

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

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February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025

Janet Petro  
Acting Administrator  
National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
300 Hidden Figures Way, SW  
Washington, D.C., 20546

Dear Acting Administrator Petro,

Thank you for the agency's response (OLIA 2025 – 00083) to our February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025 letter to you concerning the so-called Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) and its access to secure systems and classified data at NASA. As the Ranking Members of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology (the Committee), as well as the Subcommittees on Space and Aeronautics and Investigations & Oversight, we appreciate the agency's responsiveness on this matter. However, the agency's reply raises more questions than it provides answers.

Our February 6<sup>th</sup> letter expressed our “grave concern” over the threat that DOGE poses to NASA.<sup>1</sup> We noted the “enormous potential for damage and abuse” raised by DOGE's presence inside NASA.<sup>2</sup> And we articulated the risks that DOGE's presence would create for NASA's ability to protect sensitive information, maintain data security safeguards, and uphold conflict-of-interest requirements in light of Elon Musk's dual roles as the leader of DOGE and the CEO of SpaceX, the agency's second largest contractor.<sup>3</sup>

On February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025, NASA provided a formal response to our letter. In its response, the agency confirmed that “DOGE has identified an individual who will be employed by NASA.” The agency further stated, in reference to that individual:

As such, he will have all necessary access to NASA owned or managed resources as required for his duties, in compliance with all laws and regulations regarding the protection of IT resources and classified information. NASA also complies with all applicable Executive Orders and associated supplemental guidance.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://democrats-science.house.gov/news/press-releases/committee-leaders-stress-to-nasa-the-threat-of-elon-musk-demand-answers-on-whether-doge-has-made-contact>.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

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

While we appreciate the agency’s confirmation that a DOGE-affiliated individual (“DOGE Agent”) will be embedded inside NASA, that fact only sharpens our fears regarding DOGE’s potential to inflict harm – intentionally or unintentionally – on the agency and its mission. We must reiterate our deep alarm at this situation. Given DOGE’s destructive seizure of power throughout the federal government and the unique conflicts-of-interest that Elon Musk possesses with NASA, DOGE’s presence at the agency creates an unprecedented threat from within NASA’s own house. We are thus compelled to demand further explanation on a number of points related to DOGE’s relationship and activities with NASA. Complete transparency on the part of the agency is required. NASA must fully disclose the nature of its interactions with DOGE so the Committee can assess the full extent of the danger.

First, it is critical that NASA disclose the identity of the DOGE Agent who will be employed at the agency. NASA failed to disclose this information in its response to the Committee. But there is no legitimate rationale for withholding this individual’s identity, given his status as an employee of the agency who is likely to possess substantial authority over agency functions. And we note that the agency’s response to the Committee appears to characterize the selection of the DOGE Agent as having occurred entirely under DOGE’s prerogative. If true, DOGE’s power to embed a senior official at NASA without the agency’s input or approval makes the Committee’s oversight of this individual all the more vital.

Moreover, we have concerns about the character and judgment of some individuals publicly identified as DOGE employees. For example, a 19-year-old DOGE employee named Edward Coristine has been linked to multiple web domains with questionable foreign associations<sup>4</sup> and was previously fired by a cybersecurity firm after being accused of leaking company secrets to a competitor.<sup>5</sup> A second DOGE employee named Gavin Kliger promoted white supremacists and misogynists on his social media account as recently as the fall of 2024.<sup>6</sup> A third DOGE employee named Marko Elez was linked to a social media account that “advocated racism and eugenics” before it was deleted.<sup>7</sup> DOGE’s threat to NASA would be magnified if any of these individuals – or any other individual with a similar history of reckless behavior, poor judgment, and appallingly hateful beliefs – were to be employed at the agency in an influential role.

It is also crucial that the agency provide further information regarding the responsibilities, authorities, and reporting structure that will govern the DOGE Agent during his work as a NASA employee. NASA’s response to the Committee indicated that the DOGE Agent would be granted full access to agency resources “as required for his duties,” but it failed to clarify anything about who established those duties and what they will entail. We do not know what this individual’s job will be at the agency. We do not know which policy areas will be encompassed by his portfolio. We do not know whether his primary function will be to observe agency activities; to advise on agency policies; or perhaps to exercise an extraordinary decision-making authority related to the policymaking process, procurement actions, or operational matters. We do not even know

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.wired.com/story/edward-coristine-tesla-sexy-path-networks-doge/>.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2025-02-07/musk-s-doge-teen-was-fired-by-cybersecurity-firm-for-leaking-company-secrets>.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/staffer-with-elon-musk-doge-amplified-white-supremacists-online-2025-02-07/>.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.wsj.com/tech/doge-staffer-resigns-over-racist-posts-d9f11a93>.

whether this individual will report to the NASA Administrator, to another senior NASA official, or directly to the CEO of SpaceX, Elon Musk.

Furthermore, we are greatly concerned about the lack of clarity surrounding the DOGE Agent's access to sensitive proprietary data from NASA contractors, some of whom compete directly with SpaceX. Our February 6<sup>th</sup> letter explicitly raised this issue, noting that "the possibility that such proprietary data could be obtained by the CEO of SpaceX without regard to NASA procurement rules and regulations risks compromising the integrity of NASA procurement decisions in the future."<sup>8</sup> We also asked directly whether any individual affiliated with DOGE would be given access to proprietary data retained by NASA.<sup>9</sup> Yet the agency's February 13<sup>th</sup> response to the Committee ignored this question entirely and did not mention proprietary data at all. We fear that NASA's acknowledgment that the DOGE Agent will possess "all necessary access to NASA owned or managed resources as required for his duties" may, in fact, be an admission that he will have unrestricted access to proprietary data. If true, this would be a highly disturbing admission. The agency's ambiguity on this issue must end immediately.

In addition, we require further details regarding NASA's formal process to ensure that the DOGE Agent will adhere to agency conflict-of-interest and ethics requirements. In comments to the media after your speech at the Commercial Space Conference on February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025, you cited NASA's "very strict conflict-of-interest policies" and explained that "any employee or any person who is coming in we will check out their conflicts of interest and make sure they don't have any conflicts of interest with any of the companies that we work with."<sup>10</sup> You added that NASA's legal office would be charged with examining any such potential conflicts of interest.<sup>11</sup>

Setting aside the fact that DOGE employees work for a man who also serves as the CEO of SpaceX – an inherent conflict of interest if there ever was one – NASA's vetting arrangement requires elaboration, particularly since the agency failed to disclose the existence of this process to the Committee before unveiling it to the media. How NASA's legal office – presumably the Office of the General Counsel – is assessing DOGE conflicts of interest, and the authority it will have to address any identified conflicts, remains unclear. We must also understand the role NASA's Ethics Program, which is responsible for managing the agency-wide ethics and financial disclosure system, will play in identifying and preventing DOGE conflicts-of-interest. Given the heightened scrutiny that Elon Musk's conflicts-of-interest are sure to bring to the agency, the processes that NASA puts in place to determine and mitigate DOGE conflicts must be ironclad.

The lack of transparency surrounding DOGE's presence and activities within NASA is ominous and unacceptable. The Committee cannot conduct proper oversight of the agency while lacking the most basic information about how DOGE will operate inside NASA, as well as the procedures that the agency will use to ensure DOGE employees adhere to all applicable laws, regulations, and guidelines. In order to inform our ongoing oversight of the danger that DOGE

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<sup>8</sup> <https://democrats-science.house.gov/news/press-releases/committee-leaders-stress-to-nasa-the-threat-of-elon-musk-demand-answers-on-whether-doge-has-made-contact>.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

<sup>10</sup> <https://spacenews.com/doge-to-examine-nasa-payments/>.

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

poses to NASA, we must have answers to the following questions. Please respond to these questions no later than two weeks from today, 5:00 PM on March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025:

1. What is the name of the DOGE Agent who will be employed by NASA? Has this individual's employment with NASA commenced, or will his employment begin at a future date? Please provide the individual's past or future start date as a NASA employee.
2. Have other DOGE Agents or DOGE associates been identified by DOGE to join NASA? If so, please provide the same information as requested in question one for any such individuals.
3. Did NASA have any opportunity to comment on, or object to, the DOGE Agent's appointment before he was "identified" by DOGE for employment at the agency?
4. What hiring authorities were used to formalize the DOGE Agent's employment at NASA?
5. What are the duties and functions of the DOGE Agent who will be employed at NASA? Will this individual possess the right to advise, or the authority to make decisions and influence deliberations, concerning any aspect of agency operations, policy, or procurement? Please describe the nature of the DOGE Agent's mandate within the agency and the scope of that mandate.
6. What will be the reporting structure for the DOGE Agent during his employment at NASA? Who will be the immediate supervisor for that individual, and will that individual ultimately report to the NASA Administrator or to Elon Musk?
7. Will the DOGE Agent employed at NASA possess a security clearance, and will he have access to classified information at the agency? What procedures will NASA establish to ensure that the integrity of the agency's secure systems and classified data will not be compromised by any access granted to DOGE Agents or associates?
8. Will the DOGE Agent employed at NASA possess any access to proprietary data from NASA contractors or subcontractors? If so, what limits will the agency place on the DOGE Agent's access to prevent him from sharing sensitive proprietary data with Elon Musk that may pertain to SpaceX competitors?
9. What is the conflict-of-interest vetting process for DOGE Agents being led by NASA's legal office? Please detail how this process will identify and remedy conflicts-of-interest among DOGE Agents. Please also describe when these procedures were established, who will oversee them, and how the agency plans to implement them.
10. Has NASA's legal office already conducted a conflict-of-interest review under the process described above for the DOGE Agent who has been identified for employment with NASA? If so, what were the findings of the review? If not, when will such a review be conducted?

11. What is the role of NASA's Ethics Program in the conflict-of-interest review process being led by the agency's legal office? Will DOGE Agents be required to comply with the same standard requirements and guidelines under NASA's Ethics Program that apply to all other agency employees?

In addition to the agency's formal response to these questions, it is imperative that the DOGE Agent make himself available to provide the Committee with a staff briefing. The Committee cannot properly understand DOGE's role within NASA, and the risks it poses to the agency, without hearing directly from DOGE itself. As an employee of NASA, the DOGE Agent should be fully prepared to discuss his hiring, mandate, agenda, and activities with our staff and the staff of the Majority as well. We request that this staff briefing take place as soon as possible, but no later than three weeks from today, March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

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>12</sup> The Committee possesses jurisdiction over the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, as well as "astronautical research and development, including resources, personnel, equipment, and facilities" and "outer space, including exploration and control thereof."<sup>13</sup>

To schedule the requested briefing by NASA's DOGE Agent, and for any other questions regarding this letter, please contact Pamela Whitney or Josh Schneider with the Committee's Minority staff at (202) 225-6375. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



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



Valerie P. Foushee  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics



Emilia Sykes  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Investigations & Oversight

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<sup>12</sup> [119 First Session House Rules](#).

<sup>13</sup> *Id.*

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

Chairman Mike Haridopolos  
Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics

Chairman Rich McCormick  
Subcommittee on Investigations & Oversight