

Updated 5/25/2020

## **81 (was 77 on original letter) US Nobel Laureates in Science**

May 21, 2020

Dear Secretary Azar and Director Collins:

The 81 signatories of this letter, American Nobel Laureates in Physiology or Medicine, Chemistry, and Physics, are gravely concerned about the recent cancellation of a grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to Dr. Peter Daszak at the EcoHealth Alliance in New York. We believe that this action sets a dangerous precedent by interfering in the conduct of science and jeopardizes public trust in the process of awarding federal funds for research.

For many years, Dr. Daszak and his colleagues have been conducting highly regarded, NIH-supported research on coronaviruses and other infectious agents, focusing on the transmission of these viruses from animal hosts to human beings. Their work depends on productive collaborations with scientists in other countries, including scientists in Wuhan, China, where the current pandemic caused by a novel coronavirus arose. Now is precisely the time when we need to support this kind of research if we aim to control the pandemic and prevent subsequent ones.

As has now been widely reported, the grant to the EcoHealth Alliance was

abruptly terminated by NIH on April 24, 2020, just a few days after President Trump responded to a question from a reporter who erroneously claimed that the grant awarded millions of dollars to investigators in Wuhan. Despite the misrepresentation of Dr. Daszak's grant, despite the high relevance of the studies to the current pandemic, and despite the very high priority score that his application for renewal had received during peer review, the NIH informed Dr. Daszak and his colleagues that the grant was being terminated because "NIH does not believe that the current project outcomes align with the program goals and agency priorities." Such explanations are preposterous under the circumstances.

We are scientists who have devoted our careers to research, both in medical and related scientific disciplines that bear on the overall health and well-being of society, as well as fundamental scientific research, much of it supported by NIH and other federal agencies. We take pride in our nation's widely admired system for allocating funds based on expert review and public health needs. The abrupt revoking of the award to Dr. Daszak contravenes these basic tenets and deprives the nation and the world of highly regarded science that could help control one of the greatest health crises in modern history and those that may arise in the future.

We ask that you act urgently to conduct and release a thorough review of the actions that led to the decision to terminate the grant, and that, following this review, you take appropriate steps to rectify the injustices that may have been committed in revoking it.

Peter Agre	Chemistry	2003
Sidney Altman	Chemistry	1989
Frances H. Arnold	Chemistry	2018
Paul Berg	Chemistry	1980
Thomas R. Cech	Chemistry	1989
Martin Chalfie	Chemistry	2008
Elias James Corey	Chemistry	1990
Robert F. Curl Jr.	Chemistry	1996
Johann Deisenhofer	Chemistry	1988
Joachim Frank	Chemistry	2017
Walter Gilbert	Chemistry	1980
Dudley R. Herschbach	Chemistry	1986
Roald Hoffmann	Chemistry	1981
Brian K. Kobilka	Chemistry	2012
Roger D. Kornberg	Chemistry	2006
Robert J. Lefkowitz	Chemistry	2012
Michael Levitt	Chemistry	2013

Roderick MacKinnon	Chemistry	2003
William E. Moerner	Chemistry	2014
Mario J. Molina	Chemistry	1995
Richard R. Schrock	Chemistry	2005
George P. Smith	Chemistry	2018
James P. Allison	Medicine	2018
Richard Axel	Medicine	2004
David Baltimore	Medicine	1975
J. Michael Bishop	Medicine	1989
Elizabeth H. Blackburn	Medicine	2009
Michael S. Brown	Medicine	1985
Linda B. Buck	Medicine	2004
William C. Campbell	Medicine	2015
Mario R. Capecchi	Medicine	2007
Andrew Z. Fire	Medicine	2006
Edmond H. Fischer	Medicine	1992
Joseph L. Goldstein	Medicine	1985
Carol W. Greider	Medicine	2009
Roger Guillemin	Medicine	1977
Leland H. Hartwell	Medicine	2001
H. Robert Horvitz	Medicine	2002
Louis J. Ignarro	Medicine	1998

William G. Kaelin Jr.	Medicine	2019
Eric R. Kandel	Medicine	2000
Craig C. Mello	Medicine	2006
Ferid Murad	Medicine	1998
Sir Richard J. Roberts	Medicine	1993
Michael Rosbash	Medicine	2017
James E. Rothman	Medicine	2013
Randy W. Schekman	Medicine	2013
Gregg L. Semenza	Medicine	2019
Phillip A. Sharp	Medicine	1993
Hamilton O. Smith	Medicine	1978
Thomas C. Sudhof	Medicine	2013
Jack W. Szostak	Medicine	2009
Susumu Tonegawa	Medicine	1987
Harold E. Varmus	Medicine	1989
Eric F. Wieschaus	Medicine	1995
Torsten N. Wiesel	Medicine	1981
Michael W. Young	Medicine	2017
Barry Clark Barish	Physics	2017
Steven Chu	Physics	1997
Jerome I. Friedman	Physics	1990
Sheldon Glashow	Physics	1979

David J. Gross	Physics	2004
Wolfgang Ketterle	Physics	2001
Anthony J. Leggett	Physics	2003
John C. Mather	Physics	2006
Douglas D. Osheroff	Physics	1996
James Peebles	Physics	2019
Saul Perlmutter	Physics	2011
William D. Phillips	Physics	1997
H. David Politzer	Physics	2004
Adam G. Riess	Physics	2011
George F. Smoot	Physics	2006
Horst L. Stormer	Physics	1998
Joseph H. Taylor Jr.	Physics	1993
Kip Stephen Thorne	Physics	2017
Daniel C. Tsui	Physics	1998
Steve Weinberg	Physics	1979
Rainer Weiss	Physics	2017
Carl E. Wieman	Physics	2001
Frank Wilczek	Physics	2004
Robert Woodrow Wilson	Physics	1978