-concerns-about-who-covid-report-demands-n1257850>

⁸ Gary Ruskin, "U.S. Right to Know Sues NIH for Documents about Origins of SARS-CoV-2," U.S. Right to Know website, November 5, 2020, <https://usrtk.org/news-releases/u-s-right-to-know-sues-nih-for-documents-about-origins-of-sars-cov-2/>; Gary Ruskin, "U.S. Right to Know Sues State Department for Documents about Origins of SARS-CoV-2," U.S. Right to Know website, November 30, 2020, <https://usrtk.org/news-releases/u-s-right-to-know-sues-state-department-for-documents-about-origins-of-sars-cov-2/>; Arin Greenwood, "NIH WITHHOLDING WUHAN ANIMAL LAB RECORDS DUE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT INVESTIGATION," White Coat Waste Project website, June 1, 2020, <https://blog.whitecoatwaste.org/2020/06/01/nih-withholding-wuhan-animal-lab-records-due-to-law-enforcement-investigation/>

⁹ Arin Greenwood, "WCW EXCLUSIVE: NIH LOOPHOLE STILL ALLOWS YOUR TAX \$ TO FUND EXPERIMENTS AT THE WUHAN ANIMAL LAB," White Coat Waste Project website, February 10, 2021, <https://blog.whitecoatwaste.org/2021/02/10/outrage-your-tax-dollars-are-still-allowed-to-fund-cruel-experiments-at-wuhans-animal-labs/>

¹⁰ EcoHealth Alliance's federal contract and grant funding, GovTribe website, <https://govtribe.com/vendors/ecohealth-alliance-inc-dot-3mmu3>, accessed on February 21, 2021

¹¹ Wall Street Journal Editorial Board, "Who Are the Covid Investigators?" Wall Street Journal, February 15, 2021, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/who-are-the-covid-investigators-11613401955>

¹² Washington Post Editorial Board, "We're still missing the origin story of this pandemic. China is sitting on the answers." February 5, 2021, Washington Post, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/02/05/coronavirus-origins-mystery-china/?arc404=true>

¹³ Wall Street Journal Editorial Board, "Who Are the Covid Investigators?" Wall Street Journal, February 15, 2021, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/who-are-the-covid-investigators-11613401955>

¹⁴ Lincoln Park Strategies, National Omnibus Poll, February 2021

President Biden, we are grateful for your outstanding track record of leadership to rein in dangerous and unnecessary research that places our safety and security at risk. Thank you in advance for working to end this devastating pandemic and taking steps to prevent another.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JG' with a large, stylized flourish.

Justin Goodman
Vice President
Advocacy and Public Policy
White Coat Waste Project

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A Baden-Mayer' with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Alexis Baden-Mayer, Esq.
Political Director
Organic Consumers Association

cc: House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis