

DATE

Dr. Francis S. Collins,
Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH)
9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20892

Dear Dr. Collins,

As the lead scientist who directed the Human Genome Project, one of the most important scientific undertakings of our time, and now the Director of the National Institute of Health (NIH), I know that you are a faithful steward in promoting scientific integrity and the importance of following the scientific process. This scientific rigor is the foundation of NIH's credibility, and critical to its mission of protecting the health of our citizens. And as the chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies, and a member of the House Appropriations Committee, I take great interest in how the current Administration puts our U.S. tax dollars to work and supports meaningful scientific advancements.

To that point, I recently read a recent investigative report conducted by Reuters, "*Who Says Bacon is Bad: How the World Health Organization's Cancer Agency Confuses Consumers*," about the lack of scientific integrity involved at the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) and their IARC Monograph process¹. According to Reuters, IARC suffers from a troubling conflict-of-interest problem, is departing from acceptable processes and standards in applying and evaluating the objective science related to their mission, and has been co-opted by activists that are misrepresenting the agency's findings in their advocacy efforts against every compound they review. They unnecessarily alarm the public, undermine significant investments made by U.S. companies, and negatively impact whole industries which the U.S. depends on to deliver jobs and economic security.

The latest attacks by the activists at IARC has focused on glyphosate, a herbicide used by millions of farmers around the world for over four decades. The product has provided a critical tool to increase the productivity of agriculture over this same time period, replacing other more harmful products that had been previously used, and allowing farmers to increase their crop yields and feed the growing world population. Yet according to the article, IARC, which is supported, in part, by U.S. taxpayer dollars,² recently released a controversial study [an IARC Monograph], which labels glyphosate, the most commonly used herbicide in the world, as a

¹ Kelland, Kate. "How the World Health Organization's cancer agency confuses consumers." Reuters. Thomson Reuters, 18 Apr. 2016. <http://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/health-who-iarc/>.

² International Agency for Research on Cancer. "About IARC." About IARC. <http://www.iarc.fr/en/about/igo.php>.

probable human carcinogen.³ IARC's determination is directly contradicted by years of testing and evaluation by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA),⁴ as well as other world regulatory bodies⁵, and prevailing scientific evidence and studies⁶. Indeed, even within the World Health Organization (WHO) three out of four programs have weighed in on the safety and efficacy of glyphosate.⁷ And just today, the EPA issued its own new assessment, countering IARC's activist messages with real science, concluding that Glyphosate does not cause cancer.

While every regulatory agency in the world has reviewed this product, relying on the latest credible science, and determined it is safe, the IARC Monograph has been both created and seized upon by activists who wish to end the herbicide's use.⁸ Indeed, individuals closely associated with IARC, such as Dr. Christopher Portier, have used the IARC's findings to lobby against its use at the EU Commission for Health and Food Safety.⁹ As an activist against the same products he's claimed to independently review, Portier suggests that the IARC classification is more rigorous than that of the European Food Safety Administration's (EFSA) classification of glyphosate, and urged the Commissioner to disregard the EU's study on glyphosate."¹⁰ And he routinely carries his activist message to other groups, drawing unfounded conclusions from this flawed process.¹¹ Dr. Portier's blatant activism is particularly troubling

³ International Agency for Research on Cancer. "Evaluation of Five Organophosphate Insecticides and Herbicides." IARC Monographs Volume 112. 20 Mar. 2015. <https://www.iarc.fr/en/media-centre/iarcnews/pdf/MonographVolume112.pdf>.

⁴ United States Environmental Protection Agency. "Ingredients Used in Pesticide Products." Glyphosate. <https://www.epa.gov/ingredients-used-pesticide-products/glyphosate>.

⁵ European Food Safety Authority. "Conclusion on the peer review of the pesticide risk assessment of the active substance glyphosate." EFSA Journal 2015;13(11):4302. 12 Nov. 2015. <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/4302>.

⁶ Solomon, Keith R., E. J. P. Marshall, and Gabriel Carrasquilla. "Human Health and Environmental Risks from the Use of Glyphosate Formulations to Control the Production of Coca in Colombia: Overview and Conclusions." Journal of Toxicology and Environmental Health, Part A 72.15-16 (2009): 914-20. <http://www.odc.gov.co/Portals/1/Docs/pecig/estudiosInv/HumanHealthAndEnvironmentalRisks.pdf>

⁷ Monsanto, "3 out of 4 WHO programs agree on glyphosate safety." Who is IARC? <http://www.monsanto.com/iarc-roundup/pages/default.aspx>.

⁸ Center for Food Safety, Consumers Union, Environmental Working Group, Food & Water Watch, Friends of the Earth, Just Label It, Natural Resources Defense Council, and Pesticide Action Network North America. "Public Interest Groups on WHO's Decision on Glyphosate." Environmental Working Group. 26 Mar. 2015. <http://www.ewg.org/testimony-official-correspondence/ewg-whos-decision-glyphosate>.

Lévesque, Julie. "The End of Monsanto." Global Research Centre for Research on Globalization. 30 May 2015. <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-end-of-monsanto/5452183>.

⁹ Portier, Christopher. "Open letter: Review of the Carcinogenicity of Glyphosate by EFSA and BfR." Letter to the European Commission Health & Health & Food Safety. 27 Nov. 2015. http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/Prof_Portier_letter.pdf.

¹⁰ Lewis, Barbara. "EU Food Safety Watchdog Hits Back at Scientists in Glyphosate Spat." Reuters. 13 Jan. 2016. <http://www.reuters.com/article/eu-glyphosate-monsanto-idUSL8N14X0J920160113>.

