

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 6, 2025

The Honorable Pete Hegseth  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 203001

Ms. Janet Petro  
Acting Administrator  
National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
300 E. Street SW  
Washington, DC 20546

Dear Secretary Hegseth and Acting Administrator Petro,

Given the jurisdiction and oversight responsibilities of our respective committees, we write today to express concerns about perceived and actual conflicts of interest surrounding the Space Exploration Technologies Corporation, commonly referred to as SpaceX. The company's Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Elon Musk, is also a Special Government Employee (SGE) and the leader of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). Mr. Musk's dual role creates an inherent conflict of interest between SpaceX's status as a large government contractor and DOGE's influence at agencies overseeing SpaceX contracts, contract bids, and regulations governing the company and its activities. DOGE is currently overseeing massive organizational changes at the Department of Defense (DoD) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), including the firings of probationary employees at DoD,<sup>1</sup> the cancelation of hundreds of millions of dollars in grants and contracts at NASA,<sup>2</sup> and the elimination of entire programs at both agencies.<sup>3</sup> Simultaneously, SpaceX serves as a large contractor for both DoD<sup>4</sup> and NASA<sup>5</sup> and continues to bid on additional contracts, including contracts that have been awarded since Mr. Musk began his term as an SGE.<sup>6</sup> Because SpaceX performs significant work for the federal government across the national security and civil space architectures, even the perception of a conflict of interest is very troubling, and Mr. Musk's influence over the agencies awarding large contracts to his company goes far beyond mere perception. These convergent interests should be immediately evaluated to determine whether

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<sup>1</sup> <https://defensescoop.com/2025/03/20/dod-probationary-workforce-firings-rehiring-court-doge-opm/>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.science.org/content/article/confusion-and-worry-doge-cuts-hit-nasa>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/04/15/pentagons-digital-resignations-00290930>;  
<https://edition.cnn.com/2025/03/24/science/nasa-layoffs-policy-office/index.html>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/elon-musks-us-department-defense-contracts-2025-02-11/>.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2025/mar/18/nasa-cuts-elon-musk-spacex#>.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.space.com/space-exploration/launches-spacecraft/us-space-force-awards-usd13-7-billion-in-launch-contracts-to-spacex-ula-and-blue-origin>.

SpaceX has been, or could be, given special treatment due to the position that its CEO holds within the Trump Administration, particularly given the regulatory restrictions within the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) regarding entities owned by government employees.

In addition to our concerns regarding conflicts of interest, particularly after SpaceX won the largest share of a recent \$13.7 billion contract from DoD for launch services,<sup>7</sup> we were troubled to review a recently published article that highlighted potential obfuscation regarding investment by Chinese investors into SpaceX.<sup>8</sup> According to ProPublica, both SpaceX's Chief Financial Officer and a person referenced in the article as a longtime investor and company insider testified in court that the company preferred to receive investments from Chinese investors through offshore vehicles based in tax havens such as the Cayman Islands that help to shield the identities of the investors. Their testimony, which arose during a corporate lawsuit in Delaware, suggests that SpaceX may be reluctant to publicly disclose the full extent of Chinese investment into the company's privately held ownership structure. In light of the extreme sensitivity of SpaceX's work for DoD and NASA, this lack of transparency raises serious questions.

The conflicts of interest surrounding Mr. Musk, SpaceX, and DOGE threaten to undermine the integrity of acquisition processes at DoD and NASA. The company's lack of transparency regarding its foreign investors heightens this dilemma. To fully understand the scope and the potential severity of any material issues associated with the concerns described above, we request responses to the following requests for information no later than 5:00 PM on Tuesday, May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025:

1. What disclosures are required from SpaceX or its executives regarding potential conflicts of interest before securing a contract with your Department/Agency?
2. Please describe the process your Department/Agency follows to identify and address potential conflicts of interest when evaluating SpaceX for government contracts given its ownership.
3. Is your Department/Agency in compliance with FAR Subpart 3.601 with regards to contracts that have been awarded to SpaceX?
4. Have any FAR 3.602 exceptions been granted for SpaceX contracts? If so, please provide details on the justification and approval processes associated with each instance, in addition to providing the required waiver documentation from FAR Subpart 9.5.
5. What steps have your contracting officers taken to prevent or to mitigate any actual or perceived conflicts of interest—whether organizational or personal—related to SpaceX?
6. How does your Department/Agency review foreign ownership or investment, particularly by Russian, Chinese, Iranian and North Korean individuals or organizations, with regard to companies who are under contract to provide goods or services? Please detail any agency disclosure requirements for contractors pertaining to foreign ownership or investment; any agency requirements that dictate the frequency with which contractors must make these disclosures; and

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.space.com/space-exploration/launches-spacecraft/us-space-force-awards-usd13-7-billion-in-launch-contracts-to-spacex-ula-and-blue-origin>.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.propublica.org/article/elon-musk-spacex-allows-china-investment-cayman-islands-secrecy>.

any events that would trigger an agency requirement for a contractor to provide an updated disclosure regarding foreign ownership or investment.

7. Have you discovered in those reviews or disclosures any violation by SpaceX with regards to improper ownership or investment from foreign individuals or organizations, or a failure to comply with all relevant agency disclosure requirements? If so, please describe the nature of the violation and any remedial action undertaken by your Department/Agency.

The United States has long been the world leader in space exploration and in advancing technology in space to better life on Earth. As SpaceX has become ever more integrated into U.S. government activities across both civil and national security space, any conflicts of interest and foreign investment concerns on the part of the company should be swiftly and appropriately addressed.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to receiving your timely responses.

Sincerely,



Adam Smith  
Ranking Member  
House Armed Services Committee



Zoe Lofgren  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Science, Space, and  
Technology



Seth Moulton  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Strategic Forces  
House Armed Services Committee



Valerie P. Foushee  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics  
House Committee on Science, Space, and  
Technology

CC:

Chairman Mike Rogers  
House Armed Services Committee

Chairman Brian Babin  
House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

Chairman Scott DesJarlais  
Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, House Armed Services Committee

Chairman Mike Haridopolos  
Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics, House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology