

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

2321 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6301

(202) 225-6371  
<http://science.house.gov>

February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Chris Wright  
Secretary  
Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, DC, 20585

Dear Secretary Wright,

We write to you as the Ranking Members of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology and the Committee's Energy and Investigations & Oversight Subcommittees regarding a matter of grave concern. This inquiry requires a prompt and transparent response.

We have observed, with great alarm, the shocking disregard for data privacy and security protocols exhibited by personnel associated with the so-called "Department of Government Efficiency," or DOGE. The executive order that created DOGE explicitly limited its access to "all *unclassified* agency records," and only "to the maximum extent consistent with law."<sup>1</sup> Recent press reports, however, described a confrontation between DOGE personnel and security officials at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), during which DOGE employees without proper security clearances sought to gain access to secure systems containing classified information.<sup>2</sup> When the Director of Security at USAID and his deputy did their duty and denied access in order to protect the integrity of the agency's classified data, DOGE employees threatened to call U.S. Marshals against the USAID officials.<sup>3</sup> The USAID security officials were subsequently placed on administrative leave and the DOGE personnel gained access to the agency's classified systems.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/establishing-and-implementing-the-presidents-department-of-government-efficiency/>. *Italics added.*

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/usaid-security-leaders-removed-refusing-elon-musks-doge-employees-acce-rcna190357>.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

Since these events, press reports have additionally detailed the successful efforts of DOGE personnel to gain access to highly sensitive systems at the Treasury Department<sup>5</sup>, the General Services Administration (GSA)<sup>6</sup>, the Office of Personnel Management<sup>7</sup>, the Small Business Administration<sup>8</sup>, the Education Department<sup>9</sup>, and an ever-increasing number of other federal agencies. Alarming, recent reporting confirms that you personally granted DOGE access to the Department of Energy's (DOE) IT system despite the objections of your own general counsel and chief information offices.<sup>10</sup> Senior department officials opposed granting access to Luke Farritor, a 23-year-old member of DOGE, because he had not undergone the standard background check normally required to gain access to the department's IT system.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, you agreed to do so. The scope of DOGE's access to internal DOE data and systems remains uncertain. But any access at all is disturbing, especially given recent reporting that DOGE is attempting to develop an AI chatbot, "GSAi," to comb through GSA data.<sup>12</sup> This raises serious questions about whether government data is being improperly exfiltrated and manipulated on servers that lack the security measures required of government systems.

This is an appalling situation. The recklessness and contempt with which DOGE personnel are rampaging through the federal government threatens a wide range of security interests, privacy controls, and government services. Their egregious and seemingly unlawful acts compromise our national security and put Americans at risk. These data systems touch every aspect of American life and contain some of the most personal and delicate information imaginable for individual Americans. There is simply no legitimate purpose that can be conceived to explain why DOGE personnel should gain access to this information.

Moreover, the risk to DOE is heightened due to the enormous conflicts-of-interest that the leader of DOGE, Elon Musk, has with DOE. Mr. Musk, apparently serving as a "special government employee," is personally directing DOGE's activities.<sup>13</sup> He is also the CEO of Tesla, one of the world's largest electric vehicle and clean energy companies.

As Ranking Members, we intend to closely monitor the broad potential for conflicts-of-interest between DOGE, Tesla, and DOE. This issue will be the subject of ongoing oversight. But our immediate concern is to evaluate the danger posed by any DOGE access to DOE's secure systems, including classified data managed or accessed by the agency, and to ensure that any access to sensitive and proprietary information granted to DOGE does not promote the personal interests of Elon Musk. DOE and its national laboratories use classified information in support of numerous department functions. Any breach of protocol surrounding the preservation or integrity of secure systems could have grave consequences for the department and the country.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/02/01/elon-musk-treasury-payments-system/>.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/30/us/politics/elon-musk-general-services-administration.html>.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/02/06/elon-musk-doge-access-personnel-data-opm-security/>.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/03/nx-s1-5285539/doge-musk-usaid-trump>.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2025/02/06/elon-musk-doge-ai-department-education/>.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2025/02/06/climate/doge-energy-department-trump/index.html>.

<sup>11</sup> *Id.*

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.wired.com/story/doge-chatbot-ai-first-agenda/>.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/donald-trump/white-house-says-elon-musk-serving-special-government-employee-rcna190520>.

