

EcoHealth Funding Suspension: No Real Oversight



Peter Daszak is the President of EcoHealth Alliance, the organization most closely associated with the potential lab leak at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) that may have started the Covid crisis.

The US House Committee on Oversight and Accountability has recently done a lot of “research” on Daszak and EcoHealth, resulting in a published [report on May 1, 2024](#) with the earth-shattering finding that there exist “serious and systemic weaknesses in the federal government’s—particularly NIH’s—grant making processes.” Furthermore, these very bad weaknesses “not only place United States taxpayer dollars at risk of waste, fraud, and abuse but also risk the national security of the United States.”

This sounds pretty serious: Our taxpayer dollars and our national security are at risk. Some very bad things are happening, apparently. What are those bad things? “Weaknesses in the NIH’s grant making process.” Is that really all the Committee could come up with? If those grant-making weaknesses

are so terrible, what does it recommend we do about them?

Based on its findings, the Committee recommended some very broad, but not very specific, actions:

1. To Congress: “Reign in [*they used “reign” instead of “rein” –a noteworthy Freudian slip*] the unelected bureaucracy, especially within government funded public health.
2. To the Administration: Recognize EcoHealth and its President, Dr. Daszak, as bad actors...and ensure neither EcoHealth nor Dr. Daszak are awarded another cent, especially for dangerous and poorly monitored research.

The Administration must have taken heed, because a mere two weeks later, on May 15, 2024, the Subcommittee made this triumphant [announcement](#):

HHS has begun efforts to cut off all U.S. funding to this corrupt organization. EcoHealth facilitated gain-of-function research in Wuhan, China without proper oversight, willingly violated multiple requirements of its multimillion-dollar National Institutes of Health grant, and apparently made false statements to the NIH. These actions are wholly abhorrent, indefensible, and must be addressed with swift action.

Note the bizarre disconnect between the description of “this corrupt organization” and its “abhorrent, indefensible” actions, and the accusations leading to such extreme claims, which include conducting research without proper oversight (nobody ever does that!), violating requirements of its NIH grant (a bureaucratic infraction) and “apparently” making false statements to the NIH (not even for sure).

In any event, “swift action” must be taken. What exactly is that action?

“HHS has begun efforts to cut off all U.S. funding” to EcoHealth. “Begun efforts”—sounds like concrete results are imminent. Not just imminent but consequential. Like “future debarment” and “funding suspension.” (sarcasm intended)

But wait. Didn't they already do that? Yes, they did.

2020 Funding Suspension

Quick reminder: On April 24, 2020, the NIH canceled funding for Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) gain-of-function research led by EcoHealth Alliance, because the Trump Administration suspected (or knew) such research may have had something to do with the Covid pandemic.

The scientific world was outraged. Seventy-seven US Nobel Laureates and 31 scientific societies wrote to NIH leadership requesting review of the decision. Gain-of-function research must continue! In August 2020 the NIH reversed the cancellation and started funding EcoHealth and WIV again. [[ref](#)]

The Nobel Laureates and scientific societies won the day: Humanity-saving research to develop deadly pathogens not found in nature could continue unhindered by radical NIH funding cuts.

And yet: NIH grants are a mere fraction of EcoHealth Alliance's overall government funding.

So Which Funds Are Being “Suspended” This Time Around?

Actually, none.

The very threatening “[notice of suspension and proposed debarment](#)” sent to EcoHealth Alliance by HHS on May 15, 2024, reassures the organization (whose behavior has been abhorrent and indefensible) that “suspension and debarment actions are

not punitive.”

We’re not trying to punish you for your bad behavior, the letter says. We just want to make sure there are non-punitive “consequences” for that behavior. For example:

*Offers will not be solicited from, contracts will not be awarded to, existing contracts will not be renewed or otherwise extended for, and subcontracts requiring United States Federal Government approval will not be approved for EHA [EcoHealth Alliance] by any agency in the executive branch of the United States Federal Government, **unless the head of the agency taking the contracting action determines that there is a compelling reason for such action.***

[BOLDFACE ADDED]

In other words, if the head of the “agency taking the contracting action” determines there is “a compelling reason” to contract with Ecohealth, then this whole suspension and debarment thing is moot. So not punitive. And, pretty much, no consequences. And, also, no funds “suspended.”

Nevertheless, given the horrendous behavior of EcoHealth, as detailed in the announcement of the non-punitive consequences—how could any government agencies possibly have compelling reasons to engage in “contracting action” with “this corrupt organization?”

EcoHealth is Mostly Funded by the State Department and Pentagon

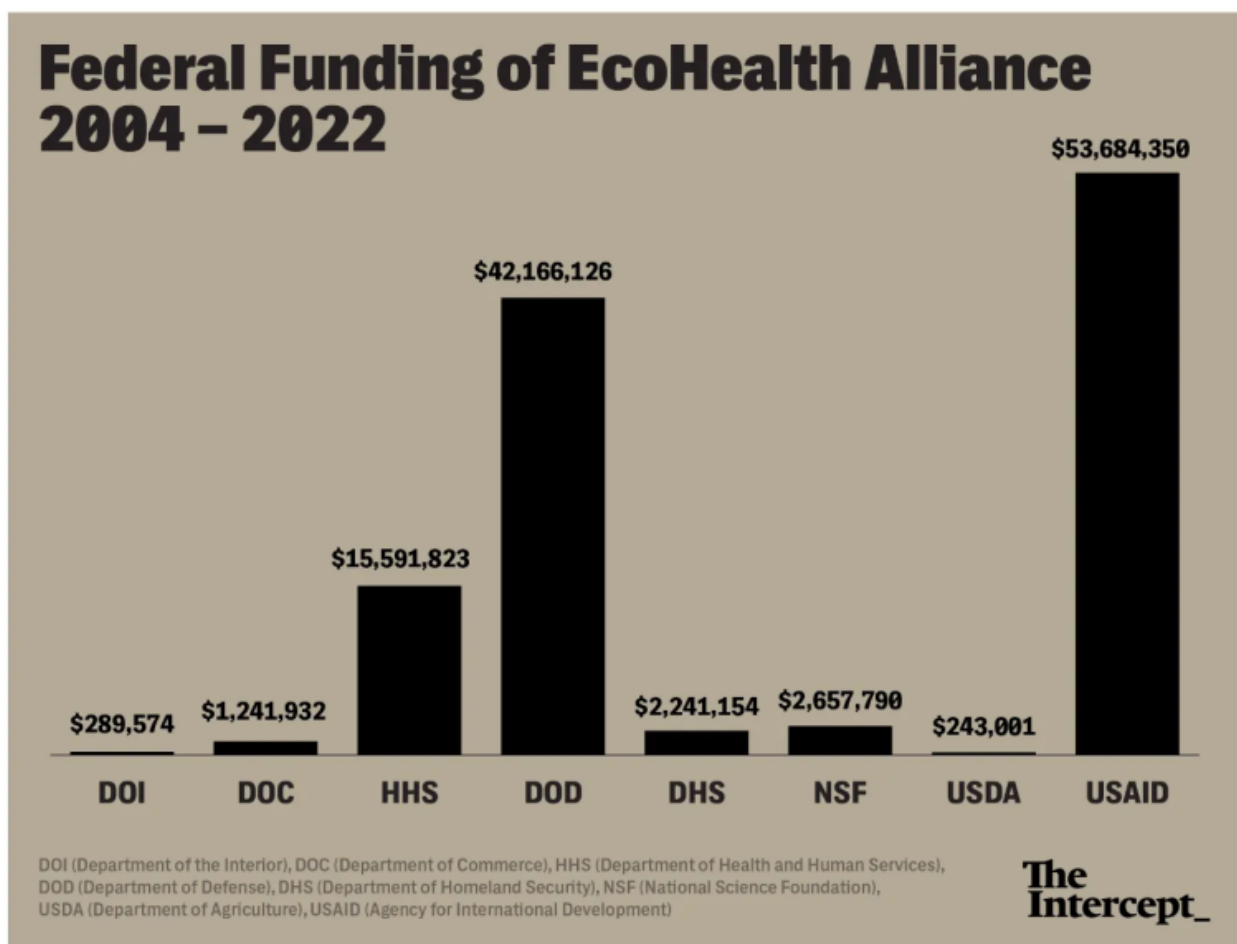
In an extensive expose on Peter Daszak and EcoHealth Alliance, [the Intercept](#) reported in December 2021:

EcoHealth Alliance’s funding from the U.S. government, which Daszak has said makes up some 80 percent of its budget, has also grown in recent years. Since 2002, according to

an Intercept analysis of public records, the organization has received more than \$118 million in grants and contracts from federal agencies, \$42 million of which comes from the Department of Defense. Much of that money has been awarded through programs focused not on health or ecology, however, but on the prevention of biowarfare, bioterrorism, and other misuses of pathogens.

[BOLDFACE ADDED]

Here's what nearly two decades of government funding for EcoHealth Alliance looks like (graph from [Intercept article](#)):



Total funding received by EcoHealth Alliance through grants and contracts from U.S. federal agencies since 2002. The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases is a division of the Department of Health and Human Services and its grants are represented under HHS. Graphic: Soohee Cho/The Intercept

As RFK Jr. wrote, based on this information, in [The Wuhan Cover-Up](#):

By far, Daszak's largest funding pool was the CIA surrogate, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Through USAID, the CIA funneled nearly \$65 million in PREDICT funding to EcoHealth between 2009 and 2020.

(p. 228, Kindle Edition)

Yet another article examining Daszak's military/biodefense ties appeared in [Independent Scientist News](#) in December 2020, reporting that most of EcoHealth Alliance's Pentagon funding "was from the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), which is a branch of the DOD which states it is tasked to "counter and deter weapons of mass destruction and improvised threat networks."

Furthermore,

The military links of the EcoHealth Alliance are not limited to money and mindset. One noteworthy 'policy advisor' to the EcoHealth Alliance is David Franz. Franz is former commander of Fort Detrick, which is the principal US government biowarfare/biodefense facility.

The ISN article also provides a handy [spreadsheet detailing EcoHealth funding](#).

So What is the Oversight Committee Overlooking—and Why?

There is no mention of DoD, DTRA, or USAID funding in the Committee's announcement or in the utterly performative, 100% toothless notice of suspension and debarment they sent to Peter Daszak. Does the US House Committee on Oversight and Accountability not know who the major government funders of EcoHealth Alliance are?

If any agency can bypass the suspension and debarment by

“determining that there is compelling reason” to fund EcoHealth, what is the point of those non-punitive consequences?

Why this charade of accountability when, in fact, the supposed overseers are willfully ignoring [what's actually going on](#)?

Clearly, the Committee is not interested in investigating Daszak's role in the biodefense industry that was responsible not just for the gain-of-function research that may have created SARS-CoV-2, but for the entire Covid pandemic response—which was most definitely [not about public health](#) and was, in fact, [all about creating and administering the medical countermeasures](#) which were the monomaniacal focus of the biodefense responders.

What to Ask Peter Daszak if We Had Actual Oversight

If the Committee were serious about investigating Peter Daszak and EcoHealth Alliance, here are some questions they would ask:

Non-Public Health Funding Sources and Projects

- Most of the government funding for EcoHealth Alliance comes not from public health agencies but from USAID (State Department/CIA) and the Pentagon. What projects are these non-public health agencies funding? Are these projects related to biodefense/biowarfare research?
- Is the USAID and Pentagon-funded virus research conducted by EcoHealth and/or its partners intended primarily to prepare for naturally occurring pandemics or for potential biowarfare/bioterrorism attacks?
- Do the USAID and Pentagon-funded projects conducted by EcoHealth and/or its partners involve creating pandemic potential pathogens as part of biodefense/biowarfare

research?

- Do you know or suspect that SARS-CoV-2 was an engineered virus created as part of a USAID and Pentagon-funded biowarfare/biodefense project?
- Do the USAID and Pentagon-funded projects conducted by EcoHealth and/or its partners involve work on medical countermeasures against potential biowarfare/bioterrorism agents?

Disease X Op-Ed

- On February 27, 2020, before the Covid pandemic had been declared and before anyone in the US had died of Covid-19, you wrote an [op-ed for the New York Times](#) stating that the novel coronavirus was “Disease X.” You explained that the term “Disease X” was coined by you and a bunch of experts at the World Health Organization in 2018. In your report from 2018, it says:

Disease X represents the awareness that a serious international epidemic could be caused by a pathogen currently not recognized to cause human disease. Disease X may also be a known pathogen that has changed its epidemiological characteristics, for example by increasing its transmissibility or severity.

Why were you so sure, so early on, even before we knew there was a pandemic, that this was “Disease X?” What was it about SARS-CoV-2 (which, after all, was named as a direct successor of the original SARS, to which it was said to be very similar) that made it seem so uniquely dangerous to you? Why did you feel you had to warn the whole world about it on the pages of the *NYT*?

- Did you think SARS-CoV-2 was a known pathogen that had

“changed its epidemiological characteristics” by “increasing its transmissibility or severity”? If yes, what made you think that?

