



December 9, 2024

Joan Gabel
Chancellor
University of Pittsburgh

Via e-mail: slmesick@pitt.edu

Dear Chancellor Gabel:

I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals—PETA entities have more than 9 million members and supporters globally, nearly 243,000 of whom live in Pennsylvania. For more than decade, the University of Pittsburgh (Pitt) has publicly stated^{1,2} its adherence to the 3Rs principle of replacing, reducing, and refining the use of animals in experiments,

Despite these public proclamations, the university has not only failed to reduce its use of animals in its laboratories by a single animal but *increased* the number of animals used. A June 2008 inventory reported that Pitt used 112,610 mice, rats, fishes, frogs, and birds in experiments. By January 2016, that number had surged to 175,893 and by January 2020, it had climbed even further to 177,494. A 2023 federal report also documented the school's use of 38 dogs, 54 cats, 26 guinea pigs, 45 hamsters, 219 rabbits, and 757 nonhuman primates. These escalating figures contradict the university's assertions of reducing animal use, revealing a troubling disregard for its stated intention to adopt non-animal replacements and reduce reliance on animal experimentation.

What exactly has been Pitt's plan to implement the 3Rs and what, specifically, is your plan for next year, 2025? We believe the public has the right to know if the University's pledge has been truthful.

You must be aware that numerous studies dating back more than two decades reveal the failure of animal experiments to lead to cures and treatments for human beings. Conferences, papers, and all manner of information sources that show the availability of countless superior, non-animal research methods that produce far more reliable and species-relevant results for human health than experiments on animals. PETA scientists' [Research Modernization Deal](#) provides a detailed strategy for replacing experiments on animals with humane and human-relevant methods. Have you read it and/or what is your own plan to implement it or alternative solutions to this burgeoning use of animals on your campus?

In 2023, Pitt received more than \$658 million in taxpayer funding from the National Institutes of Health, with approximately half of that amount directed towards experiments on animals. Among these, experimenters forced rabbits into unnatural positions by cutting ligaments in their knees and inserting wires to hold

¹Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, <https://web.archive.org/web/20130423194852/https://www.iacuc.pitt.edu/about>.

²Frequently Asked Questions, <https://www.animalresearch.pitt.edu/frequently-asked-questions>.

PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

Washington
1536 16th St. N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
202-483-PETA

Los Angeles
2154 W. Sunset Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90026
323-644-PETA

Norfolk
501 Front St.
Norfolk, VA 23510
757-622-PETA

Info@peta.org
PETA.org

Entities:

- PETA Asia
- PETA India
- PETA France
- PETA Australia
- PETA Germany
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- PETA Netherlands
- PETA Foundation (U.K.)

their legs in place. Despite severe weight loss and chronic pain, the rabbits were left to endure weeks of prolonged suffering.

The University of Pittsburgh's failure to adhere to the 3Rs principles undermines public trust. We ask you to address this matter of public interest without delay. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Alka Chandna, Ph.D.

Vice President

Laboratory Oversight & Special Cases

AlkaC@peta.org | (757) 803-6447