

Committee on Appropriations
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Francis Collins, M.D., Ph.D.
Director
National Institutes of Health
Building 1
9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20892

Dear Dr. Collins:

I am writing to request that the National Institutes of Health (NIH) provide a written summary to Congress that includes a count of all animals, including species of animals not protected by the Animal Welfare Act, that are currently used or intended for use in intramural research. This summary shall include the methodology for obtaining such a count, and a five-year plan for reducing the number of animals used in intramural research in favor of non-animal research alternatives.

The NIH has publicly stated that reducing the number of animals used in biomedical research is an important agency priority. However, currently the NIH is unable to quantify and make public the exact number of animals, including those not covered by the Animal Welfare Act, that are used annually in NIH intramural biomedical research. This lack of an inventory system constitutes a barrier that prevents Congress from determining what progress NIH is making toward its own stated goal of reducing the number of animals used in biomedical research.

Much more has become known about the unsuitability of animal models for studying human disease and many more humane, cost-effective, and scientifically suitable non-animal models are now available. Currently, the NIH spends at least \$15 billion a year on animal testing, even though evidence has shown that the return on investment is often low, and the results inaccurate. In fact, in 2016, the NIH published "The NIH-wide Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2016-2020" which states that "animal models often fail to provide good ways to mimic disease or predict how drugs will work in humans, resulting in much wasted time and money while patients wait for therapies." NIH reports that approximately 30 percent of promising new medications have failed in human clinical studies despite promising pre-clinical studies in animal models.

Not only would research benefit from moving away from animal models more quickly than it has, but non-animal research and testing methods would also spare significant numbers of animals from pain, distress, and death. According to a 2018 Pew Research Center poll, the share of Americans who oppose the use of animals in medical testing has risen to 52 percent.

I believe that it is critical to obtain a comprehensive count of all animals used in NIH research, and for the NIH to propose a plan for reducing the number of animals used for testing over the next five years. Therefore, I request that the NIH provide the following information:

1. The total number of animals used in research for fiscal year 2018:
 - a. by each individual intramural NIH facility;
 - b. identified and grouped by animal species;
2. The number of animals that were euthanized in fiscal year 2018;
3. A detailed methodology for obtaining such a count of animals;
4. The percentage of funds expended by each national research institute on biomedical and behavioral research that involved the use of animals in comparison to funds spent on such research that did not involve the use of animals; and
5. A plan outlining how NIH will achieve a reduction in animal use numbers in NIH-funded research that includes an estimate of percent reduction over the next five fiscal years.

I appreciate your attention to this request, and look forward to hearing from you on the status of NIH's efforts to reduce animal-based testing models.

Sincerely,



LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD
Member of Congress