¹¹ Huff, Ethan. "'Glyphosate is definitely genotoxic,' declares WHO scientist who authored Roundup cancer study" Natural News. 30 Jul. 2015. www.naturalnews.com/050598_glyphosate_dangers_Roundup_cancer_study.html#ixzz46tUGGXeH

when he attempts to cloak himself in the science of IARC, a process he directly influenced¹², and his undisclosed conflict-of-interest during the Monograph proceedings.¹³ Even IARC's own director Kurt Straif notes that, "There are activist groups who want to say, 'This is now an IARC carcinogen and we need to take all action against it.'"¹⁴

Fortunately, I see that real scientists are fighting back. As Reuters reported, leading scientists claim that IARC "confuses the public and policy makers,"¹⁵ as it has determined that 988 of the 989 substances it has evaluated are potentially carcinogenic. Claiming everything causes cancer does nothing to help further our public health debate, and wastes considerable resources combating harmful misinformation. And the public is ultimately harmed by false science. Bernhard Url, the Executive Director of the European Food Safety Association (EFSA) has accused IARC of "Facebook Science," saying that they have "left the domain of science...entering into the domain of lobbying and campaigning. I share this same concern and hope you are troubled as well.

The effects of this bunk science causes real-world damage. For example, restricting the use of safe glyphosate products based on IARC's flawed process would deal a devastating blow to the U.S. agricultural industry that relies on the herbicide in their day-to-day operations. In my role on the Appropriations Committee, I am keenly aware of the significant contribution the agricultural sector provides to our country. Our nation's farmers not only keep food on the table domestically, but provide healthy and wholesome food for people around the world.¹⁶ According to the 2012 Agricultural census, Alabama's 4th Congressional District yielded over \$22 million in gross income from farm related sources¹⁷ and the State of Alabama. Moreover,

¹² International Agency for Research on Cancer. "Advisory Group Participants." Advisory Group to Recommend Priorities for IARC Monographs during 2015-2019. 7-9 Apr. 2014. <https://monographs.iarc.fr/ENG/Publications/internrep/14-002.pdf>.

International Agency for Research on Cancer. "List of Participants." IARC Monographs on the Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risks to Humans. Vol. 112. 3-10 Mar. 2015. <https://monographs.iarc.fr/ENG/Meetings/vol112-participants.pdf>.

¹³ Kelland, Kate. "Is your weed killer carcinogenic?" Reuters. 18 Apr. 2016. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-who-glyphosate-idUSKCN0XF0RL>.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Kelland, Kate. "How the World Health Organization's cancer agency confuses consumers." Reuters. 18 Apr. 2016. <http://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/health-who-iarc/>.

¹⁶ Parrett, Tom. "GMO Scientists Could Save the World from Hunger, if We Let Them." Newsweek. 21 May 2015. <http://www.newsweek.com/2015/05/29/gmo-scientists-could-save-world-hunger-if-we-let-them-334119.html>

¹⁷ United States Department of Agriculture. U.S. Census of Agriculture. "Congressional District Profile, Alabama, 4th District." 2012. https://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Online_Resources/Congressional_District_Profiles/cd0104.pdf

United States Department of Commerce. Bureau of Economic Analysis. "Regional Data, GDP & Personal Income." 2 Mar. 2016. [http://www.bea.gov/iTable/iTable.cfm?reqid=70&step=10&isuri=1&7003=200&7035=-1&7004=naics&7005=3&7006=01000&7036=-1&7001=5200&7002=5&7090=70&7007=2015,2014&7093=levels](http://www.bea.gov/iTable/iTable.cfm?reqid=70&step=10&isuri=1&7003=200&7035=-1&7004=naics&7005=3&7006=01000&7036=-1&7001=5200&7002=5&7090=70&7007=2015%2c2014&7093=levels#reqid=70&step=10&isuri=1&7003=200&7035=-1&7004=naics&7005=3&7006=01000&7036=-1&7001=5200&7002=5&7090=70&7007=2015,2014&7093=levels)

Agriculture, forestry and their related industries account for 41 percent (or \$70.4 billion) of Alabama's \$174 billion economy.¹⁸ Hindering the agricultural community's ability to efficiently and effectively grow food, due to unfounded claims by self-dealing activists, could have a devastating impact on farmers in Alabama and across the country.

As an initial step to understand the damage being potentially done by IARC, I'd ask you to brief the Committee so that we can better understand the view of NIH with respect the flaws in the IARC process, and the level of support U.S. taxpayers are providing to IARC (either directly or to affiliated activist scientists). My staff will be in contact to provide a list of the affiliated activists so you can prepare a briefing on any NIH funds that are being directed to such efforts. In advance of this briefing, I would also request that you please provide an itemized list of all funding earmarked for IARC and the IARC Monographs, and the affiliated activists, over the last five years. Your response should include a detailed explanation for how NIH oversees this funding, the purposes for which it is used, and what mechanisms exist for dealing with irresponsible and unacceptable behavior (like that exhibited by IARC in this instance, or production of other scientifically-discredited work).

I trust that the NIH, and you personally, are committed to only funding organizations that produce information and conclusions based on sound science, robust processes, and credible methodology, and which above all else, act with integrity when it comes to protecting human health. I would not want to see the flawed IARC process, which appears to be co-opted by activists, damage the credibility of our proud U.S. institutions and industries.

I appreciate your prompt attention to this matter. Please provide a response no later than...[two weeks from date of receipt].

Sincerely,

NAME

¹⁸ Auburn University Press Release, Agriculture, Forestry Dominate State's Economy, Study Shows (Feb. 22, 2013) <http://www.ag.auburn.edu/comm/news/2013/AlabamaAgricultureEconomicImpact.php>.