



Peter Daszak &lt;[REDACTED]&gt;

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**Re: PLEASE READ -- Re: Please read and acknowledge receipt -- Actions needed regarding 2R01AI110964-06**

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Peter Daszak <[REDACTED]>  
To: David Morens <[REDACTED]>  
Cc: "Aleksei Chmura" <[REDACTED]>

Sun, Apr 26, 2020 at 3:23 PM

Thank you so much for your help David & Jerry. This is a brutally stressful issue on just about every level: jobs in our organization, freedom to do science in a country I came to voluntarily for that reason, and the real and present danger that we are being targeted by extremists, supported by the President, who is shockingly ignorant and unconcerned about the damage his actions have to people's lives, and our own US National Security.

David - We'll communicate with you via gmail from now on. I understand exactly what you're saying in your email, I agree, and we'll follow this line exactly. I'll be talking with Emily, Erik and Cristina early this week, then will try to set up a call with Michael Lauer hopefully as a conf. call. We haven't responded to NIH's email yet, and will only do so after talking with Program staff and getting back to you both. We are working on a brief outline of a compromise approach, whereby we change the geography of our work to include countries on the border of China, where the same bats live and the same behavioral risks happen (Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam). Even that would be a loss – we have 15,000 samples in freezers in Wuhan and could do the full genomes of 700+ CoVs we've identified if we don't cut this thread.

On the issue of why our grant has been targeted. We read the NIAID Strategic Plan for COVID-19 Research (attached) and noted that [Michael Lauer's justification for terminating our grant "At this time, NIH does not believe that the current project outcomes align with the program goals and agency priorities." Is completely countered by ALL 4 of NIAID's COVID-19 strategy \(page 2 of the attached pdf\):](#)

The *NIAID Strategic Plan for COVID-19 Research* aligns with the priorities set by U.S. Government-wide task forces for the development of medical countermeasures. NIAID actively participates in COVID-19 task forces to identify opportunities, ensure open communication, encourage resource sharing, and avoid duplication of effort. The plan is structured around four strategic research priorities:

- 1. Improve fundamental knowledge of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19**, including studies to characterize the virus and how it is transmitted and understand the natural history, epidemiology, host immunity, disease immunopathogenesis, and the genetic, immunologic, and clinical associations with more severe disease outcomes. This includes accelerating the development of small and large animal models that replicate human disease.
- 2. Support the development of diagnostics and assays**, including point-of-care molecular and antigen-based diagnostics for identifying and isolating COVID-19 cases and serologic assays to better understand disease prevalence in the population. Diagnostics also will be essential for evaluating the effectiveness of candidate countermeasures.
- 3. Characterize and test therapeutics**, including identifying and evaluating repurposed drugs and novel broad-spectrum antivirals, virus-targeted antibody-based therapies (including plasma-derived intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIG) and monoclonal antibodies), and host-directed strategies to combat COVID-19.
- 4. Develop safe and effective vaccines against SARS-CoV-2**, including support of clinical trial testing.

**Each of these points are clearly part of the Specific Aims of our grant (attached to this email).**

Re. media –Journalists are lined up wanting to talk with me about this issue, including already asking if NIH have communicated with me. I will be silent on this issue for now and hope something can happen. Likewise re. our political representatives. I'll contact them only if/when we can't resolve anything this way. I'll also be talking to our pro bono law firm who will start lining up a legal argument against termination of this grant, just in case we can't do anything in a decent way. All the time this goes on, I'm really worried about our EIDRC U01 contract that it in final Just in Time issues right now, so I'm hoping we get an NoA before anything turns ugly.

One last comment – as you talk to your colleagues, please let them know that funds from this grant aren't just shipped over to China. Most of the money stays in the USA and funds work at EHA and UNC critical to identifying future risk of pandemics and vaccine and drug development against coronaviruses. Right now, without this funding, US employees will become unemployed. Of course, that pales into insignificance against the potential loss of life if we consider the health benefits of 1) better prediction of future pandemics; 2) better vaccines & therapeutics that work against these viruses; & 3) continued access to 15 yrs of sample collection, data, and collaborative knowledge from our work with our Chinese colleagues.

Cheers,

Peter

**Peter Daszak**

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Twitter: [@PeterDaszak](https://twitter.com/PeterDaszak)


*EcoHealth Alliance develops science-based solutions to prevent pandemics and promote conservation*

[Quoted text hidden]

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**2 attachments**

 **NIAID-COVID-19-Strategic-Plan-2020.pdf**  
1867K

 **NIAID CoV 2018 R01 renewal text final.docx**  
1925K



Peter Daszak &lt;[REDACTED]&gt;

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**Re: PLEASE READ -- Re: Please read and acknowledge receipt -- Actions needed regarding 2R01AI110964-06**

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David Morens &lt;[REDACTED]&gt;

Sun, Apr 26, 2020 at 4:00 PM

To: Peter Daszak &lt;[REDACTED]&gt;

Cc: [REDACTED] &lt;[REDACTED]&gt;, Aleksei Chmura &lt;[REDACTED]&gt;

Peter, thanks for this. I am glad you got a copy of the Strategic plan which does as you say completely contradict the Lauer letter. [REDACTED]

Even while remaining silent you should be clearly documenting these things for potential future use, in your own defense, and for history.

Tony is now fully aware I think and is I am told involved in some sort of damage control, but again I am not in the loop. He just called a few minutes ago about another corona matter, and did not bring it up. I thought it best not to say anything at this point either.

I have some reason to hope that this situation can be resolved with minimal damage, but then, I am always accused of being an optimist. Stay safe and order a few cases of Negro Modelos....

Sent from my iPhone  
David M Morens  
OD, NIAID, NIH


On Apr 26, 2020, at 15:23, Peter Daszak <[REDACTED]> wrote:

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