

CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS, WASHINGTON
CHAIR

FRANK PALLONE, JR., NEW JERSEY
RANKING MEMBER

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

Majority (202) 225-3641

Minority (202) 225-2927

May 30, 2023

The Honorable Melanie Anne Egorin, Ph.D.
Assistant Secretary for Legislation
Department of Health and Human Services
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dr. Egorin,

We are in receipt of your April 26, 2023, letter in response to our March 30, 2023, letter regarding a specific research project on mpox discussed in a September 2022 *Science* article by Dr. Bernard Moss of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), a component of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

You informed us that the study discussed by Dr. Moss “has not been formally proposed, and NIAID has no plans to move forward with this research.” This is a stunning admission. Dr. Moss has been with the NIH since 1966, is one of the leading authorities on pox viruses, and is one of the NIH’s most accomplished researchers. He has received numerous awards and prizes. He was elected to the National Academy of Sciences and American Academy of Microbiology, is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and serves as president of the American Society for Virology. Dr. Moss is currently an editor of *Virology* and a member of several editorial boards. Dr. Moss’s comments to *Science* indicate to us that he gave the study in question much thought and effort and that he believed in going forward with the mpox study. The admission that he did not formally propose this research and the NIAID has no plans to pursue it seems extraordinary. It seems unlikely that Dr. Moss changed his mind. On the other hand, it is hard to believe the NIAID has apparently overruled one of its most highly respected scientists. These circumstances demand a detailed explanation about what happened with this research project publicized by Dr. Moss. Your letter provides only a conclusion but no explanation for how this conclusion was reached. It is still unclear whether this research may have been conducted, or even how NIAID knows that this research was not conducted.

Further, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has not provided any of the documents requested in the March 30, 2023, letter and did not respond directly to most of the

written questions. Majority committee staff has followed up with HHS about providing documents. So far, HHS has been either unable or unwilling to provide documents.

For these reasons, HHS's response does not adequately address our oversight concerns, and we still lack critical information because HHS has not been forthcoming with requested documents and written responses. To assist our inquiry, we request a videotaped, transcribed in-person interview with Dr. Bernard Moss by no later than June 30, 2023. Please indicate within 48 hours of receipt of this letter whether HHS will voluntarily cooperate with this request.

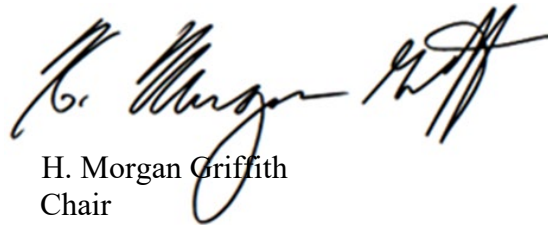
Sincerely,



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Chair
Energy and Commerce Committee



Brett Guthrie
Chair
Subcommittee on Health



H. Morgan Griffith
Chair
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

cc: Frank Pallone Jr., Ranking Member, Energy and Commerce Committee
Anna Eshoo, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Health
Kathy Castor, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations