

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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<https://oversight.house.gov>

April 7, 2025

Ms. Iris Lan  
Chief Legal Officer  
Office of the General Counsel  
National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
300 E Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Ms. Lan,

We write with significant concerns about Elon Musk's clear conflicts of interest at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). In an unprecedented arrangement, President Donald Trump has bestowed expansive and unlawful authority to Mr. Musk, an unelected billionaire. Mr. Musk is redirecting billions of taxpayer dollars to fund his own financial interests while slashing federal employees, programs, and services on which all Americans depend. Mr. Musk also remains in charge of a sprawling private sector business empire that continues to rely on billions of dollars in government funding and has been charged with managing his own conflicts of interest.<sup>1</sup> The Trump Administration has failed to make public Mr. Musk's financial disclosure filings, hiding the true extent of his conflicts from the public. We demand documents and information to bring such conflicts to light, as well as immediate action to address this corrupt arrangement that threatens accountable, democratic governance.

As of February 2025, Mr. Musk and his companies have received a combined total of at least \$38 billion in contracts, loans, subsidies, and tax credits from the federal government and state governments. In fact, Mr. Musk's businesses have been more reliant on government funds than many of his competitors.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Musk's businesses, which span various industries including the transportation, health, telecommunications, and defense sectors, are also subject to the regulatory jurisdiction of numerous federal agencies, including the Department of Justice and the

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<sup>1</sup> *Is Elon Musk's Government Role Unconstitutional? What the Supreme Court Might Say*, ABC News (Feb. 17, 2025) (online at <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/elon-musks-government-role-unconstitutional-supreme-court/story?id=118846052>); *White House Says Musk Will Police His Own Conflicts of Interest*, Bloomberg (Feb. 5, 2025) (online at [www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2025-02-05/white-house-says-musk-will-police-his-own-conflicts-of-interest](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2025-02-05/white-house-says-musk-will-police-his-own-conflicts-of-interest)).

<sup>2</sup> *Elon Musk's Business Empire is Built on \$38 Billion in Government Funding*, The Washington Post (Feb. 26, 2025) (online at [www.washingtonpost.com/technology/interactive/2025/elon-musk-business-government-contracts-funding/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/interactive/2025/elon-musk-business-government-contracts-funding/)).

Department of Transportation, and several of his companies are presently under federal investigation for safety, labor, or other serious violations.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Musk continues to profit from taxpayer dollars and now finds himself in charge of determining which federal contracts the government will keep and which will be cut—an arrangement that runs afoul of the law.<sup>4</sup> In an attempt to shield Mr. Musk from transparency and accountability, the Trump Administration has designated him as a Special Government Employee (SGE), a type of temporary executive hire that can only perform limited duties. Mr. Musk's power at the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) is expansive, and President Trump has explicitly stated that DOGE is "headed by Elon Musk."<sup>5</sup> Mr. Musk's authority to make sweeping reforms—some of which have already been deemed illegal in court—is clearly consistent with the duties of an "officer of the U.S." rather than an SGE.<sup>6</sup> Officers are high-level positions that wield significant authority, and, as such, require Senate approval, which Mr. Musk lacks.<sup>7</sup>

Mr. Musk is further circumventing federal ethics laws to avoid filing the public financial disclosures required of senior Administration officials.<sup>8</sup> Ethics laws prevent political appointees, including SGEs, from taking part in any matter that might impact their personal finances, per 18 U.S. Code § 208. The law, however, has not stopped Mr. Musk. On the contrary, Mr. Musk's ability to enrich himself through DOGE is a textbook example of corruption at the taxpayers' expense.

At NASA, where Mr. Musk has both benefited from significant contracts and has the potential to receive vast amounts of new business, his defiance of recusal laws and control of

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<sup>3</sup> *U.S. Agencies Fund, and Fight With, Elon Musk. A Trump Presidency Could Give Him Power Over Them.*, The New York Times (Oct. 21, 2024) (online at [www.nytimes.com/2024/10/20/us/politics/elon-musk-federal-agencies-contracts.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/10/20/us/politics/elon-musk-federal-agencies-contracts.html)).

<sup>4</sup> *Elon Musk's Business Empire is Built on \$38 Billion in Government Funding*, The Washington Post (Feb. 26, 2025) (online at [www.washingtonpost.com/technology/interactive/2025/elon-musk-business-government-contracts-funding/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/interactive/2025/elon-musk-business-government-contracts-funding/)); *As Musk Works to Slash Federal Spending, His Own Firms Have Received Billions in Government Contracts*, ABC News (Feb. 10, 2025) (online at <https://abcnews.go.com/US/musk-works-slash-federal-spending-firms-received-billions/story?id=118589121>).

<sup>5</sup> The White House, *Remarks by President Trump in Joint Address to Congress* (Mar. 4, 2025) (online at [www.whitehouse.gov/remarks/2025/03/remarks-by-president-trump-in-joint-address-to-congress/](https://www.whitehouse.gov/remarks/2025/03/remarks-by-president-trump-in-joint-address-to-congress/)).

<sup>6</sup> *Is Elon Musk's Government Role Unconstitutional? What the Supreme Court Might Say*, ABC News (Feb. 17, 2025) (online at <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/elon-musks-government-role-unconstitutional-supreme-court/story?id=118846052>); *Tracking the Lawsuits Against Trump's Agenda*, The New York Times (Mar. 8, 2025) (online at [www.nytimes.com/interactive/2025/us/trump-administration-lawsuits.html](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2025/us/trump-administration-lawsuits.html)).

<sup>7</sup> *Is Elon Musk's Government Role Unconstitutional? What the Supreme Court Might Say*, ABC News (Feb. 17, 2025) (online at <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/elon-musks-government-role-unconstitutional-supreme-court/story?id=118846052>).

<sup>8</sup> *Musk's Starlink Gets FAA Contract, Raising New Conflict of Interest Concerns*, CNN (Feb. 25, 2025) (online at <https://www.cnn.com/2025/02/25/business/musk-faa-starlink-contract/index.html>).

operations directly benefit his businesses.<sup>9</sup> The known conflicts of interest presented by this arrangement, which are illegal and must be addressed immediately, include:

### **Financial Benefits to Musk's Companies from NASA**

- Mr. Musk's space exploration company, SpaceX, has received more than \$15 billion in funding from NASA, making SpaceX the agency's largest private sector contractor.<sup>10</sup>
- NASA has obligated more than \$525 million to SpaceX since President Trump took office, including contracts NASA awarded to SpaceX in February with a combined value of approximately \$400 million. On March 28, 2025, NASA also added an additional SpaceX rocket to an existing contract.<sup>11</sup>
- Mr. Musk has criticized the Space Launch System (SLS), a multibillion-dollar project led by Boeing, one of SpaceX's competitors.<sup>12</sup> The White House reportedly plans on cancelling the SLS program to free up funding that can instead be allocated to Mr. Musk's priority of sending people to Mars.<sup>13</sup>

### **Trump's Nominee for NASA Administrator is Musk's Friend and Business Partner**

- Mr. Musk reportedly personally selected his friend and business partner, Jared Isaacman, to be President Trump's nominee for NASA Administrator.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *Elon Musk's Business Empire is Built on \$38 Billion in Government Funding*, The Washington Post (Feb. 26, 2025) (online at [www.washingtonpost.com/technology/interactive/2025/elon-musk-business-government-contracts-funding/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/interactive/2025/elon-musk-business-government-contracts-funding/)); *U.S. Agencies Fund, and Fight With, Elon Musk. A Trump Presidency Could Give Him Power Over Them.*, The New York Times (Oct. 21, 2024) (online at [www.nytimes.com/2024/10/20/us/politics/elon-musk-federal-agencies-contracts.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/10/20/us/politics/elon-musk-federal-agencies-contracts.html)).

<sup>10</sup> *Elon Musk's Business Empire is Built on \$38 Billion in Government Funding*, The Washington Post (Feb. 26, 2025) (online at [www.washingtonpost.com/technology/interactive/2025/elon-musk-business-government-contracts-funding/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/interactive/2025/elon-musk-business-government-contracts-funding/)).

<sup>11</sup> USASpending.gov (online at [www.usaspending.gov/search/?hash=c48f2760d874cc85c24a6f1f68d114d5](https://www.usaspending.gov/search/?hash=c48f2760d874cc85c24a6f1f68d114d5)) (accessed Apr. 1, 2025); NASA, *NASA Awards Planetary Defense Space Telescope Launch Services Contract* (Feb. 21, 2025) (online at [www.nasa.gov/news-release/nasa-awards-planetary-defense-space-telescope-launch-services-contract/](https://www.nasa.gov/news-release/nasa-awards-planetary-defense-space-telescope-launch-services-contract/)); NASA, *NASA Awards Launch Service Task Order for Pandora Mission* (Feb 10, 2025) (online at [www.nasa.gov/news-release/nasa-awards-launch-service-task-order-for-pandora-mission/](https://www.nasa.gov/news-release/nasa-awards-launch-service-task-order-for-pandora-mission/)); NASA, *NASA Awards Launch Services Contract for SpaceX Starship* (Mar. 28, 2025) (online at [www.nasa.gov/news-release/nasa-awards-launch-services-contract-for-spacex-starship/](https://www.nasa.gov/news-release/nasa-awards-launch-services-contract-for-spacex-starship/)).

<sup>12</sup> *Cutting Moon Rocket Would Test Musk's Power to Slash Jobs in Republican States*, Reuters (Feb. 12, 2025) (online at [www.reuters.com/technology/space/cutting-moon-rocket-would-test-musks-power-slash-jobs-republican-states-2025-02-12/](https://www.reuters.com/technology/space/cutting-moon-rocket-would-test-musks-power-slash-jobs-republican-states-2025-02-12/)).

<sup>13</sup> *Elon Musk's Mission to Take Over NASA—and Mars*, The Wall Street Journal (Mar. 29, 2025) (online at [www.wsj.com/business/elon-musk-nasa-mars-space-travel-d3978a7b](https://www.wsj.com/business/elon-musk-nasa-mars-space-travel-d3978a7b)).

<sup>14</sup> *Id.*

- Mr. Isaacson's fortune is tied to Shift4, the payments processing company he controls. In 2021, Shift4 entered into a partnership with Starlink, a wholly owned subsidiary of Mr. Musk's SpaceX. Shift4 estimated that its partnership with SpaceX will generate \$100 billion in Starlink subscription payments.<sup>15</sup>
- Shift4 purchased \$27.5 million in SpaceX shares (which are not publicly traded) in 2021.<sup>16</sup> Mr. Isaacman made at least \$5 million when he sold his own stake in SpaceX earlier this year to undisclosed buyers.<sup>17</sup>
- Mr. Isaacman's personal stake in the contracts between SpaceX and Polaris Program, Mr. Isaacman's private spaceflight program launched in partnership with SpaceX, is valued at more than \$50 million.<sup>18</sup>
- Mr. Isaacman reportedly paid Mr. Musk hundreds of millions of dollars for two flights using SpaceX's rockets.<sup>19</sup>
- The extent of Mr. Musk's own interests in Mr. Isaacman's businesses has not been reported because the Trump Administration has not required Mr. Musk to file a public financial disclosure.<sup>20</sup>

### **DOGE/Musk Control and Dismantling of NASA**

- Reporting indicates that individuals in Mr. Musk's orbit are operating at the highest levels within NASA. One SpaceX executive "known to some as 'Elon's conduit'" is reportedly shadowing NASA's acting administrator.<sup>21</sup> A longtime Tesla engineering manager is reportedly part of the DOGE team at NASA and has participated in conversations regarding mass layoffs at the agency.<sup>22</sup> Reporting

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<sup>15</sup> *Shift4 Stock Surges After SpaceX Starlink Payments Deal*, CNBC (Nov. 10, 2021) (online at [www.cnbc.com/2021/11/10/shift4-stock-surges-after-spacex-starlink-payments-deal.html](https://www.cnbc.com/2021/11/10/shift4-stock-surges-after-spacex-starlink-payments-deal.html)).

<sup>16</sup> *Elon Musk's Space Business Partner Is Poised to Take Over NASA*, Rolling Stone (Mar. 23, 2025) (online at [www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-features/elon-musk-jared-isaacman-nasa-spacex-business-partner-1235301236/](https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-features/elon-musk-jared-isaacman-nasa-spacex-business-partner-1235301236/)).

<sup>17</sup> Public Financial Disclosure Report (OGE Form 278e) of Jared Isaacman (online at <https://extapps2.oge.gov/201/Presiden.nsf/PAS+Index/5717A2DE21B47AE885258C4E002C7F98/%24FILE/Isaacman%2C%20Jared%20T.%20%20final278.pdf>) (accessed Apr. 1, 2025).

<sup>18</sup> *Id.*

<sup>19</sup> *Musk Is Positioned to Profit Off Billions in New Government Contracts*, The New York Times (Mar. 23, 2025) (online at [www.nytimes.com/2025/03/23/us/politics/spacex-contracts-musk-doge-trump.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/23/us/politics/spacex-contracts-musk-doge-trump.html)).

