



For Immediate Release:

Date: 03/25/09

Contacts:

Angus McQuilken
Vice President for Communications
Cell: 617-921-7749
amcquilken@masslifesciences.com

Tom Keppeler
Associate Director, Public Relations
Tufts University
Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine
Desk: 508-839-7910/Cell: 617-669-8164
Tom.Keppeler@tufts.edu

**Massachusetts Life Sciences Center Board Approves \$9.5 Million
for Tufts' New England Regional Biosafety Laboratory in Grafton**
**Investment will enhance public safety while strengthening
life sciences in Massachusetts**

Boston, Massachusetts – The Massachusetts Life Sciences Center (MLSC) Board of Directors today approved a \$9.5 million grant to support completion of the New England Regional Biosafety Laboratory (NE-RBL) at Tufts University's Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine in Grafton. The MLSC grant, one of the targeted capital investments included in the Massachusetts Life Sciences Act, will bolster existing grant funding from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), as well as additional matching funds from Tufts University. The \$33.7 million project has created 56 full-time equivalent jobs in design, development and construction of the facility, and approximately 29 long-term positions for scientists, research technicians, and other facility staff are anticipated.

The New England Regional Biosafety Laboratory is one of thirteen Biosafety Level 3 research facilities constructed nationally with substantial funding from the NIAID. The facility will include 41,000 gross square feet of space, including BSL-2 and BSL-3 research laboratories, an insectary for study of diseases transmitted by insects, an aerobiology suite for airborne pathogens research and challenge studies, and high-containment animal housing with related animal support space. The facility will be of

value to scientists studying pathogens requiring ABSL-3 biocontainment, and BSL-2 and 3 pathogens and toxins categorized as Select Agents. These will likely include scientists and companies developing vaccines, working on infectious disease therapies, clinical and environmental diagnostics and biodefense applications. The NE-RBL will be available to qualified regional investigators including scientists from academia, research institutes, non-profit organizations and the private sector. The NE-RBL project will provide state-of-the-art Biosafety Level-2 (BSL-2), BSL-3, and Select Agent laboratory and animal biocontainment facilities required for high quality infectious disease research.

“This investment will create jobs, strengthen our life sciences infrastructure, and protect public health and safety,” said Dr. Susan Windham-Bannister, President & CEO of the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center. “The capacity that this facility offers will further strengthen Massachusetts’ position as a hub for the life sciences. The translational research that will be conducted promises new therapies, new companies, new jobs, and new methods of protecting against bioterrorism.”

“The Massachusetts Life Sciences Center’s investment addresses public health threats associated with infectious and zoonotic diseases and creates a model federal-state-private partnership.” said Deborah Kochevar, Dean of the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University. “Scientists at the Cummings School’s Division of Infectious Diseases, led by Dr. Saul Tzipori, and a network of colleagues in academia and industry, will use this expanded biocontainment capacity to drive better detection, treatment and prevention of infectious diseases.

“I want to thank the Board of the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center for this grant to Tufts so that they can continue their important work,” said Representative George Peterson (R-Grafton). “This will be extremely useful in completing the new Tufts Veterinary Biosafety Lab in Grafton.”

“The news of this grant could not have come at a more opportune time,” said Senator Michael O. Moore (D-Millbury). “Not only do these funds create important job growth, they also help improve and protect our public safety and our public health as well as continue to position Massachusetts as a leader in life sciences initiatives.”

To date, the MLSC Board of Directors has authorized \$24 million in capital project funding. These investments have leveraged more than \$275 million in private or matching investment, and are projected to create more than 600 new jobs in the Commonwealth.

About the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center

The Massachusetts Life Sciences Center (MLSC) is a quasi-public agency of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts tasked with implementing the Massachusetts Life Sciences Act, a ten-year, \$1 billion initiative that was signed into law in June of 2008. The Center’s mission is to create jobs in the life sciences and support vital scientific research that will improve the human condition. This work includes making financial investments in public and private institutions that are advancing life sciences research,

development and commercialization as well as building ties between sectors of the Massachusetts life sciences community. For more information, visit www.masslifesciences.com.

About the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine

Founded in 1978 in North Grafton, Mass., the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University is known for academic programs that impact society and the practice of veterinary medicine; five hospitals that treat over 30,000 cases each year; and groundbreaking research that benefits animal, public, and environmental health.

###