

## Volkswagen: \$30 Billion Later and No More Monkeying Around

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Volkswagen’s chief lobbyist, Thomas Steg, was [suspended](#) in January after news broke that the German carmaker sponsored inhumane chemical testing on humans and monkeys.

The controversial study was conducted in 2014 amongst growing public concern about the effects diesel exhaust has on human health. The test consisted of scientists exposing ten [monkeys](#) to diesel fumes emitted from a Volkswagen Beetle in a sealed chamber. Volkswagen funded the testing in an effort to show that new diesel vehicles were less harmful than old models. However, the company intentionally manipulated the test’s results: the Beetle used for the experiment was altered to emit much lower pollution levels than similar models out on the market.

Steg was in charge of overseeing Volkswagen’s sustainability matters, which included the European Research Group on Environment and Health in the Transport Sector (EUGT), the organization that employed the testing. EUGT has since been dissolved. According to a Volkswagen senior official, Steg was aware of the monkey testing, but did not make any attempt to stop it.

The news of Steg’s departure follows Volkswagen pleading guilty to conspiracy and fraud charges in [2015](#), in which they fabricated results of emissions tests by putting software in millions of diesel vehicles. Volkswagen doesn’t appear to be the only automaker being called into question. Records from investigations and government documents revealed that Volkswagen and several other European carmakers heavily funded research in an effort to maintain tax benefits for diesel fuel.

In spite of the recent illegalities, Volkswagen’s 2017 sales did not reveal any significant decline in revenue. Analysts say the coverage of the animal testing may change this.

Volkswagen’s monkey scandal has cost them \$30 billion to date.