

## **Partial transcript of email exchanges in which NIH cuts off grant funding to EcoHealth Alliance**

*April 19<sup>th</sup> 2020: Michael Lauer, NIH Deputy Director for Extramural Research, writes to EcoHealth Alliance's vice president for research, Kevin Olival and Naomi Schrag, Columbia University's Research Integrity Officer (The email was misaddressed to Schrag; Columbia was not involved in the grant in any way):*

EcoHealth Alliance, Inc. is the recipient, as grantee, of an NIH grant entitled "Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence." It is our understanding that one of the sub-recipients on this grant is the Wuhan Institute of Virology ("WIV"). It is our understanding that Wuhan Institute of Virology studies the interaction between corona viruses and bats. The scientific community believes that the coronavirus causing COVID-19 jumped from bats to humans likely in Wuhan where the COVID-19 pandemic began. There are now allegations that the current crisis was precipitated by the release from Wuhan Institute of Virology of the coronavirus responsible for COVID-19. Given these concerns, we are pursuing suspension of Wuhan Institute of Virology from participation in federal programs.

While we review these allegations during the period of suspension, you are instructed to cease providing any funds to Wuhan Institute of Virology. This temporary action is authorized by 45 C.F.R. § 75.371(d) ("Initiate suspension or debarment proceedings as authorized under 2 C.F.R. part 180"). The incorporated OMB provision provides that the funding agency may, through suspension, immediately and temporarily exclude from Federal programs persons who are not presently responsible where "immediate action is necessary to protect the public interest." 2 C.F.R. § 180.700(c). It is in the public interest that NIH ensure that a sub-recipient has taken all appropriate precautions to prevent the release of pathogens that it is studying. This suspension of the sub-recipient does not affect the remainder of your grant assuming that no grant funds are provided to WIV following receipt of this email during the period of suspension.

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*April 19<sup>th</sup>: Following a brief response from Schrag acknowledging receipt of the email, Lauer replies to Schrag and Olival:*

Many thanks Naomi - it would be helpful for us to know about *all* China-based participants in this work since the Type 1 grant started in 2014 - who they were and how much money they received. The sooner you can get us that information, the better.

Best, Mike

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*April 21st: Peter Daszak, president of EcoHealth Alliance, responds by email to Lauer:*

"I can categorically state that no funds from 2R01 AI110964-06 have been sent to Wuhan Institute of Virology, nor has any contract been signed. Furthermore we will comply with NIAID's requirements, of course."

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Cont.

*April 21<sup>st</sup>: Lauer responds to Daszak:*

Many thanks Peter for your response. We note that:

No monies have gone to Wuhan Institute of Virology on the Type 2 award and no contract has been signed.

You agree you will not provide any funds to Wuhan Institute of Virology until and unless directed otherwise by NIH.

All foreign sites for the Type 1 and Type 2 awards have been documented in the progress reports submitted to NIH.

We appreciate your working with us.

Best, Mike

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*April 24th email from Lauer to Daszak:*

I am writing to notify you that the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), an Institute with the National Institutes of Health (NIH), under the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has elected to terminate the project *Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence*, funded under grant R01 AI110964, for convenience. This grant project was issued under the authorization of Sections 201 and 405 of the Public Health Service Act as amended (42 USC 241 and 284). This grant was funded as a discretionary grant as outlined in the NIH Grants Policy Statement which states that the decision not to award a grant, or to award a grant at a particular funding level, is at the discretion of the agency, in accordance with NIH's dual review system.

At this time, NIH does not believe that the current project outcomes align with the program goals and agency priorities. NIAID has determined there are no animal and human ethical considerations, as this project is not a clinical trial, but rather an observational study.