

# [***'Your Responses Here Are Unsatisfactory': Mastermind Of Wuhan Lab Funding Takes Beating On Capitol Hill***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BXT-G7K1-DXXD-72JF-00000-00&context=1516831)

The Daily Caller

May 1, 2024 Wednesday 10:32 PM EST

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**Section:** ***POLITICS***

**Length:** 1752 words

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**Body**

[*Link to Image*](https://cdn01.dailycaller.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Daszak-e1714596290964.png)

The House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic grilled EcoHealth Alliance's President Peter Daszak on Wednesday morning, accusing him of misleading the federal government to obtain grants that funded virus research at the Wuhan Institute of Virology.  The hearing centered on Daszak and EcoHealth Alliance's work with China's Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV), his undisclosed ties to the WIV and whether or not his nonprofit engaged in gain of function research, among other things. Daszak submitted a 2018 proposal to receive a DARPA grant for a project titled [*DEFUSE*](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/21066966-defuse-proposal), in which he collaborated with UNC's Dr. Ralph Baric and Dr. Zhengli Shi from the WIV. In written remarks to Baric and Shi, Daszak said “I'm trying to downplay the non-U.S. focus of this proposal so that DARPA doesn't see this as a negative,” the subcommittee's chair Republican Ohio Rep. Brad Wenstrup revealed. Specifically, Westrup questioned Daszak about the discrepancy in biosafety standards between the U.S. and China. In their proposal, EcoHealth Alliance highlighted the fact that the U.S. studies recombinant coronaviruses under the biosafety level three (BSL-3) [*standards*](https://www.cdc.gov/training/quicklearns/biosafety/) while in China they use the less stringent biosafety level two (BSL-2) standards.

Wenstrup asks about the DEFUSE proposal, which some scientists liken to a blueprint for generating a virus like SARS-CoV-2 in the lab.

He is asked about USRTK FOIAs showing that he would secretly export key experiments to Wuhan and downplay Chinese involvement to the U.S.... [*pic.twitter.com/WISdSuMnMu*](https://t.co/WISdSuMnMu) - Emily Kopp (@emilyakopp) [*May 1, 2024*](https://twitter.com/emilyakopp/status/1785680172894556169?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

“The BSL-2 nature of work on SARSr-CoVs makes our system highly cost-effective relative to other bat-virus systems,” the proposal claimed. Daszak, in comments on an early draft of the proposal written to Shi and Baric, noted the discrepancies in biosafety levels, writing “China might be growing these under BSL-2. U.S. researchers will likely freak out.” Daszak was also grilled about his failure to disclose a conflict of interest when he authored an [*impactful 2020 statement*](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)30418-9/fulltext) in The Lancet labeling the lab leak theory as a “conspiracy theory.” [***(RELATED: Architect Of Cash Transfers To Wuhan Lab Silent When Pushed On COVID-19 Record)***](https://dailycaller.com/2023/11/14/daszak-cash-transfers-wuhan-lab-silent-pushed-lab-leak-theory-covid-19/) “Whether the virus came from a lab or nature is still unknown, two federal agencies still assess, with low and moderate confidence, that the virus originated in a lab, and four government agencies still assessed with low confidence that the virus emerged from nature,” subcommittee ranking member and Democratic California Rep. Raul Ruiz stated. “But The Lancet statement that you authored summarily attempted to close that question. Understanding that your funding and ability to partner with the Wuhan Institute of Virology relied on relaxed scrutiny of research-related origin theories, let me ask you, why did you decide not to declare a competing interest?” Ruiz asked. Daszak claimed the statement was only talking about specific conspiracy theories related to HIV inserts and snake DNA within the virus, though the [*statement*](https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S0140-6736%2820%2930418-9) makes no mention of either snakes or HIV.

Even Democratic counsel is joining in the fun.

He asks Daszak about The Lancet letter, which reads “we stand together to condemn conspiracy theories that COVID does not have a natural origin.” Daszak says he only meant to combat very “out there” theories around HIV inserts and... - Emily Kopp (@emilyakopp) [*May 1, 2024*](https://twitter.com/emilyakopp/status/1785709607291134179?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

He also claimed that he did declare a competing interest, a contention Ruiz countered by saying “your updated disclosures do not explicitly acknowledge that you had partnered with the Wuhan Institute of Virology. That is a glaring omission...” the congressman stated.

