



PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

March 24, 2020

Rafael Reif, Ph.D.
Office of the President
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Room 3-208
Cambridge, MA 02139-4307

Via e-mail: president@mit.edu

Dear President Reif,

Thank you in advance for your time. I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and our more than 6.5 million members and supporters worldwide regarding an urgent matter. In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) is urging its research staff who use rodents to euthanize "retired breeders and animals no longer needed for studies,"¹ which will lead to the killing of countless animals.

Given the COVID-19 pandemic that is influencing the shut-down of animal experiments around the world,² we urge MIT to immediately: 1) prohibit approval of new animal protocols and experiments; 2) prohibit breeding and acquisition of new animals for laboratories; 3) finalize and end ongoing animal experiments; and, 4) prove that all of these animals and experiments are concretely advancing human health, and if they're not then switch to superior human-relevant, animal-free research methods.³

COVID-19: Ending Animal Experiments Protects Animals, Staff, and Patients

MIT urged researchers who use rodents to euthanize "animals no longer needed for studies."⁴ This begs the question why taxpayer dollars are being used on experiments that can easily be ended or that involve animals who, apparently, are considered to be extraneous to the testing in the first place. Equally troubling is that the experiments themselves

¹ <https://ras.mit.edu/about-research-administration-services/news-and-events/research-continuity-guidance-laboratories-and>

² <https://www.statnews.com/2020/03/14/coronavirus-pandemic-forces-research-labs-shut-down/>

³ https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/The-Research-Modernization-Deal-Report-US_FINAL_2020_300.pdf

⁴ <https://ras.mit.edu/about-research-administration-services/news-and-events/research-continuity-guidance-laboratories-and>

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are not critical to advancing human health, since more than 90 percent of highly promising basic science discoveries (most of which involve animal experiments) do not enter routine clinical use in humans.⁵

We call on MIT to publicly release the following information:

- 1) An itemization of all experimental protocols that will continue as part of MIT's COVID-19 response plan (such that they may be categorized as needed, critical, essential, necessary, and/or other similar terminology);
- 2) An itemization of all experimental protocols that will not continue as part of MIT's COVID-19 response plan (such that they may be categorized as no longer needed, extraneous, non-critical, non-essential, ramped down, disposable, unnecessary and/or other similar terminology);
- 3) The number and species of animals who are in experimental protocols covered by item number 1 above (e.g., in a needed and/or other similar terminology category), and the number and species of animals who are in experimental protocols covered by item number 2 above (e.g., in a no longer needed and/or other similar terminology category); and,
- 4) The endpoint/disposition of animals used in experimental protocols covered by item number 2 above (e.g., in a no longer needed and/or similar terminology category), and notice of if, when, and how many of these animals have been and/or will be euthanized, culled, killed, destroyed, disposed or reduced in cage census.

You can contact me directly by e-mail at ShalinG@peta.org or by telephone at 757-962-8325. We look forward to your swift reply to this quickly developing and urgent matter. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,



Shalin G. Gala
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⁵ <https://www.bmj.com/content/348/bmj.g3387.long>