Furthermore, DOE's work in recent years promoting clean energy technologies and next generation vehicles directly intersect with Tesla's corporate interests. To cite just two examples, DOE's Solar Energy Technologies Office funds research into solar technologies in partnership with the private sector that could have a substantial long-term effect on the commercial solar market, where Tesla has a significant market presence.<sup>14</sup> And DOE's Loan Programs Office, through the Advanced Technology Vehicles Manufacturing (ATVM) Program<sup>15</sup>, recently financed loans to electric vehicle manufacturers such as Rivian<sup>16</sup>, Ford<sup>17</sup>, and Stellantis<sup>18</sup>, all of which required exhaustive vetting of the company business models and underlying vehicle and battery technologies. DOE is thus in possession of highly sensitive proprietary data from Tesla's direct competitors in the electric vehicle sector. The possibility that such proprietary data could be obtained by the CEO of Tesla without regard to DOE's official safeguards for the protection of non-public information risks compromising the department's ability to collaborate with the private sector on a broad range of critical issues in the future. Such a breach would be particularly galling – and hypocritical – given that Tesla itself received a \$465 million loan from LPO's ATVM Program in 2010 that played a crucial role in the company's rise as a global leader in electric vehicles.<sup>19</sup>

There is enormous potential for damage and abuse if DOGE personnel improperly access secure systems and classified information at DOE. It is critical that the department adhere to legal requirements, official protocols, and best practices in protecting sensitive data from DOGE intrusions. Given the manner in which DOGE has been operating – with no notification, no transparency, and no public explanation for many of its activities – we are compelled to seek clarification directly from the department to establish conclusively that classified and confidential information remains secure and security protocols have not, and will not, be violated by DOGE's ongoing presence. Please respond to the following questions no later than 5:00 PM on February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025:

1. Has any individual employed by, affiliated with, or acting on behalf of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), accessed or attempted to access secure, classified, or proprietary data, information, or systems within DOE? If so, please identify the individuals and their stated purpose for doing so.
2. Has any individual employed by, affiliated with, or acting on behalf of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), accessed or attempted to access data or systems within DOE that contain Personally Identifiable Information (PII)? If so, please identify the individuals and their stated purpose for doing so.

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.energy.gov/eere/solar/solar-energy-technologies-office>.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.energy.gov/lpo/advanced-transportation-financing>.

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.energy.gov/lpo/articles/doe-announces-657-billion-loan-rivian-support-construction-ev-manufacturing-facility>.

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.energy.gov/lpo/articles/doe-announces-963-billion-loan-blueoval-sk-further-expand-us-manufacturing-electric>.

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.energy.gov/lpo/articles/lpo-announces-754-billion-loan-starplus-energy-construct-lithium-ion-battery-factories>.

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.energy.gov/lpo/tesla>.

3. Has any individual employed by, affiliated with, or acting on behalf of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), communicated with any DOE employees or officials in an attempt to secure DOGE access to secure, classified, or proprietary data, information, or systems maintained or overseen by DOE? If so, please identify the individuals and their stated purpose for doing so.
  
4. If any individual employed by, affiliated with, or acting on behalf of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) attempts to access secure, classified, or proprietary data, information, or systems within DOE, will you pledge to protect such data, information, or systems from any and all access that would violate any and all DOE policies and procedures, federal laws and regulations, and official protocols? Furthermore, will you pledge to immediately notify the Committee if any such incidents occur?

It is imperative that you fully disclose, now and in the future, the extent of DOE's interactions with DOGE so the Committee can assess the potential consequences of any breaches in security protocols. If any secure systems or classified data have been accessed, and thus compromised, by individuals lacking proper security clearance, we request that Committee staff who do possess appropriate security clearance be given the opportunity to review any such data to inform the Committee's response and any remedial steps that may be required.

This is a matter of the utmost significance. Any delay or lack of transparency on the part of the department is unacceptable. DOE cannot risk the leak or exposure of sensitive information to malicious or conflicted external actors. We intend to do our utmost to ensure that it does not, and that if a security violation does occur, it results in severe consequences for all involved.

Pursuant to Rule X of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology "shall review and study on a continuing basis laws, programs, and Government activities relating to nonmilitary research and development."<sup>20</sup> The Committee possesses jurisdiction over "all energy research, development, and demonstration, and projects therefor, and all federally owned or operated nonmilitary energy laboratories, as well as the commercial application of energy technologies."<sup>21</sup> If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Adam Rosenberg or Josh Schneider with the Committee's Minority staff at (202) 225-6375. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

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<sup>20</sup> [119 First Session House Rules](#).

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

Sincerely,



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



Deborah K. Ross  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Energy



Emilia Sykes  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Investigations & Oversight

CC: Chairman Brian Babin  
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

Chairman Randy Weber  
Subcommittee on Energy

Chairman Rich McCormick  
Subcommittee on Investigations & Oversight