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ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

Majority (202) 225-2927

Minority (202) 225-3641

May 11, 2021

Kimberly S. Budil, Ph.D.
Laboratory Director
Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory
P.O. Box 808
Livermore, CA 94551-0808

Dear Dr. Budil,

We write to request a classified briefing that will assist us in our inquiry into the origins of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. As leaders on the Committee on Energy and Commerce, the Congressional committee with jurisdiction over public health, we strongly support a comprehensive investigation into the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the possibility of an accidental laboratory leak. Accordingly, we request a classified briefing from Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) related to LLNL's Z Division's May 27, 2020 report on the origin of SARS-CoV-2.

The Sinclair Broadcast Group (SBG) recently reported that a classified study of the origin of SARS-CoV-2 conducted a year ago by scientists at the Z Division had concluded that the novel coronavirus at the heart of the current pandemic may have originated in a laboratory in China.¹ According to SBG, the Z Division report assessed that both the lab-origin theory and the zoonotic theory were plausible and warranted further investigation. A LLNL spokesperson confirmed the existence of the report to SBG.²

SBG also reported that Dr. David J. Rakestraw, a senior science adviser who formerly directed LLNL's biodefense programs and has been coordinating the lab's technical response to COVID-19, was intimately involved in the preparation of the Z Division report.³ It would be greatly appreciated if Dr. Rakestraw could be included in the requested LLNL briefing.

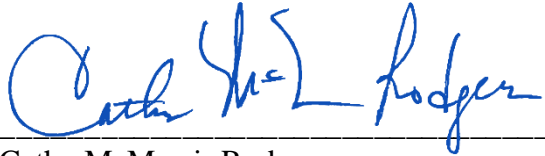
¹ James Rosen, *EXCLUSIVE: Classified study found COVID-19 could have originated in Chinese lab*, SBG (May 3, 2021), available at <https://wjla.com/news/nation-world/exclusive-classified-study-found-covid-19-could-have-originated-in-chinese-lab>.

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

Please respond by May 25, 2021. If you have any questions, please contact Alan Slobodin or Diane Cutler of the Minority Committee staff.

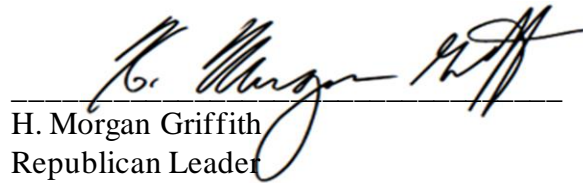
Sincerely,



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Republican Leader
Committee on Energy and Commerce



Brett Guthrie
Republican Leader
Subcommittee on Health



H. Morgan Griffith
Republican Leader
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

CC: The Honorable Frank Pallone, Chairman
The Honorable Anna Eshoo, Chair, Subcommittee on Health
The Honorable Diana DeGette, Chair, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations