

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 22, 2014

The Honorable Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D.
Director, National Institutes of Health
Building 1, Room 126
1 Center Drive
Bethesda, Maryland 20814

Dear Dr. Collins:

We are writing to express our concern about public reports of what has been described as an ongoing taxpayer-funded project involving psychological experiments on monkeys being conducted at an NIH laboratory in Poolesville, Maryland. Our constituents have been contacting us in response to various media accounts of these activities via CBS News, NPR, The Hill and other outlets.

From what we understand, these experiments are intended to cause monkeys to suffer from mental illness by breeding them to carry certain genes, removing them from their mothers at birth and subjecting them to distressful and sometimes painful procedures that measure their anxiety and depression. In some cases, they have reportedly been addicted to alcohol, which worsens their symptoms. This project has apparently been going on since 1983, receives millions of taxpayer dollars each year and is currently approved to continue through 2017.

Prominent experts—including Dr. Jane Goodall, whose groundbreaking work on primate behavior was honored by Congress 2010—have raised questions about the scientific and ethical justification of these particular experiments. To date, NIH's various responses to members of the public and Members of Congress about this subject have not adequately addressed these concerns.

In view of this, we are requesting that your office commission a Bioethics Consultation of these experiments by the NIH's Department of Bioethics and provide us with a Consultation Report by February 27, 2015.

Thank you for the work you do to continue the important mission of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). In tough fiscal times, your agency continues to excel at critical work that improves our nation's health and saves lives. We appreciate

your cooperation in helping us ensure that critical taxpayer dollars are spent on research that is scientifically and ethically justified and appropriately humane to all subjects involved, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD
Member of Congress



DINA TITUS
Member of Congress



ELIOT L. ENGEL
Member of Congress



SAM FARR
Member of Congress