- Did you think SARS-CoV-2 was a potential bioweapon that had been developed using funds from USAID and DOD by EcoHealth Alliance and/or its research partners in China or elsewhere?
- The *New York Times* has subsequently erased your “Disease X” op-ed from their online 2/27/2020 issue. You can only find it through the direct link. Why do you think they have made it all but impossible for anyone who doesn’t already know about the article to find it? Do you regret having written it?

Linking Disease X to Genetic Vaccine Platforms

- In the *NYT* op-ed, you provided a link from the term “Disease X” to a [2018 CNN article](#) in which Dr. Anthony Fauci says that, in order to combat such dangerous as-yet-nonexistent pathogens, “the WHO recognizes that it must “nimply move” and that this involves creating “platform technologies.”

Fauci goes on to say that “scientists develop customizable recipes for creating vaccines. Then, when an outbreak happens, they can sequence the unique genetics of the virus causing the disease, and plug the correct sequence into the already-developed platform to create a new vaccine.”

That sounds an awful lot like the mRNA platform used for the Covid countermeasures that came to be known as the “mRNA vaccines.”

Why did you link to that particular article from your op-ed about disease X? Were you suggesting that the solution to the pandemic that you appeared to be predicting would be a genetic

platform in which the “correct sequence” could be plugged to create vaccines?

- Were you already aware of the Covid mRNA vaccines being developed at the time of your op-ed (February 27, 2020) by Moderna and BioNTech/Pfizer, long before the official launch of Operation Warp Speed (May 2020)?
- Is it true that the Pentagon considered the mRNA platforms to be the preferred countermeasures against Covid-19, and that these were always intended to reach full funding and development, starting all the way back in January 2020?
- Was the USAID and Pentagon-funded research conducted EcoHealth and/or its partners related to the development of such mRNA vaccines? If so, how?

The Need for a Crisis to Justify Funding and Development of Genetic Vaccine Platforms

- In 2016, you participated in an Institute of Medicine working group on [Rapid Medical Countermeasure Response to Infectious Diseases](#). The report quotes you as saying:

Until an infectious disease crisis is very real, present, and at an emergency threshold, it is often largely ignored. To sustain the funding base beyond the crisis, we need to increase public understanding of the need for MCMs such as a pan-influenza or pan-coronavirus vaccine. A key driver is the media, and the economics follow the hype. We need to use that hype to our advantage to get to the real issues. Investors will respond if they see profit at the end of the process.

It sounds like you’re saying we need the media to hype up a crisis so that investors will want to fund the type of pan-coronavirus vaccine that is exactly the genetic platform you

highlighted in your op-ed, and also exactly the platform that emerged into public awareness shortly after your op-ed, and became known as the Covid mRNA vaccines.

Can you explain this uncanny overlap between your description of what was needed to get such platforms developed in 2016 and what actually happened in 2020?

- Did the USAID and Pentagon-funded research on coronaviruses conducted by EcoHealth Alliance and/or its partners support the development of such platforms? If so, how?
- Were you aware of a plan to use the emergence of SARS-CoV-2 as a trigger for the media hype, public-private funding, and massive mRNA vaccine development and deployment in early 2020 – exactly as you described them in 2016?
- If you were aware of such a plan, who was involved in it, and what was your role?

Conclusion

The US House Committee on Oversight and Accountability has made a big show of publicly chastising Peter Daszak and EcoHealth Alliance for terrible behavior in the way they managed their funding from the NIH. The Committee has also highlighted very bad weaknesses in the grant-making process of the NIH that need to be corrected.

As a result of the Committee's recommendations, the HHS (parent agency of NIH) has issued a non-punitive notice to Peter Daszak, stating that EcoHealth cannot receive another penny of government funding...unless a government agency decides there is a compelling reason to provide such funding.

Clearly, all of the Committee's investigations, reports, recommendations, and notices in this matter are purely

performative, considering 1) they actually impose no consequences, and 2) they ignore the fact that most of Daszak and EcoHealth's funding come from military and State Department sources for work on biodefense/biowarfare-related projects.

Is the Committee's work just another example of bureaucratic incompetence and "waste, fraud and abuse" of our precious taxpayer dollars?

Or is it an intentional diversion, to distract us from the work the US government was/is actually funding at bioweapons labs like the one in Wuhan, engineering pandemic potential pathogens and then deploying global public-private partnerships to develop medical countermeasures against those pathogens—all of which came together to create the catastrophe known as the Covid pandemic?

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