

JONI K. ERNST  
IOWA

CHAIRMAN,  
REPUBLICAN POLICY COMMITTEE

WASHINGTON, DC OFFICE  
260 RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510  
PHONE: 202-224-3254  
FAX: 202-224-9369

WWW.ERNST.SENATE.GOV

COMMITTEES  
ARMED SERVICES  
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION  
AND FORESTRY  
SMALL BUSINESS  
AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

# United States Senate

May 29, 2024

The Honorable Sethuraman Panchanathan, Ph.D.  
Director  
National Science Foundation  
2415 Eisenhower Avenue  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Dear Director Panchanathan:

I am writing to confirm the National Science Foundation (NSF) has suspended all taxpayer funding to EcoHealth Alliance (EHA).

On May 15, 2024, following years of investigations by me and my colleagues into EHA's disastrous collaboration on gain-of-function research with the Wuhan Institute of Virology, [the Department of Health and Human Services \(HHS\) suspended all federal funding for EHA and began debarment proceedings](#) to prohibit the noncompliant organization from receiving future funding.

In its referral for debarment, [HHS wrote](#) that "the immediate suspension of EHA is necessary to protect the public interest and due to a cause of so serious or compelling a nature that it affects EHA's present responsibility, including EHA's failure to adequately monitor the virus growth in WIV's experiments; EHA's failure to notify the [National Institutes of Health (NIH)] that the WIV viruses appeared to grow beyond permissible thresholds under the grant's terms and conditions."

Unfortunately, the NSF has continued to fund EHA with taxpayer dollars despite the overwhelming evidence of EHA's waste, abuse and noncompliance. Federal records show that your agency and others [have awarded \\$60 million to EHA just since March 2020](#).

In a May 16, 2024, Congressional hearing, NIH Principal Deputy Director Dr. Lawrence Tabak [confirmed that the current EHA suspension applies to all federal funding](#).

Despite [repeated requests from NIH, EHA never provided laboratory notebooks and files](#) from the taxpayer-funded research conducted on coronaviruses at the Wuhan Institute of Virology, which could hold vital clues to understanding the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic.

All information related to EHA's current experiments not currently in your custody needs to be collected and every precaution should be taken to ensure the pathogens in the group's possession


are documented and prevented from leaking. What happened in Wuhan should never be allowed to happen anywhere else ever again.

Please provide the following information about NSF funding received by EHA:

- **Active projects:** Please list all projects—including grants, contracts, cooperative agreements, sub-awards and other funding vehicles—on which EHA is a primary investigator (PI), Co-PI or otherwise involved and receiving taxpayer dollars.
- **Confirm suspension:** Please confirm that you have suspended all funding to EHA, including grants, contracts, cooperative agreements, sub-awards and other funding vehicles.
- **Data access and retention:** Does NSF have access to all data, including sequencing of bat viruses and other dangerous pathogens EHA collected or created with taxpayer dollars?

Please provide a response by August 1, 2024.

Sincerely,



Joni K. Ernst  
United States Senator