



City of Hamilton
223 South Second Street
Hamilton, MT 59840

Dr. Jay Bhattacharya, Director
National Institutes of Health
9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20892

Jeanne Marrazzo, Director
National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
5601 Fishers Lane, MSC 9806
Bethesda, MD 20892-9806

Dear NIH Acting Director Memoli and NIAID Director Marrazzo,

We write concerning federal government actions related to staffing of Rocky Mountain Laboratories (RML). It appears that the federal government is initiating a “reduction in workforce” process that may result in fewer staff at RML. Such actions have the serious potential to endanger the safety and economic well-being of our community and its residents. Prior to taking such action, we request formal consultation between the City of Hamilton and the official(s) making reduction in workforce decisions related to RML.

Established almost 100 years ago (1928), RML is located on a campus in downtown Hamilton. RML plays a long-proven role in protecting America’s health and well-being through research on infectious, and some contagious, diseases. Its campus includes a Level 4 lab, which allows RML scientists to handle and research the most dangerous pathogens known to humans. Any changes to employee status raise serious safety questions for Hamilton and Ravalli County. These include concerns for the safety of RML staffers, local emergency responders and, if the integrity of the research labs is compromised, the broader community.

Further, RML has been a central component of our community and our economy for a century. RML’s roughly 450 employees live in Hamilton and Ravalli County. They, and their family members live, work and volunteer in our community, and their children go to our schools. In addition to the vast human health and safety benefits to the nation that come from RML’s work on infectious diseases, RML provides substantial economic benefits – nearly \$250 million annually -- to our community and the State of Montana. See *The Economic Contributions of Rocky Mountain Laboratories*, Bureau of Business and Economic Research, University of Montana School of Business (April 2023).

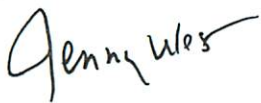
Given the safety and economic interdependence of Hamilton and RML, formal consultation between us is prudent and important prior to any significant changes in staffing levels. Please note that we do not object to

government action to prevent fraud and abuse and to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of government; these are goals we share for our own government. That said, it is important that action addressing these issues occur in an informed and transparent manner. This is especially true when missteps in addressing them have the potential for both dangerous safety and economic consequences for your neighbors in the Bitterroot Valley.

Please note that the City of Hamilton is the only city in Montana that has a National Institutes of Health satellite facility. Additionally, 72% of our county lands are public lands owned by the US government. Any potential reduction of US Forest Service employees and/or National Institutes of Health employees results in a disproportionate impact for our community's economy when considering the City of Hamilton population is less than 5,000 citizens and there are less than 50,000 citizens living within our county.

For these reasons, we invite any state or federal representatives to come visit our amazing city and speak with our constituents. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Hamilton City Council



Cc: Governor Gianforte

Montana congressional delegation

Rocky Mountain Labs

Ravalli County Commissioners