<sup>20</sup> *How the White House is Handling Elon Musk and Potential Conflicts of Interest*, NBC News (Mar. 21, 2025) (online at [www.nbcnews.com/politics/trump-administration/white-house-handling-elon-musk-potential-conflicts-interest-rcna197486](https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/trump-administration/white-house-handling-elon-musk-potential-conflicts-interest-rcna197486)).

<sup>21</sup> *Id.*

<sup>22</sup> *A Veteran Tesla Engineering Manager Has Joined DOGE, and He's Set to Attend a NASA Layoffs*

also suggests that SpaceX executives have advance knowledge of policy and program changes at NASA.<sup>23</sup>

- In early March 2025, NASA suddenly closed three offices and laid off their staff.<sup>24</sup> These closures included the Office of the Chief Scientist, which was tasked with ensuring that NASA's science programs comply with rigorous ethical and technical standards. NASA employees have reportedly raised concerns that shuttering the office would remove a safeguard preventing research from being altered to favor certain grants.<sup>25</sup>
- On March 21, 2025, DOGE announced on X (formerly Twitter) that NASA had terminated \$42 million in "unneeded contracts." Reporting indicates that the terminations, which have not been fully disclosed, encompass grants for "science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) outreach and diversity efforts."<sup>26</sup>

In order to ensure that NASA is complying with federal ethics and other relevant laws with respect to Elon Musk, please provide the following information, documents, and answers to the following requests by April 21, 2025:

1. A list of all matters under the agency's purview in which any of Mr. Musk's businesses<sup>27</sup> has any interest, stake, or engagement;
2. A detailed and complete list of all steps NASA is taking to ensure compliance with all relevant conflicts of interest and ethics laws pertaining to Mr. Musk's businesses;
3. All documents and communications related to procurements under NASA's jurisdiction in which any of Mr. Musk's businesses is a party;
4. A detailed and complete list of all actions NASA is taking to ensure that Mr. Musk is not permitted access to information that would give his businesses an advantage over competitors;

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*Meeting*, Business Insider (Mar. 14, 2025) (online at [www.businessinsider.com/tesla-employee-alexander-simonpour-nasa-doge-team-2025-3?utm\\_source=copy-link&utm\\_medium=referral&utm\\_content=topbar](https://www.businessinsider.com/tesla-employee-alexander-simonpour-nasa-doge-team-2025-3?utm_source=copy-link&utm_medium=referral&utm_content=topbar)).

<sup>23</sup> *Elon Musk's Mission to Take Over NASA—and Mars*, The Wall Street Journal (Mar. 29, 2025) (online at [www.wsj.com/business/elon-musk-nasa-mars-space-travel-d3978a7b](https://www.wsj.com/business/elon-musk-nasa-mars-space-travel-d3978a7b)).

<sup>24</sup> "Targeted" and "Cruel": NASA Staff React to Layoffs as Broader Changes Loom, CNN (Mar. 24, 2025) (online at [www.cnn.com/2025/03/24/science/nasa-layoffs-policy-office/index.html](https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/24/science/nasa-layoffs-policy-office/index.html)).

<sup>25</sup> *Id.*

<sup>26</sup> *Confusion and Worry as DOGE Cuts Hit NASA*, Science (Mar. 27, 2025) (online at [www.science.org/content/article/confusion-and-worry-doge-cuts-hit-nasa](https://www.science.org/content/article/confusion-and-worry-doge-cuts-hit-nasa)).

<sup>27</sup> For purposes of this document, "Mr. Musk's businesses" refers to businesses in which Mr. Musk is CEO or owner or otherwise has an ownership interest.

5. A detailed and complete list, including names, titles, and length of service with the federal government, of any NASA federal employees or contractors terminated, placed on administrative leave, transferred, or in any way removed from their positions by, or on the recommendation or orders of, DOGE, an agency DOGE team, or Elon Musk who were involved in any investigation into any Mr. Musk's businesses; and
6. A detailed and complete list of all exemptions NASA programs have received from President Trump's funding freezes.


The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee of the House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate "any matter" at "any time" under House Rule X.

The Committee has legislative jurisdiction over the federal civil service, public information and records, and the reorganization of the executive branch. The information requested in this letter will inform potential legislative reforms related to matters within the jurisdiction of the Committee. If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Committee Democratic staff at (202) 225-5051. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Gerald E. Connolly  
Ranking Member



Maxwell A. Frost  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Economic Growth,  
Energy Policy, and Regulatory Affairs

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman