

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

September 20, 2022

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

Dear Dr. Tabak,

In response to the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine and America's focus on starving the Russian government of surplus funding, in March of this year, we wrote to President Biden encouraging him to take action and restrict U.S. taxpayer funding from being sent to animal experimentation labs controlled by the Russian state.¹

As reported by the White Coat Waste Project, the experiments being conducted at these labs with U.S. tax dollars are shocking². In one experiment, eighteen healthy cats had portions of their brain removed while electrodes were implanted in their spines. The cats were then subsequently forced to walk on a treadmill for spinal cord experiments and were later killed and dissected.³

In June, in response to growing bipartisan concerns about these experiments, as well as other NIH-funded animal experiments in labs run by our foreign adversaries, the House Appropriations Committee voted unanimously to cut NIH funding for labs in Russia, China, and other enemy nations.⁴

It has now been six months since Russia invaded Ukraine and there is still no indication that Moscow plans to withdraw its forces. Most recently, the United States, joined by the United Kingdom and the European Union, urged Russia to withdraw from the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant amid continued shelling that poses a serious risk to the facility⁵.

In light of Russia's continued military actions and occupation of Ukraine, we are writing you to request clarification on the U.S. taxpayer funds being sent to these Russian animal labs.

Please provide answers to the following questions no later than October 14, 2022.

Following up to our letter dated March 10, 2022, did the Biden Administration or the NIH take any action to:

¹ [Rep. McClain Leads Letter to President Biden Demanding He Stop Funding Russian Research Labs](#)

² [Institutions with a PHS Approved Animal Welfare Assurance](#)

³ [Rostrocaudal Distribution of the C-Fos-Immunopositive Spinal Network Defined by Muscle Activity during Locomotion](#)

⁴ [House Committee Votes To Defund Labs In Foreign Hostile Countries, Including Wuhan Institute Of Virology](#)

⁵ [Russia urged to withdraw forces from Ukrainian nuclear power plant; Putin turns to North Korea for friendship](#)

- rescind or otherwise restrict any funds made available to the Pavlov Institute of Physiology of the Russian Academy of Sciences under grant number NS100928⁶?
- restrict grantees from diverting U.S. taxpayer dollars to labs in Russia, or labs controlled by the Russian government, through sub-grantees?

Additionally, on June 11, 2022, the White House announced that, “[c]onsistent with U.S. domestic and international law, we will wind down institutional, administrative, funding, and personnel relationships and research collaborations in the fields of science and technology with Russian government-affiliated research institutions and individuals who continue to be employed by or work under the direction of those institutions.”⁷

Can you clarify whether the NIH will, as a matter of agency policy under this Presidential guidance:

- instruct affiliated organizations, such as Federally Funded Research and Development Centers, to refrain from funding research performed by labs in, or controlled by, the Russian Federation, as either grantees or sub-grantees?
- refuse to award grants to non-government institutions who divert taxpayer funds to labs in, or controlled by, the Russian Federation?

Finally, it has come to our attention that since our initial letter, the Gamaleya Research Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology is no longer listed as having an active Public Health Service-Approved Animal Welfare Assurance and is therefore no longer authorized to receive U.S. funding⁸.

Would you please clarify whether this PHS Assurance was allowed to lapse by the institution or was terminated by the NIH?

To be responsible stewards of taxpayer funds, I’m sure you recognize that Congress must understand the nature of the NIH’s funding decisions. We look forward to your answers to these critical questions as we work to ensure taxpayer dollars are not sent to support oppressive regimes that are working to undermine American foreign policy.

Sincerely,



Lisa McClain
Member of Congress



Brian Mast
Member of Congress

CC: Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the United States

⁶ [GRANT to GEORGIA TECH RESEARCH CORPORATION](#)

⁷ [Guidance On Scientific and Technological Cooperation with the Russian Federation for U.S. Government and U.S. Government Affiliated Organizations](#)

⁸ [Institutions with a PHS Approved Animal Welfare Assurance](#)



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