

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 12, 2024

George F. Koob, Ph.D.
Director
National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism
National Institutes of Health
9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

Dear Dr. Koob,

It is critical that the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) provide transparent, independent, and science-based advice and recommendations to the American public and that federal agencies develop the 2025-2030 DGA in line with the intent of Congress. We write today to request additional information about your and your agency's contributions to the 2025-2030 DGA development process. In addition, we seek clarification about relevant comments you made in the *Daily Mail* in August of last year and comments attributed to you in May of this year.

In December 2022, Congress appropriated \$1.3 million in the *Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023* for the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) to establish a panel of experts to review scientific research on alcohol consumption to inform the 2025-2030 DGA. This work is currently underway at NASEM and is expected to conclude by the end of the year. Congress appropriated this funding after the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee failed to follow research protocols during development of the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and left eight questions on alcohol and health unanswered.

In the spring and summer of 2023, without the knowledge of Congress, the Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Prevention of Underage Drinking (ICCPUD) convened a "Technical Review Subcommittee on Alcohol Intake and Health" and a "Scientific Review Panel on Alcohol Intake and Health" to conduct work duplicative of NASEM's congressionally directed review. The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) is a member of the Technical Review Subcommittee.

- Congress has already appropriated funding for a scientific review at NASEM. Why is an additional review at ICCPUD necessary? Is an interagency coordinating committee tasked with stopping underage drinking an appropriate venue to conduct a comprehensive review of legal adult alcohol consumption?

In August 2023, you suggested to the *Daily Mail* that the United States could adopt a recommendation made by the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA) that adults consume no more than two servings of alcohol per week. As you know, the Canadian federal government ultimately did not adopt that recommendation, and the White House debunked your claim as "absolutely false" in a tweet.

- Did you or your staff participate in the Technical Review Subcommittee meetings last year?
- Can you share the minutes of those meetings and any additional meetings of the Technical Review Subcommittee?
- Were your August 2023 comments based on knowledge you gleaned from the Technical Review Subcommittee and Scientific Review Panel meetings in the spring and summer of 2023?

In April 2024, the names of the six members of the Scientific Review Panel convened by ICCPUD were finally made available to the public. Two of the six members, Dr. Tim Naimi and Dr. Kevin Shield, are authors of the CCSA report.

- Were you aware of the appointments of Dr. Naimi and Dr. Shield when you made your comments to the *Daily Mail*? If so, do you know why it took until April of this year for ICCPUD to make those appointments public?
- Do you have any reason to believe Drs. Naimi and Shield will not reach the same conclusions they made in their failed attempt to rewrite the Canadian moderate drinking guidelines?


In May 2024, at the US Alcohol Policy Alliance's policy conference, an employee of a Technical Review Subcommittee member agency stated that, "Dr. Koob manages our plans for how we're now talking... and emphasizing there's no safe level." Another attendee, Dr. Priscilla Martinez, one of the six individuals sitting on the ICCPUD Scientific Review Panel, argued that public health messaging should say that any amount of drinking increases health risk.

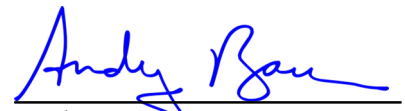
In addition to Dr. Martinez's comments, Dr. Jürgen Rehm and Dr. Katherine Keyes, who also sit on the Scientific Review Subcommittee, have publicly asserted there is no safe level of alcohol consumption.

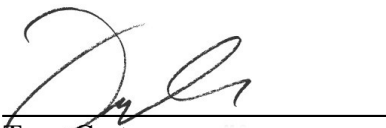
- Considering your public comments and the comments and previous work of the six members of the Scientific Review Panel, is there any reason that members of Congress should not believe ICCPUD participants have already formed an opinion and are working towards a predetermined result?

We would appreciate your timely and specific response to each of our questions and thank you in advance for your attention to this important issue.

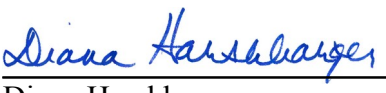
Sincerely,



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Member of Congress


Andy Barr
Member of Congress


Froy Carter
Member of Congress

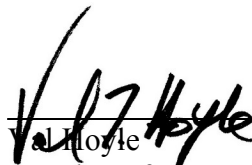

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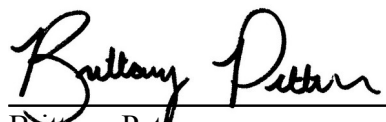
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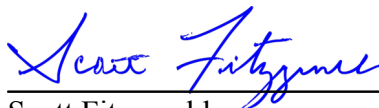
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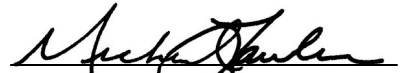
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