

PEOPLE FOR  
THE ETHICAL  
TREATMENT  
OF ANIMALS

November 30, 2020

Jill Hunsaker Ryan, MPH  
Executive Director  
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment  
4300 Cherry Creek Drive South  
Denver, CO 80246

Via e-mail: [Jill.Ryan@state.co.us](mailto:Jill.Ryan@state.co.us)

Dear Director Ryan,

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 related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which in Colorado has resulted in more than 230,000 cases and more than 3,000 deaths.<sup>1</sup> **Given the uncertainty of the reopening of Colorado and the continued high infection rates throughout the country, we urge you to intervene for the sake of public health and permanently end experiments on animals at laboratories and universities in your state, starting with those already deemed by institutions themselves to be non-essential during the initial shutdown because of COVID-19.**

In response to the shutdown, experimenters at laboratories throughout Colorado and the U.S. deemed experiments and the animals used in them to be “extraneous” or “non-essential,” among other similar terms—and therefore euthanized thousands of these animals assigned to laboratory experiments. Below are the schools in Colorado that issued guidance indicating the culling of animals in response to COVID-19:

- University of Colorado Boulder: The university instructed its experimenters to “[i]dentify any research experiments or animal breeding that can be potentially ramped down,

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<sup>1</sup>Covid in the U.S.: Latest map and case count. *New York Times*. [accessed 2020 Nov. 30]. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/coronavirus-us-cases.html>.

**Washington**

1536 16th St. N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036  
202-483-PETA

**Los Angeles**

2154 W. Sunset Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90026  
323-644-PETA

**Norfolk**

501 Front St.  
Norfolk, VA 23510  
757-622-PETA

Info@peta.org  
PETA.org

**Affiliates:**

- PETA Asia
- PETA India
- PETA France
- PETA Australia
- PETA Germany
- PETA Netherlands
- PETA Foundation (U.K.)

- curtailed or delayed”<sup>2</sup> and told them that the “[Office of Animal Resources] will euthanize unnecessary breeders.”<sup>3</sup>
- University of Colorado Denver and Anschutz Medical Campus: Experimenters were instructed to “plan for potential phased reductions of research activities with animals,”<sup>4</sup> including delaying orders of research animals and new animal studies as well as “[d]ecreasing colony size.”<sup>5</sup>

PETA questions why any of these animals are being bought, bred, trapped, or experimented on in the first place since they’re now, in response to the pandemic, so readily being disposed of and since experiments are now being ended or delayed. Expending precious research resources and taxpayer funds on animal testing—especially experiments and the animals used in them deemed by the institutions themselves to be “unnecessary”—is the height of absurdity and waste and should not continue, nor should laboratory personnel endanger their health for such experiments.

Research facilities and universities, including those in the University of Colorado system, are carrying out plans for a return to laboratory experiments. However, infection rates throughout the U.S. recently hit record highs.<sup>6</sup> Among those recently infected are Colorado Governor Jared Polis and First Gentleman Marlon Reis.<sup>7</sup> Once-safe activities—including working in close proximity to others in enclosed spaces like laboratories—will continue to pose a risk to human health for the foreseeable future. Particularly given that so many of these animal experiments have already been determined to be non-essential, allowing animal experiments to resume in Colorado cannot be justified.

Moreover, if Colorado is forced to shut down again, more animals will undoubtedly be euthanized and money that could otherwise have gone to more effective and human-relevant, non-animal studies benefiting public health will be wasted. The possibility that Colorado may need to shut down once more cannot be discounted. Dr. Anthony Fauci previously urged states with surging infection rates to “seriously look at shutting down”

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<sup>2</sup>Research & Innovation Office COVID-19 resources. [accessed 2020 Nov. 29]. [https://www.colorado.edu/researchinnovation/research-innovation-office-covid-19-resources#vivarium\\_considerations-2651](https://www.colorado.edu/researchinnovation/research-innovation-office-covid-19-resources#vivarium_considerations-2651).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Coronavirus research guidance. [accessed 2020 March 27]. <https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/University-of-Colorado-Anschutz-Medical-Campus-COVID-19-directive-regarding-animal-research.pdf>. The original source of this information has been updated (<https://www.cuanschutz.edu/coronavirus/research-guidance>).

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Covid-19: U.S. records 1 million new cases in a week. *New York Times*. [accessed 2020 Nov. 16]. <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/15/world/covid-19-coronavirus>.

<sup>7</sup>Alonso M., Harlan J., Sullivan K. 2020 Nov. 28. Colorado governor and spouse test positive for Covid-19. *CNN*. [accessed 2020 Nov. 30]. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/11/28/politics/colorado-governor-coronavirus/index.html>.

again.<sup>8</sup> Forty states, including Colorado, tightened restrictions in November in light of the worsening pandemic; other states have extended previously implemented restrictions.<sup>9</sup>

As the head of the state health agency, per Colo. Rev. Stat. § 25-1.5-102(1)(a)(I), you have a duty to “control the causes of epidemic and communicable diseases affecting the public health.”<sup>10</sup> Would you please intervene to end experiments on animals, starting with those previously deemed by institutions to be non-essential or described using similar terminology, which pose an unjustifiable risk to those working in laboratories and the public more broadly?

You can contact me at [ShalinG@peta.org](mailto:ShalinG@peta.org) or 757-962-8325. We look forward to your reply to this rapidly developing and urgent matter. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shalin G. Gala". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "S".

Shalin G. Gala  
Vice President, International Laboratory Methods  
Laboratory Investigations Department

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<sup>8</sup>Feuer W. 2020 July 9. States with severe coronavirus outbreaks should ‘seriously look at shutting down,’ Dr. Fauci says. *CNBC*. [accessed 2020 Nov. 17]. <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/07/09/states-with-severe-coronavirus-outbreaks-should-seriously-look-at-shutting-down-dr-fauci-says.html>.

<sup>9</sup>COVID-19 restrictions: Map of COVID-19 case trends, restrictions and mobility. *USA Today*. [accessed 2020 Nov. 30]. <https://www.usatoday.com/storytelling/coronavirus-reopening-america-map/#restrictions>.

<sup>10</sup>Colo. Rev. Stat. § 25-1.5-102(1)(a)(I). <http://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/images/olls/crs2018-title-25.pdf>.