

Attention: Scientific Advisory Committee on Alternative Toxicological Methods Meeting

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Private Citizen

Comments: "Entrenched interests opposing the use of animals in scientific discovery rely on the notion that scientists are reluctant to change their antiquated methods and reject modern alternatives. As a translational neurobiologist who uses rodent models to explore the brain circuitry implicated in neurological disorders, I find these ideas both absolutely wrong and unsupported by facts. The publicly and privately funded scientific enterprise relies on animal models because there is currently no alternative to the ethical and approved use of animals. At this time, we have no way to delve into the deep biological underpinnings of how the brain drives reasoning, motor control, and organizes behavior without studying animals, including rodents and other primates. Studies of this nature are indispensable to inform the development of treatments for Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, addiction, chronic pain, and severe mental illness; all diseases that millions of Americans and their families struggle with daily. As an animal lover, I understand why the use of NAM's is attractive, but physicians, researchers, and regulators understand that replacing animals in biomedical research is not yet realistic. Once tissue cultures, computer models, and organs on chips are capable of manifesting hallucinations, depression, and memory or motor deficits, neurobiologists like me will happily abandon research with animals."