

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 18, 2020

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to express grave concerns with China's lax regulation of live animal markets that have been directly connected to the spread of the COVID-19 disease and other zoonotic diseases.

In particular, we want to bring to your attention scientific reports and data that provide evidence that the virus that causes the disease COVID-19,¹ was transferred to humans from a specific live animal market, or "wet market," in Wuhan, the capital city of China's Hubei province.² Studies show that the virus is 95 percent genetically similar to a coronavirus in horseshoe bats and 70 percent similar to the SARS-CoV, the virus that causes Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome ("SARS") in humans. The genetic similarities between these three viruses illustrate the ability of viruses found in animals to genetically mutate to allow for transmission to humans when they are in close contact.

Certain live animal markets keep a variety of domesticated animals and wildlife, including common and endangered species, in unsanitary and inhumane conditions where they are purchased and then slaughtered for human consumption in the same contaminated areas. The close proximity of animals to one another and to humans, as well as the on-site butchering, creates a breeding ground for viruses and bacteria to thrive and move from host to host, animal to human through contact. Scientists researching the virus suspect that the coronavirus moved from animals to humans via contact with, or the consumption of, animals from the identified live animal market.³ It is clear that the contaminated and inhumane conditions in which these animals are kept and killed present a danger to the health of humans, as proven by the global and devastating spread of the COVID-19 disease and other zoonotic diseases.

¹ COVID-19: [Co]rona [Vi]rus [D]isease 20[19]. The collection of signs and symptoms that present once infected with the virus. For further information on SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19 naming and differentiation, please refer to the World Health Organization's (WHO) article: "[Naming the coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) and the virus that causes it](#)"

² Singhal, T. A Review of Coronavirus Disease-2019 (COVID-19). *Indian J Pediatr* **87**, 281–286 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12098-020-03263-6>.

³ World Health Organization. Q&A on coronaviruses (COVID-19): Can humans become infected with the COVID-19 from an animal source? March 9, 2020; <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>. Singhal, T. A Review of Coronavirus Disease-2019 (COVID-19). *Indian J Pediatr* **87**, 281–286 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12098-020-03263-6>.

It is important to encourage President Xi Jinping to end these dangerous practices that spread diseases such as coronavirus. We urge you to discuss these concerns with President Xi and encourage him to ban the unsanitary and inhumane practice of purchasing live animals and butchering them in contaminated conditions on-site in these markets, to avoid future deadly viral outbreaks. We thank you for your time and consideration, and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



Vern Buchanan
Member of Congress

Cc:

Vice President Mike Pence
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Secretary Mike Pompeo
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