Wow, how far we've come!

Democrat Ranking Member Ruiz is grilling Daszak about why he didn't disclose his conflict of interest when he organized an editorial in The Lancet calling the lab leak theory a conspiracy theory. The revelation by USRTK's Sainath Suryanarayanan⁩ that... - Emily Kopp (@emilyakopp) [*May 1, 2024*](https://twitter.com/emilyakopp/status/1785682987880771875?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Daszak also claimed he was unaware of any affiliation between the WIV and China's military, the People's Liberation Army (PLO). On military activity at WIV, he said “I've never seen any. I've never seen any reliable reporting of any.” He made the statement even though the DNI, whom Daszak admitted to being interviewed by, thoroughly documented the connections between WIV and PLO in a [*declassified report*](https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/Report-on-Potential-Links-Between-the-Wuhan-Institute-of-Virology-and-the-Origins-of-COVID-19-20230623.pdf).

Daszak appears to be flouting the fact that this is sworn testimony.

He denies knowing about PLA involvement at the Wuhan Institute of Virology. This involvement is in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence's declassified report. - Emily Kopp (@emilyakopp) [*May 1, 2024*](https://twitter.com/emilyakopp/status/1785683707497488695?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Daszak emphatically denied accusations that EcoHealth Alliance engaged in gain-of-function research. “EcoHealth Alliance never has, and did not do gain of function research, by definition,” he claimed. He challenged multiple members of the subcommittee's definition of gain of function research. “Dr. Daszak, gain of function is broadly understood as a type of research that modifies a biological agent so that it confers new and enhanced activity to that agent,” Republican New York Rep. Nicole Malliotakis stated. “That is not the definition of gain of function,” Daszak said, though he also claimed, “I don't have a personal definition.” Daszak maintained EcoHealth Alliance's research did not fall under the category of gain of function. He made the distinction between viruses that infect human beings and viruses that infect human cells while sparring with staff director Mitch Benzine.

Daszak denies that he funded gain-of-function research because the bat coronaviruses had not been shown to infect humans. Democratic counsel points out they were shown to infect human cells.

Daszak is making a distinction that it's not gain-of-function because it hasn't spilled... - Emily Kopp (@emilyakopp) [*May 1, 2024*](https://twitter.com/emilyakopp/status/1785712169897640122?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

“Hiding behind different definitions of gain of function to deny your role in conducting dangerous gain of [function] research at the WIV will not prevent us from conducting oversight and holding people accountable. Semantics doesn't change the risks involved,” Wenstrup said in his conclusion. Multiple members of the subcommittee castigated Daszak for failure to timely report annual progress reports which were requirements of EcoHealth Alliances NIH grant. Specifically, his fifth-annual report was due in September 2019 and he did not submit the report until 2021. Daszak claimed he was locked out of the NIH system, which prevented him from reporting in time. “However, NIH performed an electronic forensic investigation of its report submission system and found no evidence of a lockout. They also found no evidence to corroborate your claims,” Democratic North Carolina Rep. Deborah Ross told Daszak. He did contend there were efforts to submit which were not yet on the record with the subcommittee. He claimed during a cross-examination with Benzine he wasn't sure which employee of EcoHealth Alliance made the call but that “we've looked at the records, we can't find it.” He then said there were repeated efforts, both phone calls and e-mails, to a grant manager officer which were never returned.

Rep. Ross asks Daszak about a delayed NIAID progress report that was supposed to detail EcoHealth's research in the time period directly before the pandemic.

