

February 4, 2021

Edda Thiels, PhD  
Program Manager  
IOS Division Of Integrative Organismal Systems  
National Science Foundation  
2415 Eisenhower Avenue  
Room E 12300  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314  
Via email: ethiels@nsf.gov

Dear Dr. Thiels,

On behalf of Rise for Animals (Rise), I am writing to relay our concern regarding troubling evidence of animal suffering at Arizona State University (ASU) and to respectfully request that you not renew or continue funding for grant award 1558151 ("Collaborative Research: Multimodal State Estimation through Neural Coherence in the Parieto-Frontal Network"). The grant is currently estimated to end on August 31, 2021.

## **Document We Reviewed**

In formulating the recommendation below, Rise reviewed the full IACUC-approved protocol, including all IACUC-approved addenda and modifications to each protocol, as well as all appendices, annexes, attachments, and accompanying photographs, of protocol 18-1630R, funded by NSF grant 1558151, that was released to Rise on November 13, 2020 through a public records request to ASU dated May 18, 2020. In addition, we reviewed 2019 Animal Welfare Act (AWA) Exceptions for protocol 18-1630R submitted to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), which was made available for public inspection on USDA-APHIS' website.

## **Finding: Research Involves Excessive Suffering for Non-human Primates**

The documents we reviewed reveal that the experiment funded by NSF Grant 1558151 restrains monkeys for up to 6 hours a day, 5–7 days a week, for up to 3 years.<sup>1</sup> Photographs released to

---

<sup>1</sup> Arizona State University, *AWA Exceptions*, Animal Research Lab. Overview (ARLO) (2019), <https://arlo.riseforanimals.org/entity/arizona-state-university-2078/records/14049> (last visited Feb. 3, 2021).

Rise show different restraint methods used to prepare a “challenging” monkey for the experiment itself, including different straightjackets and tethering straps on their arm.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to the restraint, the monkeys used in this experiment are subject to multiple surgeries, including implanting electrodes and recording devices into their brains and drilling holes into their skulls to mount posts that are later used to keep the monkeys’ heads completely immobilized during the experiments. ASU’s IACUC also granted an exception to the AWA in 2019 so that the experimenter could intentionally deny the monkeys water throughout most of the day to coerce them into following orders for drops of water during the experiment.

**Request: Do Not Renew, Or Continue Funding, NSF Grant Award 1558151**

We echo the ASU students, alumni, and faculty who are urging the university to invest in ethical, non-animal models instead of antiquated, cruel experiments on non-human primates. Complete restraint of non-human primates for several hours a day, every day, is excessively cruel to a species whose natural, wild home range is nearly 2 square kilometers.<sup>3</sup> 5 years and more than \$1 million of tax-payer money has already been wasted on this cruel experiment. As such, I respectfully request that you not renew or continue funding for grant award 1558151.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, and for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Nathan Herschler  
Executive Director

---

<sup>2</sup> *Arizona State University Photograph 1*, Rise for Animals (2021), [https://riseforanimals.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/AZ-State\\_protocol-18-1630R\\_photo1-scaled.jpg](https://riseforanimals.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/AZ-State_protocol-18-1630R_photo1-scaled.jpg) (last visited Feb. 3, 2021); *Arizona State University Photograph 2*, Rise for Animals (2021), [https://riseforanimals.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/AZ-State\\_protocol-18-1630R\\_photo2-scaled.jpg](https://riseforanimals.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/AZ-State_protocol-18-1630R_photo2-scaled.jpg) (last visited Feb. 3, 2021); *Arizona State University Photograph 3*, Rise for Animals (2021), [https://riseforanimals.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/AZ-State\\_protocol-18-1630R\\_photo3-scaled.jpg](https://riseforanimals.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/AZ-State_protocol-18-1630R_photo3-scaled.jpg) (last visited Feb. 3, 2021); *Arizona State University Photograph 4*, Rise for Animals (2021), [https://riseforanimals.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/AZ-State\\_protocol-18-1630R\\_photo4-scaled.jpg](https://riseforanimals.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/AZ-State_protocol-18-1630R_photo4-scaled.jpg) (last visited Feb. 3, 2021).

<sup>3</sup> *Dadasheet: Macaca Mulatta (Rhesus Macaque)*, CABI (Nov. 25, 2019), <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/76105#tohabitat> (last visited Feb. 3, 2021).