It was only submitted to NIAID (after [*@fastlerner*](https://twitter.com/fastlerner?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) FOIA'd) in August 2021, two years late. Obviously Daszak would have... - Emily Kopp (@emilyakopp) [*May 1, 2024*](https://twitter.com/emilyakopp/status/1785689080493191465?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

“You have provided us with no documented evidence of EcoHealth's outreach to NAIAD about the lockout and then you stated it didn't exist because you only contacted by phone. That assertion is pretty difficult to square with your staff's previous patterns of communication over the previous four years,” Ross continued. Near the end of the hearing, Republican Georgia Rep. Richard McCormick accused a Fauci underling, Dr. David Morens, of trying to skirt FOIA subjection by communicating with Daszak with his personal G-Mail account. “Do you find it problematic that a senior advisor of Dr. Fauci, the head of NAIAD, was communicating with you on G-Mail rather than in an official capacity about an official grant?” McCormick asked. [*Daszak*](https://dailycaller.com/2021/04/16/house-committee-ecohealth-alliance-bat-coronaviruses-lab-wuhan-institute-of-virology/) claimed he was only speaking to him about personal matters, despite admitting they spoke about an effort to restore a terminated NIH grant.

Daszak dismissed concerns about his conversations with Fauci aide David Morens on Gmail to avoid FOIA and public accountability.

He states these conversations were about “personal matters.” How is a public grant a “personal matter?” Rep. McCormick asked. - Emily Kopp (@emilyakopp) [*May 1, 2024*](https://twitter.com/emilyakopp/status/1785700342518227409?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Following a Wednesday [*subcommittee report*](https://oversight.house.gov/release/new-select-subcommittee-report-recommends-ecohealth-alliance-president-debarred-and-criminally-investigated-exposes-failures-in-nih-grant-procedures/) which recommended Daszak be debarred and criminally investigated, multiple members of the subcommittee expressed a desire to stop federal funding for EcoHealth Alliance. [***(RELATED: Mastermind Of Taxpayer Funding To Wuhan Lab Accused Of Lying To Congress By Lawmakers)***](https://dailycaller.com/2024/04/04/peter-daszak-testimony-congress-select-subcommittee-coronavirus-lie-perjury/) “I feel that you at EcoHealth are not responsible stewards of the taxpayer dollars ... I believe that you should never receive taxpayer dollars again,” Republican North Carolina Rep. John Joyce told Daszak. Republican Virginia Rep. Morgan Griffith calls for NAIAD, which was headed by [*Dr. Anthony Fauci*](https://dailycaller.com/2024/04/24/dr-fauci-testify-publicly-first-time-retiring-covid-coronavirus-congress-peter-daszak-ecohealth-alliance/) [*until 2022*](https://www.niaid.nih.gov/grants-contracts/dr-anthony-fauci-leave-niaid-end-december#:~:text=At%20the%20end%20of%20this,positions%2C%20I%20am%20not%20retiring.), to lose federal funding, advocating for “taking final approval authority for these experiments away from NAIAD and other funding in favor of an independent entity.” “With so many lives lost and disrupted by what I believe was a research-related accident, we need transparent, effective oversight and tight regulation of gain-of-function research of concern. We certainly do not have that now,” Griffith stated.

The committee recommends that EcoHealth should be debarred from receiving any further federal funding.

Rep. Griffith says that the committee investigation should also culminate in new biosafety regulations, in particular to stop letting NIAID self-regulate when it comes to... - Emily Kopp (@emilyakopp) [*May 1, 2024*](https://twitter.com/emilyakopp/status/1785675806204674315?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

EcoHealth Alliance is a 501c3 nonprofit based in New York “with a mission to conduct research on emerging disease threats to the U.S., to identify the underlying causes of pandemics and develop solutions to prevent them and to benefit conservation,” according to Daszak. The House passed an [*amendment*](https://dailycaller.com/2021/09/23/congress-defund-ecohealth-alliance-wuhan-institute-virology-guy-reschenthaler/) to stop funding EcoHealth Alliance with federal money in 2021. NIH then [*terminated*](https://www.ecohealthalliance.org/2020/04/regarding-nih-termination-of-coronavirus-research-funding) a grant to the nonprofit in 2022, but later [*restored*](https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-023-01566-0) it in 2023.

**Graphic**

EcoHealth Alliance President Peter Daszak testifies to the House Oversight Committees Select Subcommittee on Coronavirus Origins. 5/1/24. Screenshot/YouTube/GOP Oversight

**Load-Date:** May 1